

CROCKETT MISTAKES SEND CAVALIER FOOTBALLERS TUMBLING OUT OF PLAYOFFS



Above: When the final horn sounded, that was it for the 2024 Crockett football season -- and unfortunately, for the cheer career of seniors Maddie Moore (left) and Kylee Garrett, who have been two of the cheer squads brightest ambassadors for several years. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

If shooting yourself in the foot were an Olympic sport, it's likely that the Crockett County football team would be standing on all three levels of the awards podium after Friday night's playoff loss to Dyer County.

"You simply cannot make the amount of mistakes we made and expect to beat a good football team like Dyer County," said Cavalier head football coach Kevin Ward. "I'm not down on my guys. The effort was there -- I don't question that a bit. But this is twice we've had an opportunity to beat this team, and it just didn't happen. I think we're pretty evenly matched, but our mistakes just killed us."

Here's a chronological listing of what Ward was talking about:

1. On their opening possession -- with a first-and-goal at the Choctaw three, and even then getting to the one on first down due to a pair of half-the-distance penalties against Dyer -- the Cavs couldn't punch it into the end zone. A run gained nothing before direct snaps were dropped on the next two plays by two different players, losing eight yards and forcing Crockett to settle for a 26-yard field goal by Avery Hurst with 3:57 remaining in the first quarter.

Earlier in that drive, the Cavs' longest run of the night -- a 60-yarder by DK Woods -- was called back because of a Crockett hold.

2. On the Choctaws' ensuing possession, Crockett was doing a decent job of stopping Dyer County running back Ja'bari Livingston -- but couldn't slow down his running mate Korey Taylor. Taylor broke off three double-digit yardage gains and then converted a fourth-down rush to set up Livingston's one-yard touchdown plunge at the 9:15 of the second period. Dyer now led 7-3.

3. When the Cavs regained the ball, Dre Walker scampered 51 yards to give Crockett a first-and-goal at the Dyer 10. Quarterback Ben Burgess ran it to the four, but then a stuffed run and a poorly-executed swing pass play combined to lose seven yards. Even after another Choctaw encroachment infraction, the Cavs had to bring Hurst back out for the 23-yard field goal that made it 7-6 with 5:48 before intermission.

4. Crockett received a huge break when Dyer County receiver Jamin Gauldin -- on a fourth-down catch that would have given the hosts a first-and-goal at the Cav one -- fumbled the ball just inside the end zone pylon for a touchback, giving the Cavs the ball back at the 20. Deuce Greenhill promptly took a direct snap and raced 37 yards with less than a minute to go, and hurried to the line to spike the ball to kill the clock. But rather than try a similar Wildcat formation play, Burgess returned to the shotgun snap and Crockett went for a deep route pass. Dyer's Everett Kuykendall intercepted the badly underthrown ball to secure the Choctaws' 7-6 halftime edge.

5. Crockett would receive the ball on the second-half kickoff, but the Choctaws employed a bouncing onside kick that clanked off a Cav receiver and was recovered quickly by the hosts. Barely a minute later, Taylor zoomed for a 35-yard touchdown run, and Dyer held a 14-6 advantage.

6. The Choctaws then executed a perfectly placed pooch kick on the ensuing kickoff and only a diving cover-up by a hustling Demo Pickens saved yet another turnover. A fumble on the next play cost Crockett five yards before Greenhill erased some of the Cav frustrations by taking a quick Burgess swing pass and jetting 88 yards through and past the Dyer defense for a touchdown. When Squirt Pickens dove in on another short throw for the two-point conversion, the game was tied at 14-14 despite all the Cavalier mistakes.

7. Crockett allowed Taylor to continue to escape its tacklers, while Dyer also added quick slant pass completions from Landon Daniels to Devin Hayward for 11 and 12 yards for key first downs. Taylor finished off a 65-yard drive by racing in from 24 yards out and giving the hosts a 21-14 lead with 5:20 to play in the third quarter.

8. The Cavs drove it to the Dyer 24 and faced a fourth-and-inches situation on the first play of the final period. Crockett tried a trick play with a quick snap to the upback rather than the quarterback, but it ricocheted off his shin and he could do nothing but fall on it for a two-yard loss, ending the possession.

9. At that point Dyer County decided to participate in the comedy of errors. After Crockett's defense stiffened, forcing a fourth-and-three at the Choctaw 43 -- and despite holding a lead again -- Dyer attempted a fake punt, with the snap going to the upback. He dropped it and had to fall on it for a three-yard loss.

10. Crockett was now in business at the Choctaw 40 with 8:05 remaining in the game. And... the business went bankrupt. The Cavs fumbled another snap exchange, which was recovered by Dyer's Anthony Jiminez. That one was the backbreaker, as Daniels eventually found Kuykendall open behind Crockett's secondary for a 20-yard touchdown pass for a 28-14 edge with 5:12 to go.

