

# Hunter goes for 24 as Lady Panthers race past Towns County, 43-31

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
sports@nganews.com

Union County pulled away late thanks to a 17-2 run that allowed the Lady Panthers (2-0) to secure a 43-31 victory in what was otherwise another tightly contested rivalry game with Towns County (1-1).

After putting up 16 points in the opener, Union County freshman Ava Hunter poured in a game-high 24 points on 10-of-14 shooting, 9 rebounds and 3 steals.

With the Lady Panthers trailing 27-26 to open the fourth, Towns County knocked down a jumper to stretch its lead to 29-26 just 22 seconds into the final frame.

It was all Union County the rest of the way.

Through three quarters, seven of the Lady Indians' nine field goals came from 3-point range while connecting on 39-percent of their attempts.

But as the (slightly modified) saying goes, "you live by the three, you'll die by the three."

A locker room appeal from Union County Head Coach Corey Garrett probably had something to do with shortening the Lady Indians' lifespan, as well.

"At halftime I challenged the girls, for just one person to bring it," Coach Garrett said. "I knew if one person would bring it, the next person would pick it up, then the next person and so on. In the fourth quarter, that's what we did, and when Adeline Dockrey jumped on a loose ball, I felt that's what sparked us.

"We were dead in the first three quarters and even the crowd was dead. I told them at halftime, 'the crowd is dead so we're going to have to supply our own energy,' and in the fourth quarter we finally did."

Towns County would miss all seven of its tries from downtown during the fourth quarter while plodding through a critical eight-possession stretch where they turned it over five times after the Lady Panthers regained the lead at 31-29. In fact, 10 of the Lady Indians' final 16 possessions ended with a missed shot, while five of the remaining six possessions ended in a turnover.

Union's 17-2 fourth quarter onslaught began with an Adelin Hill floater in the lane that sliced the Towns County lead to 29-28. Hill wasn't finished as the junior snagged the rebound off a missed trey on one end, then knocked down a triple on the other.

Consecutive Union County turnovers left the door open for the Lady Indians but both times they would misfire from behind the arc. Still trailing by a point, Towns County began to unravel as the next eight possessions saw the visitors cough up the ball five times -- three were Adeline Dockrey steals.

"We made a change on defense to a 1-3-1 (zone) and I think that played a role but it was mostly bringing the energy," Garrett said. "One thing I always talk about with the girls before every game and every practice is 'bringing the juice,'



Freshman Ava Hunter (45) scores on a double-team in the post during the second half of Union's 15th straight win over Towns. Photo/Todd Forrest

especially on the defensive end. Against Rabun Gap we brought it. But (against Towns) in the first, second and third quarter, it wasn't there."

A turnover resulted in a Lady Panther 3-on-2 fast break where Hunter put back a miss to give her team a 31-28 advantage. Adeline Dockrey's second steal of the quarter led to another Hunter basket where the freshman took the feed in the post and spun away from the double team for two.

Moments later, Brooke Dockrey would deliver the dagger that put the Lady Indians away for good. With her team on top 35-29, the junior guard made Towns County pay for a missed lay-up by nailing a corner-trey, opening up a 38-29 advantage with under 2 minutes to play.

Adeline Dockrey extended the Union lead to 39-29 with a 1-for-2 trip to the charity stripe and the Lady Indians finally connected after missing nine-straight from the floor. An offensive foul gave the ball back to Towns, trailing 39-31 but once again, they couldn't connect from 3-point land and Adeline Dockrey put the game away with a pair of free throws. Leading 41-31, Hunter put the finishing touches on her 24-point, 9-rebound performance with a two from the stripe.

Following an ice cold fourth, the Lady Indians finished 11-for-50 (22-percent) from the field and 7-for-25 (28-percent) from 3-point territory. Despite 39 misses, offensive boards were in short supply as Union County owned the glass. Towns County ended up with just two offensive rebounds -- both coming in the second and third quarter -- and was unable to convert either into second-chance points. Meanwhile, the Lady Panthers won the rebound battle 44-27 overall and 8-2 on the offensive boards.

