

CAVALIERS' AMAZING MERCY-RULE WINNING STREAK CONTINUES AT CLARK MEMORIAL



Above: Aiden Austin tossed a 12-strikeout shutout as Crockett cruised past Maine East (IL) 11-0 at the Phil Clark Memorial Classic. (Photo by Ron Barry)

When the second inning concluded Friday at Millington's USA Stadium with Crockett County leading Maine East (IL) High School 1-0, it might have been logical to think, "Well, this is the day the mercy rule streak will end for the Cavaliers."

One might have figured Coach Brad Smith's red-hot club would still be victorious, but not by the lopsided margin required to trigger the rule that had been invoked in their previous six triumphs.

But then came the third inning, when Crockett dropped a 10-spot on the Blue Demons from Park Ridge, a northwest suburb of Chicago. The rally was highlighted by a three-run homer by Nash Kilburn and both a home run and double by Carter Winders, providing the 11-0 advantage that prompted the ending of the contest when Maine East's batters were retired in the top of the fifth.

That made it an incredible seven consecutive games the Cavs have now won in mercy-rule fashion and improved the season record to 12-2 as they soundly defeated a Chicago-area team for the second straight day at the Phil Clark Memorial Classic, a gathering of teams intended to celebrate the life of one of the state of Tennessee's most decorated coaches. Clark, the head coach of five state champion teams from three different schools, died from colon cancer 14 months ago.

While one Crockett victory streak was continuing in Millington, another was ending Friday in Murfreesboro, where Coach Baron Jimmerson's softball team – after opening the season with 13 straight victories – dropped their first two games in the prestigious Southern Warrior Classic. The Lady Cavs fell to a couple of Illinois squads, 14-0 to South Elgin and 10-8 to Moline.

BASEBALL: Crockett's huge uprising in the third inning supported an outstanding pitching performance by senior Aiden Austin, who yielded just two hits and struck out 12 in posting his five-frame shutout. The win was the Cavs' ninth straight since opening the 2026 campaign at 3-2.

Kilburn's three-run smash – his first homer of the season – and Winders' four-RBI day highlighted a Crockett offense that collected eight hits, stole eight bases, and took advantage of four walks and three hit batsmen.

Winders hit a bases-loaded sacrifice fly in the first inning to provide the only run that Austin would actually need, but the Cavaliers turned up the heat in the third stanza when they batted around – and then some.

Brady Fronabarger was hit by a pitch to lead off the frame, and Winders followed with a blast over the left-field wall. George Randall walked and scored on a Landry Fronabarger double. Mason Ray singled and Sam Proctor was hit by a pitch, loading the bases for Callan Willis, whose groundout scored pinch-runner JT McKinnie. Kilburn then crushed his opposite-field home run to left, giving the Cavs an 8-0 lead.

Brady Fronabarger and Winders then hit consecutive doubles to account for another tally. Following a walk to Austin, Randall singled to left, plating courtesy runners Davis Porter and Brody Parlow.

Crockett will conclude its Clark Memorial play Saturday with a 1 p.m. game against Collinsville High School.

SOFTBALL: The previously unbeaten Lady Cavaliers have been clobbering opponents since the season began, but ran into a major buzzsaw themselves from the South Elgin Storm.

Storm pitcher Jenna Sheehan blanked Crockett on four hits – two by Wesley Thornton, including a triple – while striking out six without issuing a walk. In the meantime, the South Elgin offense jumped on Lady Cav starter Emmalynn Medlin for five quick runs in the top of the first and later took advantage of five Crockett errors to score six of their remaining nine tallies. Charlotte Rzenno belted a home run for the winners, the only one of 10 Storm hits that wasn't a single.

In Crockett's second game of the day, the Lady Cavs gave up six runs in the first inning but then battled back with six of their own in the second before actually taking an 8-7 lead into the fifth frame. With two outs and the bases loaded in the bottom of the stanza, however, Moline's Hayden Snelling ripped a two-run, walk-off single to win the game for the Maroons, who tagged Crockett starter Anna Stallings for 13 hits and seven earned runs in the contest.

Piper Smith paced the Lady Cav offense with a 2-for-2 effort that included a double, one of five the Crockett lineup produced. Thornton, Emilee Chander, Haley Leforgee, and Kiyra Liggins had the others.

Now 13-2, Jimmerson's club will play two games Saturday and two more Sunday in the Murfreesboro event. Saturday's games are against Bedford North Lawrence at 2:00 and Blackman at 6:00; Sunday's contests are against Benet Academy at 10 a.m. and Batavia at noon.



Left: Four RBIs from Carter Winders -- who had a home run and double in the same inning Friday -- aided the Cavalier cause. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Cav outfielder Nash Kilburn blasted his first home run of the season Friday, a three-run shot. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Kiyra Liggins collected one of the five Crockett doubles in the loss to Moline Friday in Murfreesboro. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Piper Smith was 2-for-2, including a double, in the Lady Cavaliers' 10-8 loss to Moline (IL) Friday. (Photo by Ron Barry)