

Ice cold shooting dooms Union; Dawson ends Lady Panthers' season

By Todd Forrest
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Norcross - The Lady Panthers saw their season come to an end last week at the hands of the Dawson County Lady Tigers during the opening round of the Region 7-AAA tournament at Greater Atlanta Christian.

Just four days removed from an upset victory over the Lady Tigers in Dawsonville, Union County stumbled in the rubber match after holding an 11-10 advantage after one quarter of action.

Dawson went on to out-score the Lady Panthers 40-12 over the final three quarters as Union's All-Region Team selection, junior Bailey Daniel scored 13 of her team's 23 points in the 50-23 defeat.

Senior Ashley Fair recorded 5 points, 8 rebounds, 3 steals, and 2 blocks to finish her high school career. Later in the week she was selected as Honorable Mention in Region 7-AAA.

The Lady Panthers' other Honorable Mention selection, freshman Kait McCarter added 2 points and 7 boards.

Falling one point shy of two-dozen, the Lady Panthers were held to their lowest scoring total since 2011 and the lowest of Head Coach David Tucker's tenure at Union County High School. For the game, Union shot a season-low 15 percent from the floor (7-for-46) while hitting 17-percent (4-for-24) from 3-point range and turning it over 21 times.



Union freshmen Andelin Hill (left) and Kait McCarter (right) apply a trap on a Lady Tiger ball handler in the corner. Photo/Todd Forrest

Also, for the first time under Tucker, Union did not reach the state playoffs - ending a streak of six-consecutive seasons in the field of 32. The girls loss on Tuesday, combined with the boys loss on Wednesday, marked the first time since 2010 that both Union County basketball teams failed to reach the state tournament.

Despite the abysmal shooting performance, Union County led 11-10 after the first quarter thanks to 8 points

on two treys from Daniel. Fair chipped in a basket and freshman Brooke Dockrey hit 1-for-2 at the line with 2.8 seconds remaining in the period to give her team the one-point advantage.

However, the hoop was unkind to the Lady Panthers during the second quarter as Dawson opened with 12-unanswered points. Union's first points of the period didn't come until under a minute to play when McCarter scored on a



Left: junior Bailey Daniel drives into the paint vs Dawson County. Right: junior Maggie Beth Stuart blocks a Lady Tigers shot attempt during the first half. Photos/Todd Forrest

put-back to trim the Lady Tiger advantage to nine at 22-13.

Following a steal-and-score by Dawson, Daniel sank a trey with 22 seconds left but the Lady Tigers responded with the final bucket of the half to take a 26-16 lead into the intermission.

Things went from bad-to-worse in the third as Union went the entire quarter without a single basket. The only points came on a pair of Daniel free throws and Dawson extended

its lead to 22 thanks to a 14-2 third frame.

Trailing 40-18 to begin the fourth, Fair connected from downtown to pull Union within 19 but the next five points belonged to the Lady Tigers as they opened up a 45-21 advantage at the 5:18 mark.

Andelin Hill scored the Lady Panthers' final bucket of the season with a 15-footer at the 4:56 mark to make it a 45-23 game before Dawson closed with another 5-0 spurt.



Right: junior Maggie Beth Stuart blocks a Lady Tigers shot attempt during the first half. Photos/Todd Forrest

Following its one-sided win over Union, Dawson continued its stellar play with a second round upset of North Hall to reach the 7-AAA finals for the fifth consecutive season.

Unfortunately for the Lady Tigers, they ran into GAC during the finals where they managed to hang around for a half until the Lady Spartans' talent and depth proved too much down the stretch and they pulled away for the Region title.

Brown selects Fort Valley State



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Two days after National Signing Day, the Union County Panthers' Blaine Brown announced that he would be attending Fort Valley State University in the fall.

According to Brown, FVSU first took interest after he turned to an online recruiting service following his junior season at UCHS.

And after a senior season that saw him earn First Team All Region honors, his online account, which included a highlight reel, began to receive a quite number of hits, and most of them were coming from one school.

"Fort Valley viewed (my account) 40-something times over the last month-and-a-half," he said. "So I went down there for a visit, I enjoyed it and they really seemed interested so I signed."

Despite playing tackle for the majority of his high school career, Fort Valley is considering moving Brown to center. And although he's never played center, the fact that FVSU runs a spread offense similar to Union County could ease the transition.

"They are looking at me as a tackle or center but they are a spread offense and

that's a huge help," he said.

Brown, who plans on majoring in agricultural economics, chose FVSU over Catawba, Brevard, and Shorter University.

"I just want to thank my mom, dad, and all of the support from my family and friends," Brown added.

Founded in 1895, FVSU is a historically black college located in Fort Valley, Ga, approximately 25 miles southwest of Macon. Both the campus and city of Fort Valley reside in Peach County.

The Wildcats football team are the reigning Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) champs and are members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II in both men's and women's athletic programs.

The schools colors are royal blue and gold and currently feature an undergraduate enrollment of 2,266 students.

Fort Valley State has one alum in the Pro Football Hall of Fame, Rayfield Wright, an offensive tackle for the Dallas Cowboys from 1967-79.

He was a six-time Pro Bowler, three-time All Pro, and a two-time Super Bowl winner.

Other NFL alumni include Pittsburgh All Pro

linebacker Greg Lloyd (1988-98), Raiders free safety Eddie Anderson (1986-97), cornerback Nick Harper who split time between the Colts and Titans from 2001-09, Dallas' 4th round draft pick, defensive end Peppi Zellner (1999-04), who finished his career with Washington and Arizona during each of his final two seasons.

FVSU's only first round pick came in 1995 when Carolina took Tyrone Pool 22nd overall. He went on to win two Super Bowls with the Patriots during a 14-year career at cornerback that saw him make stops in Indianapolis, Oakland, and Tennessee.

The 2017 football season opens at the University of West Georgia on Aug. 23 at 7 p.m..

Bowling scores

Monday Night Ladies: Pam Bierce 202, Lois Ashley 180, Nell Brown 181.

Monday Night Men: Randy Jones 203, Joe Teague 214, Derick Rice 255, Curtis Corn 220, 203, Bill Smith 202, 203, 232 Series 637, Jeff Boyle 215, 207, Taz Matetzschk 212, 267, 254, Series 733, Jeremiah Plott 212, 201, 226, Branden Hartness 210, 226, 214, Series 650, Jay Burrell 232, 248, 203, Series 683, Ray Everett 200, 215, 215, Series 630, Richard Tanner 203, 210, Bart Rodgers 212, 222, Doug Tanner 217, 247, 203, Series 667, Keith Rhodes 237, Tom Griffiths 208, Ron Wingate 201, 211, Ryan West 257, 227.

Young @ Heart Seniors: John Delphino 216, Dewey Allen 203, Ron Wingate 215, 224, Tom Griffiths 213, Bryan Cuthbert 226, 204, Series 600, Mel White 203, 236, Ken Thigpen 204, Del Neiffer 226, Walter Carpenter 211, Ron Weppelman 213, Dee Tyler 204.

Thursday Night Fun Mixed: Stanley Tyler 209, 205, Dewey Allen 217, Curtis Corn 243, 239, 201, Series 683, Doug Roberts 222, Jimmy Southern 210, Brett Hogged 214, 214, Series 623, Shay Roberts 257, 202, Ray Everett 216, 279, Series 684.

Players prepare for upcoming Pickleball Tournament



(L-R): front: Kelly Woodham, Kathy Johnson, Angie Telenko, Patty Mondl, Sheila Garrison, Alex Dezayas, Mike Mekas, Vivienne Rimoldi; back: Tony Lanza, Donnie Woodham, Karen Lanza, Marty Evans, Karen Rizzo-Richards, Lenda Mangham, Dottie Honea, Nancy Gillis, Sharon Knight, Charley McKorkle, Mary Scott, Jan Flegle

The gym of the First United Methodist Church of Blairsville has been very full this winter with both new and experienced Pickleball players practicing for the second annual tournament.

The competition will be held in the Methodist Activity Center (MAC) from 1-5 PM on March 9th for Intermediate players, and

March 16th, 1-5 PM for Novice players. Dave and Marty Evans are the organizers of the event.

Fees collected from the players will be donated to the FUMC and to the Blairsville Pickleball Club for replacement of worn equipment. The Pickleball classes held through the FUMC OASIS program has produced

dozens of new players, and the BPC now has over 100 members.

Visitors are encouraged to attend the tournament, at no charge.

Those interested in this fast growing sport may email the BPC Ambassadors Kathi and Bud Patrick, at kathipatrick3@gmail.com. NIFeb15.215CA

Barrel Racing League coming to Blairsville in March

The Battle Lines Barrel Racing series made its debut season last year. Seven events were held in Murphy, NC and Copperhill, TN in 2016. This series awarded a total of 15 Bob Berg platinum series buckles, 15 J Black Saddlery Breast Collars, and one J Black Saddle to participants for their efforts. The monetary value of awards was in excess of \$4000. The series paid \$17,603 and had a grand total of 743 entries

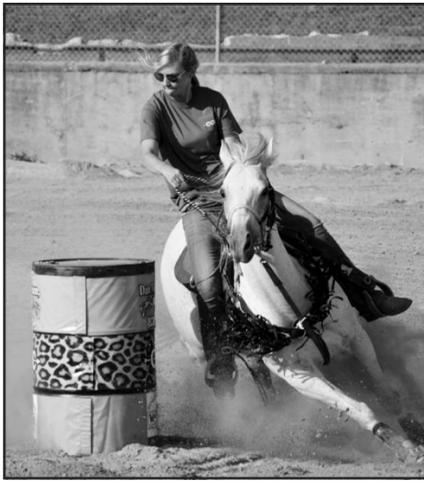
in 2016.

For 2017 we are pleased to announce that we will have T&Z photography on site for each and every date. We are also excited that Union County Saddle Club will be sponsoring three events in Blairsville, GA.

The series will expand its awards program with the addition of another saddle for 2017, to bring the total prizes offered to two saddles, 15 buckles, and 15 secondary

awards. The Union County Saddle Club in Blairsville, GA will host 3 races for 2017 at the local Union County Arena. The dates for these races are March 25th, July 22nd, and September 23rd. Admission is free to spectators. We hope to see you in March!

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Brittany Long of Blairville, GA



Vanna Chambers of Blairville, GA



Alyssa McFarland of Blairville, GA



Sarah Howard of Blairville, GA