Although, as the first three quarters unfolded, this game had all the makings of another thriller between two long-time rivals.

Senior Adeline Dockrey got the scoring underway with a 3-ball from the wing but it was answered by a Lady Indian 3-pointer on the other end. Tied

at 3-3, Hunter went to work, scoring the next five Union points to give her squad an 8-4 advantage after one quarter.

Hunter got the second period off on the right foot with a bucket in the post -- extending the Lady Panther advantage to 10-4. But Towns County would storm back with an 8-0 run for its first lead of the night at the midway point of the quarter. A runner in the paint sparked the Lady Indian spurt before a pair of threes at the 5:30 and 4:04-mark put them ahead 12-10.

"Early in the game, we were turning it over too much and that kind of saps your energy on the defensive end," Garrett said. "Once we started taking care of the ball a little bit better, the energy picked up on defense."

Senior Brianna Hemphill tied things at 12-12 with a pair of free throws, then, following a Towns free throw, Hunter put Union back on top, 14-13 with a basket at the 2:52 mark.



Junior point guard Brooke Dockrey (3) leads a fast break during the win over Towns. Photo/Todd Forrest

Hunter made it a 15-13 game by splitting a pair from the line but Towns connected on another three as the clock approached the 1:30 mark of the first half.

The Lady Panthers went back to Hunter after the freshman came up with a steal on the defensive end then got open under the basket and scored off a Brooke Dockrey assist.

Up by a point with time running out, Adeline Dockrey beat the full-court pressure then fed Hunter in the post for a last-second deuce -- opening up a 19-16 halftime advantage.

Back-to-back Lady Indian treys quickly turned a 19-16 deficit into a 22-19 Towns County lead. Brooke Dockrey would eventually tie things up with a 1-for-2 trip to the line followed by a driving lay-up at the 5:06 mark of the third.

Tied at 24-24 after a bucket from Hunter, the Lady Indians nailed their third triple of the quarter for a 27-24 advantage. Union continued to feed the hot hand and Hunter trimmed the Towns County lead to 27-26 with 25 seconds remaining in the period.

"Coming in, the game-

plan was to play inside-out but (Towns County's) pressure just prevented it," Garrett said. "We knew coming in it was going to be an issue but we're going to have to get better at handling pressure so we can play inside-out."

Rounding out the Lady Panther scoring behind Hunter's 24 was Adeline and Brooke Dockrey with 6 points each. Hill added five and Hemphill scored two.

Adeline Dockrey and Hill hauled in 8 rebounds apiece, Brooke Dockrey had 7 boards, a team-high 4 assists and 2 steals. Freshman Riley Allison grabbed 4 rebounds to go with a steal and a blocked shot. Adeline Dockrey also led the way with 4 steals while Hill blocked a team-high two shots.

Junior Kait McCarter was plagued with foul trouble most of the night and was held scoreless for the first time since her freshman season. Despite not reaching the scoring column, she was able to contribute 3 rebounds and a steal.

Sophomore Kyla Locklear grabbed 2 rebounds while recording one assist, one steal and one block.

The Lady Panthers finished 15-for-42 (36-percent) from the floor and 3-of-13 (23-percent) from long distance. At the line, Union County hit 10-of-17 for 59-percent.

Towns County's full-court pressure defense was able to force Coach Garrett's squad into 26 turnovers but the Lady Indians were only able to generate 6 points off turnovers. Meanwhile, the Lady Panther defense forced 21 turnovers, resulting in 15 points off take-aways.

**Looking ahead** - Tuesday's Robbinsville, NC game has been postponed to a later date due to the Black Knight football team remaining in the playoffs.

Union returns to action Friday when they visit Fannin County to face the rival Lady Rebels in what is now a non-region contest.

Fannin County is currently 1-2 with its only win a 54-37 victory over Hiwassee Dam, NC -- who also lost a one-sided contest at Towns County.

The two losses were narrow defeats to Pickens (50-47) and Gilmer (52-45).



