LINE OF SCRIMMAGE DOMINANCE BOOTS LEXINGTON PAST CROCKETT FOOTBALLERS 33-21



Above: Crockett's Carson Bridger (79) has Lexington workhorse Brady McEarl (4) around the neck in order to make this tackle. (Photo by Ron Barry)

"If you can't control the line of scrimmage," said Crockett County head football coach Kevin Ward, "you're not going to win many football games, especially against good teams."

Ward pretty much summarized Friday night's 33-21 defeat by Lexington, in a contest in which the visitors ran off 64 plays to Crockett's 28, outgained the Cavaliers 337 yards to 182, and totally controlled line play throughout the second half after being handed a gift touchdown right before the intermission that turned the game around.

At that time, Ward's club had rolled to a 21-14 lead with 5:17 remaining before the half after Ben Burgess carried in a keeper from three yards out and Noah Mayfield added the extra point. Crockett then made a key defensive stand after Lexington had reached the Cav 24.

Jacob Howard made a huge third-down tackle for a Tiger loss, and a fourth-down pass was dropped, returning possession to the Cavs with 1:34 to go. Trying to take advantage of the remaining time – Lexington had not done a good job of stopping Crockett's offense yet – quarterback Burgess tried to throw a quick out to flanker Titus Luten, but tossed the ball several yards over Luten's head and right into the arms of Tiger defensive back Elye Pearson, who returned it to the Cav 17.

Lexington scored on a trick play as quarterback Ross Wilson handed off to halfback Redding Wilson for what looked like a sweep of right end, but the runner pulled up and threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Pearson to bring the Tigers within a point. Even though the extra point was then missed, what should have been a one-touchdown lead for the hosts was now gone, and Lexington had the momentum going into the locker room.

"I told our guys at halftime that all I expected of them was to give their best effort on every single play," Ward said. "When you add up the seconds that the ball is actually in play during a game, it really doesn't amount to much more than a handful of minutes. So everybody ought to be able to play hard on every play. That's character, and I'm a believer that character wins ballgames. But that's what concerns me most tonight, because I didn't our guys showed that enough in the second half."

Ward saw the tide turn on the opening drive of the third quarter, when Lexington orchestrated a 65-yard drive in a pedestrian 15 plays, almost all of them on straight up-the-middle rushes by four different backs. Levi Wilkinson covered the final three yards of the march that took almost eight full minutes off the clock.

"They totally whipped us across the front line," Ward said. "We've got to do a better job in that area if we want to be a better football team."

Before Crockett could even reset after the long drive, Lexington pulled off a simple onside kick straight down the middle of the field and recovered the ball as soon as it had gone the requisite 10 yards. And while Crockett managed to hold the Tigers on this series – thanks to a fourth-down tackle of Ross Wilson by the Cavs' Khalan Thomas – the visitors soon got the ball back at their own 30 and then managed a 70-yard scoring journey in 10 plays, with workhorse back Brady McEarl accounting for most of the yardage until Wilson finished it off with a fourth-down play-action keeper around left end for 29 yards. That came with 6:10 remaining and accounted for the game's final score.

While Ward acknowledge the line of scrimmage dominance by Lexington was the main difference in the contest, he lamented a few other things that could have turned the game in the Cavs' favor.

"We didn't recover any of the three fumbles they made that we had shots at; we had that bad interception right before the half; and the failure to get on top of the onside kick was a killer," he said. "Lexington's a good football team, but we've got to make plays when we have opportunities like that."

Bright spots for Crockett were a 62-yard touchdown run by DK Woods midway through the first quarter and then an 82-yard scoring gallop by track speedster Titus Luten on Lexington's kickoff that followed its answering tally to Woods' run.

But this matchup was decided at the line of scrimmage and by the tireless second-half legs of McEarl, who defied the evening's intense heat by carrying 17 times for 61 yards in the final half alone while six or seven Crockett players were routinely trying to work out leg cramps on the sidelines.

The loss was the first of the season for Crockett was a Region 7 defeat as well. The Cavs will try to bounce back next Friday night against Dyer County on the road in Newbern. The Choctaws dropped a 31-28 decision to Hardin County last night.

