

# Sports

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## 10U Baseball claims District 7 title, advances to State tourney

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**Dahlonega** - The Union County Recreation Department's 10U baseball team traveled an unconventional path to this week's GRPA State Tournament in Jeff Davis County.

Sitting in the catbird seat heading into the District 7 championship on Monday, June 12, Union County suffered consecutive losses to host Lumpkin County to finish second.

However, due to a protest filed by Union County there would be no postgame trophy presentation.

During Union's first loss vs. Lumpkin County, the Indians used its ace pitcher more than the maximum 120 pitches allowed for the tournament. But with Lumpkin still needing another win, the protest would be rendered moot if Union secured the game-two victory.

Unfortunately, Union's comeback bid in the nightcap came up short. The Panthers couldn't overcome a 6-0 deficit, along with a 25-minute power outage at Dahlonega's Yahooola Creek Park, eventually falling 11-8 in what appeared to be a season-ending loss.

Union County's protest wasn't determined until Wednesday, when the GRPA announced that Union County would head to state as the District 7 champion. Lumpkin's appeal was quickly shot down, and adding insult to injury, the GRPA took over this week's 8U State Tournament from the



Union County's 10U baseball team is heading to this week's State tournament. Photo/UCRD

Lumpkin County Recreation Department and moved the event from Yahooola Creek Park to the University of North Georgia.

Looking ahead, the Panthers travel to Jeff Davis for state tournament action on Tuesday, June 20 against District 2 runner-up Brantley County at 7 p.m.

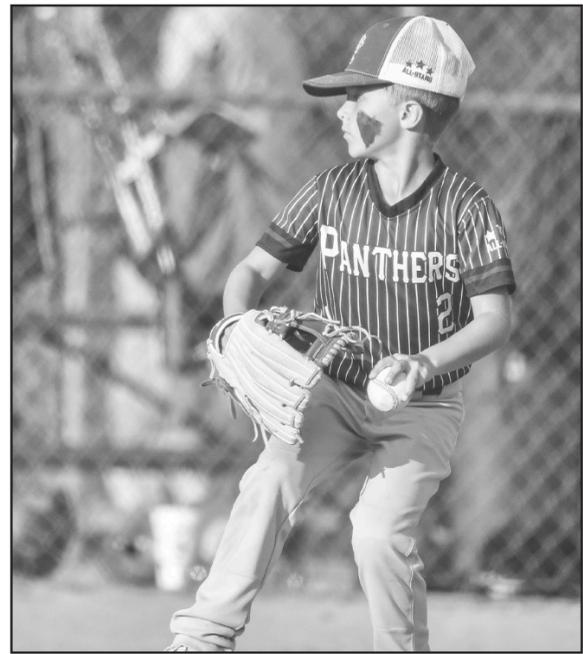
District 2 champ Long County will battle it out with District 1 champ Montgomery County for the right to face the Union-Brantley winner.

Fannin County qualified for State and earned a first-round bye, taking on the Jeff Davis (host) vs. Wilcox County (D3 champ) winner.

The earliest Union and Fannin could meet is Wednesday at 3 p.m. in the losers bracket. The first winner's bracket meeting would be Thursday at 9 a.m.

Union County's 10U team is led by head coach Stephen Waggener and assistants Jeremy Adams and Dustin Thompson.

The 10U baseball team roster includes Tripp Waggener, Wyatt Adams, Luke Spiva, Bentley Burgess, River Thompson, Coltyn Sandler, Ty McCollum, Nolan Tower, Gabe Littler, Christopher Jackson, Chase Gray, Owen Swanson, Ethan Liberatore and Jordan Zetina.



River Thompson on the bump at Lumpkin County. Photo/Todd Forrest



Coaches address the 10U team following their first-round win over Commerce. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Football: Panthers host youth camp, 7-on-7 during summer workouts

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Union County football's Summer Youth Camp attracted 55 youngsters between grades 2-6 on June 13 and 14.

"We had a great turnout," Union County head coach Michael Perry said. "It was really cool to see our players interact with those kids and that made it well worth it - it was a lot of fun."

On Thursday, June 15, Union County hosted Andrews, North Carolina and Gilmer in 7-on-7 action with the Panthers notching two wins over Andrews by scores of 19-6 and 33-7.

"I thought the first game, we weren't as crisp, but the second game we were really sharp," Coach Perry said.

During the 19-6 win, Union's senior leaders opened the contest with a scoring strike from Caiden Tanner to Jensen Goble with rising-sophomore Tyler Parker hauling in the PAT.

