

# Baseball: UCHS introduces Odom as new head coach

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Last week, Union County High School named Zach Odom as its fourth head baseball coach since 2010.

A 2013 UCHS graduate, Odom takes the job following the resignation of Robby Roxbury, who was at the helm for three seasons.

Odom was made aware of his hiring last Monday and the Young Harris grad was still a bit flabbergasted when he was introduced to the team on Tuesday.

"It was definitely a shock," Odom said. "I thought someday later down the road this might happen but hearing the news about Roxbury was definitely a surprise."

"I'm extremely excited about the opportunity and I want to do a lot of great things. It's been my life goal to come back here and now I just want to get things rolling."

After winning back-to-back Region 8-AA titles in 2015 and 2016, the Panthers suffered consecutive losing seasons in Class AAA. However, Odom doesn't want his teams to settle for region titles, he has his sights set much higher.



L-R: Zach Odom and UCHS Principal and former baseball coach CT Hussion; Odom addresses the baseball team last Tuesday. Photo/Todd Forrest

"I want to get us over that hump where it's no longer about winning region it's about going after a state championship and winning region just becomes part of the culture," he said.

When asked what the trademark of a Zach Odom-coached ball team will be, he summed it up with one word: "hustle."

"That's always been my

biggest thing as a little guy. Hustle is the one thing you can always control.

"Another thing is attitude and approach," he added. "I want us to be the same people everyday, no matter the outcome, win or lose. I want us to get after it every single day and do the things that, once you're done with baseball, will help you in life."



At UCHS, Odom was a four-year starter at shortstop where he was a part of two state tournament teams as a freshman and a senior.

In 2010, under the guidance of skipper C.T. Hussion, Union County baseball ended a 15-year postseason drought when they qualified for the Class AA State Tournament.

In 2013, first-year head coach Brandon Bradburn led

Odom and the Panthers to the Sweet 16 after defeating Bowdon in the first round of State - ending 18 years without a state playoff series victory.

Odom was also a four-year starter in basketball and received All Region honors as a senior.

Upon graduating from UCHS, Odom signed a scholarship to Young Harris College, where he made an im-

mediate impact.

As a freshman in 2014, he started 32 games and batted .288 with 2 homers and 17 RBIs.

He went on to hit .307 in 47 starts as a sophomore and .281 in 45 starts as a junior.

As a senior in 2017, Odom posted career highs in batting average (.352), RBIs (26), runs (34), doubles (12), while matching a career high with 3 home runs.

He finished his career with a .309 batting average, while recording 201 hits, 105 runs, 85 RBIs, 33 doubles, and 10 HR in 173 games.

Odom joined Roxbury's coaching staff at UCHS this past season helping lead the Panthers to a 10-19 record.

After replacing Bradburn following the 2015 season, Roxbury led the Panthers to a 19-9 record, a Region 8-AA title, and a State Elite 8 appearance in 2016.

However, Union County would finish with a combined 20-34 record over the next two seasons as members of a brutal Region 7-AAA.

"I'm just excited," Odom said in closing. "I know it came a little early but I'm just really excited to have this opportunity. I hope to teach these kids about more than baseball and win a couple championships along the way."

## Marching Band: Grader taking his musical talents to the Bluegrass State



Anthony Grader signs with Kentucky as family and Band Director Will Stafford look on. Photo/Todd Forrest

By Todd Forrest  
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The Union County High School Performing Arts Center hosted its first college signing when senior band member Anthony Grader chose the University of Kentucky over Young Harris College.

Following a brief introduction by Union County Band Director Will Stafford, Grader put pen to paper and officially became a Wildcat, much to the delight of Stafford, a Kentucky alum.

"Anthony has earned every single bit of this," Stafford said. He's worked hard and done everything that everyone has told him to do. He went up to UK and developed relationships with the professors and he's taken lessons with them. He's listened, worked hard, and really earned

this. I'm just really proud of him and I know he's going to be very successful while he's up there. I couldn't be more proud."

After greeting and thanking his friends and classmates who stopped by to congratulate him, Grader sat down with the *North Georgia News* to discuss his decision to join the Southeastern Conference.

NGN: What was it about UK that made you decide to further your education in Lexington, Kentucky?

AG: I felt they offered a lot of opportunities with the saxophone, specifically. I felt the people that I would be learning from really knew what they were doing. I also just love the campus and everything about it.

NGN: How many times have you visited UK and what was your first impression?

AG: I have visited three times since last March and the campus is huge (laughing). I

know as soon as this interview is over I'll think of something better to say, but it's beautiful and I just love the campus.

NGN: Were any other schools in the running?

AG: I really considered Young Harris. (Along with Kentucky) they were my only two choices. But I feel like I would have to work harder at Kentucky to get the same degree and I like to challenge myself.

NGN: I bet you made Mr. Stafford's day by signing with his alma mater, didn't you?

AG: Yes, definitely. He's been very supportive and I couldn't have done this without him.