Friday, September 4
Game Statistics: Lexington 33, Crockett 21
Total Offense (Plays-Yards): CC 28-182; LEX 64-337.
First Downs: CC 6; LEX 18.
Penalties-Yards: CC 4-35; LEX 7-63.
Punts-Yards-Avg: CC 2-72-36.0; LEX 1-35-35.0.
Fumbles-Lost: CC 1-1; LEX 3-0.
CC Rushing (Carries-Yards): DK Woods 11-111 (1 TD), Ben Burgess 8-8 (1 TD), Squirt Pickens 1-4, Kris Phillips 1-(2), Team 21-121 (2 TDs). LEX Rushing: Brady McEarl 22-88, Ross Wilson 13-85 (2 TDs), Levi Wilkinson 10-43 (1 TD), Redding Wilson 5-21, Cameron Smith 2-4, Aviance Huddleston 1-1, Elye Pearson 1-(-2), Team 54-240 (3 TDs).
CC Passing (Completions-Attempts-Yards-Interceptions): Ben Burgess 3-7-61-1, Team 3-7-61-1. LEX Passing: Ross Wilson 6-9-87-0 (1 TD), Redding Wilson 1-1-10-0 (1 TD), Team 7-10-97-0 (2 TDs).
CC Receiving (Catches-Yards): Kris Phillips 1-35, Mason Dennis 1-19, Titus Luten 1-7. LEX Receiving: Huddleston 3-36 (1 TD), Pearson 2-31 (! TD), Smith 2-30.
CC Pass Interceptions (Int-Yards): none. LEX Pass Interceptions: Pearson 1-13.
CC Fumble Recoveries: none. LEX Fumble Recoveries: 1.
CC Kickoff Returns (Returns-Yards): Titus Luten 1-82 (1 TD), Ian Greenberg 1-2, Team 2-84 (1 TD). LEX Kickoff Returns: Smith 1-63, Team 1-63.
CC Punt Returns: none. LEX Punt Returns: Redding Wilson 1-15.
CC Scoring (TD-2PC-FG-XP-Points): DK Woods 1-0-0-0-6, Titus Luten 1-0-0-0-6, Ben Burgess 1-0-0-0-6, Noah Mayfield 0-0-0-3-3, Team 3-0-0-3-21. LEX Scoring: Ross Wilson 2-0-0-0-12, Wilkinson 1-0-0-0-6, Huddleston 1-0-0-0-6, Pearson 1-0-0-0-6, Blayne Carrington 0-0-0-3-3, Team 5-0-0-3-33.

The Linescore:
LEX 7 13 6 7 – 33
CC 14 7 0 0 – 21
Crockett – DK Woods 62 run (Noah Mayfield kick)
Lex – Aviance Huddleston 28 pass from Ross Wilson (Blayne Carrington kick)
Crockett – Titus Luten 82 kickoff return (Noah Mayfield kick)
Lex – Ross Wilson 1 run (Carrington kick)
Crockett – Ben Burgess 3 run (Mayfield kick)
Lex – Elye Pearson 10 pass from Redding Wilson (kick failed)
Lex –Levi Wilkinson 3 run (pass failed)
Lex – Ross Wilson 29 run (Carrington kick)

Season Statistics: Record 2-1 (Region 0-1)
Total Offense (Plays-Yards): CC 87-762; OPP 130-429. First Downs: CC 24; OPP 24. Penalties-Yards: CC 15-145; OPP 28-206. Punts-Yards-Avg: CC 2-72-36.0; OPP 9-154-17.1. Fumbles-Lost: CC 2-1; OPP 9-4.
CC Rushing (Carries-Yards): DK Woods 28-320 (7 TDs), Messiah McCurry 8-92 (1 TD), Chris Vance 8-71 (1 TD), Khalan Thomas 3-34 (1 TD), Chris Mann 5-23 (1 TD), Jeremiah Young 2-15, Ben Burgess 9-14 (1 TD), Kris Phillips 3-10, Roman Barker 3-10, Squirt Pickens 1-4, Team 70-593 (12 TDs). OPP Rushing: 98-293 (3 TDs).
CC Passing (Completions-Attempts-Yards-Interceptions): Ben Burgess 10-15-153-1 (5 TDs), Roman Barker 1-2-16-1 (1 TD), Team 11-17-169-2 (6 TDs). OPP Passing: 14-32-136-4 (2 TDs).
CC Receiving (Catches-Yards): Kris Phillips 3-73 (2 TDs), Titus Luten 3-42 (2 TDs), Mason Dennis 1-19, Davis Porter 1-16 (1 TD), Squirt Pickens 2-14, Ian Greenberg 1-5 (1 TD), Team 11-169 (6 TDs). OPP Receiving: 14-136 (2 TDs).
CC Pass Interceptions (Int-Yards): Ian Greenberg 1-58 (1 TD), Squirt Pickens 1-27 (1 TD), Brody Parlow 1-8, Chris Mann 1-0, Team 4-93 (2 TDs). OPP Pass Interceptions: 2-40.
CC Fumble Recoveries: Nolen Turner 1-16 (1 TD), Rylan Redding 1-0, Peter Bosco 1-0, Davis Porter 1-0, Team 4-16 (1 TD). OPP Fumble Recoveries: 1-0 (onside kick recovery).
CC Kickoff Returns (Returns-Yards): Titus Luten 1-82 (1 TD), Jeremiah Young 1-10, Ian Greenberg 1-2, Team 3-94 (1 TD). OPP Kickoff Returns: 16-228.
CC Punt Returns: Squirt Pickens 4-51. OPP Punt Returns: 1-15.
CC Scoring (TD-2PC-FG-XP-Points): DK Woods 7-0-0-0-42, Titus Luten 3-0-0-0-18, Noah Mayfield 0-0-0-16-16, Ian Greenberg 2-0-0-0-12, Kris Phillips 2-0-0-0-12, Ben Burgess 1-0-0-0-6, Khalan Thomas 1-0-0-0-6, Chris Vance 1-0-0-0-6, Messiah McCurry 1-0-0-0-6, Chris Mann 1-0-0-0-6, Squirt Pickens 1-0-0-0-6, Davis Porter 1-0-0-0-6, Nolen Turner 1-0-0-0-6, Dontavious Forrest 0-1-0-0-2, Landeyn Catalan 0-0-0-1-1, Team 22-1-0-17-151. OPP Scoring: 5-0-0-3-33.



