SOCCER HOSTS SOUTH GIBSON IN KEY MATCH; GOLFERS TO DISTRICT TOURNEY IN DYERSBURG



Above: Ruth Gourley, a freshman -- one of six who started against Lakeland Prep -- scored Crockett's lone goal in a narrow 2-1 loss to a powerful team. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

After "playing some of our best soccer right now," Coach Carli Branson's Lady Cavaliers host one of their biggest district challenges Monday night against South Gibson.

Monday is also a big day for Crockett County's golfers, as they return to The Farms in Dyersburg to take the first step toward what they hope will be a regional tournament berth.

GIRLS SOCCER: Crockett competed in the Lakeland Showcase this past weekend, losing a nailbiter to the powerful host team 2-1 and then earning a 2-2 tie with Millington.

"We had solid performances this weekend even if they didn't end in our favor," Branson said. "I'm proud of the effort and mindset we showed. We believe we are playing some of our best soccer right now and tapping into our potential. We'll need to in order to take on as good a team as South Gibson."

The Lady Hornets from Medina will come into Monday's 5:30 p.m. encounter with a chip on their shoulder, having been handed a surprising 4-3 defeat by district rival Dyersburg last Wednesday. South Gibson is 7-2 on the season, while Crockett is 5-2-2 after this weekend.

In the Showcase opener against Lakeland Prep, the underdog Lady Cavs found themselves in a scoreless tie at halftime against what Branson called "a phenomenal team." As the second half began, "we caught them on their heels and came out aggressive and fast," according to Branson, and Crockett actually grabbed a 1-0 lead when freshman Ruth Gourley took a great pass from Alivia Hale and drilled a goal from 25 yards out.



Above: Crockett's Kate Davis (19) chases down a loose ball against Lakeland Prep. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

Lakeland Prep didn't panic, however, and rallied for the pair of goals that gave it the win. But Branson felt that her young club – starting six freshmen – earned at least a moral victory with their performance.

"While the game did not go our way, we did not walk out feeling defeated but motivated to improve on our mistakes and with a realization that we can play with strong teams, even after losing so many starters from last year," Branson said.

Against Millington on Saturday, Crockett took a 2-0 lead on a 20-yard shot from Rebecca Waddey and a "crash-the-goal" tally by Skyleigh Qualls, who punched in a corner cross pass toward the back post. But Millington made the proper adjustments and scored twice in the second half to forge the deadlock.

The winner of Monday's game with South Gibson will likely decide which team is the biggest challenger to Dyersburg for the district's top seed. The Lady Cavs play the Lady Trojans a week from Monday.

GOLF: The Cav golfers of Coach Chris Eubanks head to The Farms with the knowledge that they just finished a solid tournament effort there a week ago, in which Jack Shaver and George Randall were among five players who tied for first in the boys division (each shooting a 75) while Rachel Crossnoe was fifth in the girls grouping.
The district event begins at 8 a.m. for the 18-hole round. The top three teams and the top five individuals not on any of those three teams will qualify for the Region Tournament to follow one week later.



Above: Skyleigh Qualls (18) crashes the goal from the right side and pops in a corner cross from Rebecca Waddey to score Crockett's second goal against Millington Saturday. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

Below: Skyleigh Qualls is congratulated by Claire Nichols (25) after putting the Lady Cavs up 2-0 against Millington. Also celebrating are Ruth Gourley (4), Charlee Lewis (12), and Chloe Campbell (behind Nichols). (Photo by Robin Waddey)





Above: Alivia Hale set up Crockett's only goal against Lakeland Prep with a great pass to Ruth Gourley. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

MIDDLE SCHOOL SOFTBALL: The season came to an end this weekend for Coach Duke Kail's CCMS Lady Cavs, who won two games but then lost a 4-3 heartbreaker to USJ to fall one game shy of competing for the conference championship.

Crockett opened tournament play with a 6-5 win against a Lexington squad on a walk-off, two-run double by third baseman Addison Killen. The hit capped a four-run rally that erased a 5-2 deficit and helped the Lady Cavs overcome defensive miscues that provided Lexington with most of its runs. Killen drove in three of the winners' six tallies with two hits, while Anna McCoy added two hits and two RBIs. Kyndall Savage had a triple for Crockett.

In its next game, Crockett hung a 10-spot on the scoreboard in the second inning and cruised to an 11-0 shutout of Trinity Christian Academy. Caroline Neal and Addison Ward drove in two runs apiece and McCoy and Killen each scored twice to spark the offense, which banged out nine hits. Piper Ledford tossed three frames of one-hit ball for the pitching victory.

Against USJ, Kail's crew outhit the Lady Bruins 6-4, with Savage going 3-for-3 and stealing three bases, but the Lady Bruins induced a final fly ball when Crockett had the tying run at third base to seal the triumph. Hits by Savage and Neal and a groundout by Ledford produced the run that cut it to 4-3, but Neal was stranded at third on the last fly-out.

"We hit the ball much better this weekend than we had in the last few weeks of the season," Kail said, "but we fell one game short. "This is a good group. I'm going to miss them." The Lady Cavs finished 10-7 for the season.



Left: The dew is still spraying off the ball as Crockett's Rebecca Waddey -- who scored the game's first goal -- battles for an airborne ball with a Lady Trojan defender. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

Right: Crockett goalkeeper Hannah Wede leaps high to bat away a close shot from the right side and keep the score tied 2-2 in Saturday's match with Millington. (Photo by Robin Waddey)

