

Sports

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Lady Panthers Golf finishes third at State

By Todd Forrest
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Augusta - The Union County Lady Panthers golf team came in third at last week's Class AA State Championship Tournament at Forest Hills Golf Club in Augusta.

Under first year Head Golf Coach Greg Chambers, the Lady Panthers placed second, four shots back of Social Circle in Region 8-AA, earning them a spot in the Class AA State Sectionals Tournament along with Rabun County and Oglethorpe County, who were both 27 shots behind Union County.

The Sectionals were held at Hawks Point Golf Club in Vidalia where the Lady Panthers took first place with a score of 180 - six shots ahead of second place Oglethorpe County and 16 shots ahead of third place St. Vincent's Academy.

Rabun County placed fifth with a score of 201 joining the top eight teams that advanced to the State Championship Tournament.

At Forest Hills in Augusta, Union County placed third behind State Champion Vidalia and Runner Up Wesleyan - earning the Lady Panthers the right to call themselves the No. 2 public



The Union County Lady Panthers golf team at the State Championships in Augusta last Monday, May 18th. Maddie Horinek, Ally Horinek, Grace Wischmeyer, and Megan Rowe took part in the match that saw Union's top two golfers finish with a total of 168, good enough for a third place finish. With all four of the girls who participated at State plus Kacie Godwin returning next year, the Lady Panthers will look to contend for the 2016 State Championship.

school in the State. Vidalia finished with a score of 154 and Wesleyan shot a 158 - ten shots better than Union County.

The Lady Panthers finished three shots better than Darlington, seven shots better than Swainsboro, and eight shots better than Region 8-AA Champ Social Circle - who defeated Union at Region.

Rabun County finished tied for eighth, 17 shots back of Union County. Oglethorpe County placed 11th - five shots behind Rabun.

Maddie Horinek and Ally Horinek were each low medalist

for Union with a pair of 84's, good enough for a tie for seventh place individually.

Ally Horinek bogeyed six of the first seven holes with a par on the Par 3 third hole. She scored a birdie on the Par 4 eighth hole. She went on to bogey seven of the next 10 holes with pars on both Par 3's on the back nine, No. 13 and No. 16. She also recorded a par on the 18th hole - a 302-yard Par 4.

Maddie Horinek scored a par on 12 of the 18 holes but fell victim to an 8 on the Par 4 second hole, a 7 on the Par 4 twelfth, and a 6 on the Par 4 fourteenth.

Grace Wischmeyer shot an



89 for Union County, recording five pars, nine bogeys, and four double-bogeys or worse.

Megan Rowe rounded out Union County's State performance with a 92 that included a birdie on the front nine and a birdie on the back nine. She scored a par on the Par 4 fifth hole but scored a double bogey or worse on five holes.

For the season, the Union County Lady Panthers finished undefeated, including wins over Class A Public State Champion Towns County.

"The Lady Panther golf team accomplished many good things this season," Coach Cham-

bers said. "They gained some very valuable experience this season that will be very beneficial next year. They are excited to work on their game over the summer and fall in order to make a run at the finals again in 2016. Maddie Horinek, Ally Horinek, Grace Wischmeyer, Megan Rowe, and Kacie Godwin will all return next year. We lose one player- senior Lydia Gray, who had a great career during her 4 years as a Lady Panther golfer.

"I hope that the success that these ladies have had this season will promote junior golf in our area, whether they are a boy or girl. We have two great

golf courses in the county - Old Union and Butternut Creek - that do a great job in supporting our golf programs at the middle and high school."

As for the Union County boys golf team, they finished the regular season with only three losses. They won the Tri-County Championship at Chatuge Shores and they placed third in Region 8-AA. The team will lose seniors Clay Wallis and Lake Amick. The team will return Jeremy Herum, Brady Lawn, Nathan South, Charles Johnson, Luke Watson, Eli Dills, and Jake Martin.

The Panthers finished 20 shots back of Region Champion Rabun County and nine shots behind second place Social Circle.

Unfortunately, no boys teams in Class AA qualified for Sectionals so no tournament was held on the boys side.

"I would like to personally thank both golf courses for everything that they do for junior golf," Coach Chambers said. "I would also like to thank the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC, United Community Bank, and Community and Southern Bank for their support of the golf team.

"I would like to thank my parents for everything they did to help make this season a success. We could not have accomplished what we did without the parents."

Crystal Busbee signs with Emmanuel Gibson chooses Western Carolina

By Todd Forrest
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Lady Panthers softball three-year starter Crystal Busbee has signed on to play at Emmanuel College in Franklin Springs, which is just south of Camesville and west of Hartwell.

Busbee leaves Union County High School as the softball program's second most prolific run scorer - scoring 98 runs, second only to Kaitlyn Seabolt's 118 runs. She leaves in third place in walks with 42 and is one of only seven players to reach 100 hits with 20-plus doubles during their career. She is also seventh in at bats with 336, and eighth in games played at 108 and RBIs with 44.

She finishes her career with a .298 average and tied for fifth in team history with four triples.

As a senior in 2014 she hit .350 with 10 doubles, 18 RBIs, and a team-high 35 runs scored.

When asked why she chose Emmanuel, Busbee replied, "I really like the atmosphere and I love their Christian foundation. That



Crystal Busbee with family at signing day. Photo/Todd Forrest

really drew me in, mostly because of my faith. I also think I can be an asset to the program. I'm a utility player so I'll be playing some shortstop, second (base), and outfield."

Piedmont College and Georgia Highlands College were also in the running but Busbee claimed that neither felt like the right fit.

She didn't begin looking into Emmanuel until about a month ago when they contacted her and she went down for a try-

out, and the rest is history.

"I'd like to thank every coach that I've had growing up," Busbee said. "I've had so many different dads that I grew up with. My own parents for taking me all over country to play ball. Coach Stewart, Coach Cagle, Coach Lauren Dyer, and everyone else who has helped along the way."

Busbee is majoring in Middle Grades Education and hopes to return to Union County to teach and help coach softball.

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When the 2014-15 school year began at Union County High School, the cheerleading squad was preparing to begin competition as a co-ed squad for the first time ever.

The reason: Alex Gibson. The result: Gibson signed with Western Carolina, a Division 1 university in Cullowhee, NC.

"I went up there (to Western Carolina) and loved the campus, loved talking to the coach, loved the team, and loved how family oriented the squad was, so I just knew that I was going to be perfect up there," Gibson said when asked about what went into his decision to sign with WCU.

There were no other schools in consideration and it was Western Carolina all-the-way for Gibson.

"I went up there and just knew that was where I wanted to go and I was definitely set on that one school," he said.



Alex Gibson with family and coach/teacher Tim Hunter and Assistant Principal C.T. Hussion. Photo/Todd Forrest

Gibson began looking at Western Carolina over a year ago, during his junior year, and his mind has been made up to become a Catamount the entire time.

"I would like to thank my mom, my dad, my sister, the coaches, all my friends that have

been a big help and have always pushed me," Gibson said. He plans on majoring in Biology and going into the healthcare field.

"After I major in biology, I'm hopefully going to become a radiologist," he said.



Crystal Busbee applies the tag during a game. Photo/Todd Forrest



UCES 5th Grade Tug-of-War champions - Christy Lee's class. Tug-of-War photos courtesy of Coach Jessica Stewart



Top: 3rd Grade Tug-of-War champs - Darlene Helton's class. Bottom: 4th Grade Tug-of-War champs - Brittany Jordan's class

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