BOTH CROCKETT DIAMOND TEAMS MOVE INTO SATURDAY DISTRICT WINNERS BRACKETS



Above: On the adjacent softball field, Maddie Haynes (left) had a big two-run single and Anna Stallings (right) pitched another complete-game gem as Crockett downed South Gibson 6-1. (Photo by Ron Barry)

When miscue-laden Crockett County fell behind by four runs to Dyersburg in the top of the first inning Thursday evening in the District 13-AAA Baseball Tournament in Alamo, Cavalier assistant coach Matt Mosier observed, "I don't think we've made three errors in an inning before all season."

He was right. They had not. But Mosier didn't seem overly concerned. His team had not even swung their bats yet – and he has SEEN his team swing their bats.

So when the Cavaliers connected for solo home runs on the first two swings they took against Trojan starting pitcher Brett Horner – courtesy of leadoff man Callan Willis and two-hole hitter Nash Kilburn – things were well on their way toward returning to normal in Crockett Baseball World.

And while the struggle never really eased against the determined visitors, Coach Brad Smith's Cavs eventually squeezed past the Trojans 7-6 to improve to 29-3 on the season and slide into Saturday morning's winners bracket finals against South Gibson, a 5-2 victor over Dyer County Thursday.
It will be the third meeting of the season between the evenly matched foes. The Hornets defeated Crockett 3-2 in Medina before the Cavs won 2-1 the following night in Alamo. Both games were well-played and tension-filled.

Adjacent to the baseball field Saturday and at the same time, Crockett's Lady Cavaliers will be playing in the winners bracket of the District 13-AAA Softball Tournament after downing South Gibson Thursday evening 6-1 behind the stellar pitching of Anna Stallings and a clutch two-run, pinch-hit single by Maddie Haynes. Coach Baron Jimmerson's club – now 29-5-1 – will be facing Dyer County, which took down Dyersburg in Thursday's nightcap.

BASEBALL: If Dyersburg had lost any confidence in losing two regular-season contests to the Cavs by fairly lopsided scores, it didn't show it Thursday. When a pop fly that should have been easily handled wasn't caught and fell for a game-opening error, Trojan catcher Alex Page blasted a long two-run homer to left field that clearly stated the visitors intended to put up a battle on this day.

Two infield throwing errors followed a pair of walks from Cav starter Kilburn, and suddenly it was 4-0 Dyersburg before Crockett even came to bat.

But Willis and Kilburn immediately cut the deficit in half with their bottom-of-the-first launches, and the Cavs went on to load the bases before an inning-ending strikeout quelled the threat.

Kilburn regained his control in the second with a pair of strikeouts, and Crockett cut it to 4-3 in the bottom of the frame when Willis walked, Kilburn singled, and Carter Winders followed a fielder's choice groundout with an RBI single – the first of his three hits on the evening.

Kilburn walked another Trojan in the third, but picked him off first right after that and then sailed through the rest of the inning. Crockett then tied the game at 4-4 when Aiden Austin – who also would end up with three hits – singled, George Randall and Mason Ray walked, and Sam Proctor drove a sacrifice fly to center field.

Kilburn retired the side in order in the top of the fourth, paving the way for the hosts to take the lead. Brady Fronabarger was hit by a pitch, and then Winders – who is now batting .559 with an amazing 62 RBIs in 32 games – hammered his tenth home run of the season over the right-center fence for a 6-4 Crockett edge.

Dyersburg refused to lay down, striking for another tally in the top of the fifth when Kilburn walked Evan Thompson and then wild pitched him to second. Thompson scored when Page scorched a sinking line drive near the left field line, where a sliding Brody Parlow got a glove on it but couldn't make the catch. Kilburn induced a groundout to end the frame, keeping the Cavs on top 6-5 and finishing his time on the mound for the afternoon.

Smith turned to first baseman Fronabarger to take the hill for the sixth inning, only his second pitching appearance of the season. Two strikeouts offset a walk, and the Cavs came to bat in the sixth still up 6-5.

Fronabarger was again hit by a pitch to start the frame, and Winders followed with a long double to right. Landry Fronabarger drew a walk to load the bases, and Austin drilled a sac fly to center to push the seventh run across. It turned out to be the game-winner, because Dyersburg engineered another major threat in the top of the seventh.

Singles by John Parker Noblin and Page and a walk to Will Leonard loaded the sacks with just one out. Ryan Wesson hit a slow grounder to Randall at third, and he threw home to Winders for the force and the second out. But Horner then delivered an infield single in the hole at short, where Crockett's Mason Ray had no play at any base but kept it in the infield. It was now 7-6, Cavs, with the bases still loaded and two outs.

