

GRAYSON LAMBERT SHUTS DOWN SOUTH SIDE; FRONABARGER HITS MOON SHOT



The first three wins this week came in the season-opening Gibson County Tournament, but Wednesday evening's contest was Crockett's home opener. And after Lambert sailed through the top half of the first – striking out the first two Hawk hitters he faced – Fronabarger wasted no time giving the Cavalier fans something to cheer.

Callan Willis led off the Cav first with a sharp single to right center and took second on a passed ball. Sam Proctor placed a bunt so perfectly that South Side pitcher Brantt Anthony lost his footing trying to turn and throw after fielding it, and Proctor had a single while Willis moved to third.

Proctor was caught stealing on the first pitch to Fronabarger, but after fouling off the next offering, the first sacker put a ball in orbit well over the left-center field fence. The hosts now had a 2-0 lead, and if the game had ended after five innings, it was still one more run than Lambert would have needed.

Getting ahead of almost every batter – more than 60% of Lambert's pitches were strikes – the senior righty seemed to gain added confidence in the top of the second when the Hawks' Wyatt Diffie belted a deep, screaming liner that was tailing toward the right field line. But Cav outfielder Cade Freeman glided over, reached up, and snared the bullet, making a very difficult play look so routine it was as if to say to Lambert, "Just keep throwing strikes – we got you out here."

Lambert proceeded to do just that, and finished his impressive five-frame stint having allowed just one hit, no runs, two walks, and striking out seven.

Meanwhile, his teammates weren't content with just two runs themselves. The Cavs added three more in the second after freshman third baseman George Randall led off with a single and moved to second when Preston Lambert drew a walk.

Following a strikeout, Willis ripped a line-drive double to left-center, chasing home Randall and Lambert. Proctor then delivered another liner to left for a base hit, scoring Willis to make it 5-0.

The margin grew to 6-0 with another tally in the third. Red-hot Karson "Karl" Kail – who just missed a home run in the first inning when his roped liner hit the right field fence on the fly – smacked a one-out single to right and moved to second when Grayson Lambert perfectly pushed a bunt between Anthony and first baseman Diffie for an infield hit. Kail took third on a groundout and then scored when a third strike eluded the Hawk catcher.

Crockett relief pitcher Bryson Vance – also hitting the strike zone with regularity – breezed through a scoreless sixth, and the Cav offense provided another insurance tally in the bottom of the inning.

With one out, Willis sprayed four foul balls while working the count full and then got hit by a pitch. He promptly stole second, only to have Proctor also hit by a pitch. Fronabarger popped what would have been a single into short left-center, but it was a hard read for a baserunner and Proctor ended up being forced at second by an outfield throw as Willis took third. Crockett catcher Carter Winders cracked a hard ground-ball double down the left field line to chase Willis home with the seventh run.

Vance ran into a little trouble in the top of the seventh after walking the leadoff man and then seeing his infield make a couple of throwing errors after tough ground balls, but used three strikeouts to escape the jam with only two Hawk runs scoring, providing the final 7-2 margin.

Willis, Proctor, Kail, and Randall all had two hits as Crockett totaled 11 for the contest. Willis scored three runs and drove in two to round out his productive evening.

The Cavs are back in action Thursday in a 4:30 duel with Chester County in Medina at South Gibson.

Above: Brady Fronabarger knows he got ALL of this one as he watches his first-inning, two-run homer sail over the left-center field fence against South Side. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

Skywatchers and weather people are saying that in the very early morning hours Friday, a full moon will turn blood red during a total lunar eclipse.

Brady Fronabarger almost drew blood on it Wednesday evening in Alamo.

Crockett County's talented junior first baseman hit a titanic two-run moon shot in the opening inning and Grayson Lambert made it stand up with five sparkling shutout frames as the Cavaliers won their fourth straight game with a 7-2 drubbing of Jackson South Side.

Coach Austin Taylor's club is now 4-0 in the first week of his "rookie" season, and the former Cavalier himself is pretty happy with the current situation on the Crockett diamond.

"Our pitching has been solid," Taylor said. "Our hitting has been good. But the best thing to me is that these guys want to be out here. They've made themselves very coachable. They've bought into the culture we're trying to create out here. And they take care of each other and root for each other. That closeness is one of the main reasons we're having success so far."



Above: Approaching third base on his home run trot, Brady Fronabarger is all smiles as he acknowledges the coaching staff's approval of his latest swing. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Brady Fronabarger is welcomed at home plate by Callan Willis and Carter Winders as the rest of his teammates gather nearer the backstop to join in the celebration. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Grayson Lambert had everything working Wednesday, blanking South Side on one hit over five innings with seven strikeouts. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett second baseman Karson Kail stayed red-hot with two more line-drive hits, including one that just missed going out of the park when it hit the fence on the fly. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Callan Willis had a productive day in the leadoff spot and here is celebrating his two-run double before it is even posted up on the scoreboard to make it 4-0, Cavs. (Photo by Ron Barry)

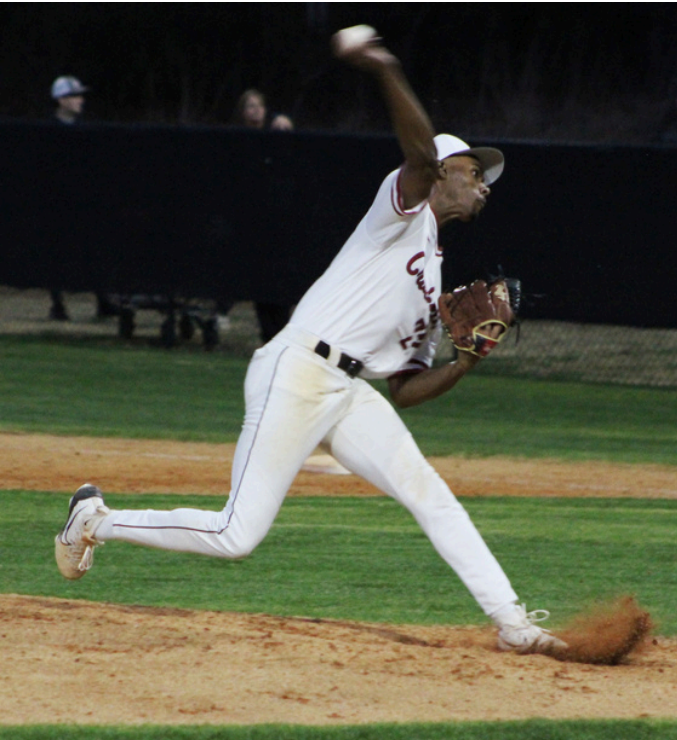
Right: Freshman third baseman George Randall collected two of Crockett's 11 hits. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: While the offense was providing adequate support, the Cavs' outstanding catcher Carter Winders was keeping Lambert properly dialed in. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Bryson Vance brought some heat in his two innings of relief, striking out four South Side batters. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Cav shortstop Sam Proctor follows through with a line-drive, run-scoring single to left field, his second hit of the contest. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Cav head coach Austin Taylor congratulates Bryson Vance on pitching out of seventh-inning trouble to conclude Crockett's 7-2 conquest of the Hawks. (Photo by Ron Barry)