

# UCHS Mock Trial team falls one ballot short of a State Championship

By April Krieger  
North Georgia News  
Sports Special

Lawrenceville - On Saturday, March 3, the UCHS Mock Trial team once again made history as they were matched up against Class AAAAA Jonesboro High School in the Georgia Mock Trial State Championship final round.

At the close of the round that evening, Union was declared the 2018 State Runner-Up, and only one single evaluator ballot separated the two teams at the end of the final round.

The day began at 9 a.m. at the Gwinnett Justice and Administration Center, with the top eight teams in the state who advanced from their respective district championships in February.

Those eight teams were Atlanta International School, Decatur, Jonesboro, Lowndes County, Middle Georgia Homeschool, Northview, Union County, and The Westminster Schools.

UCHS had previously won the 2018 Region 6 Championship in January and the District 1 Championship two weeks ago in Cartersville.

Union had two very



The UCHS Mock Trial team award winners celebrate another successful season. Photo/UCHS Facebook

evenly-matched rounds Saturday yet managed to edge out their opponents. The team went up against Northview High School in Round 1 that morning, and then they were up against the Middle Georgia Homeschool Association for Round 2.

Several team members were recognized for their performances during the first two

state rounds. Round 1 Outstanding Attorney Award went to Christianna Morris and Outstanding Witness Awards went to Emma Hambrick and Alex Bailey. Round 2 Outstanding Attorney was Clay Pickelsimer and Outstanding Witnesses were Emma Hambrick and Vatsal Trivedi.

Before the final championship round teams were

announced, students who participated in the 2017-18 Georgia Law Academy this past September were recognized. Two UCHS team members were among those recognized for passing the Georgia Junior Bar Exam; Sahory Salazar and Claire McPherson both passed the exam, with McPherson passing with honors (earning a 90% or above on the exam).

“When they made the announcement that Union County was in the final round, it was a surreal yet exciting moment,” Coach Amy McCombs said. “Our students worked so hard over the past six months to achieve this. It was awesome to see all that work finally get them to the championship round.”

In the final round ver-

sus Jonesboro High, Alex Bailey was recognized for his outstanding performance as a witness. Nine evaluators judged each courtroom in the final round; in the end, of a total of 18 evaluator ballots, Union lost the championship round to Jonesboro by a single evaluator ballot.

“We started with this case over six months ago in the same place as over 160 other teams in Georgia,” McCombs said. “To make it to the championship and finish as one of the top two teams in the state is a testament to how much hard work and dedication our team has put into this journey. We are thrilled with the outcome and the ongoing support we’ve received from so many in our community.”

The team would like to especially thank the Honorable Judge Murphy Miller, Ms. Amber O’Connell, and Ms. Peggy Caldwell for their invaluable support and mentoring throughout this season.

They also extend appreciation to the following for their financial support during the season: David Barrett, Lawrence Sorgen, Robbie Colwell, Kris Ann Poe, Jack Lance, Daniel Davenport, and United Community Bank.

# Yost ties school record with 7 goals vs East Hall as Union rebounds from loss

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The Union County Lady Panthers improved to 4-1 overall and 1-1 in region play with a 9-1 victory over East Hall that saw junior Madison Yost etch her name into the school record books.

After scoring just one goal in the first half to help the Lady Panthers grab a 3-0 lead, Yost went off in the second half - pouring in six goals in 22 minutes to match Jamie Weldon’s school record of seven goals from 2001.

“I knew I had a shot at the record when I scored five against Rabun but I didn’t expect to come close today,” Yost said following the game. “I didn’t realize how close I was today until I came out of the game for a little bit. That’s when I saw that I had five goals so I was excited to get back in and go for the record.”

When asked if she had any plans on breaking the record, Yost only wanted to focus on getting better as a team.

“I just want to become a better passer so I can set up my teammates and help them get better so everyone can achieve their goals,” she said.

The first goal of the day belonged to Layne Baenninger,



Coach Tim Hunter with Madison Yost following her record-tying performance. Photo/Todd Forrest

eight minutes in. Maddie Sutton scored on a rebound in the 17th minute and Yost made it a 3-0 game in the 32nd minute.

