

# Sports

See the Sports Section at ngenews.com

## Lady Panther seniors leaving a legacy of greatness

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@ngenews.com

Union County High School paid tribute to its Lady Panther softball seniors last week.

The class of 2013 has the opportunity to leave as the winningest class in school history.

By clinching the top seed in the Region Tournament, Union County has already guaranteed themselves a spot in the State Tournament. Therefore, this senior class will take four state playoff appearances with them when they graduate in the spring. Despite the rich tradition of Union County Softball, this class is the first one that can claim the honor of never missing a single state tournament.

More importantly, this class has contributed to two Union County Region Titles and will be gunning for a third next month.

"I'll miss all five of my seniors and I'm very thankful for what they have given to our program the past four years," Coach Jessica Stewart said.

Union County's five seniors are Carly Adams, Shawna Brown, Bailey Byers, Hannah Hughes, and Amber Seeba.

**Carly Adams:** Adams is the daughter of Scott and Camella Adams and has played softball for four years and lettered for three years.

Adams has played center field and second base.

Her most memorable moment is going camping with the team last year and witnessing Bailey Byers getting hit in the face with a flashlight.

Adams plans on attending college and possibly playing softball. She would like to become a physical therapist assistant, then have a successful marriage and start her own family.

Adams is handing her bat down to Haylle King in hopes that she will work hard and never give up because it pays off in the end.

"I would like to thank



Carly Adams



Shawna Brown



Bailey Byers



Hannah Hughes



Amber Seeba

God for giving me the ability to play," Adams said. "My mom for being my number one fan since T-ball and for always telling me that I can do anything I want, if I put my mind to it and work at it. My dad for always pushing me to my limit. He knew how good I was even when I didn't believe it. My brother Cody, for showing me how to play the game by taking me to the park every Sunday with dad until I fielded the ball clean and swung through all the way.

"Finally I want to thank my teammates as well. They are my best friends for always being there for me throughout all of our many years of sweat and tears. And also Coach Stewart and Coach (Jennifer) Cagle for not letting me settle and to strive for perfection."

"Carly has been solid this year on defense and offense," Coach Stewart said. "I moved her to center field this year and she has made some spectacular catches for us, without any complaints of missing playing in the infield. I think Carly will do well the rest of the year and hopefully be playing at the college level next year."

**Shawna Brown:** Brown is the daughter of Randy and Teresa Brown and has played softball for four years - lettering all four years.

Brown plays shortstop and her most memorable moments were reaching the Elite-8 during both her freshman and sophomore years, and hitting a grand slam during last month's

game at Gilmer County.

Her awards include the Best Bow Award.

Brown's future plans are to go to college, become a health care professional, marry the sexiest man in the world and live happily ever after, "like the princess that I am," she said.

She would like to hand her bat down to Madison Garrett.

"I would like to thank my mom for all of her support and my dad for always pushing me to be the athlete that I truly am, and to give 100 percent and not just enough to get by," Brown said. "My parents have helped me so much through the years.

"I also would like to thank my other four seniors for being my best friends. I can't express the love I have for each of them. I can remember way back, when my dad spent time hitting me ball after ball on our Sundays off. Most importantly, I would like to thank God for blessing me with the talent and ability to be the player that I am today."

"Shawna opened up the season with one of the hottest bats around," Coach Stewart said. "She is still at .485 in the year and I'm looking forward to seeing her close out the season with the best year at the plate she's had in her career. She is a naturally talented kid that I've enjoyed having for four years."

**Bailey Byers:** Byers is the daughter of Steve and Robin Byers and has played

softball for four years and lettered for three years. Byers plays pitcher and infield and her most memorable moment was going to the State Finals during her sophomore year, and scaring the Busbee girls on a camping trip with Coach Jessica Stewart's Halloween mask.

Her future plans are to attend college, get a job at the Cancer Center, marry the man of her dreams and grow old in good ole Blairsville.

Byers is handing her bat down to junior Madison Rich.

"First of all, I would like to thank God for giving me my abilities," Byers said. "I would also like to thank my mom and dad for always being my biggest fans.

"Next I want to thank David Seabolt, Jason Hughes, and Kevin Hughes for always believing in me. Last I want to

thank all of my best friends and teammates for always being there along with Coach Cagle and Coach Stewart. I love you guys."

"Bailey has really stepped up all the way around this season," Coach Stewart said. "She is our Senior Team Leader, chosen by her teammates. She has won 10 games on the mound for us and is a solid .309 at the plate. She had big shoes to fill when Angie Hughes left and has really had the determination to get the job done this year."

