

Soccer: Shorthanded Panthers edge Leopards, struggle at No. 1 Putnam

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Without the services of the injured Kobi Robbins, Union County survived Banks County's upset-bid thanks to a late goal from senior David Van Pelt.

Later in the week, the Panthers suffered their most lopsided Region 8-AA defeat in more than a decade, a 5-1 loss at top-ranked Putnam County.

Now, with the season on hold, Union County (6-2 overall, 3-1 in region play) currently sits in second place in 8-AA but are tied in the loss column with three teams.

One of those teams, Rabun County, the Panthers already own a victory over. As for the other two opponents, last Friday's visit to Elbert County was postponed, and a March 27 contest with Social Circle will likely suffer the same fate.

Panthers 1, Banks County 0 - A Van Pelt goal in the 56th minute was the difference in a victory over the

upset-minded Leopards last Monday, March 9.

Union County was unable to take advantage of several scoring opportunities and both teams entered the break in a 0-0 tie.

Banks County was unable to take advantage of a free kick in the 28th minute, sailing the shot over the crossbar. Then, early in the second half, the Panthers missed wide left in an open-goal situation while the Leopards' goalkeeper was out of position.

Van Pelt's first goal of 2020 finally put Union on the board when he found the net off a throw-in from junior Zach Jackson.

Putnam County 5, Panthers 1 - Sophomore Dalton Allen provided Union County's only goal of the evening in the 14th minute, coming off an assist from junior Malachi Patrick.

Despite the early goal, the Panthers were unable to keep pace against the top-ranked War Eagles, who returned everyone off an 18-4 squad that reached the Class AA Final Four.



Senior David Van Pelt watches his game-winner sail past a Banks County defender and the goalkeeper during a 1-0 victory. Photo/Todd Forrest

With all sporting events most likely canceled for the next two weeks, the earliest match for Union County would be a March 31 meeting vs Pickens.

Be sure to check the *North Georgia News* (print and website editions), along with social media accounts for the latest news as it becomes available.

Baseball: Panthers drop three-straight, fall to sixth place in Region 8-AA

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Union County endured its toughest stretch of the season, suffering three straight losses in what could be the final week of the season.

Following a pair of losses to Social Circle on Monday and another to Gilmer on Wednesday, the Panthers currently sit at 4-8 overall and 1-3 in region play, placing them sixth in Region 8-AA. Union County was unable to halt its recent skid when last Friday's doubleheader at Monticello suffered a postponement. Sitting one game back of fourth, the Panthers would not qualify for a State playoff spot, should the Coronavirus outbreak force a cancellation of the regular season.

Panthers 2, Social Circle 8 - In a region doubleheader rescheduled from the previous Friday, Union County was unable to overcome an 8-0 third-inning deficit in a game one loss on Monday, March 9.

Seniors John Mancuso and Cayden Rich finished with two hits apiece, accounting for four of the team's six hits.

Four pitchers saw work for the Panthers with freshman Tyler Loyd going a team-high 3.2 innings. Loyd entered in the second with his team trailing 6-0 and was able to escape a bases-loaded jam.

He allowed five hits and fanned three batters while giving



Freshman Tyler Loyd provided coach Zach Odom with 3+ innings vs Social Circle. Photo/Todd Forrest

up two third-inning runs.

Damien Chitwood started and walked three batters while allowing four hits in a five-run first. JJ Littles began the second, also walking three and giving up one unearned before getting the hook with one.

Thomas Dyer spelled Loyd in the sixth and tossed a 1-2-3 top-half as the Panthers finally got on the board with two in the bottom half.

Mancuso scored on a Carter Wright sacrifice fly after reaching on a one-out double; he later advanced to third on an error off the bat of Isaac Mullinack.

An infield single by Chitwood put runners at the corners and Rich drove in Mullinack with an opposite-field single.

Alec Youngblood added a base hit for Union County in the loss and Dyer reached on an error.

Social Circle's Brady Head tossed a complete game, scattering six hits, striking out two and not surrendering a walk.

Panthers 5, Social Circle 10, In the nightcap, the Redskins got three in each of the first two innings, grabbing another 6-0 lead in the second.

Trailing 8-0, Union made

walks and fanning three.

A leadoff double by Youngblood and a one-out walk by Matthew Kelley jumpstarted the Union fifth. Mancuso reached on an error, scoring Youngblood, then a two-out single by Wright made it 8-2. Later, Hunter Loyd reached on an error allowing Swartz to bring home Mancuso and Wright with a base hit to left.

After Swartz pitched around a one-out error in the sixth, the Panthers cut it to 8-5 when Kelly reached on a fielder's choice and eventually scored on a Mullinack groundout.

Two walks and a sacrifice bunt set the stage for Social Circle to put the game away with a two-run single in the seventh.

Panthers 2, Gilmer 3 - After routing Gilmer 10-0 last month, the Union bats struggled in a 3-2 loss to the Bobcats on Wednesday, March 11.

Trailing 3-1, the Panthers got one back in the sixth but fell short as Gilmer retired six-straight Union hitters to end the game.

