

Sports

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Allison wins 100th at UCHS with 45-7 victory at Towns

By Todd Forrest
Sports Editor
sports@nganews.com

HIWASSEE - Union County scored 45 unanswered points, 28 in the opening quarter, to put the Indians away in the first meeting in three years between the neighboring rivals.

The victory marked Head Coach Brian Allison's 100th win as a Panther and 125th overall while improving to 13-0 vs Towns County. The rivalry, which took two years off during Union's stint in Class AAA, picked up where it left off with another Union-Towns game decided by halftime.

Junior wide receiver Kyle Morlock led the Panthers with a career-high 6 catches for 132 yards and a score, while junior quarterback Pierson Allison completed 11-of-19 for 223 yards and 2 touchdowns in his first road start.

The Indians were led by Alan Gillis' 82 yards and a score on six carries.

Thanks to Gillis, Towns County seized momentum early on but was unable to maintain the energy level that accompanied them out of the gates.

On the opening drive of the contest, the Indians quickly turned things around after suffering a 1-yard loss, a false start penalty and a sack that dropped them into a 3rd-and-19. Towns County senior quarterback delivered a perfect throw on a wheel route to freshman Colvin Crowder for an 18-yard pickup.

Looking at 4th-and-1 from their own 39, Gillis went in motion and took a handoff from Bradshaw and burst up the middle untouched for a 61-yard touchdown run, electrifying the standing room only crowd at Frank McClure Stadium.

"We were just out of position and (Towns) ran it into the boundary, then we got out of position and missed a couple of tackles," Coach Allison said. "Early on, I think (Towns) was just a little bit better than us and it took a few minutes to adjust. Anytime you're a spread team and you play (an opposing offense) that's different, it takes a minute to adjust."

Trailing for the first time since game eight of last year (at North Hall), Union County's brand new starting quarterback Pierson Allison was dealt his first dose of adversity and didn't flinch.

The Panther offense needed only four plays to tie the game at 7-7 with a 33-yard go route to Morlock capping off the drive with 7:54 remaining in the opening quarter.

A facemask on a Buzzard run moved Union out to the 44, then a 12-yard throw to Morlock and a 12-yard keeper by Pierson Allison set up the 33-yard deep-ball to Morlock.

An offside penalty on Union and a hold on Towns put the Indians in a 2nd-and-13 on the ensuing drive when senior cornerback Ean Harkins jumped in front of a pass intended for Will Travis at the 41-yard line. Harkins would return the pick 15 yards to the Indians' 26.

On the first play of the series, Pierson Allison hit fellow-junior Cayden Rich for 21 yards down the sideline. With a 1st-and-goal at the five, senior Chad Buzzard took a senior and hurdled a defender at the



Left: Senior running back Chad Buzzard hurdles an Indian defensive back at the goal line for his first score of the game. Right: Coleson Daniel (50) and Sawyer Drake (21) celebrate Drake's first of two touchdowns at Towns County. Photos/Todd Forrest

goal line for a 14-7 lead.

The turnover bug bit once again when senior Kanon Hemphill jarred the ball loose from Bradshaw in the backfield before recovering his forced fumble at the Towns 30.

Two plays later, the Panthers were back in the end zone following a 9-yard keeper by Pierson Allison and a 21-yard reverse by junior receiver Sawyer Drake, who was seeing his first action of the season after suffering a shoulder injury in July.

"With (Drake on the field) you better have two good corners if you want to play us man-to-man," Coach Allison said when asked what the return of Drake brings to the offense.

Trailing 21-7 with 4:21 left in the first, Towns County's upset hopes were hanging by a thread until a pair of Indian penalties backed them up into another 3rd-and-long. This time, pressure up the middle from William Lueckert and Coleson Daniel forced Bradshaw to throw off his back foot and Harkins picked off his second pass, returning it 22 yards for the score.

The Panthers harassed Bradshaw all night, making life difficult by dialing up the pressure and taking away his go-to receiver, senior Will Travis. Bradshaw completed 3-of-6 passes for 31 yards with two interceptions. Travis was held without a catch while Bradshaw finished with just 21 rushing yards on nine carries.

"We went into the game knowing we had to stop the quarterback and stop the passing game to (Travis and Gillis)," Coach Allison said. "Travis didn't have a catch and the quarterback didn't have many yards. The fullback and the halfback hurt us a little bit and they got us once on a reverse but I thought we accomplished what we set out to do."

On the ensuing Towns County possession, the struggling offense received a boost from Garrett Oakes' kick return to midfield but the drive eventually stalled on 4th-and-3 at the Panthers 35.

