

SOCCKER “SUPPORTING CAST” STEALS THE SHOW IN 6-0 DISTRICT WIN OVER OBION COUNTY



Above: Claire Nichols is often quick to stop opponent rushes before they start, clearing advance passes swiftly to prevent attackers from getting in position. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

On January 2, 1981, Larry Bird – perhaps the greatest shooter in NBA history until Steph Curry came along – once played an entire game without scoring any points, missing all nine of his shots in 37 minutes of action.

Legendary NFL quarterback Tom Brady threw four pass interceptions in a single game four different times.

Atlanta Brave hero Chipper Jones won the Major League Baseball batting title in 2008, hitting .364 for the season. The following year, he posted a rip-roaring... .264 – 100 points less.

The point? Even the best athletes in the world are sometimes off their games.

While she didn't quote the statistics above, Crockett County soccer coach Carli Branson was trying to get her team to understand that – sometimes – your game may be off a bit. But when it is, you have to find other ways to make your contribution to the team effort.

The topic came up after Thursday evening's 6-0 district victory over Obion County Central. The reason it came up was because none of the six goals was scored by Rebecca Waddey, the Lady Cavaliers' runaway leading scorer this season. Waddey already has two hat tricks (three goals in a game) and a four-goal match this fall, but on Thursday she never did stick one into the back of the net.

Yet Crockett prevailed 6-0. And Branson was using that fact to illustrate a lesson she wanted her players to learn for future matchups.



Above: Avery Thornton (13) scored two goals against the Lady Rebels, including the first one of the match. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

"Sometimes a game doesn't go the way you planned," she said. "Sometimes your own game may be off. It can be frustrating, but it happens to everybody. But when it happens, rather than hanging your head or moping around, that's the time when you look for opportunities to still make the team better. So your role may change a bit from game to game, depending on all sorts of circumstances. Players who make the adjustments to still help the team succeed are what we need to become."

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Thursday's match – Crockett's district opener – was an example. Waddey was getting some shots, but she's also beginning to realize that the Lady Cav opponents are keying their defenses specifically to stop her. And while the frustration of not scoring a goal was getting to her – and you have to know Waddey's work ethic to fully understand why she was frustrated – she still found a way to dish out two assists to her teammates as the usual "supporting cast" stepped into the scoring limelight.

Waddey, still just a junior, is a tireless worker. With several members of the soccer team also runners for the cross-country squad, Branson called off practice last Tuesday when Crockett held its own invitational meet. But as the runners were gathering near the starting line in the field at the south end of Cavalier Stadium, Waddey was across the way on the grass pitch – in 90-degree heat – drilling shot after shot into the net from beyond the goal box. It's what she does.

"Rebecca is constantly working to improve her game," Branson said. "She'll often stay after practice – by herself – and work on things that will make her better. So I understand the frustration she was feeling (tonight), but she's smart enough to realize there are so many things she can still do to help us succeed.



Above: Ruth Gourley (4) tallied her first home pitch goal as a varsity player and also had an assist for the winners. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Kate "Sparkplug" Davis -- who always ups the energy level every time she steps onto the pitch -- earned an assist in the match as well. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Skyleigh Qualls (18) maneuvers upfield as Chloe Campbell (24) provides support from behind. (Photo by Robin Waddey)



Thursday's response to the Lady Rebel defense clamping down on Waddey may be the impetus Branson needed to get her point across to the Lady Cavs. Four different players stepped up to get into the scoring column, and some others recorded their first assists as well.

Avery Thornton netted two goals for the winners, including the game's first. Freshman Caroline Scruggs also tallied twice, once after Ruth Gourley beautifully faked the goalkeeper out of position before dropping off a perfect pass to Scruggs, who only had to tap it in with her foot. Her second goal came after a late rush by Litha Jones, whose shot attempt near the goal was deflected back to the trailing Scruggs, who again merely had to redirect it toward an empty net.

Gourley scored her first home match varsity goal to make it 3-0 at the halftime break, and Alivia Hale nailed a second-half shot for Crockett's fifth goal of the match. Waddey contributed two assists, while Gourley, Cesia Sanchez, Jones, and Kate Davis each collected one.

"As we get into the tougher part of our schedule, we need to continue to be aware of making an extra pass instead of trying a difficult shot – little things like that," Branson said. "But I'm happy with the way we played tonight, and with how many players contributed. A lot of girls got a lot of minutes, and that can only help us as we move on from here."

