

SPORTS

Gay picks up win No. 100; Lady Panthers advance to match No. 4 Waco-Robinson

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TYLER - For the first four minutes, it appeared the Lady Panthers were on their way to another ho-hum, poor foe drumming. That was before the Lady Hornets Alex Furr decided to show a little offense of her own once again. But the Lady Panthers, who received an opening-round bye, took control in the final quarter to beat Athens, 61-52, in a Class 3A area playoff Friday night at UT Tyler's Herrington Patriot Center. The win marked the 100th career win for head coach Greg Gay. After leading 7-0, the Lady Hornets shot 3-pointers to get back into the game. Furr sank two, and teammate, Ashley Jacks narrowed the lead to 11-10. Another Furr-three, and Athens took the lead for the next two and one-half quarters. Bullard trailed the upset-minded Lady Hornets by double-figures in the opening half, but went on a 10-2 run to begin the fourth period. That gave the Lady Panthers a 53-45 lead with less than four minutes remaining, an advantage they never give-in. Bullard forward Danielle Heithoff took control of the paint in the fourth, scoring multiple times on putbacks to finish with 25 points and 11 rebounds. Lady Panthers senior forward Calli Miller finished with 19 points and seven rebounds, and junior guard Ashley Ricci contributed nine points and nine boards. Furr scored 15 points in the first nine minutes, helping the Lady Hornets go in front 20-13 with 7:07 remaining in the second quarter. The junior finished with a game-high 30 points, most of which came on isolation attempts at the perimeter. Teammate Ashley Jacks drained a 3-pointer for a 30-20 lead about three minutes later, but Bullard rallied to make it a three-point game at halftime. In the second half, neither team could seize control until the Lady Panthers outscored the Lady Hornets 19-9 in the fourth. Freshman guard Minta Spears was well below her average in points but her defense on Furr the final half was a dif-

ference maker as well as her consistent feeds inside for easy Bullard buckets. Bullard (31-3), the second-ranked team in the state, advances to the regional quarterfinals, where it will meet fourth-ranked Waco Robinson at 6 p.m. Tuesday in Centerville. Athens, meanwhile, finishes the year 20-11.

Class 3A Area Playoff
At UT Tyler's Herrington Patriot Center
Bullard 61, Athens 52
Athens 11 19 12 19 - 52
Bullard 15 18 10 9 - 61
ATHENS - Alex Furr, 30; Kema Jordan, 9; Bailey Starkes, 2; Jasmine Blakemore, 3; Ashely Jacks, 8.
BULLARD - Calli Miller, 19; Danielle Heithoff, 25; Ally Covalt, 1; Christina Hatten, 3; Ashley Ricci, 9; Minta Spears, 2; Kayla Welling, 2.
THREE POINT GOALS - A: Furr (6), Jacks (2), Blakemore. B: Ricci, Hatten.
RECORDS - Athens 20-11; Bullard 31-3.
NEXT UP - No. 2 Bullard vs. No. 4 Waco Robinson, 6 p.m. Tuesday, Centerville.



Bullard freshman, Minta Spears went heads up against Alex Furr in the area playoff on Friday night. Furr had her way in the first half with 17 points until Spears took the defensive responsibility, and the momentum quickly changed for the win. Ashley Ricci and Danielle Heithoff clamp down on the defense against the Lady Hornets of Athens in a area round win, 61-52 to advance in the Class 3A state playoffs. The win for the Lady Panthers marked the 100th career win for Head Coach Greg Gay. Bullard advances to play 4th-ranked Waco-Robinson.



