LADY CAVALIER SOFTBALLERS PLACE THIRD IN TSSAA CLASS-AAA STATE CHAMPIONSHIP



Above: Senior Anna Stallings capped her outstanding Crockett County career by picking up two more wins at the state tournament, finishing the season with 21. (Photo by Ron Barry)

If you can't win a state championship – and we've all recently seen just how hard it is to do – you should at least find some consolation in the fact that the teams that finished ahead of you are the ones who directly denied you the opportunity.

Coach Baron Jimmerson's Crockett County softballers finished a highly respectable third Friday in the TSSAA Class-AAA State Championship, barely missing a spot in the title game when a late rally fell just short against the Alcoa Lady Tornadoes, who held on for a 7-4 triumph.

Alcoa, which had to defeat the Lady Cavs twice to reach the final, got on a roll and did just that, topping Crockett 9-7 Thursday prior to its Friday win. Staying hot, the Lady Tornadoes were victorious Saturday in the championship game 7-5 over McNairy Central – the team that defeated the Lady Cavs for the Region 7-AAA crown.

A third-place state tournament finish and a 34-10-1 season record are worthy accomplishments for a team with only a single senior player on its roster – pitcher Anna Stallings, who has signed to continue her softball career collegiately at Christian Brothers University in Memphis.

Stallings pitched all four state tournament games for Jimmerson's club, defeating David Crockett High School 8-3 and Liberty Creek 4-3 before Alcoa's high-powered offense – which also benefitted from some shaky Crockett defense – produced its two wins. The Lady Tornadoes accumulated 13 hits in the first one, but used seven Lady Cav errors to achieve the second.

Crockett's senior hurler – a quiet, determined young lady who prefers to let her on-field efforts speak for themselves – nevertheless expressed gratitude to the school and program that allowed her participation in two state tournaments.

"Four years, countless memories, and a lifetime of love for this program," Stallings said. "Thank you, CCHS softball, for giving me the best senior season and the best four years I could've asked for. Thank you to my coaches, teammates, family, and everyone who supported me along the way.

"As hard as it is to say goodbye, I'm excited for the next chapter and the next four years at CBU," she said. "CCHS softball will always hold a special place in my heart."

Stallings posted more than 500 strikeouts in her Crockett career and closed her senior campaign with a 21-6 record, a 2.14 ERA, and even two saves in relief.

Unfortunately for the Lady Cavs, their defensive performance Friday was as sloppy as the week-long dreary, rainy weather that caused numerous delays and site changes. Crockett committed a very uncharacteristic seven errors in its finale, providing four unearned runs to Alcoa's cause and making the margin too large to overcome despite a final-inning rally that also suffered from one hard-luck play.

Entering the seventh frame down 7-2, Wesley Thornton reached on a hard grounder that was mishandled at first base. Gabby Bursey beat out an infield hit, and Haley Leforgee singled to center to score Thornton and get the Lady Cavalier crowd revved up once again.

That brought up Fallon Beaird, a sophomore outfielder who was one of Crockett's top performers during the week, belting a double and her first home run of the season in the previous day's loss to Alcoa. She'd already singled in a run in the fifth inning in this one, after being retired on a searing line drive to the right fielder in the third.

This time she barreled another one, but it was snared by Alcoa first sacker Madyson Stewart – a Chattanooga State signee – who turned the liner into a double play by steeping on first before Leforgee could return.

Emilee Chandler then lined a single into right field, scoring Bursey to cut the deficit to three. But after a walk, Lady Tornado pitcher Jayde Deal induced a groundout to end the contest.

Crockett actually outhit Alcoa 11-8 in the championship game, but its defensive miscues were too many to overcome.

By the way, lest anyone think Alcoa "lucked" its way to the title, its 7-5 triumph over McNairy was its 44th win of the season against only three defeats. The Lady Tornadoes also have five college signees on their roster. McNairy finished 34-8-2 on the year. If Crockett had to finish behind only two teams in the state, that's a phenomenal couple of squads ahead of them.

Thornton concluded her monster sophomore season for Crockett by scoring eight runs in the four games, along with two homers and six RBIs, despite being issued six walks as teams became content to largely pitch around her. She closed the year with a .528 batting average, 12 homers, and 44 RBIs – almost all from the leadoff spot in the batting order – and was on base a staggering 63% of her at-bats. Fully 36 of her 56 hits were for extra bases.

In the final game, Bursey had three hits and a stolen base for the Lady Cavs, while Leforgee collected two hits and drove in a pair of runs.



Above: Wesley Thornton scored six runs in the two losses to Alcoa, who took to walking her after she'd homered in both of Crockett's state tournament wins. Thornton hit .528 in her spectacular sophomore season, with 36 of her 56 hits going for extra bases. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Haley Leforgee had two hits and a sac fly in the finale against Alcoa, driving in two of Crockett's four runs. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Baron Jimmerson led the Lady Cavaliers to a 34-10-1 and back to the state championships in just his second year at the Crockett helm. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: One of Crockett's hottest hitters during the state tournament was sophomore outfielder Fallon Beaird, who had four hits and four RBIs last week, including her first home run. (Photo by Ron Barry)







Left: Gabby Bursey had three hits in the finale against Alcoa and led the Lady Cavs this season with 33 stolen bases. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Wesley Thornton rips into this pitch for a double at the TSSAA State Championships in Murfreesboro. (Photo by Tiffanie Medlin)

Above: Kiyra Liggins led the 2026 Lady Cavs in RBIs (47) and walks (29) while batting .414 with 13 doubles and 18 stolen bases. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: This team prayer at the Sectional in Millington was followed by a win over the Lady Trojans to secure the state tournament berth. (Photo by Tiffanie Medlin)

Right: The 2026 Lady Cavaliers: Third Place in the TSSAA Class-AAA Softball State Championships. (Photo by Tiffanie Medlin)

