

Sports

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Baseball: Perfect week bumps Panthers' winning streak to four

By Todd Forrest
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With two weeks left in the regular season, Union County baseball is hitting its stride, taking care of business in three region outings last week, blasting Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe and Murray County by a combined tally of 36-1.

Winners of four straight and eight of their last 10, the Panthers improve to 12-9 overall, equaling the program's highest win total of the decade (2021). And with an 8-4 mark in 7-AA, Union County currently sits third in the region.

The Panthers traveled to Coahulla Creek on Monday for a doubleheader before taking the rest of the week off for spring break.

Panthers 15, LFO 0 (3 innings) - Union County exploded for 14 runs in the third frame, ending the contest early and completing the season-sweep of the Warriors on Tuesday, April 1.

Junior Maddox Patton, currently hitting a team-best .408 on the year, continued to swing a hot bat, going 1 for 3 with 3 RBIs, a double, two runs and a stolen base. Sophomore Bentley Rich tripled and drove in two during a 1-for-2 day that included a walk and a run.

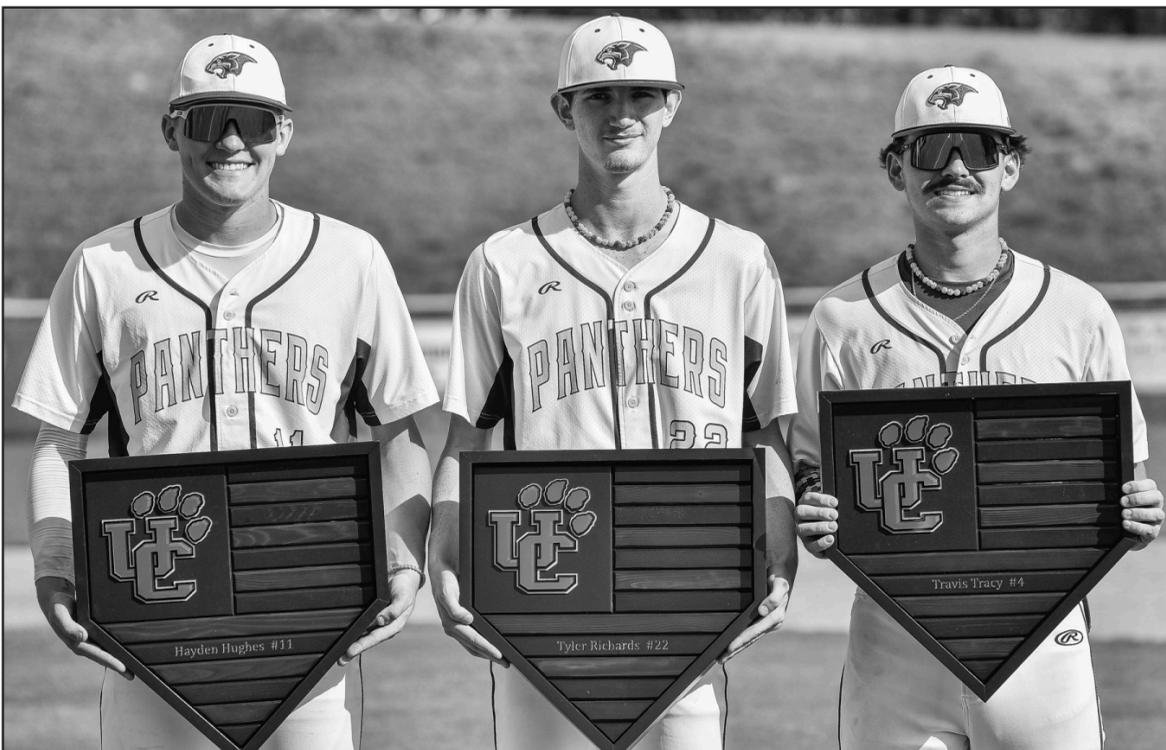
Sophomore Cayden Miller scored twice and knocked in two during his 1-for-2 contest. Junior Bo Brown added a walk, a run and two RBIs.

