

# Sports

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## Lady Panthers thump White Co in scrimmage; season opens next Tuesday

### Union softball sets its sights on Region 7-AAA title and a return trip to Columbus

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With the season opener less than a week away, practice officially began for the Union County Lady Panthers softball team this week after wrapping up Summer League action last Thursday with an 8-1 victory over White County.

Up next, the Lady Panthers will pay a visit to Gilmer County on Thursday for the team's first and only preseason scrimmage game.

Following their tune-up game with the Lady Bobcats, Union will host Region 7-AAA foe Lumpkin County on Tuesday, Aug. 9.

Region play will continue on Aug. 11 at North Hall, Aug. 16 vs Dawson County, and Aug. 18 at East Hall.

In recent years, Region 7-AAA has provided Union County with the majority of its non-region contests, so this season the Lady Panthers won't receive a break from region action until they take on Apalachee and one of 8-AAA's newest additions - Monticello at Young Harris College on Aug. 20th.

Since 2013, Social Circle has owned Region 8-AA



Sophomore first baseman Bailey Rayfield applies the tag to a White County base runner. Photo/Todd Forrest

with Union placing second in 2012, 2014, and 2015.

While the Lady Panthers might be the new kids on the block in Class AAA this year, it doesn't mean they won't be in the mix for their third Region Championship since 2010.

Here is a glance at how the six other teams stack up in region 7-AAA. The county's top two teams, Banks County and Franklin County are both

long gone, leaving third place Fannin County and fourth place Dawson County as the only playoff teams remaining from 2015.

**Dawson County:** 2015 record: 8-15 overall, finished fourth (6-6) in Region 7-AAA and lost to Calhoun in first round of state by combined score of 26-2. Graduated five seniors off a team that lost to Union 13-1 at Lanier Point Tournament. They return First



Junior Jillian Lawn allowed one run in 4-plus innings of work in the win over White. Photo/Todd Forrest

Team All Region selection Kaila Billingsley and second team selection Sydney McGinnis.

**East Hall:** 2015 record: 13-12 overall, missed play-offs with 5-7 region record. Defeated Dawson three times last year yet still finished with a worse record in 7-AAA. Player to watch: junior infielder Steffanie Redmon, who hit .405 with 2 homers in 2015.

**Fannin County:** 2015 record: 13-14, finished third in Region 7-AA with a 9-5 record. Lost to Ringgold in the first round of state by combined score of 19-0. Also fell to 10-2 to Union County in their third game of the season. The Lady Rebels graduated eight seniors from last year's squad.

**Greater Atlanta Christian:** 2015 record: 8-12 overall and finished 0-9 in a brutal

Region 6-AA. Young squad last year with only one senior on the roster. Fell 5-1 to East Hall and defeated Lumpkin County 9-8 in 2015.

**Lumpkin County:** 2015 record: 8-21, missed playoffs with 3-11 record in region play. Lost 14 of final 15 games following 3-2 upset win over Fannin County on Sept. 1. Defeated East Hall in extra innings on Aug. 25. Return First Team All Region selection Paige Martin at first base

**North Hall:** 2015 record: 22-10, placed second to Buford in Region 8-AAAA following a 1-0 loss in 8 innings to the eventual State Champions. Also fell 9-8 to Buford in regular season. Lost to eventual State Runner Up Walnut Grove in the Sweet 16 by a combined score of 17-2.

The Lady Trojans' lineup returns nearly everyone from 2015 along with their top two pitchers, which includes ace Kendyl Chase who posted a 1.04 ERA and 19 wins as a freshman last year.

Senior Carver returns behind the plate after demolishing the opposition's pitching with a .500 batting average and 8 homeruns in 2015.

