

Soccer: State Tournament kicks off Thursday at UCHS

Union County men to host Haralson County in first round on Friday

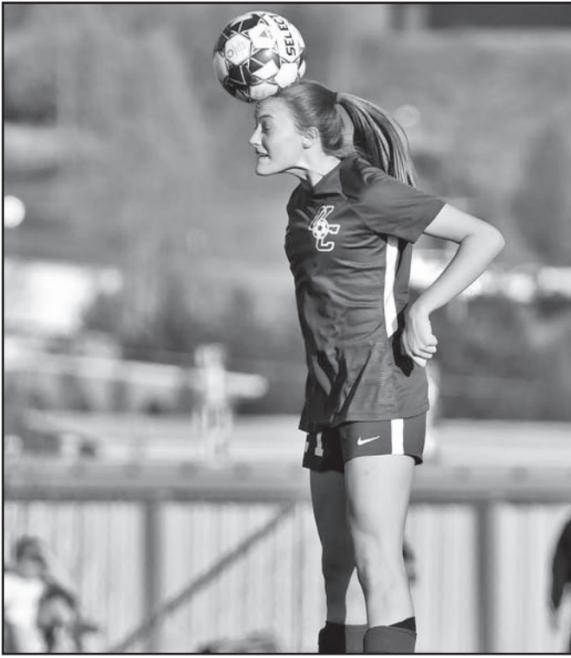
By Todd Forrest
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Union County hosted Pickens last week in a tune-up for the upcoming Class AA State Tournament that gets underway Thursday and Friday at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

With both coaches agreeing to shorten the match to 60 minutes -- 30 minutes each half -- the Lady Panthers (5-3, 4-2) and Pickens played to a scoreless tie last Tuesday, April 13 in Blairsville.

Meanwhile, the seventh-ranked Union County guys (9-2, 8-0) suffered a 2-0 loss in an abbreviated contest that was reduced to 70 minutes (35 minutes each half). Beforehand, it was also determined by the coaches that the varsity squads would man the pitch during the first half, and the junior varsity teams would take over after the intermission.

Union County soccer returns to a full 80 minutes of action with Thursday's first-round fixture that features the No. 2 seed Lady Panthers hosting Region 5-AA's No. 3 seed Temple. The top-seeded Union County



Freshman Lara Turner leaps for a header vs Pickens. Photo/Todd Forrest

men get underway Friday with an opening-round contest vs. 4-seed Haralson County. Haralson County enters the postseason riding a five-game losing skid and sporting a 2-11 overall record. They have dropped four games by

10-0 scores and lost a preseason scrimmage 9-0. Winless in region-play, Haralson's two wins came over an 0-7-1 Chattooga County squad.

Friday's match will kick off at 6 p.m. at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.



The Lady Panthers thank the home crowd following the final regular-season match of 2021. Photo/Todd Forrest

Meanwhile, Temple sports a 4-5 overall record and a 3-3 region mark. Despite entering state as the No. 3 seed, Temple finished tied for second with Callaway. The two schools would require three different tiebreakers to settle the second

and third seeds in 5-AA with Callaway narrowly receiving the nod by allowing one less goal in region play.

The Lady Panthers will kick at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

Should Union County advance to the Sweet 16, the competition will take a significant step forward for both squads as the Lady Panthers would likely visit No. 2 Lovett with the Union men playing host to sixth-ranked Lovett.



Senior goalie Aaron Helton hopes his Panthers have one more playoff run left in the tank. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union track and field enters home stretch with Region meet one week away

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Homer - With the Region 8-AA track and field meet scheduled for April 28-30 at Banks County High School, Union County prepped by paying a visit to the host school's Leopard Classic Invitational on April 16.

Elbert County joined Union and host Banks County as the lone entrees from Region 8-AA at last Friday's meet. Rounding out the field was Athens Christian, Chestatee, Madison County and Oglethorpe County.

