

THURSDAY NIGHT: CROCKETT ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE

ALL ACROSS THE CAVALIER CAMPUS



Above: It was another freshman, Landry Fronabarger, who provided the major offense in Crockett baseball's 2-1 win over Dyersburg Thursday, driving home both runs with a bases-loaded single. (Photo by Ron Barry)

By Ron Barry

It wasn't billed as such, but Crockett County High School hosted "A Night of Athletic Excellence" on its campus Thursday night.

Three different Crockett sports teams picked up big district victories, highlighted by the soccer club's impressive 3-1 triumph over traditional power South Gibson County. But equally notable were a 7-1 win by the Lady Cavalier softball squad over rival Dyersburg and a 2-1 conquest of the Trojans by the baseball team – in a virtual complete reversal of its poor performance against Lausanne Collegiate School the previous night.

SOCCER: There aren't many – if any – matchups on a West Tennessee soccer pitch that rival the intensity of a Crockett vs. South Gibson encounter, and this one was certainly no exception to the rule.

It took almost 15 minutes of play to get the goose eggs off the scoreboard, but the host Cavaliers finally broke the ice when Brandon Carcamo came streaking in from the right side to punch in a perfectly executed corner kick from Braulio Marquez, giving Crockett a 1-0 lead with 25:48 left before intermission.

Coach Joey Soriano's club was possessing the ball most of the first half, but the momentum changed somewhat when the Hornets tied it up with 9:17 left on a wide-open kick from directly in front of the goal during a rush.

From that point on until well into the second half, the talented SGC squad seemed to be in control of the ball at least 90 percent of the time, but wasn't getting any serious shots at the net despite the lopsided advantage in possession time.

"We have been working really hard on defensive responsibilities," Soriano said after the contest, "and it showed tonight. So much of what South Gibson does is bunched in the middle, so we knew we were going to have to get a lot of defensive help from our wingers. They really worked hard tonight, covering a lot of space for us. South Gibson is a really good team, and we're a really good team. They work very well together, and we're getting there. I figured this match would boil down to who wanted it more, and it looks like we did tonight."

The match was still deadlocked at 1-1 when, with 29:26 remaining, Crockett lost the services of Marquez – often the unsung engine of many of the Cavs' key plays – to a serious ankle injury.

But the defense remained strong and continued to fight off the Hornet rushes until, with only 10:56 to play, the hosts converged on a loose ball just to the left of the SGC goal. Chris Cerda and Luke Carter appeared to collide – or Cerda was knocked to the ground by a Hornet defender – but as he fell, somehow Carter steered the ball behind himself to Daniel Grajeda, who was moving in from the right side.

Despite being side-to-side with a defender and barely a yard or two away from the South Gibson goalkeeper, Grajeda got his left foot on the pass and tucked it neatly through the 18-inch opening that existed, netting the go-ahead goal as his teammates joined him in celebration.

Less than four minutes later, Cerda put the game away for good, taking an Angel Garcia assist and rifling it past the diving Hornet goalie to make it 3-1 with only 7:09 on the clock.

Allan Marquez made 10 saves as Crockett's goalkeeper, continuing the success the Cavs are having employing a "platoon" system between Marquez and Noah Mayfield, who was in goal earlier this week when Crockett shut out Madison Academic 1-0.

"Both Noah and Allan are having great seasons," Soriano said. "We have been playing them for a half each game, but they told me they didn't really like it that way – they'd rather alternate playing an entire game at a time. So that's what we're doing now. I'm glad they like it that way, because it would be really hard for me to choose between them right now."

Crockett received major contributions from its defensive backfield as well, a unit that includes Max Utley, Santiago Santos, Diego Marquez, and Josue Martinez.

The Cavs improved to 6-3. The next game on the original schedule is another home district match with Dyersburg on April 17.

SOFTBALL: Junior Anna Stallings pitched another gem and Wesley Thornton and Kiyra Liggins each drove in two runs as the Lady Cavs posted a big district win over visiting Dyersburg.

Stallings scattered seven hits, only walked one, and kept the Lady Trojans off the scoreboard until the final inning, when a passed ball set up a run-producing opportunity on a groundout. By then, Crockett was safely ahead 7-0, largely on the strength of a pair of three-run rallies.

Coach Baron Jimmerson's club took a 1-0 lead in the second when senior outfielder Sadie Hoover ripped a one-out double to left field, moved to third on a passed ball, and raced home on a groundout by Liggins. Crockett upped the margin with a three-run third, highlighted by a two-run single by Thornton and a Dyersburg passed ball that allowed her to also score.

