

REBOUNTING DOMINANCE CARRIES SOUTH SIDE PAST LADY CAVS IN REGION TOURNAMENT



Above: Crockett's Keeton Holyfield drives past South Side's Ally Collins in Friday night's Region 7-AAA Tournament quarterfinal game. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Prior to tip-off, you probably would have been hard-pressed to find many Crockett County basketball fans who realistically expected their Lady Cavaliers to upset Jackson South Side on the Lady Hawks' home court Friday night in the opening round of the Region 7-AAA Tournament.

That the Lady Cavs hung in there for as long as they did was a testament to their grit and determination – especially since it seemed the hosts were getting every single rebound available.

South Side (now 25-5) overcame an early outside shooting barrage from Crockett with a relentless pressing defense and a ginormous advantage in the rebounding department – netting a significant number of putback baskets – to steadily pull away in the second half and post a decisive 65-44 triumph that ended the season for Coach Kayla Irvin's club.

The Lady Cavs most certainly didn't go down without a fight. An opening three-pointer by Wesley Thornton, two more from Keeton Holyfield, and another from reserve guard Ruth Gourley kept Crockett within a point (16-15) after the first quarter of play. Holyfield's second one and a couple of free throws by Ellie Henderson had briefly given the visitors a 15-11 lead with 1:32 remaining, but South Side closed with a spurt to regain the edge on its way to 11 straight points.

Crockett cut it back to a one-possession game (24-21) on another Holyfield basket. And the contest remained that way through most of the second period – it was 28-25 after a Gourley free throw with 2:04 before the break – until the Lady Hawks went on a blitz in the final minute to pull out to a 32-25 margin.

By the 1:17 mark of the third quarter, South Side had pulled away to an 18-point bulge, using its tenacious jump press to force turnovers, and dominating both ends on the boards. If there was one thing the Lady Hawks did extremely well Friday night, it was to get after the ball. In the end, as much as anything, it brought them the win.

Holyfield paced Crockett's offense with 13 points, supported by Whitby with 11, Torey Savage with eight, and Thornton with six. The Lady Cavs finished their season with an 18-13 record.

South Side's balanced attack featured Ri'Kiya Mitchell with 16, Aydison Dilworth with 12, Amear'Ra Cook with 11, and Ally Collins with 10. The Lady Hawks join South Gibson, Dyersburg, and McNairy Central in the region semifinals.

Crockett's boys take the court Saturday night at Jackson North Side in their region quarterfinal battle. The duel begins at 6:00.

CCHS Girls GM 31: Feb 27 at Jackson Region 7-AAA Quarterfinal

Crockett 15 10 9 10 - 44

South Side 16 16 18 15 - 65

Crockett – Keeton Holyfield 13, Audrey Whitby 11, Torey Savage 8, Wesley Thornton 6, Ruth Gourley 4, Ellie Henderson 2, Halle Holyfield 0, Alice Luten 0, Baylee Griggs 0. 2-Pt FG: 7. 3-Pt FG: 6 (K Holyfield 3, Thornton, Whitby, Gourley). FT: 12-17. Record: 18-13.

South Side – Ri'Kiya Mitchell 16, Aydison Dilworth 12, Amear'Ra Cook 11, Ally Collins 10, Makayla Bates 6, Zandria Cohill 5, Kamia Cook 3, Mi'Kayla Newble 2, Madisyn Anderson 0, Aubrey Lewis 0. 2-Pt FG: 20. 3-Pt FG: 4 (A Cook 2, Collins, K Cook). FT: 13-28. Record: 25-5.



Above: Friday's game was highly physical. On this play, Lady Cav Alice Luten goes flying on the floor as South Side's Makayla Bates tries to pass the ball to a teammate. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Lexie Beard kept the cheers going until the very end for the Lady Cavaliers. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Audrey Whitby, who was 6-for-6 from the free throw line, lets a three-pointer fly here on her way to 11 points. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Early in the game, Crockett's Halle Holyfield (20) and Wesley Thornton (2) made it tremendously difficult for the Lady Hawks' Ally Collins to get off this shot. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Coach Kayla Irvin directs some traffic before an inbound play for the Lady Cavs. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Ruth Gourley (4) gets hip-checked by South Side's Zandria Cohill (10) while Lady Hawk coach Brent McNeal is complaining about an over-the-back rebounding foul he felt should have been called. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Makayla Murphy was doing her part (with sign language) to keep Crockett's fan base engaged in the game. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Audrey Whitby made a steal late in the game for one of Crockett's rare fast break opportunities. She was fouled on her shot attempt, but made both free throws. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Ellie Henderson (left), Keeton Holyfield, and Torey Savage (right) thought they had a roadblock set for South Side's Makayla Bates (15), but she found her way through -- but was called for traveling in doing it. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Double-team traps were the order of the night for South Side's defense, throwing one here at Crockett's Wesley Thornton. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: On the final time she touched the ball in her high school career, Keeton Holyfield looks to deliver a pass to a teammate on Crockett's last offensive possession of the season. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Ever-hustling Ellie Henderson dives on the floor for this ball as Halle Holyfield tries to screen off a pair of Lady Hawks who are ready to swoop. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Sophia McGowan lights up the court with her smile as Crockett's cheerleaders conduct a stunt during the game's last timeout. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Ruth Gourley zigzags between South Side defenders as she tries to get the ball upcourt against the Lady Hawks' relentless press. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: As South Side begins to pull away late in the third quarter, Halle Holyfield and Wesley Thornton begin to get a sense that the season is coming to a close. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett fans will miss the "whatever-it-takes" grit and attitude of senior Halle Holyfield, who may be Crockett's all-time leader in floor burns. (Photo by Ron Barry)