

# Sports

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## Union County wrestling breaks through

Panthers record their first tournament victory in the program's five-year history

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Less than a month into its fifth year, Union County wrestling has its first tournament win after protecting their home turf at Saturday's Union Invitational.

"This is a step in the right direction for our program," said Union County Wrestling Coach Michael Smith-Foot. "We are still very young and have only been in existence for five years. We don't have any seniors and only three juniors."

The Panthers wrapped up the Union Invitational with two first place finishes, eight second place finishes, one third and one fourth place finish.

Behind Union in the team standings were: Pickens in second, Towns was third, and Sequoyah, fourth.

A pair of sophomores brought home gold for Union County as Brendan Mason won it all in the 113-pound weight class and Adrian Shaw was the last man standing in the 132-pound weight class.

Placing second for the Panthers was freshman Alex Barrett at 106 pounds.

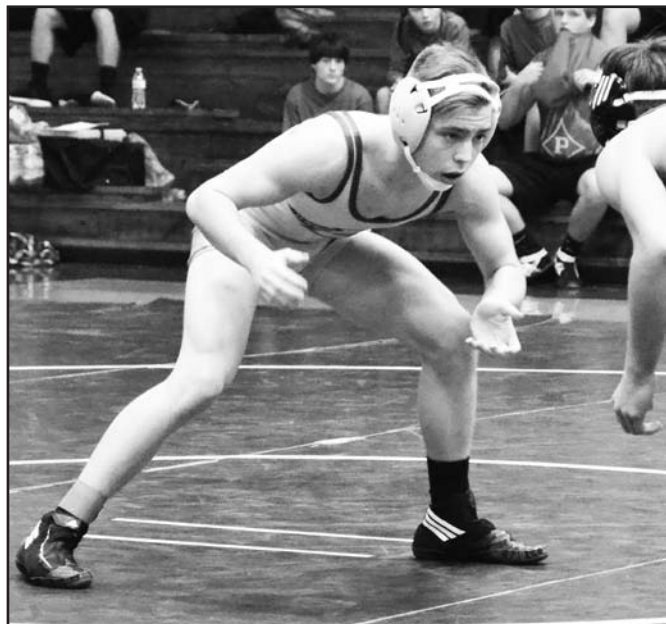
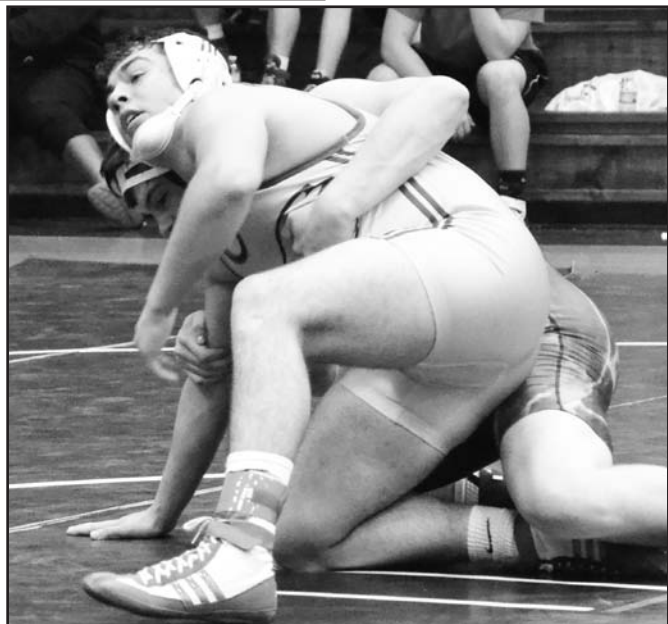
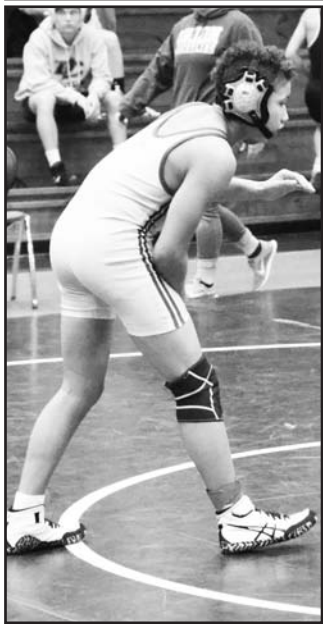
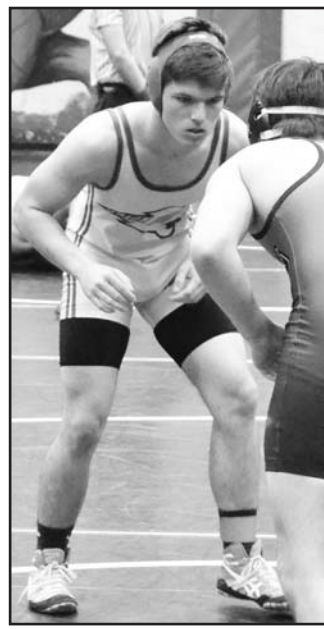
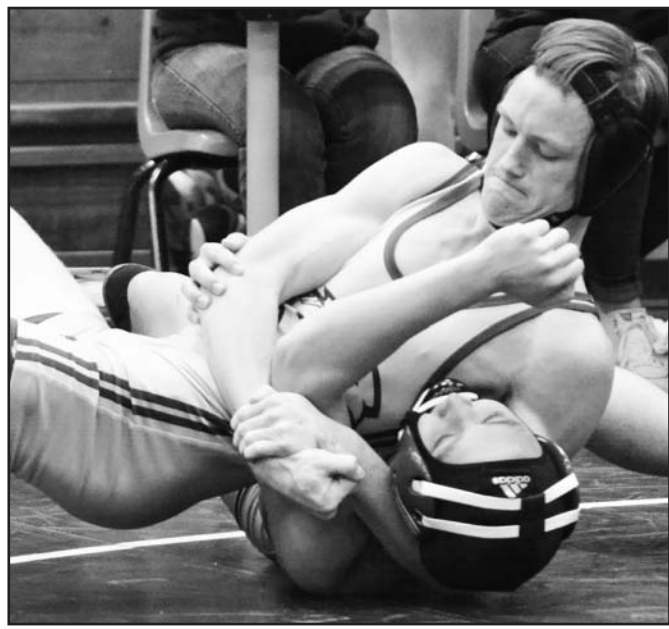
Other second place finishers included another freshman, Tyree Mackey, who posted a second place finish in the 126-pound division, as did sophomore James Rosser at 138 pounds.

