

Sports

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Softball: Hot bats lift Lady Panthers to three straight wins

By Todd Forrest
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With three straight victories in Region 8-AA, Union County (10-8-1) is riding its longest win streak of the season and is back in the mix for a No. 2 seed in the upcoming Class AA State Tournament.

The Lady Panthers notched a pair of blowout victories over East Jackson, but the week's most significant win came via Thursday's 9-1 thumping of second-place Providence Christian.

The Lady Panthers and Providence enter the week in a second-place tie with one matchup remaining between the two. Union County hosts first-place Banks County on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.

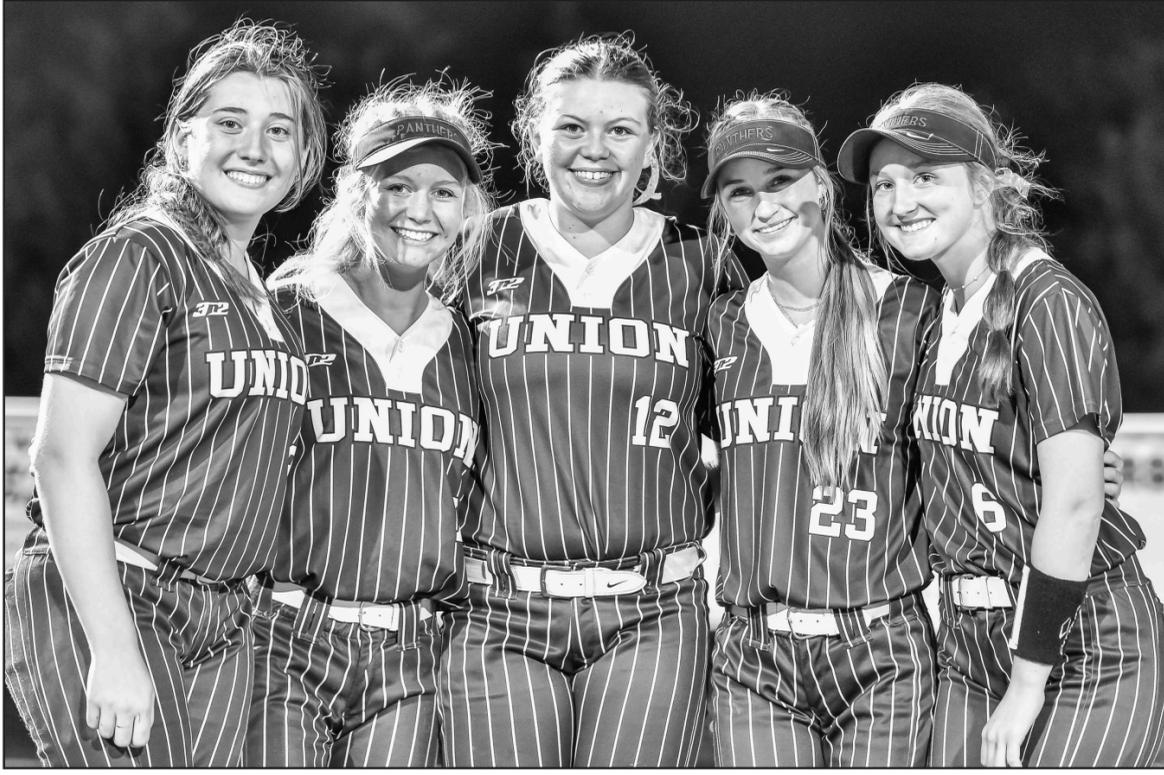
Lady Panthers 9, Providence 1 (6 inn) - Senior Gracie Gladding's sixth-inning grand slam closed out last Thursday's key 8-AA showdown in a 9-1 Union victory.

Clinging to a 2-1 lead, the Lady Panthers busted out with three in the fifth and four in the sixth to send the Storm packing. With her slam, Gladding finished with 6 RBIs during a 3-for-4 evening.

Katie Byers, Jewel Massey and Georgia Patton added two hits each in the win.

Union County stranded two runners in the first but eventually broke the scoreless tie during the third when Gladding laced a two-run double down the third-base line, scoring Delaney Moses and Massey.

But things immediately turned tense for Union County and its freshman right-hander Izzy Anthros during the Providence fourth when a hit batter



Union County softball seniors on Senior Night: (L-R) Gracie Gladding, Georgia Patton, Brooklyn Brown, Katie Byers and Jewel Massey. The Lady Panthers seniors will appear in their fourth state tournament later this month. Photo/Todd Forrest

and two errors loaded the bags with nobody out. Fortunately for the home team, Anthros limited the damage to a run-scoring groundout before recording a punch out and inducing a grounder.

