

Zollinger a Piedmont Lady Lion

By Todd Forrest
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Union County Lady Panthers basketball star Lauren Zollinger will be headed to Demorest in the fall.

The 2013 8-AA Player of the Year will be attending Piedmont College where she hopes to get her basketball career back on track after a severe knee injury, and the resulting surgery derailed most of her senior year.

"They were very understanding about my injury," Zollinger said. "(The coach) is going to get a physical therapist to help me out as soon as I get there. That was really nice of them and I'm excited about that."

She chose Piedmont over North Georgia and Young Harris, who both received quite a bit of consideration from the Lady Panther guard.

"I looked at both schools but Piedmont just felt good," Zollinger said.

An old opponent from the Towns-Union rivalry played a



2013 8-AA POY Lauren Zollinger with family, coach. Photo/Todd Forrest

role in her choice. "Gabby (Arencebia) from Towns County plays there and she e-mailed me, and now that's where I'm going," Zollinger said.

At the end of the day, it was the coach that caused Zollinger to fall in love with Piedmont College and the Lady Lions basketball program.

"The coach was awesome. She is outgoing and is in-it-to-win-it and I love that. I love the small college feel, and just the area was great."

Someday Zollinger would like to become an OB-GYN and deliver babies.

"That's my plan for right now, unless I change it," Zollinger said with a laugh.

Innis chooses Agnes Scott College

By Todd Forrest
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Union County soccer has had a successful run over the past four years, due in large part to midfielder Erin Innis.

The Agnes Scott Scottie soccer program and Head Soccer Coach Rosemary Davis will welcome Innis in the fall.

Innis chose Agnes Scott during her senior year and was the only school she considered playing soccer at.

"I looked at other schools but they were only if I didn't play soccer," Innis said. "But I really wanted to play soccer, so I chose Agnes Scott."

She didn't know anyone at the Atlanta school but an invite from the coach is what put Agnes Scott in position to nab the Union County standout.

"The coach asked me to come down to the school," Innis said. "I went and I loved it. The team was really nice and very welcoming when I visited them."



Soccer standout Erin Innis with family and coaches. Photo/Todd Forrest

When Innis steps onto the field as an Agnes Scott Scottie, she hopes to make an immediate impact.

"I hope to get to play a lot during my freshman year," Innis said. "They needed a center-mid and that's what I play."

By the time she graduates, she hopes to leave her mark on the soccer program.

"I hope that (after four years) I've made an impact on the team and that I was there to help the younger girls."

Innis is hoping to major in business and later on, open a boutique.

"I'd like to thank everyone who supported me, along with my friends and family."

Everett joins Ga. Highlands pitching staff

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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For the past two seasons, the Union County pitching staff has been anchored by Lane Everett.

Unfortunately, he will graduate from Union County High School later this month and in August, travel to Rome where he will become a Georgia Highlands Charger.

"It's a small school so I will have a better chance to play right away," Everett said about his decision.

The Chargers just recently wrapped up their inaugural baseball season but that didn't play a major factor in Everett's decision as he considered established programs at Young Harris College, Truett McConnell College, and Reinhardt College. Another plus for Young Harris was that former teammate Zach Odom is now a Mountain Lion, but Everett said that wasn't a factor.

"I didn't really know anybody at Georgia Highlands," Everett said. "I know a kid from Pickens County but that's it. I would have liked to



Panthers' 2-year ace Lane Everett with family, coach. Photo/Todd Forrest

have played with Zach but I just think Georgia Highlands is a better fit."

In his freshman year, Everett would like to see some action as a reliever and get a few innings in the outfield as well.

"Hopefully, I will get some work out of the pen and get to play some outfield," Everett said.

As for adjustments that need to be made, Everett knows

that he will need to improve in a few areas to get college-level hitters out.

