

BUSHART & REDDICK, THORNTON LEAD CROCKETT HOOPERS TO SWEEP OVER HAYWOOD



Above: Jameson Bushart hits this shot over Haywood's Earvin Jones on his way to a 14-point night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Picking up a boys basketball win at Haywood has always been a rare accomplishment.

The Tomcats have a long and rich history of hardwood success, and while this year's team has been struggling – it entered Thursday night's battle with Crockett County with a 2-18 record – Brownsville is still a difficult place to play.

And when the Cavaliers' leading scorer Kevin Pledge and their best outside shooter Karson Kail each were tagged with a pair of fouls in the first quarter Thursday, things were looking less than optimistic for Coach Spencer Bursey's crew.

As Pledge went to the bench and Bursey surveyed his reserves, several truths would have come to his mind: (1) the first guy he would have gone to – Max Woods – has his right foot in a walking boot for at least three more weeks due to an ankle injury; (2) two others who would have been next in line recently left the team; (3) another option, Carter Wren, has the height but not the bulk, being more of an outside shooter; and (4) that leaves a sophomore JV player who only just started dressing for the varsity this week because of the first three truths listed here. He's got one game of varsity experience, and only played a few minutes in that one.

Well, Option #4 it is. Enter one Jameson Bushart, about two weeks shy of his sixteenth birthday, thrown into battle against a Haywood front line that towers over him by several inches.

Crockett had an early lead because Cortland Reddick had scored 10 points and Kail had nailed a three-pointer before he exited with his second foul. Perhaps Bushart could just help the visiting Cavaliers keep it close for the remainder of the opening half, so they'd have a chance for Pledge and Kail to return in the third period.

And then a funny thing happened. Bushart netted a basket to open the second quarter – giving Crockett a 19-11 advantage – and then played solidly enough the rest of the period while Reddick added five more points and Wren came in to make two straight buckets, and the half ended with the Cavs on top 30-24. Bushart had bought Bursey the minutes he needed to get his scorers back in there after the intermission.

What may have gone unnoticed – especially by the Tomcats – was that Bushart's confidence was growing with each possession he played. And when Pledge and Andre Garduno were saddled with additional fouls in the third quarter, or needed a breather, Bushart was ready.

With the Cavs still clinging to a six-point lead, Bushart canned a turn-around jumper from the center of the lane to make it 38-30 with 3:43 left in the period. When Haywood cut it back to four points two-and-a-half minutes later, Bushart scored again off a spin move. And after Kail swished another triple from the left corner with 46 seconds left, Crockett secured a defensive rebound, got it upcourt quickly, and fed Bushart inside for a contested layup that he powered in and drew a foul. When he completed the "and-one" with a successful free throw, Crockett led 50-40 with 24 seconds remaining in the third stanza.

Bushart scored twice more in the fourth – as did Reddick, who amassed a career-high 23 points in the contest – and along with three-pointers by Jayden Frye and Kail, the Cavaliers pulled away for a 70-55 triumph, improving their season record to 13-12.

Bushart finished with 14 points and Kail with 11, ably supporting Reddick's effort. Garduno added seven, Pledge six, and Frye five for Crockett, while Ty'Lynn Currie paced Haywood with 20, including four treys.

The girls game that opened the night's doubleheader was essentially over when sophomore Wesley Thornton scored 11 straight points in the first four-and-a-half minutes, giving Coach Kayla Irvin's crew a 13-2 edge. After Keeton Holyfield and Audrey Whitby launched successful threes, the Lady Cavs were up 21-3 at the end of the opening period and were well on their way to the 65-43 pounding that resulted.

Whitby made another triple just before the half that gave Crockett a 31-12 margin at the intermission, and then created a rare four-point play with 3:26 left in the third quarter when she was knocked to the floor while swishing another trey. The senior guard finished with 11 points, supporting Thornton's 17-point performance.

Cousins Keeton and Halle Holyfield each netted eight points, Ellie Henderson seven, and Kira Bray six as the Lady Cavs improved to 16-9 on the season. Camariya Woodland paced Haywood with 18 and Zamaria Murphy added 12.

Crockett now will stage its homecoming Saturday night with Dyer County supplying the opposition. The teams will close the regular season at home Monday evening with Senior Night festivities against Dyersburg.

CCHS Girls GM 25: Feb 12 at Brownsville

Crockett 21 10 19 15 - 65
Haywood 3 9 13 18 - 43

Crockett - Wesley Thornton 17, Audrey Whitby 11, Keeton Holyfield 8, Halle Holyfield 8, Ellie Henderson 7, Kira Bray 6, Torey Savage 4, Ruth Gourley 2, Alice Lutten 2, Tink Willis O, Sydney Smith O, Callie Freeman O, Baylee Griggs O, Braniya Green O. 2-Pt FG: 19. 3-Pt FG: 5 (Whitby 2, K Holyfield, Henderson, Thornton). FT: 12-21. Record: 16-9.

