

Sports

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Union's suffocating defense steals spotlight in 38-6 win over Banks

Homecoming: Undefeated Panthers to host top-ranked Greater Atlanta Christian this Friday

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With 1:22 left in the first quarter, Banks County finished off a 10-play, 55-yard drive to trim the Panther lead to 7-6. For the remainder of the night, the Union County defense camped out in the Leopards backfield and Banks wouldn't pick up another first down until the 6:25 mark of the fourth quarter.

In the meantime, Cole Wright and the Panther offense took advantage of the stingy defense and extended their 7-6 advantage to 31-6 at the half.

With 6:32 remaining in the game, Wright hit sophomore Sawyer Drake in the back of the end zone the final score of the night, giving Union the 38-6 victory.

Wright finished 13-of-23 for 163 yards and two scores through the air. On the ground he ran for 162 and two touchdowns on 12 carries.

Defensively, the Panthers limited Banks County to season lows in scoring (6 points), total yards (188) and passing yards (56). During the first quarter, the Leopards churned out 107 yards on the ground. Union allowed just 25 rushing yards the rest of the way.

Banks took the opening kickoff and drove inside the Panthers 40-yard line thanks to runs of 14, 18, and 13 yards. With a first down at the 38, a false start penalty moved them back five. Then a 4-yard run and a Dylan Williams sack brought up fourth-and-long. The Leopards kept it on the ground and Union bottled up Banks' All-Region 8-AA running back Clayton Dykehouse for a short gain.

"The hit us early with the draw and we didn't do a very good job with it," Head Coach Brian Allison said. "We worked all week (preparing for) the sweep and we played it pretty good but the draw hurt us."

"We had a good week of practice but I was worried about (Dykehouse). It took us a few plays to adjust to the speed because he's such a good back."

Taking over from their own 38, the Panthers immediately went to the air, finding Austin Pattee and Logan Dyer to move into Leopards territory.

Then a pair of handoffs to Chad Buzzard went for 15 and 12 yards before Wright scrambled for nine. A 2-yard Buzzard run moved the chains, setting up 1st-and-goal at the four. Buzzard powered his way to the two, then a Banks County offside moved the ball inside the one. Three feet from pay dirt, a Wright RPO (run-pass option) resulted in a wide open Pattee and an easy touchdown toss for the Panther quarterback.

Banks County opened the ensuing drive from the 45 after the Panthers were flagged for a facemask penalty on the kick return. After consecutive carries by Dykehouse totaled 16 yards, the Leopards were penalized for holding. Facing a 3rd-and-16 two plays later, Banks dialed up a pass play that netted a 30-yard gain. Another first down awarded the Leopards a first-and-goal from the three where Dykehouse punched it on third down.

Junior Clayton Schafer blocked the point after to preserve the Union lead at 7-6.

Moments later, Schafer fielded the kickoff at the one and found a seam up the middle before bouncing outside and taking it 98



Often imitated but never duplicated: The Union County Pit Crew. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Matthew Beise punishes Banks' quarterback. Photo/Todd Forrest



Center Coleson Daniel barks out orders to the O-line. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior linebacker RJ Banton led UC with 10 solo tackles. Photo/Todd Forrest

yards up the far sideline. At the one, a Leopard defender caught Schafer and stripped the ball but an alert Hunter Kelley jumped on the fumble in the end zone for the touchdown.

With momentum back on the home side of the field, the Panther defense took over from there.

A tackle-for-loss on third-and-short forced the first of several Banks County punts. Taking over at their own 39, Union needed just five plays and 78 seconds to extend its lead to 21-6.

An 8-yard run by Wright was followed by three straight gives to Buzzard. With a first down from the Leopard 39-yard line, Wright broke loose down the near sideline for his longest run of the game — a 39-yard touchdown run with 10:02 left in the half.

Both offenses would trade punts before Pierson Allison brought the Panther fans back to their feet with an interception at the Banks County 35. The sophomore safety almost returned it all the way for a pick-six but he was forced out-of-bounds at the nine. Three plays later, Wright took a quarterback keeper in for the score from 3-yards out.

With a 28-6 advantage, the Union defense continued to play lights out — forcing another three-and-out. Following a punt, the Panthers took over at mid-field with 1:36 to play before halftime.

A holding penalty negated a positive gain by Riley Barrett on a reverse but a 14-yard completion to Kyle Morlock and consecutive 8-yard passes to Pattee moved Union inside the six. A first down loss was followed by two incompletions but Smith stretched the lead to 31-6 with a 26-yard field goal as time expired.

The third quarter opened with a punt by each team but the Union defense followed the offense a short-field awarding another Banks County punt. With 8:55 left in the third, the Panthers

took over on the Leopards 48-yard line and quickly drove inside the 10, but once again, the drive stalled and Coach Allison called upon the field goal unit.

