

Sports

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Fannin and Social Circle no match for Lady Panthers

Trip to 17-2 Dawson Co. awaits on Tuesday, followed by Greene and Oglethorpe at home

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The Lady Panthers are currently winners of three-straight, and with a pair of wins over the weekend, they can just about lock up one of the top two spots in 8-AA going into next month's Region Tournament.

The second place Lady Panthers (11-6, 4-1) square off with third place Greene County (5-10, 3-2) at 5 p.m. on Friday and Oglethorpe County at 2 p.m. Saturday, who is currently in a three-way tie for fourth (and last place) with Washington Wilkes and Social Circle, who all sport a 1-4 record inside of 8-AA.

The Region Tournament will be hosted by the school whose girls team finishes first in the regular season. At this point, Rabun is still unbeaten in Region play but if the Lady Panthers win out, they could host.

Prior to this weekend's region showdowns, Union must go on the road to face the Dawson County Lady Tigers - the losers of two straight. However, before the two game slide, Dawson opened the season with 17 consecutive wins.

On Tuesday, the Lady Tigers fell at Class AAAA's Chestnut, 48-46 on a buzzer-beater.

Their first loss of the year came the night before when East Hall picked up a 60-42 victory in Dawsonville. On a roster that features 10 seniors, the Lady Tigers were led in scoring by freshman Kaylee Sticker.

Last Tuesday, the Lady Panthers recorded a 25-point victory over another future Region 7-AAA foe, Fannin County (4-14), despite connecting on a season-low three shots from 3-point range. However, they made up for it at the foul line by making 22-of-34.

Sophomore Bailey Daniel scored a game-high 18 to lead Union, who was never threatened after opening with a 12-2 run.

While hosting Social Circle four days later, the Lady Panthers fell behind 10-9 after the first quarter but outscored



Senior Layne Colwell nails a fourth quarter trey vs Social Circle after dribbling from one side of the court to the other Photo/Todd Forrest

the Lady Redskins 35-13 over the final three quarters.

Senior Layne Colwell scored 11 of her game-high 18 points in the second half.

**Lady Panthers 48
Fannin County 23**

Blue Ridge - After nearly knocking out the Lady Rebels with a 12-2 run in the first quarter, Union County landed body blows for the next two quarters - extending its lead to 21-10 at the half, and 30-16 after three.

The fourth quarter saw the Lady Panthers catch Fannin County on the chin with an 18-7 final frame to put away the home team.

Daniel grabbed 3 rebounds, with 2 assists, 2 steals, and 2 blocks, to go with her 18 points.

The sophomore guard did

most of her damage at the free throw line - hitting 11 of her 14 attempts.

In the first half, Daniel went 9-for-10 at the line while Colwell hit two from the charity stripe and one from long distance.

Senior Kim Coyne scored 4 first quarter points and junior Ashley Fair connected once from downtown in the opening frame.

Those four provided Union with all 21 of its points at the intermission.

Sophomore Jillian Lawn knocked down her team's final trey in the third quarter with Coyne going 2-of-2 from the line and Daniel chipping in a pair of baskets to give their team a 30-16 advantage entering the fourth.

The Lady Panthers used 10-of-15 shooting at the stripe to stretch the lead to 25.



Sophomore Bailey Daniel at the foul line where she's been doing a lot of damage, including an 11-for-14 game at Fannin. Photo/Todd Forrest

Seniors Stephanie Busse, Coyne and Colwell provided Union with its only buckets in the period as seven different Lady Panthers hit a free throw over the final 8 minutes.

Coyne finished with 8 points and 5 steals, while Colwell had 7 points, a team-high 8 boards, and 2 steals.

Busse scored 4 points with 5 boards, and 3 blocked shots. Fair had 3 points, 4 rebounds, and 2 assists. Lawn also scored three, snagged 3 boards and recorded 4 steals.

Freshman Bailey Sutton scored 3 points on 3-of-4 shooting at the line. Fellow freshmen, Adeline Dockrey and Jordan Rogers each hit 1-of-2 free throws.

Fannin was led by 6-foot-1 sophomore Hope Franklin's 10 points.

