

# Sports

See the Sports Section at ngenews.com

## Wins over Fannin and Oglethorpe complete Lady Panthers' perfect week

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@ngenews.com

Following a 43-28 victory over the rival Lady Rebels on Tuesday, the Union County Lady Panthers (5-4) opened Region play with a win at Oglethorpe.

**Lady Panthers 47  
Oglethorpe County 21**

**Lexington** - Sophomore Bailey Daniel led the Lady Panthers (5-4, 1-0) with 18 points in her team's first Region 8-AA contest of the season at Oglethorpe County.

After taking the first quarter 13-6, Union pulled away in the second and held a 24-10 advantage at the break.

The Lady Panthers defense would put the clamps on the Lady Patriots - outscoring them 13-0 in the third and taking complete control at 37-10.

Daniel had 4 assists and 3 steals to go along with her game-high 18 points.

Senior Layne Colwell remained steady, providing Union with another solid, all-around performance.

She finished with 10 points, 3 rebounds, and 2 steals.

Sophomore Jillian Lawn scored 6 points, junior Ashley Fair added 5 points and 3 steals.

Senior Kim Coyne had 4 points, 4 steals, and 2 assists. Fellow senior Stephanie Busse chipped in 3 points while recording team highs in rebounds (9) and blocked shots (4).

Stats for Union's win over Fannin were unavailable at press time.

**Up next:** Union will visit a 2-8 Greene County team on Tuesday at 5 p.m. before opening **Battle of the States** action with Hokes Bluff, Ala at 4 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 28th.

Union and Hokes Bluff will meet for the third straight year with Hokes getting the better of Union in 2013, but the Lady Panthers got revenge last year.



Junior Ashley Fair goes for the steal in Union's win at Oglethorpe County. Photo/ Ralph Maxwell - The Oglethorpe Echo



Senior Stephanie Busse leaps for one of her 9 rebounds at Oglethorpe County. Photo/ Ralph Maxwell - The Oglethorpe Echo

## Panthers end three-game skid with 10-point region win at Oglethorpe

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@ngenews.com

After a brutal 10-day stretch, Union Head Coach Casey Jones' Panthers squad showed its resolve on Friday night with a 55-45 Region 8-AA victory at Oglethorpe County.

No stats from the Oglethorpe County game were available at deadline.

On Tuesday the Panthers took the court against Fannin County coming off an intense overtime loss to another rival, Towns County.

**Panthers 53  
Fannin County 57**

With the exception of sophomore Crawford Colwell's career-high 27 points, the Panthers struggled on the offensive end as the Rebels defeated Union County in Blairsville for the first time in almost six years.

Colwell, who finished with a double-double, hit 12 of his 22 shot attempts, but the rest of the team was a combined 8-for-47 (17 percent).

The duo of senior Chase Shook and junior Lawson Baenninger were held in check as the two combined for just 5 points.

Senior Matthew Rich connected on three treys and Colwell went 1-for-2 from downtown. However, the rest of the team finished 0-for-10 beyond the arc.

Colwell (2-for-2) and senior Andrew Brown (3-for-3) were perfect at the foul line. Unfortunately, the remainder of the team hit just 4-of-13 from the charity stripe.

Shook finished with 13 boards - seven coming on offense, and Colwell hauled in 10 boards, a steal, and blocked a shot.

Brown collected four of his team's 15 steals, but the Panthers also turned the ball



Senior Andrew Brown handles point guard duties. Photos by Todd Forrest

over 15 times. Baenninger led the team with 3 assists to go along with 3 steals. Shook added 2 blocked shots and 2 steals to a Panthers' defense that played well enough to win.

Rich finished with 9 points and a steal, Brown scored five to go with 4 rebounds, Baenninger had 4 points and 4 boards, and sophomore Patrick Baggett scored 3 points.

Sophomore Candler Colwell had 2 points and 2 steals, while junior Parker McCombs had 2 points and 3 rebounds.

Senior Lance Rich had 2 boards, sophomore Cole Wright had a rebound and a steal, and senior Knox Kiernan also added a steal.

**Up next:** On Tuesday, the Panthers travel to Greene County to face the defending Region 8-AA champs at 5:30 p.m.

The Tigers are currently struggling with an 1-7 record and an 0-4 record at home. **Battle of the States:** Union opened the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament on Monday, Dec. 28th with Hayesville, NC



Crawford Colwell Photo/ Ralph Maxwell - The Oglethorpe Echo at 5:30 p.m.

The Yellow Jackets defeated the Panthers by double-digit in a scrimmage game at Hayesville back in mid-November.

At the time, Union was without its football players. Hayesville football was over at that time after a loss to Andrews, NC.

## Allison coaching North All Stars; Gilbert catches TD in FCA East-West game

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@ngenews.com

With high school football wrapping up at the Georgia Dome earlier this month, all that's left on the agenda is the All-Star games that allow seniors from across the State of Georgia one last opportunity to showcase their talents and impress college scouts.

Over the weekend, Union County seniors Parker Daniel, Chris Drost, and Sam Gilbert were members of the victorious West team in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes' East-West Classic, held in Blairsville.

Meanwhile, Union County Head Football Coach Brian Allison will be the head coach of the North All Star team next Wednesday, Dec. 30th at Memorial Stadium in Columbus.

Kickoff is scheduled for 1 p.m.

On the heels of the most successful four-year stretch in team history, Coach Allison will be donning the headset one more time in 2015 when he leads the North all stars in the Georgia Athletic Coaches Association's North-South All-Star Football Classic.

Coach Allison became Union County football's all-time winningest coach in 2012 with 57 wins when he passed his former coach, Terry Rogers. In 14 seasons at the helm of his alma mater, Allison has compiled an 84-60 record and has led the Panthers to three nine-win seasons.

"It's a special honor after being a football coach for 20 years," Coach Allison said. "I've been an assistant coach twice and a player in this game so it's a real honor. I think it's attributed to all of the kids that I've had play for me, the successes that we've had here, and by doing it the right way."

As a Panther player, he was a member of the 1983 squad that also won nine games, making Coach Allison a part of four of the program's five nine-win campaigns (1974).

In his 20-year head coaching career that includes six seasons (2002-07) at Winder-Barrow High School - where he finished 25-36 - Allison has



Sam Gilbert (dark jersey in the middle) muscled his way into the endzone during the third quarter. Photo/Todd Forrest



Parker Daniel snaps the ball after being moved to center from left tackle. However, he was the Panthers' long snapper on punts and field goals during the season. Photo/Todd Forrest

an overall record of 109-96 that spans a 20-year career.

After serving as an assistant coach in the GACA All-Star game on two different occasions (2008 and 2011), and playing in the 1984 game, the GACA named Coach Allison the Head Coach of the North All Stars back in May and he has assembled a coaching staff that includes a pair of familiar faces.

Joining Allison will be Jefferson High School Head Coach Ben Hall, who was a member of the Union County football team back in the early-90's under former Head Coach Terry Rogers. Hall was an up-and-coming lineman before

moving to Franklin County, where he became an All State offensive lineman in 1994.

In three seasons at Jefferson, Hall has compiled a 32-6 record with a pair of Region titles (2013 and 2015) and back-to-back trips to the Elite 8 in 2014 and 2015.

Last week Chestatee High School named Shaun Conley its new Head Football Coach. He was also selected by Coach Allison to join his all-star coaching staff.

Beginning in the late-90's, Conley was an assistant at Union County for three years before going to Flowery Branch under Head Coach Lee Shaw. His most recent stint was at



Chris Drost (left No. 9) blocks a Rabun County player on a second half play. Photo/Todd Forrest



Sam Gilbert gets one foot down inbounds after snagging an over-the-shoulder grab for a big gain. Photo/Todd Forrest

Peachtree Ridge as the quarterbacks coach, where he helped guide the Lions to a berth in the second round of the Class AAAAAA State playoffs.

White County Head Coach Bill Ballard is the winningest coach on Allison's staff with a record 117-48 over 14 seasons. In 2008, he led Peachtree Ridge to a Class AAAAA State Runner-up finish. In 2003 he took Tucker to the Class AAAA Final Four. His resume also includes three trips to the Elite 8.

In 2013 his White County squad reached the Class AAA Sweet 16 with a 9-3

record. In 2012 and 2014 the Warriors reached State to give the program three straight trips to State, something only accomplished one other time in school history (1987-89).

Coach Allison's other choice to join his staff is the only head football coach that the Holy Innocents Bears have known in their 10-year history.

Ryan Livezey has compiled a remarkable 62-50 record despite not playing a full varsity schedule until 2006. In the Bears' inaugural season, Livezey led his upstart team to a 4-6 record that included a



Coach Brian Allison North-Oconee victory over

North-Oconee. In 2007, Holy Innocents capped off its first winning season with a trip to the Class AA Sweet 16 after knocking off Fannin County 21-7 in Blue Ridge in the opening round. In 2009, Livezey's Bears won the programs first and only Region Championship and reached the Elite 8 with an 11-2 mark.

Following three-straight (2010-12) first round defeats, Holy Innocents returned to the Sweet 16 in 2013.

Finally, Oconee County Head Coach Travis Noland will round out the staff. In 11 years of coaching - the first nine coming at Stephens County - he tallied a 90-37 record and his Oconee team is coming off consecutive Sweet 16 appearances. In 2005, his first year at Stephens, he took them to the Class AAA Elite 8.

With the coaching staff directly responsible for selecting their teams, the job entails much more than just X's and O's. And according to Rogers, who is also the Executive Director of the GACA, the organizations' selection and approval of Allison was a no-brainer.

"Coach Allison has an excellent reputation as a high school coach across the State of Georgia with 20 years experience," Rogers said. "He's respected not only a great coach, but as a great guy, and I'm excited for him having this opportunity."

Unfortunately, no Panther players will be represented this year. However, linebacker Chase Barnett was selected

See All Stars, Page 13A