The LFO defense didn't do its pitching staff any favors, committing eight errors in the loss. Meanwhile, Union County junior Gunnar Akins struck out five and allowed two hits over three scoreless innings.

The Panthers delivered the knockout blow via a 14-run third after two LFO errors spotted them a 1-0 lead in the first.

Union's third began with a one-out error off the bat of Akins, followed by a Lane Haney walk and a Hayden Hughes single. A two-run error grew the lead to 3-0 and a wild pitch added another run.

Travis Tracy took a base on balls, Brown came around on another wild pitch and Miller worked a full-count walk. Another free pass, this one to Rich, loaded the bases for Gwynn, who was plunked by the first pitch, bringing home



Union County baseball seniors (L-R) Hayden Hughes, Tyler Richards and Travis Tracy were recognized ahead of last Friday's 7-0 Senior Night victory over Murray County. Photo/Todd Forrest

Tracy. Patton cleared the bases with a double to the gap, then came around on an Akins groundout that grew the lead to 10-0. With the bags empty, Haney's double restarted the onslaught, Hughes and Brown followed with walks and Tracy brought home another run courtesy of an LFO error. Miller's two-run single made it 13-0 and Rich's two-run triple ended the contest at 15-0.

Haney went 1 for 2 with a walk, a double, a stolen base and two RBIs. Hughes scored twice and walked during his 1-for-2 day; Tracy finished 1 for 2 with a walk and two runs; Akins scored once and drove in a run at the plate; Gwynn scored one run and plated another.

Panthers 14, Murray County 1 (5 innings) - Union County scored four in the first, four in the second and six in the third during a five-inning victory in Chatsworth on Thursday, April 3.

Headlining the win was Gwynn's return to the mound following offseason surgery. The junior worked two innings, allowing five hits and one run while striking out two during his 34-pitch outing.

Brown drove in four

runs, going 2 for 2 with a double, a walk and a hit-by-pitch. Akins finished 2 for 4 with an RBI, two runs and a stolen base; Colten Gibson drove in two and scored during a 1-for-3 day; Rich took three walks, drove in two and scored once during his 1-for-1 game.

The Panthers put up four in the first when Patton and Akins opened the game with base hits, followed by consecutive one-out doubles from Hughes and Brown, spotting Union a 3-0 edge. Gibson's two-out single scored courtesy-runner Kamden Kendrick, awarding their team a 4-0 advantage after a half inning.

Patton worked a 1-2-3 bottom half and Akins singled to start the second. Walks by Chetley Cox and Hughes loaded the bags for Brown, who drove in one with a sacrifice fly.

Tracy's walk loaded the bases again, and following a pop-out, Rich's free pass added another run and an error off the bat of Gwynn bumped the lead to 8-0.

Walks by Cox and Hughes began the Union third, and then Brown laced an RBI single to left field. Tracy worked another base on balls, Gibson was hit by a pitch -

bringing home his team's 10th run - and Rich's walk tacked on another run.

Consecutive walks to Gwynn and Miller made it 13-0 and Akins' sacrifice fly capped the Union County scoring.

On the mound, Patton, who gave way to Gwynn to start the third, tossed two scoreless innings, allowing two hits and striking out three.

Gwynn gave up two singles in the third but induced a ground out to end the frame. In the fourth, he surrendered a leadoff double and two singles but limited the Indians to one run.

Gibson replaced Gwynn in the fifth and navigated his way around a walk and single, ending the contest via the mercy rule.

Patton finished 1 for 3 with a run at the plate; Hughes scored three times, walked twice, doubled, swiped a bag and knocked in a run during a 1-for-2 day; Cox drew two walks and scored twice; Miller walked and drove in one; Tracy worked two walks and scored twice; Gwynn walked and recorded one RBI; Kendrick stole a base.

Panthers 7, Murray County 0 - Senior Tyler Rich-

during a 2-for-3 day. Patton went 2 for 4 with a run and a double.