NGN: Is there anyone you would like to thank.

AG: My grandparents have also been very supportive. As you know, instruments aren't cheap so I want to thank them and Mr. Stafford.

## Golf: Rowe chooses Columbus State; Wischmeyer selects Maryville

By Todd Forrest  
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The Union County girls golf team has its State Tournament coming up but two team members took care of some other business last week when they signed with their respective college choices.

Megan Rowe signed with Columbus State and Grace Wischmeyer inked a scholarship with Maryville (TN) at a joint-signing last Friday at Union County High School.

"I'm very proud of everything Megan and Grace have accomplished the last four years," Union County golf coach Greg Chambers said. "We're very thankful for the administration they've been very helpful anytime we needed to leave (school) early."

"I hear stories from other coaches about some of the nightmares they go through with sports like golf. We have to leave (school) early because the time catches us, but Mr. Hussion and the administration have been very good for the golf program - paying for tournaments, covering these girls, and just being very supportive of everything they've accomplished."

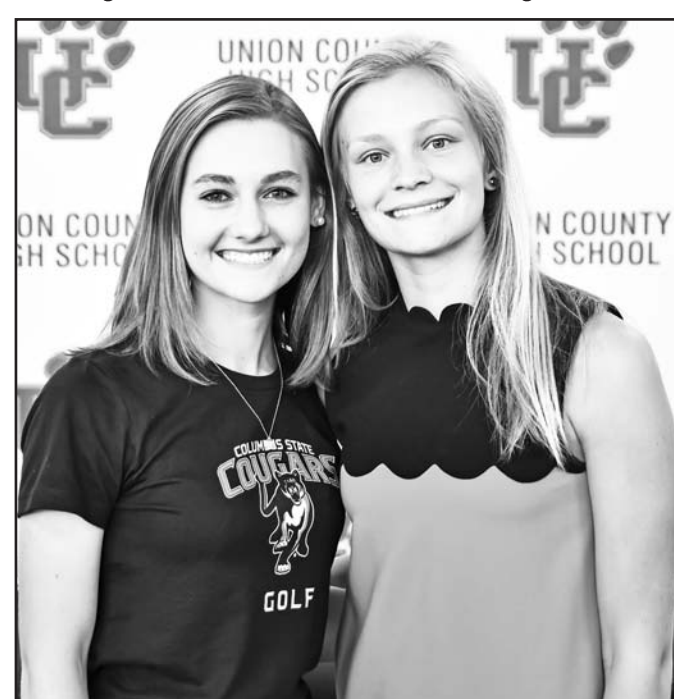
"It's been a pleasure to work with (these girls) and their families."

The *North Georgia News* was able to chat with both Rowe and Wischmeyer following their signing last week.

(Grace Wischmeyer)

NGN: What was it about Maryville that made you decide to go with them?

GW: I love the city. It's



Golfers Megan Rowe (R) and Grace Wischmeyer (L) signed together last Friday in front of family, friends, and coaches. Photo/Todd Forrest

just like Blairsville except it's a little bit bigger. The campus is very nice, they have a great academic program, and a great athletic department, as well.

NGN: How many times have you visited the campus and what was your first impression?

GW: Twice. I spoke with Coach (Kandis) Schram, the volleyball coach before visiting and she was very welcoming. Then when I got up there we went on a tour and I felt very welcome.

NGN: What do you plan on majoring in?

GW: Biology.

NGN: Anyone you want to thank?

GW: I want to thank Coach Bill Berg, Coach Chambers, and my parents for supporting me.

(Megan Rowe)

NGN: What was it about Columbus State that sold you on them?

MR: I really enjoyed the facilities; they have great golf facilities and great people.

NGN: How many times did you visit and what was your first impression?

MR: I visited once and loved it. It had such a family feel to it and I just felt welcome.

NGN: What is your major going to be?

MR: Early Childhood Education

NGN: Anyone you want to thank?

MR: My golf coaches, Coach Chambers and Coach Mason, and my family and friends.

## Local Racing circuit weekend results

By Blake Lynch  
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Tri-County Racetrack hosted its May 11 race with the Iron Man Open Wheel Modified and Blue Ridge Outlaw Late Models, along with special guest Kenny Schrader.

Here are the top five results from each class.

**Street Stock** - The No. 98 Sterling Helm got the win after he led flag to flag. Second place was No. 43 Micheal Harper. Third place was No. 14 Charles Devine Jr. Fourth was No. 01 Jacob Lynch and rounding out the top five was No. 192 Jay Lynch.

**Modified Street** - The No. 88 of Ricky Smith gets the victory. Second place was No. 34 Greg Suddereth. Third place was No. 818 Jeffery Wood. Fourth place was No. 48 Shawn Chastain and rounding out the top five was No. 17 Roger Beaver.

**Crate Late Models** - No. 7 Jason Deal get's another victory. The No. 200 Jacob Anderson finished second. Third place was No. 1c Kenny Collins. Finishing fourth place was No. 12 Drew Deaver. and rounding out the top five was No. 22 Jamison Early.

