

Union County Baseball rallies past Gilmer in 10, silences Fannin County 7-0

Weekend slump dooms Panthers in low-scoring losses to Pepperell, Heard County

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Union County began week two of the 2021 baseball season with victories over Gilmer and Fannin before dropping a pair of pitchers' duels to Pepperell and Heard County over the weekend.

The Panthers will face Dawson County (twice) and Chestatee this week in their final tune-ups before Region 8-AA action gets underway.

Panthers 7, Gilmer 6 (10 innings) - The week got underway on Monday, Feb. 22 with an extra-inning thriller vs. Gilmer that ended on Damien Chitwood's walk-double in the 10th.

However, the late-inning drama wasn't limited to the 10th as Union needed runs in the fourth, sixth and seventh to overcome a 5-2 deficit and force extras. And following two quiet frames in the eighth and ninth, Gilmer broke the 5-5 tie with a run in the top half of the 10th, setting the table for Chitwood's heroics.

With two down and the tying run at first, Union County's back was firmly against the wall in the 10th. But Zeke Swartz would represent the winning run after he was hit by a pitch, putting two aboard for Chitwood. And the Panthers' senior clean-up hitter wasted no time, jumping on the first pitch from Gilmer's Gabe Wolfson and launching a two-run double into centerfield, scoring Swartz and Thomas Dyer.

Chitwood finished his night 3 for 6 with 2 RBIs and two doubles. Dyer went 3 for 5 with 2 RBIs and a run. Senior Isaak Mullinack doubled and scored three times during a 3-for-5 performance.

Tyler Loyd picked up his first win of the year, working five innings in relief, striking out three while allowing two hits, two walks and one earned run.

Excluding a leadoff double in the 10th that resulted in a run, Tyler Loyd held the Bobcats in check after replacing Dyer in the sixth inning. As a result, the Panthers were able to erase a 5-3 sixth-inning deficit, beginning with an RBI single by Dyer after Mullinack kept the inning alive with a two-out double.

Union County struck again with two outs when Conner Shields reached on a fielder's choice and Tyler Loyd's opposite-field single put runners at the corners in the seventh. With the tying run 90-feet away, junior pinch-hitter Christopher Fletcher stepped out of the dugout and delivered an RBI single to right field.

The Panthers opened the scoring in the first inning when Swartz doubled home Mullinack, who led off with a walk. But Chitwood, who got the start on the mound, ran into trouble in the second via a single, a walk, a fielding error and three balks that aided Gilmer in securing a 2-1 advantage.

In the bottom half of the inning, a Bobcat miscue allowed Union to even the score



Damien Chitwood delivered the walk off double in the 10th inning of last week's 7-6 victory over Gilmer. Photo/Todd Forrest

on a Shields walk and an error off the bat of Mullinack.

Following two walks to begin the third, Chitwood was replaced by Dyer, who hit a batter and gave up a run-scoring wild pitch. The Bobcats pushed the lead to 5-2 in the fourth courtesy of a one-out RBI double and a run-scoring fielder's choice.

The Panthers manufactured a two-out run in their half of the inning when Mullinack singled and stole second, allowing Dyer to make it 5-3 with a base hit to left.

Dyer surrendered four hits and two runs over three innings on the hill, fanning two and walking one. Chitwood worked two-plus innings in the start, giving up two earned, three walks and one hit while striking out three.

Swartz finished 1 for 4 at the plate with an RBI, a double and a run. Shields walked and scored twice; Bailey Brown also drew two walks.

Panthers 7, No. 3 Fannin County - Union County blanked third-ranked Fannin County for the second time in two weeks, leaving Blue Ridge with a 7-0 shutout victory on Wednesday.

Swartz remained nearly unhit, recording his third win of the year with four shutout innings. The senior lefty fanned 11 of the 14 Rebels he faced, issuing one walk and an infield single. Swartz also had himself a day at the plate, going 3 for 4 with two doubles, a run and an RBI.