11. But there was still enough time for Cavalier mistakes. Even after a 22-yard kickoff return by Gabe Dupree gave Crockett good field position – and even after that field position was bettered by two major penalties against the Choctaws – Crockett fumbled it right back to Dyer at the 19.

12. The Cavs got the ball back before the game ended for one last chance – and promptly had another badly underthrown pass intercepted by Kuykendall. Interestingly, Kuykendall caught five passes in the contest: three from his own quarterback, and two from Crockett's. Dyer County ran 65 offensive plays for 343 yards, taking advantage of the Cav miscues.

"I hope the players we have coming back next season will think about how this feels right now," Ward said, "because this Dyer team – as good as it is – didn't really beat us tonight. We beat ourselves. If we want to keep advancing in the playoffs next year, we have to clean up these types of things. You just can't beat good teams when you make loads of mistakes – and you're going to face good teams in the playoffs."

Crockett finished the season with an 8-4 record. Woods finished his sophomore season with 1,124 rushing yards and 18 touchdowns, and Greenhill – with 457 yards rushing (on a 10.2 yards-per-carry average) and 600 yards receiving (23.1 yards per catch) – closed out his senior year eclipsing 1,000 yards in total offense.

In 2025, the Cavaliers will compete in a newly-realigned Region 7-4A, facing Jackson North Side, Jackson South Side, Hardin County, Chester County, Lexington, South Gibson, and Dyer County.

Final Game Statistics

Rushes-Yards: CC – Dre Walker 3-57, Deuce Greenhill 6-43, Ben Burgess 7-13, DK Woods 7-9, Amarion Hobson 1-8, **Team 24-130. DYER** – Korey Taylor 12-120-2 TD, Ja'bari Livingston 26-94-1 TD, Pereon Isom 9-29, Landon Daniels 4-0, Devin Hayward 1-(-3), **Team 52-240.**

Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC – Burgess 7-15-144-2, Greenhill 0-1-0-0, **Team 7-11-144-2. DYER** – Daniels 10-13-103-0, **Team 10-13-103-0.**

Receptions-Yards: CC – Greenhill 3-83-1 TD, Woods 2-47, Walker 1-9, Karsen Burgess 1-5. **DYER** – Everett Kuykendall 3-47-1 TD, Hayward 2-23, Jamin Gauldin 3-19, Kaleb Mahome 2-14.

Interceptions: CC – None. **DYER** – Kuykendall 2-0.

Kickoff Returns-Yards: CC – Squirt Pickens 2-39, Gabe Dupree 1-22, Team 3-61. **DYER** – None.

Punt Returns-Yards: CC – None. **DYER** – None.

Total Scrimmage Plays-Yards: CC 40-174, DYER 65-343.

First Downs: CC 7, DYER 18.

Fumbles-Lost: CC 7-3, DYER 2-1.

Penalties-Yards: CC 5-35, DYER 11-82.

Punts-Yards: CC – None. **DYER** – Ian Tittle 2-83-41.5.

Points (TD-2PC-XP-FG-P): Greenhill 1-0-0-0-6, Avery Hurst 0-0-0-2-6, Squirt Pickens 0-1-0-0-2, **Team 1-1-0-2-14. DYER** – 4-0-4-0-28.

Final Season Statistics (Record: 8-4; Region 2-2)

Rushes-Yards: CC – DK Woods 181-1,124, Deuce Greenhill 45-457, Amarion Hobson 16-120, Demo Pickens 17-103, Gabe Dupree 24-88, Dre Walker 8-77, Khalan Thomas 5-40, Travis Cork 1-1, DJ Forrest 2-0, Kris Phillips 1-(-3), Ben Burgess 83-(-27), bad snaps 2-(-37), **Team 385-1,943. Opponents 418-2,158.**

Passing (Comp-Att-Yds-Int): CC – Burgess 94-171-1,481-9, Phillips 1-1-27-0, Greenhill 0-1-0-0, **Team 95-173-1,508-9. Opponents 93-174-1,195-16.**

Receptions-Yards: CC – Deuce Greenhill 26-600-5 TD, Dre Walker 31-468-5 TD, Demo Pickens 14-186-2 TD, DK Woods 10-92, Kris Phillips 1-61, Karsen Burgess 5-40, Amarion Hobson 3-24-1 TD, Squirt Pickens 2-17, Laithon Bonds 1-9, Brody Parlow 1-7, Gabe Dupree 1-4, **Team 95-1,508. Opponents 93-1,195.**

Interceptions: CC – Dupree 3-55-1 TD, Demo Pickens 3-49, Walker 2-47, Greenhill 2-2, Ian Greenberg 2-0, Woods 1-12, Jake Knox 1-10, Randle Perry 1-8, Hobson 1-0, **Team 16-183-1 TD. Opponents 9-160-2 TD.**

Kickoff Returns-Yards: CC – Demo Pickens 17-514-2 TD, Squirt Pickens 12-249, Greenhill 1-80-1 TD, Dupree 1-22, Luke Beaird 1-8, **Team 33-873-3 TD. Opponents 31-752-1 TD.**

Punt Returns-Yards: CC – Demo Pickens 9-129, **Team 9-129. Opponents 10-168-1 TD.**

Total Scrimmage Plays-Yards: CC 556-3,351. Opponents 590-3,353.

