

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES DROP CAV GRIDDER; LADY CAV SOCCER STUNS DYERSBURG



Above: Gabe Dupree picked off this pass early in the first quarter and returned it all the way for a pick-six touchdown for Crockett vs. Dyer County. Things went south from there. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

Playing just ahead of the outside swath of hurricane Helene-affected weather, Crockett County's footballers got lost in the "missed" Thursday night: missed blocks, missed reads, missed snaps, missed field goals, missed tackles - missed opportunities all night long.

As a result, the Cavaliers dropped a 21-7 decision at Dyer County, doubly painful because it was a key region game they could have won with more solid execution.

"We've been playing reasonably well the first five games," Coach Kevin Ward said. "Tonight, it seemed like we were just a little bit off. If we did something right on a play, another thing was wrong. When you play a team as good as Dyer County, you have to take advantage of the opportunities they give you - and we certainly didn't do that."

While Ward acknowledged that Dyer County "had a good game plan against us," he was also well aware that the Choctaws fumbled the ball six times (with three recovered by Crockett) and also threw an interception - which Cav defensive back Gabe Dupree returned 55 yards for a touchdown on the hosts' fourth play from scrimmage. But that accounted for Crockett's only points of the game, as the Cavs rushed for only 49 yards and threw 31 passes for only 98 more, with one being picked off at the Dyer County 11 just before halftime, killing a chance to take the lead back.

And then there's Ja'bari Livingston, the Choctaws man-mountain of a running back, who lugged the ball 23 times for 206 yards and two scores. He joined Huntingdon's Brady Warbritton in the 200-yard club against the Cav defense in the last two weeks, Crockett's first two losses after winning its opening four games.

"We've been trying to tackle him for four years," Ward said. "He's impressive. But we had our chances in this game, and we just didn't execute when we needed two. It just makes next week's game with Obion County that much more important."

Dyer County's game plan included putting pass pressure on Crockett's Ben Burgess and also eliminating the return talents of Demo Pickens. The Choctaws kicked ground balls or low line drives on each of their kickoffs, keeping the ball away from Pickens (he did scoop one up after it bounced past a few teammates, good for a 28-yard gain just before the intermission). But Crockett also forced five Dyer punts, and most were fairly short - until the Cavs let each one hit the ground and roll for considerably more yardage, rather than attempt a single fair catch.

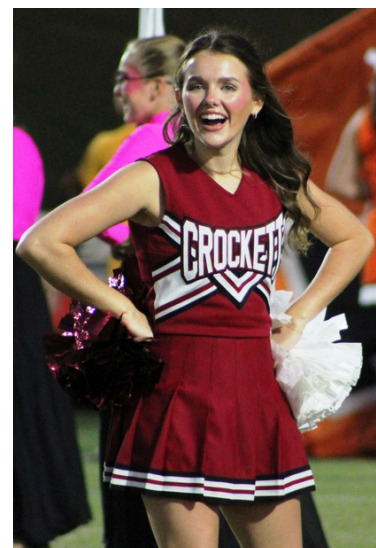
Crockett fumbled the ball four times, and even though the Cavs recovered them all, three of the four killed drive momentum. On another offensive series near the end of the first quarter, the Cavs were stopped twice on consecutive running plays for no gain when a first down would have given them the ball at the Dyer 25. It was that kind of night.

In addition to that possession, after the Choctaws tied the game at 7-all on a 46-yard jaunt by Livingston with 2:05 left in the first half, Crockett twice had scoring chances. But Burgess threw an ill-advised pass while being tackled on the run that was picked off at the Dyer 11 by Darius Hayward. Just seconds later, the Cavs' Jake Knox recovered a Pereon Isom fumble at the Choctaw 37, but a sack ended that threat.

Early in the third period, DK Woods stripped the ball away from Livingston and returned it 43 yards to the Dyer County 12, but on second down, the snap was dropped and resulted in a nine-yard loss. It forced a field goal attempt, but the usually reliable Avery Hurst missed from 27 yards. It was that kind of night.

After the miss, the hosts drove 80 yards in 13 plays for the go-ahead touchdown, a seven-yard sprint up the middle by Isom. Tyler Fowlkes kicked the extra point to make it 14-7 with 3:05 remaining in the third quarter. It stayed that way even after Ian Greenberg recovered a Korey Taylor fumble two minutes later, until Livingston broke a 21-yarder up the middle on a fourth-down play with just 2:45 left in the contest.

Crockett hit on just five of its last 18 pass attempts for a measly 25 yards. Deuce Greenhill got just one touch as a runner (a nine-yard gain), but caught four passes for 59 yards to lead that category. The Cavs travel to Troy next Friday night to face Obion County in their next region match-up.