Anthros escaped another bases-loaded jam in the fifth via an inning-ending groundout to third-baseman Peyton Grisham.

The Lady Panthers broke things open in the bottom half, starting with Gladding's two-out double and a run-scoring error off the bat of Sloane Dyer. Lily Helton followed with a base knock to center, and Byers drove in two with a

first-pitch double.

The Union County sixth began with three straight bunt singles by Massey, Patton and Anthros, setting the table for Gladding's fifth big fly of the year.

Anthros fanned 10 and allowed one unearned run during her six-inning 1-hitter.

Lady Panthers 18, East Jackson 2 (3 inn) - Union County exploded for a dozen runs during the third inning of last Wednesday's trip to Commerce.

Anthros went 2 for 3 with 3 RBIs and a double; Dyer drove in two during a 3-for-3 performance and Glad-

ding went deep to finish 2 for 3. Patton scored three times during a 2-for-3 day; Massey ended 2 for 3 with a pair of runs and 2 RBIs.

Sophomore pitcher Ayla Jamison allowed four hits and two earned over three innings.

Union County swiped six bags with Patton's two leading the way. Brooklyn Brown, Dyer, Helton and Massey added one steal each.

The Lady Panthers scored three in the first courtesy of Dyer's two-out single and three consecutive East Jackson errors.

The Eagles got two runs back in the bottom half on a

two-out single, but Anthros' RBI double quickly made it 4-2 in the second. Gladding reached on a base hit and Dyer's two-run single plated Anthros and courtesy-runner Zaidie Diaz.

Patton's double made it 7-2 in the third and Anthros added two more with a base hit. Gladding blasted a two-run home to left for an 11-2 advantage, then Massey made it 14-2 on a grounder through the infield. Up 16-2 following two wild pitches and two walks, Gladding returned to the plate and took ball four with the bags packed, and Jasyln Roberts reached on an

error to build an 18-2 margin.

Jamison navigated around a leadoff single to end the contest after three innings.

Lady Panthers 14, East Jackson 1 (4 inn) - Union opened its perfect week with a Senior Night rout of East Jackson.

The Lady Panthers put up an 11-spot in the first, sending 16 hitters to the dish, beginning with a Patton single before the senior shortstop stepped back to the plate with her team up 7-0.

Patton logged her second hit of the frame to build an 8-0 margin. Two walks and a Helton single made it 9-0, then Byers brought home two more with a base hit to left.

Earlier in the inning, Anthros doubled home Patton for the first run. Gladding made it 2-0 via an Eagles' error, Dyer walked and Diaz came around on an error. Byers walked and scored on Brown's single, Mikala Souther made it 6-0 courtesy of another error and Massey plated Souther with a base hit to center.

East Jackson's lone run came by way of an RBI groundout in the second.

During the Union County third, Helton's run-scoring single nudged the lead to 12-1, and Byers' two-run double made it 14-1.

Byers drove in four during a 2-for-2 day; Helton finished 2 for 3 with 3 RBIs. Dyer walked and scored three times, and Patton ended her day 2 for 2 with a pair of runs.

Gladding and Anthros each went 1 for 2; Diaz scored three times.

Anthros struck out three and gave up a hit and a run in 2 innings. Jamison struck out four Eagles during her two scoreless frames.

Football: Panthers welcome Banks County for Homecoming 2023-24

By Todd Forrest
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Union County football is back on the gridiron Friday and awaiting the Panthers' return to game-week is six days of homecoming festivities, culminating with Friday's Homecoming ceremony and Region 8-AA opener, followed by Saturday's Homecoming Dance.

The Panthers (4-1) host Banks County at 7:30 p.m., seeking eight-straight wins over the Leopards dating back to 2016. The two programs didn't meet between 2012-2015, and as a result, Banks' last series victory came in 2011. Union County possesses a 28-16 all-time record vs. a Banks County squad fresh off a 41-0 loss to East Jackson.

The Leopards (4-2, 0-1) started the year at 4-0 with wins over Johnson-Gainesville, Oglethorpe County, Franklin County and George Walton Academy. They suffered their first defeat on Sept. 22 in a 38-21 loss at Commerce before getting spanked by East Jackson last Friday.