Mullinack took over in the fifth and notched his second three-inning save of 2021, striking out four while giving up two hits. At the plate, he drove in two runs while walking twice and scoring a run.

Dyer also scored twice and knocked in one during a 1-for-4 performance.

Swartz's first double of the game spotted himself a 1-0 lead in the first when he scored Mullinack, who led off with a walk.

Mullinack made it 2-0 on a sacrifice fly after Fletcher walked and later swiped third during the second inning. Mullinack's second sac fly gave Union a 3-0 advantage

in the third when Tyler Loyd was plunked to open the inning and advanced to third on a Shields bunt and a wild pitch.

The Panthers loaded the bags in the fourth with nobody out on a Dyer single, Swartz's second double and a Chitwood hit-by-pitch. With one down Tyler Loyd brought home Dyer on a fielder's choice, and Shields followed by scoring Swartz with a base hit.

Mullinack entered with a 5-0 cushion in the bottom half of the inning and struck out the side following a leadoff single. The Panthers tacked on two more in the seventh after Brown walked and scored to start the inning. An error off the bat of Dyer, a Swartz single and a Chitwood sacrifice fly brought in Union's final run of the evening as Mullinack pitched around two Fannin County hits to close out the victory.

Fletcher walked twice and Hunter Loyd drew one free pass for the Panthers.

Game notes: Fannin County entered the week at No. 3 in the Georgia Dugout Club Class AA Top-10 poll. At week's end, however, the Rebels were no longer ranked.

Panthers 0, Pepperell 3 - The Dragons dealt Swartz his first loss of the year on Saturday despite just three hits and no earned runs over five innings off the Union County southpaw.

Two costly errors and a run-scoring balk allowed Pepperell to grab a 3-0 advantage after four innings in Rome. The Panthers' offense struggled in both of Saturday's losses, mustering only two hits off Dragons pitching during the opener.

Pepperell starter Landen Loyd took a no-hitter into the fifth before a Fletcher single broke up the no-no with two down in the inning. Landen Loyd went the distance, striking out six in a two-hit shutout.

Scoreless in the third, Swartz immediately ran into trouble by plunking the leadoff man, then surrendering a single up the middle. A passed ball moved both runners into



Tyler Loyd got the job done in two relief appearances last week, picking up his first win following five innings vs. Gilmer. Photo/Todd Forrest

scoring position when a balk resulted in the first run of 2021 off Swartz. After a strikeout, a one-out error made it 2-0 before a strikeout and groundout ended the inning.

Swartz hit the leadoff man in the fourth before an error and wild pitch brought him around for the Dragons' third run of the day.

Fletcher was stranded in the fifth after his two-out single, and Swartz got out of trouble in the bottom of the inning following a pair of singles.

Dyer spelled Swartz and worked a 1-2-3 sixth, but a two-out single by Hunter

Loyd was all the offense in the seventh.

Panthers 1, No. 9 Heard County 2 - In the second game of Saturday's doubleheader at Pepperell, the Union bats remained in a slumber following their game-one shutout loss.

In a potential first-round State playoff preview, the Panthers were limited to just three hits while committing four fielding errors in a loss to Region 5-AA's Heard County.

Mullinack allowed just two hits and two unearned runs over five innings, but Union could not get on the

board until the sixth - ending a scoreless stretch that spanned 12 innings. Tyler Loyd kept the Panthers within a run, tossing a perfect sixth with one strikeout.

Brett Ballew, Brown and Dyer accounted for Union's only hits of the game. Mullinack and Hunter Loyd each drew a walk.

Scoreless in the second, the Panthers wasted an opportunity with runners at the corners and nobody out. In the Heard County half of the inning, a costly two-out error spotted the Braves a 1-0 advantage. A one-out error in the bottom of the fifth made it 2-0 Heard County, but the Union County bats momentarily awoke in the sixth.