Far Right: Crockett cheerleader Kinzey Hutchison was all smiles before the start of the game ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Final Statistics

Rushes-Yards: CC - DK Woods 10-31, Deuce Greenhill 1-9, Dre Walker 2-9, Demo Pickens 1-3, Ben Burgess 12-(-3), **Team 26-49. DYER** - Ja'bari Livingston 23-206, Landon Daniels 9-45, Pereon Isom 5-22, Korey Taylor 4-15, Jamin Gauldin 1-(-2), **Team 42-286.**

Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC - Burgess 14-31-98-1. **DYER** - Daniels 6-13-54-1.

Receptions-Yards: CC - Greenhill 4-59, Dre Walker 5-25, Squirt Pickens 1-10, Demo Pickens 3-4, Woods 1-0. **DYER** - Devin Hayward 3-35, Livingston 1-15, Kaleb Mahome 1-6, Gauldin 1-(-2).

Interceptions: CC - Gabe Dupree 1-55-1 TD. **DYER** - Darius Hayward 1-3.

Kickoff Returns-Yards: CC - Demo Pickens 1-28, **Team 1-28. DYER** - Gauldin 1-28, Isom 1-13, **Team 2-41.**

Punt Returns-Yards: CC - None. **DYER** - Gauldin 3-42.

Total Scrimmage Plays-Yards: CC 57-147, **DYER** 55-340.

First Downs: CC 8, DYER 13.

Fumbles-Lost: CC 4-0, DYER 6-3.

Penalties-Yards: CC 0-0, DYER 7-55.

Punts-Yards: CC - Avery Hurst 5-198-39.6. **DYER** - Ian Tittle 5-171-34.2.

Points (TD-2PC-XP-FG-P): Dupree 1-0-0-0-6, **Hurst** 0-0-1-0-1, **Team** 1-0-1-0-7. **DYER** - 3-0-3-0-21.

Below: DK Woods (32) and Austin Carroll (56) bring down Dyer County's Pereon Isom (3) in Thursday night's loss to the Choctaws in Newbern, with Joshua Simmons (78) ready to lend assistance if needed. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Season Statistics (Record: 4-2; Region 0-1)**

Rushes-Yards: CC - DK Woods 88-475, Deuce Greenhill 35-360, Demo Pickens 11-56, Gabe Dupree 14-38, Amarion Hobson 7-13, Dre Walker 2-9, Ben Burgess 49-(-61), **Team 206-890. Opponents 222-1,205.**

Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC - Burgess 48-85-782-5. **Opponents** 42-75-501-8.

Receptions-Yards: CC - Greenhill 17-371-3 TD, Dre Walker 15-298-1 TD, Demo Pickens 9-72-1 TD, DK Woods 3-14, Squirt Pickens 1-10, Karsen Burgess 1-8, Brody Parlow 1-7, Amarion Hobson 1-2, **Team 48-782. Opponents 42-501.**

Interceptions: CC - Demo Pickens 2-49, Dupree 1-55-1 TD, Woods 1-12, Walker 1-10, Randle Perry 1-8, Greenhill 1-0, Ian Greenberg 1-0, **Team 8-134-1 TD. Opponents 5-106-1 TD.**

Kickoff Returns-Yards: CC - Demo Pickens 9-215, Squirt Pickens 6-114, Luke Beaird 1-8, **Team 16-337. Opponents 13-341-1 TD.**

Punt Returns-Yards: CC - Demo Pickens 7-103, **Team 7-103. Opponents 7-68.**

Total Scrimmage Plays-Yards: CC 289-1,672. Opponents 298-1,706.

First Downs: CC 52, Opponents 69.

Fumbles-Lost: CC 12-3, Opponents 18-8.

Penalties-Yards: CC 28-207, Opponents 47-355.

Punts-Yards: CC - Avery Hurst 16-606-37.9. **Opponents 19-677-35.6.**

Points (TD-2PC-XP-FG-P): Woods 7-0-0-0-42, Greenhill 7-0-0-0-42, Hurst 0-0-14-1-17, Burgess 2-0-0-0-12, Walker 1-1-0-0-8, Demo Pickens 1-0-0-0-6, **Team 18-1-14-1-127. Opponents 13-3-5-2-9**

Below: Dyer County's Ja'bari Livingston (28) is a tough man to tackle, as DK Woods and Dre Walker (6) are finding out here. But he's especially hard for Crockett's Jake Knox (35) to tackle, because every time he tried to do so (it seems), a Choctaw lineman would put a serious grip on him. Here's the first piece of evidence ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: ... and here's an entirely different play, in which Jake Knox (35) -- even while trying to tackle Ja'bari Livingston without help -- is being tackled himself by another Dyer County lineman. Livingston rushed for 206 yards in 22 carries and scored twice for Dyer County. (Photo by Ron Barry)

CCHS SOCCER: It had been six years since Crockett County defeated Dyersburg in girls soccer. And coming off a 7-0 loss to South Gibson in its most recent contest, there was little reason to expect what happened Thursday evening at Cavalier Stadium.

And when Dyersburg scored in the first 90 seconds, there was even less reason for optimism.

"The girls were able to figure out what had to change the rest of the half," Coach Carli Branson said, "which is spectacular, considering soccer doesn't get a timeout to reset and talk it out."