Facing a 4th-and-2, Union County was able to move the chains with a 3-yard give to Buzzard. Later, a 3rd-

and-goal pass fell incomplete and senior Brian Smith was sent onto the field for a 27-yard field goal - giving the Panthers a 31-7 advantage with 5:56 left before halftime.

Desperate to slow the Purple and Gold avalanche prior to intermission, the Towns County triple option went back to its bread-and-butter. A 7-yard dive play to senior fullback Tyler Swanger and a 5-yard option keeper by Bradshaw had Towns on the move. But two plays later, Swanger was stuffed for no gain on 3rd-and-4, bringing on the punt team as the clock ticked under 3:30.

Union set up shop at its own 41 with 3:18 remaining in the half and immediately went back to Morlock, who benefited from an eight or nine-inch height advantage over the cornerback tasked with covering him. A first down throw to Morlock moved the Panthers into Indian territory with a 19-yard completion. On the very next play, Morlock picked up 30 more yards after hauling in a jump ball at the 10-yard line, as offensive coordinator Howard McCombs continued to exploit the 1-on-1 mismatch on the outside.

"We knew we had a chance to take advantage of it and Kyle (Morlock) did a great job of catching the ball," Coach Allison said.

A give to Buzzard and a keeper by Pierson Allison put Union at the 1-yard line, where Buzzard plowed his way to pay-dirt for a 38-7 halftime lead.

Buzzard finished with his second straight multi-score game to go with 86 rushing yards on 13 carries. Only four of his 13 rushing attempts came after halftime when the Panthers had things well under control.

"Once we got up, we started working on some things but we still have to do a better job running the football if we're going to be successful down the road," Coach Allison said.

A running clock in the second half limited the number of offensive possessions for each team as Chayton Schafer opened the third quarter with kickoff across midfield to the Indians' 44-yard line.

After advancing inside

the Towns County 15, Pierson Allison coughed up the football after a scrambling around and holding onto the football a little too long. He was eventually swallowed up by a swarm of Indians back at the 22, where Swanger dove to the fumble.

"I don't need to try and do too much and just trust my teammates," Pierson Allison said after the game when asked what he learned from his first road start. "I think our offense can drive it on anyone and I'm confident that our defense can get stops too."

Coach Allison concurred with his junior quarterback.

"I thought he did (not try to do too much), maybe not early on, but as the game went on, I think we started pressing a little bit and made a couple mistakes," Coach Allison said. "We had some drops and some penalties after we started pressing. Hopefully it was a learning experience all the way around for the players and the coaches."

Towns County would eventually turn it over on downs after converting a pair of fourth downs -- the first on a short run, the second on a pass interference penalty charged to Union.

Starting from their own 41 with just over 6 minutes remaining, Buzzard tore off runs of 8 and 13 yards to move inside Indian territory. Two incompletions and a no gain put Union in a 4th-and-10 but Drake took a tunnel screen to the house from 37 yards out to conclude the scoring at 45-7.

"I feel really good and the shoulder is feeling a whole lot better," Drake said following his first game action since the spring scrimmage. "I was a little rusty and the third quarter was a little hard on me but I made up for it later. Next week I'll be 100-percent for sure."

Towns County's final possession netted a quick first down before Union recovered a fumble on the final play of the game.

TEAM STATS - UNION: Total plays 42; Total yards 354; Passing yards 223; Rushing yards 131; First downs 16; Third down efficiency 3-for-7 (43%); Fourth down efficiency 3-for-3 (100%); Turnovers 1; Fumbles lost 1. TOWNS: Total plays 59; Total yards 197; Passing yards 30; Rushing yards 167; First downs 11; Third down efficiency 3-for-11 (27%); Fourth down efficiency 3-for-5 (60%); Turnovers 3; Fumbles lost 1; Interceptions thrown 2.

INDIVIDUAL STATS - UNION: (Passing) Allison 11-for-19, 223 yards, 2 TDs. (Rushing) Buzzard 13 carries, 86 yards, 2 TDs; Allison 5 car, 26 yards; Drake 1 car, 21 yards, 1 TD; Sutton 2 car, 2 yards. (Receiving) Morlock 6 receptions, 132 yards, 1 TD; Drake 3 rec, 56 yards, 1 TD; Rich 2 rec, 35 yards. (Kicking) Smith 1-for-1 FGs (27 yards), 6-for-6 PATs

(Defense) Colwell 14.5 tackles, 1 sack, 1 TFL; Schafer 10.5 tackles; Kelley 9.5 tackles, 2 TFL; Mancuso 8 tackles; Kaston Hemphill 6 tackles, 2 TFL; Underwood 6 tackles, Lueckert 4 tackles, 1 TFL; Patton and Rockenbaugh 4 tackles each; Scott 3 tackles; Sutton 2.5 tackles; Ledford 2 tackles, 1 TFL; Harkins 1.5 tackles,



2 INTs; Kaston Hemphill 1.5 tackles; Ivester and Daniel 1 tackles each.

Game notes: Union County improves to 30-1 all-time vs Towns County and 16-0 vs the Indians in Hiwassee.

