

# Sports

See the Sports Section at ngame.com

## Softball: Lady Panthers win two-of-three; open Region play Thursday

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
sports@ngame.com

Union County softball improved its record to 4-3 on the year following two wins in three games.

Fresh off last week's 22-2 beatdown of Pickens in Jasper, the Lady Panthers continued to swing a hot bat during an 8-1 victory over Dawson County and a 15-0 rout at Towns County.

The loss came Thursday, 5-2 at Lumpkin County via a walk-off 3-run home run.

"We played well, we just couldn't get the big hit," Union County Head Coach Stephen Mitchell said afterwards.

The Lady Panthers were looking to get back on track when Towns County paid a visit to Blairsville on Monday evening - after press time.

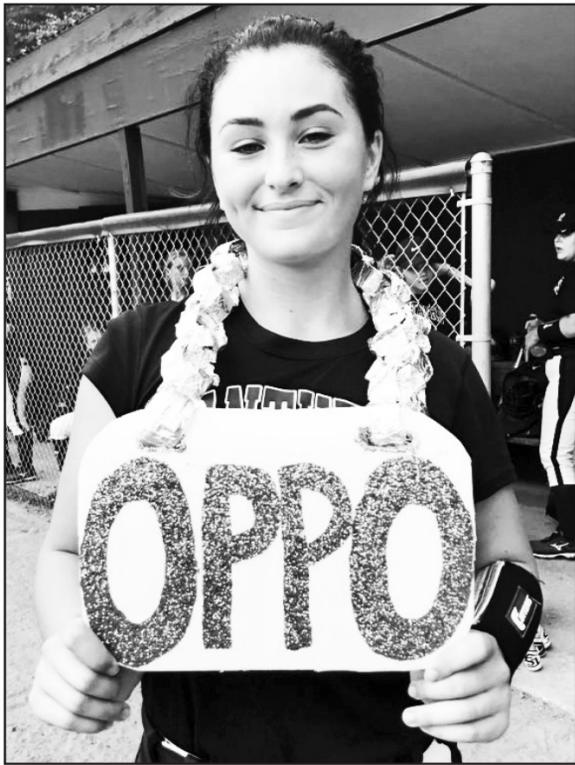
On Thursday, Union County will make the 320-mile, round-trip journey to Monticello to open Region 8-AA action against the Lady Hurricanes at 5 p.m.

The Lady Panthers will return to action Saturday when they visit East Hall at 11 a.m.

**Lady Panthers 8, Dawson County 1** - Dawson County got on the board with two hits in the top of the first and took a 1-0 advantage into the fourth.

Union responded with four in the fourth, one in the fifth, and three in the sixth. Meanwhile, sophomore pitcher Trinity Queen limited the Tigers to just two hits over the final four innings, preventing the visitors from mounting a serious comeback bid.

At the plate, Aladriel Arnold finished 2-for-2 with



Left: Aladriel Arnold was one of the first recipients of the Union County Softball 'Oppo' Chain, awarded to batters who reach base with an opposite field hit. Right: Sophomore pitcher Trinity Queen winds and delivers during Union County's win over Dawson County. Photo/Todd Forrest



two doubles, 2 RBIs, and one run - propelling the senior outfielder to *Blitz* Player of the Week honors.

Senior Skyler Ludlum, junior Mary Wischmeyer, and sophomore Hannah Patton all finished with two hits apiece.

The Lady Panthers also received contributions from its freshmen with Caley Davis going 1-for-2 with an RBI. Emma Roxbury went 0-for-1 with an RBI groundout.

Senior Maddie Sutton went 1-for-2 with a bunt single and a run; junior Krysten Hodges added a pinch hit, RBI single and senior Bailey Rayfield reached on a fielder's

choice and scored.

Queen picked up her second win of the season, striking out five over seven innings. The sophomore didn't give up a walk and hit one batter in the second inning while surrendering six hits - four coming in the first three innings.

**Lady Panthers 15, Towns County 0 (4 inn)** - Union County scored nine in the first, four in the second and two in the fourth as junior Megan Bright won her second game in three starts from the circle.

The Lady Panthers sent 14 batters to the plate in the top

of the first, with Wischmeyer sliding into the leadoff spot from the 3-hole. In her first game atop the lineup, the junior catcher went 2-for-2 with an RBI, a run, and a double.