Union County has now

come out on top in nine of its last 11 meetings with the Lady Rebels. The Lady Panthers' recent string of success over their rival dates back to January of 2011, when Union, coming off an embarrassing 70-20 home loss to East Hall, handed unbeaten and 4th ranked Fannin County its first loss of the season.

**Lady Panthers 46
Social Circle 23**

A 16-6 second quarter allowed Union to overcome a 10-9 first quarter deficit, then an 8-2 third quarter, and a 13-5 fourth put the finishing touches on the Lady Panthers' fourth consecutive win by 15-plus points.

Colwell picked up the slack after Daniel fouled out and scored 8 of her team's 13 points in the fourth quarter to finish with 18 for the game. The do-

everything senior finished with 5 boards, 3 assists, and 3 steals. She also shot 5-of-8 from the floor on 3-of-6 from beyond the arc, and 5-of-7 at the free throw line.

Daniel added 12 points, 3 boards, and a pair of steals, despite fouling out with 5:30 left in the game.

With her team leading 35-19, Daniel was whistled for her fourth and fifth foul within 10 seconds of each other.

Fair scored 9 points with 5 boards, a steal, and a blocked shot. Coyne had 6 points, 4 steals, and a block. Rogers finished with 1 point.

Busse collected a game-high 16 rebounds while recording 4 shots. Lawn grabbed 4 boards with 3 steals and Sutton recorded a pair of steals.

Trailing by a point in the second quarter, Fair poured in 6 points in the period, doing it in the paint, from long distance, and at the foul line.

Daniel connected on a trey and a deuce in the second. Colwell knocked down a trey and Coyne made two free throws to open up a 25-16 halftime advantage.

Neither team could get on the board during the first 4 minutes of the third until Daniel hit two from the line at the 3:59 mark. Fair hit her second trey, and Colwell scored the third's final 3 points following a Social Circle technical foul.

A 1-of-2 trip to the line on the technical free throws and a base line jumper by Colwell with 28 seconds left in the quarter stretched Union's lead to 33-18 entering the fourth.

A Coyne steal-and-score was sandwiched between 5 Colwell points - a driving layup and a trey from the wing that saw her dribble from the right corner to the left wing and then nail the 20-footer.

Coyne drove for two more and Colwell hit 3-of-3 from the line at the 1:58 mark to make it a 45-23 game.

Rogers added a free throw with 38 seconds to play.

Social Circle was led by sophomore Amiyah Williams' 9 points.

Union goes ice cold from the foul line as Redskins rally for OT victory

Baggett scores career-high to pace Panthers in 10-point win at Fannin

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On Tuesday, Union County (9-9, 4-2) got a career-high 21 points from sophomore Patrick Baggett that ended the Panthers' first two-game skid to the Rebels since 2008.

Playing without second leading scorer and rebounder, Crawford Colwell, Baggett picked up the slack for his fellow sophomore and Union pulled away following a dead-even first quarter.

The Panthers reopened Region play at home on Saturday when first place Union at 4-1 in 8-AA, hosted last place Social Circle (1-4 in region play).

After taking a lead of six or more on five different occasions, including an 9-point lead, late in the third quarter, the Panthers were unable to hold on due to a 2-for-14 shooting performance at the free throw line over the final 9-plus minutes of regulation and overtime.

Junior Lawson Baenninger overcame a cold start to score 23 points and Crawford Colwell returned to the lineup to add 17 more, but Social Circle's Deion Head scored 26 of his game-high 36 in the second half and overtime to lead his team to the win.

Union remains in first but they are now tied with Rabun County and Riverside Military who both sit at 4-2.

Oglethorpe County is one game back of the top three at 3-3 and will pay the Panthers a visit on Saturday. The girls are scheduled to tip at 2 p.m.

Greene County will travel to Blairsville on Friday for a girls tip off of 5 p.m.

The Tigers (2-4 in 8-AA) are currently tied with Washington Wilkes and Social Circle at the bottom of the region.

**Panthers 57
Fannin County 47**

Blue Ridge - A 15-6 second frame helped Union pull away from a 12-12 tie after one quarter.

Senior Chase Shook put up six of his 10 points in the second



Sophomore Patrick Baggett plays man-to-man defense during the first half vs Social Circle. Photo/Todd Forrest

frame as the Panthers' defense put the clamps on the Rebels, allowing the visitors to hold a 27-18 advantage at the break.

