

Softball: Lady Panthers win fifth straight, host defending champs Thursday

By Todd Forrest
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After mysteriously dropping out of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* softball rankings, the Lady Panthers (6-1) returned to the Top 10 with a vengeance last week, drilling 5th-ranked Commerce and Class AAA's Lumpkin County.

Despite opening the season ranked fifth in Class AA and owning wins Class AAA's then-No. 8 Lumpkin County and Class AAAA's then-No. 4 East Hall, the Union County Lady Panthers plummeted from the AJC's Top 10 even while sporting a 4-1 record at the time.

Last week, Union crept back into the 10th spot but still took out their frustrations with an 11-1 shellacking at Lumpkin County and a 9-1 beatdown of No. 5 Commerce.

This week, the Lady Panthers have an opportunity to take their first step towards something significantly more meaningful than an early-September newspaper ranking: The Region 8-AA title.

Union County will host the defending state champion and preseason Class AA No. 1 Banks County on Thursday. A win will put Union in the driver's seat for the top-seed in next month's region tournament.

Lady Panthers 9, Commerce 1 (5 innings) - Junior Lexi Sisum helped blow things open with a bases-clearing, three-run double in the bottom of the fourth, spotting Union a 6-1 advantage.

Senior Trinity Queen moved to 5-0 in the circle, allowing three hits and one walk over five innings.



A Contrast of Emotion: Commerce players can only look on in disbelief as Union County celebrates a fourth-inning double by Lexi Sisum that scored three runners, including Katie Byers (23), opening up a 6-1 lead over the fifth-ranked Lady Tigers. Photo/Todd Forrest

But it wasn't all smooth sailing for the Union County ace, who ran into trouble in the first after surrendering a two-out double. The Lady Tigers would grab an early 1-0 lead when an infield error scored their only run.

The Lady Panthers took advantage of consecutive Commerce miscues in their half of the first following a leadoff single by sophomore Chloe Potts, who came around to score on an error off the bat of junior Emma Roxbury.

Union made it 2-1 when a Queen pop fly was mishandled, allowing Roxbury to cross.

After a Commerce leadoff single to begin the second, Queen retired nine of the next 10 batters

- yielding just one walk over that span. In the meantime, the Lady Panthers' lineup continued to build on the early advantage.

A Sisum double and a Roxbury single put runners at the corners in the third, setting the table for junior Aubrie Banton who brought home Sisum via an RBI single.

Leading 3-1 in the fourth, Union County kept its foot on the gas. Following a Caley Davis walk to lead off the frame, a bunt single by Ansley Collins and a Potts hit-by-pitch loaded the bases for Sisum.

Her three-run double made it 6-1, and with one down, Roxbury reached on an error and a fielder's choice off the bat of Queen allowed Sisum to beat

the throw home.

Roxbury scored on a wild pitch and a sacrifice fly by Banton awarded the Lady Panthers a 9-1 advantage after four.

That proved more than enough for Queen, who pitched around a one-out single and a hit-by-pitch to end the game with an eight-run lead after five.

Sisum finished 2-for-2 with two doubles, three RBIs and two runs. Collins also turned in a two-hit performance, going 2-for-2 with a run and a stolen base.

Potts and Roxbury each singled and scored twice; Banton went 1-for-2 with two RBIs and Emily Byers finished 1-for-3. Caroline Karnes scored and stole a base. Queen drove in one run.

Lady Panthers 11, Lumpkin County 1 - Freshman Sierra Burnette picked up the first win of her varsity career, firing a three-hitter while striking out seven and not allowing a walk.

Despite the 10-run victory, Union didn't pull away until the late innings - scoring two runs in the sixth and four in the seventh.

The Lady Panthers posted an early 2-0 advantage when Potts walked and Hannah Patton singled to open the game, allowing Queen to push Union ahead with a two-run single.

The lead was extended to 3-0 when Potts scored Karnes (who was running for Burnette) with a base hit to right field.

Lumpkin got on the board during the bottom half of the inning with a pair of singles before Burnette slammed the door with consecutive strikeouts.

Banton singled and scored in the fourth, and Sisum led off the fifth with a solo homer to center to take a 5-1 advantage.

In the sixth, a one-out Collins double scored Davis, then a Patton RBI single opened up a 7-1 lead.

Roxbury, Queen and Jaycee Seabolt each singled to set the stage for a four-run seventh. A bases-loaded walk to Byers made it 8-1, and a two-run single by Davis extended the margin to 10-1.

Byers came around to score on a fielder's choice off the bat of Tori Tracy for an 11-1 score.

