

Sports

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Basketball Camps over, sights set on State Tournament

By Todd Forrest
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The Union County Basketball teams held their final team camp of the summer last week at Union County High School and the boys squad is expecting nothing less than a state playoff berth in 2013.

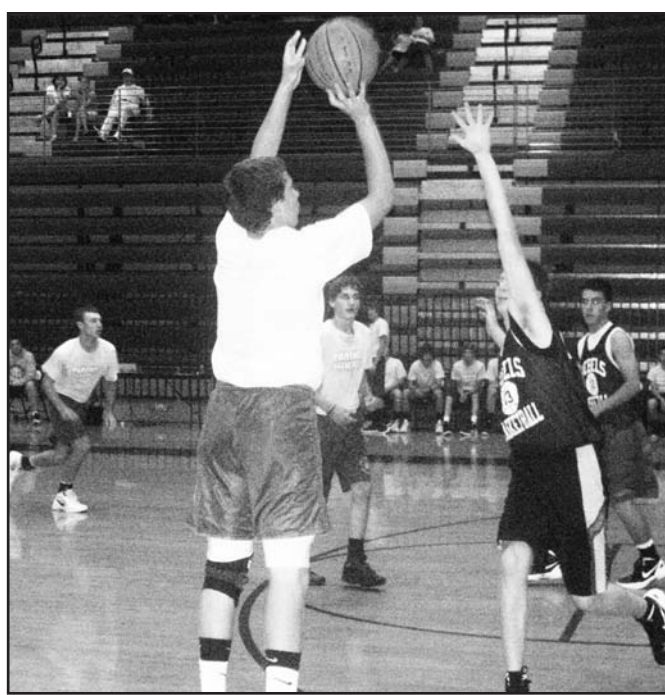
The Union County Boys have been to state only one time since 2002-03, but with nearly the entire team returning from last year, Union County is looking to reverse it's recent trend of post season disappointments, and begin a streak comparable to the Union's Boys run in the early 2000s.

Although, no one is hungrier for success than the upcoming senior class, who were in eighth grade the last time Union's boys advanced beyond the Region Tournament.

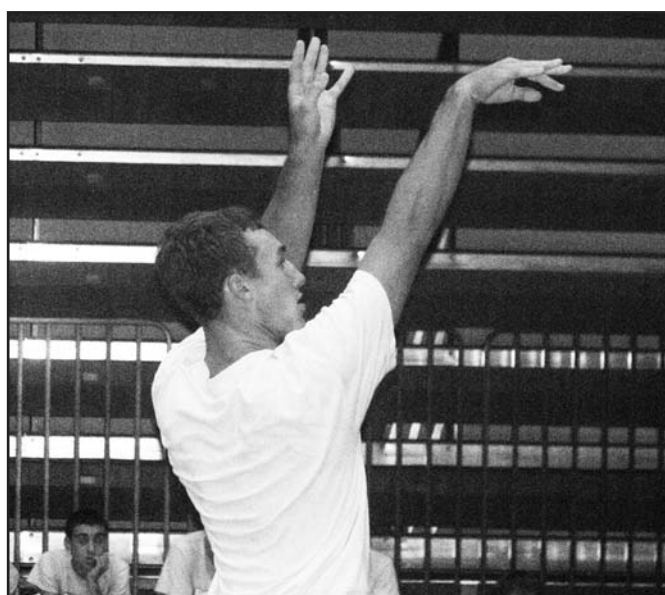
"I want for our team to go to state and make a good run," said rising senior C.J. Byers. "Anything less than state would be a disappointment. This year we should have the depth and the maturity to make it to state. And we as a team we just want to make our community proud and prove that we give it our all to represent this county."

During this camp, Union's Boys were without three-year starter Zach Odom, who was at baseball camp, but Elijah Ryals and Tyler Odom filled in nicely at guard. However the rest of the Panther starting five was identical to last year's lineup.

Upcoming junior Dylan Coyne appears primed for a breakout season in 2012-13, as he was very active at both ends of the court and said that he and his teammates have been working hard to put



C.J. Byers attempts a three-point shot against Fannin County at last week's camp. Photo/Todd Forrest



James Rowe from the free-throw line during last week's Panther Basketball Camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union County Basketball back on top.

Nobody is more pleased than returning starter, James Rowe, who is looking forward to suiting up this fall with an

improved supporting cast.

"Byers has become more aggressive on the boards and he has played really good during camp," Rowe said. "Also Elijah (Ryals) has worked

hard in the off season in the weight room as well as his shooting and he could be a big factor in our season."

"I was just looking to get back to playing and trying to get everyone involved rather than relying on just a couple of people," Rowe said. "That goal was reached and I think we looked really good and we will definitely be ready when the season starts."

Byers agreed with Coyne and Rowe and added that preparation for the upcoming season doesn't stop with the end of camps.

"I think these camps have really made us better as a team and it helps us with all of our goal," Byers said. "During these camps I wanted to work on my overall game. We just need to keep practicing when we don't have practice."

There will be no off season for Rowe either.

"I will be working out vigorously before the season to try to gain some weight as well as increase my vertical, but mainly working on my touch shots. I plan on trying to improve my mid-range jumpers and not rely on the 3-pointer as much, which should get others more involved."

Union County Head Coach David Tucker will be hosting two more individual camps this summer. This week, Coach Tucker will be hosting a skills camp. Joining Tucker will be Gary Tucker and Shawn Yates, coaches from Tellico Plains, Tenn. High School, along with players and coaches from Tennessee Wesleyan College, and Lee University.