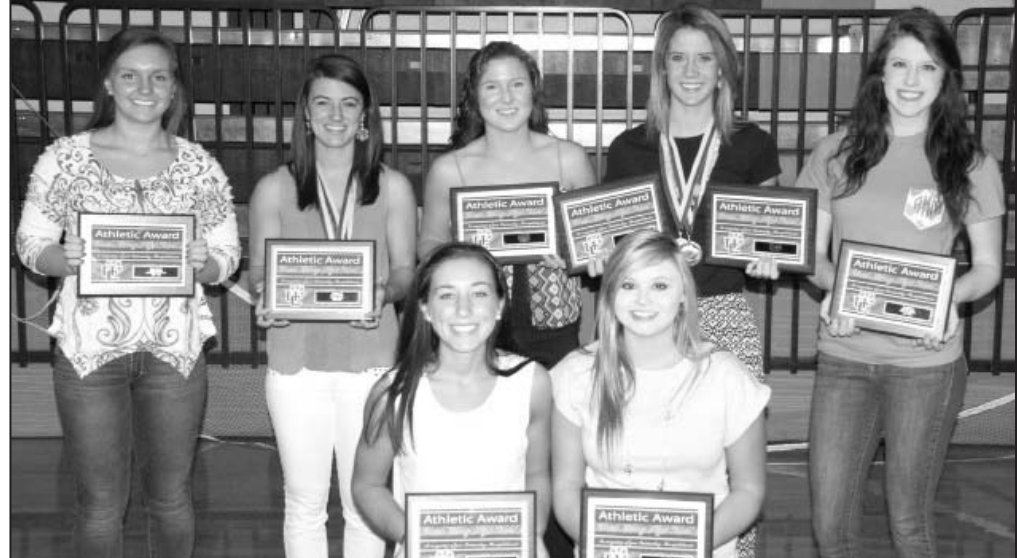
"I want to gain more velocity and learn to pitch inside and I hope to get some starts in my sophomore year," Everett said.

In his senior year at Union County, Everett went 6-4 with a 2.15 ERA. He recorded 77 strikeouts in 69.2 innings, while only walking 19.

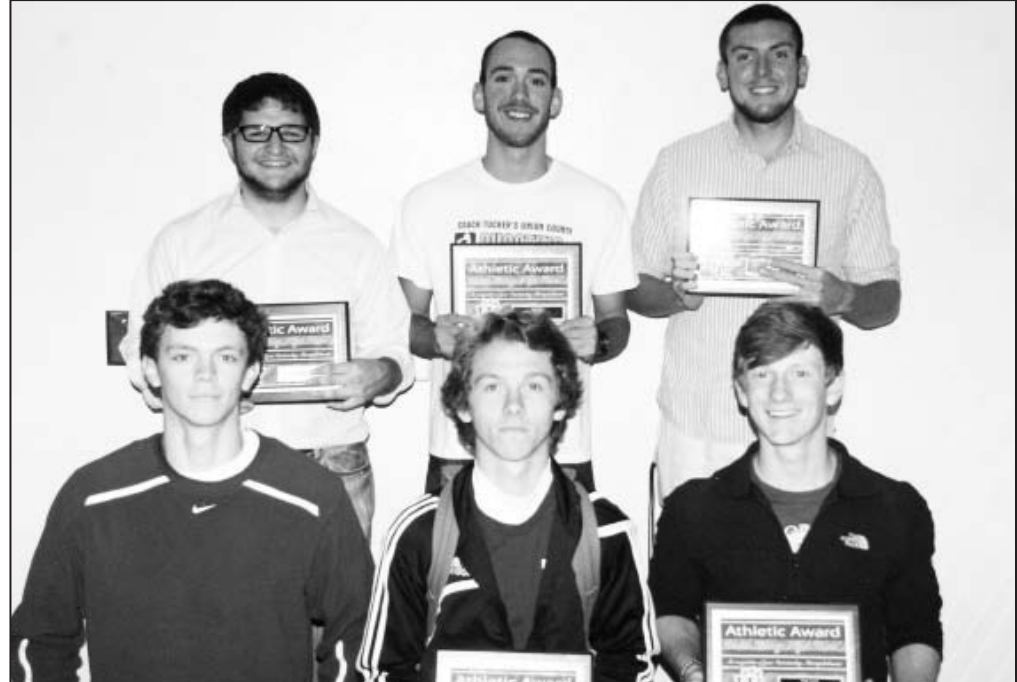
Union County basketball, cheer awards



Cheerleaders Award winners: Samantha Gentry - Coaches Award, Ashley Rowe - Most Improved, Kenzie DiNatale - Most Spirited, Amber Sykes (Not pictured) - Academic and Best All-Around.



