

FOR CROCKETT'S LAITHON BONDS, A MILLISECOND CAN SEEM LIKE AN ETERNITY

By Ron Barry

How long is one thousandth of a second?

An eternity, if you're Crockett County track star Laithon Bonds.

Running in the TSSAA Class AA West Sectional Wednesday at Millington in his specialty event, the 300-meter hurdles, Bonds completed the race in 42.18 seconds - the same exact time that was posted for Ridgeway High School's Dandridge Burns. Bonds and Burns were tied for second place.

The significance?

Only the top two finishers gain berths in the TSSAA State Championships. The race winner, Cameron Jones of Fayette Ware, was in. But who would be going with him? When two competitors in a race post with the same time - which are recorded electronically in hundredths of a second (the old days of hand-held stopwatches are long gone) - meet officials must go back to their recordings and try to carry out the times to thousandths of a second to break the deadlock.

The problem for Bonds and Burns is that it isn't done immediately so that the runners and coaches are informed. It wouldn't be until the medal ceremony was held that one of them would know who was going to State and who wasn't.

"As I waited for the tie to be broken, I really thought about if I worked hard enough through the season and if it would be the end of my senior year right there," Bonds said later. "I feel like I gave it my all in the race. I was so tired after that, my legs gave out on me for a few seconds."

Crockett track coach Julie Nass felt somewhat helpless in the process.



Left: This is what most competitors see when they race against Laithon Bonds in the 300 hurdles: his back. He's hoping that trend continues at the State meet in Murfreesboro. (Photo by Ron Barry)

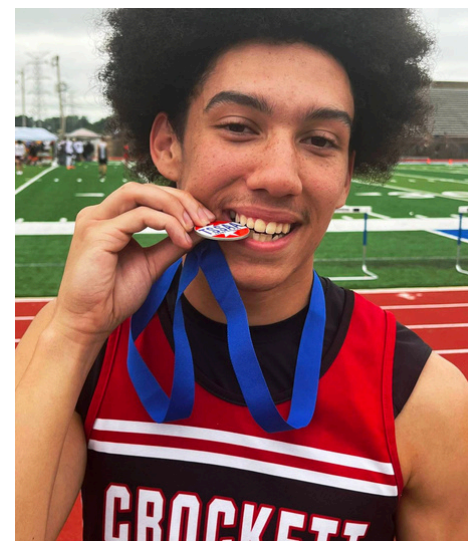
"Coaches weren't allowed down on the field," she said. "The kids were waiting for their medals and we had seen online that it was a tie. Laithon texted his mom they were doing that to see who really got second. It was definitely a photo finish!"

Now, for reference: A thousandth of a second is what is technically known as a millisecond. It's basically equivalent to the time it takes for a normal flash in a camera to finish. It takes three milliseconds for a housefly's wing flap, and five seconds for a honeybee's wing flap. The reaction speed of a human is 100 milliseconds.

And if you're thinking, "Wow - this race could come down to the blink of an eye," you're thinking way too slowly. The blink of a human eye takes 300 to 400 milliseconds.

In this case, the thousandth of a second was an eternity for Laithon Bonds, or at least it seemed like one. The actual wait was about 15 to 20 minutes.

You need to understand that Bonds is the type of athlete any track coach craves. He does multiple events at every meet, and does them well. In fact, just that Monday, he was part of a 4x100 relay team that set a brand new school record in the preliminaries (although circumstances prevented them from running in Wednesday's final). Bonds has won triple jump competitions with regularity and is definitely one of West Tennessee's finest in the 300 hurdles.



Above: Laithon Bonds celebrates his medal for his second-place finish at the West Sectional in Millington, earning him a trip to the State meet May 20. (Photo by Julie Nass)

He has been on a mission to get to the State in his senior year, because his very promising junior season was ended prematurely by an injury. And now he was on the brink of his dream – but it might be a thousandth of a second just out of his grasp.

Finally, the medal ceremony began. “Second place: Laithon Bonds, Crockett County.” His official time had been adjusted to 42.17 seconds, and he will be heading to MTSU in Murfreesboro to compete on Tuesday, May 20 in the TSSAA Class AA State Championships.

“After I found out the tie went in my favor, I was relieved,” Bonds said. “I thought about how far I came from last year when I had my season-ending injury, to now being able to go to State. My goal is to finish in the top three. Even if I don’t win I know I worked my hardest throughout the season and was happy with my results.”

At the State meet, Bonds will be accompanying the girls 4x800 relay team of Claire Evans, Addie Davidson, Alivia Hale, and Avery Thornton, who won first place in the West Sectional with a time of 11:29.66.

Hale – only a freshman – just missed qualifying as an individual in the grueling 3200-meter run, finishing fourth while shattering her own personal best time with a 13:55.01. It was the first occasion on which she’d dipped under 14 minutes for the distance.

