

LADY CAVS NAB HUB CITY CLASSIC TITLE; FRYE BOOST CROCKETT BOYS OVER BRADFORD



Above: The only player in the game to reach double figures in scoring, Cade Freeman delivered the final decisive points for the Cavs in their 41-39 victory over Bradford. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

Kayla Irvin has been battling a severe case of vertigo for more than two weeks – but Monday afternoon it was her Crockett County Lady Cavaliers who were making Trinity Christian Academy's Lady Lions dizzy.

Riding outstanding second-half performances from tournament Most Valuable Player Jordyn Maddox and All-Tournament selection Karlee Castellaw, Crockett claimed the girls championship of the Hub City Classic at Liberty Tech in Jackson by defeating TCA 53-36.

The win capped a successful day of high school basketball for Crockett County. Playing in the Dynamix Christmas Classic in Martin, Coach Rick Rudesill's Cavaliers slipped past Bradford 41-39 when Jayden Frye drilled three consecutive three-pointers in the fourth quarter to set up a game-deciding bucket by Cade Freeman.

In the Hub City event – although finally on the mend from her bout with vertigo – Irvin wasn't feeling very well at halftime Monday afternoon, following a second quarter "nightmare" (her word) in which the Lady Lions were beating Crockett players to every loose ball and most of the rebounds –

while the Lady Cav offense floundered while Maddox and Castellaw were sitting next to Irvin with two fouls apiece. Point guard Gabby Bursey also had two, both from the first period.

As a result, Crockett went more than four minutes in that second quarter without scoring a point. Castellaw had given the Lady Cavs a 15-14 edge with a three-pointer to begin the frame, and Keeton Holyfield followed with a basket to extend the margin to 17-14 at the 6:59 mark of the period.

Crockett didn't score again, however, until Amaria Walker muscled inside for a successful shot with 2:27 left before the halftime break. But then the Lady Cavs didn't add another point before the intermission. Fortunately, TCA shot a horrible percentage as well, and held only a two-point lead (21-19) at the break.

Irvin admitted later she had to apologize for the tongue-lashing she provided in the locker room.

"I can't expect my kids to have poise out on the court if I can't even model it for them at halftime," she said after the game. "But the one thing that riles me more than anything is if another team is playing harder than we are. It's one thing to play poorly, but it's another thing entirely to get outhustled by your opponent. And in that second quarter nightmare, TCA outscrapped us completely. And I told my team we will NOT be outhustled by anybody."

Message received.

With Maddox, Castellaw, and Bursey all back on the floor, Crockett won the third quarter 20-10. Castellaw kicked off the comeback with a three-pointer, setting the stage for an eight-point run by Maddox, playing her most aggressive game of the season offensively.

The closest TCA got after that was 30-27, but then Holyfield – who contributed several quality minutes to the cause – tallied the next five Lady Cav points.

"When Jordyn is taking the ball to the rim, it opens up a whole world of opportunities for us," Irvin said. "She has that ability, and if she's cut off, she can pull up and hit a mid-range shot. It's a lost art in basketball today, but she can do it, and when she's aggressive like she was in this game, it just helps the others get open shots too."

Entering the fourth period with a 39-31 advantage, Crockett soon put the contest on ice. Castellaw slipped in for a layup, and following a Lady Lion bucket, drilled another three-pointer to put the Lady Cavs up 44-33. Maddox then drove for another score before Castellaw hit a pull-up 15-footer for a 48-34 edge.

Together, Maddox and Castellaw netted all 14 of Crockett's fourth-quarter points. For the game, Maddox had a game-high 20 points (16 in the final half) and Castellaw contributed 17 (11 in the second half), along with a slew of assists. By game's end, the two were feeding off each other like the former Golden State Warriors' "Splash Brothers."

"I'm so proud of the way the whole team bounced back in the second half," Irvin said. "They showed a lot of grit in doing that. It shows me they want to keep learning and improving, even in the middle of tough circumstances and against a good team that also plays a scrappy style. I love this group of kids."

Rylee Hidrogo paced TCA with nine points in the contest. Crockett improved to 13-1 for the season, while the Lady Lions fell to 10-4.

Earlier in the day at Martin, Crockett's boys were sailing along with a 21-10 halftime lead over Bradford. Preston Lambert netted five first-period points to ignite a 13-4 start for the Cavs, who then stretched the margin by a bucket in the second quarter.

In the third frame, however, it was all Bradford, as the Red Devils outpointed Rudesill's club 15-4 and tied the game entering the fourth. With the momentum having shifted, Bradford began to edge away until Frye – who had not yet scored in the game – proceeded to drain three straight three-pointers for the Cavs to even the count again.

