

# Lady Panthers cap off perfect week with a miracle vs Lumpkin

## Softball seniors to be recognized after Thursday night's game vs Oglethorpe County

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Union County (10-4) took a pair of victories over a couple of former Region 7-AAA opponents last week when they visited Dawson County on Tuesday and hosted Lumpkin County for the annual Cancer Awareness Game on Wednesday.

On Friday, Union's game with Social Circle was canceled when a pop-up rain shower washed away the field prior to the first pitch. The make-up date is tentatively scheduled for Monday, Sept. 24.

Wednesday's game, however, offered enough excitement for one week as the Lady Panthers scored six runs in their final at-bat, all coming with two outs, to overcome a 17-12, seventh-inning deficit to Lumpkin County (12-2).

Freshman outfielder Lexi Sisum delivered a walk-off, two-run double off the right-centerfield fence with her team trailing 17-16 and down to its final out.

Union County Head Softball Coach Stephen Mitchell was asked if that was the craziest comeback he's ever been a part of.

"Most definitely," he said without hesitation. "I've been a part of a lot of big ones and I've had a lot of come-from-behind wins but I've never come back from down five with two outs and nobody on."

Actually, Union County had been down to its final out for quite a while.

Sisum led off the bottom of the seventh and was unable to bunt her way aboard. Senior Maddie Sutton, who was 3-for-3 on the day, grounded out to third for the second out, leaving the Lady Panthers with less than a 1-percent chance of winning the game.

For some perspective, according to a recent ESPN "Win Probability" graphic, a Major League Baseball team winning by five runs after eight innings has a 99-percent chance of holding on for the win.

Union County was down five runs with one out remaining, facing a Lumpkin County pitcher that already owns a no-hitter against these same



Freshman Lexi Sisum with a walk-off double to beat Lumpkin County last Wednesday night. Photo/Todd Forrest

Lady Panthers. Does anyone want to take a stab at that win probability?

The rally began with an infield single by Mary Wischmeyer, then Arnold brought her home with an RBI single. Skyler Ludlum reached on an error -- scoring Arnold -- and Bailey Rayfield battled back from a 0-2 count to draw a walk.

With the tying run at the plate, freshman Caley Davis walked to load the bases, then pinch hitter Miranda Lockaby drew a walk, scoring pinch runner Aubrie Banton and pulling Union within two at 17-15.

Freshman Rebekah Kelley scored pinch runner Ansley Collins with a grounder that was booted by the Lady Indian shortstop.

Previously 1-for-4 on the day with a bunt single in the second inning, Sisum stepped to the plate and smoked the Natalie Robinson pitch off the fence in the right-centerfield gap, scoring Davis and Lockaby.

Lumpkin County led 4-0 after a half-inning, 10-3 after the second, and 12-4 in the third inning.

Down by eight and on the verge of getting mercy-ruled, the Lady Panthers responded with six runs in the bottom half of the third, cutting the margin

to 12-10 and forcing the Lady Indians to bring its ace Natalie Robinson to the circle to slam the door after Union sent 10 batters to the plate.

"We had plenty of opportunities to lay down and quit but we kept hanging on," Mitchell said. "That's what made me proudest, was the fact that we were down eight runs but never gave up."

Two errors and two bunt singles stretched the Lumpkin lead to 14-10 in the fourth. They continued to take advantage of the small ball strategy and tacked on two more in the fifth for a 16-10 advantage.

The Lady Panthers got both runs back when Sisum reached on an error, Sutton bunted her way aboard and Wischmeyer cleared the bases with a two-run double.

Union turned to its ace, Trinity Queen, in the sixth to keep the Lady Indians at bay. However, an error and two bunt singles allowed Lumpkin to add an insurance run. The Lady Panthers suffered their only 1-2-3 inning in the sixth and went to the seventh trailing 17-12.

After surrendering a one-out walk and a two-out infield single, Queen got out of trouble without giving up a run in the top of the seventh.



Senior Maddie Sutton squares around to bunt vs Lumpkin County. Sutton has recorded 2+ hits in four straight games. Photo/Todd Forrest

Queen picked up her sixth win of the season, allowing three hits and one unearned run over two innings.

