

HOLE-DIGGING COSTS CROCKETT HOOPSTERS AGAIN IN TWIN BILL LOSS AT SOUTH GIBSON



Above: South Gibson's girls crushed Crockett County early by utilizing short pull-up jumpers in transition like this one from Karson Dunn (33), firing over the outstretched arm of Halle Holyfield (30). (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

If any local cemeteries need to employ some gravediggers, you might contact Crockett County High School. Their basketball teams have been digging holes for a week now.

For the second straight hoops doubleheader, Crockett's teams dug themselves into significant first-quarter holes and couldn't quite get out, with the Lady Cavaliers falling 50-38 and the Cav guys dropping a 69-58 decision to South Gibson County in the district play opener for each.

For Coach Kayla Irvin's girls, it was their third consecutive defeat after starting the season 13-1. And all three times, it was a full-court pressure defense from their opponent that made the difference.

The host Lady Hornets – now 16-4 on the year – blitzed the Lady Cavs 19-4 in the first quarter by draining a series of short pull-up jumpers in transition. It was 8-0 before Crockett's Jordyn Maddox finally got the visitors on the board, and it was 17-2 before Keeton Holyfield managed the next Lady Cav bucket.

Irvin's club kept plugging despite the shellshocked start, and somehow clawed their way back into it with six more points each from Maddox and Amaria Walker.

Crockett outgunned South Gibson 16-8 in the second period, finally drawing within 24-20 when Kira Bray scored on a putback with 1.4 seconds on the clock before intermission.

But the hosts quickly staged a virtual repeat of the first frame in the third, with Jade Reed tallying all nine of her points in the stanza. When a pair of three-balls from Ava Owens also fell through the netting, the Lady Hornets were back on top 40-27 entering Quarter #4.

Despite Maddox and Karlee Castellaw combining for 18 second-half points, Crockett never significantly shaved South Gibson's fourth-quarter advantage. The Lady Hornets not only put their visitors in a vise-grip with their frenetic defense, they also spread the points around on offense in an incredible balance.

Karson Dunn led the way with 10, while Jade Reed had nine, Faith Reed and Owens eight apiece, and Ivy Cianciolo and Trinity Johnson six each. Maddox produced a game-high 18 for Crockett with another gritty performance, and Castellaw added eight, including the team's only two three-pointers. Walker had six but was in early foul trouble, and no other Lady Cav contributed more than two points.

It was more of the same in the guys' matchup. South Gibson sprinted to a 23-11 edge in the first quarter before reserve Reed Leforgee led a Cavalier comeback in the second, netting seven points as Crockett drew within 31-24 at the break.

But South Gibson's Koen Thomas collected 16 of his game-high 26 points in the second half and the hosts steadily extended their lead until the Cavs' Jayden Frye got hot from downtown and almost single-handedly shot Crockett back to within seven (61-54) at one point in the fourth period, nailing four treys in the process.

The hosts maintained their advantage by hitting free throws down the stretch as Coach Rick Rudesill's crew extended the game interminably by fouling possession after possession, despite not making up any ground. The fourth quarter took nearly 30 minutes to play, most of it after three minutes remained on the clock.

Sam Tritt knocked down 18 points to support the 26-point effort from Thomas for South Gibson, which improved to 11-9. Frye led the Cavs with 14, all in the second half. Cade Freeman scored eight and Leforgee and Preston Lambert each added seven. Crockett slipped to 6-11 for the season.

Things don't get any easier when both Crockett squads resume play. District foe Dyersburg comes to Alamo for a 6:00 twin bill.

GIRLS GAME #17 – JANUARY 14

Crockett (38) – Jordyn Maddox 18, Karlee Castellaw 8, Amaria Walker 6, Keeton Holyfield 2, Gabby Bursey 2, Kira Bray 2, Ellie Henderson 0, Halle Holyfield 0, Wesley Thornton 0, TEAM 14 FG, 8-9 FT. 3-Pointers: Castellaw 2. Record: 13-4.

