

Sports

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Golf: Girls take seventh at Class AA State Championships

Sophomore Sofia McNabb paces Union County with 13th place individual performance

By Todd Forrest
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Warner Robins - The young Union County girls golf team posted its first top-10 at State since 2018 (fourth) with a seventh-place finish during last week's Class AA Girls State Golf Championships at Southern Landings Golf Club.

Last week's performance marks the girls' fifth top-seven since 2015 - all coming under head coach Greg Chambers as members of Class AA and AAA. The 2018 squad placed fourth in AAA following a runner-up finish in AAA one year earlier.

In 2015 and 2016, Union placed third in Class AA during consecutive seasons.

Meanwhile in 2022, Union County turned in a two-day team score of 410 to finish four shots back of sixth-place East Laurens. Entering the second day in seventh following an opening-round 210, Union shaved nine strokes in the final round to finish with the day's sixth-best score of 201. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough to catch East Laurens, who entered day two with a nine-shot lead over Union, before heading onto sixth with a 206 to close out the tourney.

"I was really pleased with our performance at the state tournament," Coach Chambers said. "All of the girls gained some valuable experience in the two-day pressurized tournament. One goal was to improve our team score from the Area tournament. So I challenged the girls and they responded



The girls golf team during last week's State Championships at Southern Landings Golf Club. L-R: Hope Patton, Ivie Chapman, Coach Greg Chambers, Sofia McNabb and Saylor Noe. Photo courtesy of Greg Chambers

by improving each day of the tournament." Sophomore Sofia McNabb set the pace, finishing 13th in the individual standings with a 187 two-day tally. On the heels of a 98 to begin the tournament, McNabb teed off on day two in 16th place but used an 89 to climb to 13th, where she finished five shots back of 12th place and six ahead of 14th.

However, McNabb's second day didn't begin the way she'd planned, recording three double bogeys over the first six holes. She settled down to par

the par-5 seventh hole, kicking off a string of three consecutive pars to close out the front-9. With three pars and two double bogeys on the back-9, McNabb shaved a stroke off her front-9 total, finishing with a 44 over the final nine holes.

During the opening round on Monday, May 17, McNabb collected one par during her 46 on the front-9. She added pars at the par-4 14th and the par-5 17th during an up-and-down back-9 that opened with an 8 at the 342-yard par-4 10th.

Fellow 10th-grader Hope Patton fired Union's third-best

round of the week with a 111 in round one. Patton recorded two par 4s at the 12th and 14th, but like her teammate, she struggled early on the second nine, posting a 10 at the 10th hole.

Patton notched a 3 at the 140-yard par-3 15th, en route to a 113 second-round tally. Her two-day total of 224 resulted in a 25th-place tie.

Patton ended the tournament one shot back of 24th place and one shot ahead of 27th-place Ava Lackey of Fanin County.

Junior Ivie Chapman turned in a 112 on Tuesday,



Sophomore Sofia McNabb pulls out the driver in round two at the 8th hole - a 320-yard par 4. Photo courtesy of Becca McNabb.

notching par 4s at the 5th and 16th to place 28th following a 115 on Monday. Chapman's 227 was two shots back of Lackey and one better than 29th place.

Rounding out Union's tournament was junior Saylor Noe in 34th with a 120 on Monday followed by a 119. Noe ended her week two shots out of 33rd and three strokes ahead of 36th place.

Lovett took home the Class AA title with a 333, fending off the second round's lowest score - a 166 from runner-up Jeff Davis, who entered last

Tuesday's final 18 holes tied for second with Bleckley County following a 169 to open the tournament.

Union entered the second round three strokes better than Worth County but pulled away to a 19-stroke victory (429) over the eighth-place school. Bremen and Dodge County ended in a tie for ninth at 440.

"I'm already looking forward to next year," Chambers added. "I would also like to thank everyone at Old Union and at Butternut Creek for everything that they do for Union County golf."

Basketball: Chambers to rejoin former UCHS teammate at Brenau

By Todd Forrest
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UCHS senior Rebecca Chambers accepted a scholarship to continue her basketball career at Gainesville's Brenau University.

In her second year as a Lady Panthers' starter this past winter, Chambers averaged career highs of 5 boards, 1.2 assists and 1 steal while helping Union advance to the program's second Sweet 16 in three seasons.

During her COVID-19 shortened junior season, the 5-foot-10 forward poured in a career-best 8.5 points a game while blocking one shot per contest.

Chambers was a key reserve as a sophomore in 2019-20, chipping in 2 points and 2 boards a night during the Lady Panthers' Region title campaign.

