01/20/26 By Ron Barry

"WARRIOR" PLEDGE SPARKS CAVALIERS TO COMPLETE TUESDAY SWEEP OF HAYWOOD

Above: Crockett's Kevin Pledge muscles in two of his 18 points despite strong defense from Haywood's Darius Brooks (24). (Photo by Ron Barry)

Kevin Pledge is a warrior.

Coming off a 27-point performance in a narrow loss to Obion County Friday in Troy in which he battled against taller players all night, Pledge was on a similar path Tuesday in Alamo as Crockett County dueled Haywood when – midway through the third quarter – a finger on his left (non-shooting) hand was dislocated when he was fouled on a shot attempt.

Holding his wrist to steady the hand as officials allowed him to briefly visit his bench area, Pledge was met by Cavalier athletic trainer Heather Gadlen, who quickly assessed the situation, told him to take a deep breath, and then yanked the finger back into place while all his teammates tried not to look.

Pledge then gamely came back onto the court to shoot his free throws. Although he missed them, his "do-whatever-it-takes" attitude lifted the energy level of the rest of Coach Spencer Bursey's crew, and the first-year head man promptly subbed Pledge out so that Gadlen could then tape the injured finger to an adjacent one to stabilize it.

While Pledge was out, the Cavs slowly built what had been a four-point halftime advantage to as many as 12, getting solid inside play from Max Woods, Andre Garduno, and Ben Burgess. But by the midway point of the fourth period, Haywood was rallying behind the outside shooting of Rashaad Hines and had cut the deficit to 47-42 with 3:28 to play when Bursey decided Pledge had sat out long enough.

With Pledge back on the floor, Woods and Cortland Reddick netted shots to offset points by the Tomcats, and Pledge then hit three free throws in the final minute – the last two coming with just 12 seconds remaining – to seal Crockett's 54-48 victory, boosting its season record to 11-10.

The win gave the home teams a sweep for the night. In the opener – despite having their outside shooting abandon them (they didn't make a three the entire game) – the Lady Cavaliers powered enough buckets from the lane and engineered enough breakaways with their press to register a relatively stress-free 48-28 triumph over Haywood's girls.

The boys' contest was one of those encounters that are becoming more and more the norm in local high school basketball, resembling a track meet as much as a hoops showdown. Haywood has been a perennial power in West Tennessee boys' basketball for years, although this season's squad is young and pretty freewheeling (and, consequently, is now 2-15). The Tomcats were launching quick shots from everywhere, and missing them early on, which allowed Crockett to gain a 20-10 first-quarter edge.

Pledge canned nine of his team-high 18 points in that period, but Crockett scored just four in the second frame as Haywood rallied to make it 24-20 at the intermission. The team's shooting touch returned in the third, with Pledge, Garduno, and Woods all netting four tallies each to help the Cavs enter the final stanza with a 40-29 advantage. They managed to hang on to win it in the fourth after Pledge returned from his finger mishap, with the major assist coming from Gadlen.

Woods backed Pledge's 18-point performance with 13 of his own, enjoying one of his better games of the season. Garduno added nine and Reddick eight. Burgress contributed one huge bucket in each of the third and fourth quarters and was a steadying influence in trying to keep his teammates from getting overzealous in trying to run with the speedy Tomcats. Hines led Haywood with 18 points and Jonathan Starks produced 12.

The girls' contest was much more slow-paced, with both teams employing zone defenses much of the time and taking much longer than the guys to find suitable shots. Still, Coach Kayla Irvin's Lady Cavs (now 13-8) steadily built an early lead of 17-4 by the end of the first period as Audrey Whitby tallied six, Torey Savage five, and Keeton Holyfield four. The margin never became less than nine points the rest of the way, due to the inside play of reserve post player Kira Bray (10 points); a good effort from freshman point guard Ruth Gourley (nine); and the fact that Crockett didn't let its outside shooting woes affect its free throw efficiency. Irvin's club nailed 14 of their 15 charity tosses.

Holyfield was the top overall scorer for the Lady Cavs with 11. Amiya Butler paced Haywood (now 8-9) with nine, three more than Leia Yancy.

Both Crockett teams will travel to Newbern Thursday night for a twin bill with Dyer County. The games were moved forward one night because of the threat of inclement weather.

CCHS Girls GM 21: Jan 20 at Alamo
Haywood 4 12 2 10 - 28
Crockett 17 11 8 12 - 48

Crockett – Keeton Holyfield 11, Kira Bray 10, Ruth Gourley 9, Audrey Whitby 8, Torey Savage 8, Ellie Henderson 2, Halle Holyfield 0, Tink Willis 0, Alice Luten 0, Sydney Smith 0, Callie Freeman 0, Baylee Griggs 0. 2-Pt FG: 17. 3-Pt FG: 0. FT: 14-15. Record: 13-8.

