01/16/26 By Ron Barry

HENDERSON, BRAY KEY IN LADY CAVALIER WIN; CAVS FALL TO OBION IN OVERTIME



Above: Ellie Henderson canned her first five shots Friday night against Obion County, including three triples. (Photo by Ron Barry)

If you take a journey through the box scores of the Crockett County Lady Cavaliers' first 19 games, you won't find high offensive numbers from Ellie Henderson and Kira Bray. Henderson – a starter – just doesn't take many shots. Bray – a reserve – just doesn't get that many minutes, still working her way back from a knee injury suffered last season.

All that is subject to change after the duo's clutch performance at Obion County Friday night.

Playing their second game without injured starting point guard Wesley Thornton, and trailing 19-17 at halftime despite a nine-point opening quarter from Audrey Whitby, Crockett needed to find offense from someone. When Keeton Holyfield began the third period with a long three-pointer – she's the team's leading scorer this season – it looked like maybe that was the spark the Lady Cavs needed.

But at the 3:29 mark of the quarter, Coach Kayla Irvin's club was still behind by a point and it had only tallied nine in the stanza. One of the baskets had been a three by Henderson, and with the contest still middling along in the 20s (27-26, Obion), perhaps the often-reluctant shooter saw the necessity that her team could use a boost.

So with 2:07 on the clock, Henderson netted a shot from the lane and was fouled on the play. Her successful free throw tied the game at 29-all, and she was now 3-for-3 from the field and 1-for-1 from the foul line.

Just before the end of the quarter, Irvin and assistants Brent Fronabarger and Tyler Gadlen made the decision to see if gaining a height advantage would change the course of the duel. Neither team was noticeably taller than the other – until the Crockett staff inserted Bray into the mix.

The final period opened with Obion clinging to a 30-29 edge – a margin that was quickly erased when Henderson nailed another three-pointer from the left wing. After the Lady Rebels' Natalie Daniel converted an "and-one" to offset Henderson's bucket, Bray grabbed an offensive rebound and powered in a layup to put Crockett back ahead 34-33. The Lady Cavs would never trail again.

That's because in the next three-and-a-half minutes, Henderson would slam home another long three (she hit her first five shots) and Bray worked inside for three more layups, boosting Crockett's lead to 45-36 with 2:00 left in the game. Freshman Ruth Gourley made sure the Lady Cavs maintained the advantage by calmly swishing four straight free throws in the remaining time, and the visitors escaped with a hard-fought 50-43 district win.

Henderson finished with 14 points and Whitby 13 for the Lady Cavs, who are now 12-8. Bray had eight, Keeton Holyfield seven, Gourley five, and Halle Holyfield two. Harlee Johnson was the top Obion scorer with 15, while Daniel added 12 and Emeri Lee 10.

In the doubleheader's nightcap, Coach Spencer Bursey's Cavaliers made a spirited comeback from 15 points down to force an overtime – keyed by a warrior-like performance from Kevin Pledge – but the host Rebels rode the lane-driving of speedy guard Tanner Richmond in the extra period to post a 58-54 triumph.

Pledge tallied 27 points with a variety of inside moves that kept Obion frustrated throughout the contest, although early on the Rebels' Levi Hendrix was blocking almost every shot Crockett offered up from the lane area. That defensive effort helped Obion build a 30-15 lead with just 1:51 left in the opening half, but the Cavaliers then reeled off 11 consecutive points while holding the hosts scoreless for six minutes over two quarters.

Bursey's crew twice pulled within three points on a floater by Ben Burgess late in the third period and a Pledge bucket with 6:31 left in the fourth. Crockett briefly took the lead with 5:25 to go as Pledge continued his magic, and the contest was tied 43-43 with 57.7 seconds remaining after two free throws by Pledge.

Over the next 42 seconds, Obion had three different players go to the foul line and only make one of their two shots, so the margin was 46-43 with 15.1 to play. Realizing it would take a three-pointer to keep the game going, the Cavs inserted long-range threat Carter Wren into the duel, even though he had not scored all night.

You guessed it. With five seconds to go, Wren drilled a triple from the top of the key, and the game went to overtime when Obion's Bryce Richardson missed a last-second 17-footetr from the right corner with Crockett's Max Woods in his face.

For Crockett, the good news ended there. Obion's Richmond dominated the extra period, netting eight of his team-leading 20 points. The Cavs didn't help themselves when a player who had already fouled out of the game was tagged with a bench technical for hollering at an official on a no-call with 3:06 remaining and the margin at just three points. But after the free throws and possession of the ball, the hosts pushed the edge to six points and eventually seven before a trey by Jayden Frye made the final score seem closer than it was.

