12/9/2025 By Ron Barry

CROCKETT COUNTY HOOPERS SNATCH PAIR OF HEARTSTOPPERS FROM UNION CITY



Above: Jayden Frye from the side and Cortland Reddick from behind team up for Crockett to knock the ball away from Union City's terrific sophomore Hollister Johnson, leading to an overtime layup for Frye. (Photo by Ron Barry)

An untimely cramp, an "all-ball" block, and a couple of role-player "Savages" turned heroes all figured into the mix Tuesday night in Alamo as Crockett County's basketballers swept a heart-stopping doubleheader from Union City, avenging losses from their season openers.

Coach Kayla Irvin's Lady Cavaliers rallied from a 28-17 halftime deficit behind inspired play from reserve post player Torey Savage and a spectacular blocked shot by Keeton Holyfield, overcoming a late leg cramp that sidelined point guard Wesley Thornton and significantly complicated the final minutes of Crockett's 46-43 triumph.

In the nightcap, Coach Spencer Bursey's gritty Cavaliers received a star performance from reserve Corey Savage and eight overtime points from Jayden Frye to turn back the talented Golden Tornadoes 61-53.

While Irvin's girls continued to have shooting woes – except for Ellie Henderson and Savage on Tuesday night – the Lady Cavs showed plenty of grit in fighting back from the 11-point halftime deficit, largely created by Union City's extremely aggressive trap press. The Lady Tornadoes instantly appeared in pairs whenever a Crockett player began a dribble or picked one up. Steals were numerous, as were fouls – but there was so much hacking going on, much of it wasn't penalized with a whistle.

The comeback was largely spurred by a relentless attack on the boards by the Lady Cavs, notably Savage and Halle Holyfield. As the hosts stepped up their aggressiveness over the final two periods, they began to whittle away at Union City's lead, and when Keeton Holyfield drilled a three-pointer at the 7:09 mark of the final quarter, Crockett had pulled within a single tally.

Following a Lady Tornado free throw, Thornton muscled inside on a drive to the net and cashed in an "and-1" three-point play to give the Lady Cavs a 38-36 edge with 5:19 to go. A minute later, Henderson drilled her third trey of the game to make it 41-36 – Crockett's biggest advantage of the contest.

But Union City's Uriah Davis scored the game's next five points to tie things up again with just 1:02 remaining. All five came after Thornton was forced to leave with a severe leg cramp, which took out Crockett's best ballhandler just when Irvin was prepared to spread her offensive set to try to kill the clock.

It won't show up on the stat sheet, but Crockett's biggest assist of the night may be credited to trainer Heather Gadlen, who worked on Thornton's leg intensely enough to get her back into the fray after Union City had tied it up. Crockett scored the go-ahead bucket when Henderson found Savage cutting underneath for a layup with only 33 seconds remaining.

The Lady Tornadoes worked the ball to top scorer Sh'Nyla Moss – who torched the Lady Cavs for 22 points – and she drove into the top part of the lane and went up for the game-tying shot with seven seconds to go. Keeton Holyfield timed it perfectly and completely stuffed the shot attempt, with Henderson being fouled when she recovered the ball with 5.4 seconds on the clock.

Henderson hit one of two charity shots to force Union City to make a three-pointer for the tie, but Moss's last-second heave from near midcourt never had a chance to go in.

Henderson's 12-point effort ably supported Keeton Holyfield's 13, with Thornton contributing nine and Savage seven. Crockett had another horrific night at the foul line, missing 14 of their 23 attempts. But the Lady Cavs now have a winning record at 4-3, their first time above the .500 mark since the season began.

Crockett's boys received yeoman efforts from Corey Savage – usually a role player – and point guard Frye to construct a fourth-period comeback and then an overtime domination.

Hampered immediately by two quick fouls on sophomore post Max Woods – and already missing inside starter Andre Garduno because of injury – the Cavaliers could have folded the tent early on, but hung close to the Golden Tornadoes through three quarters by playing scrappy defense and getting a couple of three-pointers from Cortland Reddick.

