

# Sports

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## Allison leads the way with 19 as Panthers cruise to 8-0 at Gilmer

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ELLIJAY - Sophomore Pierson Allison hit a career-high five 3-pointers during Union County's 59-30 victory at Gilmer (3-8) to improve to 8-0 for the fourth time in 20 years.

After falling behind 8-2 early, the Panthers, playing without suspended senior and three-year starter Crawford Colwell, closed the first quarter with a 12-0 run, then proceeded to keep their foot on the accelerator, outscoring the Bobcats 17-3 in the second for a 31-11 halftime advantage.

In the previous meeting with Gilmer, it was all Union in the second half, throttling the visitors 33-6. Combined with the 31-11 first half score in the recent meeting, the Panthers dominated the Bobcats 64-19 over a four-quarter span.

During the first half Tuesday, Allison drilled four treys to lead all scorers with 12 points at the break. He would finish with 19 points on 5-of-10 shooting from long distance. He also hauled in 8 rebounds to go with 4 steals and 2 assists.

Up 20 at the break, Union County opened the third with an 8-0 run on treys from Allison and Patrick Baggett, along with a Baggett dribble drive for two more.

Trailing 39-11, a Gilmer and-one momentarily slowed the bleeding until a Candler Colwell deuce and two Sawyer Drake free throws made it a 43-16 game at the midway point of the third.

Britt Waller answered two Bobcat free throws with a bucket then Drake stretched the lead to 47-18 with a layup at the 1:45 mark.

With time running out in the period, Allison was fouled on a 3-point attempt, and with three-thirtieths of a second on the clock, the sophomore hit all three from the line to give the Panthers a 50-20 advantage at quarter's end.

With the final quarter shortened to 6 minutes, Coleson Daniel went to work inside to extend the margin back to 30 at 52-22 with 4:24 left. He scored again a minute later before Allison hit 1-of-2 at the charity stripe to cap off his 19-point performance with 2:57 to play.

Sophomore Kyle Morlock gave Union its largest lead of the night, 57-26 with a putback at the two-minute mark. Freshman Colton Day got into the scoring



The Union County bench reacts to another trey by sophomore Pierson Allison at Gilmer. Photo/Todd Forrest

column with a putback of his own in the waning seconds.

Drake turned his fifth straight double-digit scoring performance with 12 points, 8 boards, a team high 5 assists, and 4 steals.

Over the last five games, Drake is averaging a team-high 18 points-per while Allison has poured in 40 points in his last two outings combined.

In the early going, a Drake layup was all the offense Union could muster as Gilmer jumped in front 8-2. But Allison would quickly turn things around with consecutive threes to even the score. Drake gave the Panthers a 10-8 lead then Allison knocked down his third 3-ball of the quarter for a 13-8 score at the 3:30 mark.

Both teams would finish the quarter in a scoring slump with a Waller free throw the only point of the final 3:30.

Waller got the second period off and running with a reverse layup before Allison's fourth trey opened up a 19-8 lead. Gilmer responded with a three but Baggett countered with back-to-back treys to spark Union's second 12-0 run of the first half.

Leading 25-11, the Panthers continued pulling away with two slashing layups by Drake sandwiched around a Waller deuce for a 31-11 halftime margin.

Baggett finished with 11 points and 4 assists on 3-for-9 shooting from downtown. Waller added 7 points, 3 boards, and

blocked a shot.

Daniel finished with 4 points while Candler Colwell, Morlock, and Day had 2 points each.

Senior RJ Banton had 2 rebounds, one steal and one assist while fellow senior Cole Davis recorded a steal.

Senior Tim Murphy and junior Jared Nelson pulled down one rebound apiece.

Overall, the Panthers hit a season-high eight shots from 3-point range while hitting 7-of-11 (64-percent) from the charity stripe.

Defensively, Union held the Bobcats to 29-percent shooting (10-for-35) from the field and 18-percent (2-for-11) from downtown. The opportunistic Panthers converted 21 Gilmer turnovers into 25 points and turned 14 offensive rebounds into 14 second chance points.

