

# Sports

See the Sports Section at [nganews.com](http://nganews.com)

## Softball: Lady Panthers blank Monticello in Region 8-AA opener

Union County wins three straight before falling to East Hall, Stephens County

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
[sports@nganews.com](mailto:sports@nganews.com)

Behind a career day from Trinity Queen, Union County opened Region 8-AA with a 2-0 victory over Class AA powerhouse Monticello.

The Lady Panthers' junior ace not only fired a one-hit shutout, she came through with a two-out, RBI double in the bottom of the sixth to break a scoreless tie.

Following a Hannah Patton RBI single that made it a 2-0 game, Queen worked a perfect seventh for her team's third consecutive victory of the week.

"We won three games last week but the Monticello game is the one that counts," Union head coach Stephen Mitchell said. "I was proud of our kids for the way they hung in there and found a way to win."

"I thought Trinity (Queen) pitched as well as she has all year. She shut down a very good team and I'm just proud of them for grinding it out."

On Monday, Union County defeated Gilmer and ended a three-game skid with a 4-2 win. Two days later, they were back on the road, this time waxing Pickens County by a 7-1 margin behind a 4-for-4 day from senior Mary Wischmeyer.

Following the shutout of Monticello on Thursday and sitting at 4-4 on the year, Union County traveled to East Hall for a doubleheader with the Vikings and Stephens County. When it was all said and done, the Lady Panthers dropped both games, falling to 4-6 following an 8-0 loss to East Hall and a 3-2 loss to Stephens.

In the loss to East Hall, the Vikings got two runs in the first, five in the third and one in the fifth before ending the game early with a scoreless sixth inning. Aubrie Banton, Lexie



The Union County dugout erupts in celebration after Trinity Queen's RBI double gives the Lady Panthers a 1-0 lead over Monticello in the bottom of the sixth inning. Photo/Todd Forrest

Sisum and Patton each recorded one hit apiece for the Lady Panthers. Banton and Miranda Lockaby also drew walks.

"East Hall was a little bit too much for us," Mitchell said. "They might be the best team we play all year."

Against Stephens, a pair of runs in the first and one in the third proved too much for Union County to overcome as they trailed 3-0 entering the sixth before finally getting on the board. Back-to-back two-out singles had the Lady Panthers in business during the sixth, and following an error off the bat of Lockaby, it was a base hit from Queen that broke up the shutout.

In the seventh, a leadoff walk, a passed ball and an RBI single from Ansley Collins put the tying run aboard with one down before a fielder's choice and a strikeout ended the Lady Panther threat and the game.

Mary Wischmeyer finished 2-for-4, Queen and Collins both recorded an RBI single and Caley Davis ended up 1-for-2.

After giving up a leadoff double to Monticello in the top of the first, Queen retired 21 of the next 23 Hurricane batters she faced, with the only two runners reaching via a walk and an error.

A Queen single in the bottom half of the second, a Davis single in the third and a Sisum base hit in the fourth was all the offense Union County could muster through four innings.

The Lady Panthers' best scoring opportunity came in the fifth when a walk, a single and an error loaded the bases but Monticello escaped by inducing a two-out tapper back to the pitcher.

Union finally broke through in the sixth after the

first two batters were retired but a two-out single by Lockaby kept the inning alive. That's when Queen delivered with a double into the left-centerfield gap as Lockaby came around to score from first.

With Queen advancing to third on the throw to the plate, a base hit by Patton easily scored an insurance run, making it 2-0.

And with the way the junior right-hander was dealing, two runs was plenty.

Queen and Patton both went 2-for-3 with an RBI. Sisum, Lockaby and Davis each tacked on one hit apiece.

Earlier in the week, Union County defeated Gilmer, 4-2 behind another gem from Queen, who scattered seven hits and allowed two earned in the Lady Panther victory. The Bobcat runs came in the second and sixth innings, allowing them to take a 1-0 advantage

into the fourth where a leadoff double by Wischmeyer plus RBI singles from Sisum and Queen gave Union a 2-1 lead.

"I think (Queen) is starting to come around (at the plate) which is very important because she's a large part of what we're trying to do," Mitchell said. "She and Megan (Bright) have both worked on their pitching too. They've really worked on cutting down the walks, and when you combine that with improved defense over last year, that's been the key to our success."

Union made it 4-1 in the fifth when Davis singled to open the frame and Kelley brought her in with an RBI single. Later, Wischmeyer doubled off a 3-1 pitch to drive in Kelley.

On Wednesday, the Lady Panthers picked up a victory at Pickens after breaking open a 1-1 tie with one in the second,

two in the third, two in the fourth and one in the fifth. Wischmeyer drove in a pair and scored once during a 4-for-4 performance at the dish. Sisum was 2-for-4 with a run; Queen scored twice while finishing 1-for-4. Davis and Emma Roxbury each went 1-for-3 with a run and one RBI; Lockaby was 1-for-4 with an RBI.

Megan Bright got the start in the circle and tossed a two-hitter, allowing no earned runs and striking out five.

Union County resumes region play when they visit Elbert County on Tuesday. First pitch is slated for 5:30 p.m. On Thursday they will welcome Putnam County to Blairsville for another region showdown at 5:30 p.m.

"Elbert is tough and I expect them to be better than they were last year," Mitchell said. "Last year they came up here (during the region tournament) and fought us every bit of the way until the very end. I expect the same thing so we better be ready to play or we're going to find ourselves back in the middle of the pack (in the region standings)."

"The region is better this year than it was last year and all we're worried about is just getting in (the top four)."

Business will pick up in Region 8-AA early next month when the Lady Panthers face the State Champion and State Runner-Up in consecutive Region 8-AA meetings. Union will visit Social Circle on Sept. 5 before returning home to host Banks County on Sept. 10. Both games are slated for 5:30 p.m.

"That's why it's so extremely important to get two wins this week (vs Elbert and Putnam)," Mitchell added. "There are six or seven good teams in our region so we're going to have to find a way to finish in the top four. That's all there is to it."

## Volleyball: Union defeats Stephens, equals win total from last two years

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
[sports@nganews.com](mailto:sports@nganews.com)

With a 2-0 victory over Stephens County, Union County Volleyball has won as many matches (three) this season as they did in the previous two years combined.

Following a tough start to the week that included 2-0 losses to Fannin County and Gilmer, along with a 3-1 loss to Hiwassee Dam, North Carolina, the Panthers bounced back in Thursday's home tri-match with a 2-0 win over Class AAAA Stephens County.

In the first set, Union County edged the Indians, 25-21 before taking the second set by a slightly more comfortable 25-17 margin.

In the finale of Thursday's tri-match, the Panthers once again came out on the wrong end of a 2-0 defeat to Fannin County.

Following a fairly competitive first set loss of 25-17, the Rebels turned it on in the second set and scored a quick 25-9 victory.

The loss drops Union County to 3-7 on the year, which is still a major improvement over the 0-10 mark after their first 10 games of last season.



Adelia Pyle vs Fannin County at home Thursday. Photo/Todd Forrest

On Tuesday, the Panthers host the 2-15 Pickens Dragons in a very winnable match. Pickens has already lost twice to Murray County, who Union County defeated in straight sets.

On Thursday, Aug. 29, the Panthers are scheduled to

visit East Hall where they will face the Vikings at 5 p.m., followed by Johnson-Gainesville at 6 p.m. and Eastside at 7 p.m..

Tuesday night's matchup with Pickens is scheduled for a 7 p.m. start.



Union County volleyball in action during last Thursday's tri-match. Photo/Todd Forrest