Queen finished 2-for-4 with two RBIs. Patton was 2-for-4 with one ribbie. Davis stole two bags and drove in two during a 1-for-3 day at the plate. Potts walked three times, scored once and knocked in one while going 1-for-1.

Sisum went 1-for-5 with her team's first dinger of the year; Banton was 1-for-2 with two runs scored and Collins finished 1-of-3 while driving home one run.

Seabolt, Burnette and Roxbury all recorded one hit; Karnes scored twice while Katie Byers swiped two bags and scored.

Emily Byers scored and drove in a run; Jewell Massey added a run and Tracy picked up a ribbie.

Up next: Union travels to Fannin County at 5:55 p.m. on Tuesday before returning home to open region play with Banks County at 5:30 p.m. Thursday.

Football... continued from 2C

overthrown pass near midfield. Facing a first down at the 46, the Rebels defense ended the threat with a juggling interception at midfield.

With only one timeout remaining, and less than four minutes to play, the Union defense needed a quick stop; and on third-and-three, the Panthers smothered a Fannin run for no gain. But on fourth-and-three, their luck would run out as the Rebels went to the air and moved the chains.

The Rebels' victory marks their first win at Union County since 2007 and ends a six-game overall skid to the Panthers (2013). Meanwhile, the loss is Brian Allison's first season-opening loss at UCHS since 1997 (White County) - his second season as a head coach.

Game Stats - Walker finished with 12 rushing yards on six carries. He added one catch for 13 yards.

According to Allison, Walker and Cayleb Rogers will likely be called upon to fill the void left by Daniel.

McCombs caught three balls for 31 yards; Hemphill had an 11-yard grab and Underwood finished with a five-yard reception.

Up next - Union visits No. 10 Commerce, who is fresh off a 41-18 win at Banks County.

The Panthers have never defeated Commerce in 13 tries. Since falling 20-14 to the 6th-ranked Tigers during the first-ever meeting in 1984, Union



Head coach Brian Allison and the Panthers prepare to take the field for the 2020 season. Photo/Todd Forrest

has only played Commerce within 14 points (41-27) on one occasion -- in 1998 when current Miami Dolphins QB Coach Robby Brown was under center and running a Wing-T offense for Coach Allison's Panthers.

The 1998 contest at Commerce determined a playoff spot and a Region 8-A title. This year, it's all about improving each week to prepare for next month's region action.

"We want to get better each and every game; that's how we always prepare," Allison said. "Hopefully, we'll show some improvements in a few fundamental areas."

"Commerce runs a triple-option offense and are just a physical, hard-nosed football team. Hopefully we can go down

there and play solid and it will help us get better. That's what we're hoping for with this tough (non-region) schedule."

Game Notes - Friday was Allison's first-ever home loss to Fannin County.

Union's 20 points are its lowest output vs. the Rebels since the 2007 home loss (19). Fannin's 24 points mark the lowest point total by a Union-Fannin winner since 2012 (Union won 23-7).

Union now leads the overall series vs Fannin 15-14. The advantage grows to 29-24 when you include East Fannin (11-5) and West Fannin (3-5). The two schools consolidated in Blue Ridge, giving berth to Fannin County High following the 1975-76 school year. After consolida-

tion, the Rebels won just 12 games over their first 10 seasons despite West Fannin winning 16 games during its final three years and setting a program record for margin of victory in 1974.

Chitwood's 110 receiving yards is the most by a Panther in a season opener since 2009 (Blake Gowder at Hayesville, NC). Other notable game-one performances: Kyle Morlock (101 at East Hall, 2019) and Sam Gilbert (100 vs. Towns, 2015).

Despite the loss, Helcher joins respectable company: The last quarterback to lose to Fannin was Joe Mancuso (2013); the last QB to lose at home was Kolt Owenby (2007) -- both went on to play college football following record-setting high school careers.

Volleyball: Union takes two sets from Banks, East Hall

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Union County (4-7) traveled to East Hall last Tuesday and came away with a pair of straight-set victories over the Lady Vikings and Banks County.

Against East Hall, the Lady Panthers made quick work of the hosts, running away with consecutive 25-14 wins to

take the match 2-0.

Union County dismantled Banks 25-11 in the opening set before taking a competitive 25-19 victory in set two.

Later in the week, the Lady Panthers visited Dawson County, falling 3-1 after taking the second set.

Area play begins Thursday when Union County hosts Elbert County and Banks County at 5 and 7 p.m.



