

Lady Panthers win two-straight following Banks County loss

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The Lady Panthers were unable to keep pace with Banks County on Tuesday but bounced back to sweep its weekend slate of games.

The Lady Leopards and Union County were neck-and-neck through three-plus quarters before the Lady Panthers went scoreless in the final frame, allowing Banks County to pull away in a 53-35 victory.

Union County visited Oglethorpe County on Friday and scored the first 23 points before taking its foot off the gas in a 48-19 victory over the winless Lady Patriots. A day later, the Lady Panthers jumped in front of Fannin County by double-digits but wound up in a dog fight down the stretch.

Lady Panthers 51, Fannin County 47 -- Junior Kait McCarter poured in a career-high 28 points as Union County held off the Lady Rebels' comeback bid.

The Lady Panthers led 14-10 after one then extended its advantage to 26-15 at the half. McCarter scored 11 points over the first two quarters while junior Adelin Hill and freshmen Riley Allison and Ava Hunter helped out with 5 points each.

Fannin County trimmed the margin to 35-30 after three and 40-38 with four minutes remaining but McCarter closed strong with 8 points in the fourth. Hill connected on 4-of-6 at the line and Hunter chipped in a pair of baskets during the final period.

McCarter's 28 points tops her previous career-high of 25 points, which coincidentally, also came at home against Fannin County, exactly one year earlier (Jan. 12, 2018).

Along with a career-best in scoring, the junior post pulled down 13 rebounds, recorded 3 steals and blocked 2 shots. She hit 9-of-18 from the field, 1-of-1 from three and 9-of-15 at the line.

To go with 10 points, Hill finished with 3 assists, 3 steals and 2 boards on 5-of-8 shooting from the charity stripe. Hunter had 5 points, 4 rebounds, 2 steals and an assist. Allison also finished with 5 points but dished out 3 assists to go with a pair of rebounds and steals. Adeline Dockrey had 3 points on three free throws, hauled in 5 boards with 2 assists and 2 steals.

Team Stats: Union County shot 15-for-42 (36-percent) from the floor, 3-for-9 (33-percent) from downtown and a very pedestrian 53-percent from the line (18-of-34).

The Lady Rebels were 15-of-46 (33-percent) from the floor, 4-of-16 (25-percent) beyond the arc and 13-for-17 (76-percent) at the line. Fannin County matched Union's offensive rebound total of 14 but was out-rebounded 34-30 by the Lady Panthers overall.

The Lady Panthers turned it over 14 times; Union coughed up the ball nine times.

Lady Panthers 48, Oglethorpe County 19 -- The Lady Patriots were riding a 55-game losing streak entering Friday and following a 13-0 deficit after one quarter and 23-straight Union County points to open the contest, it was obvious the losing skid would hit 56.

The long-suffering



L-R: Sophomore Kyla Locklear leads the fast break after coming up with one of her game-high 6 steals at Oglethorpe County. Freshman Rebekah Chambers scores in the paint during the second half for two of her 8 points at Oglethorpe County on Friday. Photos/Todd Forrest



Oglethorpe County fans were finally able to cheer at the midway point of the second quarter when a jumper put the Lady Pats on the board. The Lady Panthers, however, would eventually extend their lead to 27-3 at the break despite resting the starters for much of the second period.

Leading 44-11 after three, the fourth quarter was shortened to six minutes and head coach Corey Garrett was able to provide some meaningful playing time to his bench.

While the top of the stat sheet may have featured the usual suspects -- Hunter with 10 points, McCarter had nine, Hill with seven -- there were some not-so-obvious names near the top in scoring. Freshman Rebekah Chambers scored 8 points, grabbed 7 boards, picked up 3 steals and blocked a shot.

Meanwhile, Kyla Locklear was everywhere it seemed. The sophomore scored 5 points with 6 boards, 6 steals and an assist. Junior Adelia Pyle had 2 points and 5 rebounds. Senior Brianna Hemphill scored 3 points with 3 steals and an assist. Allison had 3 assists, 3 steals and one free throw; freshman Ansley Collins grabbed a rebound and sophomore Landry Baenninger added an assist, a rebound and a steal.

Team Stats: Union County hit 18-of-49 (37-percent) from the floor, 2-of-12 (17-percent) from long distance and 10-of-18 (56-percent) at the line. They would commit 23 turnovers with 15 offensive rebounds and 38 total boards.

The Lady Pats shot 7-of-41 (17-percent) and 0-for-8 from 3-point range. They were 5-of-11 (45-percent) from the line. They turned it over 34 times but snagged 16 offensive boards and 36 total.

Lady Panthers 35, Banks County 53 -- In a back-and-forth game for three quarters, Union County struggled down the stretch. Not only were they shutout in the fourth quarter, but the Lady Panthers also went without a field goal over the final 11 minutes, 28 seconds of the contest.

Despite two Locklear field goals and free throws by McCarter and Hill as the only third-quarter offense, Union found themselves down by only two, 37-35 entering the fourth. Unfortunately, the offensive struggles caught up with the home team in crunch time.

The Lady Panther starting five went absolutely frigid from the field. The final basket of the game by a Union starter came on a Hunter layup with 6:26 remaining in the first half. When the final buzzer sounded, the starting five was in the midst of a 22-minute, 26-second stretch without a field goal.

The first quarter was a stark contrast to the fourth as the Lady Panthers opened with a 7-2 spurt and held a 14-9 advantage after one. The second began with a Hill triple and a Hunter fast break layup to hand Union its largest lead of the contest at 19-11.

