# CROCKETT WINS BASEBALL REGULAR-SEASON DISTRICT CROWN; SOFTBALL TEAM INTO FIRST PLACE



**Above:** George Randall belts his first high school home run to the opposite field with two outs in the bottom of the fifth to produce the decisive run as Crockett defeated South Gibson 2-1 Tuesday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Carter Winders' intensity level is off the charts.
George Randall is… well, he's just off the charts generally.

But together, Tuesday night, they charted the path to a regular-season district baseball championship in a 2-1 nail-biter over South Gibson that gave Crockett County the top seed and the host field for the post-season tournament that will begin next Wednesday in Alamo.

And on the adjacent softball diamond, the Lady Cavaliers – needing not just to win, but to do so by four runs or better – rode a four-hit offensive effort by Haley Leforgee, a leadoff home run by Wesley Thornton that set the tone, and a huge bases-loaded pinch hit by Maddie Haynes to take down Dyer County 11-3 and move into first place in the current district standings.

To top off a busy night on the sports schedule, Crockett's soccer team traveled to Newbern and pummeled the Choctaws 10-1 as Luke Carter posted a hat trick (three goals) and Braulio Marquez contributed a goal and three assists.

**BASEBALL:** Winders – now 7-0 on the season and displaying his typical all-business demeanor – tossed a brilliant two-hitter, striking out seven without issuing a walk, and missed a shutout only because of an ill-timed wild pitch. But the game was still tied 1-1 in the bottom of the fifth with two outs, largely because Hornet pitcher Tyler DeHaan had only been touched for one hit up to that point.

That's when Randall – a fun-loving sophomore who's impossible to place in a category – stepped to the plate, sporting all of three extra-base hits through Crockett's first 29 games. Randall, who plays a steady third base for the Cavs, is just as comfortable talking to classmates and spectators along the fence row between pitches and throwing knuckleballs to the reserves who help warm up the outfielders.

But he has a knack for the big moment – he'd knocked in 27 runs with his 28 hits this spring – and he can handle the bat pretty well, as evidenced by the perfectly-placed squeeze bunt he'd laid down earlier to give Crockett its only run of the deadlocked contest.

Even so – on the first pitch from DeHaan in this at-bat – count Randall among the throng of onlookers who were completely stunned when he laced an opposite-field drive off the base of the scoreboard, clearing the fence by mere feet for a home run and the 2-1 eventual winning margin.

"When I hit it, I kind of knew it was gone," Randall smiled, "but I was shocked. While I was running around the bases, I didn't really know what to do." It was Randall's first high school four-bagger; he said his last previous one was in 14U summer travel ball.

Randall's blast provided the difference in another classic pitchers' duel between Winders and DeHaan, who were both outstanding in tossing complete-game two-hitters. But the victory was especially sweet for Winders, who was on the mound a year ago when, in his fifth frame of relief, he surrendered the 11th-inning, walk-off home run to South Gibson's Tommy Baker that gave the Hornets a 1-0 triumph in the district tournament at Dyer County.

Coach Brad Smith's Cavs tallied first when Winders led off the second with a sharp double to the left-center gap. He stole third prior to a walk to Aiden Austin, and Karson Kail entered as a courtesy runner. On the very next pitch, Randall pushed a well-executed bunt down the first-base line as Kail broke for the plate and scored easily as the throw went to first.

Crockett's lead lasted until the top of the fourth when Jacob Bateman drove a double to center, advanced to third on a wild pitch, and scored on a Cade Allen groundout. It was South Gibson's only serious scoring threat of the entire ballgame. The Cavs left the bases loaded in the sixth when the Hornets elected to intentionally walk Brady Fronabarger and Winders with two outs after Sam Proctor had been hit by a pitch and moved to third via a stolen base and a Nash Kilburn groudout. Another groundout ended the threat.

Winders worked around an infield error to retire the Hornets in the seventh, with centerfielder Callan Willis squeezing the final flyout, and Smith enjoyed watching his crew celebrate the regular-season title in his first year at the Cavalier helm.

"That's a very good baseball team over there," Smith said, nodding in South Gibson's direction. "When they beat us last night (in a 3-2 thriller in Medina), I thought it was the first time all year that our team was not the initiator of the action. So it was good to bounce back like this. I didn't see us winning on a home run by George, but he hit a ball just like that last week at Lakeland Prep that went off the base of the fence with the bases loaded. He seems to rise to the occasion."

The Cavs (now 27-3) will close their regular season with a Thursday night game at Brighton at 7:00. The district tournament begins next Wednesday, although Crockett and South Gibson – as the #1 and #2 seeds – will not play until Thursday.