In the second half, Yost scored four goals in the first 12 minutes before East Hall recorded its only goal of the game with 26:07 remaining.

Yost went back to work at the 19:56 mark - making it an 8-1 game. The record-tying goal came with 10:01 to play.

Brenna Innis finished with three assists, Mattison Ruff

had two, Sutton, Baenninger, and Yost had one each.

Earlier in the week, the Lady Panthers suffered a 10-0 loss at 6th ranked Dawson County.

The game was scoreless until the 17th minute when Dawson grabbed the lead. Moments later, Union freshman Isabella Nottage suffered an ankle injury that will cost her a few weeks of the season.

After Nottage went down, the floodgates opened. Dawson

scored four more goals in a span of 10 minutes and 22 seconds.

Leading 5-0 at halftime, the Lady Tigers churned out five more goals in less than 20 minutes to end the game at 10-0.

“At Dawson, our midfielders played pretty well, it was just one of those things where you’re simply over-matched,” Union County head coach Tim Hunter said. “I thought we were able to do some pretty good things, despite the score.”



Yost celebrates with teammates as she exits the field after scoring her record-tying seventh goal of the game. Photo/Todd Forrest

“Our girls are pretty resilient because we have some of the best captains that you could ask for. Layne (Baenninger), Brenna (Innis), and Emmi (Garrison) are three quality leaders. We’re going to miss them severely next year, not only due to their ability, but the camaraderie and leadership they show make all the difference in the world and it makes my job 10 times easier.”

Union County returns to region play on Tuesday when

they visit Fannin County. The Lady Panthers knocked off Fannin earlier this year in a non-region contest.

On Friday, Union will travel to Rome to face Darlington, who is coming off a 6-1 victory over East Hall. At Darlington, the boys will be in action first, beginning at 5:30 p.m. with the girls to follow.

At Fannin County, the Lady Panthers will get underway at 5 p.m. with the guys to follow.

# Baseball: Panthers win fifth straight; visit Coolray Field Thursday

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Union County wrapped up a perfect week with a 9-6 victory over White County, extending the Panthers’ winning streak to five games while improving their record to 5-1 overall.

On Monday, Union County overcame a 4-0 first inning deficit to knock off Rabun County, 16-6 in a mercy rule-shortened contest. A day later, the Panthers traveled to Gilmer where the arms of senior Cole Davis and junior Coleson Daniel combined to limit the Bobcats to one run and six hits during a 3-1 victory.

Union County visited Murphy, NC (post-deadline) this past Monday but the main event of the week will be Thursday when the Panthers battle West Hall at CoolRay Field, home of the Gwinnett Braves - the Atlanta Braves’ AAA affiliate -- in Lawrenceville at 4 p.m.

Panthers 9, White County 6 - Davis knocked in a career-high four runs as Union County survived two furious rallies by the Warriors to win its fifth straight.

Junior lefty Ean Harkins ran into trouble during the fifth after four shutout innings allowed the offense to build a 4-0 advantage. However, consecutive walks by Harkins to open the fifth brought Jackson Colwell to the mound with two on and no outs.

Colwell finished the first batter but the junior also found himself in a bind after a run-scoring double and error cut the Panther lead in half. White County pulled within a run with an RBI groundout then tied the score on a two-out passed ball before Colwell induced an inning-ending pop-up.

Union County caught a break in the bottom half of the fifth when Pierson Allison reached on a catcher’s interference, then the swirling wind helped a Logan Dyer shallow pop-fly avoid the glove of



Union County baseball during the national anthem prior to the Rabun game. Photo/Todd Forrest

a White County outfielder. Candler Colwell loaded the bases with a bunt single and Jonathan Everett followed with a go-ahead walk.

With the bags packed and nobody out, Davis lined an opposite-field double, scoring Dyer and Candler Colwell. Catcher Alec Scott brought home two more with another double to spot Union County a 9-4 advantage.

