

MADDOX THREE-POINTER GIVES LADY CAVALIERS OVERTIME WIN OVER LEXINGTON



Above: With her coach looking over her right shoulder and her Mom behind the coach and in the stands -- and with teammates Kinlee Walker (left), Wesley Thornton, and Keeton Holyfield watching from the sidelines -- Jordyn Maddox sets to launch a shot. Her eventual three-pointer with 59 seconds left in overtime was the difference maker Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

From the opening tip Friday night, it was apparent Crockett County's Lady Cavaliers might be in for a close scrape against Lexington.

That's mostly because -- on that opening "tip" -- Crockett's center jumper Jordyn Maddox got scraped across the face by her counterpart from Lexington, who had swung and missed the ball. For the rest of the game, the left eye of Maddox was reddening and darkening.

Fortunately, it never swelled shut, because Maddox needed both eyes to zero in on a top-of-the-key three pointer with just 59 seconds left in overtime to break a 49-49 tie and give Crockett the decisive points in a hard-fought 53-50 victory in its home opener.

Lexington's boys prevailed 55-45 in the nightcap of the doubleheader, but not before an undermanned Cavalier roster put up quite a fight, sparked by a 22-point, multi-rebound effort by Cade Freeman.

Coach Kayla Irvin's Lady Cavs, after overcoming an early deficit (10-8 with 3:12 left in the opening quarter), looked like they had righted the ship when sophomore point guard Gabby Bursey nailed back-to-back three-pointers to help the hosts acquire a 16-12 edge. That margin expanded to a relatively comfortable 29-21 advantage at halftime.

After that? "Wasn't very pretty, was it?" Irvin joked after the contest.

While Crockett maintained the lead for virtually the entire second half, Lexington got within a basket (37-35) at the 7:12 mark of the fourth quarter. From that point, the Lady Cavs never led by more than four points. The teams kept going back-and-forth.

Maddox hit a shot to make it 41-37 with 3:19 to play. The Lady Tigers answered with a couple of Holly Bartholomew free throws -- the bulk of Lexington's second-half offense -- until Maddox scored again on a perfect assist from Karlee Castellaw at the 2:10 mark for a 45-41 edge.

Bartholomew tallied again a minute later to make it 45-43, and Crockett went into keep-away mode with ball control until 20.5 seconds remained, when Castellaw was intentionally fouled -- perhaps a little too enthusiastically -- and the officials awarded the Lady Cavs two free throws and ensuing possession of the ball.

Castellaw -- one of Crockett's better shooters normally -- watched both of her efforts bounce off the back rim, leaving the score at 45-43. The Lady Cavs inbounded and managed to knock eight more seconds off the clock before Maddox -- Crockett's best free throw shooter -- was fouled with just 12.9 left to play.

Unbelievably, she also missed both of her free throws, giving Lexington a final chance. Guarding against a potential game-winning three-pointer, the Lady Cav defense allowed Lexy Cooper to sneak in close to the basket, receive a last-second pass, and toss up a hurried short shot. Cooper had not scored all night -- but this one went in just before the buzzer sounded. 45-45. Overtime.

Four minutes went up on the clock. Six seconds into it, Crockett's Halle Holyfield made one of two free throws, and the Lady Cavs led again. Thirty seconds later, Bartholomew -- who hit 15 of 18 free throws in the game, all but one after the half -- swished a pair to give Lexington its first advantage since the opening quarter.

At the 3:08 mark, Crockett's Amaria Walker worked a power move inside, banked in the shot, and got fouled. She hit the free throw, and the Lady Cavs were back up 49-47. Bartholomew, relentlessly driving through defensive traffic, drew another foul and netted both shots to tie it up again with just 2:19 remaining.

Both teams committed turnover in the next minute, but with 59 seconds on the clock, Maddox got open at the top of the key and confidently drilled in a three-pointer for a 52-49 Crockett margin.

Naturally, Bartholomew got herself fouled on the ensuing possession and promptly nailed the first free throw. She missed the second -- perhaps purposely in hopes of a Lexington rebound -- but Crockett came away with it and Maddox was subsequently fouled again. She made one of two for a 53-50 lead with 33 seconds to go, and the visitors couldn't mount a successful scoring threat in the remaining time.

"I'm so proud of the way our girls fought and fought on a night when things weren't going well," Irvin said. "I have to remind myself that we still have a lot of players who are inexperienced in the roles they're in, and I have to be patient as they learn. But even with that, to see them step up and grind this one out when it looked like it might slip away – well, I can't ask more of them than that. We have a lot of stuff to clean up, but we'll learn and be better for it. I love the way these girls are willing to be coached."

Maddox led Crockett's scoring with 17 and also pulled down nine rebounds, while Walker posted a double-double with 14 points and 10 boards. Bursey, who hit four treys in the contest, scored 16 points and made five steals for the winners. Bartholomew finished with 23 points for Lexington.

In the second game of the doubleheader, Coach Rick Rudesill's Cavs – still with a roster in transition – jumped to a surprising 8-0 lead in the game's first three minutes, but it took less than three more for Lexington to move ahead 10-8 and slowly stretch the margin to 29-19 by the intermission.

Lexington then began to pull away early in the third period, but Freeman – playing an inspired, hustling game – kept the Cavs close long enough for Rudesill to go to his bench and insert recently arrived football players DK Woods, Squirt Pickens, and Amaron Hobson.

