

Sports

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No. 8 Lady Panthers jump on No. 2 Fannin early in 66-58 win McCarter, Taylor and Trlica combine for 53 points; Union improves to 4-0

By Todd Forrest
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Senior Ariel McCarter's 19 points led No. 8 Union County (4-0) to a 66-58 win over Class A (D1) No. 2 Fannin County during a contest featuring four Lady Panthers in double figures.

Sophomore Regan Trlica scored 16 of her 18 points in the first half, and senior Hope Taylor finished with 16. Senior Katelyn Brown added 10 points as Union County sprinted out to a 13-3 lead and never led by less than seven the rest of night.

With the win, Union moves up two spots to No. 6 in Class AA's latest rankings.

"I was really proud of our girls and how hard they fought," Union County head coach Thomas Nelson said. "We had a chance to beat them last year and let it slip away, so the girls have been looking forward to this game on the schedule since then."

The Lady Panthers led 23-10 after a quarter and extended their margin to 36-21 before taking a 38-25 advantage into the break. Fannin's narrowest deficit came early in the third when they shrank the margin to 41-34, but Union opened some breathing room, 48-36 at the quarter's end.

The Lady Panthers maintained a comfortable cushion during the fourth period, coming out on top 66-58 with Fannin's trey at the horn slicing the final margin to single digits.

Fannin County's Maggie Ledford led all scorers with 34 points on eight 3-pointers. Reese Lewis finished with 10 points.

"It's always a challenge when you play Fannin," Nelson said. "They are well coached and they play hard. All you can do is play just as hard and hope you have a chance to win at the end."

Union faced its only deficit of the year at 3-0 when the Lady Rebels knocked down an early trey, but it didn't last long as the home team answered with a 13-0 run, beginning with a



Senior Ariel McCarter scored 14 of her team-high 19 points vs. Fannin County during the second half. Photo/Todd Forrest

Taylor layup and a Trlica triple. Three consecutive Fannin turnovers led to 4 straight Taylor points and two McCarter free throws. Taylor finished Union's 13-0 stretch with a putback off Trlica's miss, prompting a Fannin timeout.

"It really sets our offense off when we can force some turnovers and get teams playing a little faster than they'd like right off the bat," Nelson said.

Trlica scored in transition following a Lady Rebels bucket, then she fed McCarter for 3 on the ensuing trip, building an 18-5 edge.

Trlica countered a Fannin triple with a floater in the paint, followed by her second trey for a 23-10 lead after one.

Aubrie Akins hit 3 of 4 at the line and a Trlica jumper kept the gap at 13 early in the second. Brown scored inside to

build a 30-16 advantage before 5-straight from Fannin cut the margin to single digits at the 4:43 mark.

Trlica responded with a pull-up jumper, then an up-and-under layup from Brown bumped the lead back to 13. Ledford's misfire from 3 resulted in a run-out layup for Trlica and a 36-21 advantage with 1:55 left in the half.

Early in the third, a McCarter free throw made it 39-25, but Fannin's 9-2 spurt trimmed the deficit to 41-34 at the 3:53 mark.

Later, Fannin missed a 3 that would have cut the margin to four, and McCarter made them pay, driving the lane for 2 points. Sloane Dyer pulled down a Fannin miss and started a fast break, culminating in a McCarter trey that extended the lead to 46-34.



Senior Hope Taylor scored 16 points with 8 rebounds, 3 steals and 3 blocked shots vs. Fannin County. Photo/Todd Forrest

With time winding down in the frame, Brown beat the buzzer with a low-post bucket, awarding the Lady Panthers a 48-36 lead after three.

McCarter got to the hoop to begin the fourth, and Brown scored on a putback near the 6-minute, keeping the margin at 12.

Ledford's trey had the Lady Rebels back within seven at 52-45 until Dyer fed Brown down low for two. On her team's next possession, McCarter's triple had Union back in control with 3:51 left.

Four points from Taylor kept Fannin at bay, then McCarter's 3 delivered the dagger with 77 seconds left.

"I'm glad that Ariel and Regan play so well together," Nelson said. "It's very different having two girls that can go off and score like they can."

McCarter scored 14 of her team-high 19 after halftime to go with 8 rebounds and 3 assists.

Trlica had 18 points, 6 rebounds, 5 assists and 3 steals. Taylor finished with 16 points, 8 rebounds, 3 steals and 3 blocks. Brown had 10 points, 7 rebounds, 2 steals and an assist.

Akins ended her night with 3 points, 7 rebounds and an assist.

Other contributors included Dyer with 6 rebounds, 3 assists and 2 steals. Ragan McCarter had one rebound and a steal.

Up next: Union County opens Region 7-AA action by hosting No. 9 Sonoraville on Friday, Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. The Phoenix are currently 3-1 after dropping their season opener 61-51 to Class 4A's sixth-ranked Dalton. Sonoraville begins region play Tuesday vs. Coahulla



Regan Trlica



Sloane Dyer

Creek. Union County plays Lakeview Academy at Etowah High School at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday.

"Our competition picks up quite a bit this weekend," Nelson said. "[Sonoraville] has a point guard that's one of the top players in Class AA. It's going to be good challenge."

"Then we have Lakeview, which beat White County (Class AAA No. 3). So our competition is picking up in a hurry and we need that if we want to get to where we want to be."



Senior Aubrie Akins hit 3 of 4 at the free throw line and pulled down 7 rebounds in Union County's win over Fannin. The Lady Panther seniors go out with a 2-2 home record vs. Fannin. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Katelyn Brown had 10 points, 7 rebounds and 2 assists last week in No. 8 Union County's win over 2nd-ranked Fannin County. Photo/Todd Forrest

Hughes' 28 leads No. 9 Union in 81-52 rout of Fannin Co.