Jackson Colwell faced three batters in the sixth, getting the leadoff man before surrendering a single and a base-on-balls. With one down in the inning, the Panthers turned to RJ Banton to slam the door but the senior issued a walk and allowed an RBI single. Following a sacrifice fly that trimmed the Union lead to 9-6, Banton avoided further damage when Dyer snagged a line drive back up the middle.

Banton escaped more trouble in the seventh when a leadoff walk and a two-out error brought the tying run to the plate but he battled back from a 3-1 count, blowing a 3-2 fastball by the hitter to end the game.

Jackson Colwell picked up his second win of the year after replacing Harkins in the fifth. Colwell went 1.1 innings, allowing four

hits and three earned runs while striking out one. As for Harkins, the southpaw, tossed four innings of two-hit ball, fanning four and walking four. He also received plenty of run support as the offense provided him with two runs in the second on RBI singles from Davis and Chayton Schafer.

They would tack on two more in the third when Hunter Kelley scored Allison with a base hit and Davis brought home Dyer with a groundout to second.

Banton worked the final 1.2 innings, yielding one hit, walking two, and fanning two. Candler Colwell finished 3-for-4 at the plate with two runs and a double.

Panthers 3, Gilmer 1: EL-LIJAY - Davis got the start and allowed just one run over four innings as the offense overcame a 1-0 deficit with one in the fourth, fifth, and seventh innings.

Senior shortstop Patrick Baggett finished 2-for-4 with a run and an RBI while Kelley drove in one during a 1-for-2 performance at the plate.

The Bobcats broke the scoreless tie with a two-out single followed by an RBI double off of Davis in the third. The Panthers

answered in the top-half of the fourth with a Baggett leadoff single followed by walks to Banton and Del Ruff. Kelley tied the game with an RBI groundout to second base but Union would eventually strand runners on second and third with one out.

Davis helped his own cause in the fifth with a leadoff double - bringing Schafer in as a courtesy runner. Following a strikeout and groundout, Baggett delivered a two-out, go-ahead single - scoring Schafer.

Leading 2-1, Daniel relieved Davis in the fifth and recorded a three-inning save by working around a one-out single in the bottom half of the fifth and a leadoff single in the sixth.

Like Davis two innings earlier, Daniel sparked a rally with a leadoff double to left. Sophomore John Mancuso entered as a courtesy runner and immediately advanced to third on a passed ball, allowing Schafer to bring him in with a sacrifice fly to center.

Daniel worked a perfect seventh to seal the win and record his first save of the year. The junior fanned two and gave up two hits in three innings of relief.

Panthers 16, Rabun Co. 6 - Jackson Colwell labored through a difficult first inning that saw the Wildcats jump in front 4-0 on four walks, one single, and a costly Panther error.

Luckily, Union answered with a 5-spot in the bottom half of the first and Colwell settled down to work a scoreless second. The Panthers grabbed the lead despite just one hit in the bottom half of the first inning. Dyer was issued a bases-loaded walk then Candler Colwell and Kelly were both plunked and Daniel tied the game with a fielder’s choice. Schafer finally put Union County in front with another bases-loaded walk.

The Panthers piled on seven more runs in the second beginning with a Dyer bunt that scored Banton. Daniel lined a one-out double to left to score two more, Schafer made it a 9-4 game with an infield single that plated Kelley. With two

down, Banton cleared the bases with triple to right-center that blew things open at 12-4.

Both offenses went silent until the sixth when Rabun added two runs off Harkins but Union County ended the night early with a four-run sixth. Harkins was walked with the bases loaded, Cayden Rich scored Baggett with a single to right before Candler Colwell and Everett were each hit by a pitch to extend the lead to 10 runs, bringing the mercy rule into effect.

Harkins worked the final four innings, yielding one hit, walking five and striking out three.

Banton finished 2-for-4 with 2 runs and 3 RBIs; Ruff went 3-for-3 with 2 runs and Daniel was 1-for-3 with 3 RBIs. Schafer knocked in two during a 1-for-2 performance; Dyer and Candler Colwell also drove in two runs apiece.