CHAMPIONSHIPS AND REGIONAL BERTHS HIGHLIGHT BUSY CROCKETT SPORTS MONDAY



Above: The Nash Smash: Crockett's Nash Kilburn drilled a two-run homer to tie the game at 3-3 and helped ignite the Cavalier offense. (Photo by Ron Barry)

There may be many Crockett County sports fans who were surprised this season by the baseball team's 31-3 record and Monday night's District 13-AAA Tournament championship.

First-year Cavalier coach Brad Smith says he's not one of them. "Confidently, I can say I'm not surprised," Smith said after his Cavs defeated Dyer County 7-4 for the title. "I've watched them all through the fall and pre-season. I've seen them in the weight room. I've seen how hard they've worked, and I know how good they want to be. All they needed was a little discipline and some structure, and somebody to love on 'em."

There's an entire community loving on 'em now after a massive crowd turned out Monday night as Crockett hosted three separate district tournaments, a testament to the success of the spring sports program at the school.

But none has performed as consistently admirably as this baseball unit, a senior-led powerhouse that once won 23 games in a row and sailed through the district tournament without a loss, coming up with clutch hits, timely pitching, and the occasional belief-denying play.

In Monday night's game, it came in the top of the sixth inning. Crockett was leading 6-3, but relief pitcher George Randall entered to a suddenly shrinking strike zone and issued a pair of walks, and then was called for a balk to advance both runners. Seth Headtke hit a sharp fly ball to right field for a sacrifice fly, but Cav outfielder Nash Kilburn – who would later be named the Most Valuable Player in the tournament – caught the ball and then smartly threw to third base instead of home, where Choctaw runner Jake Stanley thought he had plenty of time to reach and came in standing up. Kilburn's astonishing Ronald Acuña-like, one-hop laser beam to third sacker Rylan Redding caught the runner by surprise for a double play. Randall then induced another flyout to Kilburn to wriggle out of the frame.

The two Cavaliers involved in that spectacular play had been instrumental in giving Crockett its lead. Freshman Redding was Smith's choice to start the contest on the mound, and he delivered five innings of two-hit ball. The three runs scored against him were unearned, largely the result of a couple in field errors.

As for Kilburn, his two-out, two-run homer in the bottom of the third tied the game at 3-3 and was the turning point for the Cav offense. And in the Crockett fifth, after Sam Proctor had been hit by a pitch and sacrificed to second by Callan Willis, Kilburn hit an infield grounder to first and then beat Stanley to the bag on sheer speed, setting the stage for senior Brady Fronabarger to do what he has done several times this spring. After watching Proctor score on a wild pitch to give the Cavs the lead, Fronabarger hammered an opposite-field, line-drive smash over the right-center fence to make it 6-3 and provide the breathing room the hosts needed.

After Proctor delivered a sac fly in the sixth to make it 7-4, Fronabarger took the mound and earned the save by offsetting a walk and a bloop hit with a pair of strikeouts. When Willis grabbed a liner to center to end the contest, the Cavs had their championship and the enthusiastic Crockett crowd went home happy.

Willis and Kilburn each had two hits and scored twice for the Cavs, who now move into Region 7-AAA Tournament play at Chester County. They'll play Lexington at 3:00 Friday in Round 1.

SOFTBALL: A district crown would have been nice, but what the Lady Cavaliers absolutely had to do to keep their season going was to win the losers bracket final game at 5:00 Monday, and they accomplished that by using a nine-run third inning to outlast South Gibson 12-7. That secured a regional tournament berth for Coach Baron Jimmerson's club.

While a leadoff home run in the bottom of the first by Wesley Thornton got the Lady Cavs off on the right foot offensively, Crockett actually trailed 3-2 entering the bottom of the third when a pair of bases-loaded hits – both clearing the sacks – propelled the hosts' huge uprising. Crockett's first two batters – Thornton and Amador – were each hit by pitches and advanced on a sacrifice bunt by Haley Leforgee. After Gabby Bursey drew a walk and an ensuing forceout was made at home plate on a grounder, Kiyra Liggins crushed a double off the left-center fence on the fly, plating all three runners for a 5-3 lead.

