

Sports

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Dockrey, supporting cast pick up slack at Fannin

Panthers to visit White County, Murphy ahead of Battle of the States

By Todd Forrest
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Blue Ridge - On a combined 8-for-30 shooting night from juniors Jude Ellis, Houston Henry and Hayden Hughes, sophomore Cade Dockrey poured in a season-high 16 points as Union County (7-2) pulled away from Fannin County (4-4) during the fourth quarter.

Deadlocked at 37-37 through three, the Panthers outscored Fannin 22-11 over the final 8 minutes to notch their fourth straight victory over the Rebels, 59-48.

"We kept plugging away and didn't break our mold," Union County head coach Corey Garrett said. "I'm proud of the guys. Fannin County is always a tough place to play and when we went to the fourth quarter tied, I told them 'it's time to go win it' and that's what we did."

Dockrey opened the fourth by knocking down a 12-footer and getting to the basket for a 41-37 edge. Junior Kaden Combs split two free throws with 5:13 to play, but Fannin responded with a 3-pointer on the other end, cutting the Panthers' lead to 42-40.

Combs delivered again moments later, taking a baseline feed from Ellis and scoring inside at the 3:27 mark. After a Fannin miss, Dockrey's floater made it 46-40, then Ellis buried a dagger in the Rebels via a triple with 2:14 remaining.

Freshman Jaxon Totherow scored down low, keeping the margin at nine before the Rebels fired back with a



Sophomore Cade Dockrey (L) and freshman Jaxon Totherow (R) finished the night with 26 points between the two of them during Union County's 59-48 victory at Fannin County. Photo/Todd Forrest

3-pointer. Consecutive baskets by Hughes provided Union a 55-47 advantage near the minute mark, then Henry's full-court baseball pass to Dockrey, who hit a trailing Totherow in stride for a layup, put the Rebels away.

Henry finished with 13 points, 5 rebounds, 5 assists and 2 steals. Ellis had 8 points, 7 boards and 6 assists; Hughes ended his night with 4 points and 8 rebounds.

Dockrey's 16 points, 4 rebounds and 3 assists led a supporting cast that lifted the Pan-

thers to victory. Totherow added 10 points, grabbed 4 boards and blocked 3 shots; Combs had 7 points and 6 rebounds; junior Brayden Hogsed had 3 points, 2 assists and a block. Meanwhile, Combs, Dockrey, Hogsed and Totherow combined to go 16 of 24 from the floor in their team's win.

"Those four were definitely the reason we won," Garrett said. "It was nice to get guys like [Combs] involved in the offense, and [Brayden] Hogsed came in, hit a 3 and provided a



spark defensively."

Fannin County was paced by 18 points from sophomore Jordan Richerson and senior Ben Bloch's 17.

With his team trailing 12-11 early in the second, Hogsed's 3 put Union back in front until Richerson fired back with a trey of his own. Totherow, Dockrey and Ellis provided the Panthers a 20-15 lead until Fannin answered with 4-straight points.

A Henry steal resulted in an and-1 before the junior guard added two free throws for a 25-

19 advantage with 2:33 before halftime. The Rebels scored the next 6 points, but Dockrey halted the spurt with a pull-up jumper.

"[Dockrey] is really effective in the high post, or what we call 'the playmaker position,'" Garrett said. "Early on, he was passing out of that spot and I finally told him to look for his shot and he took over."

"We knew from watching [Fannin's 56-54 victory over North Murray] we could attack them in that area and that's what

he did."

The teams entered the break tied at 27-27 courtesy of Richerson's 17-footer with 31 seconds on the clock.

Fannin County built a 31-27 edge early in the third, but Dockrey's steal and score and Combs' putback tied the game at the period's halfway mark. Dockrey's turnaround jumper moved Union back in front, but another Fannin spurt spotted the Rebels a 37-34 lead until Henry's 3-pointer evened the score heading to the fourth.

Team stats: Union hit 24 of 54 (44%) from the floor, 4 of 17 (24%) from deep and 7 of 12 (58%) at the charity stripe. Fannin made 18 of its 51 (33%) attempts, went 7 of 20 (35%) from long distance and hit 5 of 8 (63%) from the line.

The Panthers out-rebounded Fannin 35-29 overall and 9-6 on the offensive boards. Union held a 34-18 scoring advantage in the paint and committed 10 turnovers to the Rebels' 12.

Up next: Union County travels to Class AAA White County on Tuesday, Dec. 19, seeking a season sweep of the Warriors. On Thursday, Dec. 21, the Panthers head to Murphy, NC in a rematch of Union County's Dec. 5 loss.