Union County up one spot to No. 8 in latest Class AA rankings

By Todd Forrest
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Senior Hayden Hughes scored 28 points with 13 rebounds on 7 of 14 from long distance, and No. 9 Union County (3-1) outscored the Rebels 22-7 in the third quarter to pull away from a 33-28 halftime lead before putting the game on ice via an 11-2 run to start the fourth.

"We didn't change much after halftime," Union County head coach Corey Garrett said. "We switched to our 1-3-1 (zone defense) and that's like our press. [Fannin] didn't have much of an answer for it and that's when they started turning it over. But the guys played good and it was a good win."

Following a back-and-forth first quarter, the Panthers started to put some space between themselves and the visitors at 33-23, but Fannin rallied to within five at the break.

The third quarter, however, was all Union County. Hughes and Young started the half with buckets, and then junior Vince Marevka crashed the offensive boards for 2 points.

Young's 3-point play at the 4:26 mark handed Union its largest lead of the night before a pair of buckets by Combs stretched the gap to 49-33. Ethan Hogsed hit from 22 feet and Hughes connected from downtown at the buzzer, building a 55-35 lead through three.

Holden Payne continued the 3-point barrage, knocking down a corner try to start the fourth. After Combs scored in the paint, Hughes and Henry drilled consecutive 3-pointers to put the game away near the 6-minute mark.

"These guys really like the 1-3-1," Garrett said. "They always play hard, but for whatever reason, when we go



Senior Hayden Hughes set the school record last week with the 187th 3-point basket of his high school career. Photo/Todd Forrest

into our 1-3-1 it's like they find another gear and we start getting deflections and steals."

Fannin County's size gave Union some trouble early on, but the Panthers countered with the backcourt trio of Henry, Hughes and Young.

Young and Hughes handed Union its first lead at 4-2 until the Rebels raced ahead 7-4. Henry responded with a trey of his own but Fannin inched ahead 11-4 near the 2:20 mark.

The deficit was short-lived as Hughes hit from long range and Henry's steal resulted in a Young layup on the other end. Young added a 3 later in the quarter but Fannin fired back with a trey to climb

within two at 18-16.

Two baskets by Henry and one from Hughes pushed Union ahead 24-16 early in the second, but Fannin inched within a possession, 24-21 at the 3-minute mark.

Still leading 31-23 with 1:04 before the break, Hayden Price stretched the lead to 10 when he pulled down a missed free throw and went back up for two.

Henry finished with 17 points, 7 assists, 5 steals, 4 rebounds and a block. Young had 11 points, 4 assists, 2 rebounds and 2 steals. Combs chipped in 10 points, 7 boards, an assist and a steal.

Price scored 5 points with 2 rebounds. Hogsed had



Junior Vince Marevka celebrates as Union County starts pulling away from Fannin County during the second half of his team's sixth straight victory over the Rebels. Photo/Todd Forrest

3 points, 3 assists, a rebound and a steal. Payne ended with 3 points and 2 assists; Marevka had 2 points, 3 rebounds and 2 steals; Jackson Nichols finished with 2 points and an assist.

Ryland Chambers grabbed two boards; Jacob Rodriguez had one rebound. Hughes added 3 steals and an assist.

Jack Sparks led Fannin County with 21 points on 3-of-3 from downtown; Hudson Ethington had 16 points and 5 assists.

Up next: Union County hosts 2-2 Sonorville on Friday, Dec. 6 to tip off region play. The girls get underway at 7 p.m. with the guys to follow.

"[Sonorville] will beat us if we don't bring it, but that goes for everyone we play in our region," Garrett said. "If we play well, we should be in a good spot every single night."

"They aren't overly big, but they have a really good guard. The one thing I know is, they play hard. I've been around their coach a little bit and he's a guy that does things

the right way and he's going to have his team ready to play."

The Panthers will face Lithonia at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 7 at Etowah High School.

"We played Lithonia this summer and beat them, but you never know who they were missing," Garrett said. "I know we didn't have all of our guys, so I'm assuming they didn't have all their guys either. They have decent size and are very athletic, but I don't really know, I'm still trying to get film on them."

UCRD: 4th, 5th and 6th grade cheer squads finish first at MAC Cheer Bowl



The Union County Recreation Department's 4th grade cheer team placed first at the Mountain Athletic Conference Cheer Bowl on Nov. 10 in Dawsonville.



The 5th grade cheer team came in first at the Cheer Bowl in Dawsonville.



The 6th grade cheer team placed first at the Cheer Bowl in Dawsonville.

CLASS 2A		WEEK 4	
BOYS	SCHOOL	RECORD	MOVEMENT
#1	CARVER-COLUMBUS	2-0	--
#2	COLUMBIA	6-2	--
#3	BUTLER	2-2	--
#4	SOUTH ATLANTA	3-2	--
#5	KIPP ATLANTA	3-2	--
#6	WESTSIDE-MACON	1-1	--
#7	LANEY	4-1	NR
#8	UNION COUNTY	3-1	+1
#9	HART COUNTY	3-1	+1
#10	SPENCER	2-1	NR



Senior Houston Henry had 17 points, 7 assists, 5 steals and 4 rebounds vs. Fannin County. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Maddox Young went for 11 points, 4 boards, 2 assists and 2 steals vs. Fannin. Photo/Todd Forrest