

Sports

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Football: Union County clears hurdle during recent 7-on-7

By Todd Forrest
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Union County showed progress on both sides of the ball during its second 7-on-7 meeting of the month with Andrews, NC at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium last Thursday.

During the first matchup vs. the Wildcats, Union County struggled in a 31-6 loss, however, the Panthers looked like a different squad during the rematch, edging Andrews, 20-18, courtesy of a go-ahead 40-yard touchdown strike from Cayden Tanner to Griff Young.

"I think Tanner looked a lot better this time around," Union head coach Michael Perry said. "He got in the habit of locking onto his first option when we played last week, but this week, he did a better job of finding his second, third and fourth receivers."

"And Griff, what can you say? He's just a heck of a football player."

The Tanner-Young connection broke a 12-12 tie, then Ethan McBride hauled in the 2-point conversion, laying out to gather in a low throw across the middle.

Andrews responded moments later with a 30-yard touchdown pass on fourth down but were unable to even the score when the 2-point pass sailed wide of the intended receiver.

With under two minutes to play and the Panthers needing a first down to ice the game, Tanner calmly connected on three straight completions, the third going to Wilson Walker to put the game away.

"From a wide receiver standpoint, the [opposing defensive backs] were jamming our receivers and they were having trouble getting off the line of scrimmage during our previous 7-on-7," Perry said. "Our releases and stems were much improved this week."

Union County trailed 6-0 early after giving up a deep touchdown on Andrews' second possession. The Panthers countered with a 6-yard touchdown grab by Tyler Grasty, his third catch of the series.

"Tyler has impressed us



Rising-junior QB Cayden Tanner is building confidence this summer in his arm, as well his surgically-repaired knee. Photo/Todd Forrest

all summer, his route running and his play even when he's not catching the ball has stood out," Perry said. "On the touchdown pass to Griff [Young], Tyler gets some of the credit for that score because of his route and the attention he attracted on that play. We're hoping [Grasty is] going to give us that big possession receiver [after Keyton Chitwood's graduation]."

Down 12-6, Union answered again when Sam Page pulled down a bullet from Tanner on a slant route in the endzone.

"It was nice having Wilson Walker (wrestling camp) back on both sides of the ball, but guys like Sam Page and Ethan McBride made some big plays for us too, especially when Ethan laid out for the PAT at the end."

Union County is back in the weight room and on the practice field Monday morning, but the rest of the week will look a little different. The Panthers will hit the road Tuesday for 7-on-7

action at Chestatee, followed by a Thursday trip to White County for another 7-on-7.

On the injury front, Coach Perry reported that Elijah Helton pulled his hamstring during last week's 7-on-7 contest with Murphy, NC. Fortunately, the training staff doesn't believe the injury warrants any extended time off, and Helton should return following the July 4 dead week.

"Not having Elijah last Thursday was a huge loss, but other guys stepped up and made some plays for us on the defensive side of the ball in his absence," Perry added. "We still had a few issues on defense and need to improve, but overall we are showing progress."

Union County is still without receiver Jensen Goble (knee) following surgery during the 2021 season. As of last week, the speedy kick returner/wide out remains optimistic for a late-August return.



Rising-junior wide receiver Ethan McBride lays out on the blistering-hot turf to snag a 2-point conversion throw in the endzone, spotting Union County a late 20-12 advantage over Andrews. Photo/Todd Forrest



Tight end Tyler Grasty breaks loose into the open field, setting up Union's first touchdown of the day. The rising-junior caught three passes on the drive, including the game-tying score. Photo/Todd Forrest

Three local wrestlers represent team Georgia

Earlier this month, three Union County wrestlers were chosen to compete for team Georgia 14U at the Schoolboy National Duals in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The top two wrestlers in the state from each weight class are invited to the national wrestling tournament that attracted 40-plus teams from across the country. Competitors battle in an "Olympic Style" Freestyle/Greco wrestling event.

Kevin Kilpatrick (114 lbs.), Eli Flowers (83 lbs.), and Paxon Legatt (125 lbs.) each represented Union County on the Georgia squad. The *North Georgia News* would like to congratulate these young men for their tremendous accomplishment.





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Basketball: Lady Panthers make favorable first impression on new coach

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Incoming Union County Lady Panthers basketball coach Brad Cochran likes what he sees after two weeks with his new squad.

"These girls really love the game of basketball and I'm excited to get things going in the fall," he said. "They are a pleasure to be around, they all get along and there hasn't been any drama."

After spending the first week practicing and getting acquainted, Union County took part in six games over three days at the University of North Georgia last week.

