

# HAYWOOD EXPLODES IN FINAL HALF, DOWNS CROCKETT GRIDDER 50-29



**Above:** Dre Walker (6) caught a short touchdown pass from Ben Burgess (10) in the final quarter for the Cavaliers. (Photo by Ron Barry)

## By Ron Barry

There are two things fairly certain about Haywood County's football team: (1) they're going to score; and (2) they're probably going to taunt you after they do.

When you can hang 50 points on the scoreboard, you can afford the more than 100 yards in penalties the Tomcats received Friday night in using a strong second half to defeat Crockett County 50-29 in a Region 7-4A game. It doesn't make it any easier to witness.

Haywood's win sets up a regular season windup game with Dyer County for the top seed in the region. Both of them are 3-0 and will face off Halloween night in Newbern. Crockett will be the region's #3 seed whether it wins or loses in its season finale with Fayette-Ware that same evening. The Cavs will be 2-2 in the region with a victory, but even a 1-3 mark gives them the seed because of the current tiebreaking advantages.

While Haywood appears to be the top team in the region, Crockett was right with them Friday night at the end of the first half, deadlocked at 22-all. But the game turned just two minutes into the third quarter when Cav quarterback Ben Burgess was hit on a hurried pass attempt and the Tomcats' Jeffery Parker picked it off near the line of scrimmage and lumbered 54 yards for the go-ahead touchdown.

Haywood quickly forced a punt on the next Crockett possession and promptly drove 77 yards for another score, with Earvin Jones posting the touchdown on a 24-yard run.

The Cavalier offense, which had consistently moved the ball during the exciting first half, was stymied in the third period and most of the fourth. If wide receiver Kris Phillips had not turned his first pass reception of the season into a 61-yard gain for the hosts, Crockett would have been under 50 total yards for the second half.

Meanwhile, Haywood racked up 248 yards through the air in the ballgame, completing 14 of 18 throws with its two-quarterback system and bevy of skilled receivers. Caden Harris caught six tosses for 101 yards to lead the attack, but Jaden Butler snared two touchdown passes to push the final margin toward the lopsided position.

Still, Crockett Coach Kevin Ward was optimistic after the contest.

"I know the players are disappointed," he said, "but I'm not disappointed with the effort we showed and the passion we played with. We had our opportunities. They beat us on special teams, and you won't win many games if you get beat there. But I'd like to play this team again in the playoffs. And we'll have our chance if we play together and play as hard as we did tonight."

Haywood's Cam Miller ran the opening kickoff back 75 yards to the Crockett 19, and it looked like it was about to be a long evening for the Cavaliers. But on the Tomcats' first pass attempt of the night, Crockett's Dre Walker stepped in front of the intended receiver and returned it 37 yards to the Haywood 48.

Power runs by DK Woods and a 10-yard pass to Walker moved the ball to the 16. Crockett then lined Woods up in a solo Wildcat formation, but when he took the direct snap from center, he handed it off to a streaking Amarion Hobson on a counter move and the speedy junior took it all the way to the end zone. Avery Hurst's extra point gave the Cavs a 7-0 edge, serving notice that Haywood was in for a fight.

Challenge accepted, said the Tomcats. Four plays later, Kemonte Williams broke a 45-yard scoring run, and the extra point by Japheth Sanchez made it 7-7 with 6:35 left in the first.

The Tomcats forced a Hurst punt on the next series, and Harris – a tremendous wide receiver with college offers galore – fielded it at his own 10, gave a couple of jukes, and sailed down the right sideline for 90 yards and a touchdown. Sanchez made it 14-7 at the 3:09 mark.

Crockett answered right back with a 50-yard march after Haywood hit the receiver who signaled for a fair catch on the pooched kickoff. Woods carried five times on the drive, and dragged a couple of tacklers into the end zone from two yards out for the tying touchdown early in the second period.

Haywood responded with another quick score. Quarterback Cayden Sanders connected with Harris on a 49-yard bomb down the left sideline to set up a 16-yard touchdown burst by Miller. To make things more interesting, the Tomcats went for two points on the conversion and Williams ran in easily, giving the visitors a 22-14 lead with 7:13 to play in the half.

The Cavs answered again after Squirt Pickens zipped 44 yards with the Haywood kickoff, all the way to the visitors' 31. Crockett advanced to the four, but on a fourth-and-goal from there, Walker took a pass from Burgess and was tackled at the one, giving the Tomcats possession again.

On the next play – running a shotgun formation from his own end zone – Haywood's Sanders dropped the snap and appeared to be hopelessly cornered for a safety, but the Cavs couldn't get him down before he released a short throw that fell incomplete near an eligible receiver. Sanders then hit Harris for 15 yards to establish some breathing room, although Crockett finally forced a Sanchez punt.

Woods – who ended the game with 118 yards on 21 carries, 17 of them in the opening half – quickly burst for a 38-yard gain to the Tomcat 27. Three plays later, Burgess found Hobson in the right corner of the end zone from 22 yards out with just 43 seconds remaining before intermission. Ward called for a two-point conversion try, which Woods successfully produced from the Wildcat formation.

Crockett's Nolen Turner recovered a Carson Graves fumble on the half's final play, and the hosts appeared ready to give Haywood a powerful scare over the final 24 minutes – until they actually began. Haywood added three touchdowns by the time only 11:35 remained in the game, but Phillips' 61-yard scamper with a short pass set up an eight-yard scoring pass to Walker, pulling the Cavs within a 43-29 margin with 8:39 to go.

Hurst then executed a hard onside kick that ricocheted off a Tomcat and was recovered by Crockett's Brody Parlow at the Haywood 42, and the Cavs were open for business – until fumbling it right back to the Tomcats on the very next play. When they turned the gift into the second Butler touchdown reception, the game was effectively over.

Crockett is now 6-3 and closes the regular season Halloween night by hosting Fayette-Ware, which is winless in region play. The Cavs yielded 421 yards in total offense to the Tomcats, who also had the long punt and interception returns for scores. Additionally notable was that Deuce Greenhill – Crockett's top offensive threat entering the game with 803 yards gained from scrimmage – never touched the ball for the Cavs.

Crockett's Halloween game will be preceded by a Trick-or-Treating time – from 4:30-6:30 – on the high school campus between the tennis courts and the softball and baseball fields. Several school organizations, athletic teams, and other vendors will be providing candy to children, as well as other items for sale. All children in costume will also be allowed into the football game free of charge.

### Final Statistics

**Rushes-Yards: CC** – DK Woods 21-118, Amarion Hobson 2-52, Ben Burgess 8-26, Demo Pickens 1-(-1), **Team 32-195. HAY** – Kemonte Williams 8-74, Cam Miller 10-53, Earvin Jones 1-24, Eric Bullock 2-15, Carson Graves 4-7, **Team 25-173.**

**Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC** – Burgess 10-23-119-1. **HAY** – Cayden Sanders 10-12-194-0, Carson Graves 4-6-54-1, **Team 14-18-248-1.**

**Receptions-Yards: CC** – Kris Phillips 1-61, Dre Walker 7-37-1 TD, Hobson 1-22-1 TD, DK Woods 1-(-1). **HAY** – Caden Harris 6-101, Jaden Butler 2-61-2 TD, Jayden Reid 2-44, Miller 2-27, Kobe Wilson 2-15.

**Interceptions: CC** – Walker 1-37. **HAY** – Jeffery Parker 1-54-1 TD.

**Kickoff Returns-Yards: CC** – Squirt Pickens 3-77, Demo Pickens 3-57, Team 6-134. **HAY** – Miller 1-75, Wilson 1-22, Reid 1-15, Team 3-112.

**Punt Returns-Yards: CC** – Demo Pickens 1-0. **HAY** – Harris 1-90-1 TD.

**Total Scrimmage Plays-Yards: CC** 55-314, **HAY** 43-421.

**First Downs: CC 12, HAY 15.**

**Fumbles-Lost: CC 1-1, HAY 5-2.**

**Penalties-Yards: CC 2-20, HAY 13-101.**

**Punts-Yards: CC** – Avery Hurst 2-77-38.5. **HAY** – Japheth Sanchez 1-48-48.0.

Points (TD-2PC-XP-FG-P): Hobson 2-0-0-0-12, Woods 1-1-0-0-8, Dre Walker 1-0-0-0-6, 0-0-3-0-3, **Team 4-1-3-0-29. HAY** – 7-1-6-0-50.

### Season Statistics (Record: 6-3; Region 1-2)

**Rushes-Yards: CC** – DK Woods 146-882, Deuce Greenhill 35-360, Gabe Dupree 23-83, Demo Pickens 14-75, Amarion Hobson 9-65, Dre Walker 4-14, DJ Forrest 2-0, Bad Snap 1-(-26), Ben Burgess 69-(-5), **Team 303-1,448. Opponents 310-1,623.**

**Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC** – Burgess 70-129-1,124-6. **Opponents 75-135-980-12.**

**Receptions-Yards: CC** – Greenhill 20-443-3 TD, Dre Walker 26-400-3 TD, Demo Pickens 11-127-2 TD, Kris Phillips 1-61, DK Woods 5-33, Amarion Hobson 2-24-1 TD, Squirt Pickens 2-17, Karsen Burgess 1-8, Brody Parlow 1-7, Gabe Dupree 1-4, Team 70-1,124. **Opponents 75-980.**

**Interceptions: CC** – Demo Pickens 3-49, Dupree 2-55-1 TD, Walker 2-47, Woods 1-12, Jake Knox 1-10, Randle Perry 1-8, Greenhill 1-0, Ian Greenberg 1-0, **Team 12-181-1 TD. Opponents 6-160-2 TD.**

**Kickoff Returns-Yards: CC** – Demo Pickens 16-497-2 TD, Squirt Pickens 9-191, Luke Beaird 1-8, **Team 26-696-2 TD. Opponents 25-651-1 TD.**

