

SECOND-HALF COLLAPSES DOOM CROCKETT BASKETBALL TEAMS AT GIBSON COUNTY



Above: Cade Freeman fires a successful three-pointer from the right corner in the opening half of Friday night's game with Gibson County, in which he scored 19 points. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

Chalk it up to Friday the 13th if you like. Weird things happen.

But – honestly – “weird” would be a charitable way to describe the second-half play of both Crockett County basketball teams Friday night against Gibson County in Dyer.

Both teams were sailing along – not shooting well, generally, but enjoying decent leads in their games – until the buzzer sounded to begin the second halves. Crockett's girls were up 23-17, and the boys held an even healthier 30-21 advantage.

The Lady Cavaliers only scored seven points in their third period, but thanks to the hosts also shooting bricks most of the time, still carried a 30-25 edge into the final stanza.

Crockett's boys – in a scenario as hard to explain as the mystery drones flying over New Jersey this month – only made one basket in the third quarter. They did not maintain their advantage, however, giving up 16 points to the Pioneers in the third to now trail 37-32.

Crockett's Jordyn Maddox hit a pair of free throws with just 1:42 remaining in the girls game to give the Lady Cavaliers a 38-35 lead. They would not score again.

A Kevin Pledge bucket with 6:34 left in the boys game pulled Crockett into a 37-37 tie, and a Preston Lambert field goal still had the Cavs within 48-44 with 3:09 on the clock. They would not score again.

The girls' downfall – in addition to an inexplicable shooting exhibition in which both starting guards failed to score, and even the players that did had subpar nights – was a poor ballhandling performance against Gibson County's full-court pressure. The Lady Cavs committed numerous turnovers, often dribbled into situations in which they could be trapped, and added enough mental mistakes to allow the host Lady Pioneers – who didn't play well themselves by any stretch of the imagination – to escape with a 43-38 victory.

Crockett's guys looked like they were about to blow Gibson County out of its own gymnasium in the first half, grabbing a 15-point lead at one point on a Jayden Frye basket. But in less than six-and-a-half minutes of the third period, the Pioneers had caught and passed the Cavs, who were suddenly shooting as if they'd been blindfolded.

On the defensive end, not a single Cavalier even attempted to take a charge against Gibson County's Kylan Finch, despite the fact he basically just roared straight toward the goal every time he touched the ball, most often completely out of control. He ended up with 20 points, and Gibson County won the contest 56-44.

Crockett played so poorly in the final half that it barely seems worth mentioning that the hosts shot 30 free throws to just eight for the Cavs. Since Crockett only made three of its charity tosses, it might not have mattered even if there were no discrepancy.

Maddox and Amaria Walker led the Lady Cavaliers in scoring with 15 and 12 points, respectively. Ironically for the Lady Pioneers, their fourth-quarter 18-8 advantage was largely fueled by point guard Akira Riding, who netted half of those points after failing to get into the scoring column during the first three periods. It was her basket with 56 seconds left – following a five-second violation on a Crockett dribbler – that gave the hosts the lead for the first time all night. Riding sealed the triumph with three free throws over the final 30 seconds as the Lady Cavs kept turning the ball over.

On a positive note, the target of being an undefeated team is now off the Crockett back, and the lessons learned from facing a tough pressing defense will hopefully pay off in the future.

As for the Cavaliers, Cade Freeman's 19 points led their scoring, but was in foul trouble late in large part because he picked up two charging violations on ill-advised races into traffic. Preston Lambert collected nine points for Crockett, with Frye and Pledge adding seven apiece. The Cavs are now 2-7.

Both Crockett teams hit the road again to Lexington Tuesday night before returning home Friday to face Chester County.



Above: Jayden Frye attempts to work his way past the defense of Gibson County's Kylan Finch during Friday night's game with Gibson County. (Photo by Ron Barry)

GIRLS GAME #9 – DEC 13

Crockett (38) – Jordan Maddox 15, Amaria Walker 12, Halle Holyfield 4, Ellie Henderson 4, Keeton Holyfield 3, Karlee Castellaw 0, Gabby Bursey 0, Torey Savage 0, TEAM 15 FG, 6-6 FT. 3-Pointers: Maddox 1, K Holyfield 1. Record: 8-1.

Gibson County (43) – Sania Reeves 14, Kailey Davidson 12, Akira Riding 9, Georgia Lannom 5, Emily Skinner 3, Jada Hart 0, Kaitlin Patterson 0, Jazmin Bailey 0, TEAM 13 FG, 12-20 FT. 3-Pointers: Davidson 4, Skinner 1. Record: 7-3.

BOYS GAME #9 – DEC 13

Crockett (44) – Cade Freeman 19, Preston Lambert 9, Kevin Pledge 7, Jayden Frye 7, Andre Garduno 2, Reed Leforgee 0, Grayson Lambert 0, Squirt Pickens 0, DK Woods 0, Cortland Reddick 0, Demo Pickens 0, TEAM 18 FG, 3-8 FT. 3-Pointers – Freeman 2, Frye 1. Record: 2-7.

Gibson County (56) – Kylan Finch 20, Isaiah DeBerry 14, Trajan Eddings 9, Dillon Reynolds 6, DeMarian Wright 5, Skylar Robertson 2, Coree Wells 0, Ryan Goad 0, TEAM 16 FG, 20-30 FT. 3-Pointers – Eddings 2. Record: 5-5.



Left: Crockett's Jordyn Maddox fires the ball back toward the lane after she and Karlee Castellaw sprang a double-team on Gibson County's Emily Skinner, knocking the ball loose. Maddox had the presence of mind to find an open teammate rather than waiting to be tied up. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Lady Cav Amaria Walker was also on the floor in this one, fighting for control of the ball with the Lady Pioneers' Sania Reeves. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Lexie Beaird cheers on the Crockettball basketball teams during Friday night's doubleheader with Gibson County at Dyer. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: When Amaria Walker received the ball in the post, Gibson County's defense would swarm on her, as it did with basically anyone in possession of the ball for Crockett. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Halle Holyfield puts up a shot against Gibson County's Kailey Davidson in Friday night's contest. Holyfield scored four points for the Lady Cavs. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Gabby Bursey tries to break through full-court pressure from Gibson County's Sania Reeves and Akira Riding. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Keeton Holyfield works for an inside shot in the second half of Crockett's duel with Gibson County. The Lady Cavs suffered their first defeat after eight season-opening wins. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Karlee Castellaw continued to battle for the title of Court Wrestling Queen, engaging in battle here with Gibson County's Akira Riding. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Jordyn Maddox, trying to see around imposing defender Sania Reeves, was Crockett's leading scorer with 15 points against the Lady Pioneers. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Cav forward Reed Leforgee is facing the wrath of five loud Gibson County cheerleaders, and his path to the basket is blocked by imposing Pioneer Isaiah DeBerry. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Andre Garduno (24) looks upcourt for an outlet pass receiver after snaring a rebound against Gibson County in Friday night's contest. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Cavalier point guard Squirt Pickens gets raked across the arm as he drives toward the basket in Friday night's matchup with Gibson County at Dyer. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Concern grows on the face of Crockett cheerleader Mia Grace Simmons as a once-healthy Cavalier lead begins to slip away at Gibson County Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's Preston Lambert gets this shot up to bring the Cavs within 48-44 with 3:09 remaining in Friday night's battle with Gibson County, but it was the last bucket the visitors would get. (Photo by Ron Barry)