Now, Chambers rejoins another member of Union's 2020 Elite Eight run, Kait McCarter, who just concluded her sophomore season at Brenau.

Additionally, Chambers

was an infielder on the Lady Panthers softball team, appearing in four State tournaments.

Following her signing day ceremony, the *North Georgia News* sat down with Chambers to discuss her decision.

NGN: What was it about Brenau that made you seriously consider them?

RC: The campus is beautiful and the coach is very kind. I had an academic scholarship to [Brenau], but I went to a basketball camp there with the coaches and that made me fall in love with [the school] even more.

NGN: After accepting the academic scholarship, did you think your playing days were over? What was your reaction when you learned they also wanted you for basketball?

RC: It was definitely a surprise; a very big surprise. I was super excited to learn [I would continue playing basketball].

NGN: Any advice for future Panthers hoping to play college sports?

RC: Always work hard,

even when you think no one is paying attention.

NGN: Have you picked a major? Where do you see yourself after college?

RC: Early childhood education. I want to teach second grade and hopefully coach.

NGN: Is there anyone you want to mention or thank?

RC: My mom, dad, my family, teammates and coaches.

Brenau head coach Kris Stewart was also in attendance and provided some insight on his decision to offer a scholarship to the 8-AA All-Region forward.

"This is [my] second player from Union County and a couple things [about them] stand out: Toughness, character and academics," said the 11-year head coach during the ceremony in the UCHS gymnasium lobby. "I think there's a lot of potential for growth, both on the court and as a student athlete. But every time I speak to her, she's positive, she's excited and energetic. She's going to be a great teammate and a great addition to the university."

Basketball: John's perseverance pays off with scholarship to Truett-McConnell

By Todd Forrest
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Upon arriving at UCHS, Caleb John has spent much of the past two seasons serving as the hardwork Swiss Army knife of head coach Corey Garrett, always finding a way to contribute regardless of the task.

When Garrett needed John to play the high post during a visit to defending State Champ Towns County, John made the seamless transition in a Union win.

Need John to also slow Towns' leading scorer? He won't hesitate to D-up. Looking for 31 combined points on 13 of 17 shooting in back-to-back games to reach the program's first region title game in 21 years? John is certainly your man.

The all-region selection finished this season at 7.2 points, 4.4 rebounds, 2.3 assists and one steal a game while guiding Union's turnaround following a winless 2020-21 campaign.

John's unique combination of versatility, skill and heart caught

the attention of Truett-McConnell, where the 6-foot combo guard signed to play basketball earlier this month during a ceremony at the UCHS gymnasium.

The *North Georgia News* sat down with John following the festivities to discuss his decision, the future and more.

NGN: How did you end up on Truett's radar?

CJ: During my admissions process I told them I played basketball, so I had a conversation with Coach (Jon) Yeh and he invited me to workout with the team, things went really well and it was like a family there, so I knew it was the place for me.

NGN: So you didn't intend to play ball when you applied?

CJ: No, I planned to attend for academics only and major in Christian studies. But I was fortunate enough to get the opportunity to use basketball as a platform to [further my education].

NGN: What are your plans after college?

CJ: Something in the ministry sharing the Gospel.

NGN: After a disappoint-

ing junior season, did you believe you would end up in this situation a year later with a region title game appearance and a scholarship?

CJ: No sir, not at all. I thought my basketball career was finished. Last year was really devastating, but God turned everything around and used me for His glory, so I'm thankful to Him.

NGN: Anyone else you want to mention or thank?

CJ: Coach Garrett for everything he's done. He's helped me grow so much as a man. I want to thank my mom and dad, as well as the Kight family for letting me stay with them.

NGN: What will you remember most from your time at UCHS?

CJ: What stands out to me is the culture. It's like a family and everyone welcomed and accepted me. At first, I felt alone but everyone made me feel at home.

NGN: Any advice for younger players about the scholarship process?

CJ: Stay positive, keep God first and good things will happen.



Front: Flanked by family, Rebecca Chambers signs with Brenau. Back (L-R): Brenau coach Kris Stewart, UCHS basketball coaches Mandy Hunter, Crystal Beach and softball coach Stephen Mitchell. Photo/Todd Forrest



Caleb John (center) at signing day with his mother and UCHS basketball coach Corey Garrett. Photo/Todd Forrest

UCHS softball celebrates outgoing coach with surprise party



Top: The Lady Panthers softball team with outgoing head coach Stephen Mitchell during a surprise party at Meeks Park hosted by the players and their parents on Thursday, May 12. Bottom: Coach Mitchell is greeted by his players as he arrives at the pavilion. The girls hid in the woods on the walking trails while waiting for their coach. Photos/Todd Forrest

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Union County softball said goodbye to its beloved skipper with a surprise party at Meeks Park on May 12, where four-year head coach Stephen Mitchell expected to take in a youth baseball game along with his wife Heather, who was in on the surprise.

