CROSS-COUNTRY GIRLS CLAIM FIRST-EVER RACE WIN OVER OBION COUNTY



Above: Crockett's medalists at the Union City Invitational (left to right): Jose Aguirre, Avery Thornton, Alivia Hale, and Ruth Gourley. It was the first official high school XC race for both Aguirre and Gourley. (Photo by Julie Nass)

Tuesday offered us a distinctive glimpse into what makes Crockett County athletics so special.

Victories by three different sports were dependent on the one thing that coaches in a small population must realize is a necessity: the sharing of athletes.

As in many rural schools, there are a number of Cavalier students who play multiple sports. Performance experts will tell you that's a very positive thing. Athletes benefit from the variety of opportunities that playing more than a single sport affords them.

As far as scheduling goes, sharing athletes isn't usually a problem unless specific sport seasons overlap or run concurrently. The biggest conflict at Crockett is the simultaneous fall season of girls soccer and cross-country. There are a number of Lady Cavaliers who try to do both, and cross-country coach Julie Nass has been very gracious in the past in agreeing to a "soccer-has-priority" arrangement.

Crockett was originally scheduled to have a soccer match at Jackson North Side Tuesday. But North Side apparently had also scheduled a contest with Trenton Peabody for the same date and time. As to where the miscommunication blame should be attributed, no one on the Lady Cavalier was certain, but the ultimate result was that Crockett's soccer team would NOT have a match Tuesday.

But soccer's disappointment was cross-country's gain. Nass's runners were scheduled for a race in Union City, and she was prepared to head into it without a handful of her top performers – who all happen to play soccer as well. Suddenly, they were now available.

So she loaded up the van, took them to Union City, and the Lady Cavaliers made Crockett cross-country history by defeating West Tennessee perennial powerhouse Obion County Central for the first time in school history. Crockett placed first in the girls division at the Union City Invitational 5K by having three of the Top 15 as medalists and three more who barely missed – and all six are members of Coach Alex Taylor's soccer squad.

"We were lucky the soccer game got canceled," Nass laughed after the race. "Seriously, though, seeing our depth this year and how hard these girls are working, I was going to set the goal that they don't just go for State this year but to go as Sectional champs – in other words, beat Obion – because we've always gone as runners up to that juggernaut. Obion has won every regular season meet and region championship for at least 20 years.

"Well, I did not expect us to do it in our season opener! That being said, it is still the goal. And I know Obion's coach and team are going to work even harder now to beat us. So we are celebrating tonight for sure, but we're not goping to get complacent. Section champs plus State is the goal."

Crockett junior Alivia Hale led the Lady Cavs' tightly-bunched parade, finishing eighth in a time of 23:15.42. Senior Avery Thornton was thirteenth (25:01.36), sophomore Ruth Gourley was fifteenth (25:15.77), sophomore Caroline Scruggs was seventeenth, freshman Olivia Barger was nineteenth, and sophomore Marley Thornton was twentieth as Nass's crew ran into the school history books. Obion senior stalwart Klicey Campbell, who finished fifth, was the lone Lady Rebel racer to get in ahead of Hale.

On the boys side, freshman Jose Aguirre earned a medal for Crockett by placing fourteenth in a time of 18:47.22, leading the Cavaliers to a sixth-place team finish.

"Almost my whole boys team is also playing travel soccer right now," Nass said, "and we had some veterans overcoming soccer injuries. So I told the vets if they weren't 100% today to just help pace the freshmen. I don't know if it helped or if it was just all heart but those freshmen boys all did fantastic, especially Jose medaling in his high school opener and Nathan Bailey (38th) almost breaking 21 minutes. So I'll take sixth seeing how close we were to fourth.

"The goal will be to get this young boys team qualified to State as well, which would end a 10-year drought. The boys team last made it in 2016 when assistant coach Walker Williams was a junior on that squad."

Results of the Union City XC Invitational
Girls Teams Scores: (1) Crockett County 32; (2) Obion County 46; (3) Lexington 55; (4) Camden Central 98; (5) Glason 131. Other schools with less than full teams: Westview, Millington Central, Dresden, Union City, Gibson County, Dyer County, Huntingdon, Augustine School, Milan, Hollow Rock-Bruceton, and Tipton Christian Academy.

