

Sports

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Baseball: Split at Coahulla doesn't hurt Panthers playoff chances

By Todd Forrest
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Dalton - Coahulla Creek snapped Union County's four-game winning streak in the first game of a Monday, April 7 doubleheader, defeating Panthers' ace Gunnar Akins by a score of 6-2.

Union County (13-10, 9-5) bounced back in game two, rallying from a 3-0 deficit and escaped Dalton with a 6-4 extra-inning victory.

"I'm proud of the way we battled back and won that second game," Union County head coach Chris Robbins said. "That was a big win because who knows if we even get in the playoffs if we go over there and get swept. But I'm really pleased with the guys for never quitting. Last year's team would have quit."

Union County sits 14th among public schools (19th overall) in the GHSA's Class AA Postseason Rankings. The top 32 public schools will qualify for next week's Class AA State Tournament. Regardless of this week's outcomes, the Panthers look like they'll be back in the State tourney for the first time since 2022.

"I think we'll get into the playoffs, but sometimes I want to bite these kids' heads off; they don't understand that every moment matters," Robbins said. "Every massive mistake has ramifications. We let Ringgold off the hook. We let Sonorville off the hook. We let North Cobb Christian off the hook. You can't do that. It's the little things like that could come back and bite you."

Panthers 6, Coahulla Creek 4 - The Colts scored one run in each of the first three innings off starter Maddox Patton, taking a 3-0 advantage into the fifth. The Panthers scored two in the fifth, followed by one run apiece in the sixth and seventh to grab a 4-3 lead heading into Coahulla Creek's final half-inning.

A balk call on Patton tied the game with two away in the seventh, bringing Eli Gwynn to the mound for an inning-ending groundout.

Bentley Rich reached on an error to start the eighth and Gwynn's one-out triple moved Union County ahead. Patton's sacrifice fly brought



Junior Eli Gwynn tripled home the go-ahead run in the eighth inning at Coahulla Creek. He also recorded the last four outs on the mound to pick up his first win of the year. Photo/Todd Forrest

Gwynn punched out the leadoff hitter in the bottom half before giving up a base hit and inducing a pop-out. A two-out walk put the winning run aboard before Gwynn secured the win via a bouncer back to the mound.

Patton's night ended one out shy of a complete game, going 6 2/3 innings while giving up six hits, two earned runs, a walk and striking out four. At the plate, the junior went 2 for 3 with two RBIs, a run and a stolen base.

Gwynn picked up the win, surrendering one hit and one walk over 1 1/3 innings. He finished 1 for 4 with a run and an RBI triple at the dish.

Travis Tracy turned in a 2-for-4 day that included a run and an RBI.

During the Coahulla Creek first, a costly two-out error put the Panthers in a 1-0 hole. And then, three straight singles and a sacrifice fly made it 2-0 in the second. The Colts made it 3-0 in the third courtesy of a one-out triple and a two-out single.

Consecutive one-out base hits by Rich and Tracy started off Union's two-run fifth, and then an error off the

bat of Gwynn loaded the bags for Patton, who scored Rich on a groundout to second. Akins delivered a two-out RBI single that scored Tracy and moved the Panthers within a run.

Patton pitched around two Union errors in the bottom half, and in the sixth, Colten Gibson doubled and knotted the score at 3-3 on Tracy's two-out single.

Coahulla Creek was sat down 1-2-3 in the bottom half of the sixth and Patton opened the seventh with an infield single. Akins worked a walk and Lane Haney's fly-out moved Patton up 90 feet. Hayden Hughes followed with an RBI groundout to mount a 4-3 edge at the midway point of the seventh.

Patton came back out for the seventh and rendered a pop-fly to open the frame, but an error and a walk had the Colts in business with one away. A grounder back to Patton marked the second out, but a run-scoring balk, followed by a hit batter resulted in a pitching change.

