

# Panthers bounce back from East Hall loss with consecutive wins

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
sports@nganews.com

**Union 76, Lumpkin County 54** - With the Panthers leading 5-3 less than two minutes in, sophomore Sawyer Drake scored the next 12 Union County points to spot his team a 17-7 advantage.

Unfortunately, Drake would suffer an injury late in the first quarter and wouldn't return. As of press time Monday, his injury is believed to be a torn meniscus and his status for the remainder of the season is uncertain.

As for the Panthers, they would allow Lumpkin to narrow the gap to 21-17 until Crawford Colwell attacked the basket and scored inside at the horn - giving his team a 23-17 lead after one.

Union County opened the second with an 11-0 run that included 5 points from RJ Banton and two each from Crawford Colwell, Pierson Allison, and Cole Davis to open up a 34-17 advantage.

Crawford Colwell halted a 4-0 spurt by the Indians with a stick-back at the 3:22 mark, then a Britt Waller basket made it 38-23 with 1:52 before the half.

After Lumpkin sliced the margin to 38-27 in the final minute, Union coach Casey Jones, displeased with his team's effort, yanked the starters for five reserves resulting in sophomore Kyle Morlock knocking down a base line jumper to give the Panthers a 40-27 lead at the break.

Union didn't take long to blow the lid off the game in the second half, extending the margin to 21 at the midway point of the third and leading by as many as 29 at the 90-second mark of the period.

A corner-trey from Baggett got things rolling then Candler Colwell got in on the act with a 3-ball of his own. Five Lumpkin points sandwiched around an Allison bucket would be the last of its offense before the Panthers went for the jugular with another 11-0 run.

It began with a 1-for-2 trip to the line for Candler Colwell, making it 49-32. Moments later, he turned a steal into a layup on the other end. Baggett



Left: Senior Patrick Baggett (10) glides to the basket for two vs Lumpkin. Right: Senior Candler Colwell (21) on the attack at Andrews. Photo/Todd Forrest

drove the base line for two before an Allison steal-and-score was followed by consecutive Crawford Colwell baskets.

An Indians three momentarily slowed the bleeding until Allison answered with a triple of his own. On the next Union possession, Davis knocked down a 15-footer to give his team its largest lead at 64-35 with 1:30 left in the third.

Lumpkin closed the quarter with four-unanswered then opened the third with a trey, capping a 7-0 run. Allison would hit 2-of-2 then Crawford Colwell made 1-of-2 at the line to keep the lead at 22 with 5:30 to play. His driving layup at the 4:15 mark made it 69-47 and Jones handed the keys to his bench for the remainder of the game.

Crawford Colwell hit 10-of-12 from the floor for 23 points and 8 rebounds. Drake was Union's second leading scorer with 12 points, one steal and one block, despite not playing a quarter.

Allison had 9 points and seven assists while Candler Colwell had 6 points and seven dimes. Davis scored 6 points with three assists; Banton, Baggett, and Morlock finished with 5 points each; Waller and Brey added 2 points apiece.

**Union 58, Andrews, NC**

**42, ANDREWS, NC** - The Panthers overcame a slow start and an early 12-8 deficit with a 14-2 run to open the second.

However, the Wildcats stormed back from a 22-14 hole with a 7-0 run but Union went inside to Crawford Colwell and Waller to take an uncomfortable 26-23 advantage into the locker room.

Luckily for the Panthers, Baggett caught fire in the third and his four treys triggered a 15-1 run to close the period with a 48-32 lead.

Leading 28-25 early in the third, Baggett's first trey gave Union some breathing room at 31-25.

His second three came on the heels of a 4-0 Andrews spurt that cut the lead to 33-31. The third trey made it 39-31 then a Candler Colwell steal-and-score gave the Panthers their first double-digit lead, 41-31.

An Andrews free throw was followed by an Allison deuce, a Coleson Daniel layup and a dagger trey by Baggett to beat the buzzer.

Banton delivered two key baskets in the third quarter to keep the Wildcats at bay. The first was on the opening possession to stretch the lead to 28-23, the second answered an Andrews bucket that cut the margin to four at 31-27.



Left: Senior Patrick Baggett (10) glides to the basket for two vs Lumpkin. Right: Senior Candler Colwell (21) on the attack at Andrews. Photo/Todd Forrest

points but it wasn't enough to keep pace with East Hall in a battle of 7-AAA unbeaten.