Lady Panther award winners: Top row (L-R) Layne Colwell - Most Improved, Madison Rich - Coaches Award, Allie Stroman - Hustle, Lauren Zollinger - Best All-Around, Ariel Maurer - Defense, Front Row: Brooke Maddox - MVP, Kaitlyn Day - Offensive. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County boys award winners: Top row (L-R) Jaron Whitmore - Best All-Around, Dylan Coyne - MVP, Grant Schuette - Big Man, Front Row: Tyler Odom - Offensive, Kyle Hamby - Hustle, Hunter Hughes - Tough Man. Photo/Todd Forrest

NASCAR 2014

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Hamlin gets first 'Dega win

Denny Hamlin won Sunday's Cup race at Talladega. A caution came out midway of the last lap, ending the race, and giving Hamlin his first Talladega victory.

Hamlin and Kevin Harvick were the leaders on the race's last restart with two laps to go. Harvick drifted back and Hamlin, who was being pushed by Greg Biffle, took the white flag, signifying one lap remaining. Just as the leaders crossed the stripe, Justin Allgaier spun down on to the infield. Several pieces of sheet metal from his car remained on the track. Rather than have the cars run across the debris as they headed for the checkered flag, NASCAR displayed the yellow flag, which ended the 188-lap race.

"We've lost a lot of ground in a few races, so this win really makes us feel good," said Hamlin. "I know we've come a long way, but I still look at myself as a short track driver. I was just in the right place today."

Hamlin became the eighth winner after 10 races into the 36-race season. NASCAR has said the top-16 drivers will get a spot in this year's Chase.

Greg Biffle's runner-up finish was his career best at Talladega.

"A lot of guys just go out and race, but at the end, I had a plan," said Biffle. "I knew that I was in the right place on that last lap and was getting ready to make my move when the caution came out."

Clint Bowyer was third. "There at the end I liked the situation," said Bowyer. "I had my teammate (Brian Vickers) behind me, but it didn't happen because of the caution. But NASCAR made the right call."

Like all races at Talladega, there were several big wrecks. The first came on lap 137, and 12 cars were involved. It was caused when Brad Keselowski drifted up the track, and the rear of his car was nudged by Trevor Bayne.

"My parents split up when I was really young, but no matter where I was, I was around a race car," said Earnhardt Jr. "Both families raced and did things differently and approached racing differently so it was fun to sort of learn from both sides."

"She just worked really hard and she had a hard time giving up custody of me and Kelly to my father in 1981.

Top-10 leaders after 10 of 33: 1. Gordon-347, 2. Kenseth-344, 3. Kyle Busch-343, 4. Earnhardt-328, 5. Edwards-328, 6. Logano-305, 7. Johnson-304, 8. Biffle-300, 9. Newman-299, 10. Vickers-297.

SADLER GETS NATIONWIDE WIN
Elliott Sadler won Saturday's Nationwide race after leading 9 times for 40 laps.

Chris Buescher, Regan Smith, David Ragan, Sam Hornish, Joe Nemechek, JJ Yeley, Landon Cassill, David Starr, and Trevor Bayne rounded out the top-10 finishers.

Top-10 leaders after 9 of 33: 1. C. Elliott-339, 2. Sadler-338, 3. Smith-336, 4. Bayne-308, 5. T. Dillon-308, 6. Scott-277, 7. Gaughan-250, 8. James Buescher-244, 9. Chris Buescher-244, 10. Reed-225.

EARNHARDT JR TALKS ABOUT HIS MOTHER

Dale Earnhardt Jr. held a press conference prior to qualifying at Talladega. With May 11 being Mother's Day, it was inevitable that one of the questions asked him was about his mother.