Following a pair of three-and-outs by both offenses, Andrews got on the board but Seth Rutan picked off the point-after.

Up 7-6, Union added to its lead on Goble's second TD catch of the day. Later, the Panthers capped off the scoring when Tanner connected with rising-senior Zach Taylor in the endzone.

No score was kept vs. Gilmer with both offenses receiving 10 minutes to run plays from the opponent's 40-yard line.

"I thought it was a really good day for us," Perry said. "Caiden Tanner and Jensen Goble looked really sharp."

"Defensively, Seth Rutan, Taylor Whitehead and Nolan Thompson had really good days,



Rising senior defensive back Nolan Thompson (10) breaks up a Gilmer pass attempt during Union's 7-on-7 on Thursday, June 16. Thompson earned praise from Coach Perry after the game. Photo/Todd Forrest

and Kooper Ashcraft made a lot of good plays for us. Andrews only scored once against us in each game, so I thought that was a really great job by our defense."

During the 7-on-7 vs. Gilmer on June 8, the Panthers were without Goble, but according to Perry, rising-sophomore defensive back Cade Dockrey did an outstanding job filling in for Goble at receiver.

"We used Cade in place of Jensen that first week," Perry said. "Cade has had an incredible summer and the kid is just a football player. We plug him in and he makes plays, no matter where we put him."

Perry also praised new strength coach Curtis Turner for his immediate impact on Union County football.

"He is a huge addition to our program and the whole school," Perry said. "The kids already love him and his energy. They respond to him very well and it's been really great having him in the weight room helping us."

Union County was scheduled to host White County in 7-on-7 action Tuesday morning - weather permitting.

Andrews returns on Thursday at 10 a.m. for the Panthers' final 7-on-7 of the summer.



The UCHS football camp drew over 50 campers last week. Photo/Todd Forrest



UCHS football players look on as the campers play two-hand-touch games during the second day of last week's camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

# Basketball: Panthers visit UNG for three days; youth camp next week

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Following two solid weeks of basketball camps, Union County head coach Corey Garrett expects his team to go out on a high note at the University of North Georgia.

The Union County men are through two-thirds of their summer camp season and will wrap up this week with three days of games at the University of North Georgia.

Union County will play three games per day at UNG on Monday and Tuesday, then participate in a camp tournament on Wednesday. The Panthers opened Monday morning vs. Dominion Christian.

Union County will face South Forsyth on Tuesday and potentially could meet Gilmer in Wednesday's bracket play - allowing the Panthers two shots at avenging losses from earlier this month.

"Those are two games we want to win and games we can get hyped up for during the summer," Garrett said. "Those three days (at North Georgia) are kind of the culmination of our summer season and the games where we want to look good."

Next week, Union County will host a three-day youth camp beginning Monday, June 26.

During the opening week of June, Union County visited Hayesville, North Carolina for a three-team play day on June 6, but no scores were kept. The Panthers hosted Andrews, NC on June 7, then went to Towns County on June 8 to face Hayesville, Gilmer and Murphy, NC.

One of Union's summer priorities is learning a new identity without graduated big-



Rising-freshman guard Ethan Hogsd in one of many youngsters thrust into pressure-situations with the Panthers varsity at the team's recent camps. Photo/Todd Forrest

man Eli Underwood. "We trying to figure out how to play without Eli," Garrett said. "We've used a bunch of different lineups and used a bunch of different guys."

"We haven't decided if we're going to use someone to fill his spot, or do something different with his spot and play more guards."

At Towns, Union handled Murphy and Hayesville but dropped a tightly-contested matchup to Region 7-AAA runner-up Gilmer. The week concluded with the University of Georgia camp on Friday, June 9, where the Panthers met

Bleckley County, East Laurens and Jackson County.

"Just getting registered down there [at UGA] was absolute chaos," Garrett said. "We ended up showing up to the court 10 minutes before the game. Basically, we had a 2-hour ride, stepped off the bus and had 10 minutes to get ready to play."

Facing a quick, athletic Bleckley squad in game one, Union rallied from a double-digit deficit to fall by 2 points.

"We came out very flat but we used that as a teachable moment," Garrett said. "We learned not to let the environ-



Cade Dockrey earned an All-Region Honorable Mention nod last winter as a freshman coming off the Union bench. This year, the rising-sophomore expects to take on a more significant role. Photo/Todd Forrest

ment control us, but in the first half, we did not play good at all. In the second half we played better and had a shot to win it at the end.

"But Bleckley was super athletic, and were a lot like us because they didn't have a true big. And those athletic teams are who I want us to see this summer, because we know we're not going to see a whole lot of big guys in our region."