**Lady Panthers 8, Dawson County 4:** Tied at one run apiece after two innings in Dawsonville, Union County blew things open with two in the third, three in the fourth, one in the fifth and another in the sixth.

"That might have been our most complete performance of the year," Mitchell said. "Our (non-power hitters) made a lot of things happen with their bunting and their speed. Our (power) hitters did what they were supposed to do. Our pitching was solid; both of them threw well and we played good defense. It was a pretty dominating performance for us."

Leading 8-2 in the seventh, Coach Mitchell called on Megan Bright to nail down the win for the starter Queen.

The Lady Panthers provided Queen some first-inning run support when Wischmeyer singled and Ludlum doubled her home for a 1-0 advantage. Dawson would even the score with two hits of its own in the bottom half of the first, then strand a leadoff double in the second.

All even in the third, Sisum and Sutton set the table with back-to-back singles allow-

ing Arnold to clear the bases with a double to left.

The Lady Tigers used a pair of base hits in their half of the third to pull within 3-2 but that's as close as they would get.

The bottom half of the Union lineup did most of the damage in the fourth, scoring three runs to open up a 6-2 advantage. A one-out Hannah Patton single got things started, then Dawson shot itself in the foot with an error off the bat of Lockaby, followed by a 2-run error off the bat of Sisum.

A Sutton single moved Sisum to third where Wischmeyer brought her home with a sacrifice fly.

The fifth inning opened with a pinch-hit home run by Rayfield in her first game back following an ankle injury last month. Sutton added an insurance run in the sixth when she singled, stole a base and scored on a two-out double by Arnold.

After the leadoff batter was retired in the seventh, four straight Dawson batters reached before Bright induced a pair of groundouts to end the game.

Queen recorded the win in six innings of work, scattering seven hits while fanning five and walking one. Bright surrendered three hits and one walk over one

inning.

Sutton finished 3-for-4 with two runs as she extended her multi-hit game streak to three games. Later in the week, she would record three hits vs Lumpkin, giving the senior outfielder four consecutive games with at least two hits.

Arnold went 2-for-4 with 2 RBIs and two doubles; Wischmeyer scored once and drove in one during a 1-for-3 outing; Ludlum was 1-for-4 with an RBI double; Rayfield came off the bench to deliver a solo homer and a seventh-inning single during a 2-for-2 performance; Patton finished 1-for-4 while scoring one run; Sisum scored twice while going 1-for-3 at the dish; Davis turned in her second multi-hit performance of the season, going 2-for-4.

**Looking ahead** - On Tuesday, Union County will visit a defending Class AA State Semifinalist at Banks County. The Lady Leopards are currently 2-2 in region play but Coach Mitchell still believes that Banks remains one of the teams to beat in 8-AA.

"Social Circle and Monticello beat them and they struggled with Oglethorpe but they are still the standard (in Region 8-AA)," Mitchell said. "They have a very good leadoff hitter and pitcher, plus several more that can really hurt you."

Union County will host Oglethorpe County at 5:55 p.m. Thursday with the Senior Night ceremony to follow the game. The region clash with Oglethorpe will be Union's final regular season home game.

On Friday, the Lady Panthers will travel to Morgan County for a two-day tournament where Coach Mitchell plans on performing a little fine tuning prior to the postseason.

"We want to get better and we want to try some things that we haven't had the opportunity to try," Coach Mitchell said when asked what he hopes to accomplish at Morgan County. "We hope to shuffle some people around because you never know what tomorrow will bring and you want to be prepared for all situations."

"We're going to try some unconventional things and probably travel with more kids than we normally do to try and get them some experience."

## Union County Volleyball records first win at Putnam; Senior Night Tuesday



Union County volleyball following its first win in program history: 25-21 and 25-11 at Putnam County last week. Union County will hold its senior night ceremony Tuesday during its tri-match with Rabun and Lumpkin. Check back in next week's North Georgia News for an interview with Coach Megan Swanson, along with a complete recap of Union's win at Putnam, Tuesday's Senior Night festivities, and more. In next week's interview, Coach Swanson gives a mid-season progress report, discusses the future of the program for this year and beyond, she also describes the scene in the locker room, and on the bus, following Union's first win.