Despite the competitive field in Homer, Union County finished first or second in eight different events, including first-place performances in the boys 400-meter and 4x400 relay.

Zander Rotko crossed the finish-line first in the 400M with a time of 53.12 seconds, narrowly edging Madison's Jakeem Johnson by .26.

The boys 4x400 relay team came in first by more than 1.5 seconds - clocking in at 3:34.33.

Hannah Long took home second in the girls 400M race with a time of 1:06.60 - 5.4 seconds back of Oglethorpe senior Ella Stoudemire.

Linley Jones was the runner-up in the 300M hurdles after crossing the line less than a second behind first at 52.59.

Riley Allison cleared 4-feet, 10 inches in the high jump to come in second place. Mia McCombs turned in a 15-2.25 in the long jump for another runner-up finish. Oglethorpe's Jayda Jones took home first with a 15-11.25.

Hunter Hartzog was sec-

ond in the 1600M race with a time of 4:44.41 - nearly 3 seconds behind Chestatee's Gavin Grater.

Riley Thomas placed second in the long jump at 19-7. Elbert's Quindarius Hall was first with a distance of 20-flat.

Other top-three finishers for Union County included Hannah Gregory in the 1600M, Katie Byers in the girls high jump and Long in the 100M hurdles.

Hartzog came in the third in the 800M race. The boys 4x800 relay also took home bronze. The girls 4x400 relay team placed fourth.

Noah Underwood was fourth in the boys discus and shot put events. Luke Gambrell came in fourth in the boys 1600M, Elliot Stepps placed fourth in the boys 200M. Natalie Payne was fourth in the 3200M.

Benton MacKaye Trail Association hikes for April 23rd thru April 30th

The following hikes are sponsored by the Benton MacKaye Trail Association. The current social distancing and health rules are used by hike Leaders.

April 23 (Friday) - Benton MacKay Trail Association sponsors a moderate 7 mile hike on Wildcat Creek-Turner Trail Loop with side trip to Rocky Ford cascades. Approximately 7 miles with brief steep segments. A few

lady slippers were found on the trail in 2020.

Hiking poles recommended. Trail located in GA Wildlife Management Area. Hike leader Steve Dennison. For more information, contact HikeleaderSD@bmta-mail.com.

April 26 (Monday) - The Benton MacKaye Trail Association sponsors a moderate 5 mile hike on the Park Creek/Park Ridge Trails, Standing

Indian area near Franklin, North Carolina. There will be beautiful spring flowers to admire. Hike Leader Evelin Yarns. For more information contact hikeleaderEY@bmta-mail.org.

April 28 (Wednesday) - The Benton MacKaye Trail Association sponsors an easy to moderate 1.5 mile hike to see wild flowers near Mulky Gap, Blairsville. Hike Leaders Joy and Frank Forehand. For more information contact hikeleaderJF@bmta-mail.org.

April 30 (Friday) - The Benton MacKaye Trail Association sponsors a moderate 4-5 mile hike on the BMT-Hudson Gap and return. Many wildflowers to see. This is one of the Four Season Hike Series on the same trail.

Dog-friendly hike (adult humans may bring a leashed dog). Hike Leader Ken Cissna. For more information contact hikeleaderKC@bmta-mail.org. NT(Apr21,22)CA

Baseball... continued from 2B

Swartz allowed 4 hits and 4 earned runs in 4 1/3 innings. He struck out seven, surrendered five walks and hit a batter. Mullanack lasted 2 innings, giving up 6 earned, 5 hits and two walks. Dyer walked four, hit two batters and allowed a hit in 1/3 of an inning.

Panthers 13, Towns County 2 (five innings) - Hughes limited Towns to 2 hits over 4 innings and Loyd's first-inning grand slam provided Union pitching with all the run support it would require.

Swartz finished 3 for 3 with two doubles, 2 runs and 3 RBIs. Mullanack scored three times, drove in two and doubled during a 1-for-2 performance.