Working with Freeman – whose hustle was contagious – they helped fuel a rally that got Crockett back within eight (40-32) with 6:32 remaining in the game. Woods scored eight points in the final quarter alone, but in the end, the play of Lexington's Donovan Belew was too much to overcome.

Belew, who scored 37 points in the Tigers' previous game, added 24 in this one to pace the Lexington attack. Jakob Davis netted 10 in support.

Backing Freeman's 22 for Crockett were Woods with eight and Kevin Pledge with six.

Both Crockett teams will host Trenton Peabody Tuesday night in a 6:00 twin bill.

GIRLS GAME #2 – NOV 22 (in overtime)

Crockett (53) – Jordyn Maddox 17, Gabby Bursey 16, Amaria Walker 14, Halle Holyfield 4, Torey Savage 2, Karlee Castellaw 0, Keeton Holyfield 0, Wesley Thornton 0, TEAM 19 FG, 10-20 FT. 3-Pointers: Bursey 4, Maddox 1. Record: 2-0.

Lexington (50) – Holly Bartholomew 23, Cara Roach 10, Kadence McKnight 8, Jada Transor 4, Millie Davis 3, Lexy Cooper 2, Mylee Stanford 0, Brinlee Justice 0, TEAM 14 FG, 19-22 FT. 3-Pointers: Roach 2, Davis 1.

BOYS GAME #2 – NOV 22

Crockett (45) – Cade Freeman 22, DK Woods 8, Kevin Pledge 6, Grayson Lambert 3, Andre Garduno 2, Cortland Reddick 2, Squirt Pickens 1, Jayden Frye 1, Preston Lambert 0, Karson Kail 0, TEAM 17 FG, 9-15 FT. 3-Pointers – Freeman 1, G Lambert 1. Record: 0-2.

Lexington (55) – Donovan Belew 24, Jakob Davis 10, Grant Patterson 8, Marquan Talley 4, Andrew Pearson 3, Daniel Villatoro 3, Elye Pearson 2, Braxton Cox 1, TEAM 22 FG, 9-23 FT. 3-Pointers – Villatoro 1, Patterson 1.



Above: Crockett's Jordyn Maddox gets raked across the face on the game's opening jump ball, but got her revenge in overtime with the game-winning three-pointer. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Amaria Walker posted a double-double (14 points, 10 rebounds) and had a huge three-point play ("and one") in the overtime to help down Lexington. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett's Halle Holyfield (20) had her hands full trying to stop Lexington's Holly Bartholomew, whose relentless drives to the basket produced 18 free throws in the game (she made 15). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Sophomore point guard Gabby Bursey tries to save a ball from going out of bounds, but couldn't quite achieve her goal. Instead, she made four three-pointers and scored 16 points. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: It was Jersey Night for the Cavalier Craziest student section, and this quintet kept the gym rocking. From left are Callan Willis (Celtics), Sadie Hoover (Magic), Ella Cate Haynes (a sweet alternate Braves Acuna jersey), Maddie Moore (Rockets), and Izzy Yearwood (Titans). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: This is the play that drew an intentional flagrant foul call against Lexington's Holly Bartholomew (4) with 20.5 seconds left in regulation when she shoved Crockett's Karlee Castellaw toward the sidelines. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Jordyn Maddox (13), her left eye already darkening from the swipe on the opening tip, drew a lot of attention from the Lady Tiger defense, but still scored 17 points. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Lady Cavalier Coach Kayla Irvin glances up at the scoreboard as the seconds tick away in regulation time Friday night against Lexington. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Karlee Castellaw battles for a ball on the floor against a pair of Lexington players. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Three Lady Cavs -- Keeton Holyfield, Torey Savage, and Gabby Bursey -- converge to stop this Lady Tiger drive to the basket. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Amaria Walker steps to the free throw to complete her huge "and-one" play in the overtime period. Walker hit six of seven free throws in the game. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Halle Holyfield looks for an open teammate in the fading seconds of the fourth quarter as Crockett tries to run out the clock while guarding a slim lead. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Gabby Bursey tries to drive around Lexington's Kadence McKnight (22) in Friday night's clash. Bursey made four three-pointers in the game and had five steals defensively. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: The two offensive stars of the nightcap -- Lexington's Donovan Belew and Crockett's Cade Freeman -- found themselves squaring off early in the contest. Belew finished with 24 and Freeman with a career-high 22. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jayden Frye perhaps got a little overly optimistic on this shot attempt, but did draw a foul and get some free throws. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Squirt Pickens -- driving past Lexington's Daniel Villatoro here -- was part of the rally-producing unit used by Coach Rick Rudesill in the fourth period. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: DK Woods helped spark a late rally that brought Crockett to within eight points in the fourth quarter, but it wasn't quite enough to catch the Tigers. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Crockett's Andre Garduno took his turn trying to defend Lexington's Donovan Belew. Garduno and teammates were 13 points better than the last opponent the Tigers faced. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Kevin Pledge prepares to drive around his defender on the baseline to see what he can create in Friday night's action. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Preston Lambert (3) looks out toward the key to fool his defender before whipping a pass inside to DK Woods, the imposing figure in the foreground. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Squirt Pickens splits a couple of Lexington defenders with this drive to the hoop. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: But it was Cade Freeman's night for the Cavaliers, driving here for a layup as Preston Lambert positions for a rebound ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: ... and later in the game, on his way to a 22-point night, Cade Freeman drives past this Tiger defender for a pull-up jumper. (Photo by Ron Barry)

