

Soccer: Lady Panthers overwhelm Tri-County; Senior Night postponed

By Todd Forrest
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MURPHY, NC - The Lady Panthers ended a three-game skid by picking up some road kill on Tuesday in the form of a 9-0 victory at Tri-County Early College (NC).

Playing at Murphy High School, Union County grabbed momentum early with four goals in the first six minutes.

Junior Madison Yost got the scoring underway with a goal in the second minute thanks to a Layne Baenninger assist. Thirty-eight seconds later, Yost scored again, making it a 2-0 game.

Sutton got in on the action with a goal in the fourth minute off a feed from Baenninger, then Yost recorded the hat trick with her third score of the game, 21 seconds removed from Sutton's goal.

Brenna Innis found Baenninger for a goal in the eighth minute - Union's fifth and final points of the half.

Sutton scored her second goal of the day just four minutes into the second half. Yost and Baenninger were credited with



Left: Madison Yost (3) scored four goals in Union's win at Tri-County Early College. Right: Maddie Sutton (12) added two goals during the 9-0 victory on Tuesday. Photos/Todd Forrest



Maddie Sutton (12) added two goals during the 9-0 victory on Tuesday. Photos/Todd Forrest

the assist.

Less than two minutes later, Yost made it a 7-0 game with her fourth goal of the game (29th of the season) off an assist from Innis.

Goal No. 8 belonged to Ashlyn Hall 45 seconds later, and

finally, Jessica Palomo capped off the scoring with the ninth Union County goal at the 13:10 mark. Sophia Romano picked up the assist.

Baenninger finished the game with four assists and In-

nis added three. Yost and Sutton chipped in one assist each.

There was no boys game vs TCEC.

Union County soccer was scheduled to honor its seniors on Thursday evening following the

middle school game but the threat of thunderstorms postponed the contest (vs Gilmer) until 5 p.m. on April 20. The Senior Night ceremony will take place between games.

The next soccer game will

be Tuesday, Apr. 10 when the Lady Panthers host Tri-County at 4:30 p.m.

On Wednesday, Apr. 11, Union County will host a pair of games vs White County, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Baseball: Defending State Champion North Hall too much for Panthers

Panthers to host Greater Atlanta Christian on Tuesday; Eagles Landing on Thursday

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They don't come any better than Union County's most recent opponent, the reigning Class AAA State Champion North Hall, who swept the Panthers by a combined score of 26-4 over three games last week.

Despite suffering significant losses to graduation, the Trojans are still considered a title contender due to three returning seniors, most notably, Georgia Tech signee and reigning Class AAA Pitcher of the Year Reese Olson.

The Panthers got a look at Olson and his 93 mph heater during the series opener on Monday in Blairsville - a 14-1 North Hall victory.

Olson fanned eight over four innings while walking one and allowing two Union County singles.

The second game saw the Panthers turn things around and come oh-so-close close to handing the Trojans their first region loss of 2018 during a 3-2 defeat in Clermont.

The North Hall bats awoke during game three by using a five-run fifth to deliver the knockout blow in a 9-1 Trojan road victory.

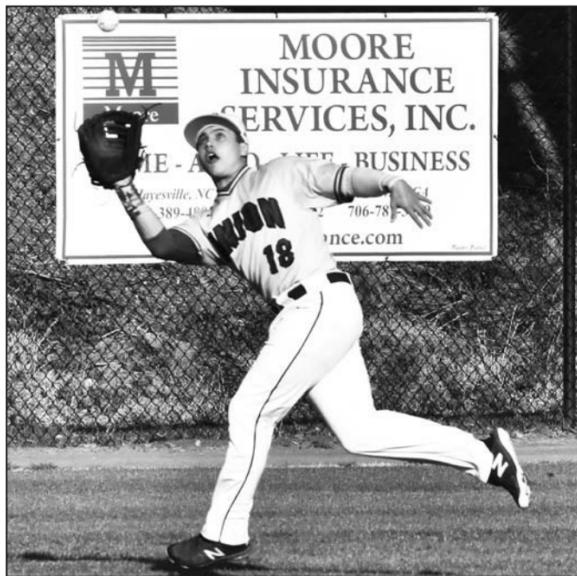
The Panthers' region foe this week is Greater Atlanta Christian (12-7, 6-3). Instead of the usual Monday-Wednesday-Friday series, Union County will host game one Tuesday before traveling to Norcross for a doubleheader on Friday.