Haywood – Amiya Butler 9, Leia Yancy 6, Jayla Harwell 4, Zamaria Murphy 3, Makayla Jones 3, Zakeraya Diggs 2, Jaknia Hall 1, Dashana Russell 0, Asia Shaw 0. 2-Pt FG: 7. 3-Pt FG: 3 (Murphy, Jones, Butler). FT: 5-8. Record: 8-9.

CCHS Boys GM 21: Jan 20 at Alamo
Haywood 10 10 9 19 - 48
Crockett 20 4 16 14 - 54

Crockett – Kevin Pledge 18, Max Woods 13, Andre Garduno 9, Cortland Reddick 8, Ben Burgess 4, Carter Wren 2, Jayden Frye 0, Squirt Pickens 0, Brilan Dunagin 0, Karson Kail 0. 2-Pt FG: 21. 3-Pt FG: 1 (Woods). FT: 9-16. Record: 11-10.

Haywood – Rashaad Hines 18, Jonathan Starks 12, Malik Perry 4, Earvin Jones 4, Dereon Kent 3, Demoric Drake 2, Rylee Barringer 2, Darius Brooks 2, Damarrion Weddle 1, Demetrick Wellington 0. 2-Pt FG: 14. 3-Pt FG: 5 (Hines 2, Starks 2, Kent). FT: 5-8. Record: 2-15.

Above: Ben Burgess looks past the defense of Tomcat Malik Perry (1) to find a teammate cutting to the basket in the fourth quarter ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: ... and that teammate was Andre Garduno, who rammed in this layup from the opposite side of the rim from the Ben Burgess assist. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Max Woods, who netted 13 points, gets two of them here over the outstretched arm of Haywood's Rylee Barringer (22) as Cav teammates Andre Garduno and Kevin Pledge await a potential rebound. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett's cheerleaders put on a dazzling preview of their competition routine at halftime, readying for an Orlando trip in February. A highlight is always the beaming expression of Ava North-Hall. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: These four members of Crockett's competition cheer squad -- Lexie Beaird, Kinzey Hutchison, Gracie Gaines, and Mia Simmons -- helped to fire up the Cavalier crowd at halftime. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Max Woods lifts the ball away from a swipe attempt by Haywood's Dereon Kent (25) in Tuesday night's Cav victory. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: A beaming Kennedy Henning has a message for the Cavaliers during the competition cheer team's halftime show. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Rachel Crossnoe (foreground) and Hadleigh MCoy (background) added their high energy to the competition cheer team's halftime performance. (Photo by Ron Barry)

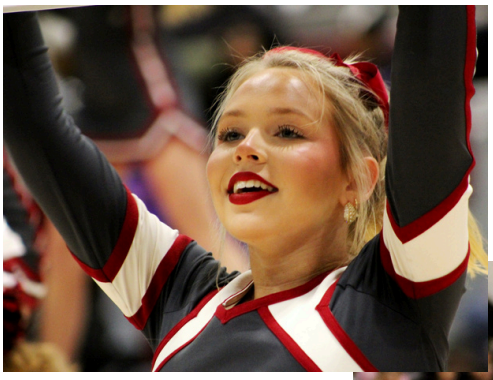
Below: Kevin Pledge tries to shake off the effects of a dislocated finger during the third quarter as Squirt Pickens (right) listens in and Karson Kail (left) checks the scoreboard. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Once Kevin Pledge went back into the game, he continued to battle while trying to protect his left hand -- as here, where he yanks a rebound away with his right arm in heavy lane traffic. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Audrey Whitby (left) helped the Lady Cavaliers get off to a good start with six first-quarter points and in the second half blocked this shot from the side by Haywood's Leia Yancy. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Ben Burgess, who made several quick passes out of the high post for the Cavs, whips another assist past the defense of Haywood's Earvin Jones (3). (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Crockett received another strong effort off the bench from Kira Bray (left), who netted 10 points from the lane area. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Sophia McGowan was front and center for this portion of the competition cheer team's halftime performance. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Keeton Holyfield led Crockett with 11 points, turning to the inside game as the Lady Cavs didn't have the outside shots dropping Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Ellie Henderson awaits a potential rebound on a Haywood free throw attempt. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Ruth Gourley sizes up an opening in the Lady Tomcat defense before zooming in for a layup for two of her nine points. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Halle Holyfield slows her dribble before attempting a spin move to get past Haywood's Zamaria Murphy. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Alice Luten searches for a cutting teammate during the final quarter of the win over the Lady Tomcats. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Tink Willis looks for an open teammate during first-half action Tuesday night against Haywood. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Two wins over Haywood made cheerleader Kennedy Price a happy camper Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: She's smiling here after her teammates have sealed the victory over Haywood, but Wesley Thornton is counting the minutes when her foot comes out of that walking boot and lets her begin playing again. (Photo by Ron Barry)