

Sports

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Cochran 'excited' about future following Lady Panthers youth camp

Union upsets Class 7A Parkview, falls at Walnut Grove in final summer scrimmages

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The Union County Lady Panthers held its annual youth camp last month, drawing more than 20 campers to the three-day event from June 20-22.

The camp, for 2nd through 8th-grade girls, also afforded incoming head coach Brad Cochran his first look at the future of Lady Panthers basketball. According to Cochran, the camp also marked an introduction for the younger, inexperienced kids to the sport's fundamentals. As for the older kids, they got a taste of what to expect in high school.

"It was more of a refresher for the 7th and 8th graders," he said. "It gave them a chance to hear my voice and learn what I want out of a basketball player and what to expect at the varsity level. But the main thing was just having fun and getting them excited to be a Lady Panther."

In addition, the camp served as a learning experience for the current UCHS players, offering them a chance to put on their coaching shoes for three hours each day.

"That's the most important thing is having [the high school girls] there," Cochran said. "They need to get to know and have fun with these kids, so hopefully, those kids will come watch us play, and they'll know all our names. And when they are playing in their games with the rec department and middle school, I plan on having our



The Lady Panthers youth basketball camp attracted between 19-22 youngsters per day during the three-day event. Photo/Todd Forrest



Girls basketball coach Brad Cochran addresses the future Lady Panthers girls at their games. I think it will be exciting for everyone. And that's the most important thing, building excitement for Lady Panthers basketball."

After three days with the local youth, Coach Cochran

feels better about the program's future, but he knows there's still more talent to uncover in Union County.

"I saw a lot of potential within the community and I know there is a lot more out



Girls basketball coach Brad Cochran addresses the future Lady Panthers girls before sending them home on the final day of camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

there," he said. "Hopefully, when we start having clinics, more kids will show up and get involved. I believe it's going to be a fun process and we'll grow the program too."

The Lady Panthers basketball team played two scrimmage games at Walnut Grove on Friday, June 17, defeating Class 7A Parkview and falling to host Walnut Grove from Class 5A.

"Walnut Grove was a great game and they are a good team," Cochran said. "They hadn't played a game all summer until us. They spent the whole month practicing so they were ready to see a different jersey in front of them. They came at us hard and I saw some great things from our girls. We just lost a little gas at the end."

"Compared to the [University of] North Georgia camp earlier in the summer, we had a lot more different girls step up, which makes me more excited. Before, it was one or two girls stepping up, but now it's four or five, and it's great to see that growth."

Against Parkview, the Lady Panthers bounced back with a victory over a school with an enrollment north of 3,200 students. During the win, Cochran credits his front-court's supporting cast for coming through with some big buckets and rebounds down the stretch.

"They knocked down the buckets they're supposed to and pulled down some important rebounds," he said. "That game, the girls came together and just played. It was a little bit of poetry in motion. Everyone got involved. The bench was into the game and was yelling and supportive, so it was very exciting from a whole-team aspect."

Last week, Union County traveled to Dawsonville for a Thursday combined practice at Dawson County High School. All high school sports are on hiatus this week due to the Georgia High School Association's mandatory dead week.

Coach Garrett: Boys' youth basketball camp 'exceeded expectations'

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For the first time since 2019, Union County basketball hosted its summer youth camp, attracting more than 50 youngsters to UCHS for the three-day event beginning Monday, June 27.

The camp, conducted by members of the Panthers basketball team and coaching staff, drew a daily turnout of 45-52 campers between 2nd and 8th grade -- the majority attending Union County schools with a few from Mountain Area Christian Academy.

The event focused on fundamentals, particularly with the younger campers, while allowing the older players to begin transitioning to the high school level.

"With the older guys, we started them on some of the things that [the high school team does] at practice and letting them know what our practices are like," Union County head coach Corey Garrett said. "We showed them what we expect and the kind of energy we expect to see at practice. But the most important things were just having fun and trying to build the program from the bottom up."

Despite COVID-19 throwing a wrench into recent youth camps, Garrett hopes to rebuild the unity among Union County basketball programs, beginning with youth ball at the recreation department.

