

Sports

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Lady Panthers pour it on at Greene; Battle of the States opens this week

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Last Tuesday the 22nd, the Lady Panthers traveled to Greene County where they routed the Lady Tigers by 40 points in their second Region 8-AA victory of the season.

Union County began the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament this week, and will be in action on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Lady Panthers' Monday results and Tuesday's game time were unavailable at the time of this writing.

The Lady Panthers played Hokes Bluff, Ala on Monday. If they won, they would play at 4 p.m. on Tuesday.

A loss on Monday and they would play at 10 a.m. on Tuesday morning.

For updated scores and game times for the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament, you can visit the *North Georgia News'* Facebook page.

**Lady Panthers 61
Greene County 21**

Greensboro - After one quarter of action, Union and Greene were even at 8-8, but it was all Lady Panthers from that point on, as they posted a season-high 61 points in the one-sided victory.

Sophomores Bailey Daniel and Jillian Lawn sparked the offense in the second quarter with Daniel scoring seven of her game-high 19 points, and Lawn scoring all eight of her points in the period to give Union a 30-14 advantage at the break.

The Lady Panthers continued to dominate - outscoring Greene 24-5 in the third frame. Daniel scored eight more in the quarter, while seniors Layne Colwell (6), Kim Coyne (6), and Stephanie Busse (4) combined for 16 points in the third period.

Leading 54-19 entering



Sophomore Bailey Daniel drives to the basket during a game earlier this month. Photo/Todd Forrest

the fourth, Union Head Coach David Tucker turned to his bench.

Freshman Adeline Dockrey scored a pair of baskets, junior Brittany Thornton hit a trey, and the defense held the Lady Tigers to just two points during the final frame.

The Lady Panthers overcame a 2-for-5 game at the foul line with 11 treys.

Both Daniel and Layne Colwell hit three treys, while Lawn and Coyne finished with a pair of 3-pointers each.

Junior Ashley Fair hauled in 10 boards to go with 5 steals, 2 blocked shots, and 4 points.

Coyne, who finished with 8 points, recorded team-highs

with 6 steals and 4 assists.

Daniel also finished with 6 steals, six rebounds, and 3 assists, while leading the way with 19 points.

Layne Colwell added 9 points, 7 boards, and 2 steals. Busse also grabbed 7 rebounds, scored 6 points, and blocked a shot.

Lawn scored 8 points - all coming in the second quarter. Dockrey scored 4 points, pulled down 3 boards, and blocked a shot.

Thornton chipped in 3 points, junior Logan Colwell added 4 rebounds, and sophomore Grace Wishmeyer dished out 3 assists.

Defending Region Champions unable to hang with Panthers

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The Union County men will enter the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament coming off back-to-back wins.

For the first time this season, the Panthers (4-6, 2-0) have won consecutive games, and more importantly, the two wins were in Region play.

The second of the two Region victories came Tuesday on the home court of the defending Region Champ Greene County (1-8, 0-1), by a score of 57-43.

In the first round of the Battle of the States, Union faced Hayesville, NC on Monday. Results and Tuesday's game times were unavailable at the time of this writing.

A win over Hayesville would result in a 5:30 p.m. tip off on Tuesday. A loss to Hayesville and the Panthers would tip at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

For updated scores and game times for the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament, you can visit the *North Georgia News'* Facebook page.

**Panthers 57
Greene County 43**

Greensboro - Four different Panthers scored in double-digits with senior Chase Shook posting a team-high 17.

Senior Matthew Rich hit three treys to finish with 10 points. He was the only Panther to connect from beyond-the-arc and led his team with 4 points in the first quarter.

Leading 12-9 after one, Union extended its advantage to six at 28-22 entering the break.

Shook, junior Lawson Baenninger, and sophomore Crawford Colwell, each contributed 4 points in the second period.

Both Baenninger and Crawford Colwell finished the game with 10 points.



Senior Chase Shook with a dunk earlier in the year. Photo/Todd Forrest

Matthew Rich and Shook combined for 13 of the team's 15 points in the third frame as the Panthers led 43-35 going into the fourth.

Matthew Rich connected on a pair of treys in the third while Shook added two baskets and 3-of-3 shooting from the foul line.

Balanced scoring and a stingy defense allowed Union to outscore Greene 14-8 in the fourth quarter, resulting in a 57-43 victory.

Shook, Baenninger, and Crawford Colwell each chipped in 4 points during the final 8 minutes, while the defense held the Tigers to their lowest scoring quarter.

Sophomore Candler Colwell scored a basket in the first, second, and fourth quarters to finish with 6 points.

Seniors Andrew Brown and Lance Rich each finished with 2 points.

Union connected on 8-of-12 (67 percent) from the

charity stripe.

**Panthers 55
Oglethorpe County 45**

Lexington - On Dec. 18th, Union opened Region play with a 55-45 victory at Oglethorpe County.

Shook led the way with 16 points on 6-of-10 shooting from the field and went 4-of-4 at the line. He grabbed 9 boards and blocked 3 shots.

Baenninger finished with 12 points on 6-of-12 shooting. He added 8 boards and 3 assists.

Crawford Colwell had a team-high 11 boards, with 2 steals, and went 4-for-4 at the line for 6 points.

Matthew Rich scored 6 points, was a perfect 4-for-4 at the line with 2 assists.

Candler Colwell scored 5 points with 2 steals and sophomore Patrick Baggett also scored 5 points to go with 2 assists.

Union County athletics 2015: success across the board

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Union County athletics saw four teams win a Region Championship and five individuals claim a Region title.

The Lady Panthers soccer team and both cross country teams took home Region titles. The baseball team shared the 8-AA crown with Rabun County.

Individually, Emma Garrison was the individual Region champ in cross country and two track and field events (1600M and 800M). Julia Lindsey finished first in the Region's 3200M race.

The Lady Panthers basketball team just missed out on a Region Championship after finishing the regular season in a first place tie with Rabun County.

After reaching the Region Championship game, the Lady Panthers (19-7) had the game in hand until Rabun County broke Union's heart by nailing a half-court buzzer beater to claim back-to-back Region Championships for the Lady Cats.

It was another week before the Lady Panthers opened State Tournament play due to winter weather. But when the roads were cleared the following weekend, Union hosted Darlington in a back-and-forth affair that concluded with the Lady Panthers on the wrong end of a 68-64 score.

In other winter sports, the Panthers basketball team placed third in Region 8-AA, then gave Coosa quite a scare in the first round of State. Union led by double digits before Coosa rallied for a 68-62 win.

The wrestling squad continued to make progress with six wrestlers placing at Area and two advancing to the State Sectionals.

Zach Payton placed fourth at 182 pounds and qualified for Sectionals. Grizzly Breedlove reached as an alternate at 152 pounds.

Brandon Mickens placed sixth, Adrian Shaw came in fifth, Noah Bierce was fifth, Bryan Nelson finished fifth, and Breedlove took fifth.

Union County athletics also saw success in the State Tournament as a No. 2 seed.

In the spring, the men's soccer team finished second in 8-AA and reached the State Sweet 16.

After shutting out Armuch-



Camryn Carter finished with 13 goals and 11 assists and received a scholarship to Huntington College. Photo/Todd Forrest



Lance Underwood (left) and Emma Garrison (right) led Union to two individual and two team Region Championships. Photo/Todd Forrest



ee 4-0 in Blairsville, the Panthers traveled to the opposite end of the state where they met Thomasville in the second round.

Playing just 30 miles away from Tallahassee, Fla. the Panthers nearly overcame an all-day bus ride and trailed 2-1 until Thomasville put the game away with a late goal.

More recently, the Lady Panthers softball team reached the Elite 8 in Columbus where they met the eventual State Champion Gordon Lee in the first game.

In the early stages of the game, Union's ace and the 8-AA Pitcher of the Year Laken Chambers suffered an injury and was unable to pitch.

The Lady Panthers' two seniors, Karley Nix and Garrett were each named First Team All Region after leading Union to a 25-9 record.

Panthers baseball (16-6) nearly matched the softball team with an Elite 8 appearance but fell one game short at Fitzgerald in the State Sweet 16.

During the regular season, Union and Rabun finished with even records and were dead even in each of the tiebreakers, so the two teams were named Region Co-Champions and the No. 1 seed was determined by a coin toss - which Rabun won.



Jake Sisum and the other five seniors helped the Panthers reach three State Tournaments during their four years. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County softball seniors Maddie Garrett (far left) and Karley Nix (far right) with coaches Kaitlyn Seabolt (sunglasses) and Jessica Stewart (white hat) on Senior Night in September. The two Lady Panther seniors appeared in four Class AA State Tournaments, three Region 8-AA Championship games, two Sweet 16's and one trip to Columbus for the Elite 8. Photo/Todd Forrest

The Region title was the first for Union baseball since 1990. The 2015 season also marked the only time in school history that the baseball team reached three straight State Tournaments

The Panthers hosted Model in the first round and won Game 1 and Game 3 of the best-of-three series.

In the second round, Union traveled south to Fitzgerald and took Game 1. Unfortunately the next two games, and the series went to Fitzgerald.

In other Spring sports, the Track and Field team won Region Championships with Garrison (1600M & 800M) and Lindsey (3200M).

Joining them at State Sectionals were Stephanie Busse

during the season finale, causing her to miss the entire State Tournament.

Union finished 10-2 overall with State Tournament wins over Darlington (7-0) and Thomasville (6-0). The Lady Panthers fell to private school Lovett in the Elite 8, which resulted in all-private school final four.

Union County swept the 2015 Cross Country Region meet at Riverside Military Academy back in October.

Lance Underwood and Garrison each claimed individual Region titles while both teams went home as Region Champions, as well.

Underwood won his race by 41 seconds and Garrison was more than a minute ahead of second place, who happened to be her teammate Emmi Schakat.

Both teams ran away from the competition with the guys finishing 35 points better than second place Social Circle.

The Lady Panthers were 19 points better than second place Social Circle.

Both teams cracked the Top 10 at State with the guys coming in sixth, led by Underwood, who placed seventh. The ladies placed 10th, led by 32nd place Garrison.

Finally, Union County football capped off its most successful four-year run in team history with its second straight nine-win season.

The Panthers were led by University of Richmond commit Joseph Mancuso, who rewrote the record books during his three years as the starting quarterback.

However, his status for the final two regular season games and the State playoffs were in doubt following a knee injury he suffered in the first half of a 49-3 loss at Rabun in mid-October.

With the bye week following the Rabun game, Mancuso was able to return and Union won its final two games, including a 43-21 victory at Washington in the season finale.

The Panthers dropped an overtime heartbreaker 56-55 to Bowdon in the first round of State on a successful 2-point conversion by the visiting Red Devils.

In perhaps the most thrilling game of the year, Union rallied for a 37-31 victory at Fannin. Two weeks prior, the Panthers pulled away from Lumpkin, 51-28.

Layne Colwell was named Homecoming Queen during a 49-28 win over Greene County.