

# CROCKETT BASEBALLERS REBOUND TO CARRY DYER COUNTY TO EXTRA INNINGS BEFORE FALLING 3-2



**Above:** Grayson Lambert made his third outstanding start of the season on the mound for Crockett County, pitching the Cavaliers to within two outs of upsetting Dyer County. (Photo by Ron Barry)

## By Ron Barry

Let's start with the most positive thing first: To take a talented baseball team to extra innings – on their turf – just one night after that team “mercy-ruled” you, on your turf, is a noteworthy accomplishment.

That the game ultimately ended with the home squad, Dyer County, winning the contest in the bottom of the ninth 3-2 is an undeniably disappointing outcome after battling so hard.

To know that you had the go-ahead run in scoring position in both extra innings – only see those baserunners thrown out trying to steal third base each time – is the game fact that makes the defeat sting a little more.

Still, there's reason to be optimistic for these Crockett County diamonders as the season progresses.

On Monday night, Dyer County beat the Cavaliers – more accurately, beat down the Cavaliers – 12-0 in just five innings in a game in which Crockett committed an embarrassing nine errors and managed just one late hit offensively. To say it was ugly is unnecessary – a child of four could have told you that.

The very next night, thanks to the way district games are scheduled now, the Cavs had to travel to Newbern to play the Choctaws again. It would have been easy – perhaps, even understandable – to be less than enthusiastic about what might take place.

Instead, Coach Austin Taylor's club headed into the bottom of the seventh clinging to a stunning 2-1 lead, just three outs away from what might have been the biggest shocker in the district this season, considering what had occurred the previous evening.

Crockett's Grayson Lambert, who has been spectacular on the mound this season for the Cavs, had yielded just the one run – unearned, on his own second-inning, two-out error – through six marvelous frames. He'd pitched mostly to contact, and the Cav defense – so extremely shaky the night before – had performed perfectly behind him.

Crockett was three outs away.

But Choctaw catcher Weston Sims led off with a single, his third hit of the game. Easton Ozment sacrificed him to second. Crockett was two outs away, but the tying run was now on second base. Into the batter's box stepped Jack Smith.

Jack Smith, you may recall, threw the previous night's shutout for Dyer County, giving up just one hit and needing less than 60 pitches to cruise through the five-inning encounter.

Smith promptly ripped a line drive to right field for a single, plating Sims to tie the game at 2-all and ending the night for the steady Lambert. Tyler Rathbun came on in relief and worked out of a jam to send the duel into extra innings.

Taylor's club had scored both its runs way back in the opening frame. Callan Willis led off with a double and came home on a Brady Fronabarger single to center, after fouling off six pitches prior to the hit. He stole second and moved to third on a Carter Winders single to left, eventually scoring on an error by Choctaw starting pitcher Landon Willis.

It would be a rare mistake by Willis, who ended up blanking the Cavs through the next seven innings, striking out 15 along the way. Crockett left a runner on third in the first; on second in the second; and had a runner thrown out trying to steal third in the sixth.

So, the score was 2-2 headed into the eighth. Crockett's Sam Proctor led off the top of the frame by reaching on an infield error, taking second on an ensuing groundout. But he was gunned down stealing third, and it was Dyer County's turn to try to break the deadlock.

Rathbun hit the first batter with a pitch, but then retired the next three. To the ninth we go.

The hosts brought Ozment in to pitch and – with one out – Winders reached on an outfield error. Courtesy runner Garet Rawson entered for Winders and promptly stole second – and then was caught stealing third. A groundout sent the game to the bottom of the ninth.

With one out, here came Jack Smith again, and he continued to torment Crockett County by lacing a triple to right field. David Headtke followed with a line-drive single to left, and that was the ballgame.

The result left Crockett at 9-5 on the season and 2-2 in district play. Willis, Fronabarger, Winders, and Cade Freeman collected the Cavs' four hits. Crockett is scheduled to host Bolivar Central on Friday, weather permitting, and will then have district games with Dyersburg on Monday and Tuesday.

**JORDYN MADDOX HONORED:** In a Tuesday announcement, Crockett County sophomore Jordyn Maddox was named to the 15-person Division I-AAA All-State Team by the Basketball Coaches Association of Tennessee.

Maddox, the Lady Cavs' leading scorer, netted 450 points in 30 games for a 15.0 points-per-game average and successfully converted a staggering 88.4 % of her free throws for the season. She joined other area players such as Dyersburg's Chelby Jordan and Joya Crawford, South Gibson's Jade Reed, and Jackson South Side's Jaidynn Askins on the prestigious squad.



**MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCCER:** In a hard-fought soccer match between two of the better middle school squads in West Tennessee, Dyersburg edged CCMS 2-1 Tuesday evening in Alamo by scoring with 13:05 left in the contest to break a 1-1 deadlock.

Crockett had taken a 1-0 advantage on a Lucas Morales goal off a free kick with 14:25 remaining before the intermission. Dyersburg answered four minutes later, and the duel remained tied until the Trojans' late second-half tally.

Cav goalkeeper Henry Mayfield made saves off a free kick and a rebound in the first half and posted another save in the second before Dyersburg broke through with the game-winner. Crockett put seven shots on goal in the second half, but couldn't capitalize.



**Above:** Callan Willis led off the game with a double for the Cavaliers, signaling that a much better performance than the previous night was at hand. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Right:** Brady Fronabarger drove in the game's first run with a first-inning single, providing the Cavaliers with an early advantage. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below Left:** Crockett's humble warrior, sophomore Jordyn Maddox, was named to the Basketball Coaches Association of Tennessee Division I-AAA All-State Team after an outstanding season averaging 15 points a game. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** The entire BCAT All-State Team for Division I-AAA.