

Sports

Covering Kickoff to the Final Out in Clinch County Athletics

Panthers reach 'Elite 8'

Beat Marion, Screven to advance to state quarterfinals

By Len Robbins
Publisher

The Clinch County Panthers have reached the "Elite 8."

Terrence George's Panthers defeated Screven County in the second round at home Saturday, 66-53, to punch their ticket to the quarterfinals, where they will face Wheeler County (21-4, 1st seed from Region 4-A) Wednesday in Alamo.

To reach the second round, the Panthers ripped Marion County at home Wednesday, 80-29, allowing nine points in the second half.

"In both of our playoff games so far, we started out tight, and then settled down," said George,

whose Panthers are now 26-3 and ranked 4th in Class A, Division II. "We played pretty good defense in the second half both nights."

Against Screven Saturday at the CCHS gymnasium, the Gamecocks came out hot, leading 17-13 after one quarter. But the Panthers battled back late in the second period, going on a 7-0 run at the end of the quarter to take a 27-25 lead into intermission.

That's when the Panthers loosened up offensively and tightened up defensively, outscoring Screven 22-13 in the third quarter, and eventually winning by 13.

Traviian Miller had an excellent game on both

sides of the ball, scoring 24 points to lead the Panthers, while Jakyri Posley added 20. Other CCHS scorers Saturday were: Kamarion Johnson-14, Kyiis Mingo-4, Fred Causey-2, and Shane Burns-2.

Wednesday at home against Marion in the playoff opener, it was a similar template, but more severe. Marion trailed by just two, 13-11, after one quarter. Clinch opened up that lead to 29-20 at halftime.

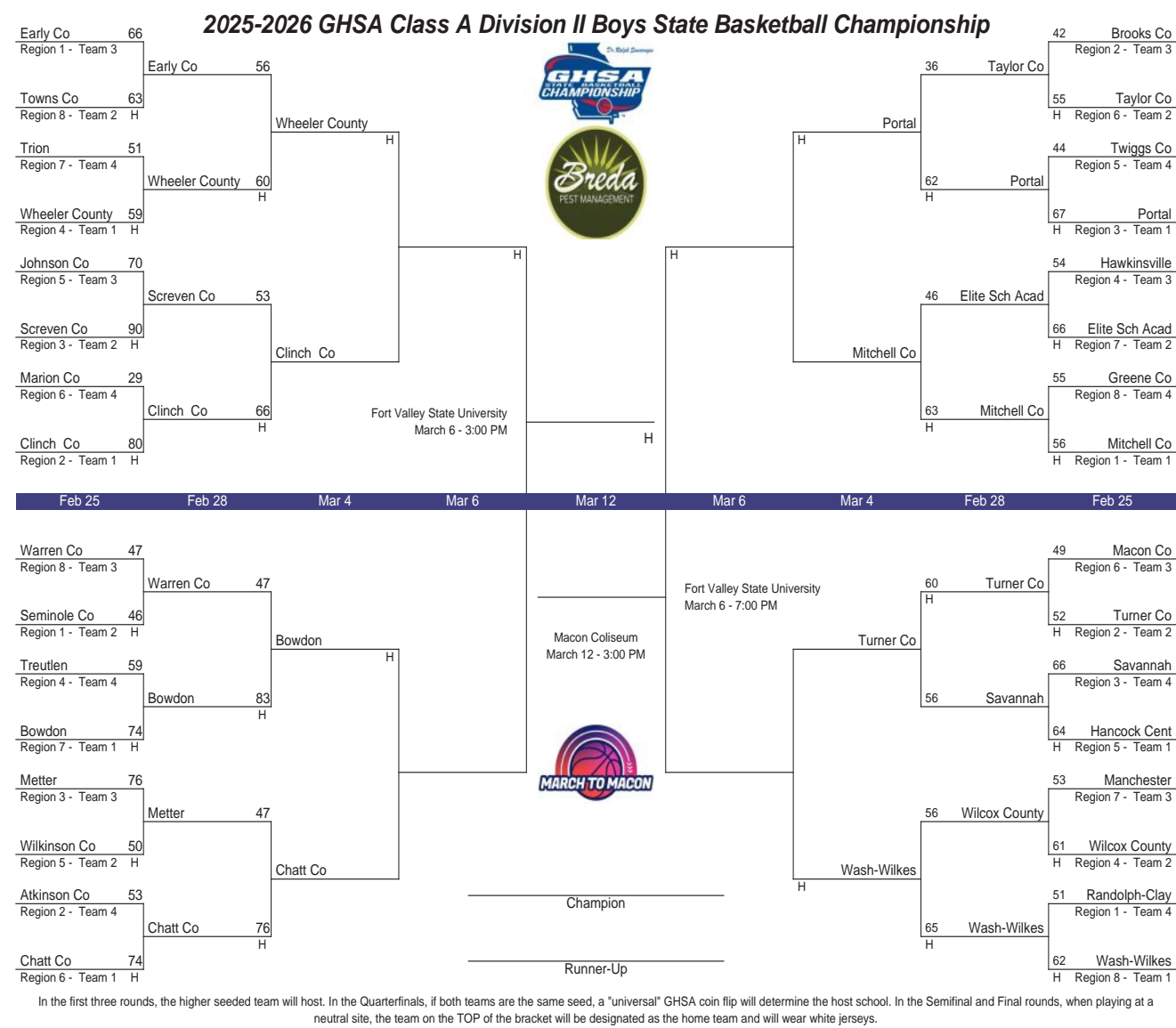
After that, it was all Panthers, as they led 55-28 going into the fourth quarter, then outscored Marion 25-1 in the fourth quarter.