"I told [the UCHS players and coaches] if each of you can have an effect on one kid



The first boys youth basketball camp in three years was more than Union County Panthers head coach Corey Garrett hoped for. Photos/Todd Forrest

here, then hopefully they have a little brother or sister and a family at home that will take an interest and start coming to the games," Garrett said. "If each of us can make an impact on just one kid, then that's more fans we'll have supporting us, and that's how we'll start building from the ground up. So overall, I think this [camp]

was good for everybody. It was good for our [players], it was good for the older kids, the younger kids and good for me."

Additionally, Garrett proclaimed the camp "exceeded expectations" and offered high praise for everyone involved, most notably the players and community.

"The energy was high, the effort was great and it's been a while since we've had one of these camps for the boys," he continued. "So for us to have 50-plus young guys show up, that's a great sign."

"We are so thankful to have the community's support. Our [UCHS players] poured in a lot of time and effort for their

community this week; this is a program that the community can be proud of. I know we're proud of our community, and we're proud of all the young guys that came out and they're proud of us."

The youth camp marked the end of summer practices for head coach Corey Garrett and the Panthers. However, Union



County basketball will spend two days a week in the weight room and playing pick-up games beginning next week.

"We're pretty much done after this," Garrett said. "On Mondays and Thursdays we'll lift and play some pick-up, but it's mainly to give them something to do this summer."

Football: Panthers end June with 7-on-7, joint practice at White County

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Cleveland - White County hosted the Panthers for a practice session and 7-on-7 on the morning of Wednesday, June 23, in Union County football's final get-together before a two-week holiday break.

After facing each other in offense-defense situational drills (red zone and goal line), the Panthers and Warriors competed in a live 7-on-7 competition. Despite no official score-keeping during the segment, the *North Georgia News'* unofficial tally had Union County on top 38-32 when play stopped.

Six different Panthers caught a touchdown pass from rising-junior quarterback Cayden Tanner, while rising-junior LB/DB Kooper Ashcraft picked off a White County pass on the defensive side.

The players on the receiving end of Tanner's scoring strikes were rising-seniors Sam Page and Griff Young, rising-juniors Tyler Grasty, Ethan McBride and Zach Taylor, along with rising-sophomore running back Connor Schuknecht.

Following the 7-on-7, both squads took part in another situational offense-defense practice where White County's depth finally started to wear down the Panthers.

"Most of our guys play both ways and you could tell as [the morning] wore on that they



Rising-junior receiver Zach Taylor hauls in an over-the-shoulder touchdown pass from Cayden Tanner at White County. Photo/Todd Forrest

started getting tired," Union County head coach Michael Perry said. "But I was proud of the guys' efforts, it was a good way for them to go out for their two-week vacation."

Before getting on the bus for the ride home, Perry told his team to enjoy the break because when they return in July, it's time to get serious with only six weeks remaining before the preseason scrimmage at

Chestatee.

"Like I said, when they return [from their two-week break], the season is here," he said. "We're going to have to get better every day to be near where we need to be in all three phases of the game, and that's something we're going to try and do when we get back."

As for the positives from the month of June, Perry continued praising his quarterback



Griff Young makes a tough grab with a White County defender draped on his back. Photo/Todd Forrest

and receivers.

"Tyler Grasty had another good day for us [at White County] and he keeps getting better and better," he said. "Griff [Young] has done a great job for us all summer, and so has Cayden Tanner, considering he's on one leg. (Tanner is recovering from offseason knee surgery in the spring and is expected to be 100% before the start of the season). Wilson

Walker is another one, he's a leader and gives great effort all the time. I'm really proud of all the guys, but those are the guys that stick out."

In closing, Perry discussed the progress of the positions that don't see much action in 7-on-7: kickers and running backs.

"At running back, Connor Schuknecht has done a very good job this summer. Liam

Cone has also been good for us, but Connor has done some great things this summer.

