

Heartbreaker at Dawson followed by back-to-back home losses

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The Panthers were unable to protect a 6-point lead over the final three minutes at 9th ranked Dawson County on Tuesday night. Union County missed 4-of-6 from the line while surrendering an 11-2 run that allowed the Tigers to remain unbeaten in Region 7-AAA.

Dawson County was riding high following an overtime victory at East Hall on Friday and their recent string of good fortune continued down the stretch vs the Panthers on Tuesday.

As for Union, they carried the Dawson with them as they limped home to get blown out by a 1-15 Fannin County squad on Friday.

Things didn't get any easier for the Panthers as they hosted the 4th ranked GAC Spartans, less than 24 hours later. Still, without the services of Sawyer Drake, the team leader in points, rebounds, and assists, Union County was unable to keep pace with a loaded GAC roster.

The Panthers have two opportunities to get back on track when they visit Pickens on Friday and host Andrews, NC on Saturday. The lone region contest is a Friday night rematch at Greater Atlanta Christian.

According to Panther head coach Casey Jones, there is a possibility that Drake could return by the end of the month. However, the earliest possible return date would be Saturday vs Andrews, but that's being extremely optimistic.

The Region 7-AAA stretch-run begins next week when Union County hosts North Hall on Tuesday, Jan. 23 and East Hall on Friday, Jan. 26.

The Panthers visit Lumpkin County on Tuesday, Jan. 30 before closing the season at home with Dawson County on Friday, Feb. 2.

Dawson 48, Union 45 DAWSONVILLE - After trailing for most of the night, the Panthers scored 12-unanswered to turn a 37-31 deficit with 2:12 to play in the third, into a 43-37 advantage with 4:19 left in the game.

The 12-0 run came on the heels of a Tiger 3-ball that saw Dawson County open up its largest lead of the contest, 37-31. On the ensuing possession, Patrick Baggett connected from downtown, cutting the margin in half.

A runner in the paint by Crawford Colwell pulled Union within a point at the one-minute mark of the third. He would get inside once again when his dribble-drive beat the buzzer and gave the Panthers their first lead of the second half, 38-37.

With possession to start the fourth, Union County elected to slow things down and burn more than 2 minutes off the clock. After a Dawson miss, the Panthers continued to slow the pace before Pierson Allison drilled a trey from the left wing,



Left: Crawford Colwell tries to keep Union County in the game vs Fannin County. Right: The Union County student section has supported the Panthers all season long. Photo/Todd Forrest

spotting the Panthers a 41-37 advantage with 4:52 to play.

At the 4:19 mark, Crawford Colwell was fouled on his way to the basket and the senior hit 2-of-2 to stretch the lead to six.

After more than five minutes without a point, Dawson finally ended its drought with a base-line jumper as the clock hit 3:00.

Union County would miss a pair of free throws with 2:48 to play and the Tigers raced down the floor for a layup on the other end.

With 2:27 to play, Candler Colwell hit 1-of-2 from the line but Dawson tied things up with a three, 15 seconds later. The Tigers finished the game at a blistering 63-percent (5-of-8) from 3-point territory.

Crawford Colwell made 1-of-2 from the line at the 1:13 mark but the Tigers regained the lead moments later with a layup.

Allison misfired from three with 21 seconds left but the Panthers were able to regain possession. Down a point, Union County had 19.5 seconds to work with and with the clock under 10 seconds, Candler Colwell caught a pass on the right wing and drove inside but his shot from just inside the baseline was too strong off the glass and the Tigers were able to come up with the loose ball under the basket and the Panthers were forced to foul with 1.5 seconds on the clock.

Allison led Union with 12 points on 3-of-6 shooting from downtown. Baggett also hit 3-of-6 from distance for 9 points. Britt Waller had 8 points and blocked a shot, Crawford Colwell finished with 7 points, 12 boards, and three assists.

Candler Colwell ended up with 5 points and 4 boards; Cole Davis had 4 points and three dimes.

Inside the numbers - Union County shot 40-percent from the floor (17-for-42) while hitting 43-percent (6-for-14) from beyond the arc. They would break even at the line going 5-of-10 for 50 percent.

The Panthers were lim-

ited to just seven offensive rebounds and 25 boards total while committing eight turnovers.

Dawson County shot 44-percent from the floor (19-for-43) and hit 5-of-6 (83-percent) at the line. Offensive rebounds were at a premium as the Tigers finished with six and 27 total rebounds. Like Union County, Dawson committed just eight turnovers while being led in scoring by senior Cullen Reed and junior Trey Pruitt's 12 apiece.

Fannin 59, Union County 44 - For just the second time this decade, the Panthers lost at home to Fannin County behind 26 points from senior Peyton Holt and 50-percent shooting (20-for-40) as a team.

Prior to Friday's victory over Union County, the Rebels were 0-7 in region play, 1-15 overall and riding a 14-game losing streak with their only win a 43-39 home victory over Hiwassee Dam, NC on Nov. 18.

