

Sports

See the Sports Section at nghanews.com

Lady Panthers rally past Gilmer 44-39 in season opener

A pair of new faces take the helm of an old rivalry when Union visits Towns on Tuesday

By Todd Forrest
Sports Editor
sports@nganews.com

In a game of runs, the Union County Lady Panthers overcame a 6-point fourth quarter deficit with a 12-1 outburst over the final 4:50 to knock off Gilmer 44-39 last Friday night.

After leading by as many as 10 in the first half and eight at the break, the Class AAAA Lady Bobcats stormed ahead 24-23 with a 9-0 run out of the locker room.

“We found ourselves down so I called a timeout and told them, ‘now we’re in a ball game,’” Union County first-year head coach Corey Garrett said. “I was excited. Not because we lost the lead but because we were able to comeback and stop the bleeding to put ourselves in a position to win. I was super-proud of that.”

Trailing 33-29 after three, Union was down six at the five-minute mark when sophomore Adelin Hill scored on a put-back then followed that up with two free throws to make it a 38-36 game with 3:54 to play.

Two missed Lady Bobcat free throws led to an Aubree Pack trey on the other end to give her team its first lead since the 4:50 mark of the third. With just over a minute remaining, Gilmer hit 1-of-2 at the line to even the score but Union went inside to sophomore Kait McCarter, who put her team on top 41-39 with 49 seconds left. Moments later, McCarter rebounded a Lady Bobcat miss and drew a foul to earn a trip to the line with 31 seconds remaining. After splitting a pair, Gilmer trailed by three but were unable to connect from long distance on consecutive possessions – the second resulting in an intentional foul on Bailey Daniel, who went 1-of-2 to put the game away with 4.8 seconds left.

Daniel led the way for Union with 14 points while



Senior guard Bailey Daniel led Union County with 14 points vs Gilmer. Photo/Todd Forrest

McCarter added 11.

In the early going, Gilmer held a 3-0 advantage but the Lady Panthers pulled ahead 7-5 after one. Tied at 7-7 in the second, Union responded with a 12-2 run to open up a 19-9 lead before taking a 23-15 advantage into halftime.

“I was proud of our man defense,” Garrett said. “We were really anticipating, we were stopping cuts, we were active on screens, both off-the-ball and on-ball screens. We just couldn’t finish some of those stops with rebounds and that really hurt us a lot, which is something we’re going to have to work on.”

Leading 23-17, the Lady Bobcats drew a shooting foul that resulted in a technical foul on Union. After hitting all four free throws to pull within two at the 5:48 mark, Gilmer drew even at 23-23 with 4:50 to play. A 1-for-2 visit to the charity stripe 27 seconds later put the visitors on top for the first time since it was 3-0.

“We were pretty happy at halftime,” Garrett said.

“(Gilmer) went zone late in the second quarter and that slowed us down a little bit. So we went into the third with a gameplan on how to attack that but we got into foul trouble and had to take both Adeline (Dockrey) and Kait (McCarter) out of the game which hurt our gameplan.”

Pack finished with 5 points, Hill scored four, while Brooke Dockrey and Mary Wischmeyer had 3 points each.

Adeline Dockrey and Jordan Rogers chipped in 2 points apiece.

**Lady Panthers 54
Hayesville, NC 34**

Hayesville, NC – On Tuesday, Union County traveled out-of-state for a scrimmage contest with the Lady Jackets of Hayesville, NC where the depth of the Lady Panthers proved too much in the second half as Union pulled away 54-34.

Overcoming a shaky start in each of the first two quarters, the Lady Panthers held leads of 15-11 after one and 25-19 at the break. Seven different players

scored for Union County in the first half, led by 7 from Hill.

A 3-pointer from Daniel to open the third was followed by 4 points apiece from Brooke Dockrey and Pack. Leading 39-28 entering the fourth, Union opened up a 46-32 advantage at the 4:14 mark, then expanded the lead to 51-32 with 3:00 to play.

Pack led all comers with 15 points – nine coming in the fourth quarter on 6-of-6 shooting from the line during the final frame and 8-of-8 for the game. All nine Lady Panthers that played scored for Union with Hill adding nine to go with 8 points each from Daniel and Brooke Dockrey. McCarter finished with 5 points while Adeline Dockrey scored four.

