DYER COUNTY DEFENSE ENDS SOFTBALL SEASON; CAV SOCCER GAINS CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

By Ron Barry

In the sports world, there is a reason the statement “defense wins championships” is as old as Methuselah: It’s TRUE.

The latest team to demonstrate that fact to a Crockett County squad is the Dyer County Lady Choctaws, who ended the Lady Cavaliers’ softball season Tuesday evening by blanking their visitors 3-0 with a consistent flashing of some fancy leather in the field.

The victory moved host Dyer County into the District 13-AAA Tournament championship series against South Gibson, while the defeat eliminated Crockett from the event and also prevented the Lady Cavs from obtaining a Region 7-AAA Tournament berth.

While the overall record of 28-10 in Coach Baron Jimmerson’s first season as Crockett’s coach is highly respectable, the final game was highly unsatisfying for the Lady Cavs. Dyer County’s winning pitcher Molly Kate Woody went the seven-inning distance for the Lady Choctaws and twirled a two-hit shutout, despite the fact that she didn’t strike out a single batter.

That’s a testament to the trust she has in her defense, which turned in a number of impressive plays, including a handful by third baseman Evie Rogers and left fielder Abbie Gibbons, who ran down a couple of long drives slugged by the Lady Cavs. And that doesn’t even include the robbery of a Wesley Thornton home run to dead center field, made to look completely routine by the fundamentals employed by Kierstyn Ray.



Left: Crockett second baseman Wesley Thornton takes a perfect throw from shortstop Piper White and prepares to place the tag on Dyer County's Katie Caldwell (11), who had singled off the third baseman's glove and was trying to stretch it into a double, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

When she gauged the length of Thornton’s long fly in the third inning, Ray backed up, found the fence with her bare hand, and then calmly extended her glove hand high enough above the fence railing to make the catch. If she had not, Crockett would have taken a 2-1 lead and the nature of the outcome may have changed.

The Lady Choctaws took a 1-0 edge when catcher and cleanup hitter Emma Wray slammed a home run to right center. Crockett center fielder Hannah Carter gave her attempted catch a heroic effort, but the ball was too far beyond the fence to gather in.

Dyer County scored twice more in third when Crockett displayed its only lapse of effective defense in the game. Gibbons led off by reaching on a bloop pop single in the infield dirt that could have been caught if the fielder initially closest to the ball had tried to make a play on it. After an out, Gibbons stole second on a change-up in the dirt and moved to third on a sharp single to left by Katie Caldwell.

As Caldwell was stealing second on the next pitch, Crockett tried instead to pick Gibbons off third, but the throw sailed into left field – allowing Gibbons to score – but then the throw from the outfield also sailed into the backstop, allowing Caldwell to reach third, from where she scored on a groundout by Rylee Key. That would end all the scoring for the evening.

The Lady Cavs hit several balls hard, but Dyer County’s defense made plays on all of them, except for a sharp single to center by Sadie Hoover and a double to left-center by Piper White, both seniors playing their final game for Crockett County.

Crockett hurler Anna Stallings – named later in the evening as the District 13-AAA Pitcher of the Year – was solid even in the defeat. Only one of the three runs allowed was earned, due to the third-inning mishaps. Stallings scattered seven hits and only walked one.

SOCCER: On a brighter note for Cavalier fans, Coach Joey Soriano's soccer boys stormed into the championship game of their district tournament with a convincing 6-2 triumph over Obion County Tuesday night. The Cavs will face South Gibson, which defeated Dyersburg earlier in the afternoon. The championship game is at 6 p.m. in Cavalier Stadium.

Luke Carter, who's been accumulating more hat tricks than Alex Ovechkin and Wayne Gretzky (ice hockey's all-time leading scorers, for the uninitiated), produced another one Tuesday night. The junior scored both goals as Crockett took a 2-1 halftime advantage, then scored his third with 12:43 remaining to push the Cav margin up to 5-2 after Obion had narrowed it six minutes earlier.

Brandon Carcamo, Aiden Markgraf, and Jathen Young netted the other goals for Crockett, which received three assists from Braulio Marquez and one apiece from Carter and Carcamo. Noah Mayfield made three saves in goal for the winners, who are now 11-3 on the season.

TENNIS: By making the district tournament semifinals at #1 singles before being defeated, Crockett's Izzy Yearwood earned All-District honors with her performance this week. Yearwood won her first three matches before falling in the semifinals.



Left: ... but White had retrieved the carom in the shortstop hole and gunned the ball over to Thornton, who successfully applied the tag. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Lady Cav center fielder Hannah Carter made a valiant effort to try to catch Emma Wray's second-inning home run ball, but it was beyond her reach, giving the Lady Choctaws a 1-0 lead. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: One sight Cavalier sports fans will miss next season is the smiling face of Sadie Hoover, seen here enjoying her final base hit as a Crockett County softballer. Hoover's smile was a fixture at both the volleyball court and softball field. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Catcher Madison Solis continued to hit the ball hard Tuesday evening, but Dyer County left fielder Abbie Gibbons made two outstanding running catches against the Lady Cav senior. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: Piper White got into the Lady Cav posing parade of the district tournament, reacting after her third-inning double to left-center. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Far Left: Wesley Thornton, the next batter, crushed this pitch to dead center with home run distance, but the Lady Choctaws' Kierstyn Ray gauged the fence railing perfectly and robbed Thornton above the top. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett's Anna Stallings was named the District 13-AAA Pitcher of the Year for her outstanding season as the Lady Cavaliers finished 28-10. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: Luke Carter gets ready to fire the shot that breaks a 1-1 tie with 15 minutes left in the first half of Tuesday night's district tournament win over Obion County. Carter would finish with another hat trick. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Aiden Markgraf (23) reacts after scoring on a cross from Luke Carter to push Crockett ahead 4-1 in Tuesday night's match with Obion County. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Braulio Marquez completely fakes an Obion defender to get his feet out of position, setting up one of the three assists Marquez recorded for his teammates in the match. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Brandon Carcamo drilled this goal past the Rebel keeper at the 36:08 mark of the second half, giving Crockett a 3-1 edge at the time. Carcamo also assisted on another goal. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jathen Young (right) celebrates the final goal of the night with teammates Cam Martin (5), Mason Wood (7), and Daniel Grajeda. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Max Utley, the mainstay of the Crockett back line, sizes up the alignment near the goal area before delivering a free kick into the zone. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Below: Crockett's Daniel Grajeda, another valuable member of the Cav back line, battles for control of this airborne ball with a couple of Rebels. (Photo by Robin Waddey)





Left: Luke Carter (1) tries to flip the ball backward near the goal in order to keep it in play for a better move or for a teammate in action from Tuesday night's district tournament. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Josue Martinez -- another valuable defender in the Cav back line -- drills this pass forward to try to start an offensive attack in Tuesday's match with Obion. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett senior Izzy Yearwood earned a berth on the All-District Team by reaching the semifinals of the district tournament at #1 singles. (Photo by Ron Barry)