

Panthers JV basketball reaches perfection

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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It was 15-up and 15-down for the Coach Kevin Hughes and the Union County Panthers JV basketball squad during its 2014-15 campaign.

Earlier this month, the JV Panthers put the finishing touches on a perfect 15-0 season with a 69-45 victory at Hiwassee Dam, NC.

The Panthers raced out to a 15-8 advantage after a quarter and 34-18 at the half to put away the Eagles. However, when the two squads met last month, Union narrowly escaped with the W while hosting Hiwassee Dam.

The Eagles played the 7-0 Panthers to a stalemate in the first half, with scores of 11-11 entering the second quarter and 23-23 entering the third. The guests would edge Union 18-16 in the third, and for the second game in-a-row, the Panthers trailed entering the fourth quarter.

But the final 8 minutes were all Union.

Sophomore Lawson Baenninger paced the Panthers with 12 points in the period with freshman Crawford Colwell and junior Matthew Rich adding 6 points each as Union outscored the Eagles 24-14 in the fourth en route to a 63-55 victory.

Baenninger finished with 21 points, Crawford Colwell had 12, Rich scored 11, and freshman Candler Colwell added 7 points.

One game prior, the Panthers were in a similar situation when they trailed 48-46 after three quarters at Rabun County.

But this time around, Union was unable to pull away in the final frame.

After leaping out to an 18-12 lead after a quarter, Rabun responded with a 22-8 second quarter for a 34-26 lead at the break.

The Panthers used a balanced scoring attack in the third as six different players



Sophomore Lawson Baenninger with a layup vs Fannin. He would score in double figures in seven games this season despite being limited to two quarters in the JV game. Photo/Todd Forrest

contributed to a 22-12 quarter that trimmed the deficit to 48-46 after three quarters, and following a 12-12 fourth quarter, Union was able to escape with a 60-58 victory.

Crawford Colwell scored 7 points in the third and 12 for the game. Rich was shutout in the third but put up 9 points in the fourth for a game-high 16 points. Baenninger also finished in double-digits with 10 points – eight coming in the first half.

The Panthers received another scare in the season opener with Dawson County when they fell behind 11-5 after one and 21-14 at the half. In the third, a pair of treys by freshman Cole Davis, and a trey from sophomore Parker McCombs igned Union to a 14-6 third quarter that put them on top at 28-27, followed by a 13-9 fourth quarter that gave the home team a 41-36 victory.

McCombs and Candler

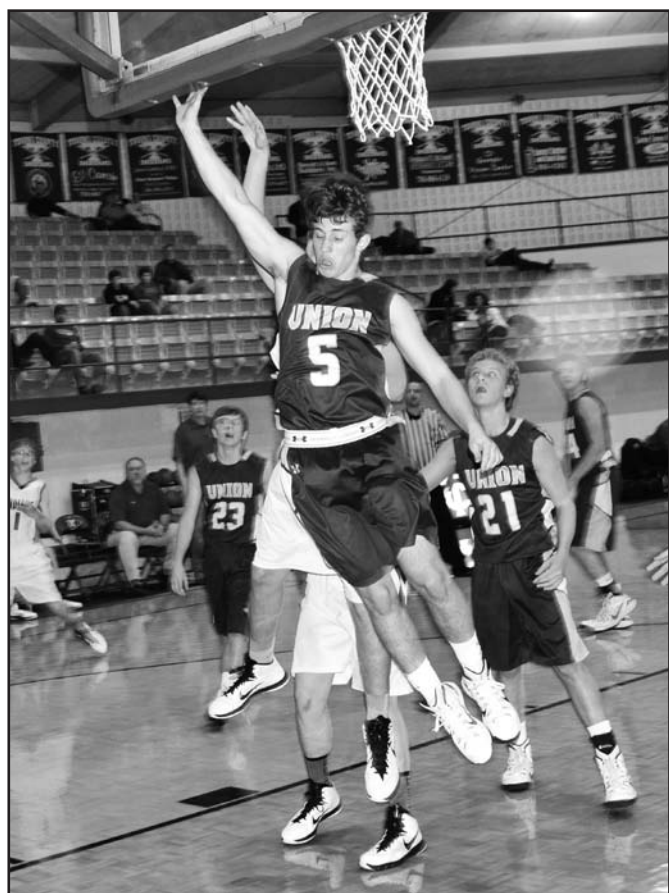
Colwell led the way with 10 points each.

