

# Sports

See the Sports Section at ngenews.com

## Lady Panthers second in 8-AA; host Bowdon in first round of State

Following one-sided loss in Region title game, Union seeks first State Tourney win in 7 years

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

**Tiger** - For the second straight year, the Lady Panthers fell to Rabun County in the Region 8-AA Championship Game.

In last year's battle, the Lady Cats needed some luck to pull off the win. This year, Union County would require quite a bit of luck on their side if they wanted to knock off Rabun on their home court, but once again, Lady Luck was wearing red and white, and this time around, they didn't need her.

**Lady Panthers 35, Rabun County 75** - Union would fall behind 13-0 in the game's opening four minutes and were unable to mount any challenge to the Lady Cats.

Trailing 20-5 after one quarter, senior Layne Colwell was fouled on a 3-point shot and hit all three from the free-throw line.

Early in the second frame, Head Coach David Tucker's Lady Panthers managed to compose themselves and slow the tempo after Rabun set a frantic pace right out of the gates. Senior Kim Coyne went inside and used a turnaround jumper to make it a 22-10 game at the midway-point of the period.

At the 3:44 mark, the Lady Cats began to impose their will once again, closing the half on an 11-2 run for a 33-12 halftime score.

Rabun continued pulling away, leading by 29 after three quarters, 52-23.

Union County sophomore guard Bailey Daniel led her team with 15 points on 7-of-9 from the foul line and 2-of-5 beyond the arc. On the defensive end she came up with 3 steals and a pair of rebounds.

Junior Ashley Fair scored 7 points - including all five of her team's first quarter points. She also finished with 4 rebounds, 2 steals, and a blocked shot.

Layne Colwell finished with 5 points on 5-of-6 shooting from the line. Four boards, 3 steals, a 2 assists rounded out the stat line for the Lady Panthers senior.



Union County with its second place hardware following Saturday's Region 8-AA Championship game at Rabun County. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Layne Colwell with a no-look pass vs Rabun. Photo/Todd Forrest

Senior Kim Coyne chipped in 4 points to go with a team-high 4 assists. She also grabbed a pair of boards and a pair of steals.

Sophomore Jillian Lawn knocked down two from the

charity stripe while claiming 3 boards, 2 steals, and an assist. Fellow sophomore Grace Wishmeyer also hit a pair at the line to finish with 2 points.

Senior center Stephanie



Senior Stephanie Busse looking for room to work. Photo/Todd Forrest

Busse hauled in team-highs in boards with 11 and blocked shots - rejecting Rabun three times.

Union's struggles with the Lady Cats' relentless defensive pressure continued and 24 turn-

overs says all their is to say.

**Lady Panthers 50, Social Circle 43** - The night before the Region title game, Union took care of business in the Region Semifinal contest with Social



Senior Kim Coyne



Junior Ashley Fair

Circle.

Each time the Lady Panthers have met the young Lady Redskins, the final margin of victory has narrowed in each contest. And with home court advantage in the first round of State on the line, a seven-point differential, combined with careless ball handling that resulted in 19 Union turnovers, provided a little more than drama than Lady Panther fans would have liked.

At the end of the day, Daniel, who was the only Lady Panther scoring in double-digits, **See Lady Panthers, Page 15A**

## Panthers enter State as No. 3 seed; travel to Bowdon on Wednesday

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

**Tiger** - Union and Bowdon (16-12) will meet in the State Tournament once again after facing off in softball, football, and girls basketball.

The Panthers also met Bowdon in the 2013 State Baseball Tournament.

Union (15-13) and the Red Devils will face off this week after the Panthers placed third at the 8-AA Region Tournament last week with wins over Washington-Wilkes and Greene County.

Union dropped its semifinal contest with eventual Region Champion Rabun County.

**Panthers 52, Washington Wilkes 36** - Thursday, the Panthers knocked off Washington Wilkes, 52-36. Union took a 26-16 lead into the half and maintained a double-digit lead for the majority of the second half, and all of the fourth quarter.

The Panthers were led by three players in double-figures including sophomore Crawford Colwell's game-high 16 points - 14 in the first half.

Junior Lawson Baenninger poured in 15 points - all coming in the second half. Sophomore Candler Colwell added 11 points in the win.

Sophomore Patrick Baggett knocked down a pair of treys in the first half for 6 points and senior center Chase Shook scored 4 points.

The trio of Baenninger and the Colwell brothers accounted for all 26 of their team's second half points.

**Panthers 41, Rabun County 59** - On Friday, the Union offense was unable to find a rhythm despite the defense holding the explosive Wildcat offense in check.

At the break, Rabun held a 29-18 advantage but the Panthers defense stifled the Wildcats, limiting them to 9 points in the third frame. Unfortunately, Union only



Senior Chase Shook goes up for two vs Wilkes. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Andrew Brown tries to create some space. Photo/Todd Forrest

managed 4 points on the offensive side of the ball and entered the fourth trailing by 16 points.

Crawford Colwell was the only Panther to score in double figures with 11 points.

Baenninger was held to 9 points, while Shook scored

eight, seniors Andrew Brown and Matthew Rich had 3 points each.

Candler Colwell, Cole Wright, and Baggett finished with 2 points each. Senior Lance Rich scored 1 point.

Union County leaves Region 8-AA as winners of 28 of the last 50 meetings



Senior Matthew Rich with a pull up jumper. Photo/Todd Forrest



Panthers cheer on their teammates in the final seconds. Photo/Todd Forrest

with Rabun's boys. However, the Wildcats have won 17 of the last 20 contests after the Panthers won 19-straight from 2001-2008.

**Panthers 56, Greene County 47** - Crawford Colwell led all scorers with 21, Baenninger added 20, and Shook finished with 12 to lead Union in their consolation game victory over Greene.

Trailing 12-11 after one quarter, the Panthers took the edge into the intermission at 26-24.

Crawford Colwell and Shook combined for 13 points in the third as Union opened up a 42-30 advantage entering the fourth.

At the 2:56 mark, the Tigers got within five at 51-46, then later, had the opportunity



Junior Lawson Baenninger



Sophomore Crawford Colwell

to make it a one-possession game on two separate occasions but a backcourt violation and a charge taken by Baenninger derailed their comeback bid.

Baenninger would connect on 5-of-6 from the line over the final 1:54 to preserve the victory.

Union will travel to Bowdon on Wednesday for a 6 p.m. tip off. The Panthers will be looking to end a 15-year absence from the State