

"FED UP" MOMENTS PRODUCE HOOP DOUBLEHEADER SWEEP OF MCNAIRY CENTRAL



Above: Preston Lambert goes up for an easy bucket in the early going against the Golden Tide Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

Crockett County's head basketball coaches Kayla Irvin and Rick Rudesill hit their boiling points at different times Saturday, yet showed there are various methods to find success when none is readily apparent.

Playing a weekend matinee doubleheader against visiting McNairy Central, Irvin's undefeated Lady Cavaliers tipped off first against the unbeaten Lady Bobcats. Perhaps when your team is 5-0, you can show a little more patience.

But by the middle of the fourth quarter – after painfully watching her team get outhustled and outscrapped for 27 minutes, which is THE cardinal sin in IrvinWorld – a timeout was in order for Crockett's coach to get something off her chest.

"I told them there will be days when we may not play well," Irvin said. "I told them there will be days when some breaks go against us. Those things I can live with. But we will NOT be outworked. I had just watched two plays where a loose ball or rebound was on the floor, and McNairy's girls dove on it while we just watched. It had been going on all day."

Miraculously, despite the Lady Cavs' subpar effort, they were still within a possession (35-38) when Irvin called the timeout with 4:49 remaining in the game.

When play resumed, Crockett had the ball and was patiently working for a shot. When it was finally taken, it missed its mark, and McNairy rebounded near the basket. Suddenly, the Lady Cavs' Karlee Castellaw zipped into the lane, somehow worked her arms around the basketball without fouling, and powerfully wrenched it from the Lady Bobcat rebounder with such force that it drew an audible gasp from the crowd and sent the McNairy player flailing for a few feet.

It was the turning point of the contest. Castellaw eventually buried a three-pointer from the left wing to tie the game at 38-38 with 3:38 left on the clock, and the Lady Cavs had new life and new energy.

While the visitors quickly responded with a Brooklyn Hopkins basket to go back in front 40-38, Crockett needed just 10 seconds to tie it again when Jordyn Maddox flipped a perfect assist pass to Amaria Walker for a spin layup to make it 40-all. When McNairy's Neerajah Wade missed a shot on the other end, Walker grabbed the rebound, the Lady Cavs dribbled back upcourt, and Irvin called another timeout with 2:10 to go.

"We were pretty much all disgusted by then because we knew we'd been outhustled," Castellaw said. "That's the explanation for fighting for the ball on that rebound. Now that it was tied again, Coach told us the game would be decided by who wanted it more. And at that point, we wanted it more than they did."

"Karlee showed a lot of senior leadership today over the final minutes," Irvin said.

"She wrestled for that ball and got us fired up again, then hit that big three-pointer, and then directed the last two minutes just the way we would have wanted it. It was a carry-over of lessons learned from the Lexington game, when we didn't finish well, even though we won."

This time, Crockett worked the clock until Maddox managed to spin into the lane and bank in a short jumper at the 1:02 mark for the lead. After another Lady Bobcat missed, Castellaw was fouled – the first of three times she'd go to the line in the game's final 45 seconds – and she confidently drilled all six shots while McNairy never got on the scoreboard again.

Castellaw, who said playing a noon game "always makes me feel weird, like I'm either going to do really well or really poorly, and I don't know why," went the "really well" route and finished with 18 points to pace the Lady Cav offense. Maddox added 13 and Walker 12 for the hosts, who are now 6-0.

Just a night earlier, Irvin's squad picked up its fifth win when Walker played one of the best overall games of her career, scoring 14 points, grabbing 10 rebounds, passing for three assists, making two steals, and drawing two charges. Her effort overcame an off-night for several other players until they began to pull it together midway through the third quarter, outscoring Peabody 39-21 from that point to post a 58-32 triumph that was nowhere near as lopsided as it sounds.

Maddox scored 18 points, Castellaw eight, and Keeton Holyfield five to support Walker's performance.

Capping off Saturday's afternoon twin bill, Rudesill took much less time than Irvin to vent his frustration in the boys game, yanking his entire starting lineup off the floor after they'd failed to score for four minutes while McNairy jumped to a 7-0 advantage with a slow, deliberate, multi-pass offense.

