

LATE EXECUTION PAYS DIVIDENDS AS CROCKETT BASKETBALLERS SWEEP OBION COUNTY



Above: The scoreboard tells the story as Andre Garduno's thunderous dunk punctuates Crockett's win over Obion's boys. (Photo by Ron Barry)

One key play personified each basketball game in Alamo Tuesday night as Crockett County swept a doubleheader from visiting Obion County Central.

Crockett's boys (now 12-12) upset the now 16-7 Rebels when Kevin Pledge muscled his way to an "and-one" basket in the paint with only 34 seconds to play, breaking open a one-point game and sparking the Cavaliers' 41-35 victory.

For Crockett's girls, a perfectly executed sideline inbounds pass from Ellie Henderson to an improvising Keeton Holyfield produced the layup in the fading minutes that put the dagger into Obion's comeback chances as the Lady Cavs foraged a 43-36 triumph to improve to 15-9 on the season.

Coach Kayla Irvin's club was nursing a narrow inside of two minutes when a timeout was called, with Crockett then set to inbound the ball from the half-court line in front of the scorer's table.

"We had set up a play in the huddle that was designed to get Keeton open using a double screen," Irvin said, "but when we took the court we could see how much Obion's defense was overplaying each of our players. So we hollered out at Keeton to just fake a break toward the ball and then curl back toward the basket. Ellie made a perfect pass – and it's not easy to do on an angle like that – but she hit Keeton right in stride for the layup."

Even then, Obion threatened to pull close on a couple of baskets by Emeri Lee, but Crockett's Wesley Thornton drained a pair of free throws with only 11.8 seconds on the clock to seal the win.

Before that, it was the first-half long-range shooting of Audrey Whitby that had given the Lady Cavs an early lead, even though the Lady Rebels had deadlocked the game at 21-all by halftime and had actually taken a three-point edge in the third quarter on a three-pointer by HJ Cary. Two quick Holyfield buckets erased that margin before Henderson nailed a triple that pushed Crockett ahead 28-25, and the hosts never trailed again.

Still, prior to the Henderson-to-Holyfield inbounds play, Crockett had established a 36-30 advantage with 3:19 remaining when Thornton brilliantly executed a spinning, misdirection floater with her off-hand to maintain the Lady Cavs' slim lead.

Whitby finished with 15 points and Holyfield 11 for the winners. Henderson added nine and Thornton eight. Lee paced the Lady Rebels with 14.

The boys contest looked like it would be a high-scoring shootout after an explosive first quarter in which Crockett's Squirt Pickens, Cortland Reddick, and Karson Kail all hit threes to counter Obion's fast-paced attack. Kail's bomb produced the 18-17 lead that the Cavs held after the opening period.

For the rest of the back-and-forth battle, it seemed like a lid had been placed over both rims. Coach Spencer Bursey's Cavs tallied just four points in the second quarter and Obion managed just five tallies in the third, so the teams headed into the final stanza with Crockett holding a 33-32 edge.

Neither team scored for three-and-a-half minutes in the fourth. Obion took the lead back with 4:24 to go, but Crockett's Jayden Frye connected on a mid-range shot to regain the advantage. The Rebels tied it with a free throw at the 3:02 mark, but Pledge made one for the hosts with 1:57 remaining. Obion missed a shot with about a minute to play, and the Cavs patiently worked until they got the ball inside to Pledge, who powered his way through traffic for a contested layup with 34 seconds left, hitting both the shot and the ensuing free throw for a 39-35 margin.

When the Rebels missed again on their end, Crockett cleared the ball out to a streaking Andre Garduno, who punctuated the triumph with a thunderous dunk in the fading seconds.

Pledge paced Crockett's offense with 10 points, with Reddick adding nine, Frye and Garduno six apiece, and Pickens and Kail five each. The Cavalier defense held the visitors to just three total points in the final period. Jatlynn Marley was Obion's top scorer with 14. Tanner Richmond, who had torched the Cavs in the season's first meeting between the teams in Troy, netted nine points, but was scoreless in the second half.

Next up for both Crockett teams is a Thursday night twin bill at Haywood. Both CCHS teams be back in Alamo to host a homecoming doubleheader with Dyer County.

CCHS Girls GM 24: Feb 10 at Alamo

Obion Co 7 14 6 9 - 36
 Crockett 14 7 12 10 - 43

Crockett - Audrey Whitby 15, Keeton Holyfield 11, Ellie Henderson 9, Wesley Thornton 8, Torey Savage 0, Halle Holyfield 0, Ruth Gourley 0, Kira Bray 0, Tink Willis 0. 2-Pt FG: 8. 3-Pt FG: 5 (Whitby 3, K Holyfield, Henderson). FT: 12-22. Record: 15-9.