**SOFTBALL:** Coach Baron Jimmerson's Lady Cavaliers had lost a 6-3 decision to Dyer County earlier this season, which meant that Crockett had to win Tuesday's game by four runs to move into the lead for the district's top seed.

When first baseman Emilee Chandler turned a hard line drive near the bag into a nifty double play to help the Lady Cavs escape the top of the first, it gave Jimmerson's crew an immediate lift.

And when Thornton – on a 2-and-2 count – led off the bottom of the frame with a laser-beam shot to left-center that easily cleared the fence for her sixth home run of the year, Crockett's team confidence shot sky-high.

The bad news for the hosts was that – needing to win by four – it was going to be much more difficult to score the rest of the day, because Dyer County wasn't going to let Thornton get another chance to hurt them. Sure enough, she was walked intentionally three times later.

But the rest of the Lady Cavs responded to the challenge, notably right fielder Leforgee, who crushed three doubles among her four hits and scored three times herself. However, the biggest blow of the day for Crockett came in the bottom of the second after the Lady Choctaws had tied it back up at 1-1.

Leforgee led off with a long double to left, advancing to third on a Chandler groundout. Madison Stitts reached on an infield error and stole second, prior to a lineout for the second out. Macie Teel ripped a hard ground ball that was booted at short, allowing Leforgee to score and put the Lady Cavs back on top 2-1. Fallon Beaird entered to run for Teel, and Thornton was intentionally passed to load the sacks.

Jimmerson called on Haynes to pinch-hit, and she raked a base hit into left field that scored Stitts and Beaird. It was 4-1 Crockett through two innings, and the momentum had clearly swung in the hosts' favor.

Lady Cav pitcher Emmalynn Medlin escaped a bases-loaded jam in the third with a key strikeout, and then her teammates struck for four more runs. Gabby Bursey drew a walk and raced all the way around to score on Leforgee's second double. Leforgee stole third and scored on a Stitts sacrifice bunt, followed by a Piper Smith single to left and an infield error on a ball hit by Teel. Courtesy runner Beaird (in for Smith this time) and Teel stole third and second, respectively, prompting Thornton to be intentionally walked again.

Nataly Amador was then drilled in the back by a pitch, forcing in a run, and it became 8-1 when Kiyra Liggins was walked by relief pitcher Rylee Kee.

Dyer County got one back in the top of the fourth, but Crockett quickly responded with three more in its half of the frame. Leforgee led off with her third double and scored on a single by Stitts. A Smith bunt was mishandled, and Stitts eventually scored on a wild pitch. Teel then singled home Smith with Crockett's final tally.

Medlin went the distance for the Lady Cavs, pitching around trouble in almost every inning. She walked four and hit a batter, but scattered six hits and avoided the big inning that the Choctaws have inflicted on several of their opponents.

Crockett (now 25-5-1) travels to Brownsville to play Haywood Thursday evening at 5:30. There is also another district game pending with South Gibson.

**SOCCER:** Crockett raced to a 7-0 lead in the opening half and cruised from there in crushing Dyer County 10-1 Tuesday night in Newbern.

The Cavs pounded 20 shots on goal in the opening period. Braulio Marquez opened the scoring at 35:02 on an assist from Adrian Calderon; Calderon then scored at 22:36 on a pass from Luke Carter. Calderon received a Marquez assist and scored again at 9:12, and Carter netted a shot less than a minute later from an Aiden Markgraf assist.

Barely a minute after that, Carter tallied again off a pass by Angel Garcia, and Markgraf scored at 6:17 on an assist from Diego Marquez. Carter notched his second goal at 2:14 off a Braulio Marquez pass to end the first-half onslaught.

Eduardo Galvez initiated the Cavs' second-half attack by taking an Allan Marquez pass and netting it at 31:05. Jacob Marquez, from Carlos Pacheco, added a score at 20:58. Cam Morey tallied at 15:17 off another Braulio Marquez pass for Crockett's final goal. Dyer County avoided being shut out by scoring at 34:50 of the second period on a penalty kick.

Allan Marquez made three saves in the contest for the victorious Cavaliers, who are scheduled to play at Dyersburg Friday night.



