

# Sports

See the Sports Section at [nganews.com](http://nganews.com)

## Basketball: Panthers place second at UNG camp tournament

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
[sports@nganews.com](mailto:sports@nganews.com)

**Dahlonega** - A short-handed Union County squad finished as runner-up in its respective bracket during last week's University of North Georgia team camp.

With the team's top-returning scorer, Jude Ellis, out with an injury for the duration of the three-day camp, the Panthers fell by 10 points to Class 5A Midtown (Atlanta) in the final game of Wednesday's bracket play at UNG's Convocation Center. In addition to Ellis' absence, Union County played without a pair of key reserves in rising-sophomore forward Vince Marevka and rising-junior guard Brayden Hogsted.

"Most of the camp, we only went six deep, so of all the teams there, we had the fewest numbers, as far as bodies," Union County head coach Corey Garrett said. "Brayden has given us some excellent defense all summer, he's hit some 3s and he's taking care of the ball. But he took a knee to the thigh on Monday so we sat him the rest of the week, leaving us only six guys."

Despite being limited in numbers, Union County earned a spot in the UNG tournament finals by holding off Class AAA Dawson County courtesy of 27 points from rising-junior Houston Henry. With a starting five of Henry, fellow rising juniors Hayden Hughes and Kaden Combs, along with rising-sophomore Cade Dockrey and incoming-freshman Ethan Hogsted, the Panthers secured a 65-58 victory.



Houston Henry gets to the basket at will vs. Dawson. Photo/Todd Forrest

Henry scored 15 of his team's first 19 points as Union County built a 19-11 advantage over the Tigers. Rising-freshman post, Jaxon Totherow provided a lift off the bench in the second half, helping the Panthers surge ahead by as many as 12.

Still on top 61-51 with 4 minutes to play, Union County allowed the Tigers back into it, surrendering six unanswered for a 61-57 edge with under 2 minutes left. But timely free-throw shooting by the Panthers helped Union County pull away down the stretch.

Facing Midtown, who routed Gilmer in the semis, Union County led most of the opening half and took a 23-17 edge into the break. Unfortunately, Henry went to

the bench with cramps, and his team's 25-21 lead quickly evaporated into a 33-25 deficit via Midtown's full-court pressure.

With Henry back on the floor, the Panthers trimmed the margin to six but would get no closer in the 10-point loss.

During Wednesday's opener, the Panthers handled Dominion Christian - a 21-win GIAA program out of Marietta by double digits.

Over the first two days of camp, Union routed Lamar County and defeated Sequoyah (Canton).

"Sequoyah is a playoff team in [Class] 6A and we led by 10 for most of the game," Garrett said. "I don't remember the final, but I think it was a 6-8 point game. Then we



Kaden Combs started in the post at the UNG camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

had some other games, like Lamar County, that one wasn't even close - we beat them by 30-plus."

The Panthers suffered four one-score losses to Lumpkin County, Gilmer, South Forsyth and Woodstock.

"Not to make excuses, but we were the only team that played three games all three days," Garrett said. "Most of those teams we lost to only played twice a day. Then, on Wednesday, none of those three teams came on Monday or Tuesday, so they were all fresh."

"We had a shot to win at the end against Lumpkin but came up short," he continued. "We lost by one to South Forsyth and they were pressing us the entire game with [a

12-man rotation]. We missed our last five free throws and then lost on a last-second free throw. Those free throws are a big deal at camp because you shoot just one free throw for 2 points, so that's 10 points we left out there."

The UNG camp's concluded Union County's games for the summer, which Coach Garrett rates as an overall success.

"Other than the games against the North Carolina schools, Lamar County and maybe another school or two, everyone we played this summer was from a larger classification."

Coming into the summer, Garrett was searching for someone to step into Eli Underwood's role in the post. And

at the moment, the frontrunners are Combs and Totherow.

"Kaden is an undersized post player and he's been really good for the JV for two years, but he was playing against guys his size," Garrett said. "He's going to be successful, he just has to learn to play against guys who are bigger than him. When he plays against guys his size, he can score a little bit. But when he sees bigger guys, his role changes. We need him inside doing the dirty work and boxing out. I don't care if he gets the rebound as long as he boxes out and his [big guy] doesn't get the ball."

"Jaxon is a bigger body and is like a younger version of Eli that can score against bigger guys," he continued. "He just needs to realize he's not playing against 8th graders anymore. But he's going to improve and get better once he gets used to playing against 18 and 19 year olds. But I definitely saw Jaxon get better as the summer went on."