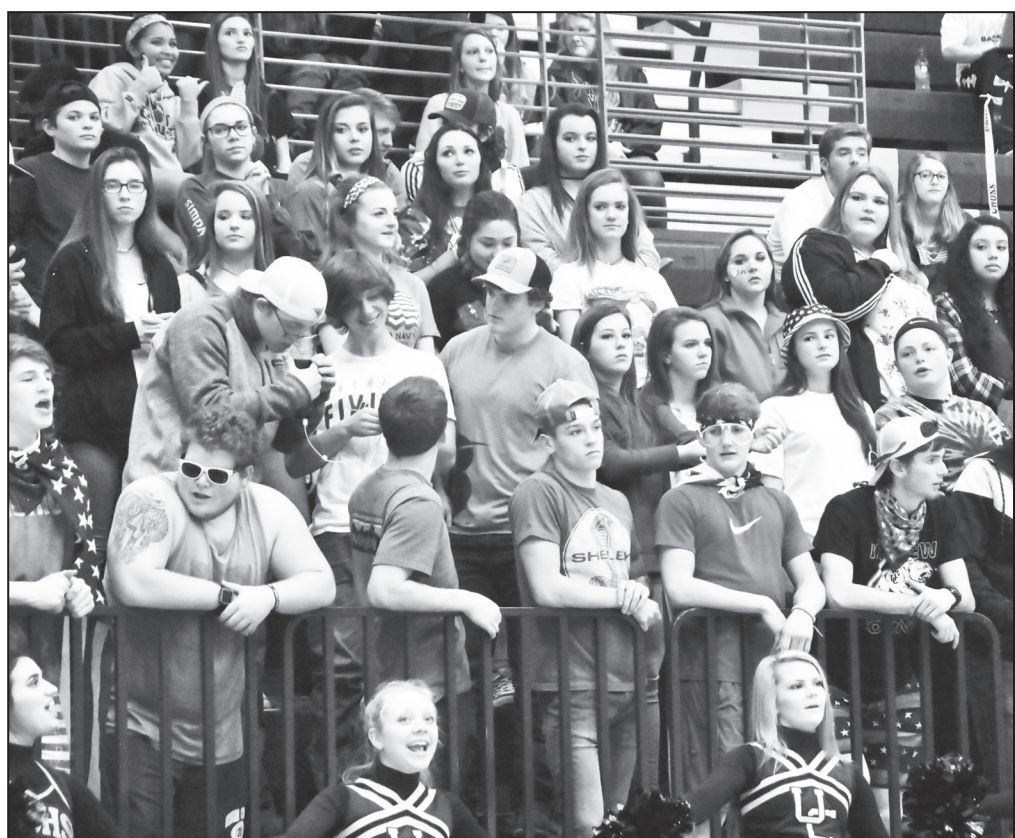
Early on it appeared as if the Rebels were heading for its 15-straight loss when the Panthers jumped in front 6-1 before they closed with a 9-3 run to take a 10-9 lead after one.

Union's only lead of the second quarter came at 17-16 on a Crawford Colwell dribble-drive with 1:22 left in the half. The Rebels answered with a game-tying free throw followed by a corner-trey for a 20-17 edge at the break.

Fannin opened the third with a steal-and-score but RJ Banton answered with a put-back to keep the Panthers within three. Unfortunately for the home team, the Rebels were about to catch fire.

Fannin would outscore the Panthers 16-6 over the final 7:04 of the third. Consecutive threes were sandwiched around a Crawford Colwell deuce. The Rebels then went inside for three straight buckets - opening up a 34-21 lead.

Another Crawford Colwell basket momentarily slowed the bleeding but consecutive Rebel buckets made it 38-23 game with 1:51 remain-



ing in the period.

Crawford Colwell did all he could to keep his team in the game, going inside for two and trimming the margin to 13 entering the fourth.

Union continued to find a lid on the basket, well into the fourth, never getting closer than 11 over the final 8 minutes. Fannin would extend its lead to 44-27 at the midway point of the fourth.

Allison finally found his range late in the game, cutting the deficit to 11 at the 1:32 mark with his third trey of the quarter, but it was too-little-too-late.

Allison led the Panthers with 17 points on 5-of-15 from long distance - the rest of the squad combined to go 0-for-11 from deep. Allison also recorded seven assists and three steals to lead the team. Crawford Colwell had 12 and seven boards as he and Allison combined to produce every Union field goal over the final 14:43 of the game.

Banton scored 6 of his 8 points in the first half; Baggett had 4 points but was unable to connect from distance; Waller added 2 points and six boards while Kyle Morlock scored 1 point.

Union County shot 31-percent (17-for-54) from the floor and 19-percent (5-of-26) from long range. The Panthers hit 5-of-6 from the line (83-percent) and grabbed nine offensive boards, 23 total rebounds, and turned it over 10 times.

Fannin out-rebounded Union 38-23 despite turning it over 17 times - leading to 13 Panther points. The Rebels were 5-of-12 (42-percent) from 3-point land and 61-percent (14-of-23) from the charity stripe.