South Gibson (50) – Karson Dunn 10, Jade Reed 9, Faith Reed 8, Ava Owens 8, Ivy Cianciolo 6, Trinity Johnson 6, Addy Doyle 3, Anna Teague 0, Serenity Johnson 0, TEAM 18 FG, 8-12 FT. 3-Pointers: Owens 2, Cianciolo 1, J Reed 1, Dunn 1, Doyle 1. Record: 16-4.

BOYS GAME #17 – JANUARY 14

Crockett (58) – Jayden Frye 14, Cade Freeman 8, Reed Leforgee 7, Preston Lambert 7, Zay Jones 6, DK Woods 5, Kevin Pledge 4, Andre Garduno 3, Grayson Lambert 2, Squirt Pickens 2, Cortland Reddick 0, TEAM 18 FG, 18-25 FT. 3-Pointers – Frye 4. Record: 6-11.

South Gibson (69) – Koen Thomas 26, Sam Tritt 18, Richard Addo 7, Cade Beaver 6, Jaxon Young 5, Aiden Moore 4, Preston Bosley 3, Cooper Yarbrow 0, Braxton Gibbons 0, Jackson Strickland 0, TEAM 23 FG, 17-27 FT. 3-Pointers – Thomas 2, Tritt 1, Bosley 1, Moore 1, Addo 1. Record: 11-9.



Left: Crockett's gritty Jordyn Maddox pokes a loose ball up off the floor to teammate Keeton Holyfield, who latches on to it before South Gibson defenders Faith Reed (12), Karson Dunn (33), and Jade Reed (23) can grab it. Amaria Walker (25) is ready to help Holyfield if necessary. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Karlee Castellaw (2) looks for an open cutter in the lane area as she's guarded by South Gibson's Karson Dunn (33). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Lady Cav Halle Holyfield tries to maintain control of the ball as South Gibson's Ivy Cianciolo gets tangled up with Holyfield's left arm. Amaria Walker (25) arrives to set a screen on the play. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Jordyn Maddox, who scored a game-high 18 points, prepares to put a move on the Lady Hornets' Karson Dunn. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett cheerleader Kennedy Henning is enjoying the Lady Cavalier comeback in the second quarter. Unfortunately, it didn't continue in the second half. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Cheer team member Lexie Beaird is all smiles as the Lady Cavs made up most of a 15-point deficit with a solid second-quarter run against South Gibson Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Karlee Castellaw (left) talks over a defensive assignment with newly-entered Kira Bray (40), who replaced Amaria Walker late in the second quarter because of foul trouble. Bray then scored on a putback with 1.4 seconds left to draw Crockett within 24-20 at the intermission. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Keeton Holyfield guards an inbound play against Lady Hornet Trinity Johnson (24) in Tuesday night's contest. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Kayla Irvin sets her press as Crockett tries to continue its comeback against South Gibson, but the Lady Hornets solidly maintained their advantage in the second half. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Sophomore Jordyn Maddox continues to impress, here scoring two of her game-high 18 points despite the Lady Cavalier defeat. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Reed Leforgee (11) slips his way in between two Hornet defenders to score two of his second-quarter points in Tuesday night's encounter in Medina. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's boys almost made a late comeback against South Gibson, utilizing the defense of lightning-quick Squirt Pickens ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: ... and the instant offense of Jayden Frye, who scored 14 second-half points, including four three-pointers. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Andre Garduno clears a rebound out to Squirt Pickens as the Cavaliers try to get a fast break going Tuesday night against South Gibson. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Grayson Lambert muscled his way inside to get ready to challenge a trio of South Gibson defenders. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Crockett's Cade Freeman draws a foul from South Gibson's Koen Thomas on this drive to the basket. Thomas scored 26 points to spark the Hornets to the district win. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Melanie Meza leads a cheer during the Cavaliers' battle with South Gibson, cascading all down the cheer squad line. From front to back are Meza, Gracie Gaines, Kaelyn Bonds, and Carrington Smith. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Reed Leforgee drives past Hornet defender Aiden Moore as he tries to provide some offense for the Cavaliers Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: DK Woods (32) tries to negotiate his way between South Gibson defenders Richard Addo (14) and Aiden Moore. Woods netted five points for Crockett and played his usual hustling defense. (Photo by Ron Barry)