Next month, Coach Tucker will host a shooting camp July 12 through July 14. The camp also will include the same coaches and players as this week's camp.

Future Panther Football Camp

July 24 through 26
Tuesday-Thursday



Receiving
Blocking



Kicking
Passing



Ages: 7-13

Early Registration \$50
Day of Registration \$60

CONTACT: Coach Allison (770) 639-7331 | Coach McCombs (706) 781-9893
TIME: 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
LOCATION: Union County High School Stadium
INFO: -Water and Gatorade will be provided. Please bring Water bottle with name.
-Wear shorts, t-shirts, and cleats.
- Each child will receive a Football camp T-shirt

Please Return With Payment

Name: _____ Age: _____ T-Shirt Size: _____

Parent: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

*Please make checks payable to Future Panther Camps. 153 Panther Circle, Blairsville, GA 30512

This is an offensive position oriented camp.

Please Circle Campers Offensive Position: Quarterback Line Receiver/Running Back

UCHS Basketball Camp Info

David Tucker
106 Sherwood Ave.
Calhoun, TN 37309
(423)-336-3045

UCHS Shooting Camp

K-12
July 12-14, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

\$40 per camper

Bring in this form and the \$40 on July 12, or you may mail this form, along with a check, to David Tucker at the address above. Activities will include: Shooting drills and instruction for individuals and group, passing drills, dribbling drills, and contest

Campers Name: _____

Grade _____

Shoe Size _____

Do you have health insurance on this child? _____

Emergency Contact: _____

Phone Number (____) _____

Parent's Signature: _____

Date _____

Sullivan completes storied college career in style

By Todd Forrest
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The North Georgia News completes its weekly segment on Union County softball players who are playing at the college level. So it's only fitting that this week's final segment is about a player who has completed her college career.

University of West Georgia and Union County High alumni, Kaley Sullivan just finished her college career and ranks among the top six in seven West Georgia statistics.

After four years, Sullivan finished third in batting average at .321, that included a blistering .358 batting average in 2011. Her fifth place mark in slugging percentage of .451 was highlighted by a .508 sophomore season in 2010.

She completed her tenure at West Georgia in fifth place in runs scored with 90, sixth in home runs, and third in doubles.

She also finished fifth in base-hits with 201, and reaching number 200 will always be one of the most memorable moments of her storied career.

"The highlight of my career would have to be hitting a double for my 200th career hit," Sullivan said. "It came against the the National Champions, Valdosta State, in the first round of the Conference tournament."

When the 2012 season was all said and done, Sullivan found herself named to the All-Region Team. When you lead your team in put-outs, at bats, and doubles, finish second in batting average and stolen bases, then third in slugging percentage, you're going to get plenty of attention from around the league.

However, for a moment, it looked as if Sullivan wouldn't get to complete her senior season.

Following a concussion that left her out of action in 2011, Sullivan severely injured her right thumb in what could have been a season-ending injury. But thanks to an amazing medical staff at West Georgia and Sullivan's toughness, she

was able to finish out the season, without missing a step.

"At the beginning of the season, I tore ligaments in my thumb and was told my senior season would be cut short and I was done playing, forever," Sullivan said. "It killed me. Thankfully that wasn't the case, but being told that really made me take this season play-by-play and I focused on enjoying the game and having fun."

"I learned to cherish every moment while playing, even if we were taking a beating from the NCAA Division II National Champions, because truth is, you can never get that moment back," she said.

Even more remarkable is the fact that Sullivan is an art major and a permanently damaged right thumb would have presented a remarkable setback on both fronts. Fortunately the team's trainer was able to construct a brace that held up for the remainder of the season.

The injury happened the weekend before West Georgia was set to travel to Young Harris to face Tori Dyer and her Mountain Lions. When Sullivan graduated from Union County, Dyer filled in nicely at shortstop for the departed Sullivan.

"It was so neat playing against Tori Dyer this year at Young Harris, we both had a lot of people come out and watch us, which meant a lot to me," Sullivan said. "Tori and I both kept hitting shots to each other at shortstop and



Kaley Sullivan's glove was just as valuable as her bat during her West Georgia career.

getting each other out, then we would just look at each other and grin."

Both girls would get their moments as Sullivan singled in her first plate appearance and Dyer doubled in her second trip to the plate.

Although, Sullivan admits that if not for her years at Union County High School, combined with her travel-ball experiences, she may not have been ready for the college game.

"Playing top-notch competition and making it to state at Union County really exposed me to the talent that is out there and showed me what it took to play at the next level," Sullivan

said. "I was really fortunate to play with the teammates I did from travel ball at 12-and-Under and sticking together throughout high school."

"During high school, both Coach Jessica Stewart and Coach Jennifer Cagle knew what it took to play at the college level because they have both been there and been through it," Sullivan said. "They are huge motivators for the athletes here and keep the passion and drive for the game alive."

Union County Head Softball Coach and fellow West Georgia Alumni, Coach Stewart had little doubt that Kaley's abilities and character would benefit her at the next level.

"I coached Kaley for only two years but she is a great player and an even better person, said Coach Stewart. "She's a very hard worker with a great attitude. It was certainly special for her to go to West Georgia and play ball and share in some of the traditions that I had in college."

I have played against Kaley in the Alumni Games at West Georgia and this coming year I look forward to being in the same dugout with her playing against the new upcoming players," Coach Stewart said. "It something special we will always be able to share and have in common."



Kaley Sullivan connects on one of her 201 hits during her four years at The University of West Georgia.