Above: Cavalier cheerleaders Kinlee Moore and Sophia McGowan were ready to celebrate "Red, White, and Blue Night" at the stadium. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Crockett's brightest moment came when track speedster Titus Luten (4) fielded a Lexington kickoff at his own 18, quickly broke through the first line of resistance, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: ... picked up the final necessary block from Dontavious Forrest (33), ... (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: ... and then gained an escort from Brody Parlow (5) and Squirt Pickens (3), although no one was going to catch him at that point. Luten covered 82 yards for the touchdown. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: The Cavs' first touchdopwn of the night came when DK Woods bounced off right tackle and suddenly found himself all alone near the left sideline, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... and 62 yards later, he was cruising into the end zone for his seventh touchdown of the season as Squirt Pickens (3) prepares to celebrate with him. (Photo by Ron Barry)







Above: Grant Smallwood (77) and Nolen Turner (54) combine to make the stop on this Lexington run attempt. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Hadleigh McCoy and Layla Petty are ready to make a little noise to encourage the Cavaliers against the Tigers. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Brody Parlow puts a hit on Lexington's Levi Wilkinson as Jacob Howard (52) and DK Woods (32) arrive to lend support. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: One of the frustrations in the game was that the Tigers fumbled three times, but Crockett couldn't recover any of them. The Cavs' Brody Jones (11) just missed this one that Brady McEarl jumped on. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Another Lexington fumble came right at the goalline, but despite the prevalence of Cav players around it, officials ruled that the Tigers retained possession. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: The Cavalier Crazies even began doing the Tomahawk Chop in an effort to fire up their favorite team, even though it has nothing to do with Crockett County relevance. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Carson Williams (24), Sebastian Garduno (63), and Kris Phillips (6) put a simultaneous hit on a Lexington back in fourth-quarter action. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Sarah Breland (right) and Emmie Pickens are involved in a pre-game conversation before the team ran through the Crockett inflatable helmet. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Early in the game, Crockett quarterback Ben Burgess (10) -- behind the blocking of Jayden Young (60) -- tried to throw a long bomb to Titus Luten (right foreground) ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... but despite this happening as the ball approached Luten, no pass interference was called and the toss went incomplete. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: The game turned just before halftime when Lexington's Elye Pearson made this interception on an overthrown Crockett pass ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... and two plays later made this outstanding touchdown catch on a halfback pass from Redding Wilson to bring the Tigers within a point at the intermission. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Below: Jacob Howard (52) made a big third-down stop on the series preceding the Elye Pearson interception, tossing Pearson for a two-yard loss on a reverse play. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Coach Kevin Ward expressed disappointment that his club didn't handle their line of scrimmage duties effectively. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Kris Phillips catches a late breather in the fourth quarter as a teammate tends to a cramp situation elsewhere on the field. Phillips caught a 35-yard pass for the Cavs. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: Lexington's Zach Grissom (44) tries to slow DK Woods down by hanging onto his jersey, but -- as usual -- that wasn't enough to get the big guy down. Woods had 111 yards on just 11 carries. (Photo by Ron Barry)