The second game of the season was a one-sided victory at Towns County where 11 different Panthers scored in a 56-43 game. Following a 12-10 first quarter, Union exploded for a 21-2 second quarter to put the game out of reach at halftime.

Baenninger scored 11 of his team-high 13 points in the second quarter, while Crawford Colwell scored all 8 of his points in the third.

Junior Lance Rich finished with 7 points and freshman Patrick Baggett knocked down a pair of treys for a 6-point performance.

In the second meeting with Dawson County, the Panthers turned a 17-16 deficit at the half into a 29-19 advantage after three. They would cruise to a 44-32 win, thanks to 14 points from Baenninger and 8 points from McCombs.



Freshman Cole Dockrey (#5) contests a Towns County layup in the second meeting between the rival schools. Union would go on to win 49-16. Photo/Todd Forrest

The next two games were routs as Union demolished Hayesville, NC 43-15 in The Pit. Sophomore Luke Watson led the way with 13 points and Baggett added 9 points as the Panthers raced out to an 18-3 first quarter advantage.

Union would use an 18-0 first quarter when they hosted Towns on Dec. 19th. Ten different players would score in a 49-16 victory over the rival Indians. McCombs finished with 11 points and Crawford Colwell added 9 points.

The Panthers hosted Riverside in their first contest of 2015 and used a 25-11 first quarter to cruise to a 56-45 victory.

Candler Colwell finished with a game-high 11 points, Baenninger scored 9 points, Matthew Rich had 8 points, and freshman RJ Banton chipped in 7 points.

Close calls at Rabun and

vs Hiwassee Dam followed so Union was relieved to host Fannin County on Jan. 13th. The Panthers came out of the gates firing on all cylinders and put the Rebels away with a 26-4 first quarter.

Crawford Colwell put up 26 points, Baggett scored 13, Candler Colwell had 12, and Cole Dockrey added 8 points in a 70-30 victory.

In the rematch at Fannin, things were much closer than the first meeting but Union still took care of business 41-27. Rich led the way with 12 points and Baenninger scored 11.

The Panthers traveled to Hayesville, NC in late January and just like the in the first meeting, Union built an early double-digit lead with a 20-5 first period. The Yellow Jackets made things interesting in the second quarter and cut the Panthers' lead to 32-24 at the break. However, the third

quarter belonged to Union as they outscored Hayesville 17-3, and go on to win 65-40.

Baenninger, Candler Colwell, and Matthew Rich each scored 10 for the Panthers, while McCombs and Crawford Colwell had 8 points each.

When Union went to Riverside they were sporting an 11-0 record and for more than three quarters, it looked as if the Panthers would go home 11-1.

The first quarter was all Riverside as they used a 22-5 first quarter to put an early stranglehold on the Panthers.

Union chipped away in the second and trailed 29-17 at the half. They managed to trim the lead to single digits in the third and entered the fourth trailing 39-31.

The final frame was all Union with Baenninger scoring 12 and Matthew Rich adding 5 points in a 17-4 run that gave the Panthers the 48-43 win.

The Panthers had another near miss when they defeated Murphy, NC 45-43. Crawford Colwell led all scorers with 16 and Baggett scored 11.

Leading 36-30 after three quarters, the Panthers went cold at the foul line in the fourth – opening the door for the Bulldogs. Union shot 17-of-37 at the line, with nine misses coming in the fourth quarter.

When the Panthers hosted Rabun, the Wildcats took a 14-9 lead into the second quarter but Union responded with 21 points in the frame to knot the score at 30-30. Holding a narrow 44-43 advantage after three, the Panthers were able to find a little bit of breathing room at the end in a 57-50 victory. Crawford Colwell, Baggett, and Dockrey led the way with 11 points each.

In the season finale at Hiwassee Dam, NC, it was all Union as the Panthers led 34-18 at halftime and 53-33 after three.

Baenninger led the team with 18 points, Dockrey scored 13, Matthew Rich had 11, and Crawford Colwell finished with 7 points in the 69-45 final.

NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Gordon and Johnson on 500 pole

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.—Jeff Gordon has won the pole for the 2015 Daytona 500. His teammate Jimmie Johnson will have the outside position. The pair won the top-two starting spots by having the fastest time during last Sunday's qualifying runs.