Rudesill's new five broke the ice with a Kevin Pledge free throw at the 1:27 mark. And from that point on – with the Bobcats holding a 10-1 edge – the Cavaliers put on a clinic in defensive intensity and offensive execution, scoring an incredible 19 of the game's next 21 points to grab a 20-12 lead.

As the run progressed, Rudesill began mixing up his lineup to keep fresh legs on the court, and several players excelled. Early on, Pledge was carrying the load, scoring 12 second-period points alone as the hosts built a 30-15 halftime lead. Amazingly, after being outscored 12-4 in the opening quarter, Crockett lambasted McNairy 26-3 in the second frame.

Reed Leforgee tallied all nine of his points in another fourth-quarter spurt that included a pair of three-pointers. Jayden Frye also nailed a couple of treys during the flurry as the Cavs eventually rolled to a 59-35 victory, improving their record to 2-4.

Friday night, while Crockett fell 85-68 to unbeaten Peabody in Trenton, Rudesill's crew was actually within three points (56-53) during a third-period rally that almost completely erased a 20-point halftime deficit. The Cavs' reputation for outscraping their foes continued to gain traction with this performance, which featured 17 points from Cade Freeman, 12 from DK Woods, and eight from Preston Lambert.

In the end, Peabody prevailed due to the long-range shooting of Jamarcus Haynes, who canned six triples on his way to 25 points. The Golden Tide is 6-0 on the season, but have survived two major scares from Crockett.

Both Crockett teams return to the home court for games with Jackson North Side Monday night at 6:00 before journeying to Haywood Tuesday night.

GIRLS GAME #5 – DEC 6

Crockett (58) – Jordyn Maddox 18, Amaria Walker 14, Karlee Castellaw 8, Keeton Holyfield 5, Gabby Bursey 3, Audrey Whitby 3, Ellie Henderson 3, Halle Holyfield 2, Torey Savage 2, Nyah Cathey 0, TEAM 23 FG, 6-11 FT. 3-Pointers: Castellaw 1, Bursey 1, Maddox 1, Whitby 1, K Holyfield 1, Henderson 1. Record: 5-0.

Peabody (32) – Za'Kaysia Skinner 10, Ny'Asia Luten 6, Paislee Walls 5, Emyah Agnew 5, A'Nyah Ross 4, YaKira Kinsley 2, TEAM 11 FG, 5-10 FT. 3-Pointers: Skinner 2, Ross 1, Walls 1, Agnew 1. Record: 0-6.

GIRLS GAME #6 – DEC 7

Crockett (48) – Karlee Castellaw 18, Jordyn Maddox 13, Amaria Walker 12, Keeton Holyfield 3, Halle Holyfield 2, Gabby Bursey 0, Torey Savage 0, Ellie Henderson 0, TEAM 14 FG, 16-19 FT. 3-Pointers: Castellaw 3, K Holyfield 1. Record: 6-0.

McNairy Central (40) – Neerajah Wade 16, Bailee Shelton 9, Haylee Whitemore 7, Linlee Davidson 4, Anna Clayton 2, Brooklyn Hopkins 2, Carlin Gray 0, Jacelyn Barnes 0, Macee Gilbert 0, Carlee Shelton 0, Kenli Bingham 0, TEAM 17 FG, 2-7 FT. 3-Pointers: Wade 2, B Shelton 1, Davidson 1. Record: 5-1.

BOYS GAME #5 – DEC 6

Crockett (68) – Cade Freeman 17, DK Woods 12, Preston Lambert 8, Kevin Pledge 8, Zay Jones 8, Andre Garduno 6, Jayden Frye 5, Squirt Pickens 4, Grayson Lambert 0, TEAM 23 FG, 19-24 FT. 3-Pointers – Pickens 1, P Lambert 1, Freeman 1, Frye 1, Jones 1. Record: 1-4.

Peabody (85) – Jamarcus Haynes 25, Zay Jelks 15, Jemelvin Brooks 14, Ryder Patterson 10, Emmanuel Cannon 7, Onterio Agnew 6, Thomas Luten 4, Zay Skinner 2, Jayden Jennings 2, Noah Woolfork 0, TEAM 34 FG, 8-15 FT. 3-Pointers – Haynes 6, Brooks 2, Cannon 1. Record: 6-0.