Maddie Haynes singled and then Fallon Beaird drove home two more runs with another single to left. Macie Teel was hit by a pitch and Thornton was intentionally walked to re-load the sacks – but then pinch-hitter Emilee Chandler ripped a triple to make it 10-3. An infield error plated the eleventh tally. All nine runs in the rally scored with two outs.

Madison Stitts drove in Crockett's final run with a sixth-inning sac fly, and winning pitcher Anna Stallings – despite yielding 13 hits to the Lady Hornets – made it stand up for the victory. Four of South Gibson's runs were unearned.

The tables were turned in the championship game that followed, as Dyer County used a big third frame – scoring six times – to key a 10-0 run-rule triumph for the district title. Crockett managed just two hits in the shutout – singles by Haynes and Nataly Amador – as Dyer County's Ava Hart kept the Lady Cavs off-balance through her five innings. Rylee Key had three hits and three RBIs for the winners, and Kierstyn Ray added two hits and two RBIs.

Crockett will carry a 30-7-1 record into the Region 7-AAA Tournament, which will begin next Monday night.

SOCCER: Crockett County will play for the District 13-AAA Tournament championship Thursday night after soundly defeating Obion County Central 5-0 Monday in a match completely dominated by the hosts, who put 22 shots on goal in the contest. The Cavs welcomed the return of Coach Alex Taylor, who missed the previous game while attending the birth of his new child.

Crockett will play South Gibson for the district title after the Hornets blanked Dyersburg 5-0. Both Crockett and South Gibson secured region tournament berths with their Monday victories.

Chris Cerda put the Cavs on the scoreboard first at the 33:22 mark, netting a shot off an assist from Braulio Marquez. Cerda then assisted on the next goal, a shot by Angel Garcia at 18:38. Before the first half ended, Luke Carter took an Adrian Calderon pass and punched it into the net at 13:42.

Carter made it two goals in a row when he scored again at 32:08 in the second period from an assist by Aiden Markgraf. Almost 20 minutes later, Calderon wrapped up the scoring for the night with a goal off a Diego Marquez assist. The Cavs are now 9-2-1 heading into Thursday's championship.

TRACK & FIELD: Five Lady Cavaliers – a pole vaulter and a relay team – claimed berths in the TSSAA State Championships by winning events Monday at the first day of the Class AA West Sectional at Lakeland Prep.

Junior Addie Davidson – who has already qualified previously for the State Pentathlon event – set yet another school record (her seventh) by winning the pole vault with a clearance of 8 feet, fully six inches higher than she had previously gone in practice sessions.

Then, Crockett's girls 4x800 relay team blew all the competition off the track, winning the race by 46 seconds over the host school. Senior Claire Evans, sophomore Alivia Hale, freshman Ruth Gourley, and junior Avery Thornton combined to post a time of 10:49.12 in the event.

In other Monday highlights, Gourley and Marley Thornton – freshmen who just started practicing the triple jump two weeks ago – placed fifth and seventh to support Davidson's third-place effort and earn key team points for Coach Julie Nass and her crew. Julia Finley added a third-place and Avery Thornton a fifth in the pole vault. Caroline Scruggs had a Top 10 finish in the high jump; Grant Smallwood was eighth in the shot put; Finley was sixth in the girls discus; and Ittai Fry was ninth in the boys discus.

The girls 4x100 relay team set a new school record, even though their time didn't advance them into Wednesday's final. As a team, Crockett's girls are neck-and-neck with Raleigh Egypt through the first day of competition.