Obion - Emery Lee 14, Natalie Daniel 9, HJ Cary 8, Harlee Johnson 3, Colee Forester 2, LK Johnson 0, Katy Frazier 0, Klicey Campbell 0, Kendall Clanton 0. 2-Pt FG: 11. 3-Pt FG: 2 (Cary 2). FT: 8-14. Record: 7-16.

CCHS Boys GM 24: Feb 10 at Alamo

Obion Co 17 10 5 3 - 35
 Crockett 18 4 11 8 - 41

Crockett - Kevin Pledge 10, Cortland Reddick 9, Jayden Frye 6, Andre Garduno 6, Squirt Pickens 5, Karsen Kail 5, Carter Wren 0, Jameson Bushart 0. 2-Pt FG: 12. 3-Pt FG: 5 (Reddick 3, Pickens, Kail). FT: 2-5. Record: 12-12.

Obion - Jatlynn Marley 14, Tanner Richmond 9, Levi Hendrix 8, Carson Jones 3, Charlie Harper 1, Bryce Richardson 0, Jack Hepler 0, Ethan Caldwell 0. 2-Pt FG: 12. 3-Pt FG: 2 (Marley, Richmond). FT: 5-9. Record: 16-7.



Above: Audrey Whitby was on fire from downtown in the first half and scored 15 points in the game to pace Crockett's girls to a victory. (Photo by Ron Barry)



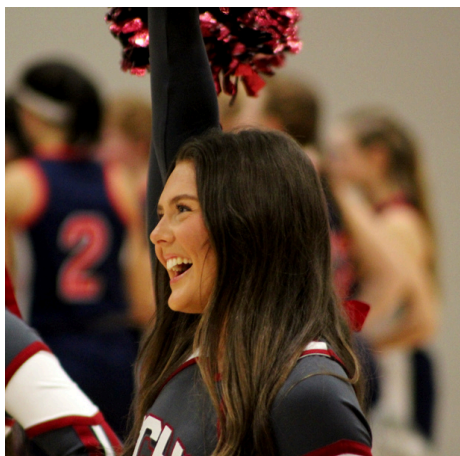
Left: Crockett's hoopers kept a smile on the face of cheer team member Eva Burleson for most of the night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Crockett's Jayden Frye tries to corral Obion's Carson Jones (4) on this drive to the basket. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Lady Cav sophomore Wesley Thornton prepares to hang a major-league move on Obion's Kendall Clanton, spinning in the opposite direction for the score that gave Crockett a 36-30 lead. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Gracie Gaines was happily cheering the Cavs and Lady Cavs on to victory Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



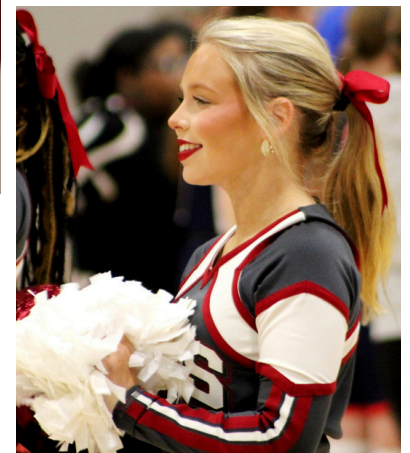


Above: Karson Kail knocked down this 15-foot mid-ranger to give Crockett a 33-29 lead with 1:43 left in the third quarter. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: When Keeton Holyfield lets a long one fly, her teammates have all the confidence in the world that the shot is going in. Holyfield had 11 points Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Cheer team member Makayla Murphy is either applauding the Cav performance or waiting for someone to hand her a large Valentine's Day gift. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Sophia McGowan kept the cheers strong for the Crockett teams all night Tuesday. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Kevin Pledge goes to the foul line after receiving congratulations from Cortland Reddick on his big basket with 34 seconds left to give the Cavs a four-point edge. (photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Ruth Gourley (4) is a study in intensity as she plays defense against Obion's talented Emeri Lee, who led the Lady Rebels with 14 points. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Andre Garduno operates against Obion's Levi Hendrix in Tuesday's Crockett victory. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Halle Holyfield protects the ball as she tries to escape this Obion County double-team Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Audrey Whitby (10) attempts to track down this loose ball between two Lady Rebels right in front of the scorer's table. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jameson Bushart was awarded two free throws when this attempted block of his shot caught too much of his face. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jayden Frye tries to spin an underhanded layup attempt around Obion's Carson Jones. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Wesley Thornton races speedily around the Obion defense to try to penetrate the lane area before dishing off to a teammate. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Andre Garduno celebrates his game-ending dunk while the Obion cheerleaders start packing up their things for the bus ride home. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Coach Spencer Bursey anxiously awaits the outcome of a Cavalier drive to the basket in the fourth quarter Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Kennedy Henning can light up an entire gymnasium with her fabulous smile as she cheers on the Cavs. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Ruth Gourley gave it her all trying to get to this loose ball before Obion did, but neither she nor Halle Holyfield (20) could get to it first. (Photo by Ron Barry)