

Sports

See the Sports Section at ngea.com

Panthers use long ball in victories at Robbinsville and Commerce Commerce hands Union County its first loss during second meeting

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@ngea.com

The Panthers finished up week two by splitting a pair of games with Commerce over the weekend following a 13-7 victory at Robbinsville, NC on Monday.

On Friday, Union improved to 2-0 on the road with a 5-4 win at Commerce before dropping its first game of 2017 the next day – a 9-6 loss to those same Tigers – to fall to 4-1 on the year.

Tied at 4-4 entering the seventh inning on Friday evening in Commerce, junior Candler Colwell lined a go-ahead, two-out base hit to left field – scoring Jonathon Everett who was running for Dawson Groves.

Earlier in the inning, Groves was hit by a pitch with one out and Everett entered as a courtesy runner and immediately swiped second. A strikeout and another hit batter later, Colwell came to the plate with two down and proceeded to drive the second pitch of the at bat into left to give his team a 5-4 advantage.

Advantage Colwell relieved Cole Davis in the bottom half of the seventh to secure the win with his first save of the season with a 19-pitch inning, that saw Crawford Colwell walk two batters and put the winning run on first.

The win was the second for Davis, who tossed 22 pitches in the sixth without surrendering a hit but gave up two unearned runs with the help of two Panther errors.

Union County took a 4-0 lead in the fourth off a Patrick



After a grand slam on Monday, junior third baseman Crawford Colwell proved he can get it done with his glove while patrolling the hot corner in Saturday's game vs Commerce. During the seventh inning, Colwell snagged a hard chopper down the line and tagged the runner who was leading off the bag. Photo/Todd Forrest

Baggett grand slam – the second grand slam for the Panthers in as many games.

Del Ruff and Crawford Colwell opened the fourth with a hit-by-pitch, and on the heels of consecutive strike outs, Slade Thompson drew a 3-2 walk to bring Baggett up with two down and the bases loaded.

After working his way into a full count on the second straight hitter, Tigers pitcher Charlie Ledford gave up the long ball to Baggett, who sent the 3-2 pitch over the right field fence for the junior shortstop's first homer of his high school varsity career.

Commerce got two runs back in the bottom half of the inning off of Union County starter RJ Banton when a one-out double led to a pair of Tiger runs.

Commerce would load

the bases with a single and a walk before getting on the board with an RBI groundout to short. A two-out single off a 2-2 pitch cut the Panthers' lead in half before Banton induced an inning-ending fly out to right field.

In the sixth, Union put two aboard with one-out but a 4-6-3 double-play kept the 4-2 score intact. The Tigers tied things up in the bottom half of the inning off Davis after two errors and a balk allowed the home team to push two runs across.

Davis caught the leadoff hitter looking at strike three for a quick out but consecutive errors sandwiched around a balk brought home the first run. A grounder to Baggett at short recorded the second out, but a passed ball allowed the runner from third to score the tying run.

Baggett finished 2-for-3 with a grand slam, 4 RBIs, a run, and a walk. Candler Colwell went 1-for-3 with an RBI and a walk; Logan Dyer was 2-for-4 and Banton 1-for-4.

On the mound, Banton allowed 5 hits and 2 earned runs in 5 innings while fanning one batter and walking a pair.

Davis worked an inning, striking out one and yielding two unearned runs. Crawford Colwell recorded the save with a scoreless seventh that saw the junior issue two walks without giving up a hit.

The Panthers fell behind early to Commerce on Saturday afternoon in Blairsville and found themselves playing catch up for the remainder of the game in a 9-6 loss.

After giving up three in the top of the first, Union got one back during the bottom half of the inning when Baggett led off with a base hit and later scored on a sacrifice fly from Banton.

However, Commerce would tack on one run in the

second and third innings to take a 5-1 advantage into the fifth before the Panthers trimmed the deficit to 5-3 when Baggett set the table once again. This time, a one-out double into right field resulted in Union's second run when Dyer brought him home with a base hit to center.

Groves made it a 5-3 game when a line drive into left field handcuffed the Tiger outfielder, allowing Dyer to score. Ean Harkins followed with a bloo-single to shallow left to put the tying run on base but a potential base hit by Crawford Colwell was snagged by the pitcher before it could find its way back through the box.

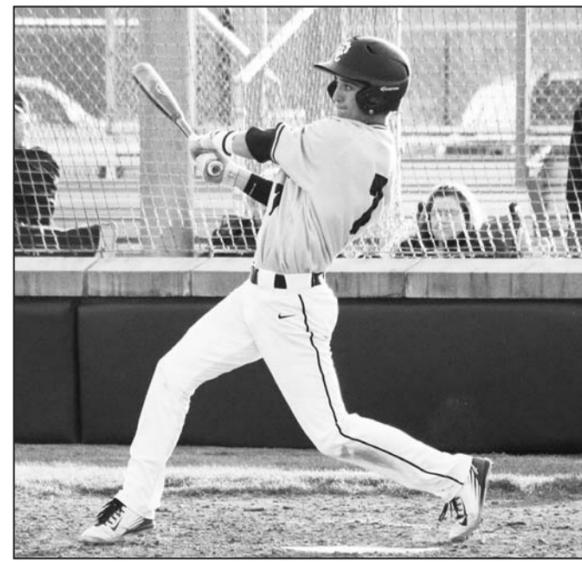
Commerce added a run in the sixth with a two-out RBI double to make it a 6-3 game. Then a leadoff single by Candler Colwell was wasted in the bottom of the sixth when he was left stranded at third.

