

Sports

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Short-handed Panthers impressive at St. Pius tournament

Union knocks off Class AAAA's Chamblee and North Oconee despite forfeiting a dozen points

By Todd Forrest
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Atlanta - On the day before Thanksgiving, Union County's wrestlers took part in a tournament at St. Pius X Catholic High School, where the small public school from the mountains went toe-to-toe with three larger city schools, and a pair of private schools.

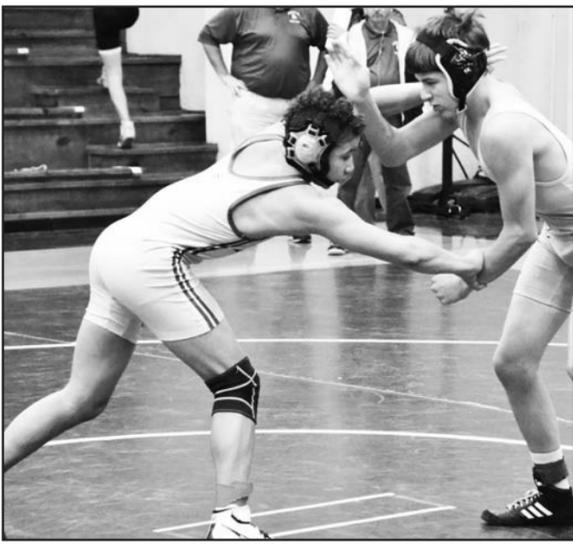
In their five matches, the Panthers won two and lost three despite giving up 12 points due to forfeits at 120 pounds and 285 pounds.

"We would have had those weights covered, but sickness and a family holiday took three key players out of our line-up at the last minute," said Union Wrestling Coach Michael Smith-Foot.

In all three of Union's losses, they came within 12 points in each one, falling by nine, six, and one point, respectively.

And one thing is for certain, the three teams that barely defeated the Panthers were no slouches.

The 9-point loss came to Class AA private school Wesleyan. The 6-point loss came to



Union County wrestling action during its recent tournament victory. After a strong showing at St. Pius, the Panthers will take part in the King of the Mountain wrestling in Towns County next weekend. Photos by Todd Forrest

a Class AAAA private school, St. Pius, and the 1-point loss to Lakeside-Dekalb from Class AAAAAA.

In Union's first dual of the tournament they dominated Class AAAA's Chamblee by a score of 54-18.

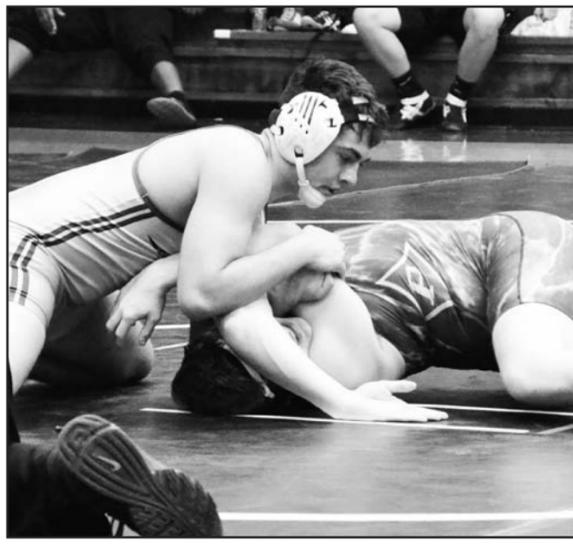
In the third dual the Panthers slammed North Oconee, who also resides in Class AAAA, by 33 points, 57-24.

In dual two, St. Pius edged Union 42-36.

In the fourth dual, Area opponent Wesleyan held off the Panthers by nine.

"They (Wesleyan) were the reason we went to this dual," Coach Smith-Foot said. "We will get to see them at their place on Dec. 30th with another area rival, Rabun."

The final dual of the day



Isaac Tritt went 1-1 at 138 pounds, Noah Bierce went 3-2 at 145 pounds, Bryan Smith and Logan Tritt went 1-1 at 152 pounds.