**Pony** - Finishing in first place was No. 15 Ryan Crawford. Finishing second place was No. 32 Franklin Burk. Third place was No. 75 Chris McCulloch. Finish-



Kenny Schrader (right) at Tri-County. Photo/Blake Lynch

ing fourth place was No. 11 Ricky Dyer. and rounding out the top five was No. 22 Tucker Anderson.

**602 Rookie** - The No. 25 Jacob Hamby finished first place. Finishing second place was No. 41 Jeff Holloway. Third place was No. 108 Allison Southard. Finishing fourth place was No. 56 Colton Berrong and rounding out the top five was No. 77 Hunter Toomey.

**Front Wheel Drive** - Finishing first was No. 05 Hunter Hughes. Second place was No. 72 Dustin Petty. Third place was No. 2 Jim Exum. Forth place was No. k3 James Klauke and rounding out the top five was No. 5 Cory Stansell.

**Iron Man Open Wheel**

**Modified** - Finishing first was No. 97 Billy Workman Jr. Second place was No. 15 Clayton Miller. Finishing third place was No. 98 Shon Flanary. Fourth place was No. 21 Taylor Cook and rounding up the top five was No. 44 Chase King.

**Blue Ridge Outlaw** - The No. 8 of David Payne finished first place. Second place was No. 17 Brian Craswell. Third place was No. 16 Wesley English. Finishing fourth place was No. 1 David Conley and rounding out the top five was No. 91 Jay Norville

Blue Ridge Motorsports Park hosted its May 12 race with The Blue Ridge Outlaw Late Models and here are the top three

from each class.

**Front Wheel Drive** - First place was No. m5 Micheal Follmer. Second place was No. 18 Jeff Perdon and Third place was No. k3 James Klauke.

**602 Rookie** - First place was No. 25 Jacob Hamby. Second place was No. 9 Jordan Talent. Third place was No. 8 Colby Paris.

**Four-Cylinder Beginner** - First place was No. 22 Tucker Anderson. Second place was No. 11 Nathan Perdon. Third place was No. 104 Ricky Queen.

**Hobby 602** - First place was No. 1 Brandon Roberts. Second place was No. 17 Brad Thomas. Third place was No. 4 Jacob Paris.

**Blue Ridge Outlaw** - First place was No. 12 Drew Deaver. Second place was No. 12 Galen Robinson. Third place was No. 91 Jay Norville.

**Pony** - First place was No. 10 Nathan Davis. Second place was No. 32 Franklin Burk. Third place was No. 8m Johnny McClure.

**Street Stock** - First place was No. 14 Charles Devine Jr. Second place was No. 91 Marlin Gunter. Third place was No. J69 Jim Weller.

**Crate Late Models** - First place was No. 7 Jason Deal. Second place was No. 24 Seth Wimpey. Third place was No. 1 Junior Whitener.

## Softball: Battle of Blood Mountain to decide CWS berth

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DAHLONEGA - The Peach Belt Conference Tournament failed to give local softball fans the rematch they desired, but rest easy, the NCAA Super Regionals have delivered.

The top-ranked University of North Georgia (59-2) will host Young Harris College (35-19) in a best-of-three series beginning on Thursday with the winner to advance to the College World Series.

The two teams met earlier in the season and fans were treated to pair of classics. In the first meeting, Young Harris shocked the Nighthawks and Peach Belt Pitcher of the Year Kylee Smith, handing UNG just their second loss of the season, 4-3.

North Georgia rallied to take game two 8-4 and they haven't lost since.

Meanwhile, Young Harris entered the PBC tournament as the No. 4 seed but were upset by fifth-seeded Lander in the opening round.

Six days later, the Mountain Lions found their groove in Hickory, NC as the seventh-seed in the NCAA Southeast Region 2.

YHC thumped the second-seeded host Lenoir-Rhyne 9-4 in game one. They continued to roll as they throttled third-seeded Carson-Newman 7-1 on Friday.

Lenoir-Rhyne responded in a do-or-die game on Saturday, using a three-run walk-off homer vs YHC to force the dreaded "if necessary" game.

The extra softball didn't faze the Mountain Lions, who rallied from a 2-0 deficit for a 9-3 victory - punching their ticket to the Super Regionals in Dahlonega.

Meanwhile, UNG picked up where they left off in the PBC tournament, running roughshod over King (twice) and Coker in the NCAA Regionals.

Coker, like YHC, owned an earlier win over the Nighthawks but fell 6-0 to North Georgia in the Friday rematch.

On Thursday, UNG defeated King 5-2 before routing them 9-1 in the final game on Saturday.

Game one of the NCAA Super Regionals is 2 p.m. Thursday, game two will be noon Friday. The "if necessary" game will follow on Friday.

Admission at UNG is \$10 for adults, \$5 for students, children 7&U are free.