Towns County Head Coach John Cornett was serving a suspension for his ejection at Hayesville, NC and was not in attendance Friday night.

Buzzard's five touchdowns in two games are the most by a Panther running back over a two-game stretch since Bo Lynch scored six times vs East Hall (4 TDs) and Dawson County (2 TDs) in 2016.

After two starts, Pierson Allison has yet to throw an interception - something Cole Wright (1 INT) and Joseph Mancuso (2 INTs) were unable to accomplish in each of their first two starts.

Smith's 27-yard field goal was the tenth FG of his career - making him 10-of-14 overall. Meanwhile, Smith remains perfect from inside of 30 yards during his career. In his three years as the Panther placekicker, two misses came from 30-39 yards and two from 50-plus.

Union's 2-0 start marks the fifth straight season -- and sixth time in seven seasons -- the Panthers have won their first two games. The lone exception was in 2013 when Union County started 1-1 following a 43-35 loss at Fannin County, who were coached by current Panther assistant Greg Chambers.

The Panthers have now won 19-straight non-region games dating back to 2013 with their last non-region home loss coming in 2011 to Lanier, 33-15.

Looking ahead - The last non-region team to beat Union County travels to Blairsville on Friday night for another rivalry clash, this time with

Fannin County.

Last week, the Panthers defended their eastern border, now they prepare for another border war with their western neighbors.

Fannin County is currently 1-1 under first-year coach Daniel Walker following a 28-0 win at Gilmer and a 28-20 loss to LaFayette two weeks ago. The Rebels had a bye last week, making them the second straight opponent to play Union County with two weeks to prepare.

According to Coach Allison, Fannin still uses the two-quarterback system they introduced last season, rotating senior Tyler Norton and sophomore Luke Holloway. However, both have struggled throwing the football, only connecting on a combined 4-of-14 for 62 yards.

So far, the offensive staff has been junior running back Treylyn Owensby, who rushed for 150 yards and 2 TDs at Gilmer.

Defensively, the Rebels feature only one senior among their top-8 tacklers. Two juniors and a sophomore make up the squad's top three tacklers before senior Mason Rhodes appears at fourth on the list.

Junior Jackson Wood leads the team with 22 tackles and 4 TFL followed by junior Will Mosely and sophomore Micah O'Neal at 18 tackles apiece.

"I think Fannin will be the best team we've played so far," Coach Allison said. "We matchup pretty well but it's our second straight rivalry game. It doesn't mean anything in the region, but when it comes to pride, it still means something."

This Friday is Recreation and Middle School Night. All rec/MS players should arrive at the fieldhouse at 6:30 p.m. to be recognized at 6:45 p.m.



Senior linebacker Jackson Colwell preparing to lead the Panthers onto the field Friday night at Towns County. Photo/Todd Forrest

**4th & 5th Grade
4-H CPA Resource Workshop**

Mr. Timothy Jennings, the 4-H Director, will host a CPA Resource Workshop.

Learn how to help your child plan, prepare and find resources needed for this project. This will be a helpful and informative meeting to guide you through the process.

Join us Monday, September 10, 2018
in the Union County Elementary School Panther Den (formally the band room).

We look forward to seeing you here.

Drop in session times are: 8:00 am / 12:00 pm / 6:00 pm

*For more information contact:
Becky Dyer,
Parent Engagement Coordinator
bdyer@ucschools.org
(706) 745-9615 ext. 4424
Childcare provided

4-H GROWS HERE

**Union County Recreation Department
Basketball Registration**
Begins Monday, August 20th

**Effective this season by GRPA,
age control date has changed:
Age you are August 31st is the age
group you play in.**

Age Group	Registration Ends
5/6 yr olds co-ed	September 28th
7/8 yr olds	September 28th
9/10 yr olds	October 26th
11-12 yr olds	October 26th

Registration fee is \$50 and open to both boys and girls. Registration can be completed online at unioncountygpa.gov or at the Recreation Office located at 310 Wellborn Street. If you need any additional information, please call 706-439-6074.