The top five finishers and all other Crockett County participants in Monday's Class AA West Sectional at Lakeland Preparatory School:

Girls High Jump: (1) Honesty Jones, Memphis East 4-10; (2) Na'Zyia Lemons, Dyer Co 4-10; (3) Alexis Rivers, Chester Co 4-10; (4) Elizabeth Foster, Lakeland Prep 4-6; (5) Keokuk Bonner, Fayette Ware 4-6; (T-9) Caroline Scruggs, Crockett 4-4.
Boys High Jump: (1) Kelvon Register, Memphis East 6-2; (2) Caynan Taylor, Brighton 6-2; (3) Drey Scott, South Gibson 6-0; (4) Triston Sebourn, Dyer Co 6-0; (T-5) Ethan Jones, Fayette Ware; Ja'Ceon Blake, Raleigh Egypt; Kylin Gurley, Dyersburg 5-8.
Girls Long Jump: (1) Leah Gregory, Memphis East 17-5; (2) Jomeria Tate, Raleigh Egypt 15-9; (3) McKenna Stuart, Lakeland Prep 15-4; (4) Addie Davidson, Crockett 15-1.50; (5) Abby Stevens, Lakeland Prep 14-9.50.
Boys Long Jump: (1) Tayshaun Dye, Millington 23-10; (2) Masai Turner, Memphis East 22-1.50; (3) Ty Beard, Covington 22-0.50; (4) Necari Hall, Dyersburg 22-0; (5) Kymani White, Jackson North Side 21-4.50.
Girls Triple Jump: (1) Jomeria Tate, Raleigh Egypt 36-9; (2) Leah Gregory, Memphis East 36-2; (3) Addie Davidson, Crockett 32-3; (4) Alexis Rivers, Chester Co 30-2; (5) Ruth Gourley, Crockett 29-0.50 [PR]; (7) Marley Thornton, Crockett 27-8 [PR].
Boys Triple Jump: (1) Tayshaun Dye, Millington 44-4.50; (2) Ty Beard, Covington 43-10; (3) Kelvon Register, Memphis East 40-8; (4) Markell Brownridge, Memphis East 40-5.50; (5) Jhumon Jemison, Raleigh Egypt 39-10.

Girls Pole Vault: (1) Addie Davidson, Crockett 8-0 [PR; new CCHS school record]; (2) Laninya Jones, Raleigh Egypt 7-6; (3) Julia Finley, Crockett 6-6; (4) Savannah Yager, Fayette Ware 6-0; (5) Avery Thornton, Crockett 5-6.

Boys Pole Vault: (1) Ben Kanda, Lakeland Prep 11-6; (2) Mark Foster, Lakeland Prep 11-0; (3) Eric Miller, Raleigh Egypt 10-0; (4) Colton Kirby, Lakeland Prep 8-0.

Girls Discus: (1) Michelea Dickerson, Raleigh Egypt 89-9.50; (2) Martina Alexander, Bolton 83-4.50; (3) Jade Reed, South Gibson 83-0.50; (4) Nyla Paige, Bolton 73-7.50; (5) Allie Brown, Dyer Co 70-9; (6) Julia Finley, Crockett 69-7.

Boys Discus: (1) Brady Whittington, South Gibson 128-4; (2) Jack Gatewood, Lakeland Prep 127-7; (3) Edward Baumann, Brighton 127-2; (4) Keanon King Jr, Ripley 126-11; (5) Kody Powell, Raleigh Egypt 120-5; (9) Ittai Fry, Crockett 107-10 [PR]; (23) Sebastian Garduno, Crockett 81-8; (31) Kamari Cason, Crockett 66-11.

Girls Shot Put: (1) Jade Reed, South Gibson 38-1 2; (2) Nyla Paige, Bolton 32-11; (3) Abigail Nesbitt, Ripley 32-6; (4) Michelea Dickerson, Raleigh Egypt 32-1; (5) Martina Alexander, Bolton 29-1.

Boys Shot Put: (1) Edward Baumann, Brighton 48-7.50; (2) Brayden Bailey, Lexington 41-1; (3) Brady Whittington, South Gibson 39-11.50; (4) Lawson Simmons, South Gibson 39-7; (5) Channing Myers, Dyer Co 39-6; (Grant Smallwood, Crockett 38-4.

Mixed (Boys & Girls) 4x400 Relay [Finals]: (1) Raleigh Egypt 3:52.97; (2) Bolton 4:02.76; (3) Fayette Ware 4:07.64; (4) Memphis East 4:08.33; (5) Brighton 4:18.51.

