

CCMS GIRLS ADVANCE TO HAILE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME; CAV SEASON ENDS IN SEMIS

By Ron Barry

Breaking out of a three-quarter defensive struggle, Crockett County Middle School's Lady Cavaliers rode a 10-point fourth-period performance by Jentry Maddox to down Lebanon's Walter J. Baird Middle School 35-29 Saturday and earn a berth in the championship game of the James C. Haile Basketball Tournament in Murfreesboro.

Coach Jamar Turner's girls will play Watertown, a 50-18 victor over Winfree-Bryant, in the title game February 1 at 6:00 at Middle Tennessee Christian School. CCMS will be seeking its twentieth win of the season against just four defeats after edging the Lebanon-based team, reversing the outcome from a year ago when the two teams met in this tournament's final contest.

Crockett's boys, coached by Tyler Gadlen, closed their season at 12-12 when Winfree-Bryant, also based in Lebanon, knocked off the Cavaliers in the tournament semifinals 35-22.

The girls game appeared at first to be a mismatch, with Crockett jumping out to a 14-4 advantage after the opening frame. But the Lady Cavaliers could only manage a single basket from Addie Whitby and a free throw by Maddox in the entire second period, yet only yielded four points themselves to take a 17-8 margin into the halftime break.

The third quarter was all Walter J. Baird's. The Lebanon club scored nine points, while Crockett only produced a Ruth Gourley three-pointer in taking a 20-17 lead into the fourth. Maddox then turned up the offense with 10 points of her own, and a big three-pointer from Haley Leforgee helped secure the edge necessary to get CCMS into the championship game.

Maddox finished with 19 points for the winners, who also received six tallies from Khylee Cobb. Charel Spencer paced Baird with 17 and Carleigh Barrett added six.

The Cavalier boys couldn't generate much first-half offense in falling behind by the break 19-6. Winfree-Bryant, getting 19 points from Jaylen Gallardo, never allowed Crockett a serious run in the second half, matching the CCMS scoring 16-16.

Brody Haley nailed three three-pointers to lead Crockett's attack with nine points. Will Dodds contributed five and Chris Vance and Parker Patterson had three apiece. Winfree-Bryant held both Jeremiah Young and Davis Porter – two of Crockett's top scorers during the season – scoreless in this encounter.

"This group of eighth-graders will always hold a special place in my heart and in our program," Gadlen said afterward. "I will definitely miss them. Not only have they learned so much this season, but I have learned so much from them. Every moment of this season that they could've just quit and given up, they found a way to work even harder and make themselves better. That's all I could ever ask for. It's easy to just give up on anything in life, but if you just keep fighting and believing, things will start come together for you."



Above: Jentry Maddox scored 10 of her game-high 19 points in the fourth quarter to help the CCMS girls gain a championship game berth in the James C. Haile Basketball Tournament in Murfreesboro. (Photo by Ashley Owens)

Top Right: Haley Leforgee drilled a huge three-pointer in the fourth period to help secure Crockett's 35-29 victory over Lebanon's Walter J. Baird Middle School Saturday. (Photo by Ashley Owens)

Right: Brody Haley netted a trio of threes Saturday against Winfree-Bryant, but it wasn't enough to keep the Cavalier boys from having their season ended 35-22 by the Lebanon team. (Photo by Ashley Owens)

GIRLS - JANUARY 25 GAME

Crockett (35) – Jentry Maddox 19, Khylee Cobb 6, Addie Whitby 4, Ruth Gourley 3, Haley Leforgee 3, Lola Bailey 0, TEAM 14 FG, 5-7 FT. 3-Pointers: Gourley 1, Leforgee 1. Record: 19-4.

Walter J. Baird M. S. (29) – Charel Spencer 17, Carleigh Barrett 6, Haidyn Burnley 3, Tenley Davis 2, Ky Jennings 1, Jaden James 0, TEAM 8 FG, 7-9 FT. 3-Pointers: None.

BOYS - JANUARY 25 GAME

Crockett (22) – Brody Haley 9, Will Dodds 5, Chris Vance 3, Parker Patterson 3, Julian Carcamo 2, Jeremiah Young 0, Davis Porter 0, Cole Summar 0, Messiah McCurry 0, Jaylen Frye 0, Ryder Williams 0, Jagger Roberts 0, TEAM 7 FG, 3-6 FT. 3-Pointers: Haley 3, Vance 1, Patterson 1. Record: 12-12.

Winfree-Bryant (35) – Jaylen Gallardo 19, Martez Harris 8, Bennett Gordon 6, Braylen Higgs 2, Jkylan Apple 0, Jamarion Johnson 0, Mason Ratliff 0, Joaquin Nangel 0, JJ Henry 0, Harrison Jones 0, Jaxson Williams 0, TEAM 14 FG, 6-11 FT. 3-Pointers: Gallardo 1.

