

Sports

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Soccer: Lady Panthers use balanced scoring in 10-0 blowout of Tri-County

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The Union County Lady Panthers didn't show any signs of rust following a two-week break and picked up their second victory over Tri-County Early College (NC) in 14 days.

On March 27, the Lady Panthers jumped ahead early and coasted to a 9-0 win in Murphy, NC. During last Tuesday's meeting, Union County scored eight first-half goals before finishing them off via "mercy rule" with a pair of goals less than four minutes into the second half.

Madison Yost recorded the hat trick with two first-half goals and one second-half goal.

Senior Layne Baenninger finished with a pair of goals - both coming in the first half - while Maddie Sutton recorded the other second-half goal.

Senior goalkeeper Emmi Schakat scored the first goal of her career during the first half, joining Brenna Innis, Mattie Ruff, and Gracie Bridges as the remaining first-half goal scorers.

The following day, Union County hosted White County and fell 6-0 to the Lady Warriors, who are currently the third-place team in Region 7-AAAA.

On Wednesday at 5 p.m., the Lady Panthers will visit Towns County (7-3, 3-1), who travel to Wesleyan on Tuesday



Senior Emmi Schakat scores her first career goal. Photo/Todd Forrest

where a win grants home field advantage to the Lady Indians in the first round of state.

The season concludes on Friday when Union County hosts Gilmer for Senior Night. The Lady Panthers get underway at 5 p.m. with the festivities to take place immediately following the girls game.

The boys' contest will begin as soon as the ceremony

concludes.

The Gilmer game was originally scheduled for March but was postponed until Apr. 20.

The Lady Bobcats are currently 1-7-1 with two losses to Fannin County by a combined score of 9-2.

Their tie came vs East Hall and the lone win was a 3-1 victory over Pickens.

Soccer: Ives' goal enough as Panthers shutout White County 1-0

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It seems all the Panthers needed was a little time off.

Following a 19-day hiatus, Union County (3-8-1) returned to action with a 1-0 victory over a seven-win White County (7-8-1) squad that owns a pair of wins over Lumpkin County and a 6-0 victory over Riverside Military Academy - two squads that had previously defeated the Panthers by a combined score of 10-1.

The only scoring of the evening came via a Colby Ives goal off an assist from Cesar Velador and David Van Pelt.

Up next for the Panthers is a road contest vs rival Towns County, who, at 0-10, is still looking for its first win of the season.

Common opponents between Union and Towns are Lumpkin County (beat Towns 7-0; beat UC 4-0), Rabun County (beat TC 7-1; UC won 2-0), and Riverside Military Academy (beat TC 6-0; beat UC 6-1).

The girls' contest is scheduled for 5 p.m. with the guys to follow.

The season will conclude on Friday when Union County hosts Gilmer for Senior Night. The girls get underway at 5 p.m. with the ceremony set to take place between the two games.

The Bobcats, from Region 6-AAAA, are currently 4-7 overall and 2-4 in region play. Common opponents in-



Colby Ives scored the only goal of the day vs White. Photo/Todd Forrest

clude East Hall (beat GC 3-0; beat UC 6-0), Fannin County (beat GC 2-0; beat UC 1-0 and 2-1), and Pickens (beat GC 6-1;

tied UC 1-1).

Gilmer also owns a 4-2 win over Towns County from March 16.

Union offense unable to keep pace with Rebels during three-game sweep

Panthers rally from 6-1 deficit to take a 10-6 victory at Rabun Gap

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The Panthers' recent struggles continued last week as they allowed 29 runs to Fannin County in three Region 7-AAA losses to the Rebels.

In the series opener on Tuesday, Union County got one in the first and two in the second before giving up seven runs in the bottom half of the second.

Trailing 11-3 after four, the Panthers made it a game once again with four runs in the fifth before the Rebels quickly put the visitors away with five runs in the bottom half of the inning and one more in the sixth - ending the game via mercy rule at 17-7.

Game two was the first half of a Friday doubleheader in Blairsville and it was all even at 2-2 heading into the sixth, where Fannin grabbed the lead with a run in the top half of the inning.

The Panthers answered with a run of their own to even things at 3-3 but the Rebels exploded for four runs in the top of the seventh to hand Union a 7-3 defeat.

Looking to avoid the sweep, the Panthers scored two in the third for a 2-0 advantage in game three. Union County would eventually surrender the lead by allowing three runs in the fifth, one in the sixth and another in the seventh during a 5-2 loss.

The bright spot of the week came Monday at Rabun Gap when Union overcame a 6-1 deficit, capped off by a six-run seventh that saw the Panthers send 10 batters to the plate.

Panthers 10, Rabun Gap 6 - DILLARD - Trailing 6-4, Union County put up six runs in its final at-bat to secure its eighth win of the season.

Jonathan Everett sparked the rally by beating out a nice back-handed play by the Eagles second baseman on a grounder up the middle. Up next was junior Hunter Kelley, who was plunked by a 1-0 pitch, putting the tying run aboard.

Coleson Daniel advanced the runners with a sacrifice bunt then Everett scored on an RBI groundout by Alec Scott.

With two down and Kelley at third, sophomore Cayden Rich worked the count full before ripping a base hit into left field - tying the score at 6-6.

Logan Dyer followed with an RBI double, scoring pinch runner John Mancuso and



Sophomore infielder Cayden Rich drives in the game-tying run during Union County's seventh inning rally at Rabun Gap. Photo/Todd Forrest

giving the Panthers their first lead of the day with two down in the seventh.

After a Patrick Baggett single to right scored Dyer, Pierson Allison brought him home with an error.

Ean Harkins delivered the last of the damage with a double to right, scoring Allison and spotting Union a 10-6 lead.

Daniel nailed down the win by striking out two during a perfect seventh inning. The junior entered in the third with the bases loaded and his team trailing 3-1.

After allowing three inherited runners to score on a wild pitch and a single, Daniel settled down and allowed just two hits over the final four innings.

In 4.2 innings, he surrendered three hits and didn't allow a walk while fanning seven batters.

The bottom four hitters in the Union lineup combined to finish 11-of-14 (.786) with seven RBIs.

Rich went 2-for-4 with three RBIs. Dyer was 3-for-4 with two runs and an RBI. Baggett also went 3-for-4 while scoring twice and driving in a pair. Meanwhile, Del Ruff finished 3-for-3 with an RBI from the No. 9 spot in the order.

Harkins, Everett, Daniel,

Allison, and Banton all finished with one hit apiece.

As for Banton, the senior right-hander got the start on the mound and worked 2.1 innings, allowing five hits and five earned runs, while walking two and striking out one.

Mancuso scored three times as a courtesy/pinch runner.

Trailing 1-0 in the second, the Panthers tied the score when Banton led off with a double and Rich eventually scored him with a grounder to first.

Down 6-1 after three, Union got one back in the fourth with a double by Daniel and a base hit from Rich.

The Panthers made it a 6-4 game with two runs in the sixth. Back-to-back two-out doubles by Dyer and Baggett brought home one run, then Ruff singled to center to plate the second run.

Panthers 7, Fannin 17 - BLUE RIDGE - A seven-run second and a five-run fifth was more than enough for the Rebels, who took game one by the football score of 17-7.

Both teams churned out 10 hits each but eight Union County errors proved too much to overcome.

The Panthers struck first when Kelley brought home Dyer by beating out a potential



Junior Coleson Daniel recorded the win at Rabun Gap by holding the Eagles scoreless over the final 4.2 innings. Photo/Todd Forrest

double-play on a grounder to third.

Two hits and two errors resulted in two Rebels runs in the bottom of the first but Union answered with two of its own in the second.

Banton battled his way aboard with a bases-loaded walk - scoring Baggett, who also walked. Then an error off the bat of Daniel allowed Harkins, who singled with one down, to score and give Union a 3-2 advantage.

The lead was short-lived, however, as Fannin sent 13 batters to the plate in its half of the second.

Four walks, three singles, and two errors allowed the Rebels to seize control by a 9-3 margin through two innings.

After Fannin tacked on two runs in the fourth via a throwing error, the Panthers closed the gap with four in the fifth.

A two-run, two-out single by Baggett was followed by RBI singles from Harkins and Dyer to pull Union within four at 11-7.

Once again, the Rebels immediately crushed any dreams of a rally with a 5-spot in the bottom half of the inning.

This time, five walks, a hit batter, a single, and a double led to five Fannin County runs.

They would end the game in the sixth with consecutive doubles to open up a 10-run lead and invoke the mercy rule.

Cole Davis worked the first 1.2 innings, allowing nine runs - two earned, five hits, and four walks.

Jackson Colwell tossed the final 3.1 innings, surrendering eight runs - six earned, six walks, and five hits.

Harkins finished 3-for-4 with two runs at the dish. Candler Colwell was 2-for-4 with a run and Baggett ended up 1-for-2 with two runs and two RBIs.

Panthers 3, Fannin 7 - All square through six, the Rebels reeled off four runs in the seventh to hand Union County a heartbreaking defeat.

Two walks and a bunt single loaded the bases for Fannin with one down in the seventh. Then a walk, a two-run single, and an RBI groundout produced four Rebel runs in the final inning.

The Panthers put two runners on in the bottom half of the inning but were unable to generate any more offense.

Trailing 1-0 in the first, Dyer reached on a fielder's choice then scored on an error to even the score.

Union took a 2-1 lead in the third when Harkins singled and scored off a base hit by

Ruff. Fannin tied things up in the fourth, then took the lead in the sixth with an RBI double.

The Panthers answered in the bottom of the sixth when Davis singled to lead off the inning and Dyer scored him with a sacrifice fly.

Union out-hit the Rebels 9-8 behind a 3-for-4 day from Harkins. Daniel went 2-for-3 while Dyer, Banton, Ruff, and Davis added one hit each.

Allison pitched into the sixth inning, allowing six hits, three runs - two earned, and three walks in 5.1 innings.

Rich gave up four earned runs on two hits and three walks in one inning of work. Everett tossed 2/3 of an inning, inducing a groundout and picking off a runner.

Panthers 2, Fannin 5 - Union struck first in the series finale with two runs in the third but it wasn't enough as they were limited to just three hits in a 5-2 loss.

After consecutive one-out singles by Scott and Baggett, a Harkins bunt resulted in a Rebel error and a Panther run.

Following a walk to Dyer, Banton scored Baggett with a sacrifice fly, spotting Union a 2-0 advantage.

The 2-0 score would hold up until the fifth when Fannin broke through for three runs.

Back-to-back one-out walks, a sacrifice fly, a triple, and an error put the Rebels on top for good at 3-2.

They added an insurance run in the sixth with a walk and a triple. Then Fannin tacked on one more run with a single and a double in the seventh.

Scott provided two of the three Union hits while Baggett went 1-for-3 with a run. Mancuso scored a run and Banton drove in a run.

Harkins started and worked four shutout innings - striking out five and walking one. Everett went 2/3 of an inning, allowing three runs - two earned on a hit and two walks.

Zeke Swartz faced one batter and recorded a strike-out.

Daniel tossed the final two innings, yielding two earned runs on three hits.

Looking ahead - Union wraps up the season this week with a three-game series vs East Hall.

On Tuesday the Panthers host Senior Night at 4:45 p.m. On Wednesday, they visit East Hall before returning home Friday for the season finale. The first pitch is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. in all three games.