Gibson went 1 for 4 with a double and a run; Rich scored twice and walked during a 1-for-3 night; Akins finished 1 for 4 with a walk and an RBI; Haney and Bo Brown both

went 1 for 4; Hughes drove in a run.

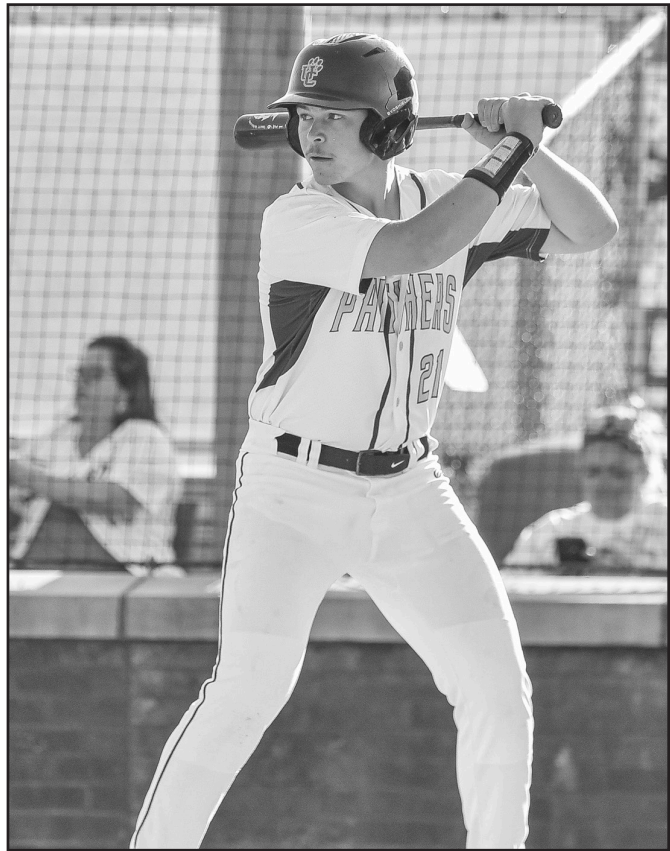
Panthers 2, Coahulla Creek 6 - With Akins not having his best stuff and the Panthers eyeing their upcoming spring break, the Colts caught Union County on a perfect night for an upset during the first game of last week's region doubleheader.

"They hit Gunnar very well," Robbins said. "His pitch count was higher than usual and we could tell by the second inning he was having an off night. It's just one of those things. It happens."

As the home team in game one, Union County struck first with two runs in the second, taking advantage of two Coahulla Creek errors, followed by four consecutive singles by Rich, Tracy, Gwynn and Patton.

Unfortunately, Akins ran into trouble in the third, giving up a one-out double and then hitting the next batter on a 1-2 count. A base hit loaded the bags and an error put the Colts on the board before an RBI single and a sacrifice fly moved the Panthers into a 3-2 hole.

Hughes' one-out single went to waste in the third and Coahulla added on three more in the fifth via a hit batter, a



Junior Colten Gibson doubled and scored during game two at Coahulla Creek. He tossed two scoreless during game one. Photo/Todd Forrest

triple, an error, a walk and a single. The Panthers stranded two in the bottom half after an Akins walk and a Hughes base hit. They left two more aboard in the sixth when Gibson and Tracy both singled.

Gibson replaced Akins and worked around a hit batter and walk in the seventh but the Panthers were sat down 1-2-3 in their half of the inning.

Akins tossed five innings, giving up seven hits, six runs (three earned), two walks and two hit batters while striking out three. Gibson struck out two, allowed two hits and walked one over two scoreless.

Hughes and Tracy each finished 2 for 3 at the plate; Patton went 1 for 4 with an RBI; Gibson scored once during a 1-for-2 day; Rich finished 1 for 3 with a walk; Gwynn went 1 for 3 and drove in a run; Akins drew Union's only walk of the day.

Up next: Union County hosted Andrews, North Carolina on Monday in non-region play, looking to match the program's highest win total (14) in six years.

