

Sports

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Track: Union qualifies for State Championships in 12 events Whitehead's 10.74 breaks own school record in 100M

By Todd Forrest
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Nicholson - UCHS track and field will compete for a Class AA State Championship in 12 events later this week during the three-day state meet at East Jackson High School beginning Thursday, May 9.

During last weekend's Class AA State Sectionals at East Jackson, Union County turned in 14 top-eight qualifying performances, headlined by a pair of top-six finishes in the boys' 100M and 200M races.

Seniors Taylor Whitehead (second) and JT Neal (sixth) each punched their ticket to state in the 100M. Whitehead clocked in at 10.74 seconds breaking his own school record of 10.78, set 10 days earlier at the 8-AA meet. Neal turned in the sixth best time of the day, crossing the line at 10.97.

With a time of 10.60, Athens Academy's Austin McGee claimed the 100M dash's lowest time.

Whitehead finished third in the 200M at 21.87; Neal was sixth at 22:48. Christopher Swint of Davidson Fine Arts recorded the top time at 21.64; McGee crossed the line second at 21.86.

The girls 4x800 team of Ellie Adams, Lola Hunter, Noel Hyatt and Hannah Kazmierzak turned in the fourth fastest time (10:51.69) of the day behind Athens Academy (10:23.62), Fellowship Chris-



Taylor Whitehead (center) and JT Neal (left) both qualified for the State Championship in the 100M but couldn't overtake Athens Academy's Austin McGee (right), who logged the fastest sectional time in the state on Saturday afternoon at East Jackson High School. Whitehead and Neal also qualified for state in the 200M race. Photo/Todd Forrest

tian (10:36.33) and Jeff Davis (10:50.88).

Hunter qualified in three individual events, the 800M, 1600M and 3200M. Hunter came in fifth in the 800 with a time of 2:32.42; fifth in the 1600M at 5:28.19 and sixth in the 3200M at 12:28.08.

Athens Academy junior

Maya Davis swept all three events with times of 2:21.64, 5:17.85 and 11:27.27, respectively.

UCHS freshman Sofia Foster qualified in the shot put with a distance of 33 feet, 7 inches. Athens Academy junior Veronica Babbitt was first at 42-03.

The boys 4x100 team of Jonah Kluth, JT Neal, Tyler Parker and Zander Rotko turned in the sixth best time at 43.58. Sumter County (42.60), Tattnall County (42.72), Appling County (42.74), Vidalia (43.29) and Athens Academy (43.30) were the top five.

Sophomore Ava Lloyd

was seventh in the 100M at 12.81 behind first-place junior I'Mani Lowery of Glenn Hills (12.20).

Junior Jack Wilson earned a spot in the discus state finals with a throw of 123-03 -- good enough for eighth place. Toombs County senior Brock Nobles delivered the best toss

of the day at 142-10.

The boys 4x400 relay team of Tyler Grasty, Benton Gregory, Rotko and Whitehead earned a spot at state with the eighth-best time, clocking in at 3:34.13. Appling County's 3:22.54 marked the best time of the day.

Freshman Nomi Nelson was eighth in the triple jump at 31-07 as Takaiya Bacon of Vidalia finished with the top distance of 37-02.

Across the state, Rockmart hosted the remaining four regions in the other Class AA State Sectionals event. The top-eight finishers from each event from the Rockmart sectional (regions 2, 5, 6, and 7) will join the top eight from East Jackson's sectional (regions 1, 3, 4 and 8) to compete for a state title. Notable boys' finishes from Rockmart included Booker T. Washington's Kameran Warren (10.66 in the 100M), Drew Charter's 42.53 in the 4x100 and Model's Jeremias Heard (159-00 in discus).

Top girls' performances from Rockmart were Drew Charter's Madeline Cooper (11.85 in the 100M), Landmark Christian's Shari Brown (2:19.64 in the 800M) and 5:15.28 in the 1600M) and Fannin County's Lindsey Holloway, who clocked in at 11:49.20 in the 3200M. Fannin's 4x800 relay team finished in 10:00.12.

The May 9-11 State Championships get underway each day at noon with the final events scheduled between 6-6:30 p.m.