As for Ethan Hogsted, Union's lone freshman starter at UNG, Garrett admits he was impressed with his shooting ability.

"He shot the ball a little better than I expected him to. From the perimeter, he helped us out a lot, but once he gets inside among the big bodies, he's going to have to learn how to finish. But he's a worker and I know he's going to be in the gym."

Union County's summer wraps up this week with its three-day youth camp. The three-day event tipped off Monday, but campers may pay for one or two sessions if they wish to attend Tuesday and/or Wednesday.

## Football: Panthers defeat White County twice in summer's final 7-on-7

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
[sports@nganews.com](mailto:sports@nganews.com)

Union County took two of three from White County with the other meeting ending in a tie on Tuesday, June 20 at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

With the dead period upcoming, the Panthers will take some time off before resuming normal summer workouts in July.

Against White County, Coach Perry had plenty of praise to go around on both sides of the ball.

"White was the most athletic team we have played in 7-on-7 at this point," he said. "Defensively, we got better as the day progressed. Kooper Ashcraft, Taylor Whitehead and Nolan Thompson definitely stood out making plays."

"Offensively Ethan McBride and Tyler Grasty had solid days. Caiden [Tanner] continues to impress and Jensen [Goble] continued to make play after play."

"[As for the] young guys, I was very pleased with Chetley Cox, Cade Walden and Rob Thompson."

The Panthers host their annual Meet the Team event on Aug. 3 at 6 p.m. The regular season opens Aug. 18 with a trip to rival Fannin County.

Union will venture across Blood Mountain looking for revenge at Lumpkin County on Aug. 25. The Panthers lost at home to Lumpkin last fall before rattling off six-straight wins to start the season 7-1.

The home opener is Sept. 1 vs. neighboring Towns County, which will double as Military



Rising-senior receiver Ethan McBride was one of the standouts from Union County's 7-on-7 wins over White County. Photo/Todd Forrest

Appreciation Night. The Panthers are back at home on Sept. 8 vs. Armuchee for Rec Night.

Union goes back on the road Sept. 15 at West Hall before consecutive bye weeks.

Region play kicks off with Banks County for Homecoming on Oct. 6. A road trip

to Providence will be Oct. 13, followed by another away game at East Jackson on Oct. 20.

Senior Night is Oct. 27 vs. Athens Academy. The regular season concludes with a Thursday, Nov. 2 visit to defending 8-AA champ Fellowship Christian.



Rising-senior running back Braylen Rader gets in on the action during a recent 7-on-7, collecting some yards after-catch out of the backfield. The team's leading rusher in 2022, Rader finished with 805 yards and nine TDs on the ground. He caught 41 passes for four TDs through the air. Photo/Todd Forrest

# Youth softball camp a success; Union to scrimmage Gilmer on July 17

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
sports@nganews.com

The defending Region 8-AA Champion Lady Panthers softball team hosted a three-day youth camp earlier this month, attracting 40 youngsters to the UCHS softball-baseball facilities.

Despite basketball camps coinciding with the softball camp, the week saw a solid turnout among the high school girls to assist the youngsters.

“We had a really good turnout with the players even though we had to share them with basketball,” UCHS softball coach Carissa Owenby said. “But overall, I think we had a very good camp and turnout with the kids and players.”

Once again, the event culminated with a slip-and-slide on Wednesday, June 14, allowing campers to celebrate nine hours of learning, fundamentals and hard work.

“The focus was on fundamentals but we made sure that every girl that wanted to pitch got the chance to work with (UCHS assistant coach Haylie] Blalock -- that was something we implemented this year,” Owenby said. “They also worked on hitting every day, and of course, the last day was the slip-and-slide, which is everyone’s favorite. And we served them snow cones since we have a snow cone machine that we’ll use at our games this year.”



Bunting isn't a lost art - at least not at Union County High School's youth softball camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

“I want to thank Joy Patton, I can't say enough about her,” Owenby said. “Also, a thank you to Tina Burnette for coming out to help and Haley Dyer for working hard on our sign sponsorships. We also have our Pink Cards out, so people need to be on the lookout for those.”

As for the 2023 season,

the Lady Panthers will host summer workouts and practice in July before traveling to Gilmer for a scrimmage at 5 p.m. on July 17, featuring the varsity and junior varsity teams. The regular season gets underway at Lumpkin County on Aug. 4.

On July 27, Union County softball will host the



Union County assistant coach Kaitlyn Seabolt looks on as youngsters go through defensive drills at the youth softball camp from June 12-14. Photo/Todd Forrest

annual kids vs. parents game, cookout and lock-in.

