

Sports

See the Sports Section at nghanews.com

Soccer: Lady Panthers throttle Greene County in Region opener

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

Greensboro - The defending Region 8-AA Champions began the defense of its crown with a 10-0 rout of Greene County.

Following an Elite-8 run to close out the 2015 season, the Union County Lady Panthers (2-0, 1-0) picked up where they left off with 6 goals in the first half.

Union would end the game early, via mercy stoppage with a goal by the team's leading scorer, freshman Madison Yost - less than 18 minutes into the second half. The 10th and final goal came off an assist from Kaitlyn Gallagher.

"Greene was not a strong team but our girls did a great job of passing and playing at our level," Union County Head Coach Tim Hunter said. "We scored early and never took our foot off the gas. The entire midfield played fantastic and our defense and keeper kept the shutout intact. Baenninger did a fantastic job of setting up other players to score."

The Lady Panthers' scoring onslaught began in the 4th minute with a goal from senior Rachel Vester off an assist from sophomore Layne Baenninger.

Sophomore Brenna Innis scored unassisted in the 18th



Sophomore Layne Baenninger had 3 assists at Greene County.

minute. Yost converted off a feed from Baenninger in the 23rd minute. Vester tacked on another goal (unassisted), 11 seconds later.

Yost made it a 5-0 game in the 37th minute and Vester scored the final goal - thanks to an assist from senior Ansley Garrison with 1:50 left before the intermission.

Baenninger found Yost once again to stretch the advantage to 7-0, just 28 seconds into the second half.

A little over two minutes later, Baenninger found the net off a pass from JoAnna Irvin.

In the 55th minute, Garrison connected off an assist from Vester before Yost found paydirt in the 58th minute to end the game at 10-0.

Union County has the week off before traveling to Towns County on March 14th at 5 p.m., where they Lady Panthers look to avenge their only regular season loss from 2015.

Soccer: Panthers demolish Greene County, host Riverside on Friday

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

Greensboro - Following a 1-1 tie with Fannin County back on Feb. 12th, the Union County Panthers (1-0-1, 1-0) were back in action, and at full strength, when Region-play opened last Friday at Greene County.

The first half was all Union as they put up six goals on the hometown Tigers and went on to thrash Greene County, 10-0 and end the game by mercy stoppage with 12:30 to play.

"(We) did a good job of moving the ball and playing to our level," Union County Head Coach Tim Hunter said. "Our midfield really got involved in the scoring as their back line really retreated close to goal when we had possession."

Sam Seiler finished with 5 assists and one goal.

"Seiler got the team started off well by setting up players to score," Hunter said. "He really played like a leader and got so many of his teammates involved. Five assists is an amazing stat."

Brian Smith scored 3 goals, Lance Underwood scored a goal and dished off 2 assists, and Sean Dobbins added a goal and an assist.

"Smith got a hat trick and



Union County Head Soccer Coach Tim Hunter.

is leading the boys in scoring as a freshman," Hunter said.

Also scoring goals were Jesus Mancillas and Matthew Van Pelt.

As for the basketball players, who were playing in their first game of the season: Lawson Baenninger finished with a goal and an assist, while Parker McCombs added a goal.

"Underwood and Baenninger did a good job controlling center-mid and setting up our players and outside-mids. Defense did a good job getting involved and keeping the shut out. Adam Bachman had a superior game at outside-defense," Hunter said.

On Friday, Union will host Riverside, who the Panthers

shared the 8-AA Region title with last year, despite the Eagles getting the No. 1 seed in the State Tournament after beating Union.

"They are a very skilled team," Hunter said. "Unfortunately, you never know from year-to-year; their team can change so much due to their enrollment changes. They beat Holy Innocents 7-4, Social Circle 5-0, who beat them last year, and they beat a very good Lumpkin team, 1-0. They are a top-five-level team in the State."

Come support the Panthers at 7 p.m. on Friday in an important Region contest at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

On Monday, Union is at rival Towns County at 7 p.m.

Tigers force split after Union takes first game of doubleheader 6-1

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

The Panthers opened Region 8-AA action with a win over Washington Wilkes but couldn't outslug the Tigers in the second game of the doubleheader at home on Friday evening.

Union took game one behind the right arm of senior Joseph Mancuso, who fanned 12 hitters in six innings after allowing a run in the top half of the first. The Panther bats responded with four runs in the bottom of the first, then tacked on two more in the fifth in a 6-1 victory.

Wilkes got an early lead in the first game thanks to a one-out walk and a hit batter via Mancuso in the first inning. The Tigers followed with a pair of infield singles that spotted Wilkes a 1-0 advantage.

In Union's half of the first, senior Lance Rich and Mancuso singled with one out and sophomore RJ Banton brought them both around with a double to left.

Junior Dawson Groves was hit by a pitch, senior Andrew Brown reached on a fielder's choice, and sophomore Crawford Colwell was hit by a pitch before sophomore Candler Colwell scored Banton and Brown with a base hit to left.

In the bottom of the fifth, Crawford Colwell knocked in two with a single after Banton and Groves were hit by a pitch and Brown laid down a sacrifice bunt.

Leading 6-1, Head Coach Robby Roxbury turned to the lefty, sophomore Cole Davis in the seventh, and after opening the inning with seven straight balls, the sophomore fired three consecutive strikes for the first out. Banton, the first baseman, recorded the second out on a running, over the shoulder catch along the fence. A base hit and a walk loaded the bases but Davis got the third out on a swinging strike three.

