

Sports

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Soccer: Lady Panthers lock up the Region Championship

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SOCIAL CIRCLE - It required a little more drama than previously anticipated but the Union County Lady Panthers are the 2019 Region 8-AA Champions.

With a magic number of one, the Lady Panthers were a win away from securing the top spot in the region when they made the trip to Social Circle last Thursday, March 28.

With the Lady Redskins already suffering a loss to Rabun County (who Union County defeated 12-2), the Lady Panthers might have taken Social Circle a bit lightly. As a result, Union needed overtime to survive the upset bid and clinch the Region 8-AA title.

A goal by senior Mattison Ruff was all the offense the Lady Panthers could generate during regulation, sending the match into overtime tied at 1-1.

And as the saying goes, "big-time players make big-time plays in big-time games."

Cue Madison Yost. Yost, who became the Lady Panthers' all-time leading goal scorer last week, served up one of the biggest goals of her brilliant career when she put her team ahead 2-1 with just over 4 minutes left in the extra session.

For the remainder of the contest, goalkeeper Sadie Underwood and the Union County defense did its job by keeping the Lady Redskins from tying it up and forcing penalty kicks.

Union County soccer will take some well-deserved time off for Spring Break before returning to action on Tuesday, April 9 at Gilmer.

The final region contest will also double as Senior Night when Union hosts Monticello on Friday, April 12.

With the region title



L-R: Madison Yost (L) scored the game-winner in OT while Mattison Ruff (R) provided the only goal in regulation during the region-clinching victory at Social Circle. Photos/Todd Forrest

already in the bag and Monticello eliminated from playoff contention, the results of the Senior Night match will have no bearing on the region standings.

As for last week's Towns County contest, the game was canceled but could be rescheduled sometime later this month. Although, with the boys and girls squads from both schools prepping for the State Tournament in their respective classifications, it wouldn't be surprising if they mutually agreed to skip what could potentially be a very intense and very physical rivalry matchup.

After Senior Night, Union County has a makeup game with Darlington and a road contest at White County remaining on its schedule. Looking ahead to the State Tournament, as a No. 1 seed, the Lady Panthers are guaranteed home field advantage for the first two rounds.

The opening round will likely see Temple (No. 4 seed from Region 5-AA) as the first opponent to make the trip to Union County.

The Lady Tigers are currently sporting an 8-6 overall record but are just 3-5

in a region that features Class AA's third-ranked Bremen.

Union and Temple don't share any common opponents but the two are linked by three degrees of separation by way of North Murray and Cedartown.

Union County defeated North Murray, 6-0. North Murray beat Cedartown, 3-0 and Temple edged Cedartown, 3-2.

Based on the transitive property alone, Union County would be an eight goal favorite over Temple. But as we learned at Social Circle, comparing early-season scores tells us very little. It tells us even less when you take into account that North Murray at Union and Temple at Cedartown were both meaningless non-region contests.

Should the Lady Panthers advance beyond the first round, they would host the winner of Region 7's No. 2 seed vs Region 6's No. 3.

Currently, Coosa is second in Region 7 with Pepperell one game back in third. Coosa has the easier remaining region schedule and should hang on to the No. 2 seed. In addition, Coosa already owns a 7-0 win over



Union County head coach Tim Hunter hopes to have Anzly Sherman (pictured) healthy and back on the field before the State Tournament begins later this month. Sherman has not seen any action since mid-March. Photo/Todd Forrest

Darlington from early February.

As for Region 6-AA, KIPP-Atlanta appears to be the frontrunner while Ther-

rell, Washington, South Atlanta and Douglass are all in the mix for the final three spots.

is slated to begin on April 25 according to the brackets on the Georgia High School Association's official website.

The Class AA tourney

Panthers upset first place Social Circle to clinch playoff spot

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SOCIAL CIRCLE - The previously unbeaten-in-region-play Redskins are unbeaten no more following their matchup with Union County last Thursday, March 28.

Coming off a victory over 2nd ranked Putnam County, Social Circle was one win away from clinching the 8-AA title, but Union's men made certain the Lady Panthers were the only team celebrating a region championship on that night.

Kobi Robbins gave Union an early lead with a goal in the eighth minute off a Colby Ives assist. The advantage would hold up until the midway-point of the second half when Social Circle evened the score.

But Robbins wasn't finished as the junior converted a penalty kick in the 72nd minute, providing the Panthers a lead they wouldn't relinquish.

The win locks up at least a No. 4 seed for Union County in the upcoming postseason. The 3-seed, however, isn't out of reach despite an early-season overtime loss at Rabun County.

The Panthers and Wildcats are currently tied for third with two losses each. If Union defeats Monticello and Rabun



Union's sophomore goalkeeper Aaron Helton has three shutouts on the season. Photo/Todd Forrest

slips up against either Elbert County or Oglethorpe County, the Panthers will jump into the 3-spot in Region 8-AA.

Should Union remain in fourth, they would travel to 9th ranked Bremen (10-3) or 10th ranked Lamar County (11-3) in the first round.

Lamar hosts Bremen on

April 11 and if Lamar wins, they will secure the top spot. If Bremen wins, that would force a tie between the two.

The Panthers are off this week for Spring Break but return to action April 9 at Gilmer. Senior Night is scheduled for April 12 when they conclude region play with Monticello.



Kobi Robbins returned from injury and scored two goals in Union County's upset victory at Social Circle. Photo/Todd Forrest

Golf: Lady Panthers defend home turf vs Towns



Senior Carson Chambers was low-medalist with a 48 as Union County defeated Towns County 106-114 at Butternut Creek GC on March 19. Junior Kait McCarter also shot a 58 for Union. Photo/Todd Forrest

Track and Field at Yonah Invitational

North Georgia News
Sports Special

CLEVELAND - Union County track and field competed in the Mt. Yonah Invitational with seven other teams.

First place medalists are Zoe Sanchez (3200m) and Carson Walker (Long Jump).

Second place medalists include Evelyn McBride (High Jump), Zoe Sanchez (1600m), Hunter Hartzog (1600m), Luke Gambrell (3200m), and Boys 4x400 Relay team

Third place medalists are Zion Ross (100m), the Boys 4x100 Relay Team, Guage Shumaker (3200m), Hayes Glover (800m) and Brendan Bowman (400m).

Also, for the first time in recent Union County Track and Field History, the boys team received an award for second place in team scoring, beating out Habersham Central, Rabun County, Lumpkin County, Fannin County, Tallulah Falls and Fideles Christian.



Molly Kay West at the Mt. Yonah Invitational. Photo/Jody McLane