Rivalry Week - The Lady Panthers visit rival Towns County on Tuesday looking to extend its winning streak over the Lady Indians to 12 games – a streak that dates back to the 2012 Battle of the States Christmas Tournament. For the first time since 1998, Towns County is not under the direc-



Aubree Pack was high scorer at Hayesville with 15. Photo/Todd Forrest

tion of head coach Jim Melton, who retired at the end of last season.

The Lady Indians are led by new head coach Brian Hunnicutt, who comes to Hiwassee by way of Rabun County, where he and Garrett faced off at the middle school ranks.

“I actually coached against him when I was with the middle school boys and he was coaching the Rabun middle school boys,” Garrett said. “He has ties to (Rabun head girls coach Dee Dee Dillard) and he’s trying to play a lot like Rabun. They like to press, like Rabun; they used full-court pressure nearly the whole game, like Rabun and they played man-to-man defense, like Rabun.”

Last Saturday the Lady Indians traveled to Rabun County to face off with the Lady Cats, and while they may use identical schemes, the similarities end there.

The Lady Cats, fresh off a State Runner-Up finish, didn’t miss a beat and easily handled Towns County 75-29.

Although, the Lady In-

dians were within striking distance for much of the first half, trailing 12-6 after one, 20-11 at the 6:02 mark of the second, and 24-14 less than 90 seconds later. However, in typical Rabun fashion, the Lady Cats’ defense sparked a 12-4 spurt to take control at the break, 36-18.

They would continue the onslaught well into the second half, outscoring Towns 22-7 in the third and 18-4 in the fourth.

The youthful Lady Indians were led in scoring by junior Kristen Byers and sophomore Sophia Shook with 8 points apiece. Freshman Kennedy Henson added 7 points to go with a team high 9 rebounds.

Tip off is scheduled for 7 p.m. at Towns County High School’s Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium.

After a week off, Union County will return to action on Tuesday, Nov. 28 with a trip to Rabun County to face the aforementioned Lady Cats. Tip-off is scheduled for 6 p.m. on the 28th.

Panthers overcome early struggles, pull away from Gilmer 48-34

By Todd Forrest
Sports Editor
sports@nganews.com

The Panthers overcame an ice-cold first half shooting performance with a stifling second half defensive effort to race past Gilmer 48-34.

Trailing by as many as 15 in the first half and 13 at the break, Union County outscored the Bobcats 33-6 in the second half – including an 11-0 fourth quarter – after low-scoring first half that resulted in a 28-15 halftime deficit.

The Panthers caught a break late in the first quarter when Gilmer’s Tyler Sims went down with an apparent lower-extremity injury after scoring eight of his team’s first 11 points on 2-of-2 shooting from beyond the arc. Union was able to close the first with a 5-1 spurt for a respectable 16-9 score but just two second quarter field goals from the Panthers allowed Gilmer to extend its lead to 13 at the break.

“Sometimes you just have to chalk it up to not being able to make a shot,” Head Coach Casey Jones said in regards to the first half struggles. “Our energy on defense, oftentimes is related to us making buckets. I don’t know what it is, but it seems like when we pick up our energy we start making buckets. If you look back at the first half, our energy on defense wasn’t where it needed to be.”

Trailing 32-21, a Patrick Baggett trey sparked an 11-0 run to tie it up at 32-32. Following the Baggett three, sophomore Pierson Allison converted the and-one to pull within five. A Crawford Colwell bucket then an Allison trey knotted the score at the 2:50 mark of the third.

A Gilmer basket gave them a brief 34-32 lead but an Allison free throw and an RJ Banton putback handed Union its first lead of the game with 22 seconds left in the period. On the ensuing Panther possession, Cole Davis drove baseline to beat the buzzer, and two Bobcat defenders, spotting Union a 37-34 lead after three quarters.

“I told the guys at halftime, ‘surely we can’t have



Union County senior Patrick Baggett at Hayesville (left) and sophomore Sawyer Drake (right) at Hayesville, NC. Photos by Todd Forrest

another half of shooting like we just did, so be patient and try to get to the rim more.” Jones said. “We were probably relying to heavily on the outside shot so we started working it inside. Of course we got a couple of steals that led to layups and that always helps get you going.”