The Panthers also host a pair of non-region opponents this week in Murphy, NC on Monday and Eagles Landing Christian on Thursday.

Panthers 1, North Hall 14

The Trojans scored four runs in each of the first two innings to secure an 8-0 lead - more than enough for Olson to pick up the win.

His counterpart, sophomore left-hander Pierson Allison



Left: Hunter Kelley makes a running catch in left field during the first inning of game three vs North Hall. Right: Head coach Robbie Roxbury with pitcher Pierson Allison (17) and catcher Chayton Schafer during a mound conference in game one vs North Hall. Photos/Todd Forrest

top half of the first. Two doubles and a one-out base hit followed, spotting the Trojans a 4-0 advantage.

In Union's half of the first, Patrick Baggett drew a leadoff walk and RJ Banton was hit by a pitch but a groundout and two strikeouts ended the inning.

Allison continued living dangerously in the second, this time issuing consecutive one-out walks. Following a pop-up for the second out, North Hall made it 6-0 with a two-run double. Two more singles extended the lead to 7-0 before Allison was pulled for another southpaw - junior Ean Harkins.

A walk and an error made it an 8-0 game before Harkins brought the top of the second to a close with a fly ball to center.

A Cole Davis single in the bottom of the second was the first of two hits off Olson, but the senior was eventually stranded at second base.

North Hall took a 9-0 lead in the third with a leadoff double, a single, and a sacrifice fly. However, with two down, Harkins would limit the damage to only a run by battling back from a 3-1 count to paint the outside corner with a fastball for strike three.

Baggett led off the bottom of the third by reaching on an error, allowing Banton to move him into scoring position with a one-out, opposite field single. Unfortunately, the Panthers would leave two runners aboard once again and the Trojans responded with two runs in the fourth.

Leading 11-0, North Hall added three more in the fifth when a leadoff error was followed by a walk. A single and hit-by-pitch followed, then an RBI groundout and a sacrifice fly gave the Trojans a 14-0 advantage.

Union County got one in the fifth off of Trojan reliever Dylan Wiley when Baggett walked, stole second, and scored on a Banton single. It wasn't enough to extend the game, however, and North Hall took the win 14-1 in five innings.

Allison walked four and gave up six hits and eight runs in 1.2 innings. Harkins lasted 3.1 innings, allowing five hits, six runs, two walks and striking out three.

At the plate, Banton finished 2-for-2 with an RBI, Davis went 1-for-2, and Baggett walked twice and scored a run.



Right: Head coach Robbie Roxbury with pitcher Pierson Allison (17) and catcher Chayton Schafer during a mound conference in game one vs North Hall. Photos/Todd Forrest

Panthers 2, North Hall 3 - With two down in the seventh and the Panthers trailing by a run, Baggett stepped to the plate with a runner in scoring position. The senior switch-hitter proceeded to ground the 1-1 pitch back up the middle for a single but Wiley, the North Hall centerfielder, cut the potential tying-run down at the plate to end the game.

In the early going, the Trojans jumped out front 2-0 and appeared destined to cruise to another easy victory.

But Union wasn't having it on this day. Davis, the senior lefty shutout North Hall over the next three innings to allow the Panthers to tie the score with two in the fifth.

A Jonathan Everett single and an Alec Scott walk put two aboard for Logan Dyer, who brought them in with a base hit to right, tying the score at 2-2.

The Trojans quickly regained the lead by manufacturing a run in the bottom of the fifth. A leadoff single, two passed balls and a sacrifice fly made it a 3-2 game.

Baggett pitched the final two innings for Union County, yielding two hits and one un-

earned run. At the plate, he was 1-for-4 with a seventh-inning single.

Everett finished 3-for-3 with a run - the first three-hit game of his varsity career. Dyer went 1-for-2 with 2 RBIs, and Candler Colwell was 1-for-3.

