

# Sports

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## Two easy victories and an upset loss: Panthers third at BOTS

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
sports@nganews.com

HIWASSEE - Union County took home third at the 24th Battle of the States Christmas Tournament following a second round upset at the hands of Murphy, NC.

After demolishing a top-five Piedmont, AL squad, 69-27, the Panthers were victimized by a physical Bulldog squad that grabbed 20 offensive boards and hit seven treys.

On Day Three, Union took out its frustrations on a short-handed Towns County squad, who was playing minus its top-two rebounders, senior Logan Cowart and junior Trent Bradshaw.

The Panthers were also without the services of junior center Britt Waller (ankle) during the tournament.

**Murphy, NC 79, Union County 72** - Union County (10-1) suffered its first loss of the season at the hands of a red-hot Murphy, NC squad in the semifinals of the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament.

Despite matching a season-high for points scored with 72, the Panthers allowed a season-high 79 after not yielding more than 52 points through the first 10 games.

Murphy (8-3) out-rebounded Union 47-27 overall and 20-9 on the offensive boards. They also shot 48-percent from the floor - the first opponent to shoot better than 44-percent this season vs the Panthers.

But that wasn't the case in the early going. With Drake and Crawford Colwell relentlessly attacking the basket, Union held leads of 13-5 and 17-10 while the contest showed all the symptoms of another mismatch that would be over by halftime. But the Bulldogs would retaliate with five points in less than 20 seconds - including a three at the buzzer - to pull within a bucket, 17-15 at quarter's end.

The duo of Drake and Crawford Colwell would combine for 15 of Union's 17 first quarter points.

The next three quarters weren't as kind, however.

The first four points of



Sawyer Drake was named to the All Tournament Team. Photo/Todd Forrest  
The second belonged to Murphy to cap off a 9-0 run and give the Bulldogs its first lead since 2-0. A conventional 3-point play by Allison momentarily put the Panthers back on top at 20-19, but it was short-lived.

Trailing 24-20, Drake and Crawford Colwell answered with back-to-back buckets, sandwiched around a Murphy trey.

The Bulldogs would build a 40-31 advantage late in the quarter until a 4-point play by Baggett narrowed the gap to 40-35 at the break.

A Crawford Colwell deuce and a Baggett troy pulled the Panthers within a basket at 42-40, early in the third but the Bulldogs exploded with a 17-3 run that was fueled by deadly outside shooting and crashing the offensive boards on a miss. Trailing 59-43 and on the verge of getting run out of the building, Union stopped the bleeding with five unanswered points to close the third. A Cole Davis layup and a Candler Colwell three as time expired pulled the Panthers within 11 at 59-48.

A Baggett layup cut the deficit to single digits but Union was unable to string together enough stops on the defensive end. As the Bulldogs cooled off

from long distance, the Panthers were unable to keep them off the offensive glass.

Each time it seemed Union would force a much-needed stop, Murphy came up with a back-breaking offensive rebound.

The Bulldogs built a 13-point lead at the 6:00-mark but two free throws and a three by Baggett kept the Panthers in the game, down eight with 5:20 to play.

Union trimmed the margin to seven with a 1-for-2 trip to the line from Davis, then consecutive treys by Candler Colwell and Allison cut the deficit to four with 1:12 remaining.

Murphy would sink both shots of a 1-and-1, then following a Panther miss, hit 1-of-2 for a 75-68 lead. Another Union miss and a Bulldog bucket on the other end put the game out of reach.

Baggett finished with 19 points - 10 in the fourth quarter. Crawford Colwell had 13, Allison scored 13 and Drake added 11 points while battling foul trouble most of the evening.

The only other team to out-rebound Union this season was North Hall, who won the battle on the offensive boards 22-6.

**Union County 69, Piedmont, AL 27** - The Panthers



Pierson Allison led Union Co. with 14 vs Piedmont, AL. Photo/Todd Forrest  
jumped out to a 31-13 lead at the break and never looked back as 12 different players reached the scoring column in the opening round of the BOTS.