After finally getting their bearings at UGA, the Panthers would rout East Laurens by 20-plus and Jackson County by more than 30.

Last week, Union spent

ry] off the floor in some situations to see who can handle [the point guard] spot. [Jude Ellis] has been banged up with an ankle sprain, so we've got some guys in in his role."

On Wednesday, June 14, Union County faced Robbinsville, NC and host Andrews at another informal play day.

During Union's second trip to Towns County on June 15, the Panthers easily took care of business against Franklin County and defeated Murphy by double digits. Union couldn't finish the day unbeaten, however, falling by a bucket to Franklin, NC.

"We know what we have with [Henry], Jude, Cade [Dockrey] and Hayden [Hughes], but we're trying to figure out what we have behind them," Garrett said. "I think we're definitely accomplishing those goals."

"We've won some games and lost some games we shouldn't have, but we're just experimenting. We've also had some moments where we haven't played that well and it's allowed some coachable moments. We've learned a lot and had a lot of good things go on, so I would say it's been a great summer, so far."

Next week, Union County will host its three-day youth camp beginning Monday. Registration is allowed each morning, and kids not able to participate all three days may pay for a single day or two days of camp.

"We're looking forward to it, we have 35 pre-registered, which is more than we had last year when we ended up with over 50 kids," Garrett said. "Kids can definitely register the day of the camp. And they don't have to come all three days. If they went to come one day, they can pay for one day; same if they come two days."

# Basketball: Early returns look promising for Nelson's Lady Panthers

By Todd Forrest  
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Union County Lady Panthers first-year head coach Thomas Nelson is pleased with the progress his squad is making through two weeks of summer camps.

"The girls are playing really hard and are playing better," he said. "We're really excited that they have taken the things we work on in practice and then showing them in the games. Their leadership skills are improving and they are learning not to be a group of individuals, but a team and count on each other."

According to Nelson, one of Union County's summer mantras is E.F.T.: Effort, focus and toughness.

"Those are the three things we are trying to establish," he said. "We have 22 kids in the program and those 22 kids have really pushed themselves."

Union County attended two play days at Murphy, North Carolina last week - facing Andrews, NC, Hiwassee Dam, NC and Murphy.

"June is our biggest month," Nelson said. "We try to get as many games and practices in as we can. In July, we will begin our weight-training program three or four days a week. We will also include some fundamental work as well."

From June 8-10, the Lady Panthers attended the University of North Georgia camp in Dahlonega.

"We learned a lot that week as players and as coaches," Nelson said. "There was a lot of really good talent down there. We won some games where the teams we played were a little better than us. And then we lost some games where the teams were a lot better than us. But the kids competed and we learned a lot about our team and what some of our weaknesses are."

This week, Union County travels to Towns County on June 21. Next week, Union will visit Fannin County for their final summer games.

Additionally, the Lady Panthers youth camp begins next week on Tuesday, June 27. The camp is for rising 2nd-8th graders.

"We would love for as many kids that are interested to come and have a good time with us," Nelson said. "We're going to learn some basketball and play some basketball, but we're going to have a good time as well."

Nelson takes over a program returning four starters from a 14-14 squad that placed fourth in Region 8-AA. Union County collected a third-place finish at the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament, as well as third in 8-AA's regular season standings.



Head coach Thomas Nelson instructs his players during last week's Murphy, NC camp. Photo/Todd Forrest



Rising-sophomore Paula Robertson vs. Andrews, NC at the Murphy, NC camp. Photo/Todd Forrest



Rising-junior Ariel McCarter leads the break. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Baseball: New coach Scott Williams meets players



Incoming UCHS baseball coach Scott Williams hosted a players-only meeting on Friday, June 16 at the Panthers' indoor baseball-softball facility. Williams met with the entire team to introduce himself, discuss expectations, team rules, etc. The 42-year old skipper also met with each player one-on-one during the one-hour gathering. A parents-only meeting will be Thursday at 5:30 p.m. Photo/Todd Forrest

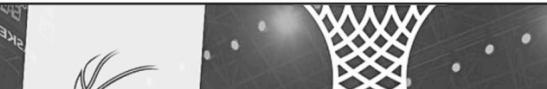


## UC WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL BASKETBALL CAMP

**When:** June 27th - June 29th  
**Time:** 9:00am - 12:00pm  
**Where:** UCHS Gym  
**Who:** Rising 2nd - Rising 8th Grade  
**Cost:** \$60.00  
 (Includes a Camp T-Shirt)



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REGISTRATION FEE:  
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