Junior running back Ancy Jacobs' 73.7 yards per game and 9 TDs lead the Leopards' ground-heavy offense. Junior Kolby Watson averages 98 yards through the air with a 45% completion percentage. Watson has thrown three touchdowns and three picks.

With nine catches, senior Aaron Scott is Watson's favorite target in 2023.

Senior defensive lineman Robert Walker has been a beast over the first six games, logging



Senior representatives: (L-R) Haylie Pattee, Isabel Galindo, Katie Byers, Georgia Patton and Addi Scott



Junior representatives: (L-R) Leah Cox, Jayden Rogers, Lucy Vinez and Sloane Dyer (11 rushing).

At the halfway point of the season, Union County senior Jensen Goble leads the team

with 112 receiving yards a night and 6 touchdowns. Senior Braylen Rader is putting up over 90 yards a game on the ground and has found the endzone 14 times

At the forefront of Union's dynamic offense is senior Caiden Tanner and his 236-yard passing average. Tan-



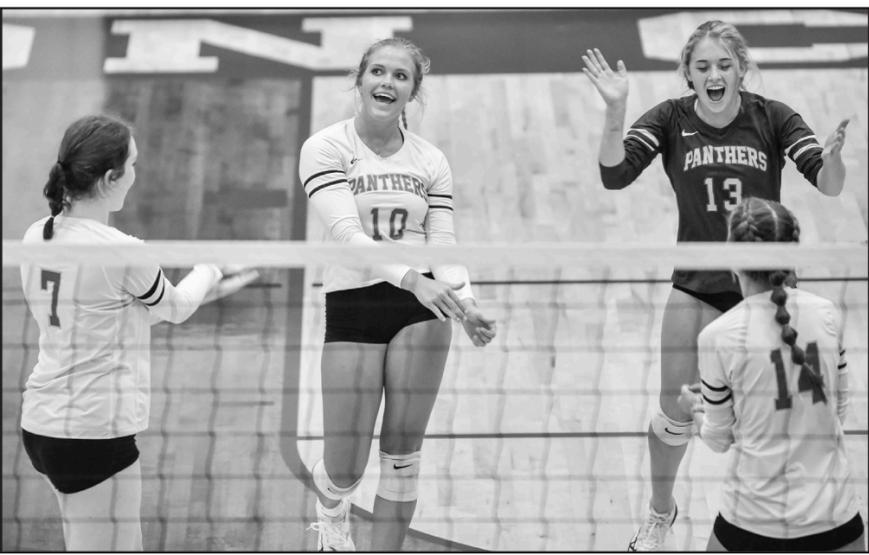
Sophomore representatives: (L-R) Peyton Grisham, Abby Barrett, Georgia Hanes. Homecoming photos by Todd Forrest



Freshman representatives: Payton Murphy, Elli Harper, Abigail Gilley ner has thrown 14 TDs through the air and rushed for four more. He is completing 66% of his passes and has been picked off only twice in 116 attempts.

Senior Seth Rutan leads the defense with 52 tackles and 13 TFLs. Senior Taylor Whitehead has paced the secondary with two interceptions.

Volleyball: Panthers pick up region 8-AA wins over East Jackson, Athens Academy



Sophomore Mady Adams (7) and juniors Katelyn Brown (10), Charlei Robinsn (13) and Mallory Rouse (14) celebrate a point during a recent home match. Photo/Todd Forrest

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Union County isn't going to finish atop the region standings, but that hasn't stopped the young Panthers from shaking things up in 8-AA and cementing themselves as a squad nobody wants to draw in the region tournament.

Last week, Union County picked up a road win over East Jackson and split two matches vs. defending 8-AA champion Athens Academy. The Panthers wrap up the regular season at home on Tuesday in a tri-match

with Fellowship Christian and East Jackson.

After dropping straight sets (25-22, 25-11) at Banks County on Tuesday, Union rebounded with a 2-1 win over Athens Academy, taking the first set 25-15 and the third 15-9. The Spartans came away with a 25-17 set-two victory.

During the match vs. East Jackson, Union rallied from a narrow 25-23 opening-set loss with a 25-23 win in set two and a 15-13 victory in the finale.

In the rematch with Athens Academy, the Panthers fell 26-24 in set two following a

25-15 loss to open the match.

Union County hosts Fellowship Christian at 5 p.m. on Tuesday. The Panthers and East Jackson will face off at 7 p.m. to conclude the regular season.

With matching records of 3-5, Union and East Jackson are tied for third in 8-AA. Meanwhile, fifth-place Fellowship is nipping at their heels with a 2-5 mark.