A high snap kept Union off the board and Banks regained possession at their own three with 6:11 left in the third. Another three-and-out led to a punt that gave the Panthers a short-field once more. This time, a penalty wiped out a big gain by Kanon Hemphill and Union was forced to kick it back to the Leopards.

Both teams continued swapping punts as the third quarter came to a close with the score still 31-6. Early in the fourth, Banks took over at the 16-yard line and a fumbled snap resulted in a 6-yard loss, then a Del Ruff sack dropped them back three more. On 3rd-and-19 the defense forced Banks to punt from deep in its own territory and the Panthers began its next series at their own 45.

A pass interference penalty on the Leopards and a 13-yard scramble by Wright moved Union inside the five, where Wright and Drake hooked up on a first down touchdown pass with 6:32 left.

"I wouldn't say that the offense played four good quarters," Coach Allison said. "I think we played two very good quarters then we had two quarters where we got to see how committing penalties, missing field goals, and doing other things like that can hurt you."

Banks finally picked up a first down with a 20-yard completion on the first play of their ensuing offensive series. The drive eventually stalled, thanks to a Kyle Williams sack, and Union got the ball back one final time.

With Pierson Allison behind center, he handed once to Cole Dockrey before keeping it himself for six yards. On third down, he took a knee and that was the ball game.

Buzzard finished with 61 yards on 12 carries despite taking a vicious hit to the mid-section

At 6-4, 265 pounds, Hinton has given a verbal to Jim Harbaugh at Michigan but remains hopeful for an offer from UGA coach Kirby Smart.

Hinton's brother, sophomore Myles Hinton is a 6-6, 325-pound offensive tackle, who already has offers from 11 Power-5 schools. Michigan is currently the early leader ahead of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Miami, Ohio St., USC, Ole Miss, and others.

"They might be better than they were last year," Coach Allison said regarding GAC. "It's very difficult to find any weaknesses. They graduated their quarterback and he really hurt us last year throwing the ball. That might be the only area I can find where they aren't as strong as last year."

Kickoff is scheduled for 7:30 Friday with the announcement of the Homecoming Queen coming at halftime.

For more details on GAC along with coach and player interviews visit the NGN Sports Blog at www.ngnsports.wordpress.com. For the latest UCHS sports news and notifications on new blog posts, you can follow on Twitter at: @hotrodtodd25.

RJ Banton's defensive stats are missing from the box score below but he finished with 10 tackles, 7 assists and 1 QB hurry.



Austin Pattee and Coach Avery celebrate a TD. Photo/Todd Forrest

Scoring Summary

Quarter	UCHS	BCHS
First Quarter		
TD Austin Pattee 1 Yd Pass From Cole Wright (Kick)	7	0
TD 2 Yd Run (Kick No Good)	7	6
TD Kickoff Return (Kick)	14	6
Second Quarter		
TD Cole Wright 39 Yd Run (Kick)	21	6
TD Cole Wright 2 Yd Run (Kick)	28	6
FG 26 Yd	31	6
Third Quarter		
Fourth Quarter		
TD Sawyer Drake 5 Yd Pass From Cole Wright (Kick)	38	6

Offense

Player	Comp/Att	Yds	TD	Int	Long	2PT
Passing						
#8 C. Wright	13 / 23	163	2	-	40	-
Rushing	Att	Yds	TD	Long	Fum	2PT
#8 C. Wright	12	162	2	39	-	-
#24 C. Buzzard	12	61	-	15	-	-
#15 C. Dockrey	9	28	-	9	-	-
#14 R. Barrett	1	10	-	10	-	-
#17 P. Allison	1	6	-	6	-	-
Receiving	Rec	Yds	TD	Long	Fum	2PT
#18 L. Dyer	3	48	-	24	-	-
#22 A. Pattee	6	40	1	14	-	-
#4 K. Hemphill	1	40	-	40	-	-
#2 C. Schafer	1	15	-	15	-	-
#84 K. Morlock	1	15	-	15	-	-
#21 S. Drake	1	5	1	5	-	-

Defense

Player	Tk	Ast	Sck	TFL	Sfty	Int	Fum	Blks	TD
#32 J. Colwell	5	7	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
#12 S. Dobbins	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
#34 B. Nelson	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
#53 M. Beise	3	5	-	2	-	-	-	-	-
#74 N. Ledford	2	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
#20 C. Rich	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
#40 K. Williams	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
#30 H. Kelley	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
#68 D. Williams	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
#52 B. Viera	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
#7 A. Scott	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
#50 C. Daniel	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rest of team	-	-	2	2	-	1	-	-	-