Thornton – like Hale a member of Crockett’s soccer and cross-country teams in the fall – also just missed as an individual, placing fourth in the 800 –meter run with a time of 2:41.37. Aidan Klonowski, fighting an illness, still managed a fifth-place finish in the boys 1600 meters. Titus Luten set a new Cavalier school record in the preliminaries for the 110 hurdles, posting a 16.86 to qualify for the finals, where he finished eighth despite falling after hitting the first hurdle.

All those placing for Crockett County in the official West Sectional meet results:

QUALIFYING FOR STATE:

Girls 4x800 Relay: Crockett (Claire Evans, Addie Davidson, Alivia Hale, Avery Thornton), 1st, 11:29.66.

Boys 300 Hurdles: Laithon Bonds, 2nd, 42.17 (new CCHS record).

All Other Finishers:

Boys High Jump: Titus Luten, T-18th, 5-4.

Boys Long Jump: Deuce Greenhill, T-17th, 19-0; Zay Jones, T-20th, 17-10.75.

Girls Triple Jump: Addie Davidson, 7th, 30-3.50; Avery Thornton, 13th, 27-0.75.

Boys Triple Jump: Laithon Bonds, 19th, 37-1.50.

Boys Discus: Avery Hurst, 22nd, 85-3.50.

Girls Shot Put: Julia Finley, 16th, 24-1.

Boys 110 Hurdles: Titus Luten, 8th, 18.38 (His prelim time of 16.86 was a CCHS record).

Girls 100 Dash: Madi Collins, 29th, 13.98.

Boys 100 Dash: Deuce Greenhill, 10th, 11.47 (Prelim time; did not run in final).

Boys 200 Dash: Deuce Greenhill, 9th, 23.36 (Prelim time; did not run in final).

Boys 1600 Meters: Aidan Klonowski, 5th, 5:03.15.

Girls 800 Meters: Avery Thornton, 4th, 2:41.37; Claire Evans, 7th, 2:48.86.

Girls 3200 Meters: Alivia Hale, 4th, 13:55.01 (new PR).

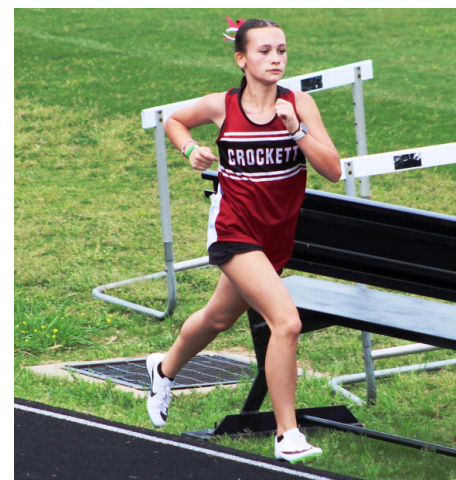
Team Scores: Crockett girls were 8th out of 30 teams scoring points; Crockett boys were 15th out of 29 teams scoring points.



SOFTBALL: While South Gibson claimed the District 13-AAA Tournament title this week, Lady Cavaliers came away with three of the district’s most prestigious awards for the season.

Junior Anna Stallings was selected as the District 13-AAA Pitcher of the Year; freshman Wesley Thornton was named the District 13-AAA Hitter of the Year; and senior Piper White will be heading to Texas A&M University with the title of District 13-AAA Infielder of the Year. The trio led Crockett to a 28-10 record in Coach Baron Jimmerson’s first year at the helm after several years at South Gibson.

SOCCER: On the schedule Thursday night: Coach Joey Soriano’s Cavaliers host South Gibson at 6:00 in Cavalier Stadium for the District 13 Tournament championship. Crockett is 11-3 for the season and has secured a berth in the upcoming Region 7 Tournament.



Above: Freshman Alivia Hale posted a huge personal record in the 3200 meters at the West Sectional, breaking 14 minutes for the first time and finishing fourth in the field.

Left: Avery Thornton placed fourth in the 800 meters, just missing a State meet individual berth. But she’ll be on the 4x800 relay team, which won the West Sectional in a Monday final. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett junior Anna Stallings was selected as the District 13-AAA Pitcher of the Year for the 2025 season. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Lady Cavalier freshman Wesley Thornton was named as the District 13-AAA Hitter of the Year for her stellar "rookie" campaign. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Headed to Texas A&M in the fall, senior Piper White was designated as the District 13-AAA Infielder of the Year, helping lead Crockett to a 28-10 record. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Tonight at 6:00 (Thursday, May , come join Santiago Santos and the boys as they try to claim another district soccer tournament title against South Gibson at Cavalier Stadium. (Photo by Robin Waddey)