Providence sits atop 8-AA with a 7-1 record, with its only loss coming to the Panthers. At 6-2, Banks County can finish no lower than second in 8-AA.

Football: UCMS off to postseason; UCRD 5th grade runs over Dawson

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Union County Middle School enters this week's postseason as the league's No. 3 seed with a 5-3 record.

The Panthers will visit No. 2 Gilmer on Tuesday in the first round of the league tournament. Union secured its spot as the 3-seed courtesy of last week's 28-6 win over Fannin County.

Micah Wallace spotted

Union a 7-0 lead that held until the break after the Panthers' defense turned away Fannin County four times inside the 5-yard line.

The Union County offense started clicking in the second half with Wallace's second touchdown. Later in the third, Kamden Kendrick connected with Mikey Davis to build a 21-0 margin.

Kendrick added a rushing score in the fourth before Fannin tacked on a late touchdown.

On Saturday, the Union

County Recreation Department's youth teams traveled to Dawsonville, where the 5th grade's 26-6 victory marked the UCRD's only win of the day.

Parker Dillinger and Collyn Sandler accounted for two touchdowns apiece in the win.

Both Grayson Nolan and Justin Lacky caught one PAT pass from Sandler.

The Union County youth teams will be at home on Saturday to face Chestatee.



Union County running back Parker Dillinger ran wild at Dawson County during the 5th grade's victory last weekend. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County 5th grade quarterback Collyn Sandler celebrates a second-half touchdown during his team's 26-6 win at Dawson County on Saturday. Photo/Todd Forrest

XC: Both Union County teams collect top-10 finishes at Mountain Invitational

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Helen - Lola Hunter's fourth-place time led the Union County ladies to fifth at White County's Mountain Invitational at Unicoi State Park.

Later in the day, the Union County men came in eighth behind Benton Gregory's 15th-place performance.

The girls' 125 points placed 3 points back of fourth-place Jackson County (122) and 26 better than sixth-place White County.

Hunter crossed the line in 20 minutes, 26 seconds; Hannah Kazmierzak placed 23rd at 22:52; Ellie Adams came in 26th with a time of 23:08. Natalie Payne finished 35th at 23:59; Noel Hyatt was 37th after clocking in at 24:07; 59th went to Lydia Wagner at 25:12; Averie Hussion came in 72nd with a time of 25:58.

North Hall (25), Jefferson (105) and Loganville (110) finished as the race's top three teams.

In the guys' race, Gregory crossed the line at 17:53; Wes Seiler logged a 19:00 to



Union County senior Benton Gregory logged a top-15 against a deep field at the Mountain Invitational. Photo/Todd Forrest

take home 45th; Ty Hogsdon came in 52nd at 19:11. Zander Rotko was 60th at 19:29 and Andrew Nushtayev's 19:40 got him 65th place.

Oliver Hillman came in 97th at 20:31 and Anderson Clouse placed 117th at 21:23.

Union's 237 points were 12 points back of seventh-place Providence Christian (225) and 16 ahead of ninth-place White County (253). Jefferson (40), North Hall (71), Lumpkin County (114), Chestatee (142) and Loganville (160) collected the top-five spots.

Local Racing Report: Tri-County

By Blake Lynch
Racing Reporter
North Georgia News

The next-to-last race of the season took place at Tri-County Racetrack Friday night. The last scheduled race of the season will be Oct. 12 for the Tarheel 50.

Jason Deal made his first appearance at the track since his work accident. Deal's No. 7 has been driven by David Payne.

FWD: No. 5 Shawna Harkins took home her first win, followed by No. J32 Shannon Jones in second place. No. X Tank Ingram was third. No. 05 Glenn Coker was fourth. No. 28 Jason Coats rounded out the top five.

602 Crate: No. 44 Bobby Elkins took home the win. No. 56 Colton Berrong placed second. No. 116 Jonathan Cope was third. No. 117 Dylan Beavers was fourth. No. 37 Michael Barnett was fifth.

Street Stock: No. 4 Roger Beavers took home another win. No. 95 Alex Vance was



Blairsville's Tucker Anderson.

second. No. 192r Robby Lynch was third. No. 01 Jacob Lynch was fourth.

Open Wheel: No. 77 Brawley Stillwell took home the win. No. 22 Matt Sandefur was second. No. 95c Stevie Clark came in third.

