

Sports

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Union County 12&U Softball wins District, advances to State

10&U Softball, 14&U Baseball to play for District title; 10&U and 12&U Baseball begin later this week

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One team from the Union County Recreation Department has already punched its ticket to state while two more have reached the Championship Game in their respective tournament.

Union County's 12&U softball team won three straight games in Lumpkin County over the weekend to claim the District 6 Championship. On Friday, the Lady Panthers defeated Gilmer before taking care of Jackson County on Saturday, securing their spot in Sunday's title game.

Jackson County would battle its way out of the loser's bracket to earn a rematch with Union. However, the Lady Panthers avoided the "if needed" game by knocking off Jackson for the second straight time to earn a district championship and advance to the State Tournament.

Meanwhile, the Union County 10&U softball team traveled to Blue Ridge and took care of business with a pair of wins on Friday - the first a 17-0 win over Lumpkin County in five innings. They followed up their one-sided opening round victory with another blowout - a 12-1 win over White County.

On Saturday, the Lady Panthers faced their toughest of the weekend test but still came out on top in convincing fashion with a 7-1 win over Jefferson.

On Monday, Union County went on to face either Jefferson, White County, or Fannin County - the three teams remaining as of this writing. Monday's title game was played after the deadline, but results will be available on [Twitter @hotrodtodd25](#).

(You can also visit my Facebook page at [facebook.com/hotrodtodd25](#). I will set the game update posts to "public" for those who aren't friends on Facebook.)

Last but not least, the 14&U Baseball team got underway Saturday in Ellijay by coming out on top during a 1-0 pitcher's duel. The Panthers used a two-out walk followed by a triple to score the game's only run in the bottom of the third. Tyler Loyd nailed down the save by pitching the final 2.2 innings after he entered with two on and one out in the fifth and recorded consecutive strikeouts to preserve the 1-0 advantage.

The Union County bats



The Union County 12&U Softball team following their championship game victory over Jackson County. Photo/Heather Akins

awoke during a 17-2 victory over Hall County later in the day. On Sunday, the Panthers blasted Gilmer, 12-4 to advance to Monday night's title game. Results will also be available on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

The 12&U softball team will travel to Boynton for the State Tournament beginning June 22. Boynton will be the site of every age group's softball state tournament, all opening on the 22nd.

Boynton is located in Northwest Georgia's Catoosa County between the towns of Ringgold and Fort Oglethorpe. From Interstate-75, take exit 350 (Hwy 2/Battlefield Parkway) toward Fort Oglethorpe. The town of Boynton is approximately 3 miles from I-75 and roughly 1 hour and 55 minutes (95 miles) from Blairsville.

As for the other age groups, they will get underway later this week. The 12&U baseball team opens Thursday in Gilmer County at the Clear Creek Complex. The Panthers will face Dawson County at 8 p.m. A win results in a noon game on Saturday while a loss means a 6 p.m. contest on Friday.

Union will face either White County or Towns County in the second game.

The 12&U Championship Game will be Monday, June 18 at 8 p.m. The "if needed" game will be held Tuesday, June 19 at 6 p.m.

Union County's 10&U baseball also opens this weekend when they take on West Jackson at 6 p.m. Friday in

Blue Ridge.

A win sends the Panthers into a high noon showdown on Saturday with the Gilmer vs East Jackson winner. A loss on Friday will result in a 10 a.m. start on Saturday against the loser of Lumpkin County vs Dawson County.

The title game will take place on Tuesday at 6 p.m. with the "if needed" game to follow.

For full brackets, state locations, and more, you can visit the Georgia Dizzy Dean website at [dizzydeanga.org](#). More info and photos will also be available in next week's *North Georgia News*.

12&U SOFTBALL DAHLONEGA - Union County outscored the opposition by a combined total of 41-11 over its three games in last weekend's District 6 Tournament.

Prior to their 10-2 victory over Jackson County in the Championship Game, the Lady Panthers demolished Gilmer, 17-1 in the opening round and pulled away from Jackson County, 14-8 in the second round.

In the first round win over Gilmer, Union County scored five runs in each of the first three innings to grab a commanding 15-1 lead through three.

The Lady Panthers ended the game via the mercy rule with two runs in the fourth.

Kyla Mullanack and Reese Kelley combined to throw a one-hitter while striking out three.

At the dish, Georgia Patton finished 2-for-2 with a pair of doubles, two runs scored, and an RBI. Ellie Hernandez finished 2-for-3 with two runs, two RBIs, and a stolen base.

Sierra Burnette scored four times, drove in one, tripled, and swiped a base. Jordane Mullanack went 1-for-2 with a run, two RBIs, and a steal.

Kelley and Kyla Mullanack helped themselves by combining for three hits and three runs from the top of the order.

Layla Akins and Addison Kennedy each singled and scored twice. Ila Bragg was 1-for-2 with an RBI, Jaycee Seabolt went 1-for-3 with a run, and Jewell Massey knocked in a pair.

In game two, Union County blew open an 8-6 game after two innings with three in the third and three in the sixth.

Jackson added two runs in the fourth but it wasn't enough to keep pace with the high-powered Lady Panther lineup.

Burnette, Kelley, and Bragg combined to work four innings from the circle. The trio surrendered just three hits and struck out seven.