Soccer: UCHS' Evan Bohms chooses Georgia State over UNG

By Todd Forrest
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Union County senior soccer standout Evan Bohms will remain a Panther.

Joined by his parents, teammates, coaches and friends on Tuesday, April 30, Bohms inked a scholarship with Georgia State University during the signing day ceremony in the UCHS all-purpose room.

"Georgia State fits my playing style and they've been very supportive of me and made me feel like a part of their family," Bohms said. "Another thing that is important for me is, I want to stay in-state so I can see my family as much as possible. [GSU is] in the Sun Belt Conference, one of the top leagues in Division 1 soccer and they play against some very tough competition."

After reaching out to the school early in his high school career, Georgia State's interest in Bohms piqued while attending games for his club team, Concorde Fire.

"Things kind of flowed from there, they liked me and I liked them and it's been happily ever after," he said.

Before signing with Georgia State, Bohms considered the University of North Georgia due to the coaching connection between UNG and Concorde Fire.

"Their head coach was my club coach this past season, so [UNG] was my second option," he said. "Just the competitiveness of the schools was the difference. I wanted to be at a Division 1 school and be able to compete at the highest level. And like I said, the conference they are in is unbelievable. I



Union County soccer star Evan Bohms is headed to Atlanta as the newest member of Georgia State's soccer program. Bohms was joined by his parents Chad and Dory during last week's signing day ceremony at UCHS. Photo/Todd Forrest

also had North Florida and Elon looking at me but, I wanted to stay in [Georgia]."

Bohms hopes to major in engineering at Georgia State.

"I'm going to take their engineering pathway and see how it goes," he said. "It's something I've always been into, and I kind of associate engineering with building Legos.

And if that doesn't work out, my second option is business and finance.

"I want to thank my parents, coaches and friends for pushing me to where I am today," he added. "I can't thank them all enough."

Bohms is the son of Chad and Dory Bohms and came to UCHS by way of Jacksonville,

FL ahead of his junior year. Over the last two seasons, the Panthers' midfielder piled up 17 goals and 10 assists while leading Union County to the Class AA Final Four in 2023 and Sweet 16 in 2024.

"Coaching Evan these last two years has been exceptional," UCHS head coach Tim Hunter said. "This is a

young man that I wish I could say I made a huge impact on his growth and development, but that would not even be remotely close to the truth. He is a ready-made college athlete, and that comes from all the years of playing elite-level club soccer growing up.

"I know, as the father of a college athlete, just how

many miles of driving go into taking him to practices and games. That commitment is remarkable. It is rare to find a kid with the kind of athletic ability it takes to play D1 soccer. It's also rare to find a kid with his kind of work ethic. But it's super rare to find both of those characteristics in the same person."

Spring football underway as Panthers look for answers at QB and WR

By Todd Forrest
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Spring football completed its first full week with several new faces at key positions.

The biggest question surrounding the 2024 squad is at the quarterback position and who will replace Region 8-AA Player of the Year Caiden Tanner. At the moment, rising junior Cade Dockrey and sophomore Chetley Cox are the frontrunners for the spot after Dockrey spent 2023 earning an all-region nod at safety while splitting time at receiver.

As for Cox, the rising sophomore started behind center in each JV game last fall.

Regardless of which QB earns the nod, the early returns show the offense will lean on a deep O-line that returns three starters in Kaden Combs, Jaxon Thotterow and Easton Shumaker. However, with depth at a premium in 2024, each of those returners may be called upon to pick up some slack on the defensive side of the ball.

On the outside, rising senior Maddox Young is back with the program for the first time since 2022 and looks like



Rising junior Cade Dockrey (L) and rising sophomore Chetley Cox (R) headline the Union County quarterback battle while splitting reps during spring practice. Photos/Todd Forrest



the frontrunner to fill the void left by do-everything receiver Jensen Goble. Additionally, rising junior receiver Tyler Parker is expected to take on a more significant role this fall.

The Union defense received some good news concerning rising senior linebacker Ethan Lester's surgically repaired knee that he injured in the playoff loss at Rockmart.

Early reports indicated at least a 12-month recovery, all but ending his high school career. But Lester is expected to be ready to go for the Aug. 23 season opener at Gilmer.