Fronabarger – unfazed – refocused and struck out the next Trojan on a 1-and-2 pitch to post the save and send the hosts into the winners bracket final Saturday morning at 11:00.
Crockett managed an 11-hit attack against the Trojans, with Winders and Austin collecting three apiece and Kilburn notching two. Willis and Fronabarger each scored twice and Winders drove in three. Kilburn picked up his eighth pitching victory against a single defeat. Four of the five runs scored against him were unearned.

Friday's schedule has two losers bracket games at 4:30 and 7:00. Haywood and Dyersburg will meet in the first one and Obion and Dyer County will duel in the second.

SOFTBALL: Stallings, Crockett's lone senior player and already signed to pitch for Christian Brothers University next year, was in control throughout for the Lady Cavaliers in gaining her sixteenth win of the season against just three defeats and lowering her ERA to a sparkling 1.57.

Stallings scattered four hits, didn't walk a batter, and struck out six as the Lady Cavs carved out the victory by scoring three times in each of the first and fifth innings.

In the opening frame, Crockett's Wesley Thornton drew a four-pitch, leadoff walk and took second on an infield hit by Nataly Amador. Haley Leforgee, moved up to third in the batting order, cranked a run-scoring double to left, and Amador then came home on a groundout by Gabby Bursey. Leforgee eventually scored on a passed ball, and Jimmerson's crew held a 3-0 advantage.

It stayed that way until the bottom of the fifth. With two outs, Leforgee singled to center and Bursey beat out a bunt. Madison Stitts lined a single to left to knock in Leforgee for a 4-0 margin. After a walk to Kiyra Liggins loaded the bases, Haynes – who's been extremely clutch in a pinch-hitting role lately – entered and smashed a hard ground-ball single to left for two more runs and the breathing room Crockett needed.
An outfield error and a subsequent single by Kynleigh Reece provided South Gibson's lone tally in the top of the sixth.

Friday's losers bracket schedule for softball will pit Haywood against South Gibson at 5:00 and Obion against Dyersburg at 7:00. Crockett will face Dyer County at 11:00 Saturday morning, followed at 1:00 by a game between Friday's winners.



Above: Carter Winders watches his fourth-inning, two-run homer break a 4-4 tie with Dyersburg on Day 2 of the 13-AAA District Baseball Tournament in Alamo. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Madison Stitts had two of Crockett's seven hits and drove in a run to help the Lady Cavs win their District 13-AAA Softball Tournament opener. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Crockett's Brady Fronabarger (7) is about to be drilled in the back by this pitch (the ball is near the left side of this photo), the second time he was hit in the contest. He ended up scoring both times, a key point in the 7-6 Cav win. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Brady Fronabarger reacts after being for the second time in the victory over Dyersburg. Alex Page is the Trojan catcher. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Crockett softballer Kiyra Liggins decided this particular pitch was not to her liking Thursday afternoon. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Crockett was already down 4-0 before even coming to bat, but Callan Willis set the right tone for the Cavs by bashing a home run on Dyersburg's first pitch. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: The next batter was Nash Kilburn, and this swing generated another homer for the Cavs, instantly cutting the Trojan lead to 4-2. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: Sam Proctor is congratulated by Brady Fronabarger after his fourth-inning sac fly tied the baseball game at 4-4. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Cavalier head baseball coach Brad Smith, who has led Crockett to a 29-3 record in his first year at the helm, tries to keep his troops encouraged Thursday. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Lady Cav speedster Fallon Beaird, who finds a way to get filthy in every game she plays, beats this South Gibson tag for her seventeenth stolen base of the season. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Crockett's eventual winning run in the baseball game came on this sixth-inning sac fly from Aiden Austin, who also had three hits. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: With Dyersburg threatening in the seventh with the bases loaded, George Randall fielded a grounder and threw to Carter Winders at home for the force out. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Brady Fronabarger, making just his second pitching appearance this season, then bore down on the next Dyersburg hitter, and ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Mason Ray threw out Dyersburg's Ryan Wesson at first to Brady Fronabarger to end a Trojan threat in the top of the fifth and maintain a 6-5 Cav lead. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett shortstop Mason Ray then fielded a ball deep in the hole, and faked this throw to try to deke the runner approaching third to keep going. The Trojans cut the deficit to 7-6 on the play, but Ray kept the ball in the infield. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: ... when Carter Winders showed the umpire he had held on to a third-strike foul tip, the ballgame was finally over. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Carter Winders continued his amazing senior season with three more hits -- a single, double, and home run -- and is now hitting .559 with 62 RBIs in 32 games. (Photo by Ron Barry)

