

TIME TO RE-GROUP: CCHS SOCCER CAVS GET A STARK REALITY CHECK IN ARLINGTON



Above: New CCHS head soccer coach Joey Soriano takes the reins of a talented group of Cavaliers - but saw Friday in Arlington they have quite a way to go to match up with the best that Memphis offers. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

When Crockett County's coaching staff made out its 2025 boys soccer schedule, it knew it was being ambitious. After all, the Cavalier program has made tremendous strides in the past few years, so much so that the school has great respect in West Tennessee.

In the off-season leading up to this spring, many Cav sports fans have likely been telling team members they can't wait to watch them play, because of how good they're going to be.

And, yes, in terms of other West Tennessee teams, they're good. But they found out Friday afternoon in Arlington: They're not "Memphis-good." At least, not yet.

How they respond to Friday's 9-0 "mercy-rule" thrashing by Christian Brothers High School - ranked third in the state - may well determine the chances of returning to the State Tournament they missed in 2024 because of an overtime sectional loss to Munford.

Crockett and Christian Brothers met Friday in opening-day play of the Arlington Ambush - and that's exactly the proper description of what ensued on the pitch. The Cavs yielded the nine goals in the span of just 50 minutes, causing stoppage of play 30 minutes early.

New head coach Joey Soriano and assistants Carli Branson and Alex Taylor were in agreement that if Crockett soccer wants to attain the level of excellence displayed by the Purple Wave - which was more like a tsunami on Friday - the Cavalier players need to dig deeper to master the "little things" they may be taking for granted.

On Friday, Crockett coaches said the mastery level of skills on display by CBHS would make them highly competitive against many collegiate teams. The school has not one, but two junior varsity teams, and the Cav coaches said it was obvious that they practice controlling and maneuvering the ball with their chests, heads, and other "legal" parts of their bodies as much as they do their footwork.

The result was disappointing in that, while the coaches didn't necessarily expect a victory Friday against the Brothers, they were hoping to see much more competitiveness than what Crockett demonstrated.

It doesn't get easier Saturday when they'll next face Houston High - the state's eighth-ranked squad. The Arlington Ambush continues through Sunday, when Crockett will face Rossview in its third match of the weekend.

The Cavs now have seen how far it is they have to climb to be among the best. How they choose to begin to navigate that journey tomorrow will largely determine what kind of turn the 2025 season takes.