When the game had less than a minute on the clock, Freeman – the only player in the contest to reach double figures, with 10 – slipped in the decisive two points to seal the win, Crockett's fifth in 14 starts. Supporting Freeman were Frye with nine and Lambert and Zay Jones with seven apiece. Jax Richardson and Brodie McDaniel each tallied nine for Bradford, which dropped to 9-3 on the season.

Both Crockett teams return home for a Friday night rematch with Gibson County at 6:00.

GIRLS GAME #14 – DEC 30

Crockett (53) – Jordyn Maddox 20, Karlee Castellaw 17, Keeton Holyfield 7, Amaria Walker 6, Gabby Burse 3, Ellie Henderson 0, Halle Holyfield 0, Torey Savage 0, TEAM 19 FG, 10-11 FT. 3-Pointers: Castellaw 3, Burse 1, K Holyfield 1. Record: 13-1.

Trinity Christian Academy (36) – Rylee Hidrogo 9, Annelise Friend 8, Tori Robinson 6, Ava Ingle 6, Mary Grace Cleek 5, Jenna Joyce 2, Annie Payne 0, Laney Williams 0, TEAM 11 FG, 12-18 FT. 3-Pointers: Hidrogo 2. Record: 10-4.

BOYS GAME #14 – DEC 30

Crockett (41) – Cade Freeman 10, Jayden Frye 9, Preston Lambert 7, Zay Jones 7, Squirt Pickens 3, Grayson Lambert 3, Andre Garduno 1, DK Woods 1, Reed Leforgee 0, Karson Kail 0, TEAM 15 FG, 6-12 FT. 3-Pointers – Frye 3, P Lambert 1, Pickens 1. Record: 5-9.

Bradford (39) – Jax Richardson 9, Brodie McDaniel 9, Carver Cates 8, Quacey Lewis 7, Jay Street 6, Trevor Harrington 0, Billy Carroll 0, Clark Gibson 0, TEAM 11 FG, 12-16 FT. 3-Pointers – Richardson 2, Street 1, Cates 1, McDaniel 1. Record: 9-3.



Above: Karlee Castellaw (2) directs Keeton Holyfield (15) to cut through the lane as she begins a weave around the TCA defense in Monday's contest. Castellaw netted 17 points. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Jordyn Maddox drives to the basket against the defense of TCA's Annelise Friend (33) in Monday afternoon's Hub City Classic championship game. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Keeton Holyfield -- who gave Crockett some hugely effective minutes in the title game -- launches a three-point shot over the outstretched arm of TCA's Ava Ingle. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Coach Kayla Irvin reacts enthusiastically after Jordyn Maddox drew a charge defending a TCA attack at the basket. Deonna Cole (behind Irvin) adds her approval. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Crockett's Halle Holyfield blocks the path of TCA's Tori Robinson in the opening half of Monday afternoon's championship game. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Amaria Walker works inside against the defense of TCA's Ava Ingle in the decisive third quarter of Monday's Crockett victory, bringing home the Hub City Classic championship. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Lady Cav point guard Gabby Bursey (4) ignites the transition game, splitting the defense of TCA's Jenna Joyce (5) and Rylee Hidrogo (25). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Crockett's Ellie Henderson awaits a potential rebound from an attempted free throw by TCA in Monday's Hub City Classic championship tilt. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Karlee Castellaw receives long-distance communication from the coaches during a stoppage in play in Monday's Hub City Classic championship game. Castellaw was an All-Tournament selection. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Jordyn Maddox (13) is off on another Crockett fast break in the third quarter against TCA defenders Annelise Friend (33), Annie Payne (2), and Laney Williams (15), on her way to a sparkling 20-point performance. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Amaria Walker receives a pass in the lane and prepares to spin past the double-team defense of TCA's Annie Payne (left) and Rylee Hidrogo (25). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Keeton Holyfield delivers a pass to an open teammate in the corner for a drive to the basket in Monday's win over TCA. Holyfield had seven key points in the triumph. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jordyn Maddox tallied eight straight Crockett points in the decisive third quarter and was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Far Left: Karlee Castellaw continued her red-hot outside shooting Monday, nailing this three-pointer over TCA's Annie Payne. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Karlee Castellaw and Jordyn Maddox -- who combined to outscore the entire TCA team 37-36 Monday -- receive their respective All-Tournament and MVP awards after the game. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Coach Kayla Irvin's Lady Cavaliers pose with the championship trophy of the Hub City Classic Monday evening, improving their season record to 13-1. (Photo by Melissa Holyfield)



Above: Jayden Frye nailed three consecutive three-point shots to deliver Crockett's Cavaliers from the brink of defeat Monday, keying a fourth-quarter comeback that secured a 41-39 win over Bradford in Martin. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Preston Lambert scored five first-period points to get Crockett off to a good start in Monday's Dynamix Christmas Classic game with Bradford. (Photo by Ron Barry)