

Offensive struggles plague Lady Panthers in consecutive region losses

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The Lady Panthers began last week in a tie for fourth place but following two losses, Union County finds itself tied for sixth with Elbert County -- who began the week two games back of the Lady Panthers.

Still without starting point guard Brooke Dockrey, the Union County offense struggled against Elbert County's full-court pressure defense in a 33-22 loss on Tuesday.

Later in the week, the Lady Panthers traveled to Monticello, where they were hoping to keep pace with the fourth place Lady Hurricanes but came up on the wrong end of a 52-38 score.

Lady Panthers 38, Monticello 52 - Once again the Union County offense struggled to put up points as they found themselves trailing 11-6 after one and 14-10 at the half before Monticello began pulling away in the third period.

Unfortunately, the defense was the culprit in the second half as the Lady Hurricanes scored as many points in the third and fourth quarters (38) as Union County did all game.

The third was all Monticello as they took a 33-23 advantage into the fourth before scoring the first five points of the final frame for a 38-23 lead.

Adeline Dockrey and Andelin Hill would both foul out in the fourth as the Lady Panthers were unable to mount a rally.

McCarter poured in a game-high 19 points -- 15 in the second half -- but didn't receive enough support as Ava Hunter added seven and Brooke Dockrey scored six in her return.

Adeline Dockrey finished with three before picking up her fifth foul while Hill was held to a season-low 3 points - coming on a fourth quarter trey.

Meanwhile, after scoring just one point vs Elbert, the Lady Panther bench was held scoreless at Monticello. Going into last week's Elbert County contest, the Union bench was contributing almost 7 points a game.

Lady Panthers 22, Elbert County 33 - The Lady Panthers (11-8, 4-5) fell victim to a 5-13 Elbert County squad last Tuesday night at home, handing Union County its first major upset since returning to Region 8-AA.

Entering last week's contest, the Lady Blue Devils were just 2-5 in region play with its wins coming over Social Circle and Oglethorpe County -- two teams that (as of this writing) are a combined 0-14 in region play and 5-26 overall.

In the previous meeting -- at Elbert County last month -- the Lady Panthers dominated from start-to-finish in a 57-40 victory. The second time around, Union County came out flat but still managed to take a 14-14 tie into the break.

The first quarter saw the Lady Panthers hold a 5-4 lead with 3 points from Hunter and one free throw apiece from McCarter and Riley Allison.

The second opened with buckets by Adeline Dockrey and Hunter followed by a Hill three for a 12-7 Union lead at the midway point of the period.

The Lady Blue Devils



Junior Kait McCarter scored a game-high 19 points in the loss at Monticello. Photo/Todd Forrest



Adelin Hill boxes out on an Elbert free throw attempt. Photo/Todd Forrest

responded with a 7-0 run to take a 14-12 lead with 2:29 left in the half but a Hill layup tied the score on the ensuing possession.

Things would only go downhill from there as the Lady Panthers could muster only eight points after halftime. Union County would finish 9-of-36 (25-percent) from the floor, 1-for-13 (8-percent) from 3-point range and 3-for-13 (23-percent) at the foul line.

The Lady Panthers' lone basket of the third was on a post-up by Hunter at the 3:59 mark to keep Union within three at 19-16. After nearly two minutes without any scoring from either squad, Elbert converted a turnover into a layup at the 2-minute mark, followed by a three moments later to take a 24-16 advantage into the fourth.

Seventy seconds into the fourth, the Lady Blue Devils opened up a 10-point lead at 26-16 before the Lady Panthers tried to make things interesting with a 6-0 spurt that included a pair of buckets by McCarter and a turn-around jumper from Hunter. Unfortunately, Union would go 0-for-5 at the line in the final period and Elbert County would outscore Union County 5-0 over the final 82 seconds to secure the victory.

The Lady Panthers were out-rebounded 33-30 and turned it over 16 times, resulting in 16 Elbert County points. Meanwhile, the Lady Blue Devils coughed it up 12 times, leading to 8 Union County points.

Hunter was the points leader with nine on 4-of-12 shooting and 1-for-6 at the line. The freshman post also hauled in 6 boards with 2 steals and a blocked shot.

Hill finished with 5 points on 2-of-7 shooting, along with 4 steals, 3 rebounds and a block. McCarter also scored 5 points to go with a team-best 9 rebounds on 2-of-6 from the floor; Adeline Dockrey chipped in 2 points with a team-high 5 assists and 3

boards. Allison added one point, 2 rebounds, 1 assist and a steal.

The Lady Blue Devils shot 13-for-42 (31-percent) from the floor, 2-for-9 (22-percent) from three and 5-of-8 (63-percent) at the line.

Union's 22 points is the lowest scoring output under second-year head coach Corey Garrett and the fewest scored since a 42-21 loss at East Hall on Jan. 3, 2017. Twenty-two points are the lowest home total since a 70-20 loss -- also to East Hall -- during the 2010-11 season.

Big Picture: Since dropping three of four in region play, Union County has fallen into a sixth-place tie with Elbert County. Of the two, the Lady Panthers have the easier remaining schedule with both Social Circle and Oglethorpe County left along with Rabun, Banks and Putnam.

As for Elbert, they have Social Circle plus Rabun, Banks, Putnam and Monticello.

Regardless of whether Union earns the No. 5 or No. 6 seed, they would draw Monticello, Banks or Putnam, who are all tied for second place, in the first round.

However, the No. 5 seed would face Rabun County in the second round while the No. 6 seed would get whoever places second out of Monticello, Banks or Putnam -- should the sixth-seed upset the three seed in the first round.

Looking ahead: Following Tuesday's meeting at struggling Social Circle, the Lady Panthers return home to face first-place Rabun County before traveling to Putnam County on Saturday where the Lady War Eagles will have revenge on their minds after Union County handed them their first region loss of the season.

Tuesday's game will begin at 5 p.m. while Friday's rematch with Rabun will tip-off at 7 p.m. Saturday's visit to Putnam gets underway at 3 p.m.



Freshman post Ava Hunter goes up for two vs Elbert County last Tuesday. Photo/Todd Forrest



Freshman guard Riley Allison feeds the post with a bounce pass vs Elbert County. Photo/Todd Forrest



Adeline Dockrey (right) and Brooke Dockrey embrace during pre-game introductions. Photo/Todd Forrest

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