

Sports

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Soccer Final Four: Tattnall County sinks Panthers in OT

Baker, Bohms lead Union into Final Four with 1-0 win at Putnam County

By Todd Forrest
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No. 4 Tattnall County halted seventh-ranked Union County's postseason run in the Class AA Final Four with a 3-1 overtime victory on Friday night in Reidsville.

The Panthers earned the program's second final-four appearance via a 1-0 victory at No. 6 Putnam County on Tuesday, April 25.

Junior Evan Bohms broke the scoreless tie during the 28th minute of the Elite Eight contest when he sliced a right-footed shot past the keeper just inside the far post.

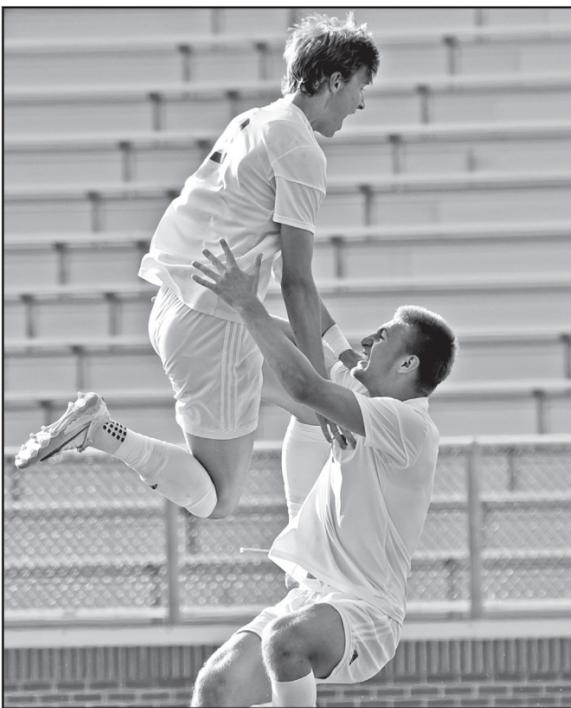
Unfortunately, three days later, Union's hopes of advancing to the State finals were dealt a severe blow when Bohms suffered a second-half injury at Tattnall County and didn't return.

Panthers 1, Tattnall County 3 (OT) - Antonio Solaro put the Panthers on the board during the second minute when Tattnall failed to clear a corner kick, allowing the sophomore to put the loose ball into the net.

Like they have all post-season, the Union County defense clamped down and took a 1-nil advantage into the second half before surrendering the equalizer during the 57th minute.

With a banged-up squad that saw five starters, Bohms included, either out of action or playing injured, the Panthers battled into overtime before eventually running out of gas.

After Bohms went to the sideline during the 63rd, senior goalkeeper Trent Baker kept things even at 1-1 when he de-



Junior Evan Bohms (left) and senior Wilson Walker (right) celebrate Bohms' game-winning goal at Putnam County. Photo/Todd Forrest

nied a free kick and the rebound in the 68th.

During the 78th, Union County misfired from close range on a well-placed cross. After another stop from Baker in the 79th, the Panthers hung on to play overtime by denying a Tattnall corner kick with under 30 seconds remaining.

Tattnall broke the tie with a goal early in the first overtime session, but once again, Union County failed to convert from point-blank, this time via a corner kick.

The home team needed only 149 seconds to break things open at 3-1 during the second 10-minute overtime

Panthers 1, Putnam County 0 - Going into Eatonton on Tuesday, head coach Tim Hunter's game plan was to gain an early lead and make the undefeated War Eagles play from behind.

"[Putnam is a] team that tries to jump out front and then spread you out, but we knew if we could jump ahead, it would make them play a style they don't like to play, and aren't used to playing."

Through the first 27 minutes, both teams were even on shot attempts and corner kicks until Bohms dribbled upfield and found some room to the



Senior goalkeeper Trent Baker is greeted by teammates at Putnam County following his third shutout of the 2023 Class AA State Tournament. Photo/Todd Forrest

right of the penalty area, where he snuck a perfectly-placed shot inside the left crossbar.

However, the play of the day came later in the half as Union led 1-0 with time ticking down in the first half. That's when Putnam got off a shot from up close, but Baker delivered a miraculous kick save with 35 seconds on the clock.

"It was just a through-ball, and I thought [Putnam] was going to go right, so I went right, but the ball went left," Baker said after the game. "I just barely got a piece of it, and it hit the post and bounced out."

Trailing 1-0, Putnam attacked early and often during

the second half, putting the heat on Baker and the Union defense.

Following the intermission, Baker turned away War Eagle shots in the 57th, 61st and the 78th minutes.

"Before the game I'm usually a little nervous, but during the game, you don't really think about it -- you're just so focused, I guess," Baker added.