The game was originally scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 2 in Blairsville, but a broken pipe during the JV game forced the games to be moved to East Hall the following day.

The Vikings took control with a 27-12 first quarter after 5 early points by Candler Colwell put the Panthers on top 5-4 - their only lead of the game.

East Hall answered Candler Colwell's go-ahead trey with 12-unanswered before a Baggett free throw made it a 16-6 game. The Vikings would score the next six points to cap off an 18-1 run with a 22-6 lead.

The two teams broke even during a 17-17 second quarter that sent East Hall into the break with a 44-29 lead.

The Vikings took a 57-41 advantage into the fourth and Union and East Hall duelled to a 20-20 draw over the final 8 minutes.

Banton added 10 points for the Panthers, Allison had 9, Crawford Colwell scored 6, while Baggett finished with 5.

The 3-point line favored the home team with the Vikings hitting 9-of-19 and Union only making 1-of-12. East Hall hit 4-of-6 in the first quarter while

the Panthers their final 11-attempts after Candler Colwell sank his first try from long distance.

The Vikings also converted 26 Union County turnovers into 27 points. The only things keeping the Panthers within 20 points was their 15 offensive rebounds and an edge at the charity stripe.

When the smoke cleared, East Hall was out-rebounded 43-33 overall and 15-10 on the offensive boards. However, when you're shooting 47-percent from both the floor and from 3-point range, you're not creating many offensive rebound-opportunities.

As for the Panthers, they shot a respectable 40-percent from the floor and 48-percent on 2-point field goals. From the line, Union hit 14-of-18 (78-percent).

East Hall made 12-of-22 (55-percent) from the foul line. They also committed 16 turnovers that led to 13 Panther points.

**Up next:** On Tuesday, Union County visits Dawson County, who recently traveled to Rabbitsville and handed East Hall its first region loss of the season, 94-91 in overtime on Friday.

The Tigers are currently 4-0 in region play and 12-4 overall. Tip-off is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Tuesday in Dawsonville.

A win over Dawson would create a 4-way tie atop the region along with East Hall and 5th ranked GAC. A loss drops Union to fourth with the Spartans coming to town on Saturday.

First, the Panthers must host rival-Fannin County, beginning at 7 p.m. Friday. The Rebels are currently 0-6 in region play and 1-14 overall.

As for GAC, the Spartans are 12-3 overall and 3-1 in region play following an 88-74 loss at East Hall. The Union County game will be GAC's fourth consecutive road game after traveling to Lumpkin and Fannin last week, then North Hall on Friday and Blairsville on Saturday.

The Spartans defeated Lumpkin, 82-22 and Fannin, 84-31. Earlier in the season they beat North Hall 83-42.

Tip-off is scheduled for 6 p.m. Saturday.



Seniors Crawford Colwell and RJ Banton during the second half at Andrews, NC. Photo/Todd Forrest

## UCHS Wrestling in action at Area Duals



Top: Alex Barrett; bottom: Issac Tritt at Area Duals - hosted by Jackson County. Union County wrestling won one and lost twice at the Area Duals tournament. The Panthers fell to Fannin and Morgan Counties but defeated East Jackson. Issac and Logan Tritt each finished undefeated. Bryan Nelson, Ben Howard, Alex Barrett, and Christian Martinez each went 2-1 on the day.

### UCHS remaining schedule

Day	Date	Opponent	Location	Time	Event
Tuesday	Jan. 9	Dawson	Away	6:00/7:30	4:15 Boys
Friday	Jan. 12	Fannin	Home	7:00/8:30	4:00/5:30
Saturday	Jan. 13	GAC	Home	6:00/7:30	3:00/4:30
Tuesday	Jan. 16	Pickens	Away	6:00/7:30	4:30 Girls
Thursday	Jan 18	White	Home	6:00	JV Boys
Friday	Jan. 19	GAC	Away	7:00/8:30	4:00/5:30
Tuesday	Jan. 23	N Hall	Home	6:00/7:30	4:15 Boys
Friday	Jan. 26	E Hall	Away	7:00/8:30	4:00/5:30
Tuesday	Jan. 30	Lumpkin	Away	6:00/7:30	4:15 Girls
Friday	Feb. 2	Dawson	Home	7:00/8:30	4:00/5:30