The Lady Indians helped the Union County cause with three errors and four walks in the first.

Patton, Hodges, Rayfield, and Ludlum each drew a base on balls in the first. Arnold, Ludlum, and Patton all reached on an error.

Towns County was limited to just one infield single off Bright, who fanned eight and walked one over four innings.

Rayfield and Sutton each singled and scored in the second inning while Rayfield walked and scored in the first; Sutton scored after reaching on a fielder's choice in the first.

Hodges walked, scored, and drove in one; fellow junior Kristen Poteete scored two with a fourth inning single; senior Madeline Tanner drew a third inning walk.

Freshmen starters Kaelyn Jones and Davis combined to reach base in each of their three at bats. Jones drove in one with a fielder's choice; Davis singled, walked, and scored.

Fellow freshmen Lexi Sisum singled, walked, and scored. Rebekah Kelley drew a bases loaded walk and flew out.

**Lumpkin County 5, Lady Panthers 2** - Tied at 2-2 entering the bottom of the seventh, the Lady Indians delivered a walk-off, three-run homer to end Union County's three game winning streak.

Last Thursday marked the second straight time Lumpkin defeated the Lady Panthers on a walk-off in Dahlonega. (No additional information on the Lumpkin game was available at press time).

## Volleyball opens with matches vs White, Fannin, Pickens, at Hiwassee Dam

### Union County dedicating its 2018 volleyball season to injured senior Madelyn Hood

By Todd Forrest  
Sports Editor  
sports@ngame.com

Union County Volleyball had a busy opening week with four varsity and junior varsity matches.

The season opened Monday at Hiwassee Dam, North Carolina where the Lady Panthers fell 3-0 in a best of five match.

Union County battled the Lady Eagles down to the wire in the opening game, falling 25-21. The second game was once again competitive with Hiwassee Dam taking a 25-17 victory. The third game was all Lady Panthers in a 25-7 win.

The Lady Panthers returned to Blairsville on Tuesday for the home opener vs White and Fannin Counties.

Union opened with the Class AAAA White County Lady Warriors and struggled in a 2-0, best-of-three series loss. White County defeated the Lady Panthers 25-13 and 25-10.

Up next was Fannin County, fresh off its win over White, and Union gave the Lady Rebels all they could handle.

Union County held a 15-14 lead before Fannin scored the final 11 points in a 25-15 win. The Lady Panthers also held a lead in the second game before Fannin pulled away for the 25-11 victory.

Union hosted another Class AAAA school on Thursday when the Pickens Lady Dragons paid a visit to Blairsville.

Game one of the best-of-five saw the Lady Panther rally fall one point short as Union pulled to within 24-23 when Pickens scored the game-winning point.

The comeback bid took its toll on the Lady Panthers, who dropped the next two games 25-13 and 25-12.

**Hood update** - Following Union County's Tuesday tri-match with White and Fannin, Union County senior Madelyn Hood fell in the parking lot while walking to the car with her parents.

She suffered a concussion which resulted in memory loss. According to Union County Head Coach Megan Swanson, Hood could miss the remainder of the



Madelyn Hood goes up high for a Union County point vs White County on Tuesday. Hood didn't have her jersey and was forced to wear No. 19 instead of No. 14. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County is honoring senior Madelyn Hood.

season. On Thursday, her teammates decided to honor her by writing Hood's No. "14" on their wrists (pictured above).

On Monday, Union County hosted Andrews, NC. On Tuesday, Gilmer will visit Union County for a 5 p.m. JV start, with the varsity to follow.

Gordon Central will host the Lady Panthers on Thursday. The JV will get underway at 4 p.m. with the

varsity to follow.

Union County will host Hiwassee Dam, North Carolina on Monday, Aug. 27 at 5 p.m. with the varsity to follow.

On Tuesday, Aug. 28, Union will visit Fannin County for a tri-match with the Lady Rebels and Rabun County beginning at 5 p.m. The Rabun County Lady Cats will provide the Lady Panthers their first look at a Region 8-AA opponent.



Union County takes the floor for the Tuesday home opener vs White/Fannin. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County celebrates a point during its comeback bid vs Pickens on Thursday. Photo/Todd Forrest