

Sports

See the Sports Section at ngea.com

Panthers struggle on the road; lose thriller at home to East Hall

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

The Panthers went 0-for-3 on the week after dropping a pair of road games at North Hall and Lumpkin County by double-digits, sandwiched around a heartbreaking loss to first place East Hall at home.

The three losses drop Union to 10-13 overall and 3-7 in region play, creating a tie for fifth with Lumpkin County, who the Panthers host on Tuesday.

If Union defeats Lumpkin (3-7 in region) on Tuesday, then wins at Dawson (5-5) on Friday, the Panthers would finish fourth - assuming Dawson falls to East Hall on Tuesday.

If Union knocks off Lumpkin on Tuesday but loses to Dawson (5-5 in region), the Panthers will need for North Hall (6-5 in region) to take care of Lumpkin on Friday.

If North Hall prevails over Lumpkin, Union is fifth. If Lumpkin beats North Hall, the Panthers and Indians would be tied for fifth.

The first tiebreaker is head-to-head record. The second tiebreaker is record vs region opponents, beginning with the first place team and working your way down. The final tiebreaker would be a coin toss.

Panthers 68, EHall 70
Having never defeated East Hall's boys, Union County was on the verge of history Friday night but fell victim to a dagger-trety with time running out to give the Vikings a 70-68 victory.

The game winning shot was not without controversy as the Panthers appeared to fall victim to a missed over-the-back, followed by a trip that wasn't called, allowing East Hall to retain possession after a missed free-throw that would have tied the game with less than 20 seconds remaining.

Then, following the go-ahead three, the Panthers Head Coach Casey Jones was denied a timeout as his team raced up the court in an attempt to get off a potential game-tying or game-winning shot.

The replay clearly shows Jones chasing the official down the sideline while calling for the



Junior Cole Wright goes up for two after one of his career-high six steals against East Hall. Photo/Todd Forrest

timeout with more than 3 seconds remaining on the clock as Union's Candler Colwell dribbled across half court.

The referee completely ignored Jones, the Panthers never got off a shot, and then the officials denied that a timeout was called as they attempted to escape to the dressing room.

This came after a handful of questionable no-calls bailed out East Hall after the Vikings missed a game-tying free throw on the other end. As Crawford Colwell attempted to box out on the free throw attempt, replay shows him being pushed from behind by No. 30 for East Hall.

Then as Colwell went up for the board, No. 30 went over his back, knocking the ball loose, but Candler Colwell came down with the ball. However, the East Hall shooter, No. 15, ran into Candler Colwell, jarring the ball loose again, then No. 15 fell to the floor and rolled into Candler Colwell's legs, causing him to fall and preventing him from securing the loose ball, allowing the Vikings' No. 30 to regain possession.

To be fair, the Panthers deserve some of the blame themselves as they should have never been in that situation. Union

missed six of its final 10 free throw attempts, including five straight misses during a stretch that lasted until the midway point of the fourth, preventing Union from building what could have been an insurmountable lead. Instead, the Panthers were clinging to a 3-point lead with less than three minutes to play.

Trailing 60-56 with four minutes remaining, Union responded with a 7-0 run to take a 63-60 lead as the clock ticked under three minutes.

A 3-point play by freshman Sawyer Drake pulled the Panthers within one at 60-59, then, moments later, Union forced a jump-ball to regain possession. That's when Crawford Colwell would rebound his own miss to give his team its first lead of the fourth quarter at 61-60 with 3:21 to play.

On the ensuing Vikings possession, Crawford Colwell came up with a steal and went the other way for the lay-up and a three-point Union lead.

East Hall answered with consecutive baskets to regain the lead at 64-63 with 1:53 remaining.

The Panthers were whistled for an offensive foul on their

next possession but junior Cole Wright picked the pocket of the Viking point guard and converted the lay-up on the other end to put his team back on top by one with 1:17 to play.

The Panthers would force another turnover on the defensive end when Candler Colwell deflected an East Hall pass into the hands of Drake. Crawford Colwell would step to the foul line with 44 seconds to play and Union up by one.

After he hitting one free throw for a two-point lead, the Vikings quickly evened the score at 66-66 with a put-back on the other end. But as the Panthers inbounded the ball, Wright drew a quick foul, sending him to the line for a pair with 31 seconds left.

After connecting on them both, East Hall was fouled on a base line drive - awarding them two free throws with 21 seconds remaining.

The first attempt was successful, but the second missed long off the back of the rim, resulting in a free-for-all that saw the Vikings come away with possession with the help of a few no-calls that went their way.

After a timeout, East Hall was inbounded from in-front of



Freshman Pierson Allison (5) blocks a Trojan shot attempt during Tuesday night's game at North Hall. Photo/Todd Forrest

their own bench with 14 seconds at the line. Junior RJ Banton finished with 14 points on 7-of-10 from the floor. He also hauled in a team-high 9 rebounds. Candler Colwell scored 11 points, grabbed 5 rebounds to go with 4 steals. Meanwhile, Wright added 10 points and a game-high 6 steals.

Drake just missed scoring in double-figures with 9 points, 5 rebounds, and 3 steals. The Panthers, who shot 41-percent from the floor, overcame a 51-percent shooting performance by East Hall by getting the better of the Vikings in two categories they usually own: fast break points and steals. Union won fast-break points 17 to 13 while recording 19 steals to East Hall's nine.

The game would remain back-and-forth throughout with the Vikings never gaining more than a five-point advantage and Union never leading by more than three.

Crawford Colwell scored a team-high 16 points on 5-of-9 shooting from the floor and 6-of-8

See Panthers, Page 2C

Lumpkin fends off Lady Panthers; North Hall, East Hall prove too much

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

The Lady Panthers dropped all three games last week while playing shorthanded without the services of one of Head Coach David Tucker's most versatile players, sophomore forward Adeline Dockrey, when they visited North Hall and hosted East Hall.

Dockrey tried to fight through the pain at Lumpkin but was nowhere near 100-percent and wound up playing very little. To prevent further injury, it's likely that she'll sit the remainder of the season.

At North Hall, it was clear the Lady Panthers weren't firing on all cylinders and were simply unable to keep up with the Lady Trojans (15-9 overall, 7-4 in region) in a 54-36 defeat.

On Friday, Union was able to keep it close into the second quarter but East Hall closed the first half on a 12-2 run for a 27-14 lead at the break.

The Lady Vikings built a 25-point advantage in the fourth and remained in a first place tie in 7-AAA with a 53-36 victory.

At Lumpkin County on Saturday, Union's second half rally fell short as they fell into a 19-5 hole out of the gates.

The Lady Indians took a 30-15 advantage into the break before Union surged back to within six entering the fourth. However, the Lady Panthers' were unable to pull off the comeback and fell 49-47.

Sitting in last place in region play, Union could still finish as high as fifth with two wins this week.

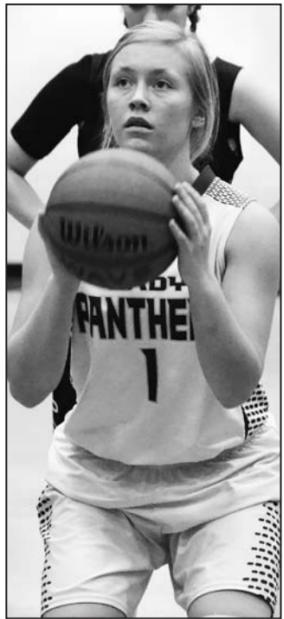
A win over Lumpkin on Tuesday would create a 3-way tie for fifth between Union, Fanning, and Lumpkin - assuming GAC defeats Fanning and North Hall beats Lumpkin on Friday.

However, a win over Lumpkin and a win at Dawson on Friday could move the Lady Panthers into fifth place all by themselves.

The opening round of region will be held at the sec-



Freshmen Kait McCarter (Left) and Mary Wischmeyer (Right) were the top two scorers vs East Hall. Photos/Todd Forrest



ond place team, which like the boys, will be GAC or East Hall.

Currently, North Hall is secure at third and Dawson is safe in fourth. The top two and bottom three spots all remain up-for-grabs, however.

UC 47, Lumpkin 49 Dahlongea - A 3-point basket and two free throws from Bailey Daniel were all the points Union could muster in the first quarter as Lumpkin drained three treys during a 19-point opening frame.

The second saw the Lady Panthers connect on just two field goals, but both were from long distance as they hit 4-of-4 at the line and managed to weather the storm and enter the intermission down 15.

Freshman Andelin Hill and senior Ashley Fair were responsible for Union's second quarter threes, while Hill and McCarter each went 2-for-2 from the foul line.

