

Sports

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Softball: Anthros drives in four, strikes out six in UCHS debut

Lady Panthers churn out 15 hits, blast Lumpkin County 14-2 on opening day

By Todd Forrest
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Dahlonega - Union County (1-0) erased an early 2-0 deficit in Friday's season opener with 14 unanswered runs, including five apiece in the third and the fifth, blowing past Lumpkin County 14-2 in five innings.

Freshman Izzy Anthros earned the nod in the circle, overcoming some first-inning jitters to surrender only one hit over the final four frames after a pair of Indians (1-2) scored via two walks and two singles.

Anthros finished the day with six strikeouts, issuing three walks over five innings and giving up two earned runs in her 65-pitch debut. At the dish, Anthros went 3 for 4, driving in four and finishing a homer shy of the cycle -- coming up short by a couple of feet on a deep fly out to center during the fourth.

Not to be outdone by the rookie, seniors Georgia Patton and Brooklyn Brown tacked on three hits each for a Lady Panthers' squad that tallied 15 for the day. Patton added three runs, two steals and one RBI; Brown scored once and drove home another while collecting a pair of doubles.

Fellow 12th graders Katie Byers and Gracie Gladding tacked on two hits each in the blowout, with Byers going 2 for 4 with a double, two runs, an RBI and a steal. Gladding, meanwhile, plated three runners and walked during a 2-for-3 performance.

Following a scoreless first from the Lady Panthers offense, Anthros (unavailable during last month's scrimmage) missed the zone on the first eight offerings of her high school career, resulting in an early visit by head coach Carissa Owenby.

Anthros responded by fanning Lumpkin's No. 3 and No. 4 hitters before giving up consecutive singles that spotted the Indians a 2-0 advantage. But the freshman limited the damage by striking out the ensuing hitter on three pitches.

Brown and Anthros kicked off the Union half of the second with back-to-back doubles to put the Lady Panthers on the board, but Union stranded the tying run at third.

Anthros worked around a leadoff single in the bottom half, eventually navigating a two-on, two-out jam to keep things at 2-1, setting the stage for Union's five-run third.

Byers opened things by doubling down the left-field line, then Patton beat out a slow



Third-base coach Robby Roxbury looks on as freshman Izzy Anthros enjoys a laugh with her teammates following a triple. Photo/Todd Forrest

roller to short. Gladding worked a free pass to load the bags, and junior Sloane Dyer tied things up with a five-pitch walk before Brown's RBI groundout put the Lady Panthers out front for good.

Anthros cleared the base

s with a two-run triple, and sophomore Zady Ludlum plated sophomore courtesy-runner Delaney Moses with a grounder to second.

Sporting a 6-2 lead, Union County sat down the Indians 1-2-3 in the third -- an

inning highlighted by a diving, over-the-shoulder grab by the first-baseman Dyer in foul territory.

The Lady Panthers continued to pour it on with three more in the fourth, beginning with a leadoff walk by senior

Jewell Massey. Later, a one-out single by Patton put two aboard, resulting in a double steal that moved both runners into scoring position. With the table set for Gladding, the senior catcher roped a two-run single into left. Brown's two-out double put

runners at second and third, allowing courtesy-runner Jules Dyer to score on a wild pitch before Anthros flew out to the warning track.

The freshman right-hander induced three quick grounders in the Lumpkin fourth, and Union put the Indians away with a five-run fifth that built a 14-2 margin.

Freshman pinch-hitter Zadie Diaz doubled to center and sophomore Peyton Grishman drew a walk to start the fifth. Following another double steal, Byers' bunt single plated Diaz for a 10-2 score. Grishman came around on Patton's base hit, and Gladding made it 12-2 with a run-scoring ground out.

Sloane Dyer lined an RBI single to center, and Brown's base knock put two aboard for Anthros, who delivered her fourth RBI of the day with a single to left.

In the bottom half, Anthros opened the frame with a backward K before a grounder to second and line out to short ended the contest.

Sloane Dyer finished 1 for 2 with a pair of runs and 2 RBIs; Ludlum plated one during an 0 for 2 day. Grishman went 0 for 1 with a walk and a run; Massey added one run, a steal and a walk - finishing 0 for 2. Moses and Jules Dyer scored once; Diaz doubled, stole a base and scored during a 1-for-1 debut.

Union County will host Lumpkin County on Tuesday, Aug. 8 and White County on Thursday, Aug. 10. The JV contests begin at 4:30 p.m. with the varsity to follow.

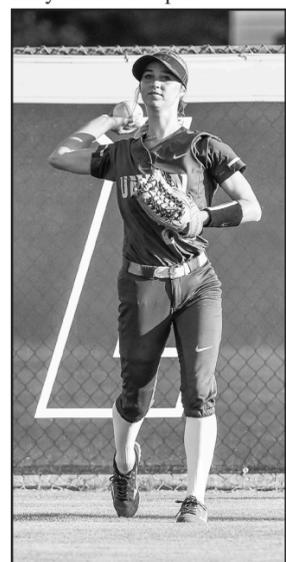
The Lady Panthers travel to Fannin County on Saturday, Aug. 12 to face Class 6A Paulding County at 2 p.m. and the Lady Rebels at 4 p.m.