Still on top at 22-16, Union County fell victim to a 16-1 Banks County outburst for a 32-23 score with under a minute left in the half. Hill would sink a pair from the stripe to send her team into the locker room facing a 32-25 deficit.

The Lady Leopards opened the third with a deuce but Union countered by outscoring Banks County 10-3 over the remainder of the period.

A Locklear turnaround jumper and three free throws in four attempts by McCarter had the Lady Panthers within four at 34-30. Another Locklear basket, two free throws from Hill and one by McCarter made it 37-35 to start the fourth after both teams went scoreless for nearly 3 minutes to close the third.

Two Lady Leopard baskets early in the fourth allowed Banks to create some breathing room at 41-35 but a three at the 4:32 mark and a driving layup at 3:46 had the margin at 11.

Things only continued to snowball as Union County starting point guard Brooke Dockrey was called for an offensive foul. She was then hit with two technical fouls, by two different officials, for disagreeing with the call. A case could be made that piling on that extra technical was unnecessary, but nonetheless, she was ejected and suspended for two games -- which luckily were against lowly Oglethorpe County and a non-region contest with Fannin.

With the game spiraling out of control for the home team, Banks County put the finishing touches on a 16-0 fourth quarter and a 53-35 victory.

Hill finished with 17 points -- 15 in the first half -- to lead Union County. McCarter added 9 points and 9 rebounds,



Brianna Hemphill (2) races up the floor to get off a shot before the buzzer at Oglethorpe. Photo/Todd Forrest

Locklear scored 4 points with 6 boards, Hunter had 4 points and 2 rebounds while Allison finished with 1 point.

Adeline Dockrey led the team with 4 assists, Brooke Dockrey added 3 assists and a steal.

Big Picture: This week's games will go a long way to help measure the Lady Panthers' postseason possibilities. Union is currently tied for fourth with Friday's opponent Monticello,

who already owns a win over UC. Meanwhile, Union is two games up on sixth place Elbert County, so a win Tuesday all but guarantees the Lady Panthers no lower than a No. 5 seed.

Rabun has pretty much locked up the region but Banks and Putnam are tied for second and only one game up on Union County and Monticello. If the Lady Panthers can score a win at Monticello, then complete the season sweep vs Putnam

County, that would set up a huge showdown at Banks County on Jan. 29.

Up next: As previously mentioned, Union County will host Elbert County at 6 p.m. Tuesday

The Lady Panthers will travel to Monticello for a 5 p.m. tip-off on Friday. Saturday is an open date so the next game will be 5 p.m. Tuesday at Social Circle.

Swimming: Union third overall at TFS Pirate Meet

TALLULAH FALLS - On Jan. 12, the Union County men's team placed third and the women came in fifth for an overall team finish of third at Tallulah Falls' Shiver Me Timbers meet. The following are the top 16 finishes for the team (first set is preliminary place, second is the finals place).

200 Yard Medley Relay
2nd /3rd Place: Steven Williams, Brian Williams, Brendan Bowman & Grayson Blocker
12th/12th Place: Nathanael Allison, Alec Youngblood, Michael Leird, Tyler Harkins
6th/5th Place Grace Weldon, Rachel Reid, Olivia Blocker, Hana Gregory

200 Yard Freestyle
7th /6th Place: Tyler Harkins

200 Yard Individual Medley
1st /1st Place: Brian Williams

50 Yard Freestyle
3rd /3rd Place: Brendan Bowman
11th/15th Place: Grayson Blocker
12th Place: Steven Williams
3rd /3rd Place: Kaiya Wilkes
6th /6th Place: Grace Weldon

100 Yard Butterfly
9th /9th Place: Alden Wilkes

100 Yard Freestyle
2nd /2nd Place: Brendan Bowman
9th/10th Place: Hunter White
11th/12th Place: Ean Harkins
6th /7th Place: Kaiya Wilkes

500 Yard Freestyle
5th Place: Tyler Harkins

200 Yard Freestyle Relay
1st /2nd Place: Brian Williams, Grayson Blocker, Steven Williams & Brendan Bowman
7th/7th Place: Alden Wilkes, Ean Harkins, Hunter White, Luke Gambrell
5th/4th Place: Kaiya Wilkes, Olivia Blocker, Hana Gregory, Grace Weldon

100 Yard Backstroke
5th /5th Place: Steven Williams
15th/15th Place: Preston Perren
3rd/2nd Place: Grace Weldon
13th/13th Place: Olivia Blocker
14th/14th Place: Hana Gregory

100 Yard Breaststroke
2nd /2nd Place: Brian Williams
5th/5th Place: Hunter White
8th/8th Place: Luke Gambrell
9th/8th Place: Rachel Reid

400 Yard Freestyle Relay
4th /4th Place: Alden Wilkes, Hunter White, Ean Harkins & Luke Gambrell

Wrestling: Union County fourth at Area



Union County placed fourth in last weekend's Area Duels tournament at Monticello. Unfortunately, only the top two teams qualify for sectionals. The Panthers entered the tournament as the 5th seed and defeated the 4-seed Oglethorpe County, 48-30 in the opening round. That setup a meeting with the defending state champs, Social Circle, who knocked off Union 60-12. In the consolation bracket, the Panthers took care of Monticello 60-24, earning a rematch with Oglethorpe, who got the better of Union the second time around, 45-33. According to Union County coach Justin Byers, the team will take this week off to rest and heal before beginning prep for the traditional area tournament, where the top 4 individuals in each weight class qualify for sectionals. From there, the top six in each class qualify for state. Union County returns to competition on Jan. 26 when they travel to Elberton for the Elbert County Inferno tournament. Photo/Todd Forrest



Top: Swim team seniors. Bottom: The Union County swim team with coaches.