After parking, Coach Mitchell said he noticed the softball parents at the pavilion. And as he approached, he quickly realized he was the centerpiece of the gathering. However, any doubts regarding the parents' intentions was put to rest when his entire 2021

squad sprinted out of the woods shouting, "surprise."

Mitchell took over the program in 2018, following in the footsteps of Jessica Stewart, who put UCHS softball on the map between 2006-2017.

In year one, Mitchell fielded a young team made up mostly of freshmen and sophomores, leading them to a 16-14 record (4-3 in region) and a berth in the Class AA State Tournament.

The Lady Panthers turned a corner in 2019, advancing to the Region 8-AA title game where they put a scare into Banks County - the eventual State Champions.

Despite a tougher schedule, Union won 16 games in

2019 for a second straight year and improved to 6-1 in region play, while winning its first State series since 2016.

The Lady Panthers won the regular season Region 8-AA title in 2020 before qualifying for their third consecutive Class AA State Tournament.

Last fall, Mitchell and Union County accomplished his long-time goal of guiding UCHS to the Elite 8 in Columbus for the first time since 2015.

The Lady Panthers featured nine seniors last fall that each stepped foot on campus at the same time as their coach.

During his four years in Blairsville, Mitchell compiled a 57-51 record (18-8 vs. 8-AA),

advancing to the postseason each year, where his team went 8-9. Overall, Mitchell is 107-69 in six seasons.

A 1995 Bowdon graduate, Coach Mitchell and his wife are returning to nearby Haralson County to be close to his parents.

After spending most of his adult life coaching baseball and softball, Mitchell said he has no plans to get back in the dugout this fall. Although, he isn't ruling out a return to coaching someday down the road.

The *North Georgia News* wishes nothing but the best to Coach Mitchell and his family. He's been a pleasure to work with over the last four years.

Union County Recreation Department (Age: 50 and Over) Summer Session 2022- Fitness Family Programs



Summer is approaching quickly, and we would love for you to join us for our Summer Fitness Family classes! Union County Recreation Department will be offering our awesome class options for the Summer 2022 session, and we will be adding Tai-Chi to this new session, which we are so excited about! Here is the full list of all our fitness classes that will be offered for the session:

- Mini-Spinning Cardio class (M/W)
@ 8:30-9:30 AM ... \$10.00 Summer Special Class
- Regular Aerobics Fitness (T/Th/F)
@ 8:30-9:30 AM ... \$30.00
- Advanced Strength-Core class (M/W/F)
@ 9:45-10:45 AM ... \$40.00
- AM Beginner Pilates-Core class (T/Th)
@ 11:00-11:45 ... \$35.00
- AM Intermediate Step-Aerobics combo (M/W/F)
@ 11:00-11:50 AM ... \$45.00
- Dance Jams (T/Th)
@ 10:00-10:45 AM ... \$40.00
- Chair Fitness-Aerobics class (T/Th)
@ 1:15-2:00 PM ... \$30.00
- Beginner Yoga Flow (M)
@ 12:00-1:00 ... \$20.00
- Tai-Chi for Beginners (M-1:00-2:00) (W/F)
@ 12:00-1:00 ... \$40.00
- **PM Zumba Fitness w/Beth
@ 5:00-6:00 PM (T/Th) ... \$50.00
- **PM Step-Aerobics Combo class
@ 5:00-6:00 PM (M/W) ... \$40.00

**Summer Session Registration opens on May 2, 2022, and ends on May 24, 2022, or "when classes fill to capacity". You can register at the New Union County Recreation Sports Center Office located at 519 Industrial Blvd next to the Health Department. Please contact Jennifer at 706-487-4453 with any questions you may have.

Union County Recreation Department New Mileage Walking Club

Union County Recreation Department will be accepting registrations for our new Indoor/Outdoor Walking Club! This is a fantastic way to meet other people with similar interests and enjoy walking together.

There will be three different levels of walking clubs to choose from. Our Social walking group will be low-impact and strictly for fun.

Our Mileage walking group will track their steps, meet more days and evenings each week, and receive a pedometer and a t-shirt. Advanced Mileage Club is our high-impact group and will meet the most out of all three groups. This group will also take a long hike once a month.