Union County graduated three seniors off a 20-8 squad that advanced to the Elite Eight following a 9-0 mark in Region 8-AA. The Lady Panthers return a three-year starter and 8-AA's top pitcher in Sierra Burnette, along with her battery-mate and team homerun

leader, Gracie Gladding.

Katie Byers expects to patrol centerfield, Sloane Dyer is back at the hot corner, Georgia Patton returns at shortstop and right-fielder Jewell Massey round out Union's six returning starters.

In Owenby's second year, Union County must replace four-year starter Chloe

Potts at the keystone, slugging first baseman Jaycee Seabolt and speedy left fielder Caroline Karnes.

Mt. Paran Christian took home the 2022 state title but graduated ace pitcher and Auburn-signee Malayna Tamborra, who finished her senior campaign with a 13-0 record.

# Union County Recreation Department 10U baseball places fifth at State

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
sports@nganews.com

**Hazelhurst** - Union County Recreation Department's 10U baseball team dropped two of three to finish tied for fifth at last week's Class C State Tournament in Jeff Davis County.

The Panthers tournament opened with a 9-6 loss to Brantley County on Tuesday, June 20, dropping Union County into Wednesday's loser's bracket. The Panthers rebounded with a 10-0 rout of District 1 champ Montgomery County, setting up a showdown with District 5 champion Fannin County later in the day.

Unfortunately, the Panthers couldn't advance, falling in a 3-2 pitcher's duel vs. the Rebels. Fannin County's tournament ended one game later in a 5-4 loss to Wilcox County.

Wilcox advanced to Friday's title game but suffered a 4-1 loss to Jeff Davis.

Union County qualified for State by winning the District 7 title at Lumpkin County.

The Panthers secured wins over Commerce, Lumpkin County and White County during the June 9-12 tournament at Yahoola Creek Park.

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

The team consists of Tripp Waggener, Wyatt Adams, Luke Spiva, Bentley Burgess, River Thompson, Collyn Sandler, Ty McCollum, Nolan Towery, Gabe Littler, Christopher Jackson, Chase Gray, Owen Swanson, Ethan Liberator and Jordan Zetina.

**Clarification:** Last week's 10U story incorrectly reported that Lumpkin County forfeited its District 7 title when its ace topped 120 pitches for the tournament.

Here's what actually happened: Lumpkin's pitcher surpassed 75 pitches on Saturday, June 10, which requires a mandatory two calendar days of rest before throwing again. However, the Indians used that same pitcher vs. Union during the Monday, June 12 title game, resulting in Union's protest getting upheld by the GRPA.



Union County Recreation Department's 10U baseball team in action during the District 7 tournament at Lumpkin County from June 9-12. Photos/Todd Forrest



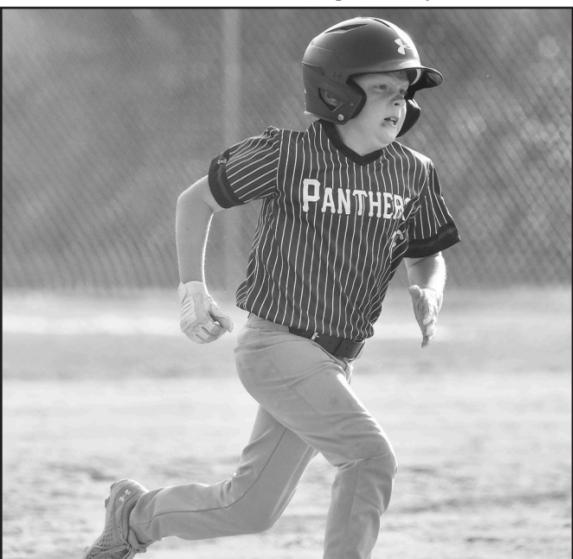


## UC WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL BASKETBALL CAMP

**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)



RESERVE YOUR SPOT & REGISTER NOW WITH THIS QR CODE!



## UNION COUNTY YOUTH WRESTLE SUMMER CAMP

July 17th, 18th and 20th

- ✓ Build confidence
- ✓ Physical and Endurance Training
- ✓ Team building
- ✓ Matches

Camp will be held at the UCES gym 'The Pit' from 5:30pm-8pm K through 6th Grade

\$65 Register here

Questions? Uctakedownclub@gmail.com

HOSTED BY UCHS PANTHERS



## YOUTH BOY'S BASKETBALL CAMP

JUN 26 - JUL 28, 2023  
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM  
UPCOMING 2ND - 8TH GRADERS  
UCHS GYM

REGISTRATION FEE:

\$60

Scan the QR code to sign-up:

