

# Sports

See the Sports Section at ngame.com

## Panthers fall to Jefferson in 11; steam roll Greene County

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

For more than 10 innings the Panthers went toe-to-toe with the third ranked Jefferson Dragons but eventually succumbed to the home team by a 3-2 score after the Dragons' used a lead off walk to post the winning run in the bottom of the 11th.

A two-out single by senior Wes Aulet gave the Panthers a 1-0 lead in the top of the third, while junior Lane Everett held the Dragon bats in check for 6 2/3 innings before a two-out double by Jefferson senior Drew Carson sent the game into extra innings.

Everett, despite being hit in the face during a plate appearance in the fourth, stayed in the game bloodied and bruised and still worked 7 innings, fanning 7 hitters, allowing 6 hits, and didn't surrender a walk before giving way to junior Calvin Duckworth.

"Lane was hit with an 88 mph fastball in the face, there was no helmet involved, just directly in the face," Union Head Coach Brandon Bradburn said. "He was hurting really bad, but he picked himself up, wiped off the dirt and blood and refused to come out of the game. He went on to pitch one of the best games of the season in a no-decision effort. I wouldn't say it phased him at all, if anything it just made him mad."

Duckworth worked the final four innings, giving up 2 hits, striking out 5 but allowed 4 walks.

After a lead off single to left by freshman Lance Rich in the Panther half of the 10th, Aulet delivered again with a two-out double, scoring sophomore Chase Barnett, who was pinch running for freshman Lance Rich.

Jefferson countered with consecutive walks and a single by clean up hitter, junior Max Ford to send the game into the 11th.

A two-out walk by Duckworth was spoiled when pinch runner Garrett Nix, a junior



Junior pitcher Lane Everett



Senior Wes Aulet smacks a single to left. Photos by Todd Forrest



Junior pitcher Calvin Duckworth



Senior Jared Croskey chops a pitch into the dirt. Photo/Todd Forrest

was struck by a ball of the bat of senior Cooper Patton.

Jefferson once again used two walks to open the inning when Carson came through again with a walk off single, giving the Dragons the win.

Ford, the reigning *Gainesville Times* Player of the Week and ace of the Dragon staff, started the game on the hill for Jefferson for the sixth time in 13 games struck out 10. However, the Panthers shot themselves in the foot at times, hitting into three double plays and leaving seven runners on base during the first seven innings and four stranded in extras.

"The key factor in the

game was when we got free passes, we couldn't cash in on those base runners," Bradburn said. "We hit into two double plays to end the innings, one was with the bases loaded. I just feel like we were snake-bit the entire game with terrible luck, but our guys kept battling."

Senior Zach Odom reached on an error in the first and was left 90 feet away after fellow seniors Aulet and T Bentley were unable to score him from third.

Luther Jones walked with an out in the second but the inning came to an end when sophomore Jackson Burks was caught in a run down after a two-out single to left-center.



Junior DH Luther Jones takes a big cut. Photo/Todd Forrest

Aulet's two-out single scored Odom in the third after the Panther lead off hitter was hit by an 0-1 pitch.

Three more Panthers were hit by a pitch in the fourth to load the bases with one out when Barnett sent a 1-1 pitch back to the mound for a 1-2-3 double play.

Another come backer to the mound resulted in a double play ball to end the Panther sixth. While a 6-4-3 double play ended the Panthers' scoring chances in the eighth.

On Friday, Union completely dismantled Region 8-AA opponent Greene County in a double header.

The Panthers took Game

One, 22-0 in a contest that was called after two-and-a-half innings.

Game Two also ended by the mercy rule in the third with Union ahead 19-0.

Jared Croskey picked up the win in the first game, working 3 innings, striking out 5 and allowing just one single.

Jones went deep to center for his first homer of the season in the first inning as Union took a 12-0 lead after one.

The Panthers tacked on 10 more in the second and after Croskey retired the Tigers in the top of the third, that was all she wrote.

Zach Odom, Tyler Odom, Robert Prunier and Bentley

scored three times each, while every spot in the Panther lineup scored at least twice.

Everett drove in 5 runs, Zach Odom and Jones knocked in 3 each. Croskey, Aulet, and Bentley brought in two, while Duckworth and Barnett finished with an RBI a piece.

A similar scenario played out in Game Two as Union opened with 12 in the first as senior Cody Davenport returned to the mound after a shoulder injury from football season.

Davenport worked 3 innings of one-hit ball, striking out three.

"It was good to get Cody Davenport some work," Coach Bradburn said. "I'm not sure if he is 100 percent but seeing him on the mound was a good sign for the depth of our pitching."

Hunter Hughes, Rich, and Prunier scored three times each. Patton had 5 RBIs, while Hughes added 3.

"I am proud of our guys for coming into the game with the amount of intensity and focus," Coach Bradburn said. "Greene County has been struggling this year, but we wanted to make sure we had the right mindset heading into a double header like this."

"Another positive was seeing some of the varsity guys who don't get a lot of playing time, have the opportunity to get in the game," he said.

This week, Union has two more critical Region contests when Riverside Military comes calling on Tuesday. Friday, Union visits Rabun County who will be looking to avenge a 13-3 beat down at the hands of the Panthers two weeks prior.

"Riverside is a well coached team with some good players," Coach Bradburn said. "They play good team baseball and we will need to play well to win."

"Also, Rabun is better than they showed last time and I am sure Coach Wilcox will have his guys ready to battle on Friday," Coach Bradburn said. "Both teams have good pitchers so we just need to take it one inning at a time and make sure we take care of business."

