

CROCKETT SOFTBALL, SOCCER TOPPLE CHESTER COUNTY; CAV BASEBALL FALLS TO HUNTINGDON



Above: Braulio Marquez scored a goal just 44 seconds into the match Tuesday to ignite a 7-3 Crockett soccer victory over Chester County. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

Ancient sport proverb: Speed kills.

If you don't believe that, you're probably among those people who (prior to Tuesday night) didn't think North Carolina belonged in this year's NCAA basketball tournament. Anyway, back to the sport benefits of speed. Exhibit A: Crockett County softball shortstop Piper White.

White's normal mode of operation is to hold her bat as if she's going to bunt, then draw it back and either slap the pitch toward the left side of the infield or resume the bunt position, knowing that if the batted ball hits the ground at all, she's got a good chance of beating any resulting throw to first base. She's that fast.

She's done that so well that next fall she'll be heading to Texas A&M (a nationally-ranked SEC program) to play softball for the Lady Aggies.

On Tuesday evening in Henderson, playing against Chester County, White showed in even greater measure what her speed can do if her batted ball finds the right gap on the outfield grass.

Leading off the ballgame, on a 2-and-1 count – with the Eaglette defense shifted to the left side – White dropped a fly ball into a vacant spot in right field, and was off to the races. Her inside-the-park home run gave the Lady Cavaliers an immediate 1-0 lead.

White scored again in the third her more conventional way, drawing a walk, stealing second, and speeding home on a single to center by Wesley Thornton.

In the fourth inning, with Gabby Bursey on second base after a bunt single and steal, White took a full swing at another 2-and-1 pitch and hit a liner to left-center field that found another gap.

Understand that inside-the-park home runs are extremely rare. But in four innings, White now had two of them. This one also broke a 4-4 tie and provided a lead that Crockett would not relinquish on the way to a 15-6 victory, its sixth in seven contests this spring.

Yet White was not finished. In the top of the fifth, she ripped a double to center that plated two more teammates, giving her a total of five runs batted in. She led an 18-hit Lady Cav attack that was necessary to offset an uncharacteristic six Crockett errors.

White, Thornton, and Sadie Hoover all collected three hits apiece in the onslaught, while Madison Stitts drove in three runs with a pair of safeties.

Reserve catcher Macie Teel – like Thornton and Stitts, just a freshman – knocked in two tallies. Bursey and Hannah Carter joined Stitts with two hits each. Piper Smith added a double to the cause.

The offense made a winner of freshman pitcher Emmalynn Medlin, who allowed just one earned run in hurling the full seven innings for Crockett. Medlin walked only two and hit a batter, but effectively scattered seven Chester County hits enough to counter the Lady Cav defensive miscues.

The Lady Cavs will next be in action Friday at Martin Westview at 5:00.

SOCCER: Five different players scored goals and four recorded assists as Crockett County also downed Chester County in soccer 7-3 Tuesday, evening its season record at 3-3.

Coach Joey Soriano's Cavs used a balanced attack that built a 5-1 halftime advantage, weathered a brief Eagle comeback, and then slammed the door with two more tallies.

Crockett needed just 44 seconds to get on the scoreboard, with Braulio Marquez tucking the ball into the top right corner of the net from just outside the box. About 11 minutes later, Luke Carter sent a wide pass to Adrian Calderon on the right side, and Calderon fired a beautiful low pass across the goal face for Chris Cerda to punch into the net for a 2-0 Cav advantage.

With 19 minutes remaining in the opening half, Calderon provided another key pass off a throw from midfield, sending in a cross to Marquez, who laid it off to Cerda for his second tally and a 3-0 Crockett lead.

Six minutes later Carter noticed the Chester County keeper was off his line and drilled in a long-distance bomb from 50 yards out, and the margin became 4-0.

Thirty-three minutes into the opening half, off a corner kick from Angel Garcia, Aiden Markgraf received the boot and dropped it to Brandon Carcamo, who punched it home for a 5-0 edge. The hosts managed a late goal to make it 5-1 at the intermission.

Crockett got off to a slow start in the second half and the Eagles scored twice, reducing the lead to 5-3. But Garcia intercepted a Chester pass and dropped it to Cerda, who got past the back line and beat the keeper to complete a hat trick (three goals) and give the Cavs a 6-3 advantage with nine minutes to play.

The final Crockett tally came when Cerda controlled his dribble past three different Eagle players, taking it down the line before lining the ball into the box, where Garcia headed it perfectly into the back of the net.

Allan Marquez made five saves in goal to aid the Cav defensive effort. Crockett returns to action on the home turf Saturday morning at 11:00, hosting McNairy Central.

BASEBALL: Broox Bennett's two-run homer in the third inning offset a solo shot in the first by Crockett's Brady Fronabarger, and the host Huntingdon Mustangs edged the Cavaliers 4-2 behind the complete-game pitching of Caleb Ezell.

Ezell scattered seven hits and used his defense well, striking out only two but yielding just one walk. Fronabarger blasted a full-count, two-out, opposite field home run to right in the top of the Cav first, but Ezell then blanked the visitors the rest of the way until consecutive singles by Sam Proctor, George Randall, and pinch-hitter Landry Fronabarger produced a two-out tally in the seventh.

Proctor was the lone Cavalier to record two hits in the contest. Cade Freeman had a double for Crockett, but the Mustangs threw out a runner at home plate on the play to kill a potential rally.

Bryson Vance went the first three frames on the bump for the Cavs, yielding three runs and five hits. Jameson Bushart finished the final three innings, yielding just one unearned run and matching Vance's five strikeouts.

Huntingdon catcher Hayes Eubanks went 3-for-3 for the winners, who dropped Crockett's season record to 4-2. The Cavs will host Lexington Friday afternoon at 4:30 in their next outing.

Below: Lady Cav senior shortstop Piper White ripped a pair of inside-the-park home runs and a double, driving in five to spark Crockett's 15-6 romp over Chester County Tuesday. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Senior outfielder Sadie Hoover delivered three more hits for Crockett, which amassed 18 safeties against Eaglette pitching Tuesday. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Freshman second baseman Wesley Thornton continued her hot hitting for the Lady Cavs, collecting three more knocks Tuesday as Crockett improved to 6-1 on the season. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Freshman third baseman Madison Stitts drove in three runs for the victorious Lady Cavs Tuesday in Henderson. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Chris Cerda (10) kept his eye on the ball well enough Tuesday to add a hat trick (three more goals) to his arsenal in the Crockett triumph. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Brady Fronabarger hammered a solo home run in the opening inning Tuesday, but Huntingdon bounced back to post a 4-2 win over the visiting Cav diamonders. (Photo by Ron Barry)