Co-Champion Tatum earns a bye the way of 61-51 tiebreaker over Panther for playoff spot

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NEW LONDON - After all said and done, who wanted a bye anyway? Make no mistake, Bullard fought shot-for-shot for the open date but unfortunately for Bullard, the shots were not falling as Tatum took a 61-51, seeding game win to earn a first round bye in the UIL Class 3A playoff scenario. Last week Chapel Hill beat Gilmer, 61-54 in their regular season finale to sew up one playoff spot. Meanwhile, Bullard was handing Tatum their second league setback, forcing the tie at the top, and the co-championship. Tatum (23-9), earned their bye with a tough defense forcing 21 Bullard turnovers in a game that the Eagles never trailed. A staunch Tatum press

created too many miscues in the early going as Tatum spotted a 17-10 lead that was really never in danger. Tatum's Desmond Fite scored 12 of his game-high 19 points in the second half to pace the win, while Matt Brown spread out 18 points in the game. Brown scored 16 of his 18 points in the first three periods as Tatum led 4 4 - 3 2 . The Panthers (23-11), will be the second-seed and play a bi-district game on Tuesday against a team to be determined. Bullard's Josiah Rosebury nailed two, 3-pointers and scored 13 of his team-high 15 points in the final half of play. Daniel Howard joined Rosebury in double-digits for the Panthers with 11 points. Howard made two free throws midway through the third period for a 35-30

deficit, leading to a 27-23, Tatum lad at intermission. The Panthers will play bi-district in Rusk against Center, with a 7 p.m. tip off slated. See the next edition of the Banner Sports for the story. District 17-3A Playoff Seeding Game Tatum 61, Bullard 51 Bullard 10 13 9 19 -51 Tatum 17 10 17 17 -61 BULLARD - Daniel Howard, 11; Lance Anding, 8; Koby Greene, 2; Josiah Rosebury, 15; Brandon Beavers, 6; Ryan Wood, 1; Marquez Franklin, 3; Charlie Moore, 4. TATUM - Junior Watkins, 4; De Palmer, 3; Matt Brown, 18; Delvin McIlwain, 2; Steadman Coleman, 10; Quentin Pipken, 5; Desmond Fite, 1 9 . THREE-POINT GOALS -



T: Palmer, Pipken. B: Rosebury (2). RECORDS - Bullard 23-11. Tatum 23-9. NEXT UP- Bullard vs. Center, at Rusk, 7 p.m., Tuesday. Tatum earns topseed and first round bye.

Tatum's Desmond Fite draws the attention of the Panthers defense in the Eagles 61-51, last Friday night in New London, at West Rusk High School. Tatum and Bullard tied for the league title with 8-2 records, however the Eagles earned a first round bye with the win at West Rusk High School last Friday night. The Panthers will play Center in Rusk, on Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Panthers wins annual powerlifting meet

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BULLARD - The Bullard powerlifting team held a sweetheart of a meet this last Saturday, on Valentine's Day, as 10 teams participated at Bullard High School. The meet was the second annual powerlifting meet. For the second year in a row the boy's team won the team competition. The boy's team ended up with 40 points, and second place was the team from Nacogdoches. Third place was Quitman. The following boys and girls medaled in their weight class for the victorious Panthers and Lady Panthers. BULLARD POWERLIFTING MEET Girls Division: Sarah Grace



Senior Blain Faulk won the 181-classification in the meet held at Bullard recently.

French (123 class) - 4th place; Lacy Hurst (181class)- 1st place. Boys Division: Cody Gabbard (123 class)- 1st place; Dalton Simonek (132 class)- 2nd place; Eric Benton (148 class) - 4th place; Phillip Rieger (165 class) - 1st place; Vinny

Cottingham (181 class) - 2nd place; Blain Faulk (181 class) - 1st place; Will Coleman (242 class)- 4th place; Jeffrey Marshall (275 class) - 4th place. "A number of the lifters are sitting in a position that could allow them to go to the regional meet," said Bullard powerlifting coach, Joe Brannen. "We are working on another meet here in Bullard before regionals but we will have to wait and see how it pans out with schedules." The last date for the girls to qualify for the regional meet will be on Saturday, Feb. 21st and the for the boys will be on Saturday, Feb.28th. The UIL girl's regional meet is in Forney on Saturday, Feb., and the boy's regional meet slated for Rusk on Saturday, March 14.

BULLARD

PLAYER of the WEEK



Daniel Howard
Junior Guard

Howard has stepped up recently with his floor leadership skills, and plays a huge role at both point guard, and shooting guard. Known for his shining lay ups at the basket, Howard's rebounding and defense has been a plus for the playoff-bound Panthers.

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