## Youth football splits with East Hall

By Blake Lynch  
Staff Writer  
North Georgia News

Saturday was the first home game for both Union County youth football teams as the Panthers hosted East Hall. Both teams played hard; here is how the games went down.

**9U Panthers** - Early in the first quarter No.31 Kevin Kilpatrick rushed for a touchdown to put the Panthers up 7-0. Later on into the game, No.30 Kingston Jones completed a pass to No.44 Chetley Cox for a touchdown. The Panthers pulled off the victory over the Vikings 40-0 to improve to 1-1.

**11U Panthers** - It was such a close game but it came down to last quarter when East Hall's quarterback ran a 20 yard touchdown to get the win over the Panthers, 7-0. Union is 0-2 this season.

**Players of the week:** (9U Panthers) Kingston Jones for throwing a bomb to Cox for a touchdown.

(11U Panthers) No.4 Jack Sparks for playing his heart out on the field.



Brandon Lynch (1) and Kamdon Kendrick (13) helping up their teammate after recovering a fumble

## XC: Sanchez, Union County ladies first at Lumpkin; guys place third



The Union County girls preparing to race following a pep talk from coach Paige Dyer. At Lumpkin County last week, Zoe Sanchez (21:19) came in first to lead her team to a first place overall finish. Meanwhile, Luke Gambrell (17:21) took home third to pace the guys to a second place finish. Steven Seiler was fifth (18:35), Hunter Hartzog placed sixth (18:45), Thomas Mellendorf was 11th (19:16), Marcus Forrester came in 13th (19:18), Malachi Patrick was 14th at 19:19 and Gauge Shumaker came in 23rd at 20:11. In the girls race, Latty Ryals was second (22:48), Sadie Underwood placed seventh (23:34), Lexie Ochoa came in eighth (24:37), Jessie Holbrook was 18th (26:36), Rachel Reid placed 31st at 28:17 and Katelyn Rash was 35th at 29:34. This Tuesday, Union County will race in the West Hall Invitational, one of the most competitive meets on the schedule. Photo by Todd Forrest.

## Local Racing Report: Blue Ridge

By Blake Lynch  
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North Georgia News

**BLUE RIDGE** - Blue Ridge Motorsports Park hosted a race on Saturday, here are the top five from each class.

**Street Stocks** - Coming in first place was No. 9 Jim Twiggs. Coming in second place was No. 7D Dylan Truhan. Finishing in third place was No. 31 Logan Exum. Coming in fourth place was No.11 Tom Darby. Coming in fifth place was No. 14 Charles Devine Jr.

**Hot Shots** - Coming in first place was No. 32 Franklin Burk Jr. Coming in second place was No. 1 Colen Twiggs. Coming in third place was No. 8 Ricky Queen.

**Pony** - Coming in first place was No.05 Jackie Holden. Coming in second place was No. 36 Michael Yonkers. Coming in third place was No. 32 Franklin Burk. Coming in fourth place was No. 43 Tain Ross

**FWD** - Coming in first place was No. 65 Larry Whitlow. Coming in second place was No. 32 Logan Exum. Coming in third place was No. K3



No. 41 Jeff Holloway

James Klaucke. Coming in fourth place was No.05 Bradley Hurlburt. Coming in fifth place was No. 107 Kyle Edwards.

**Modified Street** - Coming in first place was No. 17 Brad Thomas. Coming in second place was No. 88 Ricky Smith. Coming in third place was No. 4 Jacob Parris. Coming in fourth place was No. 48 Colton Stroud. Coming in fifth place was No. 28 Dannie Patterson.

**Beginner 602** - Coming in first place was No. E-7 Evan Winkle Jr. Coming in second place was No.25 Jacob Hamby. Coming in third place was No.8 Colby Parris. Coming in fourth

place was No. 41 Jeff Holloway. Coming in fifth place was No. 104 Bradley Doster.

**Limited** - Coming in first place was No. 30 Daren Dilbeck. Coming in second place was No. 4 Trig Parris. Coming in third place was No. L5 David Rogers.

**Crate** - Coming in first place was No. 24 Seth Wimpey. Coming in second place was No. 9 Brain Kinnersley. Coming in third place was No.1 Junior Whitener. Coming in fourth place was No. R12 Ricky Weeks. Coming in fifth place was No. 23 Barry Anderson.