Three more tallies crossed the plate in the fifth. Piper White reached on an error, stole second and third, and came home on a hit by Hannah Carter, who took second on a throwing error. Madison Stitts lined a triple to center to score Carter and then came home herself on a double to left by Liggins, who collected two of the winners' eight hits. White and Carter each scored twice for Crockett, which improved to 15-4 on the season.

The Lady Cavs travel to Obion County Friday to face the Lady Rebels in another district duel.

BASEBALL: Just one night earlier, Crockett hurlers walked 11 and hit six other batters with pitches in a lackluster 16-3 debacle with Lausanne Collegiate School from Memphis. Grayson Lambert wasn't about to let that happen Thursday night.

The senior righthander has been nothing short of spectacular on the mound for Coach Austin Taylor's Cavs and he did it again vs. the Trojans, tossing a complete-game four-hitter with 10 strikeouts. After four starts this spring, Lambert is 3-0 with 27 strikeouts in 23.1 innings and has walked just five batters in compiling a microscopic 0.60 earned run average.

Dyersburg couldn't solve him Thursday night, and Lambert got all the offensive support he would need in the bottom of the fourth in a frame that looked like it was going nowhere for the hosts after two quick outs. But Brady Fronabarger grounded a single to center and Carter Winders drew a walk, and suddenly the Cavs had a chance.

Freshman George Randall fouled off a full-count pitch and worked yet another base on balls, loading the sacks for another freshman, Landry Fronabarger. He also fouled off a full-count offering before delivering a sharp ground ball single through the left side that chased home his big brother and courtesy runner Brody Parlow for a 2-1 Crockett edge.

That was all Lambert needed. The Cav righty finished even stronger than he started, striking out six of the last seven Trojans batters he faced. Crockett only managed four hits as well. Winders, who had a single in addition to his walk, was the only Crockett hitter to earn his way on base twice.

The Cavs improved to 10-6 overall this season and are 3-2 in district play.



Above: Grayson Lambert is now 3-0 with a 0.60 ERA after pitching Crockett past Dyersburg 2-1 Thursday evening in Alamo. Lambert struck out 10 in a complete-game four-hitter. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Callan Willis skies a fly ball to right field in his opening at-bat in Thursday's 2-1 district win over Dyersburg. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Brandon Carcamo is mobbed by his Cavalier teammates after scoring the first goal of Thursday's match in Crockett's 3-1 win over district foe South Gibson County. From left are Angel Garcia, Chris Cerda, Diego Marquez, Luke Carter, Carcamo (14), and Daniel Grajeda. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Cavalier soccer is very glad to have Angel Garcia back in the midfield spot after getting a playing opportunity in Spain. Garcia assisted on Crockett's final goal in the 3-1 win over South Gibson. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett's all-around talent Braulio Marquez, whose corner kick set up the Cavs' first goal against South Gibson, later injured his ankle on this play in the second half. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Allan Marquez had a strong match in goal for Crockett soccer, making 10 saves and limiting talented South Gibson to a single goal in the Cavs' 3-1 triumph. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Daniel Grajeda netted the go-ahead goal for the Cavaliers with just 10:56 remaining in the match as Crockett downed South Gibson 3-1. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: After Chris Cerda (#10) punched this goal past South Gibson's goalkeeper to put the icing on Crockett's 3-1 district victory... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: ... he joined his teammates for a "shoeshine pantomime" celebration in the corner of the pitch. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Josue Martinez goes high to head this ball away from the Crockett goal, backed up by fellow defender Diego Marquez. The Cavs' back line was strong all night in the 3-1 win over the Hornets. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Kiyra Liggins drove in two runs with a double and a groundout in Thursday's 7-1 Lady Cavalier district triumph over Dyersburg. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Freshman second baseman Wesley Thornton knocked in two runs with a big single to give the Lady Cavs a 3-0 lead on their way to a 7-1 conquest of Dyersburg Thursday. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Lady Cav third baseman Madison Stitts watches her throw sail over to first sacker Piper Smith after fielding this grounder against Dyersburg Thursday. Stitts had a run-scoring triple in the win. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Senior outfielder Hannah Carter scored twice and singled home another tally for the Lady Cavs in their 7-1 victory over the Lady Trojans. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Crockett senior shortstop Piper White guns a throw over to first base to nip a speedy runner early in the Lady Cavs' district triumph over Dyersburg Thursday. (Photo by Ron Barry)