Union County head coach Anna Chapman and senior Haley Noe during a recent home match. Photo/Todd Forrest

What a great day at Old Union Golf Course!



Friends, not to worry about our closeness during Coronaville, we all held our breath for some time to have the picture made.

The Ladies Golf Association was pleased to have as their guest speaker, Bryan Nelson, Director of Membership and Handicapping for the Georgia State Golf Association. Mr. Nelson gave a seminar on the new World Handicap System which has been adapted by golfers all over the world. Several handouts addressing the new handicapping system were passed out to all golfers, and Mr. Nelson conducted a question and answer period. Very good information about the new system was imparted by Mr. Nelson, and he has agreed to come back and play with the league in a game called, Beat the Pro.

Fran Brown and Glenda Geddings, (the Good Witch), were serenaded with Happy

Birthday by their fellow golfing buddies. Homemade birthday cupcakes, with plates, forks and napkins were donated by Lucy Mastej and enjoyed by all. Thank you, Lucy!

The ladies' league also welcomed a new member, Joan Hatch, who joined at the end of August. Welcome, Joan!

The game of the day on August 31st, was a Scramble. The winners in Flight A were: Ginna Wheeler, Karen Musoline and Cynthia Panter who each collected \$15.50. The winners in Flight B were: Beckie Suverkrup, Cynthia Moorehead, and mother and daughter team of Jennie Kulzer and Kay Kirkland who also collected \$15.50. Closest to

the pin went to Karen Musoline. Congrats to all!

Mary Holmes continues to offer Golf Clinics at Old Union Golf Course. The cost is \$20 plus range ball. Max number in a group is six, and the clinics are an hour long. Mary will have two classes...

the first one at 8 AM and a second clinic at 9 AM. You must sign up on the website to participate in the clinic. Mary Holmes was the ladies' golf coach at LSU, and we are delighted with her offer to lead the Golf Clinics. Sign up soon as the classes will fill up quickly!

The Old Union Women's Golf Association is now offering a new 9 Holes League which will also be played on Mondays. This league is perfect for those players who are new to the game, who may have time constraints or those players who want to play only 9 holes. Come join the best league in the North Georgia Mountains!

If you are interested and would like to come as a guest, or for more information, visit our website at www.OUWGA.com or call/text Karen at 352-638-3649 or Cynthia at 706-633-7587.

Trout stocking sites week of August 31-September 4, 2020

Fannin: Big Creek, Rock Creek, Toccoa River and Toccoa River Tailwaters (Below Lake Blue Ridge Dam)
Union: Cooper Creek and Toccoa River
Lumpkin: Etowah River and Nimblewill Creek
Note: Information is subject to change. Please call the hatchery at 706-838-4723 for questions. Stay up-to-date with stocking and events through Facebook www.facebook.com/chattahoocheeforestnfh. The hatchery also provides trout for the state. Please contact Georgia DNR for information on sites stocked by the state. NISep9Z15JCA

BASKETBALL

**Union County Recreation Department
Basketball Registration is open!**

Ages 5-12
Age you are September 1st is the age group you play in.
Registration fee is \$50.00 and open to both boys and girls.
Registration can be completed online at unioncountyga.gov or at the Recreation Office.
Registration will end September 25, 2020.
If you need any additional information, please call 706-439-6074.

**Fall Session 2020- Fitness Family Programs
Union County Recreation Department
Ages: 50 and over**

Fall is quickly approaching! Union County Recreation Department will be offering many fabulous fitness class options for the Fall session. Here is a list of the following fitness classes we will offer, and take a look at our class offerings for 18 years and older! We also offer some of our classes online for those that wish to work out at home!

- Regular Aerobics (T/Th) @ 8:30-9:30 AM
- Advanced Strength-Core class (M/W/F) @ 9:45-10:30 AM
- AM Beginner Strength and Core class (T/Th) @ 11:15-12:00 AM
- AM Intermediate Step-Aerobics class (M/W/F) @ 10:45-11:30 AM
- Chair Fitness-Aerobics class (T/Th) @ 1:15-2:00 PM
- **Zumba-Latin w/Lisa (M/W/F) @ 8:30-9:30 AM (Age 18 and over)
- **PM Dance Jams (Monday class only) @ 5:00-6:00 PM (Age 18 and over)
- **Zumba Fitness w/Beth @ 4:45-5:45 PM (T/Th)
- **Online Fitness Class options (Call or come in for pricing)

*Fall Session 2020 New Registration begins on August 21, 2020 and ends September 10, 2020 (or until classes fill to capacity) at the Recreation Office (310 Wellborn Street).