## 8th ranked Panthers on a roll Lady Panther soccer breaks even

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

Over the past four games, the AJC's 8th ranked Union County Panthers (9-1, 4-0) have outscored the opposition 31-0.

No, that's not a typo.

"Our defense has been outstanding," Union Head Coach Tim Hunter said. "Kyle Hamby has been playing better than we could have asked. So is Keaton Dyer, Tim McKenna, Aaron Spaulding, and Josh Troche. They have been the heart of our defense. Also, Justin Eigel hasn't looked like a freshman at keeper this year. He made some awesome saves at Washington Wilkes."

Last Tuesday, Union County traveled next door to rival Towns County, where after a slow start, they exploded for seven goals in the second half, en route to an 8-0 win.

Friday, the road warrior Panthers ventured to Washington-Wilkes where they ended things early with a 10-0 win over the Region 8-AA opponent.

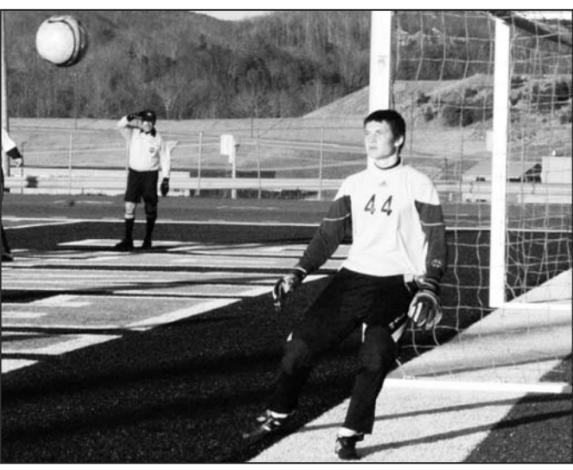
At Towns, a T.J. Smith goal off a feed from Jair Gonzalez and Josh Troche was Union's lone score of the first half.

"We had scoring opportunities but we were holding onto the ball too long," Coach Hunter said. "We weren't doing what we do well in the first half. I had to make some adjustments at the half and do a little butt chewing."

Whatever Coach Hunter said at halftime worked as Union came out firing on all cylinders in the second half.

Smith scored again off another feed from Gonzalez to open the half. Gonzalez tallied goal number 3 off an assist from Eric Hougrand and freshman Jesus Mancillas. The 4th goal gave Smith the hat trick, assisted again by his partner in crime, Gonzalez.

Jacob Rogers got into the scoring column for the first time this season as he set up Gonzalez for the 5th goal. Then Hougrand scored off a beautiful feed from Dyer.



Union County freshman goalie Justin Eigel hasn't surrendered a goal since March 8th. Photo/Todd Forrest



Sophomore Kyle Hamby has been a vital cog in the Union County onslaught in recent weeks. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Dyer scored the 7th goal off an assist from Mancillas. The final goal came from Stafford, his first varsity goal.

"The guys really responded and went on a rampage in the second half," Hunter said. "We scored seven goals in less than 25 minutes."

At Washington Wilkes, Brandon Pestana and Gonzalez both picked up a hat trick in Union's drubbing of the Tigers.

Smith scored two more goals bringing the junior's total to 19 for the season, an average

of more than 2 goals a game. Mancillas and Hamby also added goals for the Panthers.

Smith and Hougrand added two assists each. Others assisting were Spaulding, Dyer, Hamby, McKenna, Mancillas, and Phillip Jennings.

Union will continue its quest for the Region crown and home field in the State Playoffs when they host Rabun County on Tuesday at 7 p.m.

The Panthers still must face Jefferson and Riverside Military Academy before

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

Following a tough 1-0 loss at Towns County on Friday, the Union County Lady Panthers blitzed the Lady Tigers of Washington Wilkes to the tune of a 10-0 final.

At Towns, the Lady Indians scored a goal in the first half and that was good enough to hold off the Lady Panthers.

"The girls came out flat and Towns is a good team," Union Head Coach Tim Hunter said. "We crossed our own goal in the first half and they wound up getting a goal because of it. We never could recover. We had opportunities in the second half, but just didn't shoot the ball very well. They are too good of a team to not bring your A-game."

At Washington Wilkes, Union led 7-0 at the break with the scoring getting underway in the second minute when Camryn Carter connected after an assist from Marissa Akin.

Carter scored again in the fifth minute off an assist from Kristena Zeger. Maddy Morlock scored the 3rd goal off another feed from Zeger.

Carter picked up the hat trick on Union's 4th goal with Shelby Brown and Rachel Vester assisting.

Morlock got the 5th goal off an assist from Erin Innis. Zeger scored goal number 6 with an assist from Carter. Akin scored the 7th goal unassisted.

The second half started with another Zeger goal and a Kenna Bauman assist. Innis scored the 9th goal and Brown scored the 10th, ending the game in the 46th minute.

"We came out and were passing very well," Hunter said. "We were moving the ball all over the place and looked very solid. They were an inexperienced team but they had played some teams tough this season. We were just on and got them on their heels early."

Union hosts Rabun County on Tuesday with State Playoff implications on the line. Game time is 5 p.m.

Wednesday's game with Banks has been postponed to a later date.



Lady Panther sophomore Camryn Carter takes a shot during Union's game at Towns. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Erin Innis (#7) and Mary Murphy (#8) clamp down on a Towns County Lady Indian. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Kristena Zeger (#4) advances the ball at Towns County last week. Photo/Lowell Nicholson