First Downs: CC 114, Opponents 139.

Fumbles-Lost: CC 27-8, Opponents 33-13. Penalties-Yards: CC 58-442, Opponents 97-719.

Punts-Yards: CC – Avery Hurst 22-848-38.5. **Opponents 33-1,114-33.8.**

Points (TD-2PC-XP-FG-P): Woods 18-1-0-0-110, Greenhill 10-0-0-0-60, Hurst 0-0-36-6-54, Walker 5-1-0-0-32, Demo Pickens 4-0-0-0-24, Hobson 2-0-0-0-12, Burgess 2-0-0-0-12, Dupree 1-0-0-0-6, Thomas 1-0-0-0-6 Squirt Pickens 0-1-0-0-2, **Team 43-3-36-6-318. Opponents 29-5-15-3-208.**



Left: Deuce Greenhill (7) -- getting blocks from Randle Perry (50), Travis Cork (72), Amarion Hobson (4), and Karsen Burgess (2) -- looks for daylight on one of his six carries Friday night against Dyer County. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: DK Woods (32) tries to power through an ankle tackle by Dyer County as Carson Bridger and Brooks Harris (73) provide interference. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: The Cavaliers would have been shut out in the first half if not for the accurate leg of senior kicker Avery Hurst (85), who booted two field goals out of the hold of Kris Phillips (16). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett got a huge break just before halftime when Dyer County's Jamin Gauldin (1) -- fighting to get out of the hold of Squirt Pickens (23) near the goal line -- lost control of the ball and fumbled it into the end zone and out of bounds, giving possession back to the Cavs. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Amaron Hobson (4) and Nolen Turner (54) combine to make the stop on the Choctaws' Ja'bari Livingston, who gained 206 yards the first time the teams met. Friday night, Crockett held him to 94. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Prior to the team's pre-game entrance, the famous Melanie Meza stunt troupe -- (top to bottom) Meza, Gracie Gaines, Kennedy Henning, and Lexie Beaird -- struck this creative pose. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Quarterback Ben Burgess (10) got this pass off just in time, and DK Woods turned the short screen into a 44-yard first-quarter gain. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Crockett's Deuce Greenhill (7) and Ian Greenberg (19) have Dyer County receiver Jamin Gauldin (1) corralled after catching a swing pass. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Although the Cavalier defense did a respectable job against Ja'bari Livingston, they were much less successful containing Korey Taylor (24), seen here trying to speed past Jake Knox (35) and Garner Brown (67). Taylor scored twice and racked up 120 yards on just 12 carries. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett cheerleader Kinzey Hutchison managed to maintain a smile despite the cold temperature and the scoreboard outcome. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: It often takes a handful of tacklers to get Crockett's DK Woods to the ground. But here -- count 'em -- there are fully 10 Cavalier defenders involved in bringing down Dyer County's Ja'bari Livingston: (from left) Carson Bridger (79), Amarion Hobson (4), Jake Knox (35), DK Woods (32), Nolen Turner (54), Deuce Greenhill (7), Demo Pickens (3), Dre Walker (6), Squirt Pickens (23), and Ian Greenberg (19). (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... on his way to producing an 88-yard touchdown reception in the third quarter. The play gave Greenhill an even 600 receiving yards for the season, averaging a stunning 23.1 yards per catch. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: The Cavalier offensive highlight of the night came when Ben Burgess dropped a short dump pass near the line of scrimmage to Deuce Greenhill (7), who soon was at full speed ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Following Deuce Greenhill's touchdown, Squirt Pickens (23) gathered in this quick pass from Ben Burgess (10) and dove over the goal line for a two-point conversion, deadlocking the game at 14-all. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: The cold weather brought out the hot chocolate, and it didn't take long for Allyssa and Jersey to find it. Having their vocal cords sufficiently warmed, they proclaimed themselves to be Crockett's loudest fans Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: The Cavs' Nolen Turner (54) sneaks in behind Dyer County's wall of blockers to drop Ja'bari Livingston before he can get up a head of steam. Crockett's Dre Walker (6) is taking on the blockers. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Dyer County fans were howling about this pass interference call against the Choctaws, but this picture shows it's pretty obvious that Deuce Greenhill is being caressed before the ball arrives. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Although the Choctaws kept him in check for most of the night, DK Woods (32) never stopped fighting for yardage. Trying to help him shed some tacklers are Cav blockers Travis Cork (72), Carson Bridger (79), Dre Walker (6), Austin Carroll (56), and Brooks Harris (73). (Photo by Ron Barry)