"As for the kicking situation, Ethan McBride and Zurial Manciallas (soccer) are the main candidates," Perry continued. "They've each had their moments. One might be better at kickoffs and one might be better at punting, so we'll see how that goes, but right now, those are the main two guys."

Photos: UCHS youth softball camp puts the 'fun' in 'fundamentals'



Union County softball's youth camp drew 35 youngsters to the camp that began on Monday, June 27. Photo courtesy of UCHS Softball



Still young at heart: Assistant coach Kaitlyn Seabolt gets in on the slip-and-slide action at the camp's conclusion. Photo/Todd Forrest



Head coach Carissa Owenby helps campers cool off on the final day of softball camp. Photo/Todd Forrest



UCHS softball players helped out during the three-day youth camp. Photo courtesy of UCHS Softball



Campers were treated to a slip-and-slide on Wednesday at the end of the three-day camp. Photo/Todd Forrest



UCHS rising-junior softball player Katie Byers (left) convinced her head coach, Carissa Owenby (right), to join her on the slip-and-slide. Photo/Todd Forrest

UCS Union County School System New Student Registration for the 2022-2023 School Year

New and transferring students in Pre-K through twelfth grade (K-12) may be registered for the upcoming school year at Union County Elementary School, 165 Elementary Way, Blairsville, GA 30512. Parents will need to contact the registrar at 706-835-4321 or registrar@ucschools.org to schedule enrollment.

The summer enrollment office hours will vary from week to week and will be by appointment only. Please don't wait until school starts to register. The first day of school is Friday, August 12th. Waiting until the end of July or beginning of August to call to enroll your student may cause your child to delay their first day of school.

In order to expedite the registration process, please print the "Enrollment Packet" from the school system's website at www.ucschools.org. A printed copy of the packet can also be picked up at the Elementary School office by appointment. The packet will need to be completed and the required documents indicated below will need to be presented. Your child will not be enrolled until the school has ALL of the required documents.

Documents you must bring when enrolling a student:

Age Verification: The school system requires evidence of the student's date of birth and accepts as evidence a birth certificate or an alternate document from the prioritized list in the state enrollment rule.

Social Security Number: The school system complies with the provisions of O.C.G.A. §20-2-150, which requires a person enrolling a student to provide a

copy of the student's social security number or to sign a form stating that the person does not wish to provide the social security number.

Immunization Certificate: The school system requires proof of immunization as required by O.C.G.A. §20-2-771, which includes an exemption for religious grounds and provisions for a temporary waiver.

A Georgia Department of Public Health Form 3231 marked "Complete" for the appropriate grade level shall be considered proof of immunization.

Out of State Immunization Records will need to be transferred to a GA DPH Form 3231 by the Union County Health Department PRIOR to registration. The Union County Health Department is located at 175 Chase Drive, Blairsville, GA; 706-745-6292.

Certificate of Vision, Hearing, Dental, and Nutrition Screening (Form 3300): This can be obtained from your child's doctor or from the Union County Health Department, and is required for students who are enrolling in a Georgia school for the first time.

Proof of Union County Residency (2 different documents) Examples include: Current (within 2 months old) lease agreement, vehicle registration form, mortgage documents, property tax notice, homeowner's or renter's insurance bill, utility bills, etc. A cellphone bill, driver's license, or bank statement are not acceptable.

Withdrawal Form/Report Card from the student's most recent former school.

Returning Enrollment Packets and Documents: There are two ways to get the enrollment packet and documents to the registrar: 1. Scan and email them to registrar@ucschools.org; 2. Call the registrar at 706-835-4321 and schedule an appointment to bring them to the Union County Elementary School in person.

Documentation for Homeless Students: Homeless students, as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act, shall be enrolled immediately with full participation in school activities, regardless of whether all of the above can be provided at the time of enrollment. The designated employee responsible for care of homeless students shall assist the person enrolling the homeless student or the unaccompanied youth in acquiring the necessary documents for enrollment in accordance with the requirements of the state enrollment rule and the McKinney-Vento Act.

Please feel free to contact the Enrollment Office by phone at 706-835-4321 or by email at registrar@ucschools.org if you have any questions regarding student registration.

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