BOYS GAME #6 – DEC 7

Crockett (59) – Kevin Pledge 15, Cade Freeman 10, Reed Leforgee 9, Jayden Frye 8, Squirt Pickens 7, Andre Garduno 4, Grayson Lambert 3, Nolen Turner 2, Zay Jones 1, DK Woods 0, Preston Lambert 0, Cortland Reddick 0, Karson Kail 0, Carson Webb 0, TEAM 20 FG, 12-15 FT. 3-Pointers – Frye 2, Leforgee 2, Pickens 1, G Lambert 1. Record: 2-4.

McNairy Central (35) – Konner Shelton 8, Jackson King 7, Case Stone 6, Jackson Price 4, Wyatt Manley 4, Ryder Plunk 2, Kylyn Allen 2, Josh Sain 2, Tyler Mangrum 0, Jasper Hickman 0, TEAM 14 FG, 3-5 FT. 3-Pointers – Shelton 2, Stone 2. Record: 3-3.



above: Crockett's Amaria Walker (25) blocks this layup attempt by Peabody's La'Kaysia Skinner (12), part of a defensive effort by the Lady Cavaliers that held the hosts to just two second-quarter points. Walker was Crockett's key player through the first three periods. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Cavalier forward DK Woods was a defensive inspiration Friday night, modeling the tough hustle he put on Peabody's Thomas Luten (1). (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Cade Freeman (13) maneuvers past this shirt grab by Peabody's Ryder Patterson to score two of his team-high 17 points for Crockett. The Cavs fell to the Golden Tide 85-68 despite a furious third-quarter rally that pulled Crockett within three points. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Halle Holyfield (20) drives in for a layup in the third quarter of Crockett's 58-32 win over Peabody. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Crockett's freshman cheerleader Kinlee Moore was enjoying the view from atop her center mount during a timeout of Friday night's boys game. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jordyn Maddox (13) fires a three-pointer on her way to a team-high 18 tallies in Crockett's win over Peabody Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Crockett's Zay Jones (25) chased down this Peabody fast break from behind and pinned this layup attempt against the backboard, preventing an easy Golden Tide score. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: While the Lady Cavaliers posted a 58-32 triumph, the win was not nearly as comfortable as the final margin indicates. Crockett needed a strong second half, which included eight points from Karlee Castellaw (2), who filled the point guard position during a stretch when the Lady Cavs made their biggest run. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Lady Cavalier Coach Kayla Irvin had seen about all the turnovers she could stand by halfway through the second period Friday night. During this timeout, she implored her club to start using their brains while they played. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: While Gabby Bursey and Jordyn Maddox (both in the foreground) try to chase down the ball, Crockett's Ellie Henderson -- who originally knocked the ball loose in a scramble -- peers over the shoulder of Peabody's Paislee Walls, from whom she'd ripped the ball away. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: While it looks like Crockett's Preston Lambert is being swallowed completely on this driving layup by Peabody defender Ryder Patterson, he somehow got the shot to go in ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: ... and even drew a foul on it. When Lambert completed the "and-one," Crockett had narrowed Peabody's once 20-point halftime margin to 56-53 with 2:29 remaining in the third quarter. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Squirt Pickens gets a breakaway bucket for Crockett during their second-half rally against Peabody Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: When Peabody's Paislee Walls (45) received a pass and initially spun toward the basket, there were three Lady Cavs waiting on her: Keeton Holyfield (15), Jordyn Maddox, and Ellie Henderson (30), forcing her to spin right back around and kick the ball back out. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Lady Cav point guard Gabby Bursey (4) looks like a quarterback about to hand off to a cutting teammate in Crockett's win over Peabody Friday night. Bursey netted a key three-point shot when the Lady Cavs finally began to pull away in the third period. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Crockett's Andre Garduno (24) tosses up a short jump hook over Peabody defender Jayden Jennings (20) in first-half action Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: DK Woods slides inside for two of his 12 points in Friday night's contest at Trenton. Woods, who continues to improve with each game, scored 10 of his points during Crockett's furious second-half rally. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: When Crockett's Amaria Walker made a steal and drove the length of the floor for a power layup Friday night, it drew this courtside seal of approval from teammates Audrey Whitby, Deonna Cole, Baylee Griggs, and Chloe Adkisson. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Cade Freeman powers inside for a bucket as Crockett stages its second-half rally against Peabody. Freeman netted 13 of his team-high 17 points in the second half. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Amaria Walker earned this refreshing drink during a timeout with her outstanding play that allowed the Lady Cavaliers to keep afloat until they began to pull things together in the second half. Behind Walker -- who scored 14 points -- is manager extraordinaire Kinlee Walker. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Cheering on the Crockett County teams Friday night was senior captain Zoey Burleson, with younger sister Eva behind her during this timeout encouragement. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Jordyn Maddox scored 10 of Crockett's 23 fourth-period points and finished with 18 for the game as the Lady Cavs improved to 5-0 on the season. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Zay Jones (25) drives around Peabody's Jemelvin Brooks (4) as he tries to initiate a quick basket in second-half action Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Karlee Castellaw was reduced to being a cheerleader after picking up two quick fouls in the first half, but that doesn't quench her spirit for rooting on her teammates. Castellaw got back on the floor and was one of the key components of the Lady Cavs' second-half run, scoring eight points and directing several fast breaks. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: All of Crockett County -- and most of the world, in all probability -- was celebrating the birthday Friday of Lady Cav assistant coach Tyler Gadlen. Gadlen hit the big 3-0 Friday and enjoyed the present of a Crockett victory. Team manager Kinlee Walker basks in the celebration in the background. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Audrey Whitby is already calling for three points from the bench area as Karlee Castellaw lets fly the shot that ties Saturday's game with McNairy Central at 38-38. Castellaw netted 18 points in the comeback win. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jordyn Maddox connects for the bucket that puts the Lady Cavs ahead Saturday 42-40 with only 1:02 left to play, setting the stage for Karlee Castellaw's free throw heroics. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: This agile up-and-under move by Amaria Walker is typical of her outstanding weekend performances, helping Crockett to victories over Peabody and McNairy Central. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Halle Holyfield is defensively all up in the grill of McNairy's Neerajah Wade in Saturday's battle of the unbeaten in Alamo. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Keeton Holyfield drilled a big three-pointer and made it difficult for McNairy to get the ball inside as the teams battled back-and-forth throughout the contest. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: With 44.5 seconds left in the game and Crockett clinging to a 42-40 lead, Karlee Castellaw steps to the foul line, closes her eyes, takes a deep breath of confidence, and proceeds to swish six straight free throws to ice the Lady Cavs' sixth triumph. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: "Who wants it more?" Coach Kayla Irvin asked her team in a timeout. Both of these players raised their hand, but in the end, only Amaria Walker was right. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jordyn Maddox works her way down the left baseline in transition during Saturday's nailbiter over McNairy Central. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Squirt Pickens (2) was darting everywhere like a waterbug for the Cavs Saturday, here driving for a layup unimpeded by the defender's grabbing of his arm. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Reed Leforgee contributed some solid minutes off the bench for Crockett Saturday, burying two three-pointers, this shot, and a free throw for nine points in the final quarter alone. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Lady Cav Coach Kayla Irvin crouches as she watches Saturday's action against McNairy Central, with her support staff -- assistants Brent Fronabarger and Tyler Gadlen, and senior manager Kinlee Walker -- solidly behind her. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Crockett's Kevin Pledge netted 12 second-quarter points to highlight the Cavs' 19-2 run that put them safely in front of McNairy Central Saturday. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: While Crockett's cheerleaders weren't officially on call for Saturday's matinee games, these two faithful cheer friends -- Carrington Smith and Gracie Gaines -- were in the stands to make some Cavalier noise. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Andre Garduno prepares to make a move around McNairy's Jackson King to score a bucket in Saturday's win over the Bobcats. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Grayson Lambert drops off a pass to Jayden Frye (foreground) in the victory over McNairy Saturday. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Cade Freeman, who led Crockett scorers with 17 points Friday night at Trenton, drops in a short jumper for two of his 10 points against McNairy Saturday. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Jayden Frye knocks down one of his two three-pointers as Crockett's impressive run against the Bobcats continues in the final period Saturday. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Nolen Turner got into the scoring column for Crockett Saturday with his first basket of the season. (Photo by Ron Barry)