Note: When Dale Earnhardt Sr. was 17, he married his first wife, Latane Brown. She gave birth to Kerry in 1969. The couple divorced in 1970. A year later, Earnhardt married his second wife, Brenda Gee (the daughter of NASCAR car builder Robert Gee), who gave birth to a daughter, Kelley in 1972. Two years later, Dale Jr. was born. Not long after that the pair divorced. Dale Sr. met up with and married his third wife, Teresa Houston in 1982. She gave birth to Taylor Nicole in 1988.

In 1981, Brenda was unable to care for Kelley and Dale Jr., and they were sent to live with their father and then girl friend, Teresa. Earnhardt Sr. was usually not at home, due to his racing schedule, so Dale Jr. did not grow up having a close relationship with his father.

"I was just knew we would have better opportunities and a better life in that situation. That was very difficult for me and she fought with that internally for many, many years. It was a real joy to be able to have her husband Willie (Jackson), retire from his job as a fireman and move to North Carolina, so we could be close again.

"She has a great sense of humor and very sarcastic and I really appreciate that. Just a ton of fun to be



Denny Hamlin gets first Talladega victory

around, if you want an honest opinion and you want the truth even if you don't want to hear it your mom is the best person to go to, to get it. She doesn't have a filter and she will steer you down the right path every time. It's great to have a relationship with her that I have today. She is a huge influence on my life and has been for some time."

Earnhardt was named winner of the first quarter Driver of the Year Award 2014, by a panel of American sportswriters.

"I'm pretty blown away with the award," said Earnhardt. "It's an honor and really humbling to be chosen. It's good that the media sees the performance because as much as we love to do a lot of things for ourselves we really get a kick out of when the media and our fans see the performance and acknowledge it."

Weekend Racing: The truck and Cup teams will be at the 1.5-mile Kansas Speedway for two night races. There will not be any NASCAR racing Sunday, May 11, which is Mother's Day.

Fri., May 9, Truck series race 3 of 22; Starting time: 8 pm ET; TV: Fox Sports 1.

Sat., May 10, Cup series race 11 of 36; Starting time: 7 pm ET; TV: Fox.

Racing Trivia Question: Who won the first NASCAR Cup race, which was in 2001?

Last Week's Question: How many Cup championships has Jimmie Johnson won? **Answer:** He has won six.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodges@race500.com.

Men's Open League Softball

The organizational meeting for 2014 Men's Open League softball league will be held Thursday, May 15th at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Press Box meeting room at the Meeks Park upper fields. Rules, schedules, roster, fees and all aspects of the league will be discussed at this meeting. Managers are urged to attend.

UCMS fundraiser

The Union County Middle School Athletic Department is having a Fundraiser at Blimpie Friday May 9th. UCMS Athletics will receive 20% of all sales on this day. Please come out and support UCMS.

QB Club news

Spring practice starts Monday for the High School. The Middle School is distributing uniforms on Monday and practice will start Tuesday.

QB Club Meeting will be this Tuesday 5/6/14 at 6:00pm. Meetings are for all interested and parents of High School and Middle School Football Players. Please plan on attending to keep updated on upcoming events.

Cookout - sponsored by Coosa Creek - will be this Friday 5/9/14, after practice (approximately 5-5:30). Please join us as we celebrate the hard work of our athletes during Spring Practice. Players and families are invited at no cost. We need volunteers to serve the food. Also, we will need desserts. Let me know if you can help.

Summer Basketball Camp



This summer, Union County High School presents the Allan Ross Fundamental Camp beginning on June 5th through June 7th.

Michael Ross' Elite Level Training Camps will be on hand during the three-day event. For more info contact Casey Jones at cjones@ucschools.org

Trout stocking sites week of April 28-May 2, 2014

Fannin: Rock Creek and Toccoa River.

Lumpkin: Cane Creek, Etowah River and Nimblewill Creek.

Union: Cooper Creek.

Note: Information is subject to change. Please call the hatchery at 706-838-4723 for questions. The hatchery also provides trout for the state. Please contact Georgia DNR for information on sites stocked by the state. NMay7,211,CA