Junior Adelin Hill and the Union defense held the Lady Indians to 0-for-7 from 3-point range during the fourth quarter. Photo/Todd Forrest



Adeline Dockrey's defense sparked UC's late run. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Wrestling: Union to participate in Towns County's KOM this weekend

**YOUNG HARRIS** - Union County Wrestling will once again take part in Towns County's King of the Mountain wrestling tournament, this weekend at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center at Foster Park.

This year's tournament marks the 13th edition of what has become the premier high school wrestling event in North-east Georgia. Grapplers from 32

different high schools will hit the mat beginning Friday at 5 p.m. The action will resume Saturday at 9 a.m.

Last year, Issac Tritt was Union County's highest placing finisher - taking fourth at 145 pounds with a 3-2 record.

Tickets to this weekend's tournament will be \$10 for a one-day pass or \$15 for a two-day pass.

## Six Union County swimmers qualify for State

**CLARKSVILLE** - Union County High School and Middle School attended a swim meet on Saturday, Nov. 17 at Ruby Fulbright Aquatic Center in Clarksville.

In high school swimming, there are state time standards for each swim event. When you qualify for State, that means you swam a time at or below the State time and are eligible to swim at the State Meet held in February at Georgia Tech where Class A through 5A school swimmers compete against each other.

The top 30 swimmers from Day 1 at State qualify to

compete on Day 2 -- the State Championship Finals.

On Saturday, UCHS qualified for State in six events. Brendan Bowman qualified in the 50 yard and 100 yard Freestyle.

Brian Williams qualified for State in the 100-yard Butterfly event and the 100-yard Backstroke.

The boys' Freestyle and Medley relay teams qualified. Additionally Union County had several top 10 finishes.

Here are Union County's High and Middle School's top 10 finishers from the event with state times listed.

### 200 Yard Medley Relay

- 1st Place HS: Steven Williams, Brian Williams, Alden Wilkes, Brendan Bowman (State Time)
- 7th Place HS: Riley Howse, Hunter White, Michael Leird, Grayson Blocker
- 4th Place HS: Grace Weldon, Rachel Reid, Kaiya Wilkes, Olivia Blocker
- 5th Place MS: Grace Cook, Lily Helton, Courtney Foster, Olivia Loyd

### 100 Yard Individual Medley

- 10th Place MS Eli Gwynn
- 50 Yard Freestyle
- 2nd Place HS Brendan Bowman (State Time)
- 6th Place HS Grayson Blocker
- 3rd Place HS Kaiya Wilkes
- 5th Place MS Grace Cook

### 100 Yard Butterfly

- 1st Place HS Brian Williams (State Time)
- 5th Place HS Alden Wilkes

### 50 Yard Butterfly

- 3rd Place MS Lily Helton

### 100 Yard Freestyle

- 2nd Place HS Brendan Bowman (State Time)
- 5th Place HS Ean Harkins
- 7th Place HS Hunter White
- 6th Place HS Kaiya Wilkes
- 4th Place MS Liam Smith
- 8th Place MS Grayden Cobb
- 2nd Place MS Lily Helton
- 4th Place MS Courtney Foster

### 500 Yard Freestyle

- 5th Place HS Tyler Harkins

### 200 Yard Freestyle Relay

- 1st Place HS: Brian Williams, Steven Williams, Grayson Blocker, Brendan Bowman (State Time)
- 10th Place HS: Alden Wilkes, Michael Leird, Hunter White, Riley Howse
- 3rd Place HS: Kaiya Wilkes, Rachel Reid, Olivia Blocker, Grace Weldon
- 6th Place MS: Lily Helton, Olivia Loyd, Grace Cook, Courtney Foster

### 100 Yard Backstroke

- 2nd Place HS Brian Williams (State Time)
- 8th Place HS Grayson Blocker
- 5th Place HS Grace Weldon
- 9th Place HS Kindle Kolb

### 50 Yard Backstroke

- 5th Place MS Grayden Cobb
- 1st Place MS Courtney Foster
- 5th Place MS Grace Cook

### 100 Yard Breaststroke

- 4th Place HS Hunter White

### 50 Yard Breaststroke

- 6th Place MS Liam Smith