A leadoff by Dyer started the rally and Swartz bunted him to second. Ballew's two-out single to right brought home Dyer before a fly-out ended the threat with Heard still ahead 2-1.

The Panthers went down in order during the seventh after Tyler Loyd retired the side on six pitches in the sixth.

Game notes: Heard County cracked the Georgia Dugout Club Class AA Top-10 following its victory over Union. Checking in at No. 9, the Braves give Region 5-AA four teams in the top nine, joining No. 3 Bremen, No. 4 Callaway and No. 6 Haralson County.

Union County hosts Dawson County on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. Chestatee pays a visit to Blairsville on Wednesday at 5:55 p.m. The week concludes with a trip to Dawson County at 5:55 p.m. on Friday

Union County Baseball hitting/pitching stats through seven games

#	Roster	GP	PA	AB	H	1B	2B	3B	HR	RBI	R	HBP	ROE	FC	CI	BB	SO	AVG	OBP	SLG	OPS
10	Isaak Mullinack	7	27	18	8	5	2	1	0	4	10	0	2	0	0	7	3	.444	.556	.667	1.222
2	Zeke Swartz	7	27	20	7	3	4	0	0	6	3	3	0	0	0	1	6	.350	.458	.550	1.008
20	Christopher Fletcher	3	8	6	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	.333	.500	.333	.833
1	Thomas Dyer	7	27	22	7	6	0	1	0	3	6	1	2	2	0	2	5	.318	.400	.409	.809
44	Damien Chitwood	7	27	22	6	4	2	0	0	6	0	4	2	1	0	0	5	.273	.370	.364	.734
36	Bret Ballew	3	9	8	2	2	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	1	4	.250	.333	.250	.583
3	Caleb Towe	3	5	5	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	.200	.200	.200	.400
4	Connor Shields	7	25	21	4	4	0	0	0	1	4	0	2	2	0	3	7	.190	.292	.190	.482
32	Hunter Loyd	7	26	22	4	4	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	4	.182	.308	.182	.490
8	Bailey Brown	7	12	8	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	2	.125	.417	.125	.542
25	Tyler Loyd	7	20	18	2	2	0	0	0	3	3	1	2	1	0	0	4	.111	.158	.111	.269
27	Brayden Sweet	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	.000	.000	.000	.000
5	Hunter Fleming	2	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	.000	.667	.000	.667
15	Logan Anderson	4	10	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	.000	.000	.000	.000
Totals		7	229	184	44	34	8	2	0	31	33	11	10	7	0	24	49	.239	.356	.304	.660

#	Roster	IP	GP	GS	W	L	SV	SVO	BS	SV%	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HBP	ERA	WHIP
2	Zeke Swartz	18.0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	.000	5	3	0	3	36	4	.000	.444
10	Isaak Mullinack	15.0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	.000	9	7	3	5	21	1	1.400	.933
25	Tyler Loyd	7.0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	2	2	2	3	5	1	2.000	.714
1	Thomas Dyer	4.0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	4	2	2	1	3	1	3.500	1.250
44	Damien Chitwood	2.0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	.000	1	3	2	3	3	0	7.000	2.000
4	Connor Shields	1.0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	2	1	0	0	2	0	.000	2.000
Totals		47.0	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	.000	23	18	9	15	70	7	1.340	.809

