

VOLLEYBALLERS ROCK GIBSON COUNTY; CROSS-COUNTRY GIRLS SHINE AT UNION CITY MEET

By Ron Barry

Every Crockett County sports fan knows that Wesley Thornton can flat-out hammer a softball. But she can also blast a volleyball through just about any double-block thrown at her.

And... so can Deonna Cole. And Keeton Holyfield. And Katherine West. And Madi Collins. And all five of them were drilling holes through the Gibson County front line Tuesday night as Coach Andrew Laman's Lady Cavaliers swept past the Lady Pioneers 3-0 in Alamo.

One of the keys to Crockett's fast 8-2 start this season has been the depth of Laman's front row. West and Cole, both seniors, specialize in slamming balls set to the left side. Holyfield, another senior, is one of the smartest players the Lady Cavs have ever had, and has a knack for knowing exactly where to steer the ball and how much power - or touch - to apply to it. She does most of her damage from the middle front.

Collins, a junior, and Thornton, a sophomore, don't care which position in the front row they end up fielding. Both can jump out of the gym and take your head off if they get a set in the right place.

The power punches were on full display Tuesday night. After a slow start - Crockett actually trailed 10-8 in the opening set at one point - the Lady Cavs pounded the visitors 25-15, 25-18, and 25-16 to cruise to their eighth win. Their only defeats came at the prestigious Spartan Tournament in Memphis this past weekend, but they also won three matches in between the two losses.

Laman is also getting significant use of his front-line five as servers and occasional back-row position players, joining libero Addie Davidson, Audrey Whitby, and Darcy Puffer as the primary back-liners. Providing most of the sets is Lakyn Forsythe, and the group has blended their various roles well thus far in the early stages of the schedule.



Left: Sophomore Wesley Thornton (20) brings the hammer down for a kill against Gibson County Tuesday night as Lady Cav teammates Katherine West (3), Lakyn Forsythe (11), and Addie Davidson (7) back up the play. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Next up for the Lady Cavs is much-improved Milan, which gave Crockett some intense duels a year ago. That match is Thursday in Emerson Gymnasium; the varsity will follow a JV contest at 5 pm.

CROSS-COUNTRY: While official times and results won't be available until sometime Wednesday, Crockett's cross-country teams had four runners earn medals at Tuesday's meet in Union City.

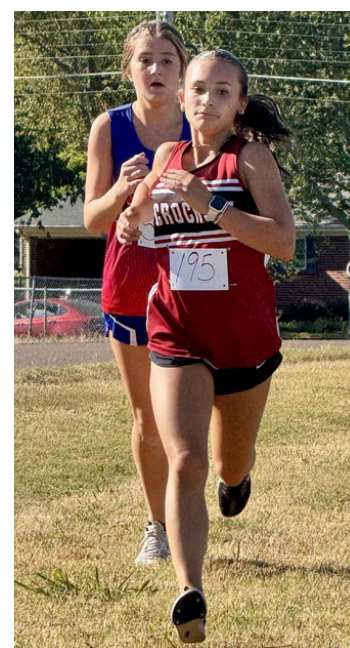
Three girls - Alivia Hale (8th), Avery Thornton (10th), and Claire Evans (14th) - medaled for Crockett. One boy - Aidan Klonowski (8th) - did so for the Cavaliers. Coach Julie Nass said the Lady Cavaliers finished third overall as a team, and that several runners in Tuesday's meet set new personal records for themselves.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SOFTBALL: Coach Duke Kail's Lady Cavs rode the four-hit pitching of Piper Ledford and two hits and two RBIs from shortstop Addison Ward to a 4-1 victory Tuesday afternoon over visiting Milan Middle School.

Ledford went all six innings, allowing just one unearned run and one walk. She struck out six and also singled in the game's first run in the bottom of the second.

Ward smashed a two-run double in the bottom of the third, scoring Addison Killen and Anna McCoy. Ward tallied the Lady Cavs' fourth run when Kambri Hughes hit a hard ground ball that was batted for an error. Killen joined Ward with a two-hit day. Kyndall Savage drew two walks for the winners, who are now 6-2.

Crockett will host Huntingdon on Thursday at 5:30 pm.



Above: Alivia Hale placed eighth overall to lead the Lady Cavaliers to a third-place team finish at Union City Tuesday. (Photo by Terry Thornton)



Above: Crockett's cross-country girls finished third overall at Tuesday's Union City meet. Pictured is the start of that race, with Lady Cavs (from left) Marley Thornton, Hannah Wede, Claire Evans, Alivia Hale, and Avery Thornton visible in the photo. Caroline Scruggs is tucked in behind Evans. (Photo by Terry Thornton)



Left: Senior Katherine West -- who spent much of her time slamming kills -- has to settle for bumping this shot over the net to keep a rally going. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: An example of Keeton Holyfield's smarts: As Gibson County anticipates a smash -- and prepares for it -- the Lady Cav (14) senior casually steers the ball into the most open area of the court, as she's flanked by teammates Deonna Cole (15), Lakyn Forsythe (11), and Addie Davidson (7). (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Madi Collins blasts one of her power serves in Tuesday's volleyball victory over Gibson County. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Deonna Cole (15) belts a successful kill as the parade of Lady Cav smashers continued all night against Gibson County. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's medal winners from Tuesday's cross-country meet in Union City: (from left) Aidan Klonowski, Alivia Hale, Claire Evans, and Avery Thornton. (Photo by Julie Nass)



Above: Audrey Whitby (10) returns a Lady Pioneer serve as libero Addie Davidson (7) looks on. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Lakyn Forsythe (11) delivers the ideal set for a Crockett point, as Gibson County defenders can't tell whether it will be Wesley Thornton (20) or Katherine West (3) who will deliver the smash. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Addie Davidson steers a return toward the net for a teammate's set in Tuesday's straight-set win over Gibson County. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: CCMS shortstop Addison Ward contributed Tuesday's biggest hit, a two-run double, as the Lady Cavs improved to 6-2 for the season. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: CCMS hurler Piper Ledford delivers a pitch as corner infielders Caroline Neal (3rd base) and Addison Killen (1st base) ready for a possible play. Ledford limited visiting Milan to four hits Tuesday in Crockett's 4-1 win. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Kambri Hughes handled the catching duties for the victorious CCMS softball team Tuesday against Milan. (Photo by Ron Barry)

