

Union basketball sees action at Hiwassee Dam scrimmages

By Todd Forrest
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Hiwassee Dam, NC - Union County basketball opens this week at Gilmer County before playing host to rival Towns County, next Tuesday, however, the Panthers and Lady Panthers both saw action last week in a scrimmage contest at Hiwassee Dam, NC.

The Panthers, who were playing without a handful of key players from the football team, pulled away in the second half for a 73-43 victory. Senior Lawson Baenninger scored all of his 16 points during the final two quarters where Union outscored the Eagles 42-18.

Juniors Crawford Colwell and Riley Barrett added 14 and 12 points, respectively.

Meanwhile, the Lady Panthers fell behind 11-0 early and 31-16 in the third quarter before an 11-1 run trimmed the Hiwassee Dam lead to 32-27. The Lady Eagles would eventually pull away with a 26-5 run to close the contest with a 58-32 win.

Junior Bailey Daniel poured in 21 of her team's 32 points while going 13-for-18 at the foul line. However, Union County finished just 1-for-19 from beyond the arc while Hiwassee Dam's Zoey Jacobsen led all scorers with 25 and Savannah Wills chipped in 13.

Trailing 11-0, the Lady Panthers didn't get on the board until just over a minute to play in the first quarter when Daniel scored off an inbounds play. Moments later, Daniel scored again off a steal but the Lady Eagles answered with a basket in the final seconds of the period to hold a 13-4 advantage.

One free throw each from Daniel and senior Ashley Fair was followed by a trey from sophomore Maddie Sutton - Union's only three of the game. Sutton added a free throw at the 3:22 mark and Daniel hit 2-of-2 from the line to keep it a nine-point game at 21-12 with 2:53 left before the half.

The Lady Eagles responded with a three but a coast-to-coast layup and two from the stripe by Daniel made it a 26-16 game at the break.

The second half opened with a 6-0 spurt by Hiwassee



Junior Crawford Colwell with a layup at HD. Photo/Todd Forrest



Maddie Sutton denies a Hiwassee Dam pass attempt. Photo/Todd Forrest

Dam to open up a 16-point lead

but another 2-for-2 trip to the line for Daniel was followed by a free throw from sophomore Jordan Rogers. Grace Wischmeyer hit two from the stripe to trim the lead to 32-21, then the Lady Eagles' coach was hit with a pair of technical fouls, resulting in four free throws from Daniel at the 1:12 mark. Fourteen seconds later, Daniel drove inside for a bucket to bring Union within five at

32-27.

With time running out in the third, Hiwassee Dam converted an old-fashioned 3-point play to stretch the lead back to eight.

They would extend their advantage to 41-27 but a pair of 1-for-2 trips to the line by Daniel brought the Lady Panthers back to within 12, however, the Lady Eagles used consecutive baskets to stretch the lead

back to 16.



Bailey Daniel scored 21 of Union's 32 points at HD. Photo/Todd Forrest



Lawson Baenninger drives strong to the basket at HD. Photo/Todd Forrest

One free throw each by

Daniel and Sutton made it 47-31 with 3:15 to play. Union's final point came on a Rogers free throw that pulled her team within 15 but Hiwassee Dam closed the exact same way they opened the game - with an 11-0 run.

Sutton finished with 5 points, Grace Wischmeyer had three, Rogers scored two, and Fair had one. Adeline Dockrey and Fair led the team with 6

rebounds each. Daniel, Brooke Dockrey and Maggie Stuart finished with 2 steals each.

The Union County men opened with a 6-0 run before Hiwassee Dam tied the game with 5:04 left in the opening frame, but a 3-point play by Britt Waller gave the Panthers a 9-6 lead and the Eagles would never get any closer than three for the remainder of the contest.

A putback by Barrett

made it an 11-6 game, Waller added another basket on an offensive board and Cole Davis hit two from the line to make it a 15-9 game.

A steal-and-score by Barrett gave Union a 17-10 advantage after one quarter. Barrett then added a free throw early in the second to extend the lead to eight, then a Waller layup and another free throw from Barrett kept the margin at eight, 21-13.

A Colwell putback at the 4:36 mark gave Union a 23-16 lead but the Eagles closed to 24-21 before Barrett connected on 4-of-6 from the stripe to keep the Panthers ahead by five at 28-23.

Colwell went 1-for-2 at the line and Lance Hill drove to the basket for a deuce to give Union a 31-25 lead at the break.

The second half opened with a turnover that resulted in a Davis layup before Baenninger scored the next nine Union County points to open up a 42-27 advantage with 2:37 left in the third.

The Eagles sliced the Panther lead to 11 but a corner-three from Davis and a pair of lay-ins from Waller gave Union a 49-31 lead with a 33 seconds to play in the third frame.

Davis dropped in a field goal with 10 seconds remaining - allowing the Panthers to take a 51-34 advantage into the fourth.

Baenninger drove the lane for a quick two to begin the final period and 40 seconds later, Colwell tacked on two from the stripe to open up Union's largest lead of the game at 55-34.

A Parker McCombs free throw was followed by a Baenninger trey and a Marty Kronz dribble-drive for two. Leading 65-38, Colwell went inside for two, Davis hit 1-of-2 at the line, Barrett hit 2-of-2, and Hill hit 1-of-2 to take a 31-point lead at 69-38.

Hill and Baenninger capped off the scoring with back-to-back lay-ins during the final 103 seconds.

Waller finished with 11 points, Davis had 10, Hill had five, McCombs scored three, and Kronz chipped in two.

Laken Chambers signs with the University of North Georgia

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Union County softball 4-year starter Laken Chambers became a North Georgia Nighthawk last week when she signed a letter of intent in front of family, friends, coaches, teammates, teachers, and others last Wednesday at the Union County High School gymnasium.