Panthers 1, North Hall 9 - The Trojans scored a run in the second, third, and fourth innings, then blew things open with five in the fifth and one in the sixth.

Meanwhile, Union's only run came in the third when Dyer opened the inning with a base hit to center, then scored on a Del Ruff groundout.

With the exception of a two-out error, Banton worked a perfect first inning. A two-out double put North Hall on the board in the second. Three walks and a hit-by-pitch led to a run in the third, forcing coach Robby Roxbury to pull the plug on Banton.

Coleson Daniel entered and induced a line-out to Banton, who moved to first base, keeping the Panthers within two runs.

Ruff's RBI cut the Trojan lead in half during the third but they quickly got the run back in the fourth with a hit batter

sandwiched between a pair of singles.

Daniel got an inning-ending double-play in the third but the fourth inning proved unkind to the junior right-hander.

Another hit batter opened the inning, then three walks, a double, a triple, and a sacrifice fly stretched the North Hall advantage to 8-1.

Two singles and two walks allowed the Trojans to add another run in the sixth - bringing the final to 9-1.

Four different Panther pitchers saw action with Banton getting the start and lasting 2.2 innings. He surrendered two hits, two earned runs, four walks, and struck out four.

Daniel went two innings, giving up five hits and five runs. Jackson Colwell spelled Daniel and worked 1.1 innings, allowing three hits and two runs. Finally, sophomore Cayden Rich gave up one hit in one inning of work.

At the plate, Banton was 2-for-4 with a double, Ruff ended up 1-for-3 with an RBI and Dyer singled and scored during a 1-for-4 day. Meanwhile, Hunter Kelly, Scott, and Davis each added a base hit for the Panthers.

Looking ahead - While Union County Schools take the week off for spring break, the Panthers have a full slate of games that began Monday when they hosted Murphy, NC.

Union County returns to region play on Tuesday by welcoming Greater Atlanta Christian to town for a 4:30 p.m. first pitch. Games two and three will be Friday at GAC, beginning at 5 p.m.

The Spartans dropped two-of-three to East Hall in early March but bounced back with a sweep of Dawson County then took two from Fannin County.

GAC didn't schedule any region games last week so its pitching rotation should be in order for the Union series.

The Panthers host another non-region contest on Thursday, Apr. 5 when Eagles Landing Christian comes to town for a 5 p.m. start.

Blue Ridge Motorsports Park Opening Day results

By Blake Lynch
North Georgia News
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Blue Ridge Motorsports Park had their opening day on Saturday, March 31st. It was a good day for racing. Here are the top three from each class.

Street Stock - First place No. 43 Michael Harper led from flag-to-flag to get his second consecutive win of the season. He has had a great season.

Second place was No. 14, defending track champion Charles Devine Jr. The third place car was No. 91 Marlin Gunter.

Modified Street - First place went to No. 17T Brad Thomas at his home track. The second place finisher was No. 88 Ricky Smith. Third place went to No. 81 John Howard.

Crate Late Models - Jason (The Real) Deal took the checked flag for first place.

Second place belonged to No. 200 Jacob Anderson. The third place finisher was No. 24 Seth Wimpy.

Pony - First place was No. 9 JJ Garrett. Second place went to No. 01 Zack Sanders.



Jason (The Real) Deal and his No. 7 car in Victory Lane following his Crate Late Model win at Blue Ridge Motorsports Park on Saturday. Photo/Blake Lynch

Third place was No. 43 Tain Ross.

Front Wheel Drive - No. 05 Hunter Hughes took home the win. The second place car was No. J3 Josh Deese. In third place was No. 32 Logan Exum.

Limited Late Models - First place was No. 12 Galin Robinson; second place went to No. 4H Levi Hicks and 3rd place belonged to No. 41J Justin Grovley.

Please come out Saturday, Apr. 7 for the next race.

Tri-County Racetrack was rained out last Friday but they've re-scheduled for Friday Apr. 6 with the full racing program and the kids bicycle race.

The gates open at 5 p.m. and racing starts at 7 p.m.