

Volleyball: Union wins two-of-three including debut at UCHS gym

By Todd Forrest
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Following a tough start to the season, Union County bounced back with a pair of victories over Murray County and Andrews, North Carolina.

In the Tuesday, Aug. 13 tri-match at Fannin County, the Panthers scored the first non-region victory in program history with a 2-0 (28-26, 25-15) sweep of Murray County.

Union would later fall in straight sets to the Lady Rebels but returned home Thursday to score a 3-0 (25-7, 25-22, 25-22) victory over Andrews, NC in the first-ever volleyball match at the UCHS gymnasium.

“Our girls are learning what it takes to win and they’re starting to show some grit and they’re gaining confidence,” Union head coach Megan Swanson said. “Now that they have the confidence to win games out of region against better teams, that’s going to give them the confidence and the drive to want to [win] a whole lot more.”

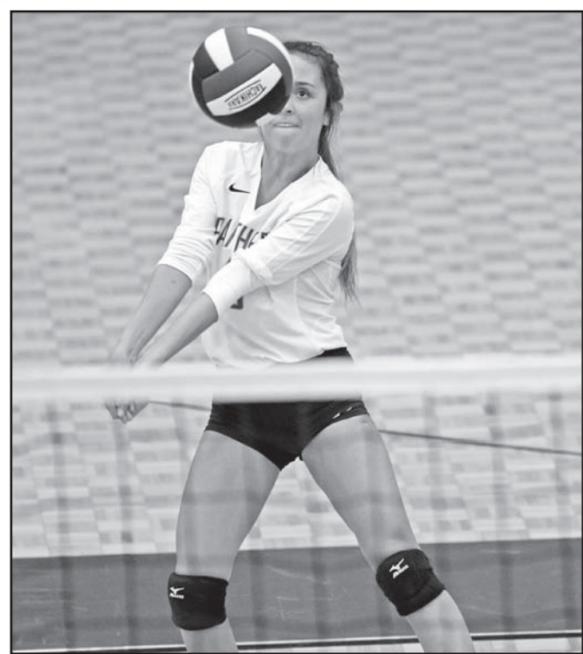
The first set was all Union as they jumped out to a 5-1 lead and never looked back. Andrews would keep it close, trailing just 9-4 before the Panthers poured it on. Eleven of the next 12 points broke in Union County’s favor as they opened up a 20-5 advantage.

Holding a 22-7 lead, the Panthers scored the final three points to lock up the most one-sided victory in program history.

Andrews would rebound in the second set as the two teams battled back-and-forth. The Wildcats eventually grabbed late leads of 17-14, 19-16 and 22-19 before Union



Left: Sophomore Riley Allison spikes a ball past the fingertips of an Andrews Wildcat in last week’s 3-0 victory over Murray County in Blue Ridge. Photos/Todd Forrest



Right: Senior Izzy Zamora sets up a shot during Union County’s 2-0 victory over Andrews.

County sealed the deal with six-straight points.

The third set saw Andrews jump out to a 12-1 advantage before the Panthers began chipping away. Seven of the next nine points belonged to Union to make it a contest at 14-8.

The Panthers would pull to within 16-12 and 18-16 and remain within two points at 21-19 before evening the score at 21-all.

Trailing 22-21, Union County closed strong for the third straight set, rattling off four unanswered to complete the program’s first home sweep.

“We did a good job in that first set but I think the girls might have got it in their heads that it would be easy and our next two matches didn’t start out very well,” Coach Swanson

said. “Battling back from a 12-1 deficit showed me a lot of heart and a lot of grit.”

On Tuesday night, the Panthers visited Fannin County for a tri-match with Murray County and went home with its the program’s first-ever non-region victory.

The sweep of Murray also marked the first win of the season for Union County as they overcame an early 5-1 deficit to take a 10-8 lead in the opening set.

However, Murray wasn’t going to roll over as the Indians rallied for leads of 16-13 and 19-14, prompting a timeout from Coach Swanson.