More information on each of the three different walking clubs can be received from Union County Recreation Department, located inside the Union County Sports Center at 519 Industrial Blvd. Registration will open for all three walking clubs on Monday, May 9, 2022, at 8:30 AM. Mileage and Advanced Mileage clubs have a small fee of \$5.00 associated with them for t-shirt and pedometer costs.

Each person to register will also receive their calendar with the dates and times that each group walks for the summer. If there is availability indoors at our facility, then that will be a backup location for summer group walking.

If you have any questions about the three different clubs, then please don't hesitate to contact Jennifer at 706-487-4453. N(May25,22)CA





\$60
/Participant



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UC BOYS BASKETBALL CAMP

June 27-29, 2022 • Upcoming 2nd-8th Graders

LADY PANTHERS GIRLS BASKETBALL CAMP

2ND-8TH GRADERS

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JUNE 20-22
8AM-12PM
PRICING: \$60
LOCATION: UNION COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL





SCAN ME

Local Racing Report: Tri-County

By Blake Lynch
North Georgia News
Racing Reporter

Brasstown, NC - Tri-County Racetrack hosted a full program on Friday, May 20, headlined by Super Late Model action.

Open-Wheel Modified: No. 108 Chuck Southard took home the win. No. 37 Michael Barrett was second.

602 Feature: No. 117 Dylan Beaver took home the win. No. 03 Dante Curtis came in second place. No. 25 Jacob Hamby was third. No. 81 John Howard was fourth and No. 42 Johnny Gulizia was fifth.

602 Non Qualifier: No. 10 Chase Hughes took the checkered flag. No. 94 Noah Wright finished in second place. No. 318 Ethan Fleming came in third. No. 50 Jerry Buice was fourth. Rounding out the top-five was No. 28 Roy Hardman.

Pony: No. 16 Jamie Cross took home first place. No. 4M Marty King finished second. No.

2 Colby McCulloch was third. Coming in fourth was No. 11 Ricky Dyer.

Super Late Model: No. 8 David Payne took home the victory. No. 4H Levi Hicks was the runner-up. No. 00 Shaun Chastain placed third. No. 156 Andy Standridge was fourth and No. 6 Joey Standridge was fifth.

Crate: No. 7 Jason Deal took home the win. No. 4 Danny Ledford was second. No. 55 Kip

Cochran came in third. No. 11

Preston Crisp was fourth. No. 22 Tucker Anderson was fifth.

FW Drive: No. J3 Josh Deese took home first place. No. F3 John Fulford was second. No. 2 Brent Lynch came in third place. No. 59 Matt Cordon was fourth. No. 32 Shannon Jones was fifth.

Street Stock: As of press time, results are unavailable due to a protest between first and second place.

Youth Hike to Long Creek Falls

Register for the next easy hike to Long Creek Falls on June 4th guided by Dustin Rogers! Long Creek Falls is located on the Appalachian Trail near the Three Forks where the Appalachian, Benton MacKaye and Duncan Ridge Trails meet.

The hike is two miles out and back along Long Creek. The road leading to the trailhead follows beautiful Noontootla Creek, which itself has several smaller falls. Kids age 7-13. Parent or legal guardian must accompany child.

Space is limited to 10 kids along with parent. (20) You must register at the Union County Sports Center by May 31st. \$5.00 Bring sack lunch and wear appropriate shoes, no flip flops.

Tri County British Car Club holds May meeting

On Sunday, May 22nd, twenty-two members of the Tri County British Car Club, met at the Sundance Grill in Hiawassee, GA.

In spite of rain predictions, there was no rain before or after the meeting, so all went home dry.

As usual, most members drove their classic British cars, and enjoyed good food, good service, and fun conversations.

Planned future outings were discussed, including a postponed ride to the Cherochalla Skyway, that is now set up for June 4th, barring weather complications.

In addition a Memorial Cruise-in, featuring British cars was announced for Saturday, July 2d, at the Blairsville Farmer's Market. This Memorial will be dedicated to the memory of member Tim Gaffney, and is presented by the Blairsville Cruisers Car Club.

The club's next regular luncheon meeting will take place on Sunday, June 26th.

Anyone interested in joining the club, that has no dues or fees, can email them at: tricitybritishcarclub@yahoo.com. You can find them on Facebook as well. NT(May25,22)CA



Austin Healy Sprite belongs to Dan and Cheryl DaAgostino



Silver Austin Healy belongs to Denny and Julie Rausch