The remainder of the 43-car field will be set after Thursday's two Budweiser Duels.

KENSETH WINS SPRINT UNLIMITED

Matt Kenseth took the lead from Martin Truex with 20 laps to go and won Saturday night's Sprint Unlimited, for his first Unlimited victory.

By being one of the leaders, he was able to stay in front of several wrecks that took out 17 of the 25 starters in the 75-lap race.

"It's great to win at Daytona anytime," Kenseth said. "We had a good car and Martin (Truex) was strong down the stretch there, but we were able to hold him off and that's a great way to start off the year for sure."

Truex held on for second.

"The race was over when Kenseth passed me for the lead," Truex said. "He's a better blocker than I am. I was never able to get back around him."

Carl Edwards was third, followed by Casey Mears, Kyle Larson, Joey Logano, Jeff Gordon, Kyle Busch, Dale Earnhardt Jr. and Danica Patrick.

The Unlimited was a non-points race limited to last year's 16 Chase drivers, pole winners from last season, former Daytona 500 pole winners, and former Unlimited winners, plus four other drivers based on their 2014 point standings.

Kevin Harvick thought Joey Logano was bumping him a little too hard on the track, and once the race was over, ran into the side of Logano's car, and then confronted him in the pit area.

"He just drove us straight in the fence," Harvick said. "Everybody is trying to be aggressive, but you still have to know when and where you can do things. You can't just drive somebody in the fence."

"I have had a few issues with him on the speedways. You can't just take your head off and detach it and throw it on the floor board and not use your brain. It's an all-star race, but you still have to have some common sense."

Logano said he was trying to be helpful.

"That is Kevin just being an instigator just like everywhere else," Logano said. "It is a new year and the same stuff. I was trying to help really, to be honest with you, we had a run and I was pushing."

"I was trying to help. He just doesn't understand I was trying

ing to help. I understand his frustration but I was trying to help out and get to the front and try to win this thing. There are no points or anything like that so you go for the win."

The race was the first to utilize NASCAR's new technology-enhanced pit road officiating procedures and several teams were caught by the system. Jamie McMurray was penalized for too many crew members over the wall, while Ryan Newman was caught for driving through three stalls on the way to his pit.

Others that received penalties included Kevin Harvick, Jeff Gordon, Aric Almirola, Kurt Busch and Kyle Busch.

TWO DRIVERS IN QUESTION

There are many racing questions that will be answered as we get further into the season, but Carl Edwards and Tony Stewart are two drivers that need to have a turnaround year.

Edwards will be with his new team, Joe Gibbs Racing, and hopefully, Tony Stewart has been able to put personal and physical problems behind him and focus on his racing.

Brad Keselowski said Edwards is one of the top-three drivers in Sprint Cup racing.

This year, he will be in the No. 19 Toyota. Prior to that, he drove the No. 99 Ford for Roush Fenway Racing. He won the 2007 NASCAR Busch Series championship and nearly won the 2011 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series title, but lost by a tiebreaker to Tony Stewart.

Edwards admits to feeling some anxiety. But he's anxious to see if he can follow the pattern and have the same first-year success as several other drivers.

"I didn't understand that until we first made the announcement and I got that feeling of, man, I've got to go prove myself, that little bit of insecurity that every driver walks around with for a long time," Edwards said. "I haven't had that feeling for a while and I'm curious to see if that's it."

One year ago Stewart was recuperating from a broken leg sustained while driving a sprint car. Then in August, 2014, he was involved in another incident during a sprint car race, that resulted in the death of 20-year-old driver Kevin Ward Jr.

But that painful incident plunged him into a depression as he anguished over Ward's death during a self-imposed three-race hiatus.

Stewart said all of that is in the past.

But is it?
NASCAR race officials black flagged him for failing to weigh in Friday at Daytona Inter-



Jeff Gordon addresses the media after winning the Daytona 500 pole national Speedway.

While Stewart was on the track, NASCAR ordered Stewart, Denny Hamlin and Kyle Busch to return to the garage to be weighed, a preseason mandate. Hamlin and Busch obeyed.

Stewart stayed on the track, ignoring NASCAR's request.

When he did return to the garage, he and crew chief Chad Johnston were called to the NASCAR hauler for a meeting regarding the incident.