## Former players prevail at Union County Alumni Softball Game



The first annual Union County softball Alumni game pitted the current Lady Panthers against the former players. The youngsters took an early 2-0 lead during the fast pitch innings but the savvy veterans bided their time until the slow pitch innings and rallied for the 7-6 victory. Photo/Todd Forrest

The Union County alumni that signed up to participate in Saturday's game and their graduation year are as follows: (not all of those that registered were in attendance) Amanda Mason Craig 2008, Kelsey Nix 2015, Mandy Bradley Hunter 1994, Alicia Morrow England 2007, Callie Dyer Wood 2012, Angie Hughes 2012, Brooklyn Swartz Harris 2009, Tanya Murphy Woodard 2004, Madison Garrett 2016, Kaitlyn Seabolt 2011, Hannah Hughes 2013, Carly Adams 2013, Shawna Brown 2013, Matraca McKim Gray 2011, Tori Dyer 2011, Kaley Sullivan 2008, Chantelle Hutson Burnette 1989, Ansley Brown Kimsey 2011, Madison Rich 2014, Hayley DeBell 2010, Kenya Lance Patton 1992, Jennifer Ramsey Smith 1992, Jennifer Dyer Ludlum 1989, Laura Makuk Holmes 1994, CJ Penland Bingham 2007, Pamela King Passmore 1997, and Sharon Odom Rohrbaugh.

Serving as umpires were Jacque Devereaux and Dustin Rogers while Chris Dyer kept everyone, players and spectators alike, amused with his keen wit behind the microphone as the public address announcer.



The veteran leadership of (left to right) Jennifer Ramsey Smith, Jennifer Dyer Ludlum, Chantelle Hutson Burnette, and Sharon Odom Rohrbaugh was essential to the Alumni victory. Photo/Todd Forrest



Coach Jessica Stewart and the current Union County Lady Panthers softball team are pumped up before the game. Photo/Todd Forrest



The current Lady Panthers may have been guilty of underestimating their elders. Photo/Todd Forrest

## UCHS football to scrimmage White Co on Friday

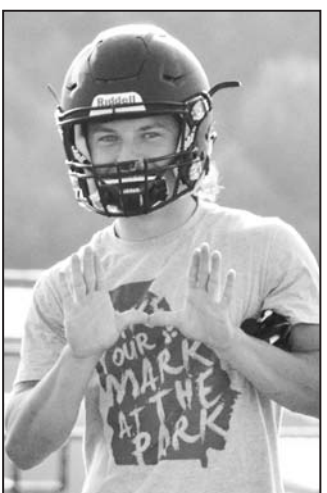
For the first time since November, Friday night lights will illuminate the Blairsville skyline as pads begin to pop inside of Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium this Friday night.

Following a summer of knocking around teammates, the Union County football team receives the opportunity to unleash its pent-up energy on the White County Warriors.

While the players will be anxious to hit someone in opposing colors, Panthers Head Football Coach Brian Allison is calling this Friday's game a "very controlled scrimmage."

The varsity will play the first half with the backups and JV teams entering in the second half.

After keeping everyone healthy, Coach Allison will be



looking to see how some of the newcomers perform under the pressure of live action.

He will also be using this Friday night to help determine some starting jobs that have yet



to be settled.

"Overall this will be a good opportunity to see where we are at," Coach Allison said. "We hope that the fans come out to get a look at the 2016 Union

County Panthers."

Kickoff is scheduled for 7 p.m.

On Thursday, Aug. 18, the Panthers will host Rabun Gap in their final scrimmage of the season.



Mountain High Hikers schedule two hikes every Tuesday, one long and one shorter, as well as occasional specialty hikes. Weekly trail maintenance trips are scheduled every Thursday.

Come enjoy the beautiful mountains and waterfalls we have here. Check the website [www.mountainhighhikers.org](http://www.mountainhighhikers.org) for schedule and contact numbers.

## Blairsville Pickleball Club prepares for first tournament



(L-R): Terry Korpinen, Alex Box, John Daniel, Jared Sandler

Members of the Blairsville Pickleball Club have been spending lots of time practicing, watching tutorial videos, and learning new techniques in order to do well in an upcoming tournament.

Ambassador David Block and Club Vice President Nolan Lang will conduct the first tournament held by the BPC on August 4-5th. Games will be played in the old Middle School gym at 310 Wellborn Street in Blairsville with over thirty-five members competing in four categories. Men's Doubles will be played on Thursday, August 4th at 8:30 AM

and Women's Doubles in both levels will be played on Thursday afternoon. Mixed Doubles in novice and intermediate levels will be held on Friday, August 5th, beginning at 8:30 AM. Entry fees were required, and all proceeds will be donated to the 'Ed Webster Scholarship Fund' to buy sports equipment for needy students.

The Blairsville Pickleball Club thanks the Union County Board of Education for allowing the use of the "rubber floor gym". Everyone is invited to come and watch the tournament. By August 21st/CA