Chad Buzzard went 1-1 at 160 pounds, Bryan Nelson went 3-2 at 170 pounds, Grizzly Breedlove went 5-0 at 182 pounds, Dakota Havard went 3-2 at 195 pounds, and Josh Silvers went 3-2 at 220 pounds.

Liam Green got his first varsity win of the year at 170 pounds, and Devin Jefferies also got his first varsity win at 152 pounds.

For the year, Barrett has a 7-1 record, Mason is undefeated with a 7-0 mark, Mackey is 6-1, and Adrian Shaw is 4-1 at 132 pounds.

Isaac Tritt is 3-2, Bierce is 5-3, Evan Browning is 3-3 at 160 pounds, Nelson is 3-2, Breedlove is 6-1, Havard is 5-3, Zach Payton is 2-1 at 220 pounds, and Silvers is 3-2.

Up next for Union County is the annual King of the Mountain tournament at Towns County on Dec. 4-5.

The middle school team is at Habersham on Dec. 5th. The high school squad will return to Towns on Dec. 11th for a dual against the Indians.

Union struggles in second half vs Dawson and Lumpkin; will host Towns in The Pit on Friday

By Todd Forrest
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The Panthers hosted a pair of former Region-rivals last week when Dawson and Lumpkin both overcame half-time deficits to pull away for double-digit victories.

Union (1-2) will visit Lumpkin on Tuesday and try to regroup before receiving a double-dose of Indians this week.

After an early-week trip to Dahlonega, the Panthers will square off with a much-improved Towns County Indians squad on Friday at the old high school gym, also known as 'The Pit.'

The hungry Indians, coming off a 71-67 win over another 8-AA school, Social Circle, will be looking to end a 35-game losing streak to the Panthers in the very same gym that their last victory over Union took place, almost 16 years ago.

**Panthers 41
Dawson County 52**

After just one win over Dawson County since 2007, the Panthers swept the season series from the Tigers last year, something Union hadn't been able to accomplish since 2002-03.

Looking to extend their winning streak to three over Dawson on Monday night, the Panthers couldn't ask for a better start than the 6-0 run they laid on Dawson right out of the gates.

Leading 4-0, a two-handed slam by Chase Shook electrified the crowd and forced the Tigers to burn a timeout less than four minutes into the contest.

The two squads exchanged baskets out of the timeout for an 8-2 Union lead that was trimmed to 10-8 at quarters end, after Shook went to the bench with two fouls.

The Panthers came out with guns blazing and went on top 18-13 with 5:13 left in the half. The surge was sparked by a Matthew Rich trey, and followed by a bucket from Chandler Colwell, and a three from Parker McCombs.

However, a 7-0 Dawson run was capped off with a triple from the corner to give the Tigers their first lead at 20-18 with 2:18 to play in the second.

A reverse layup by Chandler Colwell tied the game at 20-20 at the 2:01 mark, but it would be his team's final basket of the half and they trailed 23-20 at the break.

A Shook layup pulled Union within a point but the Tigers answered with a 7-1 run for a 30-23 advantage.

Entering the fourth, the Panthers trailed 33-27 but back-to-back 3-pointers by Chandler made it 39-29 with 6:10 left.

Union was able to get within two thanks to a 10-2 run capped off by treys from Matthew Rich and McCombs.

With 3:04 left, it was a 41-39 game, but it was all Dawson from that point on, closing on an 11-2 run.

Shook led Union with 14 points, McCombs added 9 points, and Crawford Colwell



Senior Chase Shook with a two-handed slam during the first half vs Dawson County. Photo/Todd Forrest



Sophomore Crawford Colwell led the Panthers with 17 points vs Lumpkin County. Photo/Todd Forrest

chipped in 8 points.

Matthew Rich finished with 6 points and Lawson Baeninger scored 4 points

**Panthers 44
Lumpkin County 73**

When looking at the one-sided final score, it's hard to believe that Union actually led for the majority of the first half, holding leads of 12-8 after one and 28-24 at the half.

