

Sports

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Lady Panthers bounce back from loss with blowout at Towns

Lady Lions pull away during second half; Union uses big wave second quarter in 22-point win at Towns

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The Union County Lady Panthers (3-4) bounced back with a win at Towns County on Friday following a 54-30 loss at Lakeview Academy on Tuesday.

In the loss, the Lady Lions' junior Hanna Grogan put up 35 points, 20 coming in the second half as Union was unable to keep pace after trailing by just five at the break, 23-18.

**Lady Panthers 48
Towns County 26**

Hiawassee - At Towns, the Lady Panthers were led by sophomore Bailey Daniel's 24 points as Union pulled away late in the second quarter and never looked back in a 48-26 victory.

Leading 20-14 with under a minute to play in the half, senior Layne Colwell and Daniel knocked down consecutive treys to stretch the lead to 26-14 at the break.

Sophomore Logan Colwell also added a trey in the second quarter for Union.

With Towns continuing to hang around, still within 10 at 31-21 with just under 4 minutes to play in the third, Daniel sparked a 3-point barrage to close the quarter in style for the Lady Panthers.

With 3:16 left in the period, Daniel nailed a trey to give Union its largest lead at 34-21. Following a Lady Indians' basket, Daniel connected from downtown once again with :56 remaining in the third.

The 3-pointer was the sophomore guard's fourth and final trey of the night.

Leading 37-23 with just under 30 seconds left in the period, Union sophomore Jillian Lawn dialed up three more from long distance to give her team an insurmountable 40-23 advantage entering the fourth.

The Lady Panthers put



Senior Layne Colwell (left) drives the baseline at Towns County. Right: (L-R) Bailey Daniel, Jillian Lawn, Ashley Fair, and Stephanie Busse prepare to run an inbounds play at Towns County on Friday. Photos by Todd Forrest

the finishing touches on their seventh straight win over Towns County with an 8-0 run to open the final frame.

Daniel got the scoring underway when she connected on a runner in the lane at the 6:56 mark of the fourth to extend the lead to 42-23.

Layne Colwell hit 2-for-2 at the line with 5:38 left in the game. She then connected from beyond the arc at the 5:16 mark.

Daniel hit 1-of-2 from the line with 2:43 to play to cap off the 8-0 run and give Union a 48-23 advantage.

The Lady Panthers were below-average at the charity stripe, hitting 8-of-15 (53 percent).

They would also connect on eight treys.

Daniel finished the game

with a team-high 4 assists and 5 steals to go along with her 24-point outing.

Layne Colwell hit a pair of treys on her way to a 12-point performance. She also added a pair of rebounds and an assist.

Senior Kim Coyne chipped in 4 points while recording 5 steals and blocking a shot.

Lawn hauled in 7 boards, blocked a shot, while finishing with 3 points.

Logan Colwell hit 1-of-2 from downtown for a 3-point game.

Senior Stephanie Busse had another big game in the paint. This time she grabbed 13 boards, blocked 9 shots, and added a steal while knocking down a pair of free throws for a 2-point game.

Junior Ashley Fair didn't



crack the scoring column but came up big on the glass, hauling in 7 rebounds and recording a steal.

Sophomore Grace Wishmeyer provided an assist and freshman Jordan Rogers pulled down a rebound.

**Lady Panthers 30
Lakeview Academy 54**

Gainesville - Trailing 23-18 at the half, the Lady Lions pulled away with a 15-7 third quarter but it was a 16-5 fourth that turned things into a blowout.

Treys by Daniel and Layne Colwell were all the offense Union could muster in the opening period as Lakeview jumped out to a 13-6 advantage.

The Lady Panthers took

the second quarter 12-10 behind another trey by Daniel, a basket and two free throws from Layne Colwell, three free throws from Busse, and a basket by Fair to make it a game at the break 23-18.

The second half was all Grogan and her Lady Lions. All by herself, the Lakeview junior outscored the entire Union team 9-7 in the third and 12-5 in the fourth.

Lawn and Layne Colwell knocked down treys in the third quarter and Daniel hit 1-of-2 from the stripe.

In the fourth, Coyne scored a basket and hit a free throw. Busse also added a basket to round out the Lady Panthers' scoring.

Layne Colwell led Union with 10 points. Daniel finished with 7 points, Busse scored five,

Coyne and Lawn had three each, and Fair added two.

The Lady Panthers connected on a season-low five 3-pointers while only hitting 7-of-15 (47 percent) at the free throw line.

On Tuesday, the Lady Panthers will face off with another rival when Fanning County comes calling for a 6 p.m. tip off.