A healthy Lester, plus the return of rising senior Connor Schuknecht provides Union's defense with two punishing linebackers, along with Dusty Aaron in the trenches

and Braden Plott at safety.

Schuknecht will likely take the bulk of the carries at running back in place of outgoing workhorse Braylen Rader.

In all, 57 players attended the first week of practice, including 13 incoming freshmen.

Spring practice continues for another week before the team takes off for the remainder of May. Union County expects to take part in 7-on-7 scrimmages throughout the month of June ahead of the July 4 dead period.

The season opens with a scrimmage vs. Chestatee on Aug. 9 before an Aug. 16 bye.

After the trip to Gilmer on Aug. 23, Union hosts Fannin County Aug. 30.

Life in Region 7-AA play begins with Murray County at home on Sept. 6. The Panthers travel to Rockmart on Sept. 13, host North Murray on Sept. 20 and visit Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe Sept. 27.

October begins with a visit to Ringgold, followed by a bye and a trip to Coahulla Creek. Union County returns home Oct. 25 to face Sonorville before finishing the year with North Cobb Christian on Nov. 1.

QB Club's Mountain Made Golf tourney brings 64 players to Butternut

By Todd Forrest
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The second annual Union County Quarterback Club's Mountain Made Golf Tournament proved another resounding success on Friday, May 2.

Sixty-four golfers made up 16 teams during the fundraiser tournament, won by the group of Tony Hamby, Hunter Hughes, Shorty Hughes and Jacob Schuler.

The low-net winning team consisted of Jason Busbee, Levi Kendrick, Trint Rich and Andrew Williams.

Second-place low net went to Tommy Darrah, Robbie Kelley, Shawn O'Hara and Scott Peever.

The Union County quarterback Club would like to thank the following sponsors. Without their generous support, the tournament would not be possible.

Diamond Level sponsors: Chick-fil-A, Expos, Harvey Jaxon, Kendrick & Associates Law, PC, North GA Sign and Apparel, Panel Built, Rich Trucking, State Farm Jerry Henderson, United Community Bank and TruForms Concrete.

Gold Level sponsors: Alexanders Store, Anna Davis Realty, King Ford, Rib Country, Shooks Welding and Workout Anytime.

Silver Level Sponsors: Blairsville Dentistry, Colwell Construction, Gooch Trucking, Jennifer Wimpy Fletes CPA, Lamar Paris for Commissioner, Lance Law Firm, Pinnacle Bank and Sushi Shack.

Hole Sponsors: Akins & Davenport, PC, Alexanders Store, Anna Davis ReMax Realty, Bellview Home Furnishings, Carter Williams, Chill and Fill, Colwell Construction, Cozy Cove Realty, Chick-Fil-A, David Hand, Expos Base-



The winning team of Tony Hamby, Shorty Hughes, Hunter Hughes and Jacob Schuler.



Head football coach Micheal Perry (second from left) is joined by his dad Mike (L), his brother Lewis (R) and UCHS defensive coordinator Mark Wade at the golf tournament. Photo/Todd Forrest



Tyler Parker (R) and Chetley Cox (L). Photo/Todd Forrest



Beau Webster (L) and Braden Plott (R). Photo/Todd Forrest

UC golf ends with fourth place finishes at Area

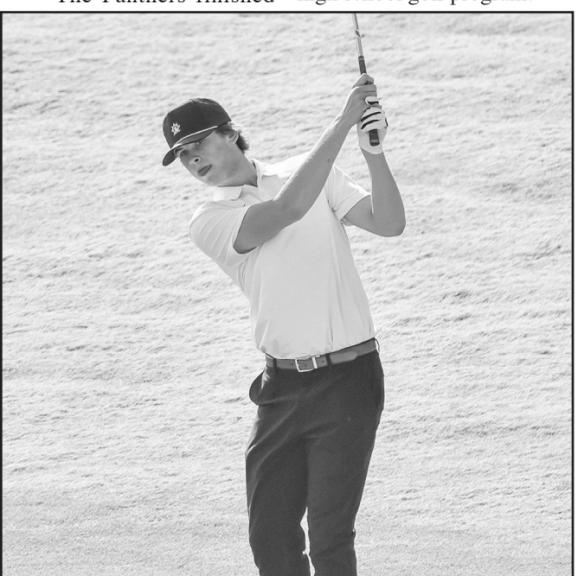
The Union County men turned in their highest Area finish in 10 years but it wasn't enough to crack the top three and qualify for State.