The Panthers’ smothering defense continued into the final frame as two Allison free throws and a Banton layup opened up a 41-34 advantage just 90 seconds into the fourth. Sophomore Sawyer Drake added another basket for a 43-34 advantage that held until inside of two minutes when Jones emptied the bench.

Colton Day and Jared Nelson added a late bucket while Timothy Murphy hit 1-for-2 from the foul line.

Allison scored nine of his game-high 10 points in the second half while seniors Crawford Colwell and Baggett scored eight and seven, respectively.

Banton added 6 points and fellow senior Candler Colwell scored four. Drake, Davis, and Britt Waller added 2 points each; Day, Nelson, and Coleson Daniel also added two apiece while Murphy finished with one.

“Being down 13 at halftime, we’ve already had that game where we faced adversity and it’s always good to look back on that whenever you get down in the future.”

**Panthers 59
Hayesville 53**

Hayesville, NC – Baggett finished with nine 3-pointers and 27 points to lead the Panthers to a 59-53 victory over the Yellow Jackets in last Tuesday’s pre-season contest.

Being a scrimmage, the nine threes don’t count towards the school record books, but had it been an official game, nine treys would’ve tied a re-



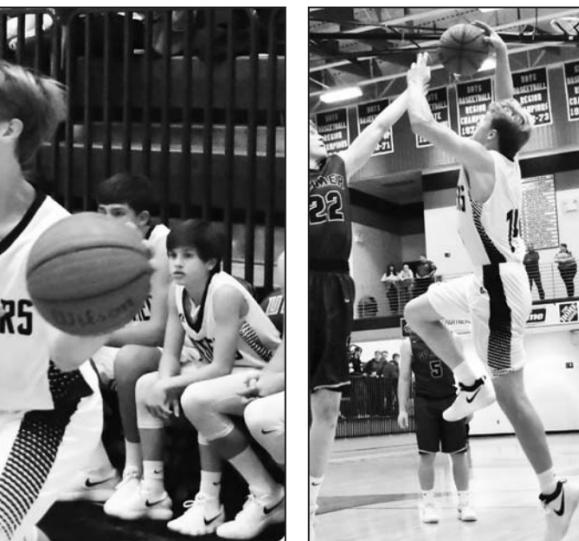
cord owned by Blake Williams (2003-04) and Michael Ross, who did it twice in one month during December of 2006.

Behind three early treys from Baggett, the Panthers opened up a 13-1 lead at the midway point of the first. The Yellow Jackets would storm back, however, behind senior standout and Western Carolina commit Josh Cottrell to make it a one possession game at 15-12 after a quarter.

Baggett connected three more times from downtown during the second quarter to go with a trey from Drake. Banton and Crawford Colwell added a bucket each in the period to send Union into the break with a 31-24 lead.

Allison got in on the 3-point barrage with a pair of treys while Baggett continued to scorch the Jackets into the third quarter.

Union opened up a 48-35



Sawyer Drake

young guys played pretty well and that’s something you’re always looking for at the first of the year, which guys are going to step up and contribute and we found a couple of those” Jones said of the scrimmage game.

The Panthers will visit Towns County on Tuesday, looking to avoid its first three-game skid to the Indians since 1995-96.

Towns is coming off a 79-65 victory at Rabun County, whose football team is still alive in the Class AA State playoffs.

During the win, senior Zach Davenport became the 13th Indian player to reach 1,000 career points. In the win over Rabun, Davenport fell three rebounds short of a triple-double, leading Towns County with 22 points, 10 assists, and 7 boards.

Other Indian scoring leaders were Logan Cowart with 14 points, Bradley Benson with 12, Will Travis with 11, freshman Kolby Moss had seven, Trent Bradshaw added six and senior Evan Berrong had five.

Tip-off will follow the girls game which is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Bill P. Kendall Gymnasium on the campus of Towns County High School.

“They’re going to be tough; we’ll have our hands full for sure on Tuesday night,” Jones said regarding the matchup with Towns County.

“I thought some of the