

# Sports

See the Sports Section at nghanews.com

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

### Hokes Bluff, AL denies Union's championship bid for the second straight year

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nghanews.com

**Hiwassee** - The Union County Lady Panthers enter the second half of its 2016-17 schedule with a 7-7 record following two wins at the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament in Hiwassee, last week.

For the second time in three years, the Lady Panthers took home the third place trophy after falling to the eventual champion, Hokes Bluff, AL in the second round.

Leading 6-4 after one and tied 15-15 at half, Union County went ice cold over the opening 12 minutes of the second half as the 4th ranked Lady Eagles opened up a 37-21 lead with just over four minutes to play.

Hokes Bluff would cruise to a 41-27 victory, then go on to rout Hayesville, NC in the Championship Game, 51-22.

Union's opening round contest with Swain County, NC saw the short-handed Lady Panthers, playing without leading scorer Bailey Daniel, put up their second highest scoring output of the season in a 62-54 victory.

Freshman guard, Brooke Dockrey posted season highs in points with 14 and assists with 6 in the win as the Lady Panthers were led by a trio of freshmen.

Union got 34 combined points from freshmen Kait McCarter with 11, Andelin Hill with 9, along with Dockrey's 14.

In the third game, the Lady Panthers recorded their 11th straight win over the Towns County Lady Indians with a 62-16 rout in the Consolation Game.

Daniel scored all of her game-high 11 points in the first half as Union had 11 different players reach the scoring column.

Sophomore Adeline Dockrey finished with 10



The Union County Lady Panthers placed third at the BOTS for the second time in three years. They have now finished third or better in four of the last six BOTS Christmas Tournaments. Photo/Todd Forrest

points, 6 rebounds, and 2 assists while senior Ashley Fair added 6 points and a game high 8 boards.

For the second year in a row, a Union County sophomore was selected for the BOTS All Tournament Team as Adeline Dockrey took home the honors after leading her team in scoring over the three games with 27 points while hauling in 17 boards - second on the team to Fair's 18.

Last year, then-sophomore Bailey Daniel was Union's representative on the All Tournament Team.

**Lady Panthers 62, Swain County, NC 54** - The shorthanded Lady Panthers closed on a 13-2 run after trailing 52-49 with 4:06 to play.

The run opened with a steal-and-score by Hill and a trey from Fair that gave Union a 54-52 advantage.

At the 3:02 mark, Brooke Dockrey drove into the paint for two and McCarter followed up with a free

throw on the ensuing Lady Panthers possession.

Both teams exchanged misses from downtown before Adeline Dockrey hit 1-of-2 at the line for a 58-52 Union lead with 1:06 remaining.

A Swain basket with 45 seconds left trimmed the Union lead to four but Adeline Dockrey was perfect at the charity stripe with 32 seconds to play.

A turnover led to another Adeline Dockrey free throw seven seconds later, and with 21 seconds left, Swain was whistled for a double-dribble.

Brooke Dockrey stepped to the line four seconds later and split a pair to make it a 62-54 game.

Adeline Dockrey finished with 8 points and 8 rebounds while fellow sophomore Jordan Rogers scored 9 points.

After trailing 10-4 in the first quarter, the Lady Panthers rattled off nine unanswered points for a 13-12

lead, early in the second.

A Lady Maroon Devil bucket and a Union turnover quickly put Swain back on top by three at 16-13.

Adeline Dockrey responded by going coast-to-coast for a deuce, then Brooke Dockrey found junior Maggie Beth Stuart under the basket with a bounce-pass to regain the lead at 17-16.

A Swain jumper put Union down 18-17 with 3:43 to play in the half, but after two free throws by McCarter put her team on top 19-18, the Lady Panthers wouldn't trail again until the fourth quarter.

McCarter continued to carry Union late in the second quarter as she hit 1-of-2 at the line to make it a 20-18 game. Then, despite drawing a double-team, she went to work inside for two, breaking a 20-20 tie with 1:07 remaining before the intermission.

Junior Grace Wischmeyer was perfect at the line to give Union a 24-20 advantage. Swain would

answer with a 1-for-2 trip at the line as the Lady Panthers went into the locker room on top 24-21.

A 3 from Fair stretched Union's advantage to 27-21 early in the third before a base line jumper by Rogers opened up a 29-21 lead at the six-minute mark.

The Lady Maroon Devils stormed back with an 8-0 run, aided by a technical foul on the Lady Panthers.