Freshman Hayden Price led the way for Union County with an 81, Huston West shot an 85, Will Henson fired 87, Leo Nam finished with a 93, Turner West had a 94 and Nicholas Nushtazev shot 123. The Panthers finished

behind Athens Academy, Fellowship Christian and Banks County.

The ladies placed fourth with Sofia Charboneau shooting 111, Hope Patton 117, Lara Turner 129 and Kendyl McBride 143.

Union County golf coach Greg Chambers would like to thank Old Union and Butternut Creek for their support of the high school golf program.



Hayden Price and the Panthers didn't feature a senior on the 2024 men's golf team. Photo/Todd Forrest



SCHOLARSHIP SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT
HONORING JACOB LYNCH

JULY 13, 2024 @ 8 AM
COLWELL FIELD AT MEEKS PARK

SCHOLARSHIPS WILL BE GIVEN YEARLY TO UNION COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL AND UNION COUNTY MOUNTAIN EDUCATION NIGHT SCHOOL

\$200 per team

Co-Ed teams welcome

\$150 Business Donation will get your business name on a T-shirt!

100 T-shirts will be sold at the tournament.

CHRISTI LYNCH
Contact Christi with any questions
706-897-4165

Payment can be given via Cash, Check, Venmo or Zelle

Old Union Women's Golf Association 2024 season

The Old Union Women's Golf Association will open their 2024 season on May 13th with Mimosas, finger food and a few surprises. The league meets formally on Mondays for play day. They meet, again, on Thursday for informal play. The league

would like to invite lady golfers to join our group for loads of fun and camaraderie.

Anyone interested in joining this great group of ladies is asked to contact Karen Mussoline at 352-638-3649 or Cynthia Panter at 706-633-7587. NI(May8,21)ICA

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 2024-25 school year is the grade you play in. A copy of the child's birth certificate is mandatory for registration.

Registration ends Monday, June 17th at 8 AM. Late registration, \$20 more, ends Friday, June 21st at 4:30 PM. Practice will begin week of July 29th. You will receive a text for uniform fittings.

You may register online at unioncountyga.gov or in person at The Union County Recreation Department located at 519 Industrial Blvd. Our office hours are M-F 8 AM - 4:30 PM, closed for lunch 12 PM-1 PM.



Summer Camp 2024 at The Union County Recreation Department

- June 3th - 7th **Pickleball**, 5:30 PM - 7 PM
Ages 8-17, \$40
- June 10th - 14th **Outdoor Adventure Camp**, 10 AM - 3 PM, Ages 8-13, \$80
- June 17th - 19th **Volleyball Camp**, 9 AM - 12 PM, Grades 3rd-5th, \$75
- June 24th - 28th **Cheerleading Camp**
K-3rd grade, 5:00 PM - 6:15 PM
4th-6th grade, 6:30PM-8:00PM, \$50.
Must be registered for 2024-25 UCRD Cheer to participate.
- June 24th - 27th **Tennis Camp**, 10:30 AM - 12 PM
K-4th grade, \$40
- June 24th - 27th **Soccer Skills Camp**, 9 AM - 11 AM
Age 8 and up, \$40
- July 8th - 11th **Tennis Camp**, 10:30 AM - 12 PM
5th-8th grade, \$40.
- July 13th and 27th **Softball Camp**, 11 AM - 1 PM
Ages 7-10, \$30
- July 15th -19th **Baseball Camp** 8 AM - 1 PM, Ages 8-14,
Lunch will be provided, \$50.

Skill levels will range from beginner to advanced. Grade based is grade you are going into for 24-25 school year. SPACE IS LIMITED and you must register in person at The Union County Recreation Department located at 519 Industrial Blvd. More info will be given at registration. Please call 706-439-6074 with any questions. Our office is open M-F 8 AM-4:30 PM, closed for lunch 12 PM - 1 PM.