After Union's previous two seasons ended in the Elite Eight, the Union County goalkeeper provided a brief insight on how it feels to finally get that monkey off the collective backs of his senior class.

"This feels really, really good. I can't really describe it."

Looking ahead: Union County is primed for another run in 2024 with eight starters returning: Kooper Ashcraft, Bohms, Eli Decker, Benton Gregory, Zuriel Mancillas, Joel Mendoza, Seth Rutan and Antonio Solaro. Additionally, part-time starter Wes Seiler will back next spring.

Other returning contributors include Zach DePalma, Ty Hogsted and Matthew Ortiz.

The biggest question marks will be on the defensive end following the graduations of Baker and sweeper Isaiah Ortiz. The lone loss on the offensive side is senior forward Wilson Walker.

Golf: Lady Panthers place 2nd at Area



The Union County girls golf team placed second at Hard Labor Creek GC (Social Circle) on Tuesday, April 25. L-R: Hope Patton, Saylor Noe, Coach Greg Chambers, Ivie Chapman and Lydia McNabb.

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Social Circle - Led by freshman Lydia McNabb's 95, the Union County girls finished second at the Area 3-AA match and qualified for the State Championships at Pierce County later this month.

McNabb opened her round with a 50 on the front-9 but fired a 45 on the back to stake team-low medalist honors and third-overall for the tournament.

Along with senior Saylor Noe's 111 (55-56), Union County's total score of 206

was good enough for second behind Area champion Athens Academy's 166 (79 and 87 individual scores).

Banks County finished third with a 238 (118 and 120) and Fellowship Christian rounded out the top-four with a 239 (111 and 128).

Other Union County scores included Ivie Chapman's 112 (59-53) and Hope Patton's 115 (58-57).

Other teams participating were Westside-Augusta (248), Putnam County (289), Washington County (307), Glenn Hills (333) and East Jackson, who had only one golfer finish her round.

Okefenokee Golf Club in Blackshear will host the two-day State Championships beginning May 22.

Meanwhile, the Union County men finished sixth out of 17 teams at Area on Monday, April 24.

Huston West finished one shot back of an individual State-qualifying score.

Other members of the 2023 boys team included Terry Ball, Jett Busbee, Leo Nam, Izayah Sewell, Turner West, Jack Wilson, Maddox Young.

Other girls golfers this spring were Hensley Adams, Aubrie Akins, Sofia Charboneau and Kendyl McBride.

MGC collects five State Championships

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Blairsville's Mountain Gymnastics Center (MGC) collected five titles from among its seven competitors at the USA Gymnastics Xcel State Championships last month.

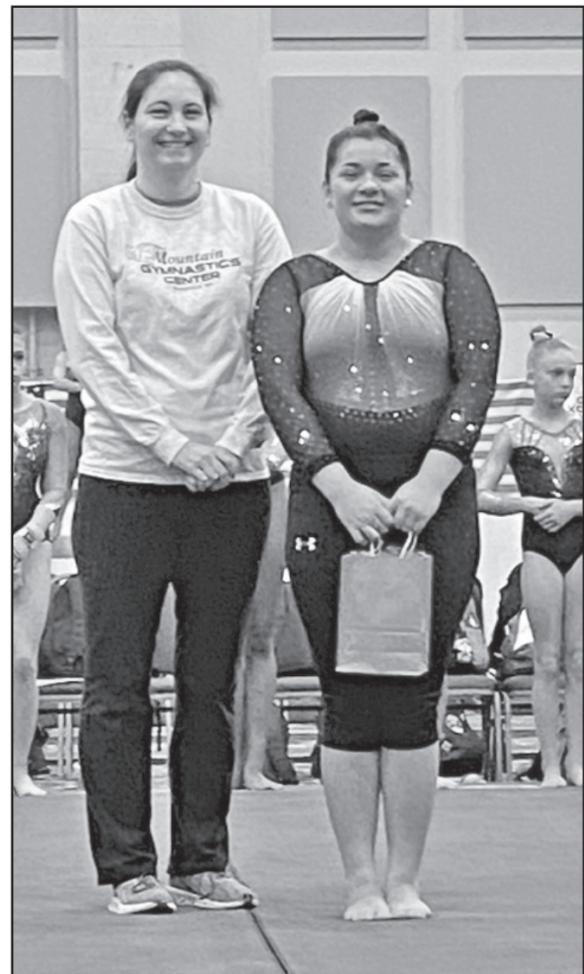
Emma Schuette took home gold on the vault (9.625), the bars (9.7), the floor (9.575), and all-around (38.225) in USAG Xcel Platinum action. Addison Harkins was crowned State Champion on beam (9.6) for USAG Xcel Gold.

Additionally, these state championship meets are qualifiers for the Region 8 Xcel Regional Championships, which will be held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on May 5-6.