Trailing by five, Union pulled to within a point at 19-18 before eventually edging its way in front at 21-20. Tied at 22-22, Murray converted

back-to-back points and were one score away from taking the first set but the Panthers answered with consecutive points of their own.

Needing to win by two, Murray was unable to convert another game-point at 25-24, leading to a 26-25 Union lead.

Tied at 26-26, the Panthers finished off the Indians with two-straight points to take the 28-26 victory.

“The girls wouldn’t quit and that’s exactly what I’ve asked them to do,” Coach Swanson said. “That [first set] was a fight to the very end and it was great for them to finally win one like that.”

The second set was all Union after they blew things open following an 8-8 tie. Leading 15-9, Murray took a timeout but were unable to

weather the purple storm as the Panthers built a 21-11 advantage.

The Indians tried to make things interesting by trimming the margin to 22-15, but three-straight Union County points secured the win.

In the matchup with Fannin County, the Rebels jumped out to an early 10-3 advantage. The Panthers would get as close as 18-15 and 24-22 but Fannin held off the late rally to take the first set 25-22.

Union County led 3-1 in the second set but quickly found themselves down 9-3. After battling back to within three at 16-13, the Rebels rolled off nine-unanswered to put the set and the match away at 25-13.

“I think we got tired against Fannin County and

that’s something we’re going to have to work on as the season progresses,” Coach Swanson said. “Going into extra points really took a lot out of us but we’re going to have to learn how to win when we’re coming off a close match like that.”

“They will need to learn to keep pushing, even when you’re tired. We were right there with Fannin. We were battling them and I think it might have shocked both of us that it was that close.”

“We have [Fannin] two more times so maybe we’ll [beat] them this year.”

After Monday night’s match with Hiwassee Dam, North Carolina and Tuesday’s visit to Gilmer, Union will host Fannin and Stephens County at the high school gym on Thursday, beginning at 5 p.m.

Softball: Union drops three last week; opens region play at home Thursday

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After two weeks the Lady Panthers are sitting at 1-4 with the start of the region schedule right around the corner.

Union County features a full slate of games this week after coming off three road losses last week. On Monday, the Lady Panthers were unable to hold a 4-0 lead at Lumpkin County as the Lady Indians rallied with four in the fifth and one in the sixth.

Union would travel to North Gwinnett on Wednesday where they suffered a 3-0 loss to North Forsyth and a 4-1 defeat to Lambert.

Against Lambert, an RBI single by Miranda Lockaby scored Rebekah Kelley to give the Lady Panthers a 1-0 advantage before the Longhorns scored two each in the fifth and sixth innings.

Mary Wischmeyer walked twice for Union County, who struggled at the plate, reaching base only six times in the contest.

Offense was even tougher to come by vs North Forsyth as two singles and a double accounted for the Lady Panthers’ only baserunners. Back-to-back two-out singles by Lockaby and Wischmeyer had Union threatening in the fourth, then a one-out double by Wischmeyer went to waste in the seventh.

Junior Trinity Queen limited North Forsyth to just five singles and two earned runs but received no run support for her efforts.

At Lumpkin County, Kelley led off the game by reaching on an error before coming around to score on a Queen RBI single. Union County would make it a 4-0 game in the fourth when Wischmeyer led off the inning with a double.

Caley Davis singled and stole second to put two in scoring position for Emma Roxbury, who brought home Wischmeyer with an RBI groundout.

Aubrey Banton would bring home Davis before com-



Union County junior pitcher Trinity Queen scattered five hits vs North Forsyth last week but received no run support in a 3-0 loss. Photo/Todd Forrest

ing around herself on a passed ball after Hannah Patton’s base hit moved her to third.

The Lady Panthers would put two aboard with one down in the fifth but came up empty. They also stranded one runner each in the sixth and seventh inning.