Union County scored four in the first, beginning with Patton's opposite-field single. Haney's single with one out scored the first run, and Hughes' base knock extended the lead to 2-0. With two down, back-to-back RBI doubles by Tracy and Miller built a 4-0 edge.

Patton doubled in the second, coming around to score on Haney's sacrifice fly.

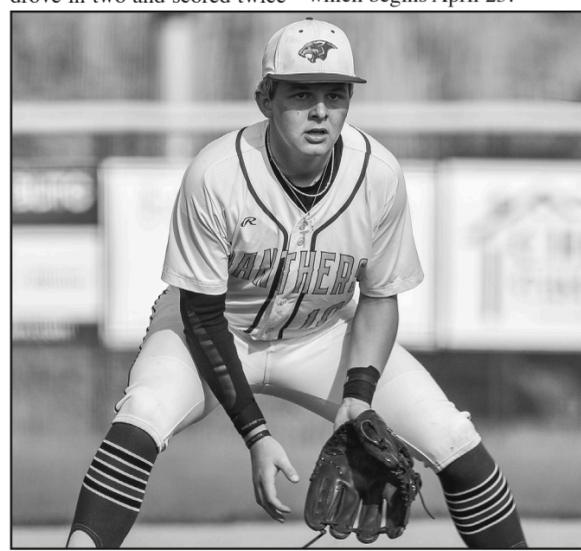
Richards pitched out of jams in the third, fourth and fifth -- stranding two runners apiece in each inning. Union County added an insurance run in the bottom of the fifth when Hughes doubled and scored on Brown's base hit.

The Panthers tacked on one more in the sixth courtesy of a single and two stolen bases by Haney, followed by a Hughes single.

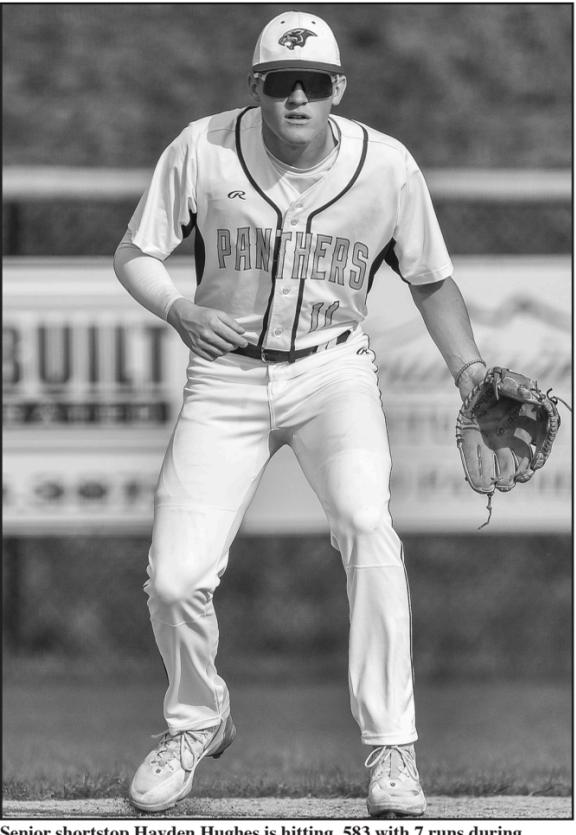
Brown finished 1 for 4 with an RBI; Miller went 1 for 3 with a double, an RBI and a stolen base; Gwynn reached on an error and scored a run.

Up next: Following spring break, Union County hosts Andrews, NC on Monday, April 14 at 4 p.m.