Last year the Lady Panthers lost at home to Fanning in December but got revenge in Blue Ridge in January.

Region action begins on Friday when Union travels to Lexington to face Oglethorpe County. Tip off is at 5 p.m.

**Lady Panthers JV 39
Towns County 37**

Hiawassee - Rogers and Adeline Dockrey led the Lady Panthers JV past Towns County with 12 points each, overcoming deficits of 18-12 after one quarter and 24-19 at the half.

After holding the Lady Indians to just five points in the second quarter, Union cranked up the defensive intensity even higher in the third as they outscored Towns 14-4 to take a 33-28 advantage into the fourth quarter.

Dockrey scored two buckets in the fourth before fouling out.

A free throw each from Wishmeyer and Rogers were Union's only other points in the final frame but it was enough to hold off the Lady Indians.

Rogers scored six of her 12 points in the first quarter and Dockrey got eight of her 12 in the second half.

Brianna Hemphill knocked down a pair of treys en route to an 8 point game.

Maggie Beth Stuart scored a basket in the first and third quarter before fouling out in the fourth.

Maddie Sutton added 2 points on a pair from the line and Wishmeyer scored one.

Towns pulls the upset with 7-0 run in final 74 seconds to force OT

Tough week for Panthers opens with 33-point loss at Lakeview before falling in OT at Towns

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Things went from bad to worse for the Panthers last week as they were overmatched by a very good Lakeview squad, whose only loss of the year was a 12-point defeat to Greater Atlanta Christian.

The Lions own an 87-69 victory over East Hall so coming in, Union knew they would have their hands full and Lakeview cruised to a 66-33 victory.

On Friday, Union saw its dominance of rival Towns County come to an end after the Indians paid the Panthers back with a dramatic comeback of their own.

**Panthers 63
Towns County 64 OT**

Hiawassee - In perhaps the most thrilling Union vs Towns contest since the game that began the Panthers' winning streak almost 16 years ago, the Indians exorcised its Purple and Gold demons and parted like it was 1999 - the last time Towns defeated Union in Hiawassee.

Despite the best efforts from sophomore Crawford Colwell, who finished with 21 points, the Panthers game-winning shot in overtime came up short, as did a putback attempt at the buzzer.

With less than 2 minutes left in the game, Union was in control with a 57-50 lead and appeared on its way to another victory over Towns when the bottom fell out.

While trying to milk the clock with just over 1:30 left, the Panthers missed a shot attempt and the Indians' Will DeVries responded with a trey at the 1:14 mark of the fourth quarter.

With just over a minute left, Towns forced a turnover that resulted in a Major Moss dunk that trimmed the Union lead to 57-55 with 59 seconds left.

With 39 seconds to play, the Panthers misfired on the front-end of a 1-and-1 free throw attempt and with 14 seconds remaining, Towns County went inside to Adam Barrett for the game-tying bucket off an inbounds pass.

Junior Lawson Baenninger, who finished with 13 points, was whistled for a charge as he drove



Sophomore Crawford Colwell takes the floor at Towns County where he would lead the Panthers with 21 points. Photo/Todd Forrest

the baseline and attempted a 15-foot, pull up jumper in front of a defender. Originally, the referee started to signal a blocking foul on Towns (which would have been Moss' fifth foul) by bringing both hands down towards his waist, but he quickly stopped and thrust his fist forward to signal the charge.

The Indians were forced to go the length of the court in 6 seconds but a turnover handed the ball back to Union with less than a half-second on the clock.

The Panthers' inbounds pass went out-of-bounds so the Indians got a crack under their own basket but they were unable to get off a shot, and the game went into overtime, tied at 57-57.

Towns drew first blood in the extra frame with a 1-for-2 trip to the foul line by Zach Davenport at the 3:32 mark to take a 58-57 lead.

Senior Matthew Rich drove the lane and connected on a floater, breaking Union's scoreless drought of more than 4 minutes.

With just under 3 minutes to play, the Panthers led 59-58 until a 2-for-2 trip to the line by DeVries put Towns back on top at 60-59 at the 2:28 mark.

Just 13 seconds later, Crawford Colwell knocked down a baseline jumper to give Union the

61-60 advantage.

With 1:11 left, Moss put the Indians back on top 62-61 with a pair from the charity stripe.

Trailing by a point, the Panthers went back to the hot hand, Crawford Colwell and the sophomore drove to the rack for two more with 35 seconds remaining.

