

Sports

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Softball: Lady Panthers blast their way into State Sweet 16

By Todd Forrest
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In one of the least dramatic first rounds in program history, Union County Softball punched its ticket to the second round of the State Tournament with a sweep of Atlanta's Therrill High School.

The Lady Panthers outscored the visitors by a combined total of 39-0 in the two-game sweep, taking the opener 22-0 on the heels of a 16-run first inning.

Junior Trinity Queen picked up the win for Union County, tossing three perfect innings with six strikeouts.

At the plate, senior Mary Wischmeyer opened the bottom of the first with a solo homer. Three batters later, Hannah Patton sent a two-run home run over the left-centerfield fence, scoring Lexi Sisum, who reached on a base hit earlier in the frame.

With the bases empty, Ansley Collins reached on an error and Rebekah Kelley singled her home. Senior Miranda Lockaby walked, Queen singled and Caley Davis doubled as Union built a 7-0 lead on its first trip through the lineup.

Wischmeyer doubled in her second at bat of the inning, as did Sisum and Emma Roxbury - opening up an 11-0 advantage.

Collins and Lockaby each singled and drove in a run, Queen was hit by a pitch and Davis scored one with an RBI double. Aubrie Banton brought home two more with a single to close out the scoring at 16-0.

Union County added six more in the second as Jessica



L-R: In Game One of the Class AA first round, senior Mary Wischmeyer leads off the Union County half of the first inning with a solo home run. Junior Hannah Patton sends a two-run homer over the fence in left-center during the first inning of the Lady Panthers' 22-0 Game One victory. Photos/Todd Forrest

Lara, Krysten Hodges, Kaelyn Jones, Adaley Burnette and Caroline Karnes all singled and scored. Freshman Chloe Potts would draw a walk and score during the Lady Panthers' six-run second.

In Game Two, Megan Bright got the start as Union County jumped out to a 7-0 lead. Leading 8-0 after two, the Lady Panthers added six in the third and three in the fourth to end the game with a 17-0 victory.

Kelley replaced Bright in the circle during the third and worked the final two innings.

Bright was perfect with two strikeouts in two innings. Kelley allowed one hit and

struck out three during her two innings of work.

In the Union half of the first, Wischmeyer reached on an error and Hodges scored her with an RBI single.

Following a Sisum hit, Tori Tracy, Lockaby and Bright each rattled off three-straight RBI singles. Burnette would walk and score, Wischmeyer drove in one with a base hit and Kaylee Helton brought home Burnette with a 3-2 single, spotting the Lady Panthers a 7-0 advantage.

Union made it 8-0 in the second when Sisum led off the inning with a triple and later scored.



Burnette opened the third with a base hit and Wischmeyer's second homer of the day made it 10-0. Allie Brey would single and score then Hodges doubled and scored.

Lara and Potts each singled and scored to open up a 14-0 advantage in the third inning.

Karnes led off the fourth with a single and eventually scored. Brey scored after reaching on an error and Jones followed with an RBI single.

Freshman Jaycee Seabolt recorded an RBI single and later scored on a base hit by Lara to round out the Lady Panther scoring.

Potts also singled in the fourth inning but was left stranded at second.

Up next - Union County will visit 6th ranked Vidalia on Wednesday. Game One will get underway at 4:30 p.m. with Game Two to follow. The third game will be Thursday if necessary.

Originally scheduled to begin Tuesday, the series was pushed back due to rain in the forecast.

Vidalia is currently 26-5 after finishing region play at 14-0. Like Union County, the Lady Indians made quick work of their first round opponent, knocking off Westside 11-0

and 20-0. The Lady Panthers and Vidalia have one common opponent in Social Circle. Union would defeat Social, 8-0 on Sept. 5. Vidalia beat them 9-7 on Sept. 13.

However, it should be mentioned that Vidalia and Social met in the second game of a two-day, five-game tournament, and it's very unlikely that Social Circle saw the Lady Indians at their best.

The winner of Union and Vidalia will advance to Columbus for the Elite 8, which gets underway on Thursday, Oct. 24 vs the winner of East Laurens and Rockmart.