Savage then netted eight points in the fourth period, drilling a pair of treys and a layup, pulling the hosts within a point at 46-45 with 4:36 to go. Reddick then nailed his third three of the game at the 3:29 mark, giving Crockett a 48-47 advantage. Frye scored 20 seconds later after a steal to make it 50-47, but Union City's outstanding sophomore Hollister Johnson tallied the next four points to put the visitors back on top with just 1:40 remaining.

A Frye free throw with 1:25 to go was the final point scored in regulation, with the teams deadlocked at 51-all heading into the four-minute overtime.

Bursey's crew dominated the extra period, with Frye scored the first two buckets before Ben Burgess added one for the Cavs. Four down-the-stretch free throws by Frye iced it for Crockett, now 3-4 on the season.

Savage totaled 17 and Frye 15 for the winners, who also got nine from Reddicks, six from Burgess, and five from Max Woods. DK Woods provided some timely defense and rebounding for the Cavs in the game's later minutes.

Both Crockett squads hit the road Friday to challenge Gibson County in Dyer, with the girls tipping off first at 6 p.m.

CCHS Girls GM 7: Dec 9 at Alamo
Union City 12 16 7 8 - 43
Crockett 9 8 14 15 - 46

Crockett – Keeton Holyfield 13, Ellie Henderson 12, Wesley Thornton 9, Torey Savage 7, Audrey Whitby 5,Halle Holyfield 0, Ruth Gourley 0. 2-Pt FG: 11. 3-Pt FG: 5 (Henderson 3, K Holyfield 2, Whitby). FT: 9-23. Record: 4-3.

UC – Sh'Nyla Moss 22, Blair McKinnis 8, Uriah Davis 7, Alli McMillan 2, Riyan Gordon 2, Alaja Crawford 2, Addy Lanner 0, Ainsley Sadler 0. 2-Pt FG: 15. 3-Pt FG: 2 (Moss, Davis). FT: 7-8. Record: 4-4.

CCHS Boys GM 7: Dec 9 at Alamo (Overtime)
Union City 17 12 13 9 2 - 53
Crockett 10 14 13 14 10 - 61

Crockett – Corey Savage 17, Jayden Frye 15, Cortland Reddick 9, Ben Burgess 6, Max Woods 5, Kevin Pledge 4, Squirt Pickens 3, DK Woods 2, Karson Kail 0, Brelin Dunigan 0, Amarion Hobson 0. 2-Pt FG: 13. 3-Pt FG: 6 (Reddick 3, Savage 2, Pickens). FT: 17-21. Record: 3-4.

UC – Hollister Johnson 19, Kobe Maddox 14, Tayshun Gentry 7, Brayden Marshall 5, Ayden Lewis 5, Will Kail 3, JB Thompson 0, Clayton Montgomery 0, Brayden Chism 0, Kaden Robinson 0, Zaven Thompson 0. 2-Pt FG: 13. 3-Pt FG: 6 (Maddox 4, Kail, Lewis). FT: 9-17. Record: 4-5.

Below: In an extremely physical girls game, Lady Cavs Ellie Henderson (right) and Halle Holyfield wrestle for control of the ball with a Lady Tornado opponent. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Right: Corey Savage netted eight of his team-high 17 points in the fourth quarter to help Crockett force overtime against Union City. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Keeton Holyfield (15) turns to run back upcourt after absolutely stuffing a shot attempt by Union City's Sh'Nyla Moss (11), who can't believe she just got blocked. Ellie Henderson comes up with the ball for Crockett as teammate Halle Holyfield lends support. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Crockett cheerleaders Lexie Beaird and Jentry Elmore manage to look luminous even while serving as base support for a teammate. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Jayden Frye absolutely took over the boys game in overtime, scoring eight of Crockett's 10 points, including this maneuver for a layup. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Sophia McGowan cheers on the Cavaliers after completing a successful campaign to help collect more than 500 pairs of socks for distribution at the Crockett County Carl Perkins Center. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Ellie Henderson knocked down a trio of three-pointers on her way to a season-high 12-point night against Union City. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Wesley Thornton swipes the ball from Union City's Blair McKinnis and proceeds to navigate her way around Lady Tornado Uriah Davis (15). (Photo by Ron Barry)





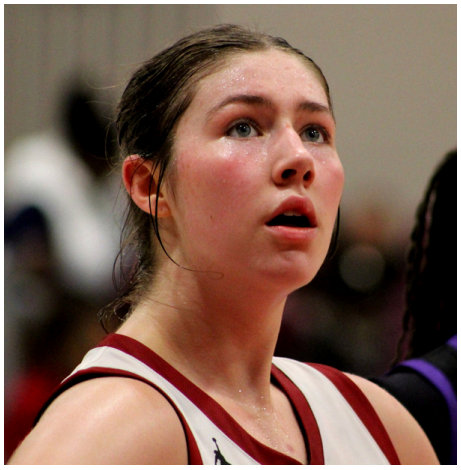


Above: A determined Kevin Pledge prepares to negotiate a drive around Union City's Hollister Johnson. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: This free throw by Max Woods with just 1:25 left in regulation tied the boys game at 51-51 and sent the duel into overtime. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Halle Holyfield -- as usual -- was the hustle queen Tuesday night, snaring multiple rebounds for fighting for every loose ball. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: Cortland Reddick knocks this ball away from Union City's Ayden Lewis as Crockett cranked up the defensive pressure in the second half. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Wesley Thornton may be checking her heart rate as she steps to the foul line to complete an "and-1" that gave the Lady Cavs a 38-36 lead in the fourth quarter. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Crockett reserve Tink Willis was fired up in the bench area as the Lady Cavaliers staged their fourth-quarter comeback. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Makayla Murphy cheers on the Cavaliers as the starting lineup is introduced. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Crockett's Squirt Pickens works against Union City's Kobe Maddox in a battle of the "zeroes." (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's Torey Savage -- here forcing Lady Tornado Blair McKinnis away from the basket on a drive -- was a major positive factor in the Lady Cavs' victory Tuesday. (Photo by Ron Barry)

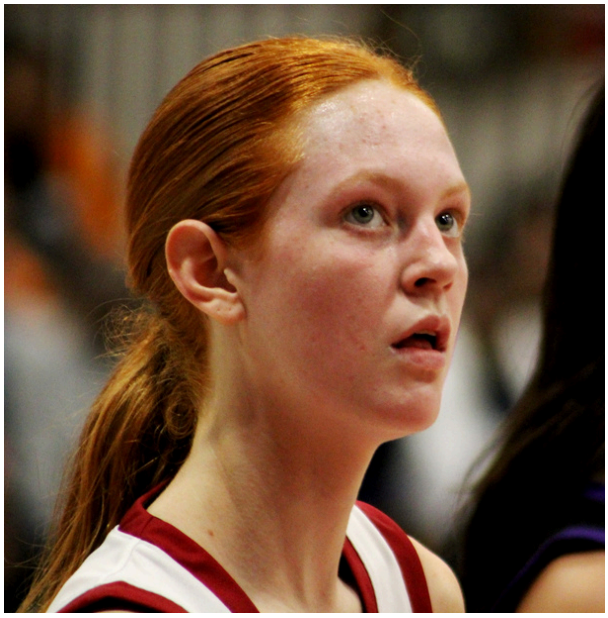


Above: Karson Kail gets tangled up with Golden Tornado guard Kobe Maddox on this drive in Tuesday's nightcap. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: With only minutes left to play, Wesley Thornton is working to ease a severe cramp out of her legs in order to re-enter for the last stretch as Ruth Gourley and Callie Freeman focus on the action. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Keeton Holyfield -- who led the Lady Cavs with 13 points -- made the key defensive play of the night, using her volleyball skills to stuff block the final Union City shot. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Max Woods and Ben Burgess (33) try to stop this attack by Union City's Hollister Johnson, who scored 19 for the visitors. (Photo by Ron Barry)