**Punt Returns-Yards: CC** – Demo Pickens 8-103, Team 8-103. **Opponents 9-167-1 TD.**

**Total Scrimmage Plays-Yards: CC 430-2,572. Opponents 446-2,603.**

**First Downs: CC 91, Opponents 104.**

**Fumbles-Lost: CC 16-5, Opponents 28-11.**

**Penalties-Yards: CC 40-312, Opponents 72-542.**

**Punts-Yards: CC** – Avery Hurst 19-729-38.4. **Opponents 24-830-34.6.**

Points (TD-2PC-XP-FG-P): Woods 14-1-0-0-86, Greenhill 7-0-0-0-42, Hurst 0-0-28-2-34, Demo Pickens 4-0-0-0-24, Walker 3-1-0-0-20, Hobson 2-0-0-0-12, Burgess 2-0-0-0-12, Dupree 1-0-0-0-6, **Team 33-2-28-2-236. Opponents 23-4-11-3-166.**



**Above:** Crockett's Dre Walker (6) intercepted this pass by Haywood's Carson Graves (18) and returned it 37 yards to set up the game's first touchdown. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Above:** : That touchdown came when Amarion Hobson ran it in from 16 yards out on a counter play from a Wildcat formation snap to DK Woods, who handed it off to Hobson. Randle Perry (50) and Nolen Turner (54) helped pave the way to the score with their blocks. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** : After his score, Amarion Hobson (4) got the traditional airlift from lineman Carson Bridger to celebrate. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below:** : ... and Crockett flagbearer George Goldsby, who couldn't have been much pinker as he leads the Cavaliers onto the field. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Friday's game was a "Pink-Out" to raise awareness of the fight against cancer. Beautifully modeling the night's theme was the Crockett cheer squad ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** The Cavalier defense faced a tough task all night, trying to stop a Haywood offense with several potent weapons. Here the Cavs converge to stop Tomcat running back Kemonte Williams, with several tacklers lending a helping hand: Jake Knox (35), Nolen Turner (54), DK Woods (32), Brooks Harris (73), Dre Walker (6), and Gabe Dupree (29). (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Cavalier head coach Kevin Ward paces the sidelines prior to the beginning of the third quarter, proud of his squad for playing the favored Tomcats to a first-half tie. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Above:** Crockett's second touchdown of the night showcased the pure power running of DK Woods (32), who literally drags a tackler into the end zone as teammates Dre Walker (6), Joshua Simmons (78), Austin Carroll (56), Jake Knox (35), and Carson Bridger (79) clear a path for him. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** ... and finally spins all the way around to secure the touchdown as Austin Carroll (56) makes the call for the officials. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Nolen Turner (54) picked up this fumble recovery from Haywood quarterback Carson Graves on the final play of the first half as DK Woods (32) and Randle Perry (50) provide assistance. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Right:** The Crockett Marching Cavaliers put on another outstanding performance of their competition show "Glitch" at halftime. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** DK Woods (32) crosses the goal line still dragging his initial tackler as he prepares to take another hit from a Tomcat defender ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** This week's "traditional" Melanie Meza photo op was a bit more complicated, including a pyramid and a couple more friends getting involved: Kinzey Hutchison is apparently still getting dressed (background left), Zoey Burselon is not sure which way to turn, Lexie Baird and Kennedy Henning are forming the base, Gracie Gaines is the throne, Meza is the queen, and Auriana Taylor is creating a little mischief to the side. (Photo by Ron Barry)







**Above:** Watching the band perform at halftime from the sideline bench area are (from left) Marlee Kellough, photographer extraordinaire and basketball manager Kinlee Walker, Mia Grace Simmons, Melanie Meza, and Maddie Moore. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** Crockett's fourth-quarter highlight came when wide receiver Kris Phillips -- catching his first pass of the season -- turned it into a 61-yard gain by turning on the jets. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below:** The brightest moment of the third period for Crockett was this 36-yard run by Amaron Hobson (4), following the blocking of Dre Walker (6). Hobson scored two touchdowns for the Cavaliers. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Haywood's sensational Caden Harris (1) looks back to see how far ahead he is of his nearest pursuer as Tomcat teammate Earvin Jones (6) leads the way to the end zone on this 90-yard punt return for a touchdown. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Things generally went so bad for Crockett in the second half that even apparent fumble recoveries disappeared. After Amaron Hobson knocked this ball loose from Tomcat quarterback Carson Graves, Crockett linebacker Jake Knox (35) has a direct line to pick it up and go, as Nolen Turner (54), Austin Carroll (56), and Ian Greenberg (19) get ready to escort him in that direction, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below:** ... only to have Graves roll over from the tackle by Hobson and take the ball right back away from Knox before he could begin his run. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Left:** The play that turned the game around came early in the third quarter when Haywood's Jeffery Parker (52) snared a short interception as Ben Burgess (10, on ground) was hit as he threw, returning the pick 54 yards for the go-ahead score. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** DK Woods (32) applies this stiff-arm to Haywood's Jaden Butler (11) near the end of his 38-yard run that set up Crockett's third touchdown. Woods had 118 yards rushing on 21 carries. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** The power displayed by both teams in the contest was extraordinary, illustrated here as Crockett's Dre Walker (6) churns to get into the end zone, but is prevented by this determined Tomcat tackler. (Photo by Ron Barry)