Stewart refused to elaborate over what took place in the hauler, but according to SB Nation, he issued several curse words and profanity towards NASCAR officials.

"Well NASCAR felt compelled to make me the first to be called to the trailer 10 minutes into the first practice of the year," Stewart tweeted.

He wrecked during the first round of Sunday's qualifying. Not a good start.

Weekend Racing: It all begins Thurs., Feb. 19 with two non-points races and culminates on Sun., Feb. 22 with the Daytona 500.

Thurs., Feb. 19; two non-points races known as the Budweiser Duels. These are a pair of 60-lap Sprint Cup Series races to determine the starting field for the 2014 Daytona 500; The top-16 finishers of each race will be guaranteed a spot in the "500." Starting time: 7 pm ET; TV: Fox Sports1.

Fri, Feb. 20; Camping World Truck Series, race 1 of 23; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: FS1.

Sat, Feb. 21; Xfinity Series, race 1 of 32; Starting time: 3:30 pm ET; TV: FS1.

Sun, Feb. 22; Daytona 500, race 1 of 36; Starting time: 1 pm ET; TV: FOX.

Racing Trivia Question: Who won the first Daytona 500, which was held in 1959? Hint: He was the patriarch of a famous racing family and drove an Oldsmobile to victory.

Last Week's Question: Who won the 2014 Daytona 500? Answer: Dale Earnhardt Jr.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: www.hodges@race500.com.

Bowling scores

Monday Night Ladies: Joyce Trenton 191, Linda Nichols 204, Susanna White 216.

Monday Night Men: Jim McCreary 245, 223, 257, 725 Series, Larry Canaan 220, Mike Davis 201, 222, Gary Brown 236, 192, 279, 707 Series, Keith Rhodes 213, Mike Newsome 206, 211, Kevin Mohan 223, Del Neiffer 211, Joe Teague 224, Derick Rice 214, 207, 237, Taz Matetzschk 228, 233, 204, BJ Gilbert 225, 213, Tom Griffiths 236, 220, 226, Chris Ellinwood 202, DJ DeJoseph 279, 225, Brett Hogsed 201, Steve Brandt 225, Barry Kives 200, Johnathan Everett 201, Ray Everett 200, 245, Jeb Plott 233, 203.

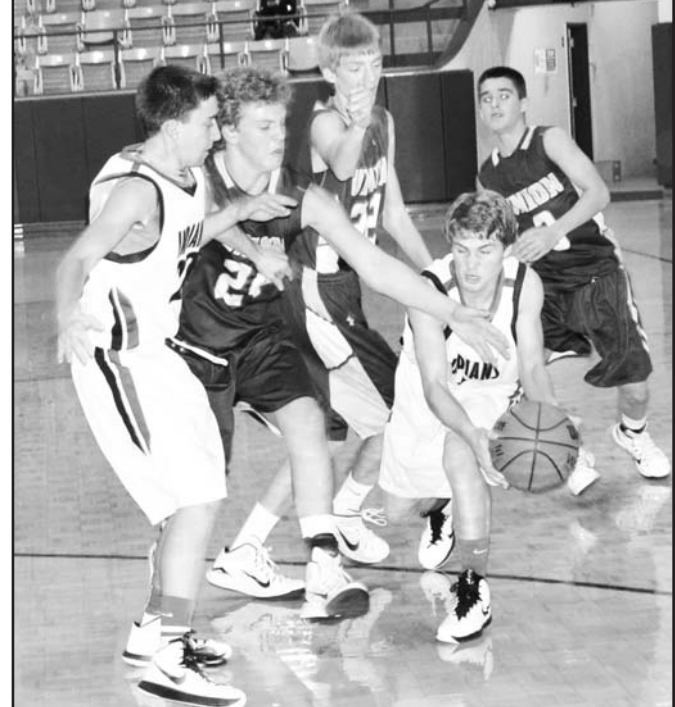
Hazel Farmer Senior League: DeJay DeJoseph 279, 222, 678 Series, Bruce Burnett 218, Mel White 230, Dewey Allen 202, Bill Co. Cooper 209, Paul Napolitano 225, 204, Ernest Rice 192.