Towns County grabbed an early lead with a bases-loaded walk in the top-half of the first, but the Panthers responded by loading the bags for Loyd in the bottom half.

Hughes reached on a wind-aided error by the left fielder, Mullanack was hit by a pitch and Swartz worked his way aboard on a seven-pitch walk to set the stage for Loyd.

Swartz singled and later scored on an error in the third, then Shields pushed the margin to 6-1 with an RBI single.

Two walks and a one-out single pulled Towns within 6-2 in the fourth. But after loading the bases once again, Hughes got out of trouble with a strikeout and a fly-out.

Mullanack was plunked for a second time and Swartz doubled him home for a 7-2 lead after four. Dyer replaced Hughes to start the fifth and worked around a one-out single and a two-out error to keep Union's margin at five.

Shields, Towe and Brown ignited the Panthers' 6-run fifth with three-straight singles. Shields and Towe came around to score on wild pitches, Hughes walked, Dyer reached on an error and Mullanack and Swartz ended the game with back-to-back two-run doubles.



Senior catcher Damien Chitwood breathes a sigh of relief after Union clinches third place with its second win over Rabun. Photo/Todd Forrest

Hughes fanned six while pitching around six walks to limit Towns to only 2 runs in 4 innings. Dyer struck out two and gave up a hit in one inning. At the plate, he went 1 for 3 with a stolen base and a run.

Shields finished 2 for 2 with an RBI and a run. Towe and Brown each scored during 1-for-3 games. Chitwood also ended his day 1 for 3.

Up next: Union County hosted White County on Monday before traveling to Cleveland for the Friday rematch. The first pitch is at 5:55 p.m.

With the Panthers earning a No. 3 seed in the State Tournament, they will likely travel to seventh-ranked Callaway for a best-of-three first round series on Thursday, April 29.

Rec Volleyball Training

Registration will open on April 21, 2021 at the Union County Sports Center

June 7th, 2021 - July 30th, 2021
for ages 11-14
Classes on Mondays and Fridays

\$55 for all 14 classes or \$5 per class
Beginner and advanced classes
Limited space available

Please register in person at the Union County Sports Center located at 519 Industrial Blvd.

Deadline to register for all classes is May 21, 2021
Please call (706)-439-6074 with any questions

Deyton 5K Fun Run/Walk

When: Saturday, May 8, 2021 (9 am to 1 pm)

Where: Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds

Details:

Show your love and support for Greg (Goob) as he is fighting neuroendocrine cancer. After Southwire closed its doors, Greg lost his job and his medical insurance. All proceeds will help pay for doctor appointments, hospital visits and medicines.

- Charity 5K Fun Run/ walk at 9 am pledge of \$30 which includes a shirt! If you would like a t-shirt, please fill out the order form by April 28 using the QR code
- Gospel music/singing (lower campground pavilion)
- Silent Auction (crafts, jewelry, baked good, etc)
- Photography by Aviela - 15 minute mini session of 3 images for \$15 donation
- BBQ plates will be sold for lunch starting at 11 am for \$8/each

Greg (Goob) and Glenda Deyton

My flesh and my heart may fail. But god is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
-Psalms 73:26

Learn to play Pickleball

Free Beginners Classes every Saturday at 10 a.m. (weather permitting). All equipment is provided and there is no need to sign-up... just come. Courts are located on Chase Drive behind the Health Department.

For more information contact: blairsvillepickleball@gmail.com. NT(Apr21,22)CA

Trout stocking sites week of April 12-16, 2021

Fannin: Rock Creek, Toccoa River and Toccoa River Tailwaters (below Lake Blue Ridge Dam)
Lumpkin: Etowah River and Nimblewill Creek
Murray: Holly Creek
Union: Cooper Creek

Note: Information is subject to change. Please call the hatchery at 706-838-4723 for questions. Stay up-to-date with stocking and events through Facebook www.facebook.com/chattahoocheeforestnfh. The hatchery also provides trout for the state. Please contact Georgia DNR for information on sites stocked by the state.