Girls 4x800 Relay [Finals]: (1) Crockett (Claire Evans, Alivia Hale, Ruth Gourley, Avery Thornton) 10:49.12; (2) Lakeland Prep 11:35.10; (3) Chester Co 12:17.98; (4) Raleigh Egypt 14:14.33.

Boys 4x800 Relay [Finals]: (1) Millington 8:48.51; (2) Memphis East 9:06.70; (3) Lakeland Prep 9:21.76; (4) Raleigh Egypt 10:30.10.

All other running events were preliminaries for Wednesday finals. Here are Crockett's qualifiers from the prelims for the Wednesday finals:

Girls 4x200 Relay Team (Zinayah Donald, Zamaria Edwards, Catherine Scruggs, Cesia Sanchez – 6th, 1:57.41).

Girls 400: Claire Evans [PR] (5th, 1:05.64).

Girls 300 Hurdles: Addie Davidson.

Boys 300 Hurdles: Aaron Morgan (7th, 47.05).

Girls 4x400 Relay Team (Avery Thornton, Caroline Scruggs, Marley Thornton, Claire Evans – 1st, 4:37.39).

Boys 4x400 Relay Team (Cortland Reddick, Khilan Thomas, Christian Buchannan, Aidan Klonowski – 5th, 3:54.23).

Here are Crockett's other previous qualifiers for Wednesday finals:

Girls 3200 – Alivia Hale (5th-best time); Boys 110 Hurdles – Titus Luten (4th-best time); Girls 1600 – Alivia Hale (6th-best time) and Caroline Scruggs (10th-best time); Boys 1600 – Aidan Klonowski (4th-best time); Girls 300 Hurdles – Addie Davidson (7th-best time); Girls 800 – Ruth Gourley (5th-best time), Avery Thornton (6th-best time), and Claire Evans (7th-best time); Boys 3200 – Aidan Klonowski (3rd-best time).



Left: Nash Kilburn then bailed the Cavs out of a sixth-inning jam with a laser beam throw to third on a sac fly, nailing a runner for a double play; Sam Proctor congratulates him here as the inning ends. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Soaring to a new school record in the pole vault -- and now to the TSSAA State Championships as the West Sectional winner -- Addie Davidson continues her monumental track & field season for Crockett. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Kiyra Liggins hammers a bases-loaded double to take Crockett from a 3-2 deficit to a 5-3 lead in the Lady Cavs' big tournament win over South Gibson. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Chris Cerda scored one goal and assisted on another as the Cavalier soccer team earned a berth in the district tournament championship game by defeating Obion County 5-0 Monday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: After Sam Proctor scored the go-ahead run on this wild pitch, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: The scoreboard tells to story as Brady Fronabarger circles the bases in the foreground. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Davis Porter beats the tag at second as he steals a base for the Cavaliers in Monday's 7-4 district championship victory. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: ... Brady Fronabarger blasted a two-run homer to right-center to give the Cavaliers some insurance against the Choctaws. (Photo by Ron Barry)

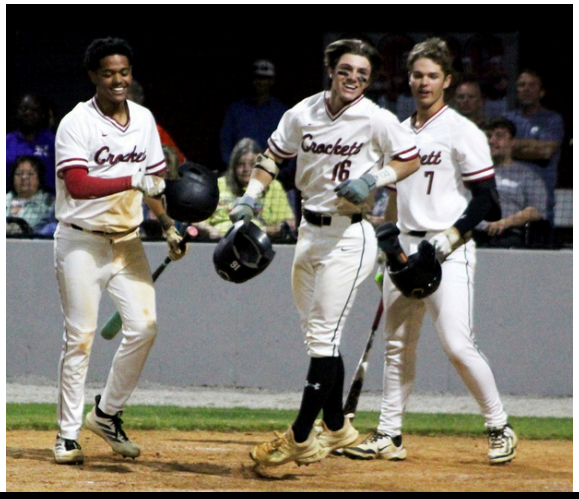




Left: And when he reaches home plate for the celebratory helmet tap, Carter Winders (left) and Nash Kilburn (right) are happy to oblige. (Photo by Ron Barry)