"The girls were exhausted after we got back, but we learned a lot about each other and I think they are adjusting to my coaching style," Cochran said. "We have some talented players, even among the younger girls. We also have a nice group of incoming freshman; they have some girls that can play. The turnout has been great as far as I've been told. Everyone that's supposed to be there is there, with the exception of the girls that graduated."

However, the biggest question mark entering the 2022-23 season is the holes left by those two graduated post



Another new face: Rising-sophomore Katelyn Brown joins first-year head coach Brad Cochran's Lady Panthers after she made a considerable impact off the bench as a freshman last season during Woodstock's 19-win, region runner-up and Sweet-16 campaign in Class 7A - Georgia's largest classification. Photo courtesy of G-Rox Photo - Greg Spell / Cherokee Tribune.

starters, Rebecca Chambers, and the program's all-time leading scorer, Ava Hunter.

Fortunately, the Lady Panthers added a post player in 5-foot-10 rising-sophomore Katelyn Brown, who joins her mother, incoming volleyball coach Megan Brown, at UCHS.

A year ago, Katelyn Brown appeared in 27 of 29

games as a freshman for Class 7A Woodstock, averaging 2 points and 4 rebounds a night while shooting 54% from the floor during a 19-win season that ended in the State Sweet 16.

Katelyn Brown logged a career-high 12 rebounds, including nine offensive boards, during a 65-47 win over Greenbrier on Jan. 22. Two weeks

later, she pulled down 10 rebounds (six offensive) in a 64-38 win over Etowah. She also recorded nine rebounds once and eight rebounds twice.

Her high scoring mark came on Jan. 25 when she had 5 points during a 69-58 victory over Roswell. She scored 4 points on six different occasions last winter.

"She's very good on the



Rising-senior Corinne Hill was Union's only junior starter last year and hopes to appear in her fourth state tourney this winter. Photo/Todd Forrest

ing to a close: He won't get to be around the team every day until the fall.

"I hate that the summer is coming to an end but I know that means we're getting closer to the start of the season," he said. "I can't wait for basketball season to get here. I think we could shock some people and possibly make a run at the region [title]."

Men's Basketball: Panthers hone in on defense during summer's final week

By Todd Forrest
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Union County faced off with three Smoky Mountain Conference squads last week during visits to Hayesville (NC) on Monday, Murphy (NC) on Wednesday and a home practice on Thursday with Hayesville.

The Panthers also scrimmaged Cherokee, NC, during their June 15 trip to Murphy.

"We did some good things last week, but we're still struggling a little bit on the defensive side of the ball," Union County head coach Corey Garrett said. "Murphy is a big and physical team, and that gave us some problems, but for the week as a whole, I thought we looked pretty good."

On Thursday, June 16, the Panthers invited Hayesville to UCHS for a joint practice. The day began with the Panthers and Yellow Jackets splitting their varsity and JV teams onto each end of the floor, where they squared off in half-court sets.

For 5 minutes, one team would run its offense against the other squad's defense, switching when time expired. After an hour of shared half-



Rising-sophomore post Dusty Aaron swats away a Hayesville, NC layup attempt during the full-court practice segment. Photo/Todd Forrest

court practices, they finished the 2-hour practice session with full-court scrimmages.

"Practicing against another team in the half court is something I've always wanted to do," Garrett said. "This was also the first day we filmed our

practices, and we noticed some things we need to address.

"I thought we looked pretty good in the half court, but just looked a bit off when we picked it up full court. I don't know if the guys had a hard time adjusting after playing half



Rising-sophomore Hayden Hughes looks for a teammate on the perimeter during the half-court practice vs. Hayesville, NC. Photo/Todd Forrest

court but we really struggled at times."

This week, Union County spends three days at the University of North Georgia before closing out the summer camp season Thursday at North Forsyth.

Union County will play three more games on both Tuesday and Wednesday, giving them nine games total.

"It's going to be defense, defense, defense," Garrett said, when asked what his team will focus on over the final week of scrimmages.

"I know we can put the ball in the basket. That's not going to be our problem. Our issues are on the defensive end; I'm not even worried about the offense right now."

The Panthers will host their youth camp next week and will continue practicing for the remainder of the month. Once July rolls around, the team will shift to the weight room with a few open gyms until the official practices begin in October, Garrett said.

Learn to Play Pickleball

Free Beginners Classes every Tuesday at 6 p.m. (weather permitting).

All equipment is provided and there is no need to sign-up... just come.

Courts are located on Chase Drive behind the Health Department. For more information contact: blairsvillepickleball@yahoo.com.

Flag Day on the Fairway at Old Union Golf Course

What a day! Lots of American Flags on the fairways and greens at Old Union on Monday, June 13! We know that tee times vs shotgun starts can make a long day, but we think that all the ladies enjoyed the Chick-Fil-A lunch and the fellowship while they waited for the whole group to come in.

