

Sports

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Lady Panthers wrap up regular season with consecutive wins

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Union County (14-10, 7-7) secured the No. 5 seed in this week's Region 8-AA Tournament with victories at Banks County and over Oglethorpe County.

With winter weather in the forecast for Tuesday, Jan. 29, the Lady Panthers' trip to second place Banks County was postponed a day. As a result, Union County went into the matchup after learning the news that sixth place Elbert County had upset third place Putnam County on Tuesday, forcing a tie for fifth which would most likely require a coin toss to settle.

With their backs against the wall and needing an upset of their own to keep Elbert County in the rearview mirror, the Lady Panthers delivered at Banks County behind a strong fourth quarter from freshman Ava Hunter.

Lady Panthers 39, Banks County 36 -- Union County overcame a cold start to rally from 10-down and stun the 20-win Lady Leopards on Wednesday afternoon in Homer.

"We've known that we're capable of doing big things all season," Union County coach Corey Garrett said. "And when we played (Banks) at home we were right there with them going into the fourth quarter. We were right there with Rabun County too so we know what we're capable of doing, it's just as we going to do it."

Hunter scored eight of her team's 12 fourth-quarter points -- including the last six -- as the Lady Panthers outscored Banks County 8-3 over the final three minutes, 13 seconds.

All tied up approaching the midway point of the fourth, the Lady Leopards took a 33-31 lead with 4:32 to play. Hunter would pull Union within a point by splitting a turn at the line, followed by a turnaround base line jumper -- giving the Lady Panthers a one-point lead with 2:31 remaining.

A minute later Hunter hit 1-of-2 at the line for a 35-33 advantage but Banks County responded with a clutch three to retake the lead, 36-35 with 1:15 left.

Still down a point, Hunter went to work in the post and drew a foul on a late-arriving defender with 19.6 seconds to play. After hitting both freebies to put her team up a point, the Lady Panthers, who had a foul to give, hacked the ball handler on the perimeter with 14 seconds left, forcing the Lady Leopards to inbound from in front of their own bench. Following a timeout, Banks was able to get a



Senior Adeline Dockrey with family. During the postgame interview, Dockrey thanked her mother for "being the best role model and teacher that she's ever had." Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Cheerleader Joshlyn Pouncey with family. Photo/Todd Forrest

decent look at a tray but the shot misfired and they were unable to secure the offensive rebound, losing it out-of-bounds with under 3 seconds remaining.

Junior point guard Brooke Dockrey was immediately fouled and sent to the line with 1.7 seconds left, where she sank both shots to give her squad a 39-36 advantage.

Banks' fullcourt desperation heave missed everything and Union County escaped with the victory and a firm grasp on fifth place.

In the early-going, the Lady Leopards came out red hot from downtown, sinking three treys in the first five minutes for a 15-7 advantage. Banks County sank a pair of free throws early in the second to open up a 17-7 lead before knocking down consecutive threes for leads of 20-10 and 23-13.

On the other end, junior Kait McCarter did her best to keep the Lady Panthers in the game, connecting on a pair of triples before Brooke Dockrey got in on the 3-point barrage, drilling a corner-three, then sinking 1-of-2 at the line to pull Union within six at 23-17. McCarter scored on a putback at 1:40 before halftime and Hunter

split a pair of free throws 30 seconds later for a 23-20 score at the break.

Union County used seven free throws to outscore the Lady Leopards 7-4 in a low scoring third quarter as the two teams entered the fourth all square at 27-27. McCarter got the second half scoring underway with a 1-for-2 trip, followed by two free throws from Brooke Dockrey to knot the score at 23-23.

Banks countered with consecutive baskets for a 27-23 lead but McCarter sank 2-of-2 with 1:27 left in the period. Brooke Dockrey converted a turnover into a pair of free throws to even the score with 55 seconds on the clock.

Trailing 28-27, Hunter used an offensive board to give Union its first lead of the game at 29-28 with 6:16 remaining. Banks answered with a deuce on the ensuing possession but Andelin Hill quickly responded with another putback at the 5:34 mark.

The Lady Leopards hit 1-of-2 to even the score with 5:18 remaining. Following two Lady Panther misses at the charity stripe, Banks County scored in the paint for a 33-31 advantage with 4:32 to play.

Hunter led Union County with 13 points on 7-of-10 at the line and 6 rebounds. McCarter added 11 points -- eight in the first half -- along with a team-high 7 boards and 4 steals.

Brooke Dockrey finished with 10 points and 4 assists on 7-of-8 shooting from the foul line. Hill chipped in 5 points while Adeline Dockrey had 3 rebounds and a steal.

Lady Panthers 69, Oglethorpe County 23 - Union County scored the first 17 points as they made quick work of the last-place Lady Patriots on Senior Night to finish at 7-7 in Region 8-AA.

The Lady Panthers



Senior Brianna Hemphill with family. Photo/Todd Forrest

REGION 8-AA TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE - GIRLS

Tuesday, Feb. 5 @ Rabun County

GAME 1: 4:00 - No. 6 Elbert County vs No. 3 Putnam County
GAME 2: 5:30 - No. 7 Social Circle vs No. 2 Banks County
GAME 3: 7:00 - No. 5 Union County vs No. 4 Monticello
GAME 4: 8:30 - No. 8 Oglethorpe County vs No. 1 Rabun County

Thursday, Feb. 7 @ Elbert County

4:00 - Winners of Game 1 and Game 2
7:00 - Winners of Game 3 and Game 4

Friday, Feb. 8 @ Elbert County

4:00 - Region 8-AA Consolation Game (Losers of Thursday games)
7:00 - Region 8-AA Championship Game (Winners of Thursday games)

opened up a 34-4 second quarter advantage en route to a 36-9 halftime lead.

"It wasn't exactly what I expected," senior Adeline Dockrey said when asked about taking the floor on Senior Night. "We were able to score a lot of points and it was an easy win, but at the same time, it was a little sadder than I thought it would be."

McCarter accounted for 10 first-half points as seven different players reached the scoring column during the first two quarters. Sophomore Kyla Locklear scored all six of her points in the first half while senior Brianna Hemphill, Hunter and Hill each scored five by the intermission.

Freshman Landry Baenninger, Ansley Collins and Emma Roxbury each connected from long distance in the second half while fellow freshman Rebekah Chambers scored 5 points in the final frame.

McCarter finished with a game-high 17 points plus 7 boards and 2 steals. Hunter

scored 11 points with 5 rebounds and a pair of assists. Brooke Dockrey had 6 points, 4 steals and 2 assists; Locklear pulled down a game-high 11 rebounds to go with her 6 points while Hemphill finished with 6 points and 2 steals.

Hill scored 5 points while grabbing 7 boards; Chambers also had 5 points to go with 5 rebounds. Collins scored 4 points; Adeline Dockrey had 3 points, 4 assists, 3 rebounds and 2 steals.

Baenninger finished with 3 points while Roxbury ended up with 3 points and 2 rebounds. Freshman Riley Allison had 2 assists, a steal and a blocked shot. Junior Adelia Pyle hauled in 3 rebounds to go with 2 assists.

Up Next: Union County begins region tournament play at 7 p.m. Tuesday when they take on the No. 4 seed Monticello at Rabun County. A win on Tuesday will secure a state playoff berth and setup a third meeting with first place Rabun County at 7 p.m. Thursday in

Elberton. "Hopefully we are peaking at the right time and I truly believe that we're a team that people should watch out for in the region tournament.

"Of course, we have to win that first game, but after that point, we're playing with house money."

Adeline Dockrey echoed her coach's comments.

"It's all about reaching state and then hopefully playing for a region title, those are our two main goals at this point," she said.

Friday's region consolation game will be at 4 p.m. while the region title game is scheduled for 7 p.m., both in Elberton.

Union County's season is over with a loss to Monticello on Tuesday.

"The girls are in good spirits so I think we're in a good spot," Garrett added after the Oglethorpe County win. "Hopefully we can surprise some teams."

2019 Baseball and Softball registration opens at the Union County Recreation Department January 7th - February 15th for ages 3-14. Fee: \$55

3-4 Coed Start Smart-parent participation is required.

5-6 Coed T-ball 11-12 Softball

7-8 Girls Machine Pitch 11-12 Baseball

7-8 Boys Machine Pitch 13-14 Softball

9-10 Softball 13-14 Baseball

9-10 Baseball

Three UCHS students named to GMEA All State band



Union County High School band members Eli Reeves, Leilani Schroeder, and Aliceyn Covington were selected for the GMEA All State band. Reeves made second chair trumpet in the 11/12 orchestra. Covington made first chair in the 9/10 concert band. Schroeder made eighth chair in the 11/12 Symphonic Band.



Freshman Ava Hunter gives Union County the lead at Banks County with 19.6 seconds left. Photo/Todd Forrest



Kait McCarter looks for room vs Oglethorpe Co. The junior post finished with 17 points. Photo/Todd Forrest