Volleyball: Union County second in Area; begin State playoffs Saturday

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Union County made things interesting in last week's Area Championship, but eventually fell 3-1 to Rabun County to finish second.

In just its third season, the volleyball program has made tremendous strides each year. After going winless in year one, Union County made a playoff appearance in year two and have the potential to win a playoff match in year three.

The Panthers will attempt to advance beyond the first round of State when they face off with Model on Saturday at Harlem High School.

Union began the postseason at home last week when they defeated Oglethorpe County, 3-0 on Tuesday.

In the first set, the Panthers jumped out to a 7-2 advantage. Oglethorpe rallied within a point at 10-9 until a Morgan Fussell kill sparked a Union onslaught that opened up a 19-10 lead.

The Panthers would go on to take the first set 25-15, then jump out to an 8-3 lead in set two.

A pair of kills by Adelia Pyle had Union in control at 12-6 before Oglethorpe battled back to



Coach Swanson with senior captains Adelia Pyle and Izzy Zamora at Rabun County. Photo/Todd Forrest

within three at 12-9.

Once again, the Panthers would explode for a commanding lead at 22-12. The Patriots would hang around, however, pulling within striking distance at 23-18 and 24-20 before Union sealed the deal at 25-20.

The Panthers jumped out to another early lead at 7-3 but

Oglethorpe eventually opened up a 20-16 advantage in set three.

Trailing 22-20, Union County closed with five-straight points to take a 25-22 victory and a 3-0 match win.

"The fact that we're able to play for the (Area) championship and can finish no lower than second is a huge deal for this

program," Union County coach Megan Swanson said.

The Panthers visited Rabun County for the Area Championship on Thursday and dominated the first set 25-16 before dropping three-straight to the Wildcats.

Union jumped out to leads of 5-0, 8-1 and 9-2 in the first set before Rabun battled back to



Morgan Fussell with a block vs Oglethorpe County in last Tuesday's Area semifinals. Photo/Todd Forrest

away from a 14-14 tie.

Trailing 19-15, Union would get no closer as Rabun took the second set 25-18.

The Panthers jumped out to an early 7-4 lead in set three before the Wildcats stormed ahead 11-8 and never trailed again.

Union would keep it close at 16-15 and 19-18 but could never get over the hump as Rabun took a 2-1 lead with a 25-20 victory.

The Wildcats closed out the third set 25-17, never trailing again after an early 1-0 score.

The Panthers hung around at 14-12 and 16-13 but would get no closer as Rabun County claimed the Area title, 3-1.

"I had high hopes for our girls at the beginning of the season, but when I took this job two years ago, I did not expect to be playing for an Area Championship this soon," Swanson said. "But coming into this season, I saw how hard they worked over the summer, so I knew what they were capable of. And they are still capable of accomplishing so much more."

"Our girls have so much more confidence, we know the game better, we play better together and we're really starting to click at the right time."

A back-and-forth second set saw the teams swap leads early before Rabun began pulling

Union County 14U Baseball adds another title

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After winning the World Series in August, the Union County 14U All-Star team brought home some more hardware later that month as they picked up another first-place finish in Winder.

Union County went 3-1 during the tournament, winning its final three games after dropping the opener 6-1 to Hebron.

In the loss, four pitchers saw action in the contest, beginning with Will Duncan and followed by Will Carringer, Isaac Cole and Tyler Loyd.

Trailing 2-0 in the third, Hunter Flemming singled and stole a base allowing Chris Fletcher to bring him home with a two-out single. Heading to the fourth and down 2-1, Hebron put things away with four runs in the inning to take the 6-1 win.

Cole Laney, Fletcher and Cole each finished 2-for-2 in the loss. Ty Laney singled and walked; Duncan and Nate Lands also drew a base on balls for Union.

With their backs against the wall, the Panthers responded with an 11-1, four-inning win



Union County 14U adds another championship to its resume

over the Georgia Lookouts. Union did all of its damage in the first two innings, scoring seven in the first and four in the second.

The Lookouts' lone run came in the top of the first to