MONUMENTAL KIYRA LIGGINS PERFORMANCE PROPELS LADY CAVS INTO SECTIONAL



Above: It may take a while to wipe the smile from the face of Kiyra Liggins after her four-hit, six-RBI performance in Monday's 15-3 region tournament win at Lexington. (Photo by Ron Barry)

The TSSAA Region 7-AAA Softball Tournament is now completely topsy-turvy.

Its two district champions – Dyer County and Lexington – are out, making summer plans. Its two district runners-up – Crockett County and McNairy Central – are now headed for Sectionals play on Friday. But first, they'll get together in Alamo Wednesday night at 6:00 to duel for the region championship and decide who gets a home game and who goes on the road Friday.

And yes, the CCHS campus will be crowded Wednesday night, as the Cavalier baseball team will be playing a doubleheader against Lakeland Prep at 4:30 and 7:00 in their best-of-three Sectional series. If a third game is necessary, it will be played Thursday night in Alamo.

The Wednesday softball game became a reality when Coach Baron Jimmerson's Lady Cavaliers battled back from an early 3-0 deficit with 15 – count 'em – 15 unanswered runs Monday night in Lexington, spanking the homestanding Lady Tigers 15-3 as Crockett outfielder Kiyra Liggins contributed a performance for the ages to fuel the comeback.

Liggins was 4-for-5, scored four times, and drove in six runs – including three on a long home run to center field to cap the winners' scoring.

So Crockett will now host McNairy Wednesday night after the Lady Bobcats surprised Dyer County in Newbern Monday night, ending the Lady Choctaw season with a 9-2 victory. Crockett and McNairy will play either Brighton or Millington in the Sectionals on Friday.

Jimmerson's club found itself in immediate trouble Monday night in Lexington when the Lady Tiger first baseman Kennady Maness hammered a two-out-two-run home in the bottom of the first inning. A run-scoring double by Blakely Harmon added to the Lexington lead in the second.
After that, however, it was all Lady Cavaliers. The visitors posted a four-spot in the third inning and hung eight more runs on the hosts in the fifth before Liggins' second home run of the season closed the scoring in the seventh.

The large comeback made a winner of Lady Cav senior pitcher Anna Stallings, who settled down after the first two innings to blank the Lady Tigers the rest of the way, aided by a Maddie Haynes unassisted double play in one frame and a fortuitous knockdown of another Harmon smash in the sixth by Madison Stitts. Lexington had runners on first and second when Harmon belted a shot right down the third-base line. As Stitts managed to get a glove on it, she tripped over the base and had the presence of mind to pound the ball on top of the bag for the force out to end the threat.

Meanwhile, Crockett was hammering out 14 hits and benefitting from seven Lexington errors in erasing the three-run margin the Lady Tigers had accumulated.
Crockett catcher Macie Teel initiated the four-run third with a leadoff single. Courtesy runner Tink Willis took second on a passed ball prior to a walk to Wesley Thornton. Nataly Amador beat out a bunt and Willis scored on an infield error. Liggins then singled Thornton home; Gabby Bursey singled Amador in; and Haley Leforgee put the Lady Cavs on top 4-3 with a sacrifice fly.

Lexington completely self-destructed in the fifth. Liggins singled to center to took second on an error. Bursey beat out a bunt. Leforgee then dropped the world's shortest bunt – just inches in front of home plate – but reached safely on an errant throw by the catcher as both Liggins and Bursey scored – although Bursey was originally called out because the home plate umpire had not noticed that the ball came loose on the tag at the plate. The out call was overturned, and the rally continued.

Stitts drew a walk while Leforgee was scoring on a passed ball. Maddie Haynes singled to left. Piper Smith sacrificed both runners over, and Teel walked to load the bases. After a ground ball force-out at the plate, Emilee Chandler drilled a hard grounder to short which was booted, allowing courtesy runner Mae Parker to score, making it 8-3.
Liggins followed with a two-run single to boost the edge to 10-3, and Bursey – who had three hits in the contest – also delivered a two-run single for a 12-3 Crockett advantage.
Stallings went the distance to improve her record to 18-4 with a 1.83 ERA. The team is now 31-7-1 heading into Wednesday's region championship game.



Above: It's not easy to get to second base when two different opponents are trying to tag you out, but Crockett's Gabby Bursey made it here, even tearing her own pants leg by catching it on one of her cleats. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Shortstop Wesley Thornton made a terrific stop in the hole on this play, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: ... but was unable to get to her feet quickly enough to throw anyone out. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Maddie Haynes had two hits and -- for some undisclosed reason -- seemed to be taking a lot of ribbing from her own dugout friends while at first base. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Piper Smith laid down a key sacrifice bunt in Crockett's big fifth-inning uprising that helped to set up five more runs scoring in the rally. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Lady Cav pitcher Anna Stallings improved to 18-4 on the season, with a stellar ERA of 1.83. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: It's always dangerous when an opponent makes a pitching change when Crockett's Tink Willis is on base -- because there's going to be some entertainment on the way. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: At one point in the game Monday, Crockett's Macie Teel took a mighty swing and -- whacked the opposing catcher's mitt right off her hand. Teel was awarded first base on an interference call. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Crockett appeared to be in early trouble when this was as close as centerfielder Gabby Bursey could get to Kennady Maness' long first-inning home run for Lexington. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: You can just about conclude here that there's bound to be an eventual collision between Gabby Bursey (left) and Haley Leforgee (right) on this fly ball, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: ... but somehow they avoided it after Leforgee made the catch. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: Fallon Beaird makes a long throw in from the outfield to hold a Lexington hitter to a double instead of a triple. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Emilee Chandler -- who may have a side-gig giving knuckle-bumps to softballs -- hit a hard pinch-hit grounder that couldn't be handled, prolonging the long Lady Cav rally in the fifth. (Photo by Ron Barry)







Above: But Kiyra Liggins eventually slid in on this play with the go-ahead run in the Lady Cav third on a sac fly by Haley Leforgee. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: In addition to her big sac fly, Haley Leforgee also contributed the world's shortest bunt, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... which turned into a two-base Lexington error. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: First baseman Maddie Haynes speared a liner and pulled off an unassisted double play, earning her lots of love at the dugout from teammates Syesha Torres, Wesley Thornton, and Nataly Amador. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: But it was clearly Kiyra Liggins' day Monday, with this swing producing the three-run homer that close the Crockett scoring. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: Madison Stitts (left) and Wesley Thornton laugh about the inning-ending play in which Stitts knocked down a hard shot near third base, tripped over the bag, and then pounded the ball on top of it for a force-out. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Wesley Thornton tosses her bat aside as she takes a walk in her second trip to the plate in the contest. The sophomore shortstop scored three runs for the Lady Cavs in the win. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: The big lead near the end of the game brought out the return of Crockett's Dugout Critters. (Photo by Ron Barry)

