

FIRST-HALF DOMINANCE PUSHES DYERSBURG PAST LADY CAVS IN DISTRICT SEMIFINAL



Above: Crockett's Keeton Holyfield looks to whip a pass past Dyersburg's Aerie Quinn (12) in Friday's District 13-AAA Tournament semifinal. (Photo by Ron Barry)

When watching Dyersburg's girls play basketball, you sometimes get the impression they're just toying with their opponent.

They have Miss Basketball candidate Chelby Jordan, who seems to be able to score at will. If she were selfish – which she's not – she could probably average 30 points per game. They have an unflappable point guard in Kay Kay Strayhorn. If you throw a zone defense at them, she can just back up and launch these moon-ball three-pointers that almost scrape the gym ceiling before – as often as not – they swish through the net. And she's not the only Lady Trojan with long-range capabilities.

They play defense as if they have just caught you trying to steal an Amazon package off their front porch. They will do whatever it takes to grab that package back.

And yet – just four nights earlier – Crockett County's Lady Cavaliers had an excellent chance to beat them in the regular season finale, but Dyersburg erased a five-point deficit in the final quarter to escape with the victory.

Friday night – in a District 13-AAA Tournament semifinal – the Lady Trojans were not about to get complacent again. Dyersburg built a 29-7 advantage by halftime, put it on cruise control the rest of the way, and handed Crockett a 49-31 defeat to advance into Monday's championship game against host South Gibson at 7:30. The Lady Cavaliers will face Haywood at 6:00 to determine the third and fourth seeds from District 13 in next week's Region 7-AAA Tournament.

Coach Kayla Irvin's Lady Cavs just could not get anything going early on against the Lady Trojans. Keeton Holyfield hit a three-pointer from the top of the key to give Crockett a 3-0 lead – but Dyersburg didn't allow another one from beyond the arc. It really wasn't until Holyfield and Wesley Thornton started driving to the basket in the second half – well after the outcome had already been decided – that Crockett's offensive totals began to climb.

Even then, a much slower-paced Lady Trojan attack basically matched them, allowing only four points to be trimmed off the first-half deficit. Dyersburg completely shut off Crockett's wing shooters, Audrey Whitby and Ellie Henderson, who combined for 29 points in the Lady Cavs' quarterfinal win over Obion County. Against Dyersburg, they managed one free throw between them.

Keeton Holyfield netted 12, Thornton 11, and Halle Holyfield six to account for nearly all of Crockett's points. Jordan compiled a low-key 17 points to pace the Lady Trojans, with Strayhorn adding 11. Dyersburg improved to 20-5, while the Lady Cavs moved to 18-11.

Crockett's boys take the semifinal stage Saturday night, also dueling Dyersburg. The contest begins at 6:00 in Medina at South Gibson High School.

CCHS Girls GM 29: Feb 20 at Medina

District 13-AAA Semifinals

Crockett 5 2 18 6 - 31

Dyersburg 10 19 16 4 - 49

Crockett – Keeton Holyfield 12, Wesley Thornton 11, Halle Holyfield 6, Ruth Gourley 1, Audrey Whitby 1, Kira Bray 0, Ellie Henderson 0, Torey Savage 0. 2-Pt FG: 9. 3-Pt FG: 1 (K Holyfield). FT: 10-12. Record: 18-11.

Dyersburg – Chelby Jordan 17, KayKay Strayhorn 11, Aerie Quinn 6, K'Laya Currie 4, Kathleen Harrell 3, Brianna Parr 3, Zya Currie 3, Elizabeth Lemons 2, Lily Kate Jones 0. 2-Pt FG: 12. 3-Pt FG: 7 (Strayhorn 3, Harrell, K Currie, Jordan, Z Currie). FT: 4-10. Record: 20-5.

FORMER CROCKETT STARS SHINING: Two former CCHS sports stars are thriving in their sophomore seasons in the junior college ranks.

Basketballer Hannah Johnson is third in scoring in the entire Tennessee Junior College Athletic Association, averaging 16.9 points per game for Jackson State Community College. Johnson is also second in the league in free throw percentage, hitting 84% of her charity tosses.

In softball, Lynden "Lou" Cole has begun the spring season on fire for the University of Arkansas-Rich Mountain (UARM). The Bucks have played eight games thus far and Cole – their catcher and cleanup hitter – has homered in five of them while compiling a .500 batting average (11-for-22) and a staggering OPS (on-base + slugging) of 1.273. Cole has been on base 59.3% of her at-bats and has driven in 12 runs, has seven extra-base hits, and has thrown out nearly 40% of the baserunners attempting to steal while she's been catching. Cole transferred to UARM from Pensacola State.



Above: Wesley Thornton races upcourt alongside Dyersburg's Kathleen Harrell in an attempt to get the Lady Cav fast break going in the second half. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: In an example of Dyersburg's often-suffocating defensive pressure, Halle Holyfield has Lady Trojan hands reaching in toward her from every direction on this play. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Audrey Whitby, who scored 19 points in Crockett's opening tournament win, wasn't being allowed to get open by the Dyersburg defense in Round #2. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Keeton Holyfield paced Crockett's scoring with 12 points against Dyersburg. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Crockett's main nemesis was again Dyersburg's Chelby Jordan, who casually tossed in 17 points with her patented smoothness. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Ellie Henderson tries to find a path to the hoop among the Lady Trojan defensive traffic. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Cheerleader Amy Mena was looking signs that Crockett could mount a comeback. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Dyersburg's KayKay Strayhorn (1) was draping herself all over whoever ran Crockett's point, here trying to trap Ruth Gourley into a mistake. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Wesley Thornton managed to score 11 points despite an entourage of Dyersburg defenders that surrounded her all night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Wesley Thornton tries to work the ball inside against Dyersburg's Aerie Quinn. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Audrey Whitby is hounded defensively here by Lady Trojan KayKay Strayhorn. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Former CCHS star Hannah Johnson is having a standout year as a sophomore at Jackson State Community College and was the TJCAA Player of the Week after a 27-point game in December. (Photo courtesy of JSCC)



Left: Lady Cav softball star catcher Lynden Cole is off to a great start in her sophomore season at Arkansas-Rich Mountain (UARM), homering in five of the Bucks' first eight games. (Photo courtesy of UARM)