Game one stats:
HITTING - Patrick Baggett 1-for-4 with a double. Rich 1-for-3 with a BB. Mancuso 1-for-4 with a run. Banton 1-for-2 with 2 RBIs, 1 run, a double, and 2 hit by pitches. Groves 0-for-1 with 1 run, 1 BB, and 2 hit by pitches. Brown 0-for-2 with a run. Crawford Colwell 1-for-2 with 2 RBIs and a hit by pitch. Candler Colwell 1-for-3 with 2 RBIs. Ean Harkins 1 run. Slade Rowan 1 run, 1 stolen base.
PITCHING - Mancuso 6 innings, 1 run, 1 earned run, 12 K, 2 hits, 1 BB. Davis 1 inning, 0 runs, 2 K, 2 BB. **WINNING PITCHER** - Mancuso.

In the second game, Wilkes posted three in the first but Union put up six runs in the second. However, the Tigers got seven in the fifth and went on to win 11-8.



Senior ace Joseph Mancuso struck out 12 in Union's win over Washington Wilkes in the first game of Friday's Region 8-AA doubleheader. Photo/Todd Forrest



Sophomore third baseman Crawford Colwell knocks in two with a base hit in the fifth inning of the first game. Photo/Todd Forrest

starter Dawson Welborn from the game in the second, Wilkes turned to Walker Robinson, who struck out 12 Panthers over the final 5 1/3 innings.

Rich, Union's starter, worked four innings and left with a 6-3 lead. The senior allowed 3 runs - 1 earned, while striking out three and surrendering 5 hits.

Senior Will King worked 2/3 inning, yielding 4 runs on just one hit. Candler Colwell relieved King in the fifth and went 1 1/3 innings while also allowing only one hit but gave up 3 runs - 1 earned, and walked two. Banton worked the seventh and allowed a run on one hit but issued 3 walks.

At the plate, Union reached on 12 walks but only mustered 3 hits in the loss.

Groves finished 1-for-2 with an RBI and sophomore Logan Dyer was also 1-for-2

with an RBI. Candler Colwell went 1-for-2 with a run and reached twice on walks. The Achilles' heel turned out to be the top four hitters in the Panthers' lineup, who were a combined 0-for-12 with 9 strikeouts.

Game two stats:
HITTING - Baggett 0-for-3 with 1 RBI, 1 run, 2 BB, and a stolen base. Rich 0-for-4 with 1 RBI, 2 stolen bases, and 1 BB. Mancuso 0-for-3 with 1 RBI, and 1 BB. Banton 0-for-2 with 1 RBI, and 2 BB. Groves 1-for-2 with 1 RBI, 1 run, and 2 BB. Brown 0-for-4 with 1 run. Candler Colwell 1-for-2 with 2 runs, and 2 BB. Dyer 1-for-2 with 1 RBI, 1 run, and 2 BB. Rowan 1 run. Harkins 0-for-1 with 1 run.

PITCHING - Rich 4 innings, 3 runs, 1 earned run, 3 K, 5 hits, 0 BB. King 2/3 in, 4 runs, 4 earned runs, 1 K, 1



Dawson Groves

hit, 2 BB. Candler Colwell 1 1/3 innings, 3 runs, 1 earned run, 1 K, 1 hit, 2 BB. Banton 1 inning, 1 run, 1 earned run, 1 K, 1 hit, 3 BB.

Upcoming games:
Tuesday, March 8th vs Riverside Military Academy at 5 p.m. Thursday, March 10th at Riverside Military Academy 5 p.m. Friday, March 11 vs Fannin County at 5 p.m. Monday, March 14 at Gilmer County (DH) 4:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Union resumes Region play on Tuesday when they host Riverside. The Panthers will travel to Gainesville to face Riverside on Thursday.

The Eagles also hosted



Andrew Brown with one of his two 2-out, RBI hits. Photo/Todd Forrest

Wilkes in a doubleheader with the same result as Union. RMA took game one 8-3 before dropping the second game 15-6.

Overall, Riverside is 4-2 with one-sided wins over Chestatee and Fulton Leadership Academy (twice). Their last game was a 13-2 loss to St. Francis.

Fannin is 3-1 and coming off an 11-0 no-hit victory over Towns County on Saturday. They also own wins over Liberty County 11-7 and Bryan County 8-3.

Their lone loss came at home to Bryan County, 6-5 on Saturday before Towns

defeated Bryan 10-0.

Following the win, the Indians fell 11-0 to the Rebels in the final game of a round-robin between Fannin, Towns, and Bryan County on Saturday in Blue Ridge.

Gilmer is currently 1-4 and will meet Fannin at home on Tuesday, then in Blue Ridge on Thursday.

After winning their opener 11-7 over Dawson County, Gilmer fell twice (by one run) to North Murray. Dawson got revenge at home with a 14-4 victory over the Bobcats, then Lumpkin County took down Gilmer, 6-3 in Dahlonega.

UCRD's 10&U Girls All-Star team takes part in State Tournament over the weekend



A fabulous job 10&U Panthers! The Union County Recreation Department's 10&U Girls All Star team had an exciting weekend at the State Tournament in Rabun County. The Lady Panthers were beat in Friday night's game against Berrien County, 34-24, which seemed them to play Saturday morning at 10:15 a.m. against Morgan County. The girls' defense was outstanding, holding Morgan County to a 4-4 tie after the first quarter. It wasn't until the second half of the game that Morgan County pulled away, leaving the final score at 24-14, with a loss for the Lady Panthers. The 10&U Lady Panthers would like to extend a special thanks to Jerry Henderson at State Farm for sponsoring their way to the State Tournament! Congratulations on a great season All Star Lady Panthers! The North Georgia News would also like to congratulate the 10&U girls and their coaches on an incredible season and we look forward to covering these young ladies' continued success in the future.