**Hannah Hughes:** Hughes is the daughter of Jason and Leslie Hughes and has played softball for four years and lettered for all four years.

Hughes plays first base and her awards include the 2011 Big Stick Award, 2011 8-AA All-Region Team, and 2011 Class AA All-State Team.

Her most memorable moment was finishing second in state her sophomore year and last year's camping trip.

She plans on attending North Georgia College and becoming a Nurse Anesthetist, getting married and raising a family.

Hughes is handing her bat down to Karly Nix.

"I want to thank God," Hughes said. "I want to thank my dad for pushing me, my brother Hunter for going to get my home run balls, Megan for always believing in me whenever I was down, my coaches, and the other four seniors for always being there for me, both on and off the field.

"Hannah is having a fantastic senior year," Coach Stewart said. "She has been on varsity all four years and started and played in all 129

See Seniors, page 11A



The Lady Panther seniors. This group will be gunning for their third straight Region 8-AA Championship and will make their a fourth trip and final trip to State, early next month. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Tough weekend for Lady Panthers at Brookwood

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@ngenews.com

The 4th-ranked Union County Lady Panthers traveled to the Brookwood Tournament last weekend to take on some of the top schools from Class AAAAAA and AAAAA.

Union opened the tournament with a 7-3 win over Dacula before dropping its final four games.

The Lady Panthers fell victim to Newnan 8-0, Peachtree Ridge 7-2, Eastside 4-0, and Woodstock 4-3.

Despite going 1-4, history was made when Hannah Hughes homered for the ninth time this season to set a new single-season team record. Hughes' homer also tied her with Callie Dyer's team record of 35 RBI's on the year.

### Lady Panthers 7 Dacula 3

Bailey Byers went the distance and picked up her 10th win of the season, while Carly Adams led the offense with two RBIs.

Dacula scored two in the first inning but Union responded by posting a six-spot in the second inning.

Courtney Busbee lined a single to center, Adams singled to left, and Amber Seeba walked to load the bases with one out.

Allie Stroman was hit by a pitch with a full count to score Courtney Busbee. With the bases still full, Crystal Busbee singled to bring in Adams.

Madison Rich had a sacrifice fly, scoring Seeba. Hannah Hughes singled to load the bases. Shawna Brown would reach on an error that brought in Stroman and Crystal Busbee.

After batting around, Courtney Busbee drew a walk to fill the bases before another walk, this time to Adams, allowed Hughes to score.

Dacula got one back in the bottom half of the third thanks to three singles and a sacrifice fly to make it a 6-3 game.

Union posted its final

run in the fourth when Hughes walked, Courtney Busbee doubled and Adams singled home Hughes.

Byers allowed six hits and walked three in the win. Hughes finished 1-for-1 with three walks and two runs. Adams and Courtney Busbee each went 2-for-2 with Adams knocking in two and Courtney Busbee doubling.

Crystal Busbee had a 1-for-4 day with a run and an RBI. Brown also finished 1-for-4.

### Lady Panthers 0 Newnan 8

Union County was two-hit by Newnan on Friday night in an 8-0 loss.

Newnan got one run in the first inning, two in the third inning, two in the fifth, and three in the sixth.

Rich singled and Stroman doubled for Union's only two hits on the day. Rich also added a walk.

The Lady Panthers put the ball in play, only suffering three strikeouts but Newnan played flawless defense - not committing a single error.

Chelsey Cook tossed 4 1/3 innings, giving up seven hits, four earned runs, while striking out one.

Byers pitched the final 1 2/3 innings, allowing four hits, two earned runs, and one walk.

### Lady Panthers 2 Peachtree Ridge 7

The 6th-ranked team in Class AAAAAA jumped out to an 4-0 lead and never looked back.

Union picked up one in the third and one in the sixth to make it a 4-2 game but Peachtree Ridge posted three runs in the seventh to stretch its lead to 7-2.

Crystal Busbee threw seven innings, striking out six, allowing eight hits and walking two batters.

Hughes would homer and walk, while Seeba finished with two hits.

Peachtree Ridge took an

early 2-0 advantage thanks to a two-out, two-run home run.

Union left two runners on in their half of the first and the second to remain in a 2-0 hole.

Peachtree Ridge used three hits in the third to take a 4-0 lead.

The Lady Panthers got one back in the third when Hughes turned on a pitch and sent it over the right field fence for her record breaking home run.

In the sixth inning, Adams walked to lead off the inning. Seeba singled, and Adams eventually scored on an error.

Union finished with six hits as Brown and Haylle King added hits for the Lady Panthers.