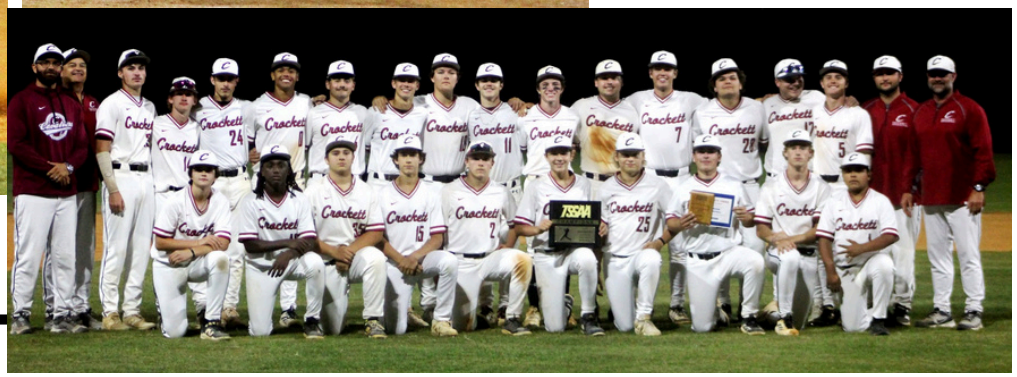
Below: Freshman Rylan Redding got the pitching start Monday night and threw five effective innings to pick up the victory. (Photo by Ron Barry)

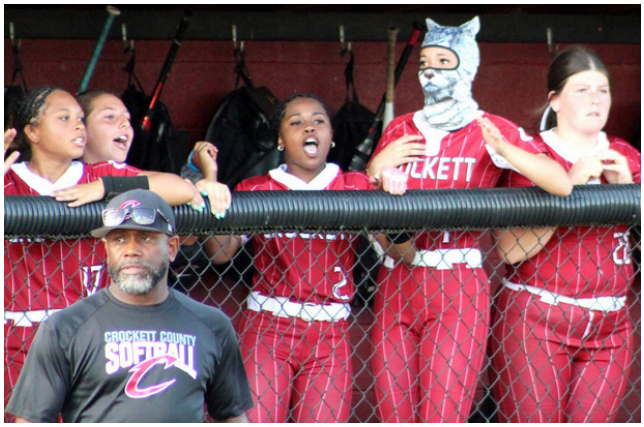




Left: Nash Kilburn -- named the tournament's Most Valuable Player -- celebrates his home run with Callan Willis and Brady Fronabarger. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: When it was all over, the Cavaliers were District 13-AAA Tournament champions. They'll play in the Region 7-AAA Tournament Friday against Lexington at Chester County. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: You never know what you mind find in the Lady Cav dugout behind Coach Baron Jimmerson, such as Emilee "Cat-Head" Chandler, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: A hustling Maddie Haynes is safe at the plate as the ball comes loose from the South Gibson defense. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Below: Another textbook Wesley Thornton power swing produced another first-inning leadoff homer for Crockett against South Gibson. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: ... who later pinch-hit with the bases loaded and cleared them all with a big triple in Crockett's nine-run uprising in the third inning. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Fallon Beaird contributed a big two-run single in Crockett's monster rally in the third inning against the Lady Hornets. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Below: Caroline Scruggs -- the shortest competitor in the field -- showed some major hops as she finished ninth in the girls high jump. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Freshmen Ruth Gourley (left) and Marley Thornton (right) -- who just started training in the event two weeks ago -- both produced Top 7 finishes in the triple jump at the West Sectional Monday. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Below: Julia Finley placed third in the pole vault, giving Crockett three of Top 5 finishers in the event. Finley was also sixth in the discus throw. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Grant Smallwood placed eighth in the boys shot put at the West Sectional Monday at Lakeland Prep. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Above: Avery Thornton made Crockett County history as the first Cav athlete to clear a pole vault height at the West Sectional. (Photo by Ron Barry)

