

Sports

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Arnold, Lady Panthers overpower Fannin County on Senior Night Union County all alone in second place; conclude region play with trip to GAC on Tuesday

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The month of September remains kind to the Lady Panthers (13-10, 8-3) as they picked up a pair of one-sided victories over White County and Fannin County last week to enter the final week of the regular season in second place in Region 7-AAA.

Unbeaten in region-play this month, Union County will travel to Greater Atlanta Christian on Tuesday where a win will give the Lady Panthers the No. 2 seed during the Region Tournament, after East Hall dropped to third place with an 8-0 loss to North Hall.

The top two seeds in the region tournament receive a bye into the second round and an automatic berth in the State Tournament.

Last Monday, Union traveled to White County where they avenged a one-run loss with a 7-1 victory. On Thursday, a first inning run by Fannin County wasn't enough to hold off the Lady Panthers on senior night as sophomore Aladriel Arnold stole the show with the first homerun of her career – a two run shot in the first inning to propel Union to a 9-1, five-inning victory over the Lady Rebels.

Back in 2013, Lydia Arrowood, Laken Chambers, and Kendra Tanner remembered their first win as freshmen over Fannin County, so it was only fitting



Sophomore Aladriel Arnold sends the first homerun of her high school career over the fence in left-center. Photo/Todd Forrest

that the Lady Rebels played the victims on Senior Night.

Chambers allowed one run, two hits, and struck out five during a run-rule shortened victory. Fannin's lone run came on a one-out double in the top of the first until Arnold's deep fly over the left-centerfield fence with two outs in the bottom half of the inning put Union on top to stay.

Chambers doubled home Tanner in the third inning to extend the lead to 3-1. The advantage would stretch to 5-1 in the fourth, thanks to doubles by Maddie Sutton, Braden Poteete, and Arrowood.

The game was called after the Lady Panthers posted four runs in the fifth inning. Arnold reached on an error, Ellie Garrison singled, and Mary Wischmeyer walked to load the bases. Courtney Moose and Sutton followed with sacrifice flies to bring home one run each, Poteete drew a walk, and Wischmeyer stole home to make it 8-1. Tanner delivered the knockout blow with a triple to right-centerfield that scored Poteete, bringing the game to an end.

Chambers finished 2-for-3 at the plate with an RBI. Arnold went 1-for-3 with two RBIs and



Softball Senior Night 2016-17: Lydia Arrowood (second from right) with family. Photo/Todd Forrest

two runs, Tanner was 1-for-3 with one RBI, while Arrowood wrapped up a 1-for-2 day at the plate with one RBI.

Garrison scored once and went 1-for-2, Wischmeyer walked twice, Moose drove in a run, Sutton went 1-for-2 with an RBI, and Poteete scored twice and drove in one during a 1-for-2 performance.

Union was without the services of first baseman and clean-up hitter Jillian Lawn, who was out-of-town with family.

At White County, the Lady Panthers pulled away from a 1-1 tie after one as Chambers tossed a complete game, fan-

ning seven, and giving up one unearned run in the win.

Lawn finished 2-for-4 with 3 RBIs at the plate while Arrowood went 2-for-4 with 3 runs and 2 RBIs.

Chambers recorded an RBI double during a 2-for-4 performance and Wischmeyer went 2-for-3 with a run and a walk.

Union struck early with a run in the top of the first when Arrowood doubled and Lawn brought her home with a ground ball to short.

The Lady Warriors capitalized on an error to tie the game at 1-1 in the bottom half of the first but Union got two

runs in the third when Lawn drove in a pair with a base hit to centerfield.

The Lady Panthers tacked on three more in the sixth off singles from Arrowood and Chambers. They added one more in the seventh when Garrison doubled and scored on an error.

After a difficult month of August where Union County was one game ahead of last place in 7-AAA, they are currently one win away from securing second place in the region playoffs. First pitch at GAC is scheduled for 5:55 p.m. on Tuesday.



Softball Senior Night 2016-17: Laken Chambers with family. Photo/Todd Forrest



Softball Senior Night 2016-17: Lillian Daniel with family. Photo/Todd Forrest



Softball Senior Night 2016-17: Kendra Tanner with family. Photo/Todd Forrest

Allison: Panthers 'grow up' in loss at No. 1 GAC

Union looks to avoid 0-2 start in region when East Hall visits Friday for Homecoming

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Norcross - Union County suffered its first loss of the season at No. 1 Greater Atlanta Christian, 35-12 after falling behind 28-6 at halftime.