GAC 70, Union County 39 - Early threes by Baggett and Allison allowed Union to grab a quick 8-5 lead but a 14-0 Spartan run quickly turned the tide in favor of the fourth-ranked team in Class AAA.

After a quarter of play, GAC was in control at 24-12 before a low-scoring second quarter kept the Panthers hanging around at 33-18.

The Spartans put their foot on the gas in the third, outscoring Union 16-4 after a Baggett steal-and-score to open the quarter had the Panthers within 13.

Leading 49-24 after three, GAC extended the margin to 30 with a 7-2 spurt in the opening minutes of the fourth.



Senior guard Patrick Baggett soars for two of his 10 points during the second half vs fourth-ranked Greater Atlanta Christian on Saturday night. Photo/Todd Forrest

Bowling Scores

Monday Night Men: Rick Bracken 214, 203, Dallas Lloyd 202, Guy Hill 237, Larry Cannon 212, Derrick Rice 251, 200, Pete DeJoseph 217, Doug Tanner 247, 240, 210, Ryan West 210, Bryan Cuthbert 207, 200, Andrew Haire 223, 245, Series 644, Tony Lynch 237, 230, Series 648, Stanley Tyler 203, 222, Series 615, Brandon Hartness 247, 244 Series 680 Jay Burrell 226, 217, Series 621 Bill Cox 210, Bob Bischoff 211, Greg Wittenberg 204, Mel White 224.

Monday Night Ladies: Joyce Trenton 183, Janet Burrell 193, 215, Susan Ganitch 189, Carol Eaton 202.

Un-bowl-ievable League: 1st Place - Splits Happen, 2nd Place - Spare Me, Exit Realty, SLB.

Young @ Heart League: John Delphino 216, 211, Series 605, Barry Rice 202, Del Neiffer 213, 212, Series 617, Mel White 215, Larry Snyder 205, Bob Bischoff 222, Stanley Tyler 244, Jim Kidder 213, Ron Wingate 218, 212.

Blairsville Youth: Eric Fox 180, 206, Jared Edwards 162, Ivy Robbins 127, Kiley Hartness 114, Cody Meeks 158, Cooper Allen 116, Noah Freuen 93, Lily Love 127, Michaela Caldwell 122, Joshua Collins 155, Connor Rexroad 153, Christian Theriot 223, Jaden Love 157, Ben Love 114, Nick Love 159.

Thursday Night Fun Mixed: Ray Everett 243, 247, 211, Series 701, Doug Roberts 209, Brett Hogsed 211, Shay Roberts 204, 210, Series 608, Ryan West 223, Justin Miller 204, 226, Debbie McGregor 192, Josh Mathis 211, Don Summers 205, Stanley Tyler 206, 212, Tony Lynch 212, 237, 227 Series 676. N(Jan17,A)SH



Union County Recreation Department 2018 Evening Step-Aerobics Program

Ages: 50 and over

You asked and we listened! Union County Recreation Department is now offering evening fitness classes! If you are looking for an indoor exercise program to fit your work schedule and other needs, then come on down to the Union County Recreation Department and sign up for our new Step-Aerobics program. The Program Director of Union County Parks and Recreation will be leading step-aerobics sessions two times a week for February and March for 45 minutes. This is a great time to socialize and exercise with a fun group for a very low cost. Step-Aerobics Registration begins on January 15, 2018 and ends February 2, 2018 at the Recreation Office (310 Wellborn St.) Registration must be done in person due to class size limits. If you have any questions, please call our office at (706) 439-6074. N(Jan17,M)SH

Union County Recreation Senior Dance Program

Winter 2018 Ballroom Dancing Program

Ages: 50 and over

Did you know dance could be fun? You do not need to have coordination to have a great experience dancing! The Program Director of Union County Parks and Recreation will be leading the next session of beginning ballroom dance two times a week for 4 weeks in this winter session. You will learn the basics of four ballroom dances, such as the Waltz and Foxtrot. This is a great time to socialize and dance with a fun group. We will meet at Union County Recreation Room and dance our hearts out for 60 minutes.

**Winter session registration begins on January 8, 2018 and ends February 2, 2018 at the Recreation Office (310 Wellborn St.).

Registration must be done in person due to cap on participants per session. If you have any questions, please call (706) 439-6074. Price discount the more lessons you sign up for.



2018 Baseball and Softball Registration opens at the Union County Recreation Department

You may register at the Union County Recreation Department located at 310 Wellborn Street or online at unioncountygga.gov.

Age Groups

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| 3-4 Coed- Smart Start | 11-12 Boys- Baseball |
| 5-6 Coed-T-Ball | 11-12 Girls- Softball |
| 7-8 Boys- Machine Pitch | 13-14 Boys- Baseball |
| 7-8 Girls- Machine Pitch | 13-14 Girls- Softball |
| 9-10 Boys- Baseball | |
| 9-10 Girls- Softball | |