The Tigers put up three more runs in the seventh when the inning got underway with a questionable call at first base when it appeared that Baggett had thrown out a runner that the umpire ruled safe, opening the door for Commerce to add some insurance to its 6-3 lead.

With two outs and runners on second and third, the Tigers used three consecutive singles to open up a 9-3 advantage when the Panthers could have very well been out of the inning.

Union refused to go away quietly in its final at bat, however as Banton singled and Groves was plunked. With two down and two in scoring position, Crawford Colwell singled home Banton. Candler Colwell followed that up with a double to deep center to score courtesy runner Pierson Allison and Crawford Colwell.

That's as close as they would get as Commerce shut down the rally with a bouncer back to the mound for the third



Junior Patrick Baggett finished the two game series vs Commerce 4-for-7 with 4 RBIs and 3 runs. All of his RBIs came at Commerce on Friday when his fourth inning grand slam put Union up 4-0. Photo/Todd Forrest

out. Josh Nachtrieb got the start for Union and worked into the third inning before giving way to Harkins.

The final line on Nachtrieb was 2 1/3 innings, 6 hits, and 5 earned runs.

Harkins went 3 2/3 innings while allowing 3 hits, one earned, one walk, and striking out one.

Sophomore Coleson Daniel entered in the seventh and gave up 4 hits and three earned in one inning. At the plate, Baggett and Candler Colwell each finished with a 2-for-4 day with Colwell knocking in two runs and Baggett scoring two more.

Crawford Colwell went 1-for-4 with an RBI and a run, Dyer and Banton also singled, scored, and drove in one run apiece.

On Monday, the Panthers picked up their first road win of the season with a 13-7 victory at Robbinsville, NC when Crawford Colwell blew open a 7-5 slugfest with a fourth inning grand slam to spot Union County a six-run advantage at 11-5.

The six-run fourth proved to be more than enough run support as Nachtrieb and Daniel combined to work a scoreless bottom half of the fourth. But a double and a two-run homer to open the fifth pulled the Black Knights within four at 11-7 until Daniel responded by striking out the side to end the inning.

RBI singles by Hunter Kelley and Everett added two more Union runs in the top of the sixth to cap off the scoring at 13-7.

Crawford Colwell finished 2-for-3 at the plate with 3 runs and 4 RBIs. Ruff drove in two and scored three times during a 1-for-2 performance.

Dyer, Banton, Harkins, and Thompson also provided a two-hit game for the Panthers

who finished with 16 hits on the day.

Baggett, Groves, Davis, Kelley, and Everett all chipped in one hit apiece to the Union County-cause.

Following a scoreless first, Candler Colwell put the Panthers on the board when the Robbinsville third baseman mis-handled a grounder that allowed Ruff to score. After a Davis single advanced Candler Colwell 90 feet from home, he would take advantage of a passed ball to give Union a 2-0 lead.

The Black Knights tied it up in their half of the second with two singles and a double but the Panthers retaliated with three in the third for a 5-2 advantage.

Singles by Dyer, Banton, and Ruff made it a 3-2 game before a passed ball allowed two more runs to come home.

A Robbinsville single, walk, and double in the third cut into the Union lead, then a fielder's choice tied things up at 5-5 headed into the fourth inning when the Panthers exploded for a half dozen runs.

All six Union runs came with two outs, beginning with an RBI single by Groves that scored Davis, who opened the inning with a walk.

Thompson scored the second run after he singled and came around to score when Ruff was hit by a pitch.

With the bases still packed, Crawford Colwell jumped all over a 1-0 pitch, sending it deep to centerfield for the first varsity homerun of his high school career.

The game would be called after six innings with Union leading 13-7.

Union's only game of the week will be at home on Wednesday vs Rabun County.

First pitch is scheduled for 5 p.m.



Senior Josh Nachtrieb started at Robbinsville, NC and recorded the win after fanning seven batters in 3 2/3 innings. He also started the second game with Commerce and went 2 1/3 innings in the 9-6 Union County loss. Photo/Todd Forrest

Two MGC gymnasts crowned Grand Champion at Snowflake Classic



Mia McCombs (center) was named Grand Champion for her vault score of 9.25 and her all-around score of 35.15. She also placed second in her division on the bars and on the beam.



Lola Patton (center) was named Grand Champion for her floor exercises score of 9.575. She finished first in her division on the vault, the bars, and all-around.



The USA Gold and USA Platinum teams: Sofia Swartz of the USA Gold squad placed first on the bars and second all around. USA Gold's Hana Gregory came in first on the bars. Meanwhile, Erin Raper of USA Platinum was first on the floor and third all around. Other team members include Kiersten Queen, Annalyse Kiernan, Jacey Lee, Evelyn McBride, and Mia McCombs.



The AAU Silver team: Dakota Hogeback placed first on the vault and first all around. She also took home third on the beam. Emily Henderson placed second on the bars and third on the floor. Reese Chambers was second on the floor, second on the bars, third on the vault, and third all around. Kendall McClure was second on the floor and third on the bars.



The AAU Gold team saw Madison Pelfrey take first all around, first on the vault and on the bars. Avery Frechette placed second all around, first on the floor, second on the bars and vault. Josie Poston was second on the bars. Other team members include Bre Arp and Lola Patton.



The AAU Level 3 team: Lillian Peacock came in first on the beam, second on the bars and floor, and third all around. Emma Schuelte came in fourth on the bars. Other members of the team include Nevaeh Leopold and Savannah Rogers.