GAC quarterback and Stanford commit, Davis Mills threw four touchdown passes while completing 17-of-24 passes for 248 yards. The Panthers, however, were able to limit the Spartans rushing attack to 134 yards - 67 yards below their season average of 201 yards-per-game.

Union's sophomore kicker Brian Smith connected on a pair of first half field goals from 38 and 29 yards out. The first kick trimmed the GAC lead to 7-3 with 1:13 to play in the first quarter. The second made it a 21-6 game with 1:52 remaining in the first half.

The Spartans were able to match each of Smith's field goals with a touchdown after scoring on their second drive of the game.

On the game's opening drive, the Panthers' defense was able to corral a GAC pitch-sweep on 4th-and-3, inside the redzone, after the Spartans returned the opening kickoff to the Union 44-yard line.

The offense would go three-and-out and GAC took advantage of a shanked punt and Mills set up shop at the Panthers' 30-yard line.

A sack by junior Matthew Beise on first down resulted in a 2nd-and-14 but a 26-yard pickup gave the top-ranked team in Class AAA a 1st-and-goal at the eight.

Three plays later the Spartans punched it in from a yard out to take a 7-0 advantage.

On the ensuing Union possession, Bo Lynch tore off a 23-yard run on first down and Cole Wright completed passes to Kanon Hemphill for 11 yards and Logan Dyer for 9 yards.

Another pass to Dyer, this time for 7 yards, moved the chains for the Panthers. Wright scrambled for a gain of six and



Freshman holder Pierson Allison (17) gets the ball down for sophomore Brian Smith (36) to connect on a 38-yard field goal. Photo/Todd Forrest

Lynch kept the drive alive with a 4-yard pickup on third down.

Slade Thompson reeled in a Wright pass for a short gain but the drive stalled when an attempt at trickery was unsuccessful. A halfback pass by Lynch into the endzone was overthrown and Union settled for a 38-yard field goal from Smith.

"Offensively, we made some mistakes, missed some blocks, but I thought Cole Wright played really well and grew up during the game," Union County Head Coach Brian Allison said. "We still had several drops (passes) that hurt us and we've got to get better at that."

The Spartans extended their lead to 14-3 when Mills tossed a 68-yard touchdown pass on the third play of the ensuing drive.

The Panthers would move the ball into GAC territory before turning it over on downs. The drive immediately stalled but an offside on the Spartans awarded Union new life. On the first play following the penalty, Wright rolled left found Hemphill over the middle and the sophomore turned up field for a pickup of 22.

Facing a 4th-and-10, Wright's pass to Thompson wasn't enough to move the chains and the Spartans took over

close to midfield.

Mills and the offense orchestrated a 9-play scoring drive, capped off by a 4-yard completion on 3rd-and-goal from the four.

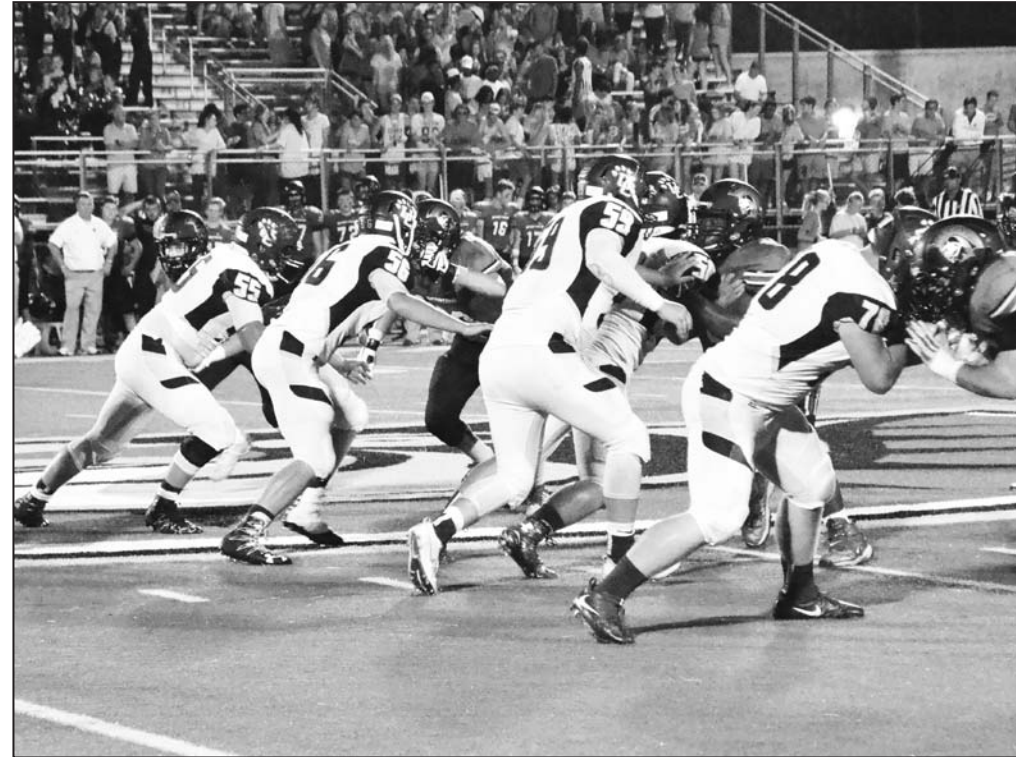
Following another Union County punt, the Spartans coughed up the football when Dawson Groves jarred the ball loose from Mills on a sack and RJ Banton scooped it up and returned it to the GAC 18 with just over 3 minutes to play in the half.

The turnover led to another Smith field goal but Union was unable to burn any time off the clock after being stopped on three plays.

A loss of four on first down put the Panthers behind the chains but Wright was able to use his legs for a gain of nine to set up a 29-yard kick with 1:52 to go in the second quarter.

The Spartans found the endzone with 8 seconds left on the clock to take a 28-6 lead into the break.

Their scoring drive began on the 36 but three consecutive gains of 11, 21, and 26 yards gave GAC a 1st-and-goal. The Union defense stood firm - forcing an incompletion and a short gain to bring up a 3rd-and-goal at the three, but Mills was able to find an open receiver for his third



The Union County offensive line didn't allow a sack to the No. 1 team in Class AAA. Photo/Todd Forrest

touchdown pass of the half.

"If we're able to score a touchdown and make it 21-10, instead of 21-6, (GAC) wouldn't have had enough time to score another touchdown at the end of the half and things might have been a little different," Coach Allison said.

The Spartans recovered an onside kick to open the third quarter, although it appeared a member of GAC's kick team touched the ball prior to it traveling 10 yards. Coach Allison's argument was overruled by the officials and the Spartans opened the second half at the 50-yard line.

Five plays later, the Panthers defense was forced into another goal-to-go situation, but this time, Nic Rodriguez dislodged the ball from a GAC running back at the goal line and Cole Dockrey dove on the loose football at the six.

"Defensively we did a pretty good job against the run," Coach Allison said. "They had 130-something yards rushing and I think the quarterback had 50 yards on two scrambles."

Both teams would exchange penalty flags early on

in the Union possession but first down runs by Lynch and Dockrey had the Panthers on the move.

A holding call negated a 5-yard run by Wright and on 3rd-and-15 from their own 22-yard line, Wright and Hemphill hooked up for another gain of 20-plus yards.

Just shy of midfield, Wright hit Sean Dobbins for 6 yards but a loss on third down brought up a punting situation.

As the fourth quarter began, the Spartans were on the move and on the first play of the period, an 18-yard completion awarded GAC another 1st-and-goal.

A 15-yard penalty moved the Spartans back to the 17, then two plays later from the 15-yard line, Union's defense appeared to have stuffed a run for a loss - bringing up a 3rd-and-goal from the 16, but the ball popped loose and after bouncing around on the turf, it was recovered at the nine by GAC.

With a more manageable 3rd-and-goal from inside the 10, Mills completed his fourth touchdown pass of the day to open up a 35-6 advantage with

10:45 to play.

Both defenses would force punts before Union began its only touchdown drive of the game at the 25 with 6:40 showing on the clock.

Wright carried for eight then hit Dyer on a short pass for a gain of three. Lynch gained four on first down but a pair of incompletions brought up a fourth down. Wright escaped trouble and outran the Spartan defense around the edge for a first down gain of 11 yards. Facing another fourth down, GAC was flagged for pass interference to award Union a first down.

From the 31, Lynch ran for 11 yards and Dobbins hauled in a pass for 13 yards to give the Panthers a 1st-and-goal at the seven. On the very next play, Wright fired a strike to Dyer for the score.

"Overall I saw an improvement (on both sides of the ball) over (the Banks County game)," Coach Allison said. "We had some drops and at times we didn't block as well as we should have. But if we eliminate the drops and block a little better, I

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