Trailing 63-62, the Indians went back to Moss, their hot hand, who answered with a drive of his own and with 8 seconds to play, Union was behind 64-63.

The Panthers advanced the ball past half court and with exactly 3 seconds showing on the clock, called timeout.

Inbounding from the baseline, Andrew Brown took the pass and fired a contested 25-foot trey that came up short but was rebounded by Chase Shook deep under the basket, the long-armed center was able to stretch from under the backboard and get off a shot that bounced off the front of the iron.

Shook drew contact on his shot attempt and was knocked to the floor, which would take more than a tap on the wrist considering the Union senior stands 6-8 and weighs in at 220 pounds.

No call was made and the buzzer sounded. Despite protests from Union Head Coach Casey



Junior Lawson Baenninger scored 13 points and hit Union's only 3-pointer in the second half at Towns County. Photo/Todd Forrest

Jones, the three officials raced off the court, each one saying that they didn't "see a foul."

The Panthers attempted only nine free throws in the second half and overtime to Towns' 22 attempts over the same stretch.

In the overtime period, the Indians attempted eight from the stripe to no attempts for Union.

However, the Indians took advantage, hitting 8 of their final 10 free throws, while Union connected on 6 of its last 10 shots from the line.

The first quarter saw Union take a 13-7 lead on a turnaround jumper by Shook but Towns' Davenport connected on an NBA-range trey at the horn to draw within three at 13-10.

A pull-up jumper by Baenninger at the 5:30 mark of the second gave the Panthers a 19-14 lead but the Indians responded with a 9-0 run that gave them a 23-19 advantage.

A Crawford Colwell trey pulled Union within a point. Following a Towns basket, a short jumper by Shook brought the Panthers back within one at 25-24.

With 1:00 left in the half, sophomore Candler Colwell hit 2-of-2 at the line to put Union on top at 26-25.

A reverse layup by Shook

with 23 seconds left before halftime answered a Towns basket - making it 28-27, Union.

Once again, Davenport came through at the buzzer by banking in a trey to put the Indians ahead 30-28 at the break.

Shook and senior Lance Rich crashed the boards early in the third and put the Panthers ahead 32-30 with a pair of putbacks.

A Towns trey was followed by another second chance basket, this time Baenninger grabbed the board and went back up for two.

Tied at 34-34, Crawford Colwell attacked the offensive glass and was fouled on his putback attempt. He would hit 1-of-2 at the line and Union led 35-34 with 3:29 left in the third.

The sophomore followed with consecutive baskets in the paint to keep things tied at 39-39 until Baenninger nailed a corner-trey to put Union on top 42-39 with 2:17 remaining in the quarter.

Towns answered with a trey then used a free throw to take a 45-44 lead after Baenninger pulled Union within one.

In the final seconds of the third, Lance Rich scored inside to put the Panthers ahead 46-45 entering the fourth.

Crawford Colwell went

1-of-2 at the line to extend the lead to 47-45 then Lance Rich went back to work inside for two more - making it a 49-45 game.

Baenninger went 2-for-2 at the line to keep it a 4-point game at 51-47 with 3:36 to play.

A Towns trey cut the lead to 51-50 but Shook scored a bucket in the paint for a 53-50 score at the 3:12 mark.

A Crawford Colwell fast-break layup off an Indian turnover made it a 55-50 game with 2:55 left.

After a Shook blocked shot on the defensive end, Crawford Colwell was perfect at the line with 1:58 remaining and Union held a 57-50 advantage.

Shook finished with 12 points and Lance Rich added 8 points. Parker McCombs had three, while Matthew Rich, Candler Colwell, and Brown scored two each.

**Panthers 33
Lakeview Academy 66**

Gainesville - Baenninger and Crawford Colwell led the Panthers with 8 points each as the Lions pulled away after holding Union to only two second quarter points.

Baenninger also finished with a team-high 6 steals in the game.

Crawford Colwell scored four of his 8 points during the first quarter.

Matthew Rich knocked down a trey in the third quarter, and the senior guard would finish with 5 points.

McCombs and sophomore Cole Dockrey each hit 2-of-2 from the line in the fourth quarter to finish the game with 3 points.

Candler Colwell ended up with 2 points and 3 steals. Lance Rich scored 2 points. Brown and sophomore Cole Wright had one point each.

On Tuesday, Union hosts Fanning after losing the last meeting between the schools in Blue Ridge. The girls will tip at 6 p.m.

On Friday, the Panthers look to open Region play with a win at Oglethorpe County, but it won't come easy as the Patriots have always played Union County close. The girls are set to tip at 5 p.m.