Nine different Lady Panthers pounded out 10 hits with Hernandez picking up two hits, including a triple. The other extra base hit (another triple) belonged to Akins.

Seven different players recorded an RBI with Massey driving in two.

The top of the order con-

tinuously set the table for Union County as the first four hitters in the lineup: Kelley, Kyla Mullanack, Burnette, and Seabolt each crossed home plate twice, accounting for eight of the team's 14 runs.

The Lady Panthers were also aggressive on the base paths, swiping 11 bags with Kelley's three steals leading the way.

10&U SOFTBALL BLUE RIDGE - Like their 12&U counterparts, Union County's 10&U softball team has throttled the competition by a combined 36-2 score through three games.

As of Monday's deadline, the 10&U squad was one win away from clinching the District title and moving on to the State Tournament in Boynton.

They opened the tournament with a dominating 17-0 victory over Lumpkin County.

While the offense churned out 12 hits, it was the pitching of Chelsea Kinderknecht and Sloane Dyer that set the tone in the early going.

The duo teamed up for a no-hitter while striking out eight of the 12 batters they faced. The other four Lumpkin at bats ended with walks resulting in not one single pitch put into play off Lady Panther pitching.

Kinderknecht also scored three times on three walks while Dyer went 1-for-2 with two RBIs, a run, and a walk.

Kaylee Radar, Lily Helton, Zady Ludlum, and Avery Hussion each scored two runs.

Ayla Stepp drove in four during a 2-for-3 game that included a 3-run inside-the-park homerun.

Aubrie Akins and MacKenzie Bohannon also drove in two runs apiece for Union County.

Bella Moss scored and Izzy Ankins knocked in a run. Ella Anhos also singled home a run and scored.

In game two, a 12-1 win over White, Kinderknecht picked up the win from the circle in four innings, recording all 12 outs via strikeout while giving up one hit.

Radar finished 3-for-3. Helton went 2-for-3, and Bohannon 2-for-2 with three stolen bases. Ludlum added a hit, a walk, and two steals.

Lacey Newton was 1-for-1 with an RBI, a run, a walk, and a stolen base.

During the 7-1 win over Jefferson on Saturday, Kinderknecht pitched four innings to send the Lady Panthers into Monday's title game.

Jefferson scored its lone run in the bottom of the first even the score at 1-1 but it was all Union County the rest of the way. Picking up another win from the circle, Kinderknecht fanned 12 batters while walking three and allowing one hit.

At the plate she went 3-for-3 with a triple, two runs, and an RBI. Helton doubled home two runs while Aubrie Akins and Bohannon each recorded two hits and one RBI.

14&U BASEBALL ELLIJAY - After holding off Fannin County with solid pitching and timely defense in a 1-0 victory in round one, the bats came to life later in the day as the Panthers pummeled Hall County, 17-2.

On Sunday, Union County continued to terrorize opposing pitching during a 12-4 win over Gilmer.

Following a sluggish start, the Panthers bounced back to post a .453 team batting average over the first three games.

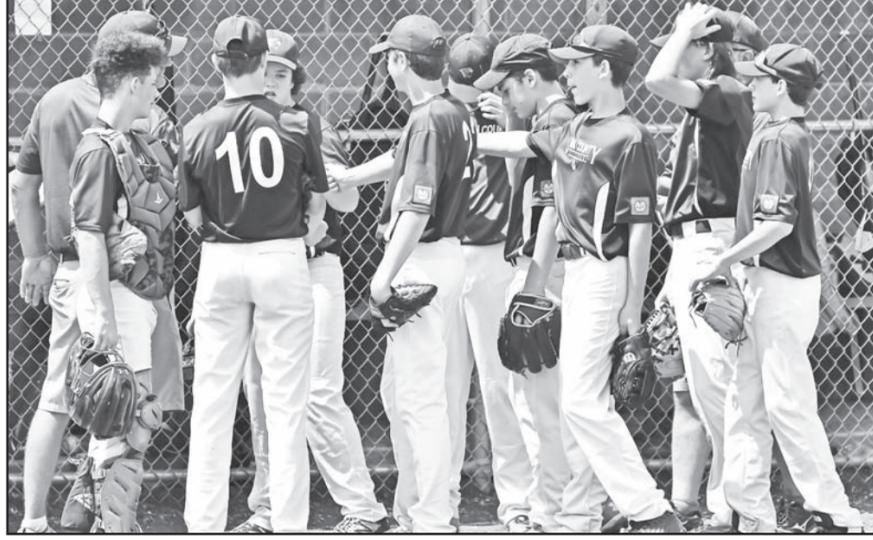
On Monday at 8 p.m., Union will meet the winner of the 6 p.m. Fannin vs Gilmer game. The "if needed" game would be Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.

The 14&U Panthers consist of Bailey Brown, Lake Hughes, Connor Shields, Bret Ballew, Logan Anderson, Logan Helcher, Thomas Dyer, Chris Fletcher, Tyler Loyd, Houston Busbee, Hunter Fleming, and Hunter Hartzog.

The final results of the 14&U Baseball, 10&U Softball, along with the rest of the UCRD results will be available in next week's *North Georgia News*.



The Union County 10&U Softball team following their 7-1 win over Jefferson. Photo/Todd Forrest



The Union County 14&U Baseball team between innings vs Fannin County. Photo/Todd Forrest