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Crockett defense was effective enough that Lady Cav goalkeeper Hannah Wede only had to make a single save to post her clean sheet (shutout). Claire Nichols, Kendra Juarez, Chloe Campbell, Kamillah Juarez, Kyleigh Kelley, Marley Thornton, Amy Mena, and others helped keep Obion County off the scoreboard.

The Lady Cavs (now 4-1-1) will play at Jackson South Side on Monday at 5:30 before heading to the Lakeland Prep Tournament next weekend.

By the way – Larry Bird went on to lead the Boston Celtics to a championship that year; Tom Brady has won more Super Bowls than any other signal-caller; and Chipper Jones is in the Baseball Hall of Fame. It's safe to say they found their way back to success.

VOLLEYBALL: Crockett broke a three-match losing streak with a road victory at Obion County, sweeping the Lady Rebels 3-0 in straight sets to move to 14-5 for the season. The Lady Cavs will host South Gibson Monday night and Martin Westview Tuesday night before a tough rematch with Milan on the road Thursday evening.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SOFTBALL: CCMS had defeated USJ in Jackson 4-2 back on August 11, but the Lady Bruins returned the favor Thursday with a 6-1 triumph in Alamo.

Crockett's offense, which had produced 19 runs on Tuesday in a romp over Gibson County, managed just two hits against USJ – singles by Caroline Neal and Addison Ward. Meanwhile, four Lady Cav errors allowed four unearned runs to score. Hadley Haltom went 3-for-3 for the winners and Parker Nichols twirled the two-hot gem from the pitching circle for the Lady Bruins.

The Lady Cavs are now 8-5 for the season and will play at Lexington on Tuesday.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL: A huge Region 7 battle of 3-0 teams is on tap for Friday night in Cavalier Stadium as Coach Kevin Ward's crew hosts nemesis Dyer County, a club that defeated the Cavs twice a year ago. The winner will take a giant step forward in the Region 7 playoff picture with a 2-0 start. Kickoff is set for 7 p.m.



Left: When a soccer goalie runs forward to dive on the ball just at the exact time you're ready to kick it into the goal, you get a result like this: Crockett's Emme Grace Martin is about to deliver the kick, but Obion County's sliding keeper has latched on to the ball for dear life ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... which means Emme Grace Martin has no recourse but to pull a Superman and blast skyward; ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: ... unfortunately, gravity is Emme Grace Martin's Kryptonite, and she comes tumbling back to earth -- but unhurt, as it turns out. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett defender Kyleigh Kelley (23) moves the ball away from the Lady Cav goal to thwart an Obion rush. (Photo by Robin Waddey)



Above: Sequences are the early theme in this post. Here is Crockett's Alivia Hale (6), making a rush at the Obion goal alongside teammate Aime Aguilar ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... but Alivia Hale keeps her kick low, perhaps surprising the Lady Rebel keeper, who seems to be expecting a higher shot; ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: ... and as it settles into the net, we are left with a forlorn Obion goalie and a celebrating Alivia Hale. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Another sequence: Litha Jones (20) gets an apparent breakthrough, with an ever-aware Caroline Scruggs (5) right behind her, trailing the play. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: But as Litha Jones tries to boot it into the net, her shot is deflected by an Obion defender as Caroline Scruggs -- still trailing the play -- cuts to her left, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: ... and as the shot deflects toward the middle -- notice the goalie has already committed to stopping the first shot by Litha Jones -- Caroline Scruggs fields the deflection and drills it into the net for her second score of the match ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: ... which earns Litha Jones (20) an assist as Caroline Scruggs is congratulated by Chloe Campbell, Ruth Gourley (4), and Avery Thornton (13). (Photo by Robin Waddey)





Above: As is visible in this picture, Crockett's Rebecca Waddey (7) drew most of the attention of the Obion County defense, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Freshman Amy Mena was one of the Crockett defenders who helped keep Obion off the scoreboard in the 6-0 romp. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Rebecca Waddey (background left) launches a high, beautifully-placed corner kick, descending toward Crockett teammates Braniya Green (14), Chloe Campbell (middle), and Charlee Lewis (12) -- but the Lady Rebel defense was able to snuff out any scoring threat. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: ... but finally managed to launch an open shot on this play; unfortunately, Rebecca Waddey's attempt hit the top crossbar -- but she did record two assists on the day. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett coach Carli Branson (shouting instructions at left) also received outstanding minutes from the sister duo of Kamillah Juarez (16) ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: ... and Kendra Juarez, who is a mainstay in the Lady Cav defensive backfield. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Anahy De La Rosa (2) chases down a ball against an Obion defender. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