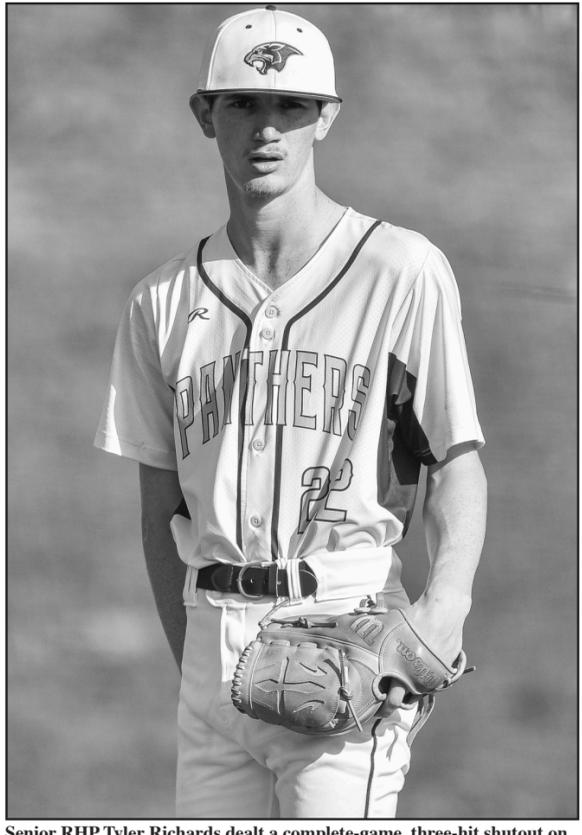
The Panthers sit 17th among public schools (22nd overall) in the latest GHSA postseason rankings. After the regular season concludes on April 18, the top 32 public schools will be seeded for the Class AA State Tournament, which begins April 25.



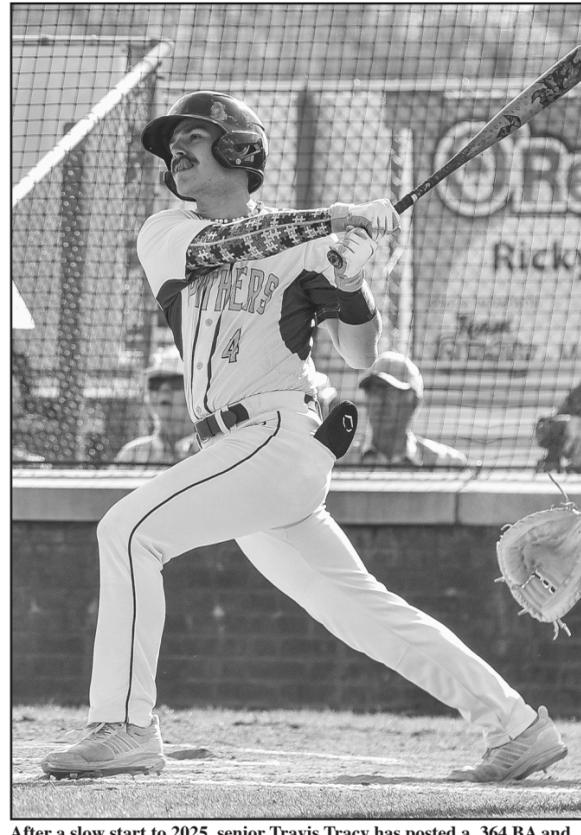
Union County received a boost last week when junior Eli Gwynn was cleared to pitch following offseason surgery. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior shortstop Hayden Hughes is hitting .583 with 7 runs during Union County's four-game win streak. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior RHP Tyler Richards dealt a complete-game, three-hit shutout on Senior Night. Photo/Todd Forrest



After a slow start to 2025, senior Travis Tracy has posted a .364 BA and a .955 OPS over the last four games. Photo/Todd Forrest

Soccer: Hill's two goals push Lady Panthers past North Hall

Shirley and Sommers' early goals propel Union men over NH

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Union County enhanced its postseason resume with a pair of home victories over Class AAA North Hall on Thursday, April 3.

Both Union teams are off for spring break before two games next week to close out the regular season, visiting Gilmer on April 15 and Lumpkin County on April 17.

Lady Panthers 2, North Hall 1 - Freshman Destiny Hill scored both goals, including the game-winner during the 66th minute.

