CROCKETT FOOTBALLERS GAIN TENTH WIN IN PLAYOFF OPENER; MARSHALL COUNTY NEXT UP



Above: Crockett defenders Nolen Turner (54), Khalan Thomas (20), DJ Forrest (33), and the soon arriving Grant Smallwood (77) create a Cougar sandwich on this Kirby running back Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Kirby High School's backfield of Kaleb Pruitt, Christian Jefferson, and Reagan Bullard can all run like deer.

So Crockett County head coach Kevin Ward gave his team one assignment during its practice week for the playoff opener against the Cougars: Get that backfield to look more like deer in someone's headlights.

To try to accomplish that task, Ward took his speedy track star turned wide receiver Titus Luten and inserted him as the scout team quarterback, taking direct snaps and letting Crockett's defense see what it would take to corral the swiftness it would face from Kirby's lineup. If the Cavalier defenders could contain Luten, it would be a major boost to the likelihood of success Friday night.

So how'd they do?
The Cougars managed just 107 yards in 30 rushes from scrimmage and added just 57 yards more through the air as Crockett rolled to its tenth win of this significantly solid season, hammering the Memphis-based school 42-6.

An additional benefit of the practice week was that Luten – a scoring threat every time he touches the ball as a pass receiver – was given three opportunities to carry it himself as a runner, and he found the end zone on two of them. The senior blazer also turned his only catch of the night into a third touchdown as the Cavs advanced to the next round of the TSSAA playoffs, where they will face Marshall County (6-5) in Lewisburg.

"We had a really great week of practice with Titus running the scout team," Ward said. "The players saw what it would take to face a really fast quarterback, and they responded tonight as well as we could have wanted. Each player knew his role and executed it well, and I couldn't be much happier with the way things worked out."

Crockett forced three Kirby turnovers – an interception by Brody Parlow and fumble recoveries from Khalan Thomas and Brody Jones – to throttle the Cougar attack even more. Kirby actually had more yards (108) returning five kickoffs than it had from running the ball from scrimmage.

Offensively, the Cavs' usual suspects were getting the job done. Running back DK Woods went for 140 yards and a score on 21 carries; efficient quarterback Ben Burgess hit on seven of his eight throws for 62 yards and two more touchdowns; Luten and tight end Brody Jones snared scoring tosses; and Luten and Squirt Pickens had success on wide receiver sweeps or reverses, tallying three times on such plays.

Crockett's offensive line pushed the Cougars back for 301 yards of total offense on 44 plays. And after Kirby had managed its lone touchdown in the third quarter following a 73-yard kickoff return by Jefferson to cut the Cavs' lead to 21-6, the hosts responded with three fourth-quarter scores to put the game away.

"These guys should be really proud of this win," Ward said. "Our goal now at this time of the year is simply to keep playing for one more week. There are no bad teams left, so everything has to be earned from here on. And our guys earned this one tonight."

Another highlight of the night for Crockett sports fans was the presentation at halftime of rings to the 2026 State baseball championship team, the first such title captured by any of the school's sports squads in its history.

In the other first-round playoff games involving Region 7-4A teams, top seed Lexington blasted Millington Central 45-3; Jackson North Side fell to Lakeland Prep 30-16; and South Gibson County lost to Haywood 31-6. Marshall County easily disposed of White House 41-6 in a matchup of Middle Tennessee squads. The winner of the Crockett vs. Marshall County matchup will travel to face the victor of the duel between Lakeland Prep and Pearl-Cohn.

Friday, November 6
Game Statistics: Crockett 42, Kirby 6
Total Offense (Plays-Yards): CR 44-301; KIR 40-164.
First Downs: CR 11; KIR 6.
Penalties-Yards: CR 2-10; KIR 9-54.
Punts-Yards-Avg: CR: 1-28-28.0; KIR 3-98-32.7.
Fumbles-Lost: CR 1-1; KIR 3-2.
CR Rushing (Carries-Yards): DK Woods 21-140 (1 TD), Squirt Pickens 4-58 (1 TD), Titus Luten 3-36 (2 TDs), Mason Dennis 1-6, Ben Burgess 6-1, Khalan Thomas 1-(-2), Team 36-239 (4 TDs). KIR Rushing: Christian Jefferson 16-68, Kaleb Pruitt 6-34 (1 TD), Reagan Bullard 7-8, Jamil Wooden 1-(-3), Team 30-107 (1 TD).
CR Passing (Completions-Attempts-Yards-Interceptions): Ben Burgess 7-8-62-0 (2 TDs). KIR Passing: Pruitt 4-10-57-1.
CR Receiving (Catches-Yards): Brody Jones 1-21 (1 TD), Titus Luten 1-19 (1 TD), Squirt Pickens 3-16, Kris Phillips 1-4, Mason Dennis 1-2. KIR Receiving: C. J. Lackland 1-41, Bullard 1-9, Matthew Thomas 1-4, Wooden 1-3.
CR Pass Interceptions (Int-Yards): Brody Parlow 1-8. KIR Pass Interceptions: none.
CR Fumble Recoveries: Brody Jones 1-0, Khalan Thomas 1-0. KIR Fumble Recoveries: Team 1-0.
CR Kickoff Returns (Returns-Yards): none. KIR Kickoff Returns: Jefferson 3-94, Bullard 1-12, Antonyo Christian 1-2, Team 5-108.
CR Punt Returns: Squirt Pickens 1-23. KIR Punt Returns: none.
CC Scoring (TD-2PC-FG-XP-Points): Luten 3-0-0-0-18, Woods 1-0-0-0-6, Pickens 1-0-0-0-6, Jones 1-0-0-0-6, Noah Mayfield 0-0-0-6-6, Team 6-0-0-6-42. KIR Scoring: Pruitt 1-0-0-0-6.
The Linescore:
KIR 0 0 6 0 - 6
CR 7 7 7 21 - 42
Crockett – Titus Luten 19 pass from Ben Burgess (Noah Mayfield kick)
Crockett – Brody Jones 21 pass from Burgess (Mayfield kick)
Crockett – Luten 21 run (Mayfield kick)
Kirby – Kaleb Pruitt 7 run (kick failed)
Crockett – DK Woods 1 run (Mayfield kick)
Crockett – Luten 10 run (Mayfield kick)
Crockett – Squirt Pickens 9 run (Mayfield kick)