### Lady Panthers 0 Eastside 4

Eastside took advantage of two Union County errors while two-hitting the Lady Panthers.

The game was all even at 0-0 until Eastside got a run in the fifth, sixth, and seventh innings.

Byers threw all seven innings, striking out three and allowing seven hits and walking one.

Crystal Busbee was responsible for both Union County hits during a 2-for-3 afternoon.

Byers and Madison Garrett each chipped in with a walk

each for Union.

The Lady Panthers best scoring opportunity came in the first inning when Crystal Busbee led off with a single to left and Byers drew a walk, unfortunately Union was caught stealing and the inning came to an end.

Union wouldn't get another hit until the sixth inning when Crystal Busbee again singled to left.

### Lady Panthers 3 Woodstock 4

Union County let a 3-0 lead slip away late as Woodstock got three runs in the bottom of the sixth, and the game winner on a walk-off double in the bottom of the seventh inning.

Cook pitched a solid game for Union, allowing just four hits and two earned runs in 6 2/3 innings.

Union finished the game with seven hits, two coming from Hughes, including a double.

Crystal Busbee also connected on the first home run of her high school career in the fifth inning.

Seeba finished 1-for-2 with two RBIs. Brown, Courtney Busbee, and Garrett also added a hit for Union.

Union will travel to North Oconee on Thursday for its final game before opening the Region Tournament, in Blairsville, at noon on Saturday.

Joe Collins

Tips from the Range

I have heard it said that there is only one swing for every club and I agree with this statement, for the most part. Every swing has consistent fundamentals and is dependent upon certain repeatable motions but every swing is not the same. Each club is unique in its design and function, therefore; the swing involved with each club will be unique.

When striking most iron shots, you will make a divot. A wedge will typically make a longer and deeper divot than a 5-iron. These divot patterns are in direct relation to the length of the club you're using, so the longer the shaft then the shallower the divot. Since this is true, then it stands to reason that there should be little evidence of impact when using a fairway wood. In other words, a fairway wood should simply sweep the ball off the turf and this is one of the most difficult actions to perform with a golf club. This fact alone is why fairway wood shots demand precision and the swing must be nearly perfect to consistently hit good fairway wood shots.

Proper impact with a fairway wood is totally dependent on solid fundamentals. It is extremely important to have the correct ball position and to maintain your balance throughout the swing. The bottom of the swing arc must coincide with the position of the ball almost perfectly. If the ball is too far forward in the stance then you will hit it thin and end up with what many golfers call a "worm burner". If the ball is too far back in the stance then you will top the shot and the ball won't go very far. So, how do we determine the correct ball position to use when playing a fairway wood shot? I am so glad you asked.

First, take your normal stance and push a short tee into the ground just inside your front foot so that the top of said tee is the same height as the turf grass and located at the proper distance away to play a 3-wood shot. Next, place another tee about 8 inches back from the front tee, at the same height, but

still in line with your take away path. Now, place another tee 12 inches behind the middle tee again at the same height and on the same line as the other two. Place the head of your 3-wood behind the middle tee and start taking some practice swings being careful to not hit the tee but simply swing over the top of it to make sure you can maintain your balance. If you can barely brush the top of the tee then your balance is close to being proper. Now comes the more difficult part of finding the exact location to place the ball in your stance.

To find the best ball position, place the head of your 3-wood behind the middle tee and make your normal take away. Make sure you swing the club down the same way as you always do and try to make contact with the forward tee. The place where the club hits the ground is the exact position your ball needs to be in order to make good contact with a fairway wood on a normal shot or in other words, the spot where the club head impacted the ground is the ball position spot you should use when playing fairway woods.

As I stated earlier, your fundamentals need to be solid to make consistent impact with fairway woods. Do not let your head move and make sure you keep your eye on the ball. Impact has to be precise to hit a good shot off the fairway so swing smooth and keep your grip light. Stay away from the ball and always let your arms straighten through impact. Practice is crucial when learning to hit this shot.

Okay, we have now covered the basic swing development aspects and I hope it has been helpful. I would like to start having some fun by helping you with your swing problems. I will need to know if the ball is starting off on the target line and moving one way or another or if the ball is starting off left or right of where you are aiming. Please email me at jcollins.tcherald@windstream.net with any questions you have. You will be surprised by how common your flaws are among most golfers. I will analyze your issue and discuss it here in "Tips."

Go ahead and give it a shot. I bet I can help. Good luck and I will see you on the course!



Sophomore Crystal Busbee rounds the bases following her home run against Woodstock last weekend.