The Lady Cavs responded by scoring off a corner kick by Dani Rios, with Stephanie Joyner slipping it past the Lady Trojan goalie to even the count at 1-1. That was all the scoring for the first half.

Dyersburg again went ahead with the first goal of the second half, but Crockett answered again when Rebecca Waddey scored from a Rios free kick to make it 2-2, a score that stood to the end of regulation play.

The teams then played a 10-minute "Golden Goal" period, in which the first team to score wins. Neither team did. So a second "Golden Goal" period followed – and neither team scored again. Lady Cav "rookie" goaltender Amaria Walker – still learning a new sport – deflected a tough shot on a free kick toward the right corner of the net for the key save that sent the game into a penalty kick situation, in which each club gets five individual players to take alternating shots at the opposing goalie from only 12 yards out – a succession of one-on-one showdowns.

Branson and assistant coach Joey Soriano – who had each received a yellow card warning from a game official during regulation – selected Crockett's top five kickers "based off what we had seen in practice," and reminded Walker that this game was not on her shoulders and "to relax and do her thing." The hosts won the coin toss and chose to kick second so they would know what they had to do each time they stepped up the ball.

In the penalty kick situation, Dyersburg made three shots, countered by goals from Crockett's Waddey, Rios, and Cristal Martinez. But then Walker – who Branson described as "a beast in the goal all night" – stopped the next Lady Trojan attempt, leaving it up to Stephanie Joyner to try to win it for the Lady Cavs.

Ironically, the last time Crockett beat Dyersburg six years ago, Stephanie's older sister Jennifer – in her senior year – scored the goals that led the Lady Cavs to victory.

"Stephanie has been our drummer," Branson said. "She keeps the rhythm in the midfield, and although she is little, she is fierce! We put her in a position tonight to step up and lead and she did so with a confidence and willingness to make sure we won this game."

Joyner – calmly and completely poised on her shot – slammed the ball into the top left corner as the rest of her teammates streamed from the sidelines in joy to swarm her in front of the net.

"I used to play for Musa Manneh (the current Dyersburg coach)," Branson said. "I told my girls that I know what it is like to be on the receiving end of his halftime speech and post-game speech. He is by far one of the best in the business, and we have to understand this isn't it. They will hit the ground running to redeem themselves, and we will have to hit the ground running even harder."

Branson went on to compliment Dyersburg and the caliber of play for the entire match.

"Dyersburg has a great squad," she said. "Very respectable players who have high soccer IQs. Their keeper was phenomenal in the goal, making tremendous stops to keep us from taking the lead. The physicality of the game was evenly matched and the respect among the players was evident."

But – at the end of THIS special night – Crockett girls soccer not only earned some respect, but put a key district match into the win column.



Above: Stephanie Joyner is petite by soccer standards, but Coach Carli Branson says she's "fierce." And that's why she was placed in the penalty kick position that resulted in Crockett's 100-minute-plus victory over Dyersburg Thursday night, the first time in six years that the Lady Cavs have prevailed over the Lady Trojans. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Rebecca Waddey scored the goal that sent the soccer game into overtime and then tallied for Crockett in the penalty kick phase to help the Lady Cav squad to its win over Dyersburg. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Dani Rios assisted on both Crockett goals in regulation time and then was one of the penalty kick scorers that produced Thursday evening's win over district foe Dyersburg. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Amaria Walker made a huge game-saving play in the second "Golden Goal" period and then stopped shots in the penalty kick portion that allowed the Lady Cavs to upset Dyersburg Thursday. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Squirt Pickens (23) collected his first pass reception of the season, fighting here for extra yardage as his brother Demo tries to lend blocking help. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's Nolen Turner (54) gets after Dyer County quarterback Landon Daniels (7) in Thursday night's region duel. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Some of the Crockett students showed up in their red, white, and blue regalia to cheer on the Cavaliers. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: The cheer team's sign carried a patriotic theme for Cavalier encouragement, along with Garett Rawson dressed as a hot dog. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Also involved in a first was Dre Walker (6), who had his first two tries as a ball carrier, fighting through face mask contact here as Colton Mayo (52) provides blocking assistance. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Deuce Greenhill (7) only had one rushing attempt for the Cavs -- going for nine yards on this play -- but caught four passes for 59 more. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Zerafin Guardian -- on the sidelines with an injury -- was significantly missed by the Cav defense. He appeared none too happy to be without his helmet. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Demo Pickens (3) is dragged down by a Choctaw tackler after receiving a pass for a short gain. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: A Dyer County defender tries to drag down Deuce Greenhill by his jersey after the Cav wideout made a pass reception. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: But in the end, it was too much of this guy: Ja'bari Livingston (28), here trying to shake off Gabe Dupree's hold on his foot and Nolen Turner's approaching hit from the back side. And wouldn't you know it -- in this photo, Austin Carroll (56) is being held, rather than Jake Knox. (Photo by Ron Barry)