Haywood - Camariya Woodland 18, Zamaria Murphy 12, Jayla Harrell 7, Jakhia Hall 5, Leia Yancy 1. Kamiya Robertson O, Dashana Russell O, Zakeraya Diggs O, Amiya Butler O. 2-Pt FG: 12. 3-Pt FG: 4 (Woodland, Murphy, Harrell, Hall). FT: 7-12. Record: 9-12.

CCHS Boys GM 25: Feb 12 at Brownsville

Crockett 17 13 22 18 - 70
Haywood 11 13 16 15 - 55

Crockett - Cortland Reddick 23, Jameson Bushart 14, Karson Kail 11, Andre Garduno 7, Kevin Pledge 6, Jayden Frye 5, Carter Wren 4, Squirt Pickens O, Nolen Turner O. 2-Pt FG: 21. 3-Pt FG: 7 (Reddick 3, Kail 3, Frye). FT: 7-9. Record: 13-12.

Haywood - Ty'Lynn Currie 20, Jonathan Starks 11, Rashaad Hines 10, Jamalachi Bond 8, Deraen Kent 3, Darius Brooks 2, Riley Barringer 1, Malik Perry O, Earvin Jones O, Marquez Rudd O, Demetrick Wellington O, Demaris Drake O. 2-Pt FG: 15. 3-Pt FG: 6 (Currie 4, Starks, Kent). FT: 7-13. Record: 2-19.



Left: With shots like this, Wesley Thornton scored 11 straight points in less than five minutes in the first quarter Thursday night against Haywood. (Photo by Ron Barry)

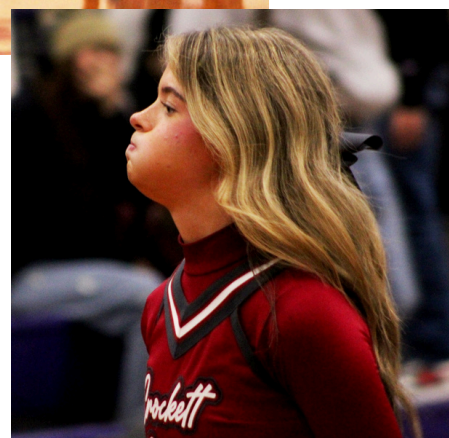
Below: Sometimes the cheerleaders who comprise the base on a stunt can get lost in the shuffle, but Gracie Farmer (left) and Mylee Simmons can still do the "grunt" work with a smile. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Cortland Reddick finishes off a fast break ignited by a pass from Karson Kail (22 in background) on his way to a career-high 23 points against the Tomcats. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett cheerleader Gabby Dobbelaire returned to her former school system in Brownsville and was all smiles as Crockett came away a double-winner. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Crockett cheerleader Allyssa Ward gets ready to release a deep relaxing breath of relief after a long night in Brownsville, but two Crockett victories. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Audrey Whitby's "Oh, well!" facial expression says it all as she tries to get out of the way after a Haywood player took a swing at her and drew a technical foul while they were entangled on the floor. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Kevin Pledge keeps an eye on the basket as he negotiates traffic on this ultimately successful acrobatic layup. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Carrington Smith drums up some pre-game excitement as Crockett's boys are introduced in the Brownsville gymnasium. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Cacie Jo McNeill pumps up the crowd during a Cavalier timeout. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Ellie Henderson operates against the Lady Tomcat defense before finding an open cutter to the basket. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's Halle Holyfield (on the floor) tries to bat the loose ball in the direction of either Ellie Henderson (left) or Wesley Thornton (right). Thornton ended up with it. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Jayden Frye spins away from a Haywood defender in front of the Cavalier bench in Thursday night's Crockett win. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Squirt Pickens speeds past the Haywood defense to set up an assist pass into the lane. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: As Karson Kail (22) lines up this corner triple, Lady Cavalier Ellie Henderson (upper left) is already signaling to put three more points up onto the scoreboard. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Alice Luten rips down a fourth-quarter rebound as teammates Sydney Smith (left) and Ruth Gourley (4) hold their positions. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Keeton Holyfield prepares to launch a three-pointer from the right corner. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Audrey Whitby pulled off a rare four-point play in the third quarter when she was fouled while drilling a trey and then converted the free throw. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: When shots like this are going in, you know you're having a magical night. It did, and Jameson Bushart was. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Wesley Thornton is fast-breaking right into your living room here on her way to a team-high 17-point performance and Crockett's sixteenth win of the year. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Carter Wren hit two big shots in a row for Crockett to help the Cavs maintain a second-quarter lead and weather some early foul trouble. (Photo by Ron Barry)