All even at 29-29, Brooke Dockrey dribbled the length of the court for a lay-up to put Union ahead 31-29. On the very next offensive possession, Brooke Dockrey nailed a trey from the top-of-the-key for a 34-29 lead.

A corner jumper by Hill kept the Lady Panthers up five before two straight Swain baskets - the second coming off a Union turnover - sliced the Lady Panthers' lead to one.

Once again, Brooke Dockrey stalled the Maroon Devil momentum, this time with a 2-for-2 trip to the line.

However, a Swain trey knotted the score at 38-38 with 1:46 left in the third.

A lay-up by Rogers and a put-back from McCarter put Union back on top by four before Swain's full court pressure defense forced another turnover that led to a game-tying basket.

The Lady Panthers turned to a freshman to break the tie, except this time it was Hill, who drilled a trey with 12 seconds left in the period.

However, Swain beat the buzzer with a 15-footer to pull within one entering the fourth.

Another jumper put the Maroon Devils on top at 46-45 with 6:55 to play. A Union turnover led to another jump shot on the other end and the Lady Panthers found themselves trailing by three.

Hill made it a one-point game with a short jumper until a Swain put-back made it 50-47 with 5:21 remaining.

Adeline Dockrey knocked down a pair at the line with 4:22 left to pull Union back to within one but Swain went inside for a deuce at the 4:06 mark.

The Lady Maroon Devils would only muster one basket the rest of the game as the Lady Panthers used their 13-2 run over the final 3:44 to finish off Swain County.

**Lady Panthers 27, Hokes Bluff, AL 41** - In the opening round it was Union who finished strong, but the second round saw the 4th ranked Hokes Bluff Lady Eagles clamp down on the Lady Panthers coming out of halftime.

Union was held to a season-low, one 3-point basket while shooting just 11-of-46 (24 percent) from the floor and 1-of-21 (5 percent) from 3-point land.

A low scoring first half saw Union hold a 6-4 lead after one following baskets by Adeline Dockrey and

See Lady Panthers, Page 3B

## Panthers respond to first round loss with wins over Hokes Bluff, Polk

### Union returns to Region 7-AAA action this week with games at East Hall and Lumpkin County

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nghanews.com

**Hiwassee** - The Panthers (6-8) came out on top in two games at the Battle of the States despite all three contests going down to the wire after looking like potential blowouts early on.

In game one, Union overcame a 10-point halftime deficit to unbeaten Swain County, NC to take the lead late in the fourth quarter before succumbing to the Maroon Devils in the final minute.

Union County's All Tournament Team selection Lawson Baenninger finished with 13. The Panthers also got 13 points - a career high - from junior RJ Banton in the loss.

In the second game, it was Union's turn to let a double-digit lead slip away as they were in complete control of Hokes Bluff, AL with a 32-18 advantage, early in the third quarter.

The Eagles would pull within three at 40-37 with just over three minutes to play until three Hokes Bluff turnovers allowed the Panthers to extend the lead to 10 at 47-37 with 1:44 remaining.

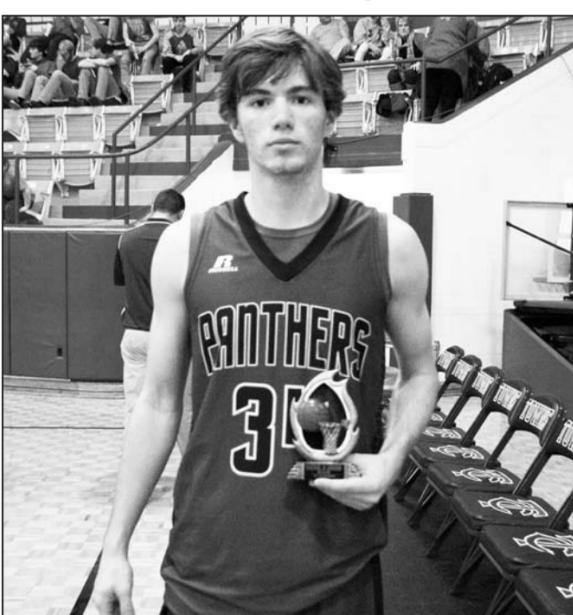
The Eagles immediately clawed their way back to within six but couldn't get any closer as Union held on 50-44.

Baenninger led Union with 12 points and Candler Colwell added 10 in the win.

The third day saw the Panthers fall behind 49-42 to Polk County, TN before exploding for a 17-0 run to close the third quarter with a 59-49 lead.

The Wildcats, who have lost to Union in three of the last five Battle of the States, fought their way back behind 37 points from junior center Josh Laughlin to pull within a basket on three separate occasions.