**Above:** On the adjacent softball field, Haley Leforgee -- here clowning at her dugout teammates from second base -- hammered three double and a single and scored three times as the Lady Cavs ripped Dyer County 11-3. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Above:** Carter Winders tossed a two-hitter over seven innings to go to 7-0 on the season and pitched Crockett to the regular-season district baseball championship. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Left:** Lady Cav shortstop Wesley Thornton -- here making a tremendous defensive play almost from third base -- opened Crockett's scoring with a home run Tuesday in the romp over Dyer County. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** Senior Sam Proctor was all smiles after catching Carter Winders' superb pitching performance, which improved Crockett's record to 27-3. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Right:** Carter Winders stole third base after doubling in the second inning ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below**: ... to set up this RBI squeeze bunt by George Randall, giving Crockett an early 1-0 lead. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Right:** Crockett made some key defensive plays, like this running over the shoulder catch in short right field by Aiden Austin (12). (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** George Randall is congratulated on his home run by Coach Brad Smith as he heads for home plate after giving Crockett the 2-1 lead. (Photo by Ron Barry)



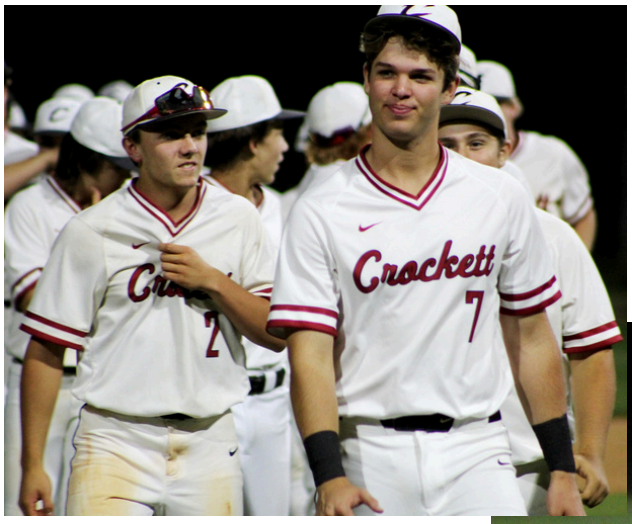





**Above:** Carter Winders' intensity in this game was constant, from his leadoff double in the second inning ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** ... to his reaction when he recorded the final out of his two-hit masterpiece. (Photo by Ron Barry)




**Left:** Crockett County has masterfully used its roster this season, from the power-hitting of senior Brady Fronabarger (7) to the speed of freshman Davis Porter (left). (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** But what most folks will remember from this beautifully-played game is the stunning home run clubbed by smiling George Randall. (Photo by Ron Barry)




**Left:** Coach Baron Jimmerson reacts to Maddie Haynes' clutch pinch hit with this encouraging point and a wide smile. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below:** On the softball field, Haley Leforgee was doing most of the damage to Dyer County, sliding in home safely here with one of her three runs scored. (Photo by Ron Barry)

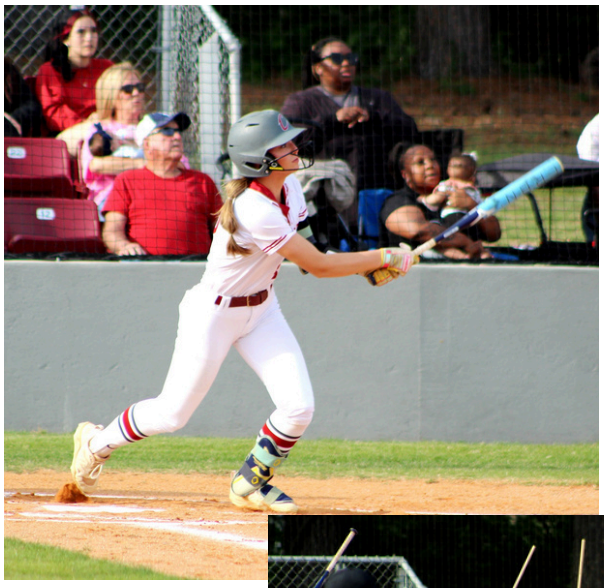


**Left:** Nataly Amador, standing on first base, tries to shake off the effects of gaining a run batted in the hard way: getting drilled in the back by a pitch with the bases loaded. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Above:** What really started to break the game open for the Lady Cavs was the bases-loaded, pinch-hit, two-RBI single by Maddie Haynes, seen here watching her hit drop in as she heads toward first base coach Tre Jimmerson. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Left:** Wesley Thornton's follow-through on her first-inning home run indicates that she pretty much knew it was landing on the other side of the fence ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** ... and her demonstrative teammates were very glad to welcome her happily at home plate. (Photo by Ron Barry)



**Below:** Meanwhile, Dyer County seemingly had multiple baserunners in almost every inning, but Emmalynn Medlin somehow kept effectively pitching around all the traffic. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Left:** Madison Stitts fields a shot near third base and steps on the bag for a forced third out before tossing the ball back to the pitching circle as Crockett comes to bat. (Photo by Ron Barry)

**Below:** Piper Smith beat this throw into second base to keep a Crockett rally going in the middle innings against Dyer County. (Photo by Ron Barry)





**Above:** Courtesy runner Fallon Beaird races in to score a run as the throw from the outfield sails toward the backstop. (Photo by Ron Barry)