Allison (14) and Drake (13) led the way for Union County while Candler Colwell scored 7 and Crawford Colwell had 6 in his first game back.

Following a 4-4 early tie, it was all Union County the rest of the way. The Panthers outscored Piedmont 9-4 over the final four minutes of the first, then opened the second on a 9-0 run.

Leading 22-8, Union gave up consecutive baskets only to answer with a 9-1 run to close the second.

The Panthers put the game away with a 9-0 run to open the third quarter for a 40-13 lead at the 5:00-mark. However, three straight Union baskets made it a 30-point advantage at 46-15 with 3:00 left in the period.

The two teams would break even at 9-9 over the final three minutes and Union took a 54-24 lead into the fourth.

The final frame was shortened to six minutes due to the "Mercy Rule" and the Panther bench outscored Piedmont 15-3.

Freshman Colton Day

scored 4 points while sophomore Sawyer Brey had three.

Kyle Morlock, Christian Robertson, Timothy Murphy, and Davis each scored 2 points in the fourth.

Union County finished with a season-low five turnovers

**Union County 82, Towns County 59** - Twenty-four hours

removed from surrendering a season-high in points to Murphy, NC, the Panthers (11-1) dropped a season-best 82 points during their third consecutive victory over the rival Indians (7-4).

Although, it was Towns County, not Union, that came out firing on all cylinders, connecting on 3-of-3 from long distance for a 9-6 advantage.

A Indian free throw made it 10-8 before the Panthers rattled off 10-unanswered. A Towns bucket cut the Union lead to 18-12 but the Panthers answered with 13 in-a-row, capping a 23-2 run.

With his team down 19 early in the second, a Kolby Moss troy finally thwarted the Union onslaught, but the damage was done, and the Panthers took a 54-25 advantage into the break behind 15 points and five treys from Allison.

Drake, Union's All-Tour-

namment selection scored 20 points on 7-of-10 shooting while Allison finished with 19.

The Panthers continued to pull away with 24 points in the third for a 78-41 advantage, despite Towns' Zach Davenport accounting for all 16 Indian points in the frame.

With the mercy rule in play, Towns outscored the Panthers 18-4 in the fourth period.

Baggett and Crawford Colwell scored 11 each for Union County with Baggett recording a team-high four assists and Crawford Colwell leading the way with nine boards.

Davis chipped in 7 points, while Banton and Candler Colwell added 5 apiece. Junior Coleson Daniel and Day each scored 2 points.

The Panthers shot a season-high 49-percent from the floor on 31-of-63 from the floor. Meanwhile, the Indians hit eight treys, the most allowed this season by Union County. The previous high was seven by Murphy, the day before.

However, the Panthers out-rebounded the Indians 39-29 overall an 14-7 on the offensive glass.

Towns County was coming off an overtime loss to the eventual tournament champion Hokes Bluff, AL, who blasted Murphy, 63-33 in the finals.

The Panthers resume region play on Tuesday when they host the defending 7-AAA Champion East Hall beginning with the Lady Panthers at 6 p.m.

The Vikings are also unbeaten within the region following an 88-74 victory over then-No. 2 GAC and an 86-53 win at Lumpkin County.

East Hall is coming off a 96-73 loss to rival-Gainesville in the Lanierland finals.

On Friday, Jan 5, the Panthers host another region opponent when Lumpkin County visits. The Indians are coming off an 0-3 performance in the BOTS following a 78-53 loss to Murphy, NC, a 59-46 defeat at the hands of Piedmont, AL and a 58-47 loss to Hayesville, NC.

The Panthers are scheduled to visit Andrews, NC on Saturday for a 2 p.m. girls tip-off. The earlier scheduled game with Andrews was canceled last month.

## Lady Panthers third at BOTS with wins over Darlington, Towns

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
sports@nganews.com

HIWASSEE - The Lady Panthers (8-4) placed third at the Battle of the States for the third time in four years following two wins in three days.