With 1:22 to play,



Senior Lawson Baenninger was named All Tournament for the second straight year. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union led 68-66, with 44 seconds remaining, the score was 70-68, and with 12 seconds left, the Panthers were clinging to a 72-70 advantage until a free throw by Crawford Colwell made it 73-70 with 8 seconds to play.

Polk would be whistled for traveling as they tried to get off the game-tying shot.

A technical foul was given to Polk County coach John Tucker (son of Union's David Tucker) and Baenninger hit 1-of-2 technical free throws to seal the victory, 74-70 with seven-tenths of a second left.

Freshman Sawyer Drake led the Panthers with a career high 18 points. Baenninger and Candler Colwell scored 17 each, while Crawford Colwell added 12.

**Panthers 49, Swain County, NC 55** - Swain County jumped out to an 18-11 lead over the Panthers in the first quarter and extended that to 36-26 at the half.

Banton led Union with seven at the break, Drake had five, and Baenninger had four.

Junior Crawford Colwell was held scoreless in the

first half while Cole Dockrey had a trey, Cole Wright had two, and Candler Colwell hit 2-of-2 at the line.

Entering the BOTS, Swain County was averaging more than 80 points-per-game and appeared to be on pace to approach that number, but that was until the Panthers' defense held the Maroon Devils to a season-low 9 points in the third quarter, allowing Union to pull within four entering the final frame.

Three field goals and two free throws were all the offense Swain could produce in the third as the Panthers got 8 points from Baenninger, five from Banton, and two from Crawford Colwell.

However, the fourth quarter saw Union take the lead despite not connecting from the field during the entire period.

Union hit 8-of-12 at the line in the fourth but it wasn't enough to maintain its edge as Swain was able to sneak past the Panthers in the final moments.

"I thought we played Swain County really well,"



Freshman Sawyer Drake drives to the basket vs Polk County, TN. He finished with a career high 18 points in Union's come-from-behind victory. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union County Head Coach Casey Jones said. "It was probably the most complete game we've played all year except for barely shooting 50 percent from the line."

The Panthers finished 15-of-28 at the line while Swain County hit 9-of-13.

Drake finished with nine, Candler Colwell had four, Dockrey scored three, while Wright and Crawford Colwell scored 2 points each.

**Panthers 50, Hokes Bluff, AL 44** - Union led 9-7 after one before pulling away early in the second quarter with a 10-3 run and holding a 30-18 lead at the break.

The Panthers connected on five first half treys with four coming during the second quarter.

Baenninger connected on a trey in each of the first two quarters, while Dockrey, Candler Colwell, and Cole Davis connected from downtown in the second.

A corner jumper from Drake gave Union a 32-18 lead just one minute into the third.

Hokes Bluff answered with a trey but Candler Col-

well went inside for two to stretch the lead back to 13 with six minutes left in the quarter.

A 7-0 Eagles' run sliced the Panther lead to 34-28 but Davis connected on two at the line and Wright went coast-to-coast for a lay-up that put Union back up by 10 and momentarily pulled the momentum back in favor of the Purple and Gold.

When the fourth quarter concluded, the Panthers seemed to remain in control at 38-30.

The Eagles went inside for two quick buckets to open the fourth and pull within four but Baenninger took a charge and Banton hit 2-of-2 at the line for a 40-34 Union lead.

A Hokes Bluff free throw was followed by a pair of Union misses at the other foul line. The Eagles pulled within three but Baenninger hit two free throws to put his team back on top by five.

Hokes Bluff was called for a backcourt violation at the 2:43 mark, then missed a jumper at the 2:22 mark. On the other end, Candler Colwell drove to the basket

for two - making it a 44-37 game.

Hokes Bluff handed the ball back to Union with a travel and Drake converted 1-of-2 at the line. A tie-up led to a jump ball that awarded possession to the Panthers and Banton scored inside off a Baenninger assist to put Union ahead by 10 with 1:44 remaining.

A 3-point play by the Eagles, one free throw from Baenninger and Drake, along with a free throw and a put-back by Hokes Bluff made it a 49-43 game with 55 seconds remaining.

The teams exchanged turnovers before Candler Colwell hit 1-of-2 to give Union a seven-point lead.

An Eagle free throw with 38 seconds left brought the score to 50-44 and those totals held up for the remainder of the game.

Crawford Colwell finished with seven, Drake and Davis had five each, while Wright and Banton both scored four, and Dockrey ended up with 3 points.

**Panthers 74, Polk County 55**  
See Panthers, Page 3B