Crown Vic: No. 99 Josh

Miller picked up the win. No. 1 Anderson Heisler came in second. No. 11 Ricky Dyer was third, followed by No. 9mm Mary Phillips.

Come out to the last scheduled race of the season on Thursday Oct. 12 which is the Tarheel 50.

"Beat The Pro" and "Scramble" were the games of the day September 25th at the Old Union Golf Club

It was a beautiful day in the neighborhood on Monday, September 25, at Old Union Golf Club. The weather was absolutely perfect for golf. The ladies played two games, Beat The Pro, against Coach Matt Cook, and a Scramble. Coach Cook played with only a six iron and a wedge while the ladies were allowed to use their entire set of clubs. Every team was able to beat Matt's gross score of 78 with their net scores. Coach Matt played the round with the ladies pictured... Sandy Synder, Nancy Outlaw and Kathleen Bolin. However, Flight A- team Geni Preece, Pat Strickland, Shelia Baggett and Gloria White were very successful with the lowest net score of 70. Congrats to these ladies who had a great round and won \$7.10. The winners in Flight B - Rachele Cronje, Becky London, Nancy Harvill and Vi Copenhagen also won \$7.10. All the ladies who participated in the Scramble were given a sleeve of balls compliments of Matt Cook. Playing in a Scramble produced many birdies. Team Sandy Synder/ Nancy Outlaw/Kathleen Bolin had four birdies, and they will split \$16. Team Rachele Cronje/Becky London/Nancy Harvill/Vi Copenhagen had four birdies, and they will split \$16. Team Jane Childers/Pat Westbrook/ Kay Kirkland/Karen Mussoline had four birdies, and they will split \$16. Team Kathy McAfee, Cynthia Moorehead/ Donna Tipton/Connie Dockery had three birdies, and they will split \$12. Closest to the Pin winners on the four par 3s were: #2- Preece/Strickland/Baggett/White with Geni Preece making the shot. They will split \$20; #6- Cronje/London/Harvill/Copenhagen with Nancy Harvill making the shot. They will split \$20; #13- Preece/Strickland/Baggett/White with Geni Preece making the shot. They will split \$20; #16- Childers/Westbrook/Kirkland/Mussoline with Karen Mussoline making the shot. They will split \$20.



Sandy Synder, Nancy Outlaw, Coach Matt and Kathleen Bolin

House on Collins Road. The theme is Viva Las Vegas. During the month of September, every player received one extra chip for playing on play day. Players also received one additional chip for each week they won in their flight. Additional chips will be added to the money bags for each player. The banquet will start approximately at 11 AM, and there will be 6 poker tables. Each player will be assigned a card with the time for each player to be at what table. Each player will play at a table for 20 minutes. A dealer will announce when the table is closed, and everyone will move to their next assigned table. Viva Las Vegas was such a big hit for the closing banquet of 2022, the league decided to do it again this year. Carol Millard and Sandy Snyder will check everyone in as the ladies gather to try their hand at the different games. Kathy McAfee has once again volunteered to make her delicious appetizers for everyone. The food is catered by Longhorns and the ladies will chose between steak or parmesan chicken. Desserts will be furnished by Donna

Tipton, Cynthia Moorehead, Nancy Harvill and Sandy Synder. The dealers will be Cynthia Panter, Nancy Harvill, Glenda Geddings, Karen Mussoline, Jane Childers and Kathleen Bolin. The Old Union Women's Golf Association is a fabulous group of ladies who enjoy the game of golf, (either 18 holes or 9 holes), sunshine and friendship. Lessons are offered during the season by Mary Holmes and/or Matt Cook. For more information about the league or the upcoming events, please visit www.OldUnionWGA.com.

Any new member will receive an "Email Invite" to register as a member on the ladies' league website which is <http://www.OldUnionWGA.com>. The "Email Invite" includes a link to create a profile. The information provided is only available to registered members and is not available to the public. Anyone interested in joining this great group of ladies is asked to contact Karen Mussoline at 352-638-3649 or Cynthia Panter at 706-633-7587. NOCH215CA

Union County Recreation Department Wrestling for Boys and Girls



The Union County Recreation Department in conjunction with Union County Schools Offer Down Club are pleased to now take wrestling for boys and girls ages 5-12. Fee: \$68.00 (includes uniform of a t-shirt and shorts) Registration ends: October 6th

Practice will begin in November. You may register in person at the Union County Recreation Department located at 519 Industrial Blvd., or online at unioncountyga.gov. Please call 706-439-6074 with any questions.