Left: The offensive line helps the officials out as Crockett's DK Woods (32) posts his 21st touchdown of the season. Carson Bridger (79) and Nolen Turner (54) signal for the score, which resulted from the additional blocks of Jayden Young (60), Sebastian Garduno (63), Ittai Fry (57), and Brody Jones (11). (Photo by Ron Barry)

Season Statistics: Record 10-1 (Region 6-1; 2nd)
Total Offense (Plays-Yards): CR 405-3,865; OPP 483-1,756.
First Downs: CR 116; OPP 94.
Penalties-Yards: CR 55-499; OPP 81-632.
Punts-Yards-Avg: CR 14-533-38.1; OPP 45-1,266-28.1.
Fumbles-Lost: CR 18-7; OPP 27-13.
CR Rushing (Carries-Yards): DK Woods 146-1,441 (22 TDs), Squirt Pickens 19-312 (4 TDs), Khalan Thomas 22-205 (4 TDs), Ben Burgess 63-172 (5 TDs), Mason Dennis 14-167 (3 TDs), Chris Vance 22-161 (3 TDs), Messiah McCurry 8-92 (1 TD), Titus Luten 7-79 (2 TDs), Jeremiah Young 4-54 (1 TD), Chris Mann 5-23 (1 TD), Roman Barker 7-20, Davis Porter 2-15, Kris Phillips 3-10, bad snap from center 2-(-19), Team 324-2,732 (46 TDs). OPP Rushing: 329-980 (8 TDs).
CR Passing (Completions-Attempts-Yards-Interceptions): Ben Burgess 55-80-1,117-2 (21 TDs), Roman Barker 1-2-16-1 (1 TD), Team 56-82-1,133-3 (22 TDs). OPP Passing: 68-154-775-15 (7 TDs).
CR Receiving (Catches-Yards): Titus Luten 18-526 (10 TDs), Kris Phillips 12-246 (5 TDs), Squirt Pickens 14-224 (3 TDs), Brody Jones 3-74 (2 TDs), Mason Dennis 3-21, DK Woods 3-18, Davis Porter 1-16 (1 TD), Ian Greenberg 1-5 (1 TD), Jeremiah Young 1-3, Team 56-1,133 (22 TDs). OPP Receiving: 68-775 (7 TDs).
CR Pass Interceptions (Int-Yards): Mason Dennis 3-85 (1 TD), Squirt Pickens 3-83 (2 TDs), Ian Greenberg 1-58 (1 TD), Squirt Pickens 2-27 (1 TD), Brody Parlow 3-23, Kris Phillips 1-13, Chris Vance 1-13, Brody Jones 1-6, Chris Mann 1-0, Jeremiah Young 1-0, Team 15-281 (4 TDs). OPP Pass Interceptions: 3-40.
CR Fumble Recoveries: Nolen Turner 1-16 (1 TD), DK Woods 1-12, Brody Jones 2-10 (1 TD), Khalan Thomas 2-0, Brody Parlow 1-0, Rylan Redding 1-0, Peter Bosco 1-0, Davis Porter 1-0, Carson Bridger 1-0, Squirt Pickens 1-0, Dontavious Forrest 1-0, Team 13-38 (2 TDs). OPP Fumble Recoveries: 7-72 (1 TD) [includes an onside kick recovery].
CR Kickoff Returns (Returns-Yards): Titus Luten 2-162 (2 TDs), Squirt Pickens 4-100, Mason Dennis 1-13, Jeremiah Young 1-10, Ian Greenberg 1-2, Team 9-287 (2 TDs). OPP Kickoff Returns: 63-1,019 (1 TD).
CR Punt Returns: Squirt Pickens 10-107, Khalan Thomas 1-21 (1 TD from end zone recovery after punt block by Rylan Redding), Titus Luten 2-16, Team 13-144 (1 TD). OPP Punt Returns: 4-31.
CR Scoring (TD-2PC-FG-XP-Points): DK Woods 22-2-0-0-136, Titus Luten 14-0-0-0-84, Noah Mayfield 0-0-0-60-60, Squirt Pickens 9-0-0-0-54, Kris Phillips 5-0-0-0-30, Ben Burgess 5-0-0-0-30, Khalan Thomas 5-0-0-0-30, Mason Dennis 4-0-0-0-24, Chris Vance 3-0-0-0-18, Ian Greenberg 2-0-0-0-12, Brody Jones 2-0-0-0-12, Jeremiah Young 1-0-0-0-6, Messiah McCurry 1-0-0-0-6, Chris Mann 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 0-0-0-2-2, Team 77-3-0-62-530. OPP Scoring: 17-0-0-14-116.