Meanwhile, Union County limited its own mistakes, allowing the Bobcats just 4 points off turnovers and 4 second chance points on 4 offensive rebounds.

Due to the holidays, the *North Georgia News* was on an early deadline, therefore coverage of the Union County vs Pickens County game will be in next week's edition, along with Battle of the States results.

The Panthers are off to an 8-0 start for the third time since 2010 and the fourth time since 1997-98.

However, the only two

teams to enter January still unbeaten were the 1997-98 and the 2011-12 squads. Unfortunately, none of the previous Union County teams that began 8-0 reached the state playoffs.

The 2011-12 team was the last Panther team to win the Battle of the States - they also exited the tournament undefeated.

Union County has won the tournament three times - a boys record - however, Lumpkin County is going for its third straight BOTS title - no team, boys or girls, has ever accomplished a three-peat. Lumpkin and Murphy, NC will meet in the first round with the winner to take on the Union-Piedmont, AL victor.

Hayesville, NC is also looking for its third BOTS title and will open with rival Towns County.

Union County's first round opponent, Piedmont, AL is looking for its second BOTS title after winning it all in 2008.

As for this year's tournament, the Panthers open play on Wednesday, Dec. 27 vs Piedmont at 5:30 p.m.

The Bulldogs are currently 6-2 and ranked third in Class AAA; their last four victories have come by an average of 28 points.

The closest the Panthers and Piedmont have to a common opponent is Gilmer, who lost 45-43 to Murray County, who beat Haralson County 67-37, who lost to Piedmont 70-52.

Last season, Piedmont fin-



Candler Colwell blocks a shot at Class AAAA Gilmer. Photo/Todd Forrest



Britt Waller



Sawyer Drake

ished 15-13 and was eliminated in the second round of state after reaching the state finals one year prior. They also fell 69-57 to Towns County in the first round of last season's BOTS.

The Bulldogs graduated Austin Brazier last year and have just one senior on the roster. They do, however, return a pair of junior leaders in T.J. Fairs and Carl Myers. They also feature five freshman, most notably Ryley Kirk and Sean Smith, who were two

of Piedmont's top three scorers in last Wednesday's first round win at the Patrick Ball Memorial Christmas Classic hosted by Hokes Bluff, AL.

The Bulldog roster also includes five juniors, two sophomores, and one 7th grader.

For up-to-date info on Union County basketball results, stats, and other info during the BOTS, you can follow on *Twitter* at: @hotrodtodd25

## Four Lady Panthers reach double digits in 68-61 win at Class AAAA Gilmer

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ELLIJAY - The Lady Panthers overcame a red-hot shooting performance from Gilmer on Tuesday behind a balanced scoring attack that included four players tallying at least 13 points.

Senior Bailey Daniel poured in a season-high 19 points and 5 steals while sophomore Kait McCarter recorded her second double-double of the year with 17 points and 10 boards.

Sophomore guard Brooke Dockrey finished with 17 points and a season-high 7 assists while sophomore Andelin Hill netted 13 points and 6 rebounds.

Those four accounted for 66 of the team's 68 points and Union County needed every bit of them as the Lady Bobcats hit 75-percent (8-of-12) from 3-point land. The Lady Panthers were also playing without the services of junior starter Aubree Pack, who reinjured her ankle and will likely be out through the Christmas Tournament.

The third quarter ended with some fireworks as Union County coach Corey Garrett received a technical foul for voicing his displeasure with a charging call on Bailey Daniel that wiped off a basket at the buzzer.

Gilmer hit 1-of-2 technical free throws to cap off a 14-6 run and enter the fourth trailing 43-42 after the Lady Panthers held a 36-29 advantage earlier in the third.

On the opening possession of the fourth, the Lady Bobcats took their first and only lead of the second half at 44-43. It would last all of 44 seconds before McCarter caught a Daniel miss and went back up for two. Following a Gilmer miss, Daniel drove into the paint and got a friendly bounce off the iron to stretch the Union lead to 47-44.