UCHS Track & Field results at Buford - Feb. 17

- Girls 100M:** Hannah Long 7th, Lexi Sisum 8th, Mia McCombs 16th
- Girls 200M:** Lexi Sisum 12th, Emma Lander 14th
- Girls 400M:** Emma Lander 9th, Lindey Jones 11th
- Girls 800M:** Hana Gregory 1st (2:43.79), Campbell Chambers 7th
- Girls 1600M:** Campbell Chambers 2nd
- Girls 3200M:** Natalie Payne 2nd
- Girls 100M Hurdles:** Karaline Silver 5th
- Girls 300M Hurdles:** Lindey Jones 6th, Karaline Silver 8th
- Girls 4x100M Relay:** 4th
- Girls 4x400M Relay:** 1st (5:18 - Riley Allison, Hannah Long, Lander, Gregory)
- Girls 4x800M Relay:** 3rd
- Girls High Jump:** Riley Allison 1st (4-6), Allie Brey 2nd
- Girls Long Jump:** Mia McCombs 2nd, Lexi Sisum 6th
- Girls Triple Jump:** Riley Allison 2nd
- Girls Discus:** Shelby Whitney 4th, Trinity Queen 5th
- Girls Shot Put:** Trinity Queen 5th, Shelby Whitney 7th
- Boys 100M:** Elliot Stepps 11th, Sam Page 26th, Riley Thomas 28th
- Boys 200M:** Elliot Stepps 6th, Luke Miller 25th, Daniel Griggs 27th
- Boys 400M:** Luke Miller 8th, Adrian Breedlove 12th, Daniel Griggs 14th, Nolan Thompson 18th
- Boys 800M:** Hunter Hartzog 2nd, Hunter Payne 11th, Brady Mull 16th
- Boys 1600M:** Hunter Hartzog 1st (4:46.11), Brady Mull 22nd
- Boys 3200M:** Luke Gambrell 2nd, Hunter Payne 7th
- Boys 4x100M Relay:** 7th
- Boys 4x400M Relay:** 3rd
- Boys 4x800M Relay:** 3rd
- Boys Long Jump:** Riley Thomas 6th, Sam Page 11th, Elliot Stepps 18th
- Boys Triple Jump:** Trace Wright 3rd, Sam Page 6th
- Boys Discus:** Noah Underwood 2nd, Tyler McBride 12th
- Boys Shot Put:** Noah Underwood 1st (40-5), Tyler McBride 10th

Soccer... continued from 2B

high school career, the freshman goalie finished with 25 saves while shutting out the Class AAA No. 4 team for nearly 48 minutes.

While McKechnie held up under a barrage from the Indians, Union County was hit with three offsides during the first half, denying the Lady Panthers multiple scoring opportunities.

Basketball... continued from 2B

two Lara Turner free throws and an Ellie Cook basket secured Union's early lead.

Free throws by Hunter kept Union in front at 6-2 and 8-5 before five unanswered provided the Cavs their first lead of the night. Hunter quickly evened the score at 10-10, then another low-post bucket, this one courtesy of Rebekah Chambers, pulled the Lady Panthers within a deuce at 14-12.

Trailing 20-12 late in the first, five-straight points from Cook, including her team's only 3-pointer of the contest, helped close the gap to 22-17 after one.

Chambers and Hunter kept the Lady Panthers within two possessions at 27-21 early in the second, but foul trouble began to mount on the Union County frontcourt as Callaway

Locked in a scoreless tie early in the second, Lumpkin finally got on the board in the 48th minute. They would hold a 1-0 advantage until adding two more goals during the contest's final seven minutes - the first coming in the 74th minute, the final goal in the 76th.

Union's only scoring chance of the second half came when they were awarded a free kick in the 66th minute.

The Lady Panthers will travel to Banks County on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. to take on the 2-2 Leopards. After winning its first two matches over West Hall and Hart County, Banks was outscored 20-0 during consecutive losses to North Hall and Commerce.

Union visits Elbert County at 5 p.m. Friday.

Chambers, Cook and McNabb finished with 7 points each.

Speaking of McNabb, the freshman turned in career-highs with 7 points and eight rebounds.

Helton added 5 points - a career-best. Turner had 3 points, Layla Akins scored two and Mull finished with one.

Junior Ansley Collins pulled down four rebounds and Turner had three. Cook, Helton, Mull, freshman Katie Byers and sophomore Corinne Hill grabbed two boards apiece.