At 145 pounds, junior Team Captain Noah Beirce came in second. At 160 pounds, sophomore Evan Browning was also second.

Union's other team captain, Grizzly Breedlove was second at 182 pounds, and 195-pound freshman Dakota Harvard took second.

Rounding out the Panthers' eight second place finishers was 220-pound junior Zach Panton.

Junior Kyle English took third in the 132-pound



Panther wrestlers in action at the Union Invitational Tournament held last Saturday at old high school gym (The Pit). Photos by Todd Forrest

weight class, joining Shaw, the 132-pound champ.

"I would love to have both of them in the line up by the end of the year," Coach Smith-Foot said.

At 152 pounds, freshman Logan Tritt came in fourth place and freshman Chad Buzard was sixth at 160 pounds.

Union didn't have a wrestler in the 120-pound weight class, but according to Smith-Foot, there is a wrestler that

could possibly fill that role.

The Panthers were also without a wrestler in the 170-pound division due to an injury.

"Freshman Christain Robertson (220-pounds) was out due to sickness and sophomore Josh Silvers was out due to an injury as well," Coach Smith-Foot said. "We had no entry at 285 (pounds) and may not have one all year. I really expected some linemen from

footbal to come out and fill the spot, but several had to work after football or said they were too tired to do two sports back-to-back.

"Our heavy weight from last year, Tyler Mask, is out the whole year with a back injury and we miss him and think of him often."

Although, Coach Smith-Foot pointed out that the turnout from the football team was still the largest they've

ever had.

On the JV side, Union had one second place finish, two third places, one fourth, fifth, and one sixth place finish each.

On Wednesday, the Panthers will travel to St. Pius where they will face off other schools from the Atlanta metro-area.

Following Thanksgiving, Union heads to Towns County on Dec. 4th and 5th

for the King of the Mountain tournament.

"That is a very tough tournament and we have struggled at it in the past," Coach Smith-Foot said. "I expect to do much better there this year. If we can pull off several high places there, we should do very well at Area this year."

The Panthers' next home event will be "Friday Night Fights" on Dec. 18th.

## Basketball: New look Panthers hold off furious Gilmer rally in the final minute

By Todd Forrest  
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The Union County Panthers men's basketball team won its home opener for the second straight year with a 52-49 victory over Gilmer County that saw Union take control late in the fourth quarter before the visiting Bobcats stormed back during the final 45 seconds to draw within a 3-point basket.

Trailing 31-27 entering the fourth, the Panthers' Chase Shook and Lawson Baenninger led a late surge that put the home team on top at 49-40 with just under a minute to play. But an 0-for-2 trip to the foul line for Union was followed by six Gilmer points in less than 10 seconds.

A trey trimmed the lead to 49-43, then a steal by the Bobcats resulted in a lay-up and a foul. The old-fashioned 3-point cut the Panthers lead to 49-46 with just over 30 seconds to play.

Baenninger went to the line and the junior hit both attempts to extend the advantage back to five and give his squad some breathing room, but it would be short-lived as another Gilmer trey with less than 10 seconds to go made it a two-point game.

With 3 seconds left and the Panthers leading 51-49, Baenninger went back to the line where he hit the first and missed the second. By the time the Bobcats were able to secure the rebound, all they had time for was a desperation heave from beyond midcourt that missed everything.

The Panthers poured in 25 points in the fourth quarter with Baenninger, Shook, and sophomore Crawford Colwell combining for 21 of those 25. Shook led Union with 15 points – seven in the fourth – while Baenninger scored eight of his 10 points in the final frame.