Mullinack opened the sixth with a walk and stole second, allowing Wright to score him on a base hit to left. That would be Union's final baserunner of the

game as Gilmer sat down the next three Panthers to end the inning, then worked a 1-2-3 seventh.

The Bobcats took a 1-0 lead in the first with a two-out double off Swartz. Union answered in the second when Littles scored Chitwood by beating out a would-be double-play ball.

Youngblood and Kelley singled for the Panthers; Rich, Wright and Mullinack walked during the loss.

Swartz allowed three hits and one run over two innings. Rich tossed two innings of one-hit baseball; Littles walked three, gave up two hits and two runs in the fifth.

Tyler Loyd finished off the game with two no-hit innings, walking two and striking out one.

Up next: With last Friday's region contests postponed, and Friday's twin bill with Elbert likely meeting the same fate, that would leave the Panthers with, at most, four region games left.

Luckily, those remaining 8-AA doubleheaders would come against the two teams behind them in the standings: April 3 vs Oglethorpe County and an April 17 trip to Rabun County.

Annual Duncan Dash 5K Run/Walk to benefit Haven Project of Georgia

The 4th Annual Duncan Dash 5K run/walk and fun run will be held March 21st at 8:30 AM at Meeks Park in Blairsville. This year, it will benefit a local non-profit, Haven Project of Georgia.

The race will start and end at Pavilion #3 and the gazebo near the softball fields and playground and will include a beautiful route through Meeks Park and the dog park.

To register in advance, go to www.active.com and look for 4th Annual Duncan Dash or email duncandash5k@gmail.com for a paper registration form. Participants with disabilities can register for free by emailing havenprojectofga@gmail.com. Race t-shirts are guaranteed to those who register by March 7th and will be given

first-come, first-serve to later registrants, including those who sign up the day of the race, as long as supplies last.

Awards will be given for the overall male and female winners, overall masters male and female winners, and three deep in ten-year age groups from 10 and under to 70 and over. The team or group showing the most spirit will also be recognized.

All proceeds from the race will benefit Haven Project of Georgia, a non-profit organization that serves individuals with disabilities and their families in north Georgia and western North Carolina by offering free education, advocacy, and respite programs. Haven is neighbors helping neighbors get access to the programs and services they need to live their best lives.

T.U.F. Athletes upcoming fundraiser

Hi from T.U.F. Athletes, We just wanted to updated everyone on where we are with fundraising for the Connecticut trip.

We would like to thank everyone from the bottom of our hearts for all the support this community has shown to our athletes.

On April 17th we will be having a BBQ Plate Sale. Tickets are \$8 per plate, which includes BBQ sandwich, coleslaw, chips, drink, and dessert. Pick up will be at the Civic Center. Ticket must be shown at pick-up.

We are planning to have signup sheets at local businesses, etc. and we will deliver.

If you would like to purchase a ticket please contact us, jpdyer1362@gmail.com, or call Paulette at 706-897-9938 for locations tickets will be available for purchase.

The BBQ Master will be Mr. Clayton Reeves, Full Throttle Ministries. We will be having more fundraising activities so stay tuned.

Again we thank you for your support for these amazing athletes.

#	Roster	GP	PA	AB	H	1B	2B	3B	HR	RBI	R	HBP	ROE	FC	CI	BB	SO	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS
1	John Mancuso	12	44	37	14	10	3	1	0	6	10	0	3	0	0	7	6	.378	.477	.514	.991
44	Damien Chitwood	9	32	26	9	8	1	0	0	8	2	0	0	0	0	6	6	.346	.469	.385	.853
15	Matthew Kelley	10	28	26	9	7	2	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	2	5	.346	.393	.423	.816
8	Carter Wright	12	42	34	11	7	4	0	0	10	6	1	3	0	0	5	5	.324	.405	.441	.846
10	Isaac Mullinack	12	40	35	11	11	0	0	0	3	12	0	1	1	0	5	0	.314	.400	.314	.714
27	Alec Youngblood	12	38	32	8	6	2	0	0	2	2	2	0	1	0	3	8	.250	.351	.313	.664
11	Cayden Rich	9	25	21	5	5	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	4	5	.238	.360	.238	.598
20	Austin Garrison	6	21	18	4	4	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	1	0	1	2	.222	.333	.222	.556
4	Connor Shields	3	7	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	.143	.143	.143	.286
19	JJ Littles	4	8	7	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	4	.143	.250	.143	.393
32	Hunter Loyd	9	20	16	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2	.125	.263	.125	.388
2	Zeke Swartz	9	31	21	2	2	0	0	0	5	4	0	1	0	0	6	3	.095	.276	.095	.371
17	Lake Hughes	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000	.000	.000
5	Mason McCombs	7	13	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	6	.000	.077	.000	.077
23	Thomas Dyer	7	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	.000	.000	.000	.000
3	Tyler Loyd	4	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	.000	.250	.000	.250
Totals		12	362	303	77	64	12	1	0	39	45	9	12	11	0	42	54	.254	.358	.300	.658

Offensive statistics through 12 games