Playing at North Georgia has always been a dream for Chambers but she almost ended up elsewhere. In August, the Nighthawks had reached their scholarship limit and Chambers was left on the outside, looking in. Fortunately, fate would smile upon her as player decommitted from North Georgia, and the rest is history.

"Ever since I was little, North Georgia has always been the school that I dreamed about going to," she said. "When the opportunity became available in August, I was super excited and it was a dream come true."

"During my sophomore year, I took part in some camps down there, and I talked to the coach some too. Their 2017 commitments were filled up but luckily, this past August, he had one decommit. So he called me, I went down there for a visit and he offered me then. I needed a week to think about my decision, but a week later I called him back and told him that I would like to commit."

She also received offers from Young Harris and Shorter, and according to Chambers, if North Georgia didn't offer her, she was leaning towards Shorter.

"I really liked Shorter and their coach came to some of my tournaments and contacted me for a visit," Chambers said. "I didn't know much about them but I went down there and really liked it."

Chambers was the ace of the Lady Panthers' pitching staff for all four years of high school, leading Union to four State Tournaments, three Sweet 16 appearances, and one trip to the Class AA Elite 8 in 2015.

Under Head Coach Jessica Stewart, the Lady Panthers went 91-46 with Chambers anchoring the pitching staff and batting in the middle of the order.

At the plate, she owns the top two single season RBI totals in program history. She also laid claim to the school's career RBI record this season while becoming the 17th Lady Panther softball player to sign a college scholarship since 2006.

She ranks among the top five in program history in home runs and doubles while ranking



UCHS' Laken Chambers signed with the University of North Georgia last week. Photos by Todd Forrest



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second to Angie Hughes in nearly every pitching category, but most notably: innings pitched, strikeouts and wins.

While North Georgia is expecting to use Chambers primarily at pitcher, they are well aware of her capabilities with the bat.

"They told me that if I was one of the top nine hitters, then they couldn't keep me out of the lineup," she said.

During the early stages of the 2016 season, Chambers battled

an injury during that prevented her from taking the circle, as a result Union dropped six of its first seven contests. However, the Lady Panthers went 16-7 over the remainder of the regular season and entered the Region 7-AAA Tournament as the No. 2 seed, riding a five-game winning streak.

They would take third in the tournament before pounding Lovett 17-0 and 9-3 in the opening round of the state playoffs, where Chambers picked up the win in

both games and helped her own cause with a game one homer.

"I'd like to thank my coaches for the opportunities that they've given me," she said. "My dad for always being my No. 1 fan and for taking me to the fields to practice," she said. "I would also like to thank my teammates, family, and friends for the love and support over the years, and God for blessing me with the talent and the ability to play the sport I love."

Upward Indoor Soccer 2017

The House of Prayer and First United Methodist churches are glad to announce that registration is now open for the Upward Indoor Soccer 2017 season. Boys and girls in grades Kindergarten through 8th Grade can now sign-up at www.hopb.org and www.firstmethodist-blairsville.com.

The registration price to participate is \$60, through Dec. 16th, and an additional \$10 will be applied thereafter, with registration closing on Jan. 28th. Payment plans are available, if needed. Convenient weekly practices commence the week of Jan. 9th, while games will be held every Saturday between Jan. 28th through March 4th.

Registrants should attend the evaluation that will be held on Thursday, December 8th on a drop-in basis between the hours of 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the House of Prayer Family Life Center located behind the sanctuary. For more information regarding registration, call the church offices at House of Prayer (706) 745-5925.

Established in 1995, Upward Sports is the world's largest Christian youth sports provider. It

remains unique by providing a substitution system that ensures every young athlete plays, while requiring only an hour practice each week and one game.

Upward Sports develops total athletes mentally, athletically, spiritually, and socially - producing players who excel both on and off the field. Today, approximately 6.2 million players have participated at more than 2,000 churches in 47 states, in camps, clinics, and leagues through Upward Sports' Recreation Division.

Information regarding Upward Sports can be found online at www.upward.org.

265, Series 688, Derrick Rice 223. Blairsville Youth Bowlers: Kiley Hartness 113, Jaeden Love 115, Michael Fox 192, 204, Series 569, Nick Love 101, Lily Love 64, Woo Wooten 115, Michaela Caldwell 102, Sabrina Willis 112, Lizzy Tazzia 76, Ben Love 80, Eric Fox 214, Cooper Allen 67, Ivy Robbins 138, Chritian Theriot 149.

Young At Heart Seniors: Del Neiffer 233, 210, John Delphino 230, Ron Wingate 238, Pam Bierce 202, Bob Bischoff 213, Gene Langford 204, Bryan Cuthbert 222, 210, Bob Shannon 199, Ken Thigpen 212, Stanley Tyler 210, Claudia Harrison 208, Bob Landis 222, 236, Bart Rodgers 212.

Thursday Night Fun Mixed: Brandon Hartness 203, Doug Roberts 224, Brett Hogsed 221, 209, Shay Roberts 227, 240, 224, Series 691, Dewey Allen 228, Tim McVay 203, Tony Lynch 209, 224, Stanley Tyler 207, Ray Everett 275, 203, 215, Series 693, Paul Lierd 212, Ernest Rice 232.

Bowling scores

Monday Night Ladies: Pat Craig 206, Linda Nichols 203.

Monday Night Men: Stanley Tyler 212, 228, Series 635, Jay Burrell 200, 210, Bill Smith 210, Jeremiah Plott 236, 242, Series 662, Greg Wittenberg 216, Richard Tanner 218, 202, 201, Bart Rodgers 211, Michael Brandenburg 205, Ron Wingate 203, Dewey Allen 215 230, Walter Carpenter 233, Randy Jones 216, Ray Everett 232,