With two runs already in, Lumpkin tied the game with a two-out, two-run single in the fifth. They later scored the go-ahead run on a two-out, RBI double in the sixth.

Union County will look to get back on track with a pair of winnable games early in the week when they visit 3-3 Gilmer on Monday and 2-3 Pickens on Wednesday.

Region 8-AA action gets underway Thursday when they host Monticello, who finished third in Class AA last season.

The Lady Hurricanes are also going through some early-season struggles as they enter the week with a 1-6 record.

First pitch is scheduled

for 5:30 p.m. vs Monticello. Wednesday’s contest at Pickens is also slated for a 5:30 p.m. start.

On Saturday, the Lady Panthers will visit East Hall for a doubleheader beginning at 11 a.m. when they square off with the host Lady Vikings.

At 1 p.m., Union County and Stephens County will meet before East Hall and Stephens close out the day at 3 p.m.



Miranda Lockaby fires to first during a recent game. Photo/Todd Forrest

Football... continued from 2C

battling for the job. Everyone should have a better understanding of who will be named QB-1 after Friday’s East Hall at Flowery Branch season opener.

Regardless of who the quarterback is, Coach Allison knows the Vikings are always capable of putting up a lot of points and getting into a shootout is not in the Panthers’ best interest.

“Our defense is going to have to play well,” Coach Allison said. “If we can eliminate the big plays and can get the ball back into the hands of our offense, I believe we’ll be able to score some points and give ourselves a good chance to win.”

Meet the Team: On Friday, Union County will host its annual Meet the Team event and Coach Allison is hoping for a solid turnout from the community.

“We’re looking forward to hosting the community on Friday and we hope everyone shows up,” he said. “We hope that the youth football players will come out so we can get them involved.”

Meet the Team is scheduled for 7 p.m. Friday at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

Next week’s season opener is slated for 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 30 at East Hall Stadium.

MUSA ‘Colorful Run’ 5K benefit race scheduled for Aug. 31

Go online and register for Blairsville’s first EVER Colorful Run 5k. This is open to kids, adults, grandparents, runners, walkers, joggers - anyone who would like some exercise while getting showered in color!

You can register online now at <https://enduranceactive.com/event-reg/select-race?e=63477154>.

Make sure to register by August 5th to assure you get a shirt and the size you would like as after that date it will be while supplies last! If you would like to sponsor and be on the shirt message us and we



will get you on there! All monies will go to help kids with their individual registration costs.

Fall Fitness Family Programs

Union County Recreation Department
Fall 2019 Session / Ages: 50 and over



Fall is quickly approaching! Union County Recreation Department will be offering many awesome fitness class options for the fall session. Here is a list of the following fitness classes we will offer:

- Regular Aerobics (T/Th) @ 8:30-9:30 AM
- Advanced Strength-Core class (M/W/F) @ 9:45-10:30 AM
- Outdoor Exercise/Indoor Walking (M/W/F) @ 9:00-9:45 AM
- AM Beginner Strength and Core class (T/Th) @ 9:45-10:30 AM
- AM Step-Aerobics class (M/W/F) @ 10:45-11:30 AM
- PM Beginner Strength-Core class (T/Th) @ 5:30-6:30 PM
- Chair Fitness-Aerobics class (T/Th) @ 1:15-2:00 PM
- **New Line Dance class (W/F) @ 8:00-8:50 AM
- **New Balloflex class (M/F) @ 1:30-2:15 PM
- AM Dance Jams class (T/Th) @ 10:45-11:30 AM
- PM Dance Jams class (M/Th) @ 6:30-7:30(M) and 5:30-6:30(Th)
- Beginner Yoga (M/Th) @ 8:00-8:45 AM

*Fall Session 2019 Registration begins on August 1, 2019 and ends August 30, 2019 (or until classes fill to capacity) at the Recreation Office (310 Wellborn St.) Registration and class payments must be done in person. If you have any questions, you can call (706) 439-6074 and ask for Jennifer.