

## MAGICAL QUARTER LEADS TO CAV WIN OVER DYERSBURG, GIRLS LOSE HEARTBREAKER



**Above:** Shots like this one propelled Crockett's Kevin Pledge to a 27-point night in his final home game in Emerson Gymnasium. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Two of the best things to see in sports competition are: (1) when a team moves into a "flow" state, in which everything is working about as perfectly as it can, almost automatically; and (2) when a team leaves every ounce of energy it has on the floor in the quest for victory.

If your team experiences the first thing, you're likely going to see a win on the scoreboard at game's end. But the honest reality of sports is that experiencing the second is not always reflected in the final outcome.

Monday night's regular season finales at Crockett County displayed both. Coach Spencer Bursey's Cavaliers hit the "flow" state for almost the entire first quarter, building a 24-9 advantage that eventually led to a stunning 68-50 triumph over Dyersburg. Senior Kevin Pledge – in his final home game – torched the Trojans for 27 points in a masterful performance that helped boost Crockett's season record to 14-13.

For Coach Kayla Irvin's Lady Cavaliers, facing the superbly talented Dyersburg club that won a state championship with many of these same players in 2024, the maximum effort was exerted – but the scoreboard betrayed them at the end. The Lady Trojans – keyed by an amazing display by Miss Basketball candidate Chelby Jordan, who scored 25 points – escaped with a 47-42 win when the gassed Crockett club succumbed in the fading minutes to the visitors' relentless defensive pressure. It was an extremely physical contest, and the home crowd was not always pleased with the amount of clutching, grabbing, and colliding that was allowed.

Irvin's club dug a massive hole for itself as the contest began, falling behind 15-2 in the first five minutes. Ellie Henderson then hit a three for the hosts and a layup 90 seconds later to get the score back to a more respectable 18-9 at the end of the opening frame. Crockett then outpointed the Lady Trojans 14-13 in the second quarter as Henderson and Audrey Whitby each netted treys and Wesley Thornton added a pair of buckets. The 30-23 halftime count felt much more like a game.

Thornton – Crockett's softball phenom who is making tremendous strides in basketball as well in her sophomore season – took over the duel in the third period, powering her way to 10 points as the Lady Cavs caught Dyersburg at 32-all with 2:51 left in the stanza. Keeton Holyfield's second triple of the quarter and a strong finish by Thornton pushed the Lady Cavs ahead by eight with 8.5 seconds remaining, but Crockett left Kay Kay Strayhorn open for a three-pointer at the buzzer to cut the margin to 40-35 entering the fourth. After Dyersburg's Kathleen Harrell scored to make it 40-37, Whitby responded with a short jumper to give the hosts a 42-37 edge at the 5:58 mark. Remarkably, Crockett – whose players had been wrestling with the much more physical Lady Trojans all night and were running on fumes at that point – would never score again.

Dyersburg tallied the contest's final 10 points, including eight in a row by the smoothly spectacular Jordan. If people have any doubts about her Miss Basketball nomination, they should obtain a copy of the game tape from this battle. Jordan wears #11 on her jersey, but on this night, she played like the one who used to wear #23.

Crockett's club could not have fought any harder. Three crucial turnovers in the final minute – all involving collisions with Dyersburg players – erased any comeback hopes. But the Lady Cavs demonstrated that opponents in the upcoming district tournament may have their hands full.

Thornton, whose competitive nature was on full display, led Crockett (now 17-10) with 16 hard-earned points. Henderson added 10 – all in the first half – and Whitby contributed seven. Backing Jordan's 25 for Dyersburg (now 19-5) were Harrell with eight and Strayhorn with seven.

The guys game that followed was clogging along with the Cavaliers up 4-2 when Pledge muscled in a shot at the 4:17 mark of the first period. That basket triggered an amazing 30-10 run over the next eight minutes in which Crockett could simply do no wrong. Jayden Frye's ballhandling kept Trojan defenders baffled through much of that stretch, helping Cortland Reddick free up to "snowbird" on Dyersburg shot attempts. He netted seven straight points to put the Cavs up 14-3, a feat Pledge matched later to make it 28-12 with 6:36 remaining in the second period.

Dyersburg mounted a brief comeback in the third, trimming the deficit to 44-37 at the 3:00 mark, but Jameson Bushart powered in a bucket and Corey Savage scored off a fast-break feed from Reddick, and the Trojans never got closer than eight points after that. Pledge netted nine straight Cav points from the end of the third quarter through the first four minutes of the fourth, and when Reddick canned a three with 3:47 to go to make it 62-47, the duel was decided.

Pledge's 27-point performance included eight-of-10 from the foul line and even a three-pointer to beat the first-quarter buzzer. Reddick had 14, Bushart and Frye eight apiece, and Savage seven as the Cavs closed the regular season at 14-13.

Dyersburg (now 16-7) was paced by Jace Ward's 15. Came Rines tallied 11 and JB Parr nine for the Trojans.

The district tournament is set to begin Wednesday night at South Gibson High School. The schedule will be posted when available.