Leading 47-46 with 5:30 to play, Hill came down with a Lady Bobcat miss at one end and hit a streaking Brooke Dockrey



Sophomore Kait McCarter turned in a double-double performance at Gilmer on Tuesday. Photo/Todd Forrest

for an easy layup at the other end.

Daniel answered a Gilmer free throw with two of her own to make it a 51-47 game but the Lady Bobcats refused to go away, sinking a long two from the corner at the 5-minute mark.

Daniel was tagged with her fourth foul moments later and Gilmer tied the game at 51-51 with a pair of free throws. On the ensuing trip down the floor, Brooke Dockrey fed Hill inside on backdoor pass for two.

A little more than a minute later, the Lady Bobcats hit 1-out-of-2 free throws to pull within a point but a player Gilmer was hit with a technical foul for giving Brooke Dockrey a few words that were followed by chest bump after the same Lady Bobcat was whistled for a reach-in foul.

Brooke Dockrey hit both 1-and-1 attempts then hit 1-of-2 on the technical free throws. When play resumed she

found McCarter under the basket on a nice dribble drive to set up the assist.

With 2:39 remaining, Gilmer hit 1-of-2 at the line to pull within five at 58-53. They hit two more 20 seconds later to make it a one-possession game at 58-55.

On the inbounds pass, McCarter hit Hill on a full court baseball pass for a layup plus a foul. Hill's and-one opened up a 61-55 lead.

After trading 1-for-2 trips to the line, the Lady Bobcats made it a 4-point game with a deuce at the 1:18 mark. Then with a chance to make it a one-possession game, Gilmer turned it over when they didn't realize they were playing with only four girls.

Brooke Dockrey hit 1-of-2 with :38 seconds left, then 2-of-2 eight seconds later before the Lady Bobcats realized they were playing with just four players.

Gilmer hit a trey to cut the lead to 65-61 but Daniel put the game away with two free throws before Brooke Dockrey added one more for good measure.

The only other Lady Panther to score was Adeline Dockrey who finished with 2 points, 6 rebounds and a steal.

The first quarter saw McCarter score on a pair of inside buckets, Daniel hit 3-of-4 from the line, and Hill connected on a corner trey for a 10-6 lead.

A McCarter putback and a runner in the lane by Daniel opened up a 14-6 advantage early in the second. A short jumper by Brooke Dockrey made it 16-10 before Gilmer used a 7-0 run to regain the lead 17-16.

Another putback by McCarter plus a floater and a three from Daniel gave Union a bit of breathing room at 23-19.

Two buckets from Brooke Dockrey and a fast break layup by Hill made it 29-21 but Gilmer



Bailey Daniel drives inside for two of her 19 at Gilmer. Photo/Todd Forrest

nailed a trey at the buzzer to pull within five at the break.

McCarter and Daniel helped the Union hold leads of 31-24, 34-27, and 36-29 early in the third before a 5-0 Gilmer spurt cut the lead to 36-34.

A Hill trey and an Adeline Dockrey 15-footer at the 2:10 mark gave Union a 41-36 advantage. Brooke Dockrey went coast-to-coast late in the period to stretch the lead to 43-39 but Gilmer hit 2-of-2 with 6 seconds to play. Hit 2-of-2, Daniel was called for a charge that resulted in a technical on Garrett.

Union County's Thursday game with undefeated Pickens came after the deadline and will be in next week's edition of the *North Georgia News*.

Towns County's Battle of the States Christmas Tournament gets underway for the Lady Panthers on Wednesday, Dec. 27 at 4 p.m. vs Darlington.

Darlington features just one senior, forward Julia Holmes. Union and the Lady Tigers last met in the 2015 Class AA State Tournament - a 68-64 Lady Panther loss in Blairsville.

Darlington would lose in the second round, 69-60 at Pelham.

On Union's side of the bracket is Lumpkin County and Murphy, NC.

The two-time defending BOTS champs, Hokes Bluff, AL is currently ranked sixth in Class AAA after opening the season fourth. Hokes Bluff (10-2) will face Polk County, TN in the opening round while sharing a bracket with Towns County and Hayesville, NC.

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