MGC also qualified three girls for regionals: Shaylyne Davis and Harkins for Xcel Gold, and Schuette for Xcel Platinum. They will compete against gymnasts from Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, North Carolina and South Carolina.

Each Regional Championship also has a team for each State. To qualify for the State team, they must finish among the top eight overall, per level, in all-around scores at State.

Schuette is the top qualifier for the Georgia State Team in Xcel Platinum, logging the highest all-around score of 2023 Xcel Platinum competitors. She will join seven other gymnasts from Georgia to compete as a team against the top-eight gymnasts from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, North



Senior Brandy Barlow (right) with MGC coach Caroline Thomas.

Carolina and South Carolina. Other MGC competitors at State included Davis, who placed second all-around with a 37.35 in USA Gold. She placed second on beam at 9.5 and second on bars with a 9.475.

Reagan Gwynn placed

fourth on beam, tallying a 9.15. Addyson Lee was eighth on beam with a 9.2; Kylee Coggins tied for seventh on floor at 9.35.

Brandy Barlow came in ninth on bars at 8.65 in USA Platinum Competition.

Track: Seven silver medalists highlight Union County's 8-AA meet

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Nicholson - Union County track and field logged 22 State-sectional qualifying performances at last week's Region 8-AA Championships at East Jackson High School despite battling cold and sloppy conditions during Wednesday's track events.

Those 22 performances were shared among Katie Byers, Mattie Brookshire, Lola Hunter, Noel Hyatt, Linley Jones, Cooper Kluth, Jonah Kluth, Ava Loyd, Sam Page, Zander Rotko, Nolan Thompson, Taylor Whitehead, the boys' 4x200 and 4x400 relay teams, and the girls' 4x100, 4x200, 4x400 and 4x800 teams.

Silver medalists went to the girls' 4x800 relay team at 10 minutes, 47 seconds, the boys' 4x400 team (3:35.96), Hunter in the 3200M race (11:59.92), Cooper Kluth in the 110 hurdles (16.56) and Jonah Kluth was second in the high jump at 5-feet, 8 inches. Rotko's time of 52.24 placed him as runner-up in the 400M and Whitehead's 23.34 was second in the 200M.

Third-place finishers were the 4x100, 4x200 and 4x400 girls' teams and the 4x200 boys' team. Other Union County bronze medalists were Brookshire in the shot put (35-5.75), Byers in the 100 hurdles (18.48), Hunter in the 1600M (5:34.27), Cooper Kluth in the 300 hurdles (43.37) and Loyd in the 100M (13.75).

Rounding out Union County's qualifiers were fourth-place finishes from Hyatt in the high jump (4-4) and Jones in the triple jump (31-3).

Jonah Kluth's time of 11.64 was good enough for fourth in the 100M, Page's 5-4 in the high jump qualified the senior for sectionals. Thompson crossed the line at 43.98 in the 300 hurdles and Whitehead



Freshman Lola Hunter placed second in the 3200M. Photo/Todd Forrest



Taylor Whitehead (left) and Zander Rotko (right) placed fourth and second, respectively, in the 400M. Photo/Todd Forrest

logged a 53.62 in the 400M.

Those just missing the cut in fifth-place were Abby Barrett (triple jump), Brookshire (discus), Jones (100 hurdles, 300 hurdles, long jump), Hannah Kazmierzak (800M), Daniel McPhee (triple jump), Eli Underwood (discus, shot

put), Lydia Wagner (3200M) and the boys' 4x800.

East Jackson will host the Class AA Sectionals beginning Saturday at 10:30 a.m. McEachern High School in Powder Springs will host the State Championships May 11-13.



Junior Katie Byers took home third in 8-AA in the 100M hurdles. Photo/Todd Forrest



Cooper Kluth (right) finishes a close second to Banks County's Aaron Scott in the 110M Hurdles during the 8-AA Region Championships at East Jackson on Wednesday, April 26. Photo/Todd Forrest

Photos: Suches community hosts Run Above the Clouds 10K and 5K races

Photos by Todd Forrest



The starting group approaches the General Store after departing from Woody Gap School.



Participants celebrate the completion of the race.



Runners make the turn onto Cooper Gap Road.



The RATC course passes the scenic Woody Lake on Hwy. 60.



Runners return to Hwy. 60 to begin the final stretch back to Woody Gap School.



More scenic locations along the RATC course.

Veterans Golf League Update

This week's competition was rained out but last week's competition was won by the team lead by Steve Crayton. Team members contributing to the victory were Carolyn Crayton, John Harkins and Ron Robinson.

The winning score was 60 which is 12 strokes under par. Congratulations ! NT(May3,21)

Learn to play Pickleball

Free classes first and third Tuesdays at 6 PM (weather permitting). Equipment provided and no registration is required. Courts are located on Chase Drive behind Health Department.

NT(May3,22)CA