#### CCHS Girls GM 27: Feb 16 at Alamo

Dyersburg 18 12 5 12 - 47  
Crockett 9 14 17 2 - 42

**Crockett** – Wesley Thornton 16, Ellie Henderson 10, Audrey Whitby 7, Keeton Holyfield 6, Kira Bray 2, Halle Holyfield 1, Torey Savage 0, Ruth Gourley 0. 2-Pt FG: 9. 3-Pt FG: 5 (Henderson 2, K Holyfield 2, Whitby). FT: 9-15. Record: 17-10.

**Dyersburg** – Chelby Jordan 25, Kathleen Harrell 8, KayKay Strayhorn 7, Kaliyah Lewis 5, Aerie Quinn 2, K'Laya Currie 0, Brianna Parr 0, Makayla Johnson 0, Lily Kate Jones 0, Zya Currie 0. 2-Pt FG: 14. 3-Pt FG: 4 (Harrell 2, Strayhorn, Jordan). FT: 7-7. Record: 19-5.

#### CCHS Boys GM 27: Feb 16 at Alamo

Dyersburg 9 13 20 8 - 50  
Crockett 24 14 16 14 - 68

**Crockett** – Kevin Pledge 27, Cortland Reddick 14, Jameson Bushart 8, Jayden Frye 8, Corey Savage 7, Andre Garduno 2, Jeremiah Young 2, Karson Kail 0, Carter Wren 0, Squirt Pickens 0, Brelin Dunagin 0, Jett Johnson 0, Nolen Turner 0, Daniel Morgan 0. 2-Pt FG: 23. 3-Pt FG: 3 (Reddick 2, Pledge). FT: 13-16. Record: 14-13.

**Dyersburg** – Jace Ward 15, Cam Rhines 11, KB Parr 9, Rell Johnson 6, Jayce Ellerbrook 5, Isaiah Thomas 2, Peyton Hill 1, Toookie Ragland 1, Isaac Zamzow 0, Tylen Thomas 0, Frank Barringer 0, Rainin Watson 0, De'Karon Robertson 0. 2-Pt FG: 14. 3-Pt FG: 5 (Johnson 2, Ellerbrook, Ward, Rines). FT: 7-18. Record: 16-7.



**Left:** Point guard Jayden Frye kept Dyersburg defenders off-balance with his excellent ballhandling throughout Monday night's 68-50 win. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** One of the Crockett cheerleaders honored on Senior Night was Auriana Taylor, who has been a mainstay in encouraging the football and basketball crowds. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** Crockett's outstanding competitive cheer team recreated their award-winning Orlando performance at halftime of the boys game Monday, with Kinlee Moore and crew smiling up a storm. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below:** Cortland Reddick dished this fast-break assist pass to Corey Savage for an easy basket. Reddick scored 14 himself in the win over Dyersburg. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Corey Savage cashed in on a few fast breaks for the Cavaliers, netting seven points in the 68-50 win over Dyersburg. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Right:** When Jameson Bushart powered in a basket against the Trojans' taller front line, the baseball team members in the front row of the Cavalier crazies got a kick out of making the "too small" sign to each other. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Above:** Rachel Crossnoe hollers through her megaphone as the cheer team celebrates its runner-up finish from the Orlando nationals. (Photo by Ron Barry)

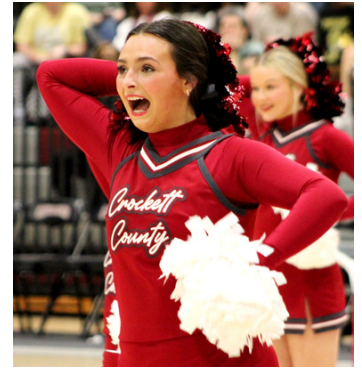


**Left:** Kevin Pledge drew enough Trojan fouls -- including this one -- to send himself to the line for 10 shots, making eight. At one point the senior netted nine straight Cav tallies. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** The girls game between Crockett and Dyersburg often resembled a wrestling match. Here, Audrey Whitby (10) and Keeton Holyfield (15) try to get the ball away from two Lady Trojans. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below:** Layla Petty performs with her cheer teammates at halftime, re-creating their Orlando showcase. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Left:** Cortland Reddick buries a jumper from mid-range during Crockett's first-quarter blitz of Dyersburg. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Audrey Whitby found herself on the floor again later, this time with teammate Wesley Thornton, after both were knocked over by a Dyersburg attacker. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Right:** Crockett's Ellie Henderson netted 10 first-half points to keep the Lady Cavs reasonably close by the intermission. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Above:** If the ball is going to be wrestled for on the floor, you know Halle Holyfield will get involved if possible, here with cousin Keeton Holyfield as well. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Left:** More from the competitive cheer team performance, where Lexie Beaird (center) is flanked by Kinzey Hutchison (left) and Kennedy Henning (right). (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** When she was able to stay on her feet, Wesley Thornton displayed the athleticism and competitive drive that has made her one of Crockett's most improved basketballers this season, scoring 16 points Monday. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Right:** The Lady Cavs actually took the lead in the third quarter when Wesley Thornton made this free throw with 2:01 on the clock. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Right:** The main problem for the Lady Cavaliers was Dyersburg's outstanding Chelby Jordan, who made this shot to regain the lead for the Lady Trojans with 3:12 left in the game. Jordan scored 25. (Photo by Ron Barry)

