REBECCA WADDEY HAT TRICK RESCUES LADY CAV SOCCER; VOLLEYBALLERS ROLL AGAIN

By Ron Barry

For the first 40 minutes Thursday, Carli Branson may have thought she was watching an outdoor showing of Night of the Living Dead.

Crockett County's girls soccer coach had just viewed a first half in which her players sleepwalked around Cavalier Stadium like a bunch of nonchalant zombies. As a result, visiting Jackson North Side held a 1-0 lead as the Lady Cavaliers headed to the north end of the field for their intermission talk.

"We did not play together as a unit at all in that first half," Branson said later. "So we just told them, 'We [the coaches] don't care if we win this game or not. But just find a way to get the ball in the back of the net.' We decided to keep it simple." Crockett had yet to score a goal in three halves of play this season at this point.

The halftime admonition tossed some gasoline on the fire that burns inside Lady Cav junior Rebecca Waddey, who had a fairly nondescript opening frame herself. But over the final 40 minutes, Waddey rammed home three goals, providing the necessary offense for Crockett to post a 3-1 victory and snatch a district win in the process.

Things were so lackadaisical in the first half for the hosts that the only goal scored came when freshman goalkeeper Hannah Wede – normally as reliable as a Scottie Scheffler putt – got fooled by the strength of the breeze that was blowing at North Side's back. A long-distance shot, which Wede appeared to be tracking all the way, just kept floating higher and higher until it sailed over her leaping hand and just under the crossbar. Wede turned around and glared at the ball in the net as if in disbelief – but also with a look on her face that clearly said, "That's not going to happen again."

It didn't. She went on to record 13 saves, including one shot that hit the top crossbar and bounced straight down at the goal line; Wede grabbed it before it could be poked into the netting.



Left: The shot that started the comeback: Rebecca Waddey launches a shot from 28 yards out that glides over the goalkeeper's leap and ties the match at 1-1. (Photo by Ron Barry)

For the second straight match, Crockett benefitted from the defensive speed of Chloe Campbell and the dependability of freshman Kyleigh Kelley, who always seems to be in the right place at the right time. Claire Nichols and Kendra Juarez comprise the rest of the solid back line that so ably assists Wede.

On the offensive end, it's been more of a struggle. Crockett didn't score in its opening match at Huntingdon, settling for a 0-0 tie, and things weren't going any better in this one until Waddey took matters into her own hands – or feet, to be more accurate. The determined junior thumped a shot from the 18-yard-line – a total boot of 28 yards – and boomed it past the North Side keeper to tie the contest at 1-1 with just over 30 minutes left to play.

That opened the floodgates, or at least allowed a little trickle. Shortly thereafter, Lady Cav sophomore Skyleigh Qualls was making a rush from the left side when she was dragged down inside the goal box by a North Side defender. Officials awarded a penalty kick, and Waddey nailed it past the keeper to make it 2-1 with 25:49 remaining on the clock.

Ten minutes later, Crockett freshman Ruth Gourley centered a pass from the left sideline and Waddey threaded it through the Lady Indian defenders, securing her hat trick and giving Crockett a 3-1 advantage with 15:15 to go.

"It certainly wasn't pretty, but it's another step toward trying to be better," Branson said. "We're so young, and we have a lot of players that are still learning parts of the game. But we've got to play together. We changed our starting lineup for this game, and we may change it again before the next one. Nobody's spot is safe if we don't learn to play as one unit."

The Lady Cavs will be back at it again Monday, hosting Jackson Central-Merry.

VOLLEYBALL: Coach Andrew Laman's Lady Cavalier volleyball team made it three wins in as many starts Thursday night, sweeping visiting Obion County Central 3-0 in Bill Emerson Memorial Gymnasium. Crockett hammered the Lady Rebels 25-11, 25-16, and 25-10 to move to 3-0 heading into this weekend's trip to Memphis for the prestigious Spartan Classic. Laman knows his squad will be facing much tougher competition in the Memphis event than what his girls have seen thus far in winning their nine straight sets.





Left: Cristal Martinez (1) holds off a North Side player while glancing upfield for a pass recipient. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

Below: Kate Davis -- who always gives Crockett a spark when she hits the pitch -- races with the ball in an attempt to get an attack going. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

Above: Chloe Campbell swoops in to swipe the ball on a North Side attack as fellow defenders Claire Nichols and Kyleigh Kelley hustle back to help out. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Skyleigh Qualls (18) -- here trying to get off a shot through North Side traffic -- was later dragged down when making a rush toward the goal, setting up Crockett's go-ahead score, ... (Photo by Robin Waddey)

Below: ... which was procured when Rebecca Waddey drilled this penalty kick for the 2-1 lead. (Photo by Ron Barry)









Left: North Side's lone goal had come when this wind-aided shot kept floating higher and higher until it eluded the leaping Hannah Wede. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: The Lady Cavs lost the services of freshman Catherine Scruggs during first-half play when her right foot caught in the turf, causing her to roll her ankle. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Caroline Scruggs was her usual active self for the Lady Cavaliers. The gritty freshman may be a four-sport participant before her "rookie" year is complete. (Photo by Ron Barry)







Above: Freshman Kyleigh Kelley had another solid outing on the defensive end for Crockett County. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Freshman Ruth Gourley centered a pass from the left sideline to gain an assist when Rebecca Waddey blistered the resulting shot through North Side defenders, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... bringing about congratulations from Braniya Green (14), Litha Jones (20), and Ruth Gourley (4). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Once Hannah Wede scolded herself for letting the wind fool her on the North Side goal, she stopped everything else, posting a 13-save performance for the afternoon. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Inside the gym at the volleyball match, Keeton Holyfield and Ava Lee were combining for this winning block as Crockett was closing out a 3-0 sweep over Obion County Central. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Audrey Whitby (10) and Addie Davidson (7) go through the hand-slap line at the conclusion of Thursday's match, which made Crockett 3-0 on the season. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Lakyn Forsythe hammers a serve in the 25-10 third-set victory over Obion. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Wesley Thornton goes high to block this attempted Obion kill, hammering it right back where it came from. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Head Coach Andrew Laman knows the competition will be much tougher than what his Lady Cavs have seen thus far when his team heads to Memphis this weekend for the Spartan Invitational. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Right: Carmen Claybrooks readies to return a Lady Rebel serve. (Photo by Ron Barry)