Despite never winning the BOTS, Union County has won two games in five of the last six tournaments, including a pair of second place finishes in 2011 and 2012.

The Lady Panthers opened the tourney with a team they met in the State Tournament a few years ago, the Darlington Lady Tigers. After losing a close-call in the 2015 Class AA playoffs, Union County came out on top thanks to a put-back score by junior Adeline Dockrey with 31 seconds left.

The Panthers were led by a season high 24 from their All-Tournament Team selection, senior Bailey Daniel.

On Day Two, Union was overmatched by an imposing Murphy, NC squad that led wire-to-wire and were never threatened with leads of 15-25 points throughout the second half.

The Lady Panthers ended the game on a positive note, a 52-33 victory over a short-handed Towns County team that lost freshman Kennedy Henson to a knee injury a day earlier. Henson was the team's leader in scoring, rebounding, assists, blocked shots, and 3-point shooting.

The injury was extra costly since the young Lady Indians were beginning to play their best basketball of the season - winning at Fannin County then beating Hayesville by 10 to open the BOTS, improving to 4-6 overall after starting 0-4.

Meanwhile, Union is still without junior starter Aubree Pack, who aggravated an ankle injury at North Hall. However, the previously-injured Maddie Sutton saw action for the first time this season during the BOTS, albeit in a limited role.

**Union County 54, Darlington 52** - Daniel poured in a season-high 24 points, 7 rebounds, and 3 steals while hitting 5-of-6 from the line during the fourth quarter as the Lady Panthers were victorious in the first round of the Battle of the States for the second straight year.

The Lady Tigers came out



Senior Bailey Daniel hits a three vs Darlington. Photo/Todd Forrest

bombing away from downtown and built an early lead of 9-3 before McCarter went to work inside with 4 points in the paint. Brooke Dockrey converted a 3-point play after driving into the lane. Hill scored on a lay-in, and Mary Wischmeyer knocked down a base-line jumper to pull Union within two at 16-14 after one.

A Hill put-back tied the game then a corner-three by Daniel gave the Lady Panthers their first lead, 19-16.

Union continued to pull away, outscoring Darlington 19-4 over a stretch that began late in the first period and ended at the 2:40 mark of the second, when the Lady Panthers held their largest lead at 31-20.

Daniel drilled three treys during the second quarter as Union built it's double-digit lead, but Darlington, however, had an answer, converting an and-one then hitting a 3-pointer to pull within five at the break.

A Daniel free throw and a Wischmeyer bucket off a Tiger turnover opened up a 34-26 advantage early in the third until Darlington scored five-straight to cut the Union lead to 34-31.

The low-scoring third quarter closed with a Daniel layup at the buzzer to extend the lead back

to five at 38-33. Adeline Dockrey hit a 15-footer just 13 seconds into the fourth for a 40-33 advantage before Darlington scored on three consecutive trips to pull within a point at 40-39.

McCarter sank to free throws at the 6:09 mark but the Lady Tigers tied the score at 42-42 with a troy on the ensuing possession.

McCarter put Union back on top with a free throw, then Daniel sank 2-of-2 with 5:09 to play, and two more at 4:43 to open up a 47-42 lead.

Once again, the Lady Tigers answered with a deuce followed by a three to knot the score at 47-47 with 3:20 remaining.

McCarter answered with a basket but Darlington hit two from the stripe to tie it up again. Daniel made 1-of-2 with 2:14 to go then Brooke Dockrey drove right and banked in a one-handed runner in the lane for a 52-49 lead with 1:43 left.

The Lady Tigers refused to go away and went inside for two and later, earned a trip to the line with a chance to take the lead.

Trailing 52-51, Darlington hit 1-of-2 with 57 seconds to play. Following a Union timeout, the Lady Panthers inbounded from midcourt with :48 left. With



Adeline Dockrey with a late basket vs Darlington. Photo/Todd Forrest

Brooke Dockrey dribbling up top, Daniel caught a pass at the foul line, she took one dribble right but missed the short jumper. Fortunately, the ball bounced off the left side of the rim where it was kept alive by Wischmeyer and deflected into the arms of Adeline Dockrey, who dribbled right and sank a jump hook in the paint that gave Union the lead with :31 remaining.

A Darlington pass sailed out-of-bounds with 17 seconds left and the Lady Panthers took over but were called for traveling after burning just 5 seconds off the clock.

With time running out, Lady Tiger sophomore Caroline Dingley, who had 21 points, got off a contested three that bounced off the iron for the Union win.

McCarter finished with 11 points and 10 boards, Brooke Dockrey had 7, and Wischmeyer added 6.

**Murphy, NC 56, Union County 39** - The Lady Bulldogs,

who feature a pair of college-bound 6-footers were too much for the young Lady Panthers.

Early baskets by Brooke Dockrey and McCarter kept Union close but Murphy closed the first on a 10-2 run to take a 20-8 lead after one.

The second opened with an 11-2 Lady Bulldog run, leading to a 39-18 score at the break.

A 15-footer from McCarter opened the third before Murphy scored six-unanswered to build a 25-point lead. Daniel would close the period with two free throws and a buzzer-beater three to pull within 20.

Murphy led by as many as 23 in the fourth before Union closed with 6-straight points.

Daniel had 11 and Brooke Dockrey scored 10 points with 3 assists. McCarter finished with 8 points and 7 boards while Andelin Hill added 7 points and 6 rebounds.

**Union County 52, Towns County 33** - Apparently, two games was not enough for Towns and Union.

The Lady Panthers and Lady Indians have recently made a habit of meeting in the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament. The two rivals have now squared off four times in the last six tournaments and in five of the last eight.

However, the series has been extremely harsh to Towns County of late. The Lady Indians have currently lost 14 straight to the Lady Panthers, a streak that dates back to the 2012 Battle of

the States, when Union upset an 11-0 Towns County squad.

In the most recent meeting last Friday, it was Union trailing 8-4 with 3:28 left in the first until a 19-0 run by the Lady Panthers opened up a 23-8 advantage that was 24-13 at the break.

Five quick Towns County points cut the Union lead to 24-18 early in the third but the Lady Panthers responded with 7-unanswered to stretch the margin to 13 at 31-18.

Towns would outscore the Lady Panthers 9-6 over the final six minutes of the third to stay within striking distance at 37-27.

Following a slow start by both teams, the fourth period was all Union County. With 5:27 to play, a steal by Hill set up a give-and-go on the other end from Rogers to Brooke Dockrey, resulting in an and-one.

Leading 40-27, Brooke Dockrey went inside again for a bucket and a 42-27 advantage at the 4:40 mark. On the ensuing Towns possession, Brooke Dockrey came up with a deflected pass and went coast-to-coast for a layup and her 7th straight point.

The Lady Indians ended their scoring drought with two free throws at the 2:47 mark but Rogers answered with a put-back for a 46-29 lead.

Brooke Dockrey put Towns County away for good with two free throws at the 1:51 mark.

Brooke Dockrey finished with 15 points, seven boards and two assists. Hill scored in double figures for the fifth time in her last seven games with 10 points, seven boards, two steals and two blocks.

Daniel added 8 points and five steals, Adeline Dockrey had 6 points and seven boards, McCarter netted 6 points while Rogers had 3 points and seven rebounds.

Wischmeyer and Lexie Ochoa scored 2 points apiece.

Union hosts East Hall at 6 p.m. Tuesday. The Lady Vikings (7-7) are coming off a second place finish at Lanierland.

On Friday, the Lady Panthers host Lumpkin County, who won two-of-three at the BOTS after losing 76-55 to Murphy. They responded with a 74-38 win over Darlington and a 55-30 win over Polk County, TN on Day Three.

Union visits Andrews, NC at 2 p.m. Saturday in a non-region affair.