Colwell, who finished with 13 points, also left his mark in the first half, scoring 6 of his quarter's 12 points in the second quarter and leading the team in scoring with 8 points at the break.



Union County Senior Chase Shook battles in the paint vs Gilmer County. He led the team in scoring with 15 points. Photo/Todd Forrest

The Panthers struggled from downtown, connecting on only three shots from beyond the arc, however two came when they were needed most, during the fourth quarter.

Baenninger and senior guard Matthew Rich knocked down treys during the game's final minutes. Rich hit his team's only other 3-point basket in the first quarter.

Senior Andrew Brown chipped in 2 points in the first quarter and fellow senior Lance Rich was perfect in one trip to the foul line. On the night, Union finished 11-of-15 (73 percent) and 7-for-11 (64 percent) in the fourth quarter.

Sophomore Candler Colwell added 2 points in the second quarter.

After trailing 23-19 at the half, Gilmer took the third quarter by a 12-4 margin. Shook accounted for all four Union points in the period.

On Monday night, the Panthers hosted Dawson County

and results were unavailable at press time. On Tuesday, Union will host Lumpkin County. The Lady Panthers will tip at 6 p.m. with the guys to follow.

"At this point of the year we want to see what we have and who's going to be able to play," said Union Head Coach Casey Jones. "We want to work through several different rotations with different guys on the floor. I would love to be able to play 10 or 12 guys and I think the talent is there, I just don't know if some of those young guys are going to be ready. During November and December we just want to get guys on the floor to see what they can do."

"I expect big things from Candler and Crawford Colwell," Jones added. "They are very talented and they're only sophomores, but I think they can help us quite a bit. Actually, that whole sophomore group

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## Basketball: Gilmer edges Lady Panthers despite career-high from Daniel

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The Union County Lady Panthers and Gilmer County were neck-and-neck for the majority of the contest, but Union was unable pull ahead during a tight second half and eventually it was the Lady Bobcats that pulled away in the game's final three minutes for a 55-47 victory.

Sophomore Bailey Daniel put up a game-high 23 points but it wasn't enough as she was the only Lady Panther to reach double-digits in the scoring column.

Seniors Kim Coyne and Layne Colwell chipped in 9 points each for Union who trailed 39-38 after the third frame. Unfortunately, they were unable to take the lead, despite trailing by three points-or-less for the majority of the quarter.

The Lady Bobcats extended their advantage to six, but Union trimmed its deficit back to a point before Gilmer stretched its lead to 53-42 with under a minute to play, after Daniel and junior starter Ashley Fair each fouled out.

Trailing 16-11 after a first quarter that saw Coyne hit a pair of treys to go along with 5 points from Daniel, the second and third periods belonged to the Lady Panthers. Colwell connected on three treys in the second while Daniel added 6 points to enter the break trailing 30-26.

Daniel hit two treys on her way to an 11-point third quarter while Coyne added a free throw to bring Union within one entering the fourth.

The Lady Panthers were outscored 16-9 over the final 8 minutes with Daniel hitting one from the charity stripe, Coyne hitting a pair of free throws, sophomore Grace Wischmeyer going 1-for-2 at the line, senior Stephanie Busse scoring a basket, and sophomore Jillian Lawn connecting on a late trey.

Union hit 10 treys with Daniel accounting for four of them. They also finished 12-



Sophomore Bailey Daniel splits a pair of Lady Bobcat defenders. She would finish the contest with 23 points. Photo/Todd Forrest

of-19 (63 percent) at the line. Gilmer connected five times beyond the arc while going 10-of-19 (53 percent) at the line.

Colwell and Lawn each finished with a team-high 3 assists. Coyne led the way with 8 boards, Colwell hauled in seven, and Busse grabbed 6 rebounds.

Colwell swiped the Lady Bobcats four times while Daniel added 3 steals. Busse blocked 3 shots and Fair denied 2 shot attempts.

The Lady Panthers hosted Dawson County on Monday after this writing, but will play host to Lumpkin County on Tuesday at 6 p.m.

"We always play Towns and Fannin but this year we've added Gilmer and Dawson so it should be fun," said Union Head Coach David Tucker. "Those are some good teams and we're going to see where we're at."

Like the guys, the ladies must replace four starters, including the Region 8-AA

Player of the Year Brooke Maddox.

All Region selections Lisa Nalaschi and Kaitlyn Day also graduated.

Junior Holly Stroman has moved out of the county, leaving Colwell as the only returning starter for the Lady Panthers.

Coyne played a significant role off the bench for the Panthers as a junior and has moved into the starting-five as a senior.

The bench also took a hit as backup point guard Madison Lariscy also graduated.

Daniel, Fair, and Busse saw some varsity action last season but each will be thrust into a much larger role in 2015-16.

"It's their time to play and they're going to have to step up," said Coach Tucker. "We have some girls on the bench that will also need to step up but I think we'll be

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