"We hope to put together four good quarters of basketball at White County," Garrett said. "As for Murphy, it's always a fun place to play. Hopefully we shoot the ball better and do a better job attacking their bigs."

The Battle of the States Christmas Tournament opens Thursday, Dec. 28 in Hiwassee with a first-round matchup between Union and Franklin, NC.

Fannin County delivers early knockout blow to Lady Panthers

By Todd Forrest
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Blue Ridge - Union County (4-5) made two late runs at Fannin County, but it wasn't enough to overcome a lackluster first half and a 24-point third-quarter deficit during a 68-50 loss.

Trailing 42-18 in the third, the Lady Panthers cut the margin in half at 46-34 behind a 16-4 run. Consecutive 3s from Fannin County senior Courtney Davis stretched the deficit to 18, but another Lady Panthers' run narrowed the gap to 54-44 in the fourth.

"I am really proud of the character they showed by coming back," head coach Thomas Nelson said. "They showed a lot of fight, but Fannin played a great game and hit a lot of shots from the outside."

A 10-point margin is as close as Union County would get in the second half as Fannin (6-2) pulled away down the stretch behind Davis' game-high 33 points.

Junior Ariel McCarter led the Lady Panthers with 21, including 11 for 12 at the charity stripe, 4 rebounds and 2 steals. Sophomore Paula Robertson finished with 16 points -- 10 coming during her team's 18-point third period -- to go with 4 rebounds, 2 assists and 2 steals.

Senior Lara Turner and McCarter scored 4 points each in the quarter; junior Katelyn Brown added a bucket.

McCarter went 6 of 6 at the line during an 8-point fourth; Robertson pitched in 4 points and Brown hit two



Junior Ariel McCarter made 11 straight free throws at Fannin County but it wasn't enough to overcome a 40-18 halftime deficit. Photo/Todd Forrest

free throws during the final 8 minutes.

The Lady Panthers fell into an early 7-0 hole and trailed 17-6 after a quarter. Fannin continued pulling away in the second, taking a 40-18 lead at the intermission.

"We were making things

harder than they should have been at times," Nelson said. "Fannin played some very good man defense, but it seemed like we were in a rush all night and weren't playing at our tempo. Once we were able to slow things down, we were able to find some openings."

Turner finished with 6 points, 5 rebounds, 4 steals and 3 assists; Brown had 5 points, 7 rebounds, 2 assists and 2 steals; junior Aubrie Akins added 2 points, a rebound and a steal.

Senior Kamryn Mull finished with 2 rebounds and 2 assists; junior Hope Taylor



Sophomore Paula Robertson scored 16 at Fannin. Photo/Todd Forrest

pulled down one board.

"The kids coming off the bench played really well," Nelson said. "Those girls do a lot of the dirty work that you need to do to play well."

Up next: Union County visits Class AAA's No. 6 White County (10-1) at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 19. The Lady Warriors already own a 62-36 win in Blairsville on Dec. 1.

"We have to play better than we did [in the first meeting]," Nelson said. "They beat us worse than anyone we've played this year."

"I think a lot of the reason for the 26-point difference was our own doing. I just want us to continue improving and not make those same mistakes

this time."

On Thursday, Dec. 21 at 6 p.m., the Lady Panthers travel to Murphy, NC after scoring a 65-35 win over the Bulldogs (0-3) on Dec. 5.

"[Murphy will] be much better over there," Nelson said. "Our goal right now is to see our weaknesses and we've been lucky enough to see them. Hopefully we can go to Murphy and handle that environment and it will provide us some experience for later in the season."

The Lady Panthers will meet Franklin, NC on Thursday, Dec. 28 in the first round of Towns County's Battle of the States Christmas Tournament.

Wrestling: Union third at Berkmar's Gorilla Warfare X

Payton Legatt finishes first at 165 lbs; four place second

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Lilburn - Union County placed third out of 43 schools over the weekend at Berkmar's two-day Gorilla Warfare X tournament behind junior Payton Legatt's first-place individual finish at 165 lbs.

Freshmen Eli Flowers (113 lbs), Paxton Legatt (150) and senior David Heredia (190) all placed second. Senior Anderson Clouse (144) and junior Asa Smith-Foot (175) came in third.

Senior Brooke Kennedy finished second at 235 lbs in the girls' tournament. Kristyn Kraft was third at 135 lbs.

Payton Legatt knocked off Lambert's Xan Kelley by an 8-4 decision in the 165-lb final, using a takedown and a near-fall to grab a 5-0 edge in round one. The junior notched a second-round pin over Grayson's Daemon Campbell in the semis to earn a spot in the championship bout.

