

Sports

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Wrestling: Smith-Foot wins Area; Union sending 10 to State

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Homer - Union County Wrestling made history twice last Friday night in Banks County -- earning its first individual Area title and qualifying a program-record eight men for the upcoming State Tournament.

Headlining the day for UCHS was senior heavyweight Eli Smith-Foot, who claimed the program's first-ever Area Championship with a pinfall victory over Fannin County's Logan Long.

In addition to the record-setting eight Panther men, two Union County females, Brooke Kennedy and Shelby Agasinski, also qualified for this week's State Tournament, earning an automatic berth.

Despite competing without a full squad due to injury and illness, the Union County men sent four individuals to the Area finals, where Smith-Foot came away victorious and three Panthers placed second.

"We had a good day today, we qualified the most that we ever have for State, and Eli is our first Area Champion," Union County coach Justin Byers said. "Unfortunately, we left a couple of weight classes open because of some injuries and other things that happened. But we're excited. We will leave Monday and start wrestling Tuesday morning at the Macon Coliseum."



The Union County men qualified eight wrestlers for the State tourney during last Friday's Area 8 Tournament at Banks County. Additionally, two Union females earned an automatic bid for this week's State competition in Macon. Photo/Todd Forrest

Zander Rotko finished second in the 126-pound division after falling to Fannin County's Cooper Mooreland by pinfall in the final round.

Damon Wallace was also an Area runner-up at 138 pounds, defeating Banks County's Zak McClellon in the first round and suffering a pinfall to Fannin's Taylor Collins in the title match. Brady Guild

rounded out Union County's second-place finishers after scoring a first-round pin over Rabun County's Celton Littrell in the 160-pound weight class.

Fannin's McKay Turner -- the defending State third-place finisher in Class AAA -- would defeat Guild via pinfall during the finals.

Union County's third-place finishers, and State quali-

fiers, were Anderson Clouse at 113 pounds and Kanon Abercrombie at 120. Trevor Guild earned a spot in the State meet by defeating Banks County's Davis Mitchell in the 152-pound consolation round.

James Whisenhunt qualified for State at 170 pounds with an 8-1 decision over Rabun County's Justin Cody in the consols.

Lane Lance just missed a State berth at 220 with a fourth-place finish.

The Union County men will open State competition on Tuesday morning in Macon. The women get underway on Wednesday.

As Area Champion, Smith-Foot earned a first-round bye and will open State competition with Dade County's

Dakota Whitmore, who also received a bye. A win over Whitmore will punch Smith-Foot's ticket to the Class AA quarterfinals.

Rotko will open with Glen Hills' Latrez Tanksley at 126 - the winner faces Lovett's Josh Robinson in the second round.

At 138, Wallace takes on Zion Corral of Westside-Augusta in the first round. The victor will meet Lovett's Al Coy - the defending State champ.

160-pound Brady Guild's first-round opponent is Kendall Lively of Glen Hills. Awaiting the winner is Lovett's Finn Bresnahan.

Elbert County's Carter Fleming will join Clouse in the ring for a 113-pound freshman vs. freshman battle in round one. Coosa senior Travis Pelfrey, who is coming off a fifth-place finish in last year's State tourney, will take on the winner.

Abercrombie and Oglethorpe County's Austin Cort square off in the 120-pound division, with the victor set to face Dade County's Garrett Dunn.

At 152, Trevor Guild meets Elbert's Jamaze Hall - Dade's Zach Smith awaits the winner.

Finally, defending State Champion Drake Miller (Pepperell) will take on the winner of Whisenhunt's matchup vs. Oglethorpe County's Chris Collins at 170 pounds.

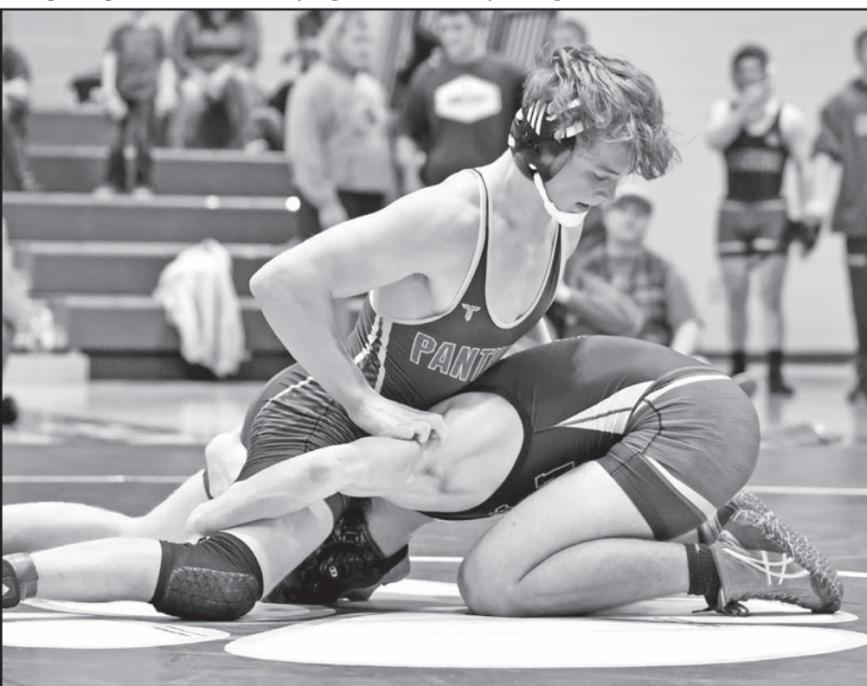
The female State brackets were unavailable at Monday morning's deadline.



Union County coaches and supporters celebrate Eli Smith-Foot's victory over Fannin County in the Area 8 Championship match at Banks County High School last Friday evening. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County senior heavyweight Eli Smith-Foot (top) takes control moments before his pinfall victory over Fannin County's Logan Long in the Area 8 title bout. Photo/Todd Forrest



A pair of 2020 State qualifiers met in the 2021 Area finals when Union's Brady Guild (top) and Fannin's McKay Turner squared off for the Area title on Friday night. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County's James Whisenhunt scores a takedown during his 8-1 decision victory over Rabun County's Justin Cody in the 170-pound consols. Photo/Todd Forrest