Posley, Miller and Johnson led the Panthers offensively, with

24, 20, and 18 points offensively. Other Panthers scoring Wednesday were: Burns-11, Causey-3, AJ Barr-2, and Jarvis Henderson-2.

Tipff is scheduled for 6 p.m. at Wheeler County High School in Alamo (88-mile trip one way from Homerville). Wheeler County is the Region 4-A champion, and are 21-4 coming into the game.

They defeated Early County 60-56 in the second round to advance, and topped Trion in the first round 59-51. The winner will advance to the Final 4 at Fort Valley State on Friday at 3 p.m., playing the winner of Bowdon (ranked 7th) and Chatahoochee County (ranked 1st).



Diamond Panthers get big region win over Irwin

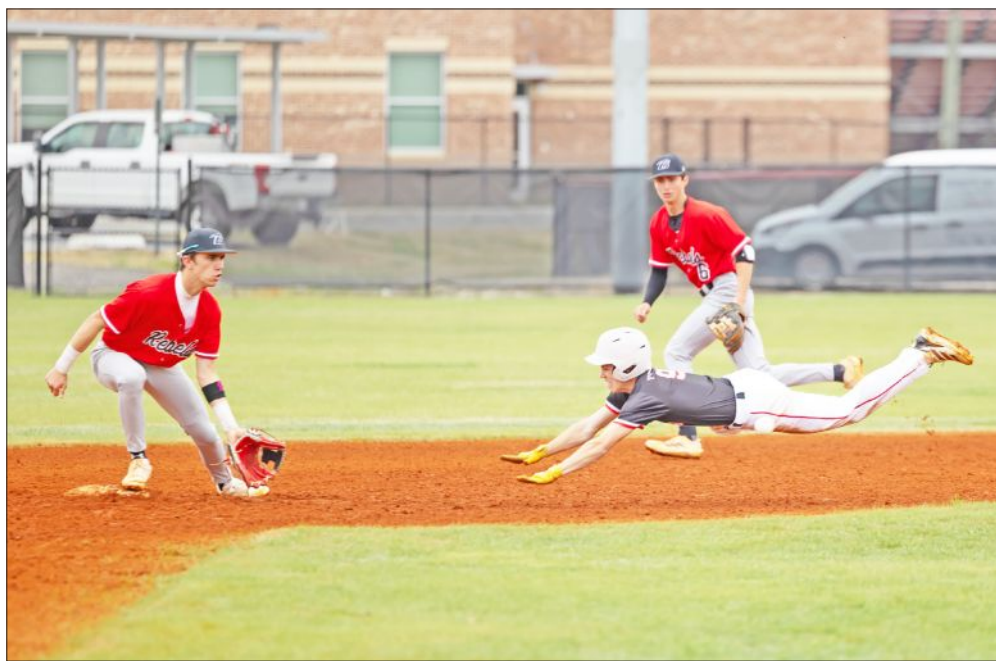
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The Clinch County Panthers got a big region victory at home Thursday – edging Irwin County, 12-11.

In their other games last week, Lee Douglas' Panthers (now 6-2 on young season) blasted Echols County on the road Tuesday, 13-2, and were edged by Class AA's Berrien at home Saturday, 4-3.

In Thursday's game against Irwin, Clinch jumped on the Indians early, up 6-2 after two innings. But the visitors battled back, taking a 10-7 lead in the top of the fifth. But the Panthers scored three in the bottom of that inning to knot the game at 10-10. Clinch then got two runs in the top of the sixth, holding Irwin to just one run in the top of the seventh to secure the win.

The Panthers had eight hits in the game, and were walked 10 times by the Indians. Sage Delk, Dane Brown, and Remington Wheeler all had two hits for the game, with Brown having a double and 4 RBIs. Jake King and Hunter Henderson also had hits



Clinch's Winston Fortner slides into second base against Berrien Saturday at Cecil Barber Field – Photo by Joy Sumner Photography.

for the Panthers. On the hill, Tate Denmark started, going 3 1/3 innings, striking our four and allowing five hits. He was relieved by Joshua Delk for an inning, and Henderson closed out the final 2 2/3 innings, allowing just two hits and striking out three.

Tuesday at Echols County, Clinch led just 4-1 before erupting for a nine-run fifth inning.

Brown again had the hot bat, going 3-for-3 with a homer and double. Denmark and Wheeler had two hits

apiece, while Weston Bennett (double) and Henderson also had hits. Wheeler went the distance (five innings) on the mound, getting the win. He struck out eight and scattered six hits.

The runs weren't as plentiful Saturday against Berrien. Clinch got down 4-1 after three innings, and managed single runs in the fifth and sixth innings, but couldn't catch the Rebels. Bennett started on the mound for Clinch, going two innings. He was relieved by King, who gave up no runs over

the final five innings.

Clinch had nine hits, and left 15 on base. Denmark hit homer and went 2-for-3. Wheeler, Rayce Godfrey and Brown all had two hits, while King also had a single.

This week, the Diamond Panthers will be busy, going to Lanier County Tuesday, then visiting Turner County Thursday, and Atkinson County Friday. All of those are set for 6 p.m. starts. The following Tuesday (March 10), Clinch will come home to host Brooks County, also at 6 p.m.

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The Subway Basketball Player of the Week is sophomore Traviian Miller. In two playoff games last week, Traviian had 20 points vs. Marion, and 24 points vs. Screven, along with some key blocks, steals, and rebounds.

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Dane Brown

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