Earlier, he recorded pins over Discovery's Tyler Chancellor in the quarters and South Gwinnett's Hudhaifah Baptiste during the round of 16. His tournament opened with a 16-1 major decision over Locust Grove's Diego Vargas.

Paxton Legatt dropped his title bout to Mt. Pisgah Christian's Marley Washington via an 11-4 decision. Until the finals, Paxton Legatt didn't yield a point to the opposition, knocking off Locust Grove's Marcos Amerman by a 6-0 decision in the semis after defeating Lambert's Max Sciro in a 3-0 quarterfinal decision.

He was leading Discovery's



Union County seniors (L-R) David Heredia, Zander Rotko, Caleb Smith, Anderson Clouse and Brooke Kennedy. The Panthers easily defeated Hayesville, NC on Tuesday, Dec. 12 following UCHS' Senior Night ceremony. Photo/Todd Forrest

ery's Victor Gomez 9-0 when he scored a pin during the round of 16 and was up 4-0 when he pinned South Gwinnett's Caleb Landry.

As for Heredia, the senior suffered a first-round pin to Mt. Pisgah's Josh Lange in the finals after earning a 6-2 decision over Tift County's Damion Moate during the semis.

Heredia started the tournament with three pinfall victories, taking down Lowndes' John Browning in the quarters, Roswell's Nicholas Silva during the round of 16 and Loganville's James Easley in the opening round.

Flowers dropped an 8-0 decision to Commerce's Gabe

Burns in the finals. Earlier in the weekend, Flowers pinned South Gwinnett's Jalen Rogers during the semifinals and notched a 12-0 major decision in the quarters over Lowndes' Cai Little. Flowers earned a forfeit victory vs. Shiloh's Luis Cruz in the round of 16 following a major decision over Salem's Darryl Taylor.

At 144 lbs, Clouse placed third, edging Mt. Pisgah's Christian Lange by way of a 5-3 decision in the consolation finals. Clouse scored an early pin over Graysen Turley of Sequoyah during the consolation semis.

Clouse ended up in the consols after dropping an 8-4

decision to the eventual champion, Grayson's Kevin Heath. Clouse knocked off Parkview's Christian Penn 8-1 in the quarters and pinned Centennial's Jermaine Shippy during the round of 16 after earning a first-round bye.

Smith-Foot's third-place journey saw the junior advance to the semis before losing a 6-4 decision to Seckinger's Jordan Oldknow. But he bounced back with a 3-0 decision over Lambert's Noah Dobbs and an 11-6 victory over Grayson's Dante Miller.

Smith-Foot's tournament began with a quick pin of Arabia Mountain's Trent Jennings, followed by another first-round

pin of Discovery's Aaren Freeman and a 7-4 decision over Alpharetta's Brandon Goldberg.

In other action, senior Zander Rotko advanced to the semis via an 8-5 quarterfinal decision over Lowndes' Klen Flanigan. Rotko pinned Northview's Sami Hafiane during the round of 16 and picked up a forfeit victory in the opening round.

Rotko was sent to the consols courtesy of a pin at the hands of the eventual champion, Will Thomas of Cambridge. In the next match, Woodland-Cartersville's Christian Cothran pinned Rotko in the consolation semifinals.

Freshman Kevin Kilpat-

rick (150) earned a first-round bye but dropped a 9-2 decision to Carrollton's George Carden. In the consols, Kilpatrick recorded an 11-5 victory over Anthony Pace of Tift County, a first-round pin of Roswell's Declan Laverty, but suffered a pinfall at the hands of Sciro, who went on to finish third.

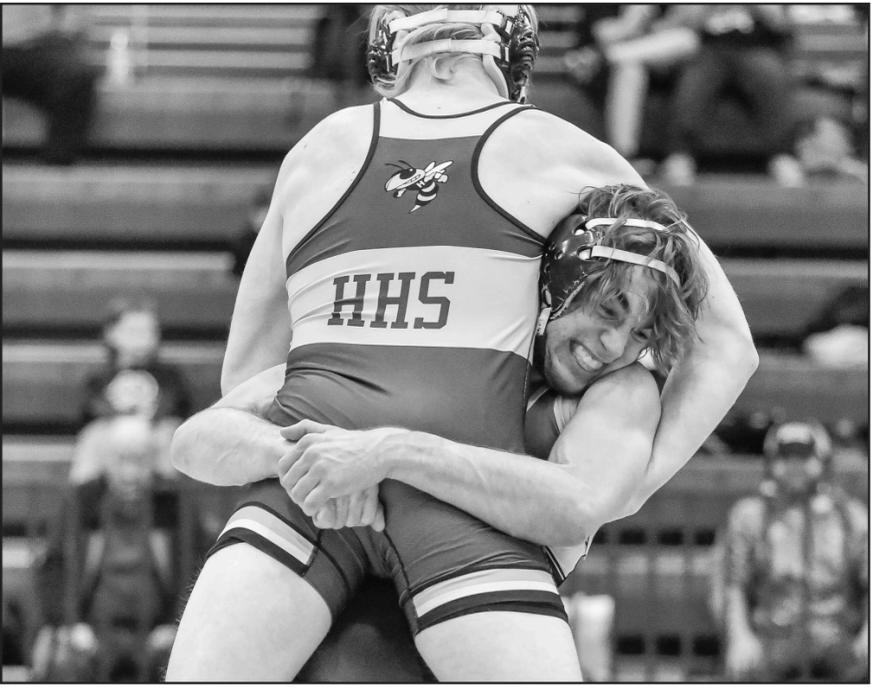
In the girls' tournament, Kennedy's tournament opened with pins over Seckinger's Emma Allen and Norcross' Jankarla Mitchell. Meadowcreek's Zorah Lee was Kennedy's third pinfall victim during the semis, but Katia Castillo of Lambert took home first place at 235 lbs by pinning Kennedy during the finals.