Thursday Night Fun: DJ DeJoseph 209, Chuck Reeves 221, Krik Bass 236, Russ Southcott 203, 298, John Moore 214, Denise Baldwin 190, Zach Moore 202, 202, 221, Tim Moore 252, 215, 218, Stanley Tyler 209, 202, Doug Roberts 224, 217, Dewey Allen 211, Johnathan Everett 213, Tony Lynch 221, 212, Ray Everett 200, Mike Davis 225, Jim McCreary 211, 200, 226, Brett Hogsed 202, 250, Jason Swanson 214, 215, 211, Taz Matetzschk 249, 226, Bonnell Thomas 202, 235, 203, Jordan Moore 217, Daniel Brown 214, Jaythan Burrell 224, Jerry Thomas 232, 202.

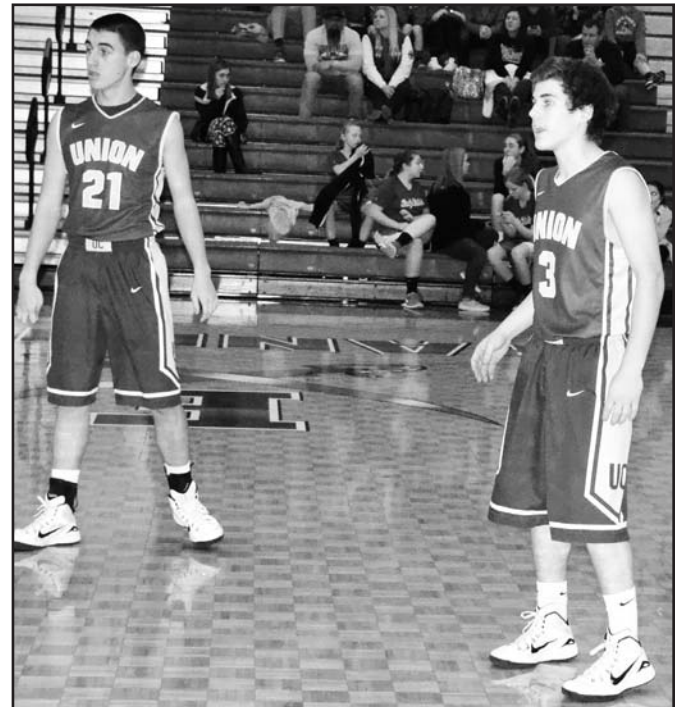


Dan James of Double Dan Horsemanship returns to Union County Saddle Club for a "Gaining Control Under Saddle - from Beginner to Advanced" on March 14 & 15, 2015 from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. each day. We will have drawings for free stuff periodically during the clinic.

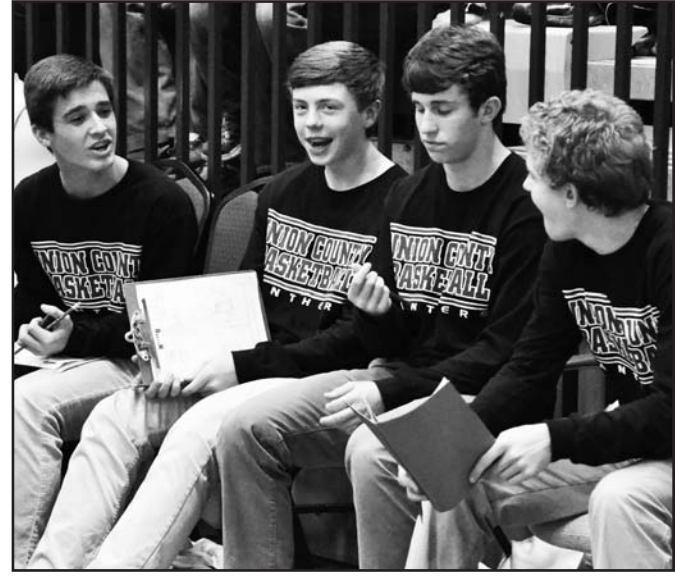
Concessions will be open. Contact Margie Buchanan at 706-633-4132 to reserve your spot or for further information.



The relentless JV Panther defense swarms a Towns County ball handler. Defending from left to right: Candler Colwell, Tim Murphy, and Patrick Baggett. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Junior Matthew Rich (#21) and sophomore Parker McCombs (3) see action during the varsity contest at Fannin. Photo/Todd Forrest



Members of the JV squad keeping track of statistics during the varsity contests. Photo/Todd Forrest