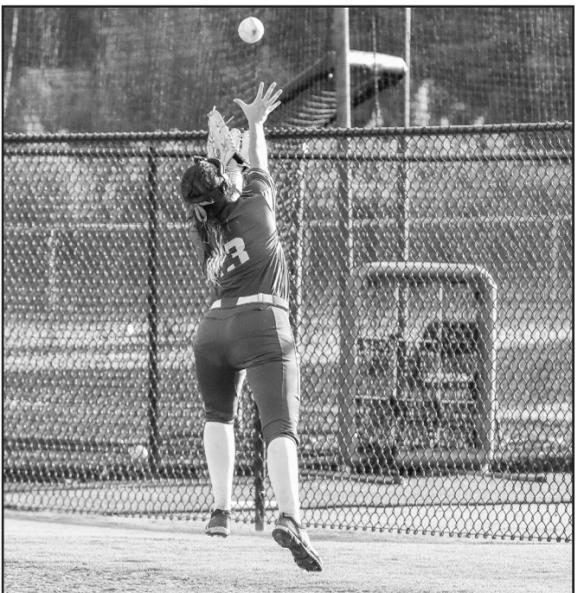
Senior Jewell Massey scores during the third. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Brooklyn Brown sends a double into the gap. Photo/Todd Forrest



Katie Byers



Junior first-baseman Sloane Dyer lays out to make a circus catch in foul territory down the right-field line. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior catcher Gracie Gladding lines an RBI single into left field during Union's three-run third. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior shortstop Georgia Patton had three hits and scored three times at Lumpkin County. Photo/Todd Forrest

Football: Union County visits Chestatee for Friday night scrimmage

By Todd Forrest
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It's finally that time of year again in Union County. The Panthers travel to Chestatee on Friday night for a preseason scrimmage ahead of their Aug. 18 opener at Fannin County.

According to UCHS head coach Michael Perry, Friday's meeting at Chestatee will feature three quarters of varsity action before turning things over to the youngsters in the fourth. A no-contact rule will apply to both quarterbacks and special teams are included, but will not feature any returns or blocked-kick attempts.

Entering his third year in Blairsville, Coach Perry's Panthers more than doubled their win total from a 3-7 season in 2021 to an 8-4 mark in 2022. But Union's record wasn't the only massive improvement between 2021 and 2022. The Panthers saw its offensive production jump from 22.6 points a game to 28.4. Meanwhile, the defensive unit went from giving up 38.6 a night in 2021 to allowing 21.8.

Behind returning seniors David Heredia and Lane Lance at the defensive ends, the front three appear to be the strength of this year's unit, with juniors Dusty Aaron and Trent Webster the early favorites to replace Elijah Haynes in the middle.

Senior Kooper Ashcraft and Seth Rutan headline a line-backer group that must replace Gage Barnes' team-leading 102 tackles and Elijah Helton.

Perhaps the most concerning question on that side of the ball is how to fill the voids left by safeties Sam Page and



Running back Braylen Rader celebrates his touchdown catch at Model in the first round of the Class AA State playoffs. Rader led Union with 805 yards rushing and nine touchdowns in 2022. Photo/Todd Forrest

Wilson Walker, especially considering that sophomore Cade Dockrey, junior Braden Plott and senior Nolan Thompson are the only returning defensive backs with double-digit tackles in 2022.

The offensive picture is significantly less cloudy with senior quarterback Caiden Tanner leading an experienced unit this fall. Three of Tanner's top-four targets from last year, seniors Jensen Goble, Tyler Grasty and Ethan McBride, are all back, not to mention Union's top-two rushers in senior Bray-

len Rader and junior Connor Schuknecht.

The offense's front five is anchored by returning starters Kaden Combs (JR), Cody Meeks (SR) and Mayo Collins-Spiva (SR).

The only question mark on special teams is who will take over punting responsibilities following Walker's graduation. Goble will return kicks again in 2023, Zuriel Mancillas is back to handle kickoff duties and McBride remains as Union's PAT/FG specialist.

As for Friday's oppo-



Caiden Tanner fires downfield during Union County's Sweet 16 playoff game at South Atlanta in November 2022. Tanner should benefit from entire spring and summer's worth of workouts in 2023 after spending much of his 2022 offseason recovering from knee surgery. Photo/Todd Forrest

ment, the Region 8-AAAA War Eagles are coming off a 2-8 campaign with wins over East Hall and East Forsyth. Chestatee is under the direction of first-year head coach Stuart Cunningham, who's in the process of transitioning the War Eagles from a spread attack to a wing-T offense.

Kickoff is at 7:30 p.m. on Friday at Chestatee High School. The school is located at 3005 Sardis Rd. Gainesville, GA 30506.