Daniel and McCarter went to work in the third as they spearheaded the Lady Panthers' attack that outscored Lumpkin 16-7 in the quarter.

Daniel knocked down a trey, then hit 3-of-4 at the line. McCarter hit a pair at the charity stripe before scoring a bucket in the paint.

Freshman Brooke Dockrey, junior Maggie Beth Stuart, and Fair also added a basket in the period to pull the Lady Panthers within six.

In the fourth, freshman Mary Wischmeyer came off the bench to pour in six points on three field goals after Daniel, who hit three free throws in the quarter, picked up her fifth foul.

Fair connected from beyond the arc before joining Daniel with five fouls.

Sophomore Jordan Rogers and McCarter each chipped in a deuce in the final frame but it wasn't enough.

Daniel finished with a team-high 14 points while Fair and McCarter added 8 points each.

Mary Wischmeyer had six, Hill scored five, Stuart, Rogers and Brooke Dockrey each finished with 2 points.

UC 36, North Hall 54 Clermont - Trailing 17-12 after one, the Lady Panthers pulled within three at 17-14 on a basket by Rogers, early in the second.

North Hall would counter with a 7-0 run and Union would be forced to play from behind for the remainder of the game.

After trimming the defi-



Bailey Daniel hangs in the air during a shot attempt vs East Hall. Earlier in the week, the junior guard scored 17 of Union's 34 points at North Hall. Photo/Todd Forrest

cit to five on two Daniel free throws, the Lady Trojans reeled off five unanswered points to close the half with a 33-23 lead.

North Hall opened the third with four unanswered to open up a 14-point advantage before Daniel sank a deep trey to cut the deficit to 37-26, the Lady Trojans responded with a 5-0 mini-run for their largest lead of the game at 42-26.

The Lady Panthers answered with a 6-0 spurt thanks to two free throws from Daniel and a pair of buckets by McCarter.

And just when Union appeared to have a bit of momentum, North Hall got off a lay-up in the final seconds of the period to stretch its lead back to a dozen.

Nearly two minutes into the fourth, the Lady Trojans provided the first points of the quarter with a trey to go up by 15.

A Brooke Dockrey free throw was followed by a North Hall deuce. McCarter scored on a put-back with 3:55 to play but the Lady Trojans put the game away with a free throw on the ensuing possession, then a basket at the 3:20 mark to open up a 17-point lead at 52-35.

Daniel scored a team-high 17 points to go with 2 steals. She also connected on 7-of-10 from the foul line and hit two 3-point field goals.

McCarter added 8 points and 7 rebounds. Fair had 5 points, 7 boards, 3 steals, and a blocked shot. Rogers also scored 5 points and recorded 2 steals.

UC 36, East Hall 53
The Lady Panthers fell into an early 11-2 hole and trailed 13-4 after one before making it a contest early in the second.

Down by nine, Union opened the second quarter with an 8-2 run to pull within three at 15-12.

Brooke Dockrey drove inside for a pair of buckets during the run. Rogers and Stuart also went to work inside for two but McCarter was whistled for her third foul with 3:33 left in the second and the Lady Vikings outscored Union 9-2 over the final two minutes of the period.

Leading 27-14, East Hall connected on consecutive treys to open the third for a 33-14 advantage.

Fair answered with a 3-ball of her own, Rogers scored in the paint, and Fair converted a steal into two

points to keep Union within 16.

East Hall responded with a 3-point play, then Brooke Dockrey hit a short jumper before the Lady Vikings hit a jumper of their own to close the third with a 42-23 lead.

Daniel fouled out early in the fourth and East Hall quickly extended its lead to 23.

Late baskets by sophomores Brianna Hemphill and Maddie Sutton, along with a trey and deuce from Mary Wischmeyer allowed Union to get within 16 with 1:12 to play.

McCarter, Sutton, and Mary Wischmeyer also hit free throws in the fourth to bring the final score to 53-36.

Mary Wischmeyer went on to lead the Lady Panthers with 7 points. McCarter also added 7 points, 6 boards, 2 steals, and a blocked shot.

Brooke Dockrey scored 6 points with a team-high 3 assists. Fair chipped in 5 points, while Rogers had 4 points and 4 boards.

Sutton scored three, Hemphill, Stuart, and junior Grace Wischmeyer each finished with 2 points.