Above: Cavalier wide receiver Titus Luten will never appear more open than he was on this touchdown sweep against Kirby. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Brody Parlow (5) got the party started against the Cougars, intercepting this early pass and returning it eight yards to the Kirby 19 ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Right: ... and then celebrating the pick with teammate Kris Phillips (6). (Photo by Ron Barry)







Right: Ittai Fry has had to move to center because of injuries to Carson Bridger's wrists, but continues to deliver for the Cav offensive line. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Carson Bridger (79) helped clear the way for DK Woods (32) to rack up another 140 yards on 21 carries. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Above: Brody Jones (11) was extremely active on defense, dragging down Kirby back Christian Jefferson here, but he also caught a touchdown pass just before halftime. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Left: Another win, another efficient performance by QB Ben Burgess: 7-of-8 passes for 62 yards and two more touchdowns, bringing his season total to 21. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Leah Beaird and Cacie Jo McNeill were ready for another chilly night, cheering the Cavaliers on. (Photo by Ron Barry)









Above: Khalan Thomas (20) gets ready to take down Kirby's Antonyo Christian as DJ Forrest (33) arrives to provide support. (Photo by Ron Barry)

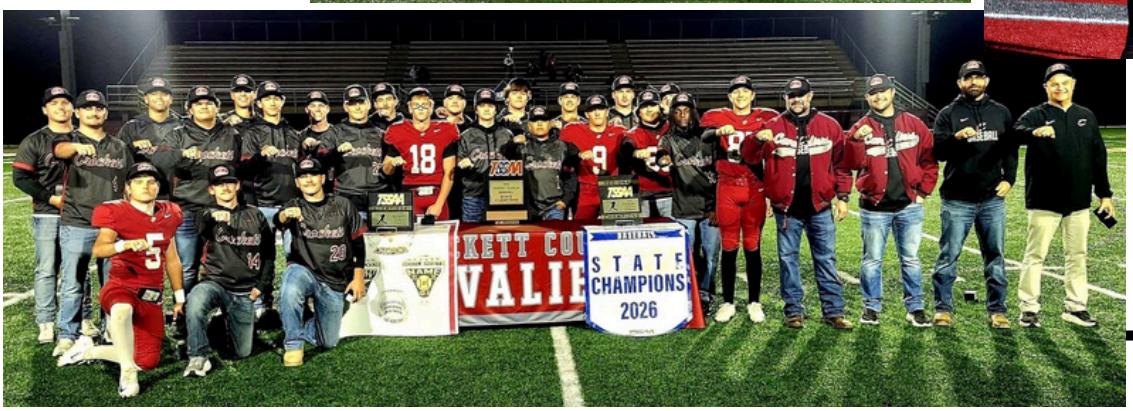
Below: Nolen Turner (54) and Jacob Howard (52) have Kirby's Christian Jefferson hemmed in from the right, while Mason Dennis (7) makes sure there's no way to go left. (Photo by Ron Barry)



Right: Halftime highlight: Athletic Director Duke Kail coordinated the awarding of the 2026 TSSAA Baseball State Championship rings to Crockett's diamonders, ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: ... who then gathered for this commemorative photo by Beth Williams. (Photo by Beth Williams)







Left: Noah Mayfield nailed all six of his extra-point attempts out of the dependable holds of Kris Phillips. (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below: Sebastian Garduno (63) and Kris Phillips (6) listen to instructions during a second-half timeout Friday night. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Left: Squirt Pickens stays inbounds on this short pass reception and later ... (Photo by Ron Barry)

Below:... broke off a 37-yard run to set up another Cavalier score. (Photo by Ron Barry)





Above: Titus Luten (4) -- celebrating a touchdown pass with thrower Ben Burgess (10) -- scored three times against the Cougars. (Photo by Ron Barry)