Ten points from Baggett, including his third and fourth treys of the game, Baenninger's first and only 3 of the night, and a basket from Shook in the third period gave Union a double-digit cushion entering the final 8-minutes.

During the fourth, the Panthers hit 12-of-20 from the line along with buckets by Baggett and Baenninger that sent Union home with its first three-game winning streak of the season.

Sophomore Candler Colwell connected on 5-of-9 free throws in the final frame to finish the game 7-for-11 at the line with 9 points.

Baenninger, who hit 3-of-6 in the fourth, finished with 14 points.

Baggett was good on 3 of his 4 free throw attempts in the fourth period.

Senior Andrew Brown chipped in 4 points.

Fannin County senior Austin Ingram led the Rebels with 13 points.

**Panthers 61
Social Circle 63 OT**

After missing all five of his 3-point field goal attempts in the first half, Baenninger came out of the break with back-to-back treys.

Shook followed with a baseline jumper, and Baggett connected on a corner trey to turn a slim 24-23 halftime advantage into a 35-26 lead, midway through the third quarter.

The Redskins answered with a three but a drive and pull-up



Junior Lawson Baenninger drives to the hoop for two of his 23 points vs Social Circle. Photo/Todd Forrest

jumper by Baenninger made it an 8-point game at 37-29 with 1:48 left in the third.

A Social Circle basket 10 seconds later was followed by two more missed Panther free throws.

Consecutive buckets by the visitors trimmed the Union lead to 37-35. With 5 seconds left in the third period, the Panthers came up empty during another trip to the line to keep it a two-point game with one quarter to play.

The Redskins tied things up 25 seconds into the fourth but a Shook putback made it 39-37.

With 6:36 to play, Union missed its fifth and sixth free throws in-a-row to keep Social Circle within two.

At the 6:05 mark, Head made them pay with a 3-point play and the first Redskin lead since the second quarter.

Five more unanswered points gave Social Circle a 45-39 lead and capped off a 19-4 run.

Baenninger made it a 3-point game with a trey at the 4:54 mark, a Crawford Colwell layup off a feed from brother Candler Colwell kept Union within three. Then with 3:06 left, senior Matthew Rich found Crawford Colwell inside for two more and the Panthers were back within a point.

Crawford Colwell did it again at the 3:06 mark when he converted a 3-point play, giving Union a 49-47 lead.

With 1:50 left, the Redskins tied things up, but Baenninger went to the line for a 1-and-1 at the 1:15 mark. After missing the first, Social Circle was whistled for a lane violation and Baenninger got another chance. He would hit the first, miss the second, but

Crawford Colwell grabbed the offensive board and was fouled on the putback attempt.

With Union leading 50-49, he would miss both, but this time, Baenninger got the rebound and scored, drawing the foul in the process.

Once again, a free throw missed its mark, although Shook grabbed another offensive rebound, but a mystery foul was called on the Panthers' big man, sending him to the bench with five fouls.

The Redskins answered with a trey to tie the score at 52-52 with a minute to go.

Baenninger put Union back on top when he drove for a deuce with 42 seconds left, but four seconds later, Head drew a foul and hit both free throws to tie the game.

The Panthers held for the last shot and with 4.8 seconds left, Union County Head Coach Casey Jones called a timeout.

On the final play of regulation, Baenninger got the ball, drove just inside the top-of-the-key and dished off to an open Matthew Rich on the left wing and the senior's shot bounced off the side of the iron.

In the 4-minute overtime session, Candler Colwell scored a quick layup off the jump ball and the Redskins missed on their ensuing possession.

Both teams exchanged turnovers and Union would miss two more free throws at the 2:41 mark that could have given them a 4-point lead.

Social Circle took advantage and scored the next six points. Baenninger scored on a putback with 16 seconds left to get Union within two but the Redskins hit 3-of-4 at the free throw line to seal the deal.

Down by five, Baenninger hit a trey at the buzzer to make it a 2-point final.

Union finished the game 8-of-20 at the line after starting 6-of-6.

Matthew Rich scored 7 points, Candler Colwell had 5 points, and Shook finished with 4 points.

Baggett had three and senior Lance Rich added two.