The Panthers close out the week and the regular season with a Friday night doubleheader at region-leading

getting ready [for Rockmart] on Tuesday," Robbins said. "We're not holding anything back. It's going to be a good challenge and hopefully we'll be stoked to play. Usually when you know a team is very good, that's who you look forward to playing. Hopefully that will get the kids riled up a little bit and excited to meet the challenge."

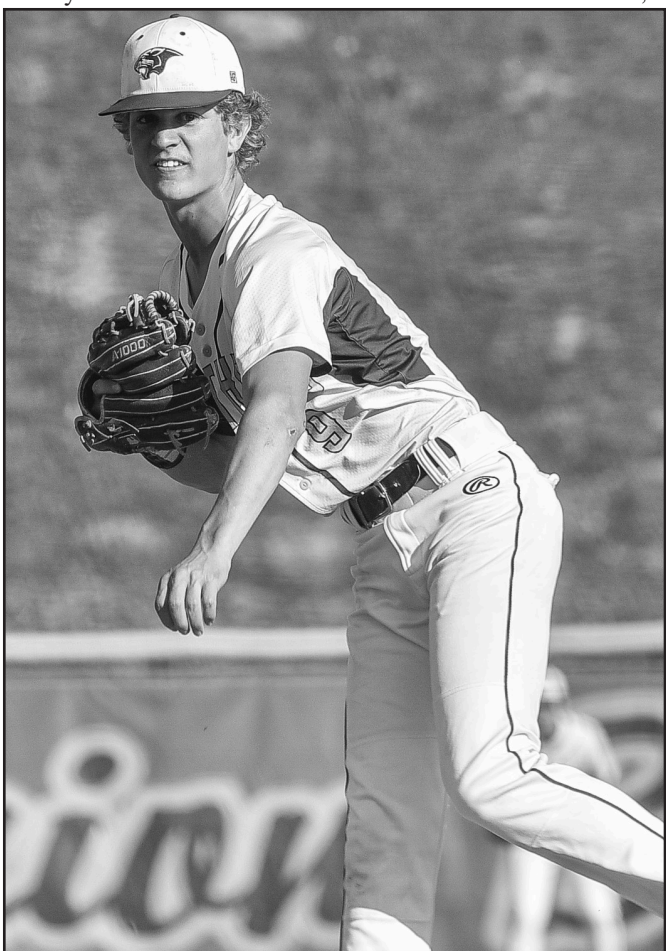
Friday's doubleheader at 4th-ranked Rockmart gets underway at 5 p.m.