We had 23 ladies playing with 21 participating in the game. We paid out in two places in four flights. Congratulations to two of our players who advanced their balls to the 1st tee box, Karen Mussoline and Cynthia Panter! Our results: Flight A: 1st place Jessica Milhous; 2nd place Kathie McAfee; Flight B: 1st place Karen Mussoline; 2nd place Katie Farris; Flight C: 1st place Cynthia Panter; 2nd place tie Nancy Harvill and Vicki Hough; Flight D: 1st place Kay Kirkland; 2nd place Debbie Estes. We had four chips-in by Geni Preece, Jane Childers, Kathie McAfee and Carol Millward. Also, four birdies by Cindy Flanders, Mary Tribble, Jessica Milhous and Kathie McAfee.

We had four closest to the pin for each flight: Flight A winner was Jessica Milhous and Flight B winner was Sandy Snyder. There were no winners for Flight C or Flight D. Each winner will receive a breakfast Chick-fil-A gift card donated by Chick-fil-A. Thank you, Chick-fil-A, for your support!

We are excited to welcome two new members, Carol Milward and Sevgi Gough! These are two great ladies who we know well, and we are delighted that they are now part of our league. This brings our membership to 49! We are so proud of our ladies and the contributions they make to our league. These ladies are the best!

The latest news from our league is that we will now have a 9 holes only round sign-up on the website. As the



Karen Mussoline

summer months approach, we understand that some of our ladies would prefer to play just 9 holes. If you are someone new to golf or just want to play only 9 holes, check out our website for more information.

Next week is our first of two rounds for the annual Eclectic Tournament. The game will cost \$10.00 for both rounds. This unique format is always lots of fun!

June 21st is our first "girls golf road trip"! We will be spending 3 days and 2 nights in the Historical area of Savannah. Our accommodations are at Bell Mansion; a 7,000 plus SF; 8 bedrooms and 8-1/2 bathrooms home. Seventeen ladies will be participating, and we have two days of golf at Crosswinds. They offered us a reduce rate plus range balls. Our next road trip will be to see the Ark in Kentucky and of course a day or two of golf!

Old Union Golf Course will be hosting the 1st Annual Couples Scramble July 15, 2022. The cost will be \$125.00 per couple; no handicap is necessary. The entry fee includes lunch catered by Nick's BBQ starting at noon



Cynthia Panter

and shotgun start at 1:30 and prize money based upon the number of participants

Did you know? Monday's is ladies' day and the cost to play for the ladies is only \$22.00. Wednesday is Senior Day and the cost to play is \$25.00. Save time and book your next tee time online at www.OldUnionGolf.com. Make sure you sign-up for the Email Club to get the latest information for upcoming events, golf course status, etc. Check their website for upcoming tournaments and events.

Old Union Golf Course and the OUWGA promotes women's golf and encourages women to come out and play this amazing game. There is something for everyone at Old Union. New to golf? Call the Pro Shop for lessons with Coach Cook or email Jane Childers at Jane.Childers77@gmail.com for lessons with Mary Holmes, former LSU women's golf head coach.

For more information see our website at www.OUWGA.com or contact Karen Mussoline at 352-638-3649 or Cynthia Panter at 706-633-7587.

10U Softball final UCRD team to claim District 7 Championship

Cleveland - District 7 competition wrapped up last week for the Union County Recreation Department with another first-place trophy.

On Tuesday, June 14, the Lady Panthers' 10U softball team became the fourth Union

County youth team to claim a District Championship following a 13-7 victory over host White County.

Speaking of White County, the Warriors opened the tournament with a 25-7 rout of Lumpkin County, but fell 16-9

to Union County in the second round.

White County earned a rematch with Union on Tuesday, but once again, had no answer for the Panthers in the District title game.



The Union County Rec Department's 10U District Champion softball team. Photo/UCRD

Veterans Golf League

This was a big golf week for the league. On Tuesday, we had a tournament at Butternut Golf Course in Blairsville. The course was in immaculate condition. The winners of the event were Mel White, Gary Ide, Kenny Price and Vince Cooper. Our regular Thursday play at Chatuge Shores was won by Rick Schmid, Gary Nicholson, Ron Slatt and Tom Strickland. Congratulations all!! NT(June22,F1)JH

Youth Outdoor Adventure



Register for the next Union County Recreation Department's next outdoor adventure! Ever wonder how our streams are stocked with fish?

On July 9th, Dustin Rogers will be taking a trip to tour the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery. Lunch will be provided. As a bonus, the group will get to explore Rock Creek Lake and a surprise waterfall! Kids age 7-13. Parent or legal guardian must accompany child. Space is limited to 15 kids along with parent (30). You must register at the Union County Sports Center by July 1st; \$5.00 fee.