The third quarter would be all Indians as they outscored the Panthers 23-4. As for the fourth quarter, it also went in Lumpkin's favor, 26-12.

Trailing 47-32 entering the final period, Crawford Colwell did his best to keep Union

in contention with 7 points while being the only Panther to score from the field during the fourth frame. He would go on to score a team-high, and career-high 17 points.

Shook scored 11 of his 16 points in the first half. Baeninger finished with 4 points, Matthew Rich scored 3 points, and Lance Rich scored two.

RJ Banton and Cole Wright each chipped one point.

Tip-off for Tuesday's ladies contest at Lumpkin will be 6 p.m. with the guys to follow.

Friday night's rivalry game in The Pit with Towns is scheduled for a 7 p.m. tip for the ladies and an 8:30 p.m. tip for the guys.

Dawson too much for young Lady Panthers; Lumpkin escapes with narrow 45-40 victory

By Todd Forrest
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On Tuesday night, Union County (0-3) was unable to get into the win column following a tough loss to Class AAA's Lumpkin County. On Monday night, the Lady Panthers met an experienced and physical Dawson County squad and came up on the wrong end of a 20-point defeat.

The Lady Tigers jumped out to an 11-3 lead after one and scored the final four points of the second quarter for a 23-10 advantage at the break.

Dawson extended its lead to 34-15 but an 11-2 Union run got the Lady Panthers within 10 points at 36-26 and 41-29 entering the fourth, where it was all Dawson.

The following night, Union was locked in a battle with Lumpkin, leading by one at the break, and trailing by two after three quarters, but foul trouble reared its ugly head and the Lady Indians escaped with a 45-40 win.

Up next for Union is a Tuesday rematch with Lumpkin in Dahlonega, then a rivalry game with Towns County at The Pit on Friday.

The Lady Panthers will be going for their sixth straight win over Towns County - a streak that hasn't been accomplished since the early-1990's.

**Lady Panthers 32
Dawson County 52**

A Kim Coyne trey was the only Union basket during the first half as Dawson put some space between themselves and the Lady Panthers at 11-3 after a quarter of play.

Coyne and Layne Colwell each connected from long distance in the second quarter, with Ashley Fair and Stephanie Busse chipping in a basket to keep Union within striking distance at 23-13 at halftime.

Bailey Daniel came to life after the intermission and posted nine third quarter points after Dawson tried to pull away.

Consecutive treys by Daniel cut a 19-point deficit to 13, then a Layne Colwell 3-pointer made it a 36-26 game with 1:32 left in the third.

A fastbreak bucket by Fair, off a Layne Colwell assist, kept Union within 11 at the 40-second mark of the third until a 3-point play gave the Lady Tigers a 41-29 advantage after three quarters.

A Daniel three was the only offense the Lady Panthers could muster in the final frame as Dawson pulled away for a 52-32 victory.

Daniel led Union with 12 points - all coming in the second half.

Layne Colwell and Kim Coyne added 6 points each while Busse and Fair chipped in 4 points each.



Sophomore Bailey Daniel puts up a jumper with a pair of Lady Tiger defenders draped all over her Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Kim Coyne drives to the basket during the second half vs Dawson County on Monday. Photo/Todd Forrest

**Lady Panthers 40
Lumpkin County 42**

The trio of Daniel, Busse, and Layne Colwell combined for 32 points but it wasn't enough as Lumpkin County held on, 45-40.

While three players accounted for 80 percent of their team's offense, the remainder of the team was only able to manage 8 points.

Union posted a balanced 15 points in the opening frame with Daniel scoring six, Busse had four, Layne Colwell scored three, and Fair added two.

But following a 13-point second frame, points would be at a premium during the second half as Union only put up 12 points following the intermission.

Daniel led the team with 14 points, Layne Colwell and Busse each scored nine.

Grace Wischmeyer and Logan Colwell both connected on treys, and Fair added a deuce.

Tuesday, the Lady Panthers will get underway at 6 p.m. in Dahlonega, and 7:30 p.m. on Friday at The Pit vs Towns County.