

Sports

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Lady Panthers youth camp teaches lessons on and off court

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The Union County Lady Panthers put a bow on their 28-game summer camp season with the final day of the team's three-day youth basketball camp on Thursday, June 29.

The event attracted more than 35 campers each day, and thanks to a sponsorship by BSN Sports, each girl left Thursday with a basketball of their own.

"We had a great turnout and the community stepped up and helped give everyone a t-shirt," Lady Panthers head coach Thomas Nelson said. "We had a lot of fun these three days, and we didn't want them to end -- [the coaches] didn't and the kids didn't either."

Another impressive facet from last week was the turnout among the Lady Panthers players. Despite being voluntary, every UCHS basketball player assisted with the camp.

"It wasn't mandatory, but they decided they wanted to be apart of [the camp] and I was happy they were," Nelson said. "Most importantly, we want them to understand that it's their responsibility to help teach young people how to act -- on the basketball court and in the community."

According to Nelson, the daily goal was to help the campers improve in two areas. Attendees also left each afternoon with an inspirational word of the day.

"[The word of the day] was about how to act and treat



Head coach Thomas Nelson and the Lady Panthers hosted more than 35 youngsters during last week's youth girls' basketball camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

other people," he said. "Every kid learned it, and they had to remember it, and repeat it to me each morning as they walked in the door.

"Overall, it's been a really good experience with the kids and their parents. I'm very proud of our [high school] girls. They came in every morning and worked out, then headed straight from work outs into camp. Even some stayed around after camp to help the younger kids. I'm just really proud of them and how hard they've worked."

The previous week, Union County attended a camp at Towns County High School, where the seniors' leadership earned praise from their first-year coach.

"Once again, our seniors and upperclassmen have played well," Nelson said. "Even the young kids are playing well. Right now, they're just learning how to be a team, and the game is more than just individuals. Hopefully we can keep it going and keep getting better."

"The month of June is

very hectic, especially for the two-sport athletes," Nelson continued. "But I'll tell you what, overall, I couldn't have asked for a better experience. Nobody got hurt and they are working hard in the weight room. And with the youth camp tying it all up, I think June was a great month for Lady Panthers basketball."

Former Murphy, North Carolina coach Penny Johnson will join Nelson's staff this winter while the two become acclimated to north Georgia basketball.

"One of the main take-aways from this first month: Girls basketball in this area is going to be tough," Nelson said. "Everyone in this area has a team capable of beating you. I'm learning as we go, just like the girls are, but I'm thankful to have coach Penny Johnson helping. She has worlds of experience and has helped me quite a bit. So we'll just keep learning. You can never learn enough and I've really enjoyed the process, so far."

This week marks the mandatory GHSA Dead Week,

but summer workouts resume next week.

"July will be a lot of individual stuff, like getting in shape, and they'll workout three or four days a week," Nelson said. "We're just trying to get ready for a strong school year, both athletically and academically."

"I'm very thankful to everyone in the community that's helped us out and has been willing to do things for these girls. The support has been great."



New head coach Thomas Nelson conducts drills on the final day of last week's youth camp. Photo/Todd Forrest



Incoming assistant coach Penny Johnson with youth campers on Thursday, June 29. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union youth wrestlers doing big things

The future of UCHS wrestling is as bright as ever due to a talented crop of youngsters making their way into the program.

Future stars to keep an eye on are: **Aiden Hyatt** -- rising 8th grader (Class of 2028) and first-year wrestler.

Accolades include - First place - Folkstyle / GA Novice (1-2 year wrestlers); championship (14U / 95 lbs) on March 5. Fourth place - Freestyle / GA State Championship (14U / 106-lbs) on May 13.

Eli Flowers -- rising 9th grader (Class of 2027) and a third-year wrestler.

Second place - Folkstyle / GA State Championship (14U / 95 lbs) on March 5. First place - Greco Roman / GA State Championship. Third place - Freestyle / GA State Championship on May 13.

A 2022-2023 FS/GR Team GA (Schoolboys / Cadet) National Team Member.

Landon Bell -- a rising 9th grader (Class of 2027) and a third-year wrestler.

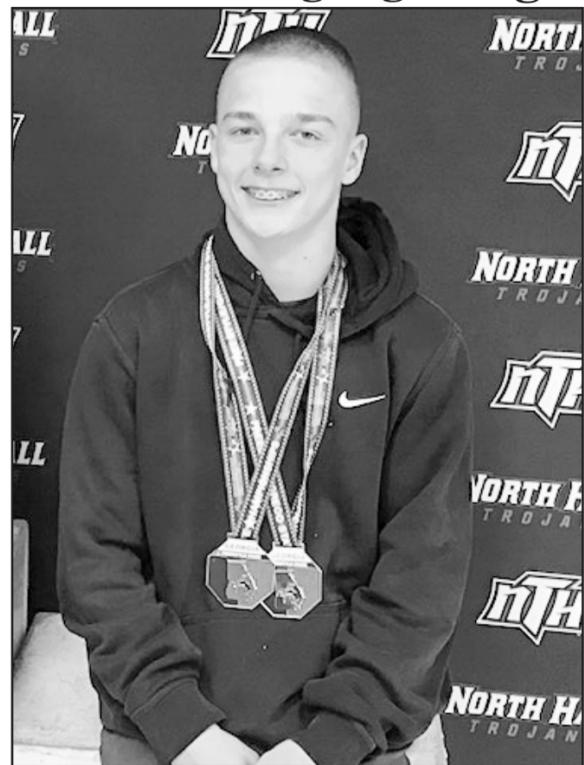
Fourth place - Folkstyle / GA State Regionals placer on May 28. A 2023 FS/GR Team GA Schoolboys National Team Member (FS Elite 8) All-American.

Kevin Kilpatrick -- rising 9th grader (Class of 2027), who started wrestling in Union County at age five and began competing at age seven.

First place - Folkstyle / GA State Championship Club Duals team member. First place - Folkstyle / GA State Champion (14U / 130 lbs) on March 5.

First place - Greco Roman / GA State Champion. First place - Freestyle / GA State Champion on May 13.

Georgia Triple Crown winner (three styles) FK/FS/



Union County rising-freshman wrestler Kevin Kilpatrick.

GR. First place - Folkstyle / Southeast Regionals Champion. Second place - Greco Roman / Southeast Regionals Finalist on May 28.

First place - Freestyle / Southeast Regionals Champion on May 29. A 2023 FS/GR Team GA Schoolboys National Team Member (FS/Elite 8) All-American.

Paxon Legatt -- rising 9th grader (Class of 2027) who moved from Minnesota to Union County three years ago and is a seasoned wrestler.

His father, Jim Legatt, is a volunteer Assistant Coach at UCHS who has another son, Payton Legatt, a rising 11th grader who was the 2022

Folkstyle Freshman GA State Champion and placed third at the GA High School State Championship in 2023 as a sophomore at UCHS.

Paxon's accomplishment include: third place - Folkstyle / GA State Championship placer on March 5. Seventh place - Folkstyle / NHSCA Nationals Placer on March 26.

Second place - Greco Roman / GA State Championship Finalist. Third place - Freestyle / GA State Championship Placer on May 13.

A 2022 FS/GR Team GA Schoolboys National Team Member.