Girls Individual Top 20: (1) Alaina Uselton, Westview 19:46.16; (2) Corrie Mihalko, Millington 21:29.38; (3) Bailey Warbington, Dresden 21:57.09; (4) Ainsley Phillips, Westview 22:16.50; (5) Klicey Campbell, Obion Co 23:10.19; (6) Eva Lewis, Lexington 23:10.96; (7) Peyton Oliver, Dresden 23:11.75; (Alivia Hale, Crockett 23:15.42; (9) Stella Graham, Union City 24:03.21; (10) Adley Thompson, Gibson Co 24:06.43; (11) Ainsley Beard, UC; (12) Chloe Adcock, Obion: (13) Avery Thornton, Crockett 25:01.36; (14) Bailey Haliburton, Dyer Co; (15) Ruth Gourley, Crockett 25:15.77; (16) Avery Coffey, Obion; (17) Caroline Scruggs, Crockett 25:43.49); (18) Maggie Lewis, Lexington; (19) Olivia Barger, Crockett 25:57.85; (20) Marley Thornton, Crockett 26:12.73. Other Crockett finishers: (31) Hannah Wede 28:51.14; (32) Anahy De La Rosa 29:06.20; (40) Cesia Sanchez 30:06.70; (41) Bradlee Dodd 30:17.11; (50) Catherine Scruggs 33:49.15; (52) Isabella Aguirre 34:19.48. Total Runners: 65.
Boys Team Scores: (1) Dresden 31; (2) Union City 54; (3) Obion County 93; (4) Westview 155; (5) Huntingdon 156; (6) Crockett County 160; (7) Lexington 173; (Augustine 182; (9) Millington 183; (10) Hollow Rock-Bruceton 232; (11) Milan 264. Other schools with less than full teams: Greenfield, Camden Central, Gibson County, Gleason, and Dyer County.

Boys Individual Top 20: (1) Deegan Arant, Greenfield 16:24.02; (2) Vaughn Bounds, Dresden 16:38.66; (3) Leonardo Luna, Unattached 16:38.98; (4) Carson Brownlow-Rendon, Dresden 17:10.04; (5) Miloh Turner, Union City 17:44.07; (6) Liam Johnson, Augustine 17:45.95; (7) Woodrow McKinnis, UC 17:46.36; (Jackson Woodrough, Westview 17:53.06; (9) Madix Turner, UC 18:06.62; (10) Domanic Ledezma, Dresden 18:22.16; (11) Connor Evans, Dresden; (12) Derek Hodge, Huntingdon; (13) Miles Cary, Dresden; (14) Jose Aguirre, Crockett 18:47.22; (15) Carter Molands, Obion; (16) Brady Dunn, Obion; (17) Brody Fields, UC; (18) Cody Partridge, Huntingdon; (19) Briar Lofton, Obion; (20) Azariah Lindsey, Millington. Other Crockett finishers: (31) Hutsen Stephens 20:25.98; (38) Nathan Bailey 21:07.32; (42) Uriel Diaz 21:26.04; (53) Jose Diaz 22:10.23; (55) Gabe Williams 22:24.38; (72) Mase Utley 23:55.03; (77) Javier Aguirre 24:30.02. Total Runners: 102.

HIGH SCHOOL GOLF: Coach Pate Randall is another Crockett County team leader who is grateful for multiple-sport athletes. And to celebrate his birthday Tuesday, several of them shot their best rounds ever to present him a victory over Jackson South Side at the Alamo Golf & Country Club.

The boys defeated the Hawks 153-189, shooting "the best team score we've had in the three years I've been involved in helping coach them." Medalist Jack Shaver (who is also the manager for Crockett's basketball squad) shot a season-best 35, one under par for the nine holes. Baseball players George Randall and Myles Perkins each contributed scores of 39, and Clay Kail added a 40. For Perkins and Kail, the scores were career-bests. Max Woods – who is also on the basketball team – had a solid 41.

South Side did not bring a girls team to the match, so Crockett's threesome of Rachel Crossnoe, Alyssa Stricklin, and Emmalynn Medlin played a round together – and while Crossnoe delivered her dependable score of 40, Stricklin (51) and Medlin (52) posted their best scores ever on the course.

"We got continued great play from Jack today," Randall said. "And Myles continues to get better and better. A 153 for nine holes would be a 306 for 18 – that score would give us a chance to win the region."

HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL: Anyone who thought that Crockett's girls might be hanging their heads after battling so hard Monday night in a grueling match with Jackson Christian School only to lose in four tight sets doesn't know the competitive spirit and resilience of Coach Andrew Laman's club.

Those traits were on display in Alamo Tuesday when the Lady Cavaliers swept a lopsided varsity doubleheader from visiting Westview, downing the Lady Chargers 25-14, 25-18, and 25-20 in the opening match and then doing even worse damage in the second, winning 25-10, 25-11, and 25-10.

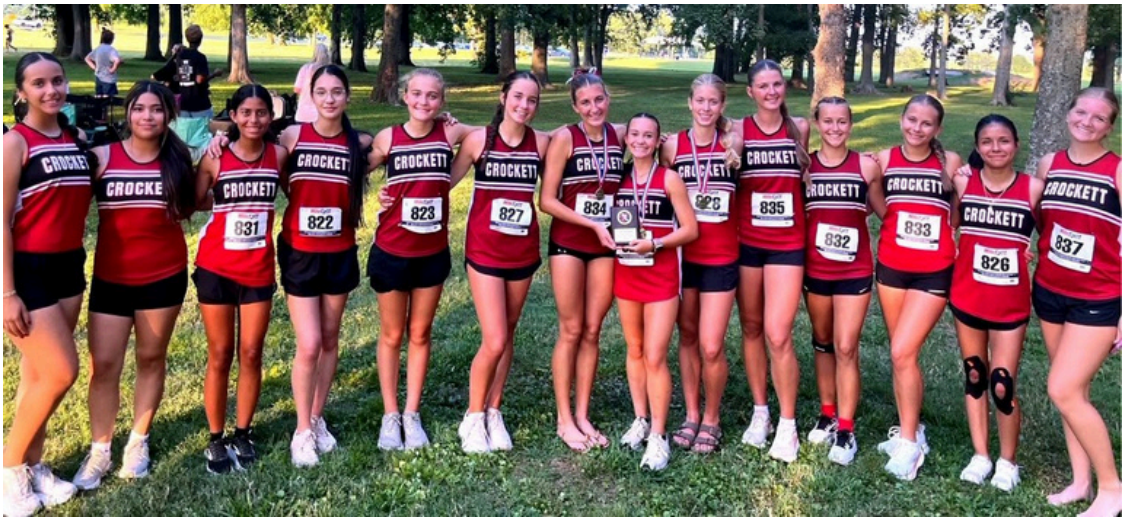
Laman's volleyballers – who also comprise portions of Crockett's softball, basketball, and tennis teams, to keep the Tuesday "theme" going – improved their record to 8-4 as they journey to Milan Thursday to face the always scrappy Lady Dawgs.



Left: Jack Shaver was back under par Tuesday, carding a 35 for medalist honors against Jackson South Side. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Myles Perkins -- shown here in his baseball environment -- only recently starting playing golf, and Tuesday actually shot a three-over-par 39 to help Crockett defeat South Side. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Left: These Lady Cavaliers achieved the distinction of being the first Crockett County cross-country team to ever defeat Obion County in an official meet. It happened Tuesday in Union City, when the Lady Cavs won the Union City Invitational. (Photo by Julie Nass)

Below: Coach Andrew Laman has found his volleyball crew to be a resilient bunch thus far this season, bouncing back from a Monday loss to pulling off a doubleheader sweep on Tuesday. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: One of the keys to Crockett's volleyball season is the athleticism of the Lady Cavs who operate in the back row, such as track and pentathlon standout Addie Davidson. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Often alongside Addie Davidson is softball star Nataly Amador, another multi-sport athlete showcasing the strength that typifies Crockett County versatility. (Photo by Ron Barry)