01/06/26 By Ron Barry

HUSTLING CAVLIERS TAKE DOWN MCNAIRY CENTRAL; LADY CAVS NOT SO FORTUNATE



Above: Carter Wren came off the bench to drill five three-pointers -- including three in a decisive third-period run -- as Crockett's boys defeated McNairy Central Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Coach Spencer Bursey's starters have been putting in some quality minutes for Crockett County lately, but Tuesday night there were three reserves who had as much of an impact on the game with McNairy Central as anybody.

Karson Kail snapped the Cavaliers out of an offensive sleepwalk with a pair of three-pointers in the first half; Ben Burgess netted seven straight tallies in a second-quarter run that gave the hosts a lead they never relinquished; and Carter Wren tossed in a career-high five long-range bombs to seal the deal as Crockett improved to 10-7 by knocking off the Bobcats 63-51.

In the opening game of Tuesday's doubleheader, the Lady Cavaliers proved once again that the only thing consistent about them this season is their inconsistency. Fresh off of one of their best showings of the season in a 53-28 romp over Gibson County, Crockett's girls laid an ostrich-sized egg in falling to McNairy – a team they had already beaten this season in Selmer – 40-23. And the "23" isn't a typo.

Thankfully, Bursey's Cavs salvaged the evening for the home crowd, although it looked for a while like Crockett's boys might not score. Kail came off the bench to drain a three with only 4:32 remaining in the first quarter to provide the first Cav points and then added a second one to begin the second period and give Crockett the lead at 14-13. Wren countered a McNairy trey with his first bomb a minute later, followed by a Cortland Reddick three.

After McNairy fought back to a 20-20 tie, Burgess took over by scoring seven straight points in the next 3:30 to push Crockett's advantage to 27-20 with 1:56 remaining before the halftime break. Additional buckets by Corey Savage and Kevin Pledge provided a 31-23 edge at the intermission.

In the third quarter, Wren cut loose from downtown, shooting the Cavs into a double-digit lead. When McNairy threatened with a final-period run, Pledge answered with seven of his 15 points, capping the triumph with a huge "and-one" three-point play in the paint at the 1:59 mark.

Wren matched Pledge's 15-point performance with his five threes, and Burgess finished with nine counters. Kail, Reddick, and Jayden Frye all netted six apiece for Crockett.

Jackson King and Konner Shelton paced McNairy's out-of-control offense, which consisted largely of sprinting to the basket with the ball, regardless of the defensive set employed by the Cavs. The myriad of turnovers created by the strategy assisted the Crockett victory immensely.

The less said about the girls' game, the better. The Lady Cavs managed only 12 points in the entire first half and then did even worse (11 points) in the second. McNairy held Crockett's leading scorers – Keeton Holyfield and Wesley Thornton – to a combined six points. The Lady Bobcats' Shelton girls – Bailee and Carlee – outscored the hosts by themselves, finishing with 26 points between them. Audrey Whitby led Crockett with eight, three more than Ellie Henderson.

Both Crockett teams return to action Friday night, traveling to Dyersburg for a twin bill that begins at 6:00.

CCHS Girls GM 17: Jan 6 at Alamo
McNairy Co 11 13 10 6 - 40
Crockett 5 7 7 4 - 23

Crockett – Audrey Whitby 8, Ellie Henderson 5, Keeton Holyfield 4, Wesley Thornton 2, Halle Holyfield 2, Torey Savage 2, Ruth Gourley 0, Tink Willis 0. 2-Pt FG: 6. 3-Pt FG: 2 (Whitby 2). FT: 5-10. Record: 11-6.

McNairy – Bailee Shelton 15, Carlee Shelton 11, Haylee Whittemore 6, Neerajah Wade 4, Jaselyn McGee 4, Meredith Arnwine 0, Rhyan Gray 0, Macee Gilbert 0. 2-Pt FG: 9. 3-Pt FG: 6 (B Shelton 3, Whittemore 2, C Shelton). FT: 4-6. Record: 12-3.

CCHS Boys GM 17: Jan 6 at Alamo
McNairy Co 13 10 16 12 - 51
Crockett 9 22 17 15 - 63
Crockett – Kevin Pledge 15, Carter Wren 15, Ben Burgess 9, Jayden Frye 6, Karson Kail 6, Cortland Reddick 6, Andre Garduno 4, Corey Savage 2, Squirt Pickens 0, Max Woods 0, Jeremiah Young 0. 2-Pt FG: 16. 3-Pt FG: 8 (Wren 5, Kail 2, Reddick). FT: 7-15. Record: 10-7.

McNairy – Jackson King 13, Konner Shelton 13, Jackson Allen 11, Connor Plunk 6, Kaneon Brooks 4, Jayden Wilson 2, Hayes Teague 2, Tyler Mangrum 0, JD Gaines 0. 2-Pt FG: 12. 3-Pt FG: 5 (Plunk 2, Shelton 2, Allen). FT: 12-16. Record: 4-11.



Above: Ben Burgess muscled in seven straight points in the second quarter to give Crockett a lead it would never relinquish in defeating McNairy Central. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Karson Kail netted a couple of first-half bombs to ignite the Cavalier offense, which went nearly four minutes into the game before scoring. (Photo by Ron Barry)







Left: Addie Dunn cheers on the Cavs from high atop her teammate-supported perch as Crockett prepares to tip off against the Bobcats. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Kevin Pledge -- who scored 15 points -- gets ready to toss his patented spin move against McNairy's Jackson Allen. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: The often out-of-control style utilized by the Bobcats is displayed here as a McNairy player goes right through Crockett point guard Squirt Pickens in his attempt to steal the ball. (Photo by Ron Barry)

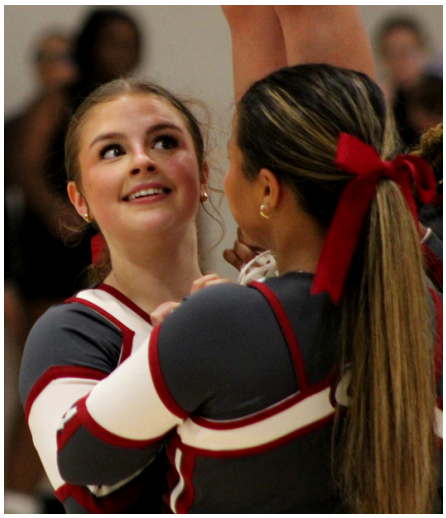
Left: Cavalier coaches Spencer Bursey and Tyler Mosier study the proceedings as Crockett begins its run to take the lead away from McNairy Central. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Cortland Reddick advances the ball upcourt as the Cavaliers try to capitalize on a fast break opportunity. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jayden Frye tries to slip past the McNairy defender as the Cavs work to run out the clock in the final couple of minutes Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: It can't always be easy to maintain a smile while helping lift another human above your head, but Crockett cheerleader Aleigha Dunn seems to have figured it out here. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Karson Kail readies a no-look, fast-break pass into the corner -- setting up Carter Wren for one of his five three-pointers on the night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: The Cavaliers' hustle had the Cavalier Crazies cheering loudly and often, in between their good-natured insults of the Bobcats. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Ben Burgess battled furiously inside against McNairy -- as did Kevin Pledge -- despite all the pushing, holding, and whatever else goes on in the paint. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: On one of his threes, Carter Wren pump-faked McNairy's Konner Shelton off his feet, watched him sail helplessly by, and then canned the long-range bomb. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett's Halle Holyfield finally gets away from McNairy's Haylee Whittemore, but her drive to the basket was quickly cut off by another Lady Bobcat. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: On a brighter note, at least the Crockett faithful got to enjoy the excellence that is Craig Cochran, the best courtside announcer in the business. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: There wasn't much to say about the girls' game. McNairy's Najeerah Wade forced shots like this from Crockett's Wesley Thornton (2), and nobody's outside attempts were going in either. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: McNairy's Haylee Whittemore (5) also made it difficult for Keeton Holyfield to get many good looks in the contest; Crockett's three-point leader didn't make one Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Crockett volleyball star Lakyn Forsythe (left) and football cheerleader Leah Beaird (right) looked like they were watching a horror show during the girls' game -- which it certainly resembled. (Photo by Ron Barry)