Jensen Goble slips a tackle at Athens Academy in October 2022. As a junior, Goble set a school record with 87 catches. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union County Football's Meet the Panthers rescheduled for Thursday



Get excited Union County! It's that time of year and we all have FOOTBALL FEVER! Come out on August 3rd and show your Panther Spirit in support of our football players, cheerleaders, and band! This year we have Nana & Papa's Ice Cream (\$5), Southern Sips Lemonade (\$5), & Kona Ice (\$4)! There will be free hotdogs for all who attend and inflatable slides for the kids! Featuring performances by the UC cheer squad, UC band, & other events that you do not want to miss! We look forward to seeing our community pack the stadium on August 3rd at 6:00pm at UCHS stadium!



Eenie, Meenie, Miney, Moe, where should our next ride go? Pavement, forest, rocks, and creeks, we can get there with our Jeeps. Come join us!

Blue Ridge Mountain Jeepers meet the 2nd Friday of every month at Daniel's Steak House in Hiwassee. Eat and greet is at 11 AM and the meeting starts at 12 noon.

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UCHS Volleyball 2023 schedule

Date	Time	Opponent	Location	Level
Aug 10		Preseason scrimmage at Hiwassee Dam	Hiwassee Dam	Varsity
Aug 12		Rally on the Ridge	Fannin	Varsity
Aug 15	5:00 PM	Dawson Co	Dawson Co	JV/Varsity
	6:00 PM	East Forsyth	Dawson Co	JV/Varsity
Aug 17	5:00 PM	Pickens Co	Pickens Co	JV
	6:00 PM	Pickens Co	Pickens Co	Varsity
Aug 21	5:00 PM	Andrews	HOME	JV
	6:00 PM	Andrews	HOME	Varsity
Aug 24	5:00 PM	Gilmer Co	Gilmer Co	JV/Varsity
	6:00 PM	Murray Co	Gilmer Co	JV/Varsity
Aug 29	6:00 PM	Rabun	Rabun Co	JV/Varsity
	7:00 PM	BASA - Barrow Arts and Science Academy	Rabun Co	JV/Varsity
Aug 31	5:00 PM	Hiwassee Dam (NC) SENIOR NIGHT	HOME	JV
	6:00 PM	Hiwassee Dam (NC)	HOME	Varsity
Sept 5	5:00 PM	White Co	White Co	JV/Varsity
	6:00 PM	Habersham	White Co	JV/Varsity
Sept 6	5:00 PM	Dawson Co	HOME	Varsity
	7:00 PM	Providence Christian	HOME	Varsity
Sept 7	5:30 PM	Stephens Co	Stephens Co	JV
	6:30 PM	Stephens Co	Stephens Co	Varsity
Sept 11	5:00 PM	Andrews	Andrews	JV
	6:00 PM	Andrews	Andrews	Varsity
Sept 12	5:00 PM	Fellowship Christian	FCS	JV/Varsity
	6:00 PM	Third team	FCS	JV/Varsity
Sept 14	5:00 PM	Providence Christian	Providence Christian	Varsity
	6:00 PM	Whitefield	Providence Christian	Varsity
Sept 19	5:00 PM	Banks Co	HOME	Varsity
	7:00 PM	Rabun Gap	HOME	Varsity
Sept 21	5:00 PM	Gainesville HS	Gainesville HS	JV
	6:00 PM	Gainesville HS	Gainesville HS	Varsity
Sept 26	6:00 PM	Athens Academy	Banks Co	JV/Varsity
	7:00 PM	Banks Co	Banks Co	JV/Varsity
Sept 28	5:00 PM	East Jackson	East Jackson	JV/Varsity
	6:00 PM	Athens Academy	East Jackson	JV/Varsity
Oct 3	5:00 PM	Fellowship Christian	HOME	Varsity
	7:00 PM	East Jackson	HOME	Varsity
Oct 12	TBA	AREA TOURNAMENT		Varsity
Oct 14	TBA	AREA TOURNAMENT		Varsity

UCHS 2023 Softball Schedule

Date	Location	Level
August 4	@ Lumpkin	JV/V
August 8	Lumpkin	JV/V
August 12	@Fannin vs Paulding	Varsity
August 12	@Fannin	Varsity
August 10	White	JV/V
August 15	Commerece	JV/V
August 21	Pickens	Jv/V
August 24	@ white	JV/V
August 31	@Dawson	JV/V
September 7	Banks	V-Region
September 12	@East Jackson	V-Region
September 14	@ Providence	V-Region
September 19	@ Banks	V-Region
September 26	East Jackson	V-Region
September 27	@ Pickens	JV/V
September 28	Providence	V-Region
October 3	Banks	V-Region
October 5	@ East Jackson	V-Region
October 10	@ Providence	V-Region

UCHS 2023 Football Schedule

Regular season		
08/18	A	Fannin County (Region 7-AA)
08/25	A	Lumpkin County (Region 7-AAA)
09/01	H	Towns County (Region 8-A Division II)
09/08	H	Armuchee (Region 7-A Division I)
09/15	A	West Hall (Region 7-AAA)
10/06	H	● Banks County
10/13	A	● Providence Christian
10/20	A	● East Jackson
10/27	H	● Athens Academy
11/02	A	● Fellowship Christian

This schedule does not include Union County's scrimmage game at Chestatee on Friday, Aug. 11