

Lady Panthers' five-game winning streak ends at Putnam County

Union County looks to avenge its two region losses this weekend

By Todd Forrest
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The Lady Panthers (16-4, 7-2) dropped Saturday's first-place matchup at Putnam County, 61-45, but can force another three-way tie atop of Region 8-AA with a perfect week.

Finishing the week at 3-0 will be much easier said than done as Union County visits Rabun County on Friday. At 8-1, the Lady Cats are currently tied atop the region with Putnam County, who will pay a visit to Blairsville on Saturday.

"Our senior leadership is still strong through the ups and downs and we have confidence in every girl in our locker room," Union head coach Crystal Beach said. "We were disappointed in the loss but we can't keep looking back, we have a tough week ahead and we're still confident."

This week's slate begins with a home contest vs Social Circle, who owns a 2-7 region record and a 5-13 overall mark. The Lady Redskins are currently tied with Monticello for sixth in 8-AA following a victory over Oglethorpe County and a split with the aforementioned Lady Canes.

As for Monticello, they paid a visit to Union County on Friday night and the Lady Panthers jumped out to a 25-0 lead, en route to a 62-38 victory. On Tuesday, Union County held off a late comeback bid at Elbert County, surviving 49-45 behind 22 points from sophomore Ava Hunter.

Lady Panthers 49, Elbert County 45 - The Lady Panthers led 25-12 at the intermission and 37-24 after three



Junior Kyla Locklear scored 8 points during the first half of Union County's win over Monticello. Photo/Todd Forrest

before the Lady Blue Devils made it a game in the fourth, outscoring Union 21-12 over the final eight minutes.

With senior point guard Brooke Dockrey on the bench with five fouls, Elbert kept things interesting but Hunter and Kait McCarter did enough to secure the win.

The post duo accounted for all four of Union's fourth-quarter field goals as the Lady Panthers struggled to make free throws, going just 4-for-9 down the stretch.

Despite battling foul trou-

ble in the second half, Hunter finished with 22 points, 12 rebounds and two blocks. McCarter was one point shy of a double-double with 9 points, 11 rebounds and a block.

Dockrey scored 6 points, Ellie Cook added 5 points, Riley Allison had 4 points and three boards, while Andelin Hill finished with 3 points, 11 boards, four assists, three blocks and two steals.

Lady Panthers 62, Monticello 38 - Union County scored the game's first 25 points as they made quick work of the Lady



Freshman Ellie Cook scored 9 points in Union County's 62-38 victory over Monticello on Friday night. Photo/Todd Forrest

Hurricanes prior to Saturday's trip to Putnam County.

Hunter scored all of her team-high 10 points in the first half while Cook added nine and Kyla Locklear scored eight.

The Lady Panthers outscored Monticello 24-0 in the first before Locklear split a pair of free throws to begin the second-quarter. Union would eventually extend its lead to 45-10 at the break as Hill scored all of her 7 points in the first half.

All of Locklear's 8 points came in the opening 16 minutes, as did McCarter's 4 points. The

only Lady Panther starter to score in the second half was Cook, who scored seven of her nine in the first half.

Freshman Corinne Hill scored 5 points after the break and Rebekah Chambers added four as Union held a 58-29 lead after three. Riley Allison, Ansley Collins and Ivie Chapman also contributed to the second-half scoring effort.

Lady Panthers 45, Putnam County 61 - Union fell behind 18-9 after a quarter but rallied for a 25-25 tie before the Lady War Eagles closed the half on a 10-2 run and never looked back.

"We missed a lot of easy opportunities at the beginning and that led to our slow start," Beach said. "We kept battling back, but in the end, it just wasn't a good day for us on the court."

Early foul trouble plagued the Lady Panthers as Dockrey, Hunter and McCarter were limited with two early fouls and Allison picked up three quick fouls.

"The foul trouble really limited our defensive options, especially when you play an

aggressive defense like ours," Beach said. "Anytime you have your starters and the people coming in behind them in foul trouble, it's never a good thing. We tried (subbing) our girls in and out but when you have that much foul trouble early on it's just really tough."

Putnam extended its margin to 48-34 after three quarters as senior Jashanti Simmons poured in a game-high 27 points.

"What made matters worse was Putnam County is a great team and they made their free throws," Beach said. "Being able to make free throws helped them start, and also extend a few of their runs."

Hill led Union County with 12 points and Hunter finished with 10.

McCarter added eight, Cook had six and Dockrey scored five. Allison and Locklear chipped in 2 points apiece.

Up next - Union County hosts Social Circle at 5 p.m. Tuesday. The Lady Panthers won the early-season road matchup 56-24 over the Lady Redskins.

On Friday, Union will look to end a losing skid to Rabun County - a place they haven't won since defeating the Lady Cats in the 2009 Region 8-AA Championship game. Earlier this month, the Lady Panthers fell short, missing two free throws with 2.8 seconds left while trailing Rabun County by two. The Lady Cats would go on to win 50-46.

The Union County-Putnam County rematch will be Saturday at 3 p.m. The Lady War Eagles face Oglethorpe County and Monticello this week so they should enter Saturday's contest with only one region loss.

As for Rabun, they travel to Elbert County on Tuesday and should also remain atop the standings when they face the Lady Panthers at 6:30 p.m. Friday.

"We've got a few things we need to tweak but we still feel good," Beach said. "That loss (at Putnam) was not for the region championship, it was just a slight detour on the way to our goal. We're ready to get back out there and do what we need to do to win some games."



Sophomore Riley Allison hits the floor while diving for a loose ball during Union County's win over Monticello on Friday night. Photo/Todd Forrest

UCHS student Aliceyn Covington makes Georgia's All State Band



Aliceyn Covington, Union County High School student, has been selected as first chair in the Young Harris College Honor Band, she has made GMEA District 9 Honor band for the past 2 years, and she is alternate Horn for the Governors Honors Program (GHP). Aliceyn is truly an elite musician. N/Jan22,2020/CA

2020 Baseball and Softball Registration opens at the Union County Recreation Department January 13th - February 21st
Age 5-14 Fee: \$55
AGE CONTROL DATE HAS CHANGED
Age you are on 9/1/20 is the age group you play in.



- 5-6 Coed T-ball
- 7-8 Girls Machine Pitch
- 7-8 Boys Machine Pitch
- 9-10 Softball/Baseball
- 11-12 Softball/Baseball
- 13-14 Softball/Baseball

You may register at the Union County Recreation Department located at 310 Wellborn Street or online at unioncountyga.gov. Please call 706-439-6074 with any questions.



When: Saturday, February 8, 2020
Time: 6 PM-9 PM at North Georgia Technical College
Cost: \$50 per couple
\$20 for each additional daughter
Tickets are limited and must be purchased in advance only at the Union County Recreation Office located at 310 Wellborn Street.
Dinner, dancing, and limo rides are included.
Dressy attire is suggested. Pictures are an additional fee.
Please call 706-439-6074 with any questions.

UCHS Basketball lends an assist to Ferst Readers



Earlier this month, the Union County boys and girls high school basketball teams stepped off the hardwood to offer a helping hand to young readers in the community. UCHS Basketball hosted their First Annual Youth Literacy Fundraiser for Ferst Readers of Union County. The basketball teams were able to raise \$355 to help provide books to local children. The Union County Ferst Foundation provides free books in the mail each month to children in Union County from birth to age 5. For more details, you can visit ferstreaders.org



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