Tied at 1-1 with under 15 to play, Hill beat two defenders on the right wing and slipped a perfectly placed right-footed shot into the left net from 20 yards out.

Hill's first goal of the evening came less than two minutes in, taking a feed from Ariel McCarter and beating three defenders on the right wing before cutting back inside and finding the back of the net from close range.

North Hall fired off shots in the 3rd and 10th minutes, eventually scoring the equalizer in the 12th just moments removed from a corner kick.

Union County tried corners in the 2nd and 18th minutes and had shot attempts in the 2nd, 8th, 9th and 31st.

Lady Panthers sophomore keeper Gaby Jimenez denied a Trojans shot in the 35th.

During the second half, Union County was awarded a corner in the 53rd and freshman Charlie Llewelyn got off two shots in the 64th and 74th. Hill had two scoring tries stopped in the 76th and 80th.

North Hall attempted five shots in the second half.

Panthers 3, North Hall 1 - Kainen Shirley and Noah Sommers each found the net during the opening minutes, spotting Union County a 2-0 lead at the break during last week's win.

Clinging to a 2-1 late lead, goalkeeper Eli Chapman tacked on a penalty kick in the final minute to put the game



Union County freshmen standouts (L-R) Stella Collins, Charlie Llewelyn and Destiny Hill celebrate Hill's goal during the opening minutes vs. North Hall. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior captain Noah Sommers celebrates his first-half goal that spotted Union a 2-0 lead vs. North Hall last Thursday night. Photo/Todd Forrest

away. Shirley kicked off the scoring in the 3rd minute, scoring from point-blank courtesy of a perfectly-placed feed by Sommers. Sommers found the net from the left wing when Shirley returned the favor in the 19th.

North Hall made it a game in the 60th, scoring off a rebound moments after attempting a corner kick.

Chapman stopped a Trojans' free kick in the 68th, Union denied a corner in the 72nd and a North Hall shot missed high in the 74th.

During the final moments, Chapman knocked in a penalty to seal the victory.

At 8-4 overall, the Union men sit 16th among public schools in the GHSA's postseason rankings; the Lady Panthers (7-5-1) are 15th among public schools.

The GHSA Class AA State Tournament opens April 24 for the ladies and April 25 for the men.



After scoring the game's first goal, Kainen Shirley (4) holds up a picture of his dad, who passed away earlier in the week. Photo/Todd Forrest

Golf: Panthers sink Towns County



Hayden Price (L) and Huston West (R) during a recent match at Butternutt Creek. Price's 37 led Union County to a 170-211 victory over Towns County last week. West finished with a 45. Photo/Todd Forrest



Will Henson (pictured) finished with a 41 vs. Towns County. Leo Nam had a 47, Grant Smith shot a 49 and Turner West ended his round at 53 vs. Towns at Butternutt Creek. Photo/Todd Forrest

Spring football right around the corner

Union Nike
2025 UNION FOOTBALL
SPRING PRACTICE
Union SCHEDULE
PRACTICE FROM 6PM TO 8PM

APRIL 22	APRIL 24	APRIL 25	APRIL 28
APRIL 29	MAY 1	MAY 2	MAY 6
	MAY 7	MAY 8	SPRING GAME 7PM @ HOME -Christian Heritage

Union Nike
2025 UNION FOOTBALL
Union SCHEDULE

VS. GILMER CO. AUGUST 22ND	VS. LFO LAKEVIEW-FORT-OGLETHORPE SEPTEMBER 26TH
@ FANNIN CO. AUGUST 29TH	VS. RINGGOLD OCTOBER 3RD
@ MURRAY CO. SEPTEMBER 5TH	VS. COALHULLA CREEK OCTOBER 17TH
VS. ROCKMART SEPTEMBER 12TH	@ SONORAVILLE OCTOBER 24TH
@ N. MURRAY CO. SEPTEMBER 19TH	@ NO. COBB CHRISTIAN OCTOBER 30TH