UC Team Leaders

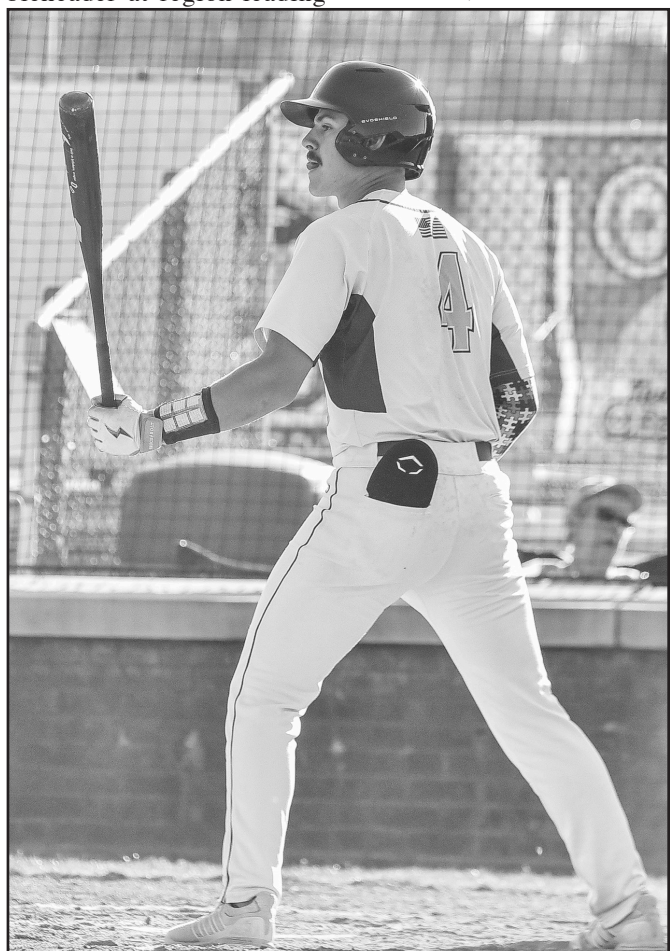
Avg: Patton .410, Hughes .370, Haney .352, Akins .338
OBP: Patton .467, Haney .446, Hughes .434, Gwynn .418
OPS: Patton .979, Haney .965, Hughes .869, Akins .824
2B: Haney 7, Patton 6, Akins 5, Brown 4
HR: Cayden Miller 2, Brown 1
RBI: Brown 22, Patton 17, Akins 16, Hughes 15
SB: Patton 13, Haney 11, Four tied at 3
ERA: Gibson 1.95, Akins 2.01, Patton 2.07, Brown 3.82
Wins: Akins 6, Patton 2, Three tied at 1
Ks: Akins 77, Patton 29, Tyler Richards 27, Gibson 14
IP: Akins 52.1, Richards 24.1, Patton 23.2, Brown 14.2



Sophomore infielder Bentley Rich has a four-game hitting streak, driving in four runs over that span. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior Maddox Patton went 6 2/3 at Coahulla Creek but was left with a no-decision when the Colts tied it up in the seventh. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Travis Tracy logged two hits apiece during both games of Union's doubleheader at Coahulla Creek. Photo/Todd Forrest

Sweeps, Streaks, & Senior Days: A Spring Stretch to Remember at Young Harris College

Young Harris Athletics not only secured multiple team wins this past week but snagged some individual honors as well! The national attention for Baseball's Jeremy Begora continues, as he adds another title to this name since last weekend. He earned the prestigious NCBWA National Player of the Week after his jaw-dropping performances at the plate.

Additionally, Begora's teammate Jonny Smith was recognized as Conference Carolinas' Baseball Freshman of the Month. The second baseman has been raking in the 2025 season, as he is slashing .408 at the plate, tallying 15 runs, 19 RBI, and two stolen bases. He has recorded nine multi-hit games this month, including a dominant four-hit, three-RBI performance in a win over Francis Marion. His impressive combination of average, power, and clutch hitting has been a cornerstone of the YH Baseball offense as the team prepares for the final stretch of the regular season. The team added another conference series win over King University April 4th & 5th while sweeping Union University in a midweek double-header on April 9th.

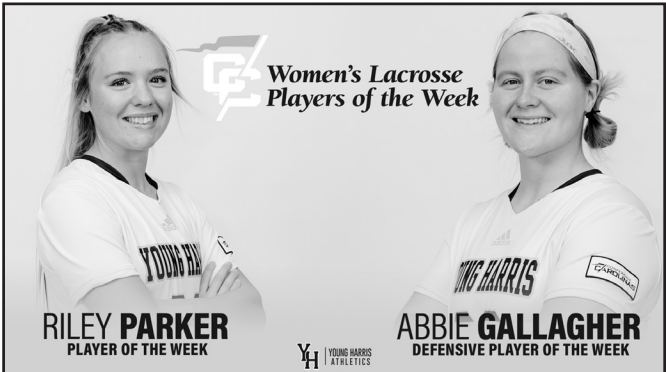
In a season-defining stretch, YH Women's Lacrosse pulled off a ranking-shaking upset over Belmont Abbey and saw two of their own earn top honors – their biggest week yet. The Mountain Lions took down the former #1 Belmont Abbey Crusaders with a final score of 19-17 April 15th.

Young Harris had nine different goal scorers, but it was Riley Parker who led the charge with six goals. Conference Carolinas named Riley Parker "Player of the Week," and Goalkeeper Abbie Gallagher as "Defensive Player of the Week." Parker didn't only score the game-winning goal in overtime at Emmanuel, but has totaled 12 points over this duration. On the defensive side of the ball, Gallagher has saved an astounding 33 shots over the two games.

Moving over to the putting green, lots of young talent has been contributing to the success of both the men's and women's squads. However, it was Men's Golf Adrian Ronn who was named



Jonny Smith Throwing Across the Diamond



Parker & Gallagher Earn Conference Honors

Conference Carolinas Freshman of the Month. He turned in top 10 finishes at both the Bearcat Classic and the Music City Invitational, posting a tournament scoring average of 70.5 across six rounds. With the CC Championships on the horizon, Ronn is hitting his stride at the perfect time as the Mountain Lions look to put together a great championship showing.

The Purple & White of Men's Lacrosse added a sweet victory over Chowan to their resume this on April 5th. After scoring two goals in the final minute, the Mountain Lions took down the Hawks 14-13. Hunter Stagg & Tommy Chriszt each recorded a hat trick, in addition to six other Mountain Lions who found the back of the net.

Mountain Lion Women's Tennis took down the Lions of Emmanuel University 6-1, winning all six singles matches. This is the second time this season Young Harris has swept out the singles side in regular season play.

Young Harris Softball dominated Belmont Abbey in a much-needed conference sweep April 9th. The Mountain Lions run-ruled the Crusaders in both games (11-0,

8-0), with Grace Young making a difference at the plate and in the circle. She fired five scoreless innings in game one, allowing only four hits and striking out two in her eleventh victory of the year. In game two, Young was a perfect 3-for-3 with three RBI at the plate.

Quick reminder: YHC Athletics will have the Mountain Lion Club Inaugural Spring Auction to raise funds for student-athlete scholarships THIS MONTH! Some exceptional items have been donated. The auction link is now live and consists of a 14-day online bidding period from April 10 at 8 a.m. to April 24 at 7 p.m. and a live event with free food and drinks on April 24 from 6-8 p.m.

Tons of midweek Mountain Lion action on the schedule! Kicking things off at the diamonds, both YH Baseball and Softball hit the fields on Wednesday, April 16.

Softball takes on Erskine College at a 2/4:30PM doubleheader, while Baseball faces UAH at 3 p.m. At the Bob & Gayle Nichols Tennis Complex, Men's and Women's Tennis will take on Shorter University for their Senior Day at 4 p.m. Under the lights on Friday night, April 18, Men's Lacrosse matches up with Montreat College at 7 p.m.

Learn to play Pickleball

The Blairsville Pickleball Club, in conjunction with the Union County Recreation Department, will hold free beginning pickleball classes every Tuesday evening starting at 6 PM, weather permitting.

Classes will start April 1st and continue through Oct 28. No registration is required, and all required equipment is provided. Certified instructors will teach the classes, and all ages are welcome!

The classes will take place at the outdoor courts at the Union Co. Pickleball Complex: 108 Chase Drive, Blairsville (next to the Rec Center).

Spring sports regular seasons winding down

By Todd Forrest
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Union County soccer and track-and-field teams both wrap up their seasons this week, ahead of next week's respective state tournaments and region meets.

Both soccer teams conclude the regular season with trips to Gilmer on Tuesday and Lumpkin County on Thursday. Both girls contests begin at 5:30 p.m. with the guys to follow.

As of this writing, the Lady Panthers sit 15th among public schools (18th overall) in the GHSA Class AA Post-season Rankings. The men are currently 16th (17th overall).

The track and field squads visit Dawson County on Tuesday before wrapping up the regular season on Wednesday at Creekview.

The Region 7-AA meet is April 21 and 24 at Coahulla Creek. Both days begin at 11:30 a.m. Sectionals will be May 3 at Buck Godfrey Stadium in Decatur.

Union County golf has two weeks remaining in its regular season, beginning with a Thursday matchup vs. Gilmer at Butternut Creek.

Next week, Union County visits Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe on Tuesday, April 22.

The region meet is April 28 at Windstone Golf Club in Ringgold. The boys' Class AA State match is May 19-20 at Bull Creek East Golf Course in Midland.

The Class AA girls will crown a state champion at Maple Ridge Golf Club in Columbus.



Avery Hussion



Turner West

Union County Recreation Department Football, Cheer, and Girls Flag Football is now open!



Football/Cheer registration fee is \$115.00, Kindergarten-6th grade.

Girl's Flag Football registration is \$65.00, 3rd grade-8th grade

Football, Cheer and Girl's Flag Football are grade based. The grade you are going into for the 2025-26 school year is the grade you play in. A copy of the child's birth certificate is mandatory for registration.

Registration ends Thursday, May 1st. You will receive a text for uniform fittings.

You may register online at <https://unioncounty.recdesk.com> or in person at The Union County Sports Center located at 519 Industrial Blvd. Our office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8-6, and Wednesday from 8-4:30. For questions, call 706-439-6074.

Union

2025 UNION FOOTBALL
SPRING PRACTICE
SCHEDULE

PRACTICE FROM 6PM TO 8PM

APRIL
22

APRIL
24

APRIL
25

APRIL
28

APRIL
29

MAY
1

MAY
2

MAY
6

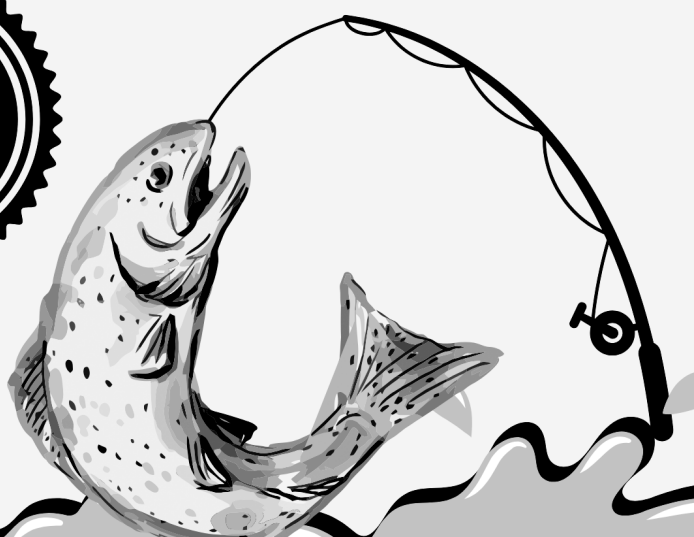
MAY
7

MAY
8
SPRING GAME
7PM @ HOME
-Christian Heritage

Union County Parks and Recreation
PRESENTS:

FISHING
at Reece Farm

Fishing Hotdogs
Cornhole
Kickball
Door Prizes



WEDNESDAY, MAY 28TH
5:30-8:30PM

\$5/person | Ages 15 & Under

Register by calling 706-439-6074 or visit
www.unioncounty.recdesk.com/community

Union

2025 UNION FOOTBALL
SCHEDULE

VS. GILMER CO.
AUGUST 22ND



@ FANNIN CO.
AUGUST 29TH



@ MURRAY CO.
SEPTEMBER 5TH



VS. ROCKMART
SEPTEMBER 12TH



@ N. MURRAY CO.
SEPTEMBER 19TH



VS. LFO LAKEVIEW-FORT-OGLETHORPE
SEPTEMBER 26TH



VS. RINGGOLD
OCTOBER 3RD



VS. COALHULLA CREEK
OCTOBER 17TH



@ SONORAVILLE
OCTOBER 24TH



@ NO. COBB CHRISTIAN
OCTOBER 30TH