Crockett also missed five free throws in the overtime, as did Obion. The Rebels actually missed 13 of the 24 they took in the contest, another factor aiding the Cavs' comeback in regulation. Pledge was outstanding in his 27-point effort. Frye and Woods supported him with eight points apiece. Backing Richmond's 20 for the Rebels were Carson Jones with 16 and Hendrix with 10. The Cavs are now 10-10 on the season.

Next up for both Crockett teams is a Tuesday night home twin bill with Haywood.

CCHS Girls GM 20: Jan 16 at Troy
Crockett 11 6 12 21 - 50
Obion Co 9 10 11 13 - 43

Crockett – Ellie Henderson 14, Audrey Whitby 13, Kira Bray 8, Keeton Holyfield 7, Ruth Gourley 5, Halle Holyfield 2, Torey Savage 1, Alice Luten 0. 2-Pt FG: 9. 3-Pt FG: 6 (Henderson 3, Whitby 2, K Holyfield). FT: 14-19. Record: 12-8.

OC – Harlee Johnson 15, Natalie Daniel 12, Emeri Lee 10, Hartleigh Jo Cary 3, Kendall Clanton 3, Katy Frazier 0, Lakeland Tubbs 0, Italia Gordon 0, Preslee Johnson 0. 2-Pt FG: 10. 3-Pt FG: 4 (Lee, H Johnson, Cary, Clanton). FT: 11-16. Record: 6-13.

CCHS Boys GM 20: Jan 16 at Troy (OT)
Crockett 7 14 9 16 8 - 54
Obion Co 18 12 7 9 12 - 58

Crockett – Kevin Pledge 27, Jayden Frye 8, Max Woods 8, Cortland Reddick 5, Ben Burgess 3, Carter Wren 3, Corey Savage 0, Squirt Pickens 0, Brilan Dunagin 0. 2-Pt FG: 16. 3-Pt FG: 4 (Frye 2, Reddick, Wren). FT: 10-16. Record: 10-10.

OC – Tanner Richmond 20, Carson Jones 16, Levi Hendrix 10, Jatlynn Mosley 4, Bryce Richardson 3, Jack Helper 3, Charlie Harper 2, Ethan Caldwell 0. 2-Pt FG: 19. 3-Pt FG: 3 (Richmond 2, Helper). FT: 11-24. Record: 14-5.



Above: Kira Bray entered the game very late in the third quarter and proceeded to knock down four baskets for eight points, sparking Crockett's fourth-quarter spurt. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Audrey Whitby was red-hot in the game's opening quarter, netting nine of her 13 points. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Right: Carrington Smith (right) and Jalisa Tate keep a cheer going while nervously checking the scoreboard as the Lady Cavs enter the final period trailing by a point. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: Halle Holyfield drives to the basket during Crockett's big fourth-quarter push Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Once Crockett finally pushed ahead in the fourth period against Obion, cheerleader Layla Petty was all smiles. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Keeton Holyfield tries to see around the defense of Obion's Natalie Daniel in Friday night's game in Troy. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Ruth Gourley races upcourt to beat the Lady Rebel press. Gourley drained four straight free throws in the final two minutes to help seal Crockett's win over Obion. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Audrey Whitby heads for the hoop against the defense of Obion's Katy Frazier. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Below: Keeton Holyfield slips through a trio of Lady Rebel defenders on her way to a layup in Friday night's contest. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Audrey Whitby (left) and Ellie Henderson (30) try to box in Obion's Emeri Lee during Friday night's game in Troy. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Kevin Pledge had a monster game against Obion Central, netting 27 points. Here, Pledge calms himself before swishing two free throws to tie the game 43-43 with 57.7 seconds left. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Ben Burgess hit this running floater between two Rebel defenders to pull Crockett within 33-30 with 1:57 to play in the third quarter. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Gabby Dobbelaire and her cheer teammates had to work overtime Friday night to keep the encouragement going for the Cavaliers. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Jayden Frye (23) hit this shot over the outstretched arm of Obion's Ethan Caldwell (5). (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Max Woods came off the bench to score eight big points and grab some key rebounds. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Hadleigh McCoy keeps the crowd involved as the Cavaliers prepare to head into overtime at Troy ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... but in the extra period, Crockett saw too much of this: Tanner Richmond (1), weaving inside for layups that sealed the deal for Obion Central. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Ben Burgess attempts to get a fast break started as teammates Kevin Pledge (left) and Jayden Frye (right) join in the race upcourt. (Photo by Ron Barry)