Kraft suffered a first-round loss to eventual champion Katherine Parra of Berkmar but battled out of the consols to place third with wins over Iyana Bracey of Shiloh, Joy Alizor of Central Gwinnett and Kyerra Harris of ELCA.

Freshman Jada Taylor (155) opened her tournament with a pin over North Springs' Maddison Milnichuk but fell to Lanier's Fevin Coleman. In the consols, Taylor defeated Parkview's Kaiden Worthy and Loganville's Donata Trowsse before falling to Seckinger's Kyra Barnum.

In the final men's team standings, Union County's 169 points were behind second-place Mt. Pisgah (185) and first-place Woodland-Cartersville (196).

Lambert placed fourth with 136.5 points, Tift County (112) came in fifth, Lowndes (110.5) was sixth, Grayson (109) and Lee County (109) were seventh, Commerce (108.5) came in ninth and Lanier (101) rounded out the top 10.



Payton Legatt scores a takedown during Union's Senior Night win over Hayesville, NC. Photo/Todd Forrest

Swim: Nushtayev qualifies for State meet; Union County places seventh at Adairsville



Panthers shine in Georgia's 28-17 FCA Senior Game win over Tennessee



Top: Jensen Goble had a TD catch and an interception. Bottom: Braylen Rader (34), Caiden Tanner (1) and Cody Meeks (59) during Georgia's game-clinching drive. Photos/Todd Forrest

Blue Ridge - Twelve Panthers represented Georgia on Thursday night at Fannin County in the annual FCA Senior Game.

Georgia, featuring players from Fannin, Gilmer, Pickens, Towns and Union, took home a 27-18 win over Tennessee, represented by Polk County, Bradley Central, Walker Valley and McMinn County.

Union County started off the scoring when Caiden Tanner found Jensen Goble on an opening-drive touchdown strike.

After Ethan McBride's PAT made it 7-0, Georgia increased its lead to 14-0 after one quarter. Braylen Rader added a touchdown run and McBride caught a TD pass as Georgia pulled away from a 14-12 half-time lead.

UCHS was represented by Goble, McBride, Rader, Tanner, Kooper Ashcraft, Larry Blackwell, Mayo Collins-Spiva, Tyler Grasty, Lane Lance, Cody Meeks, Seth Rutan and Zach Taylor.

UCHS SWIM TOP 20 FINISHES

WHOVILLE MEET @ ADAIRSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

200 MEDLEY RELAY

6th - Andrew Nushtayev, Cole Orlando, Wyatt Chandler, Nicholas Nushtayev
7th - Lilly Collins, Lily Helton, Reese Jones, Sophia Licavoli

200 FREE RELAY

6th - Reese Jones, Sophia Licavoli, Isabel Hoover, Lily Helton
7th - Andrew Nushtayev, Wyatt Chandler, Cole Orlando, Nicholas Nushtayev

200 FREE

4th - Lily Helton

100 BACK

9th - Lilly Collins

100 FREE

3rd - Nicholas Nushtayev
6th - Andrew Nushtayev
12th - Cole Orlando
17th - Isabel Hoover

COMBINED 7TH OVERALL OUT OF 14 TEAMS

200 IM

5th - Reese Jones

100 FLY

11th - Wyatt Chandler

50 FREE

3rd - Nicholas Nushtayev (GHSA Qualifier)
10th - Andrew Nushtayev
16th - Cole Orlando

100 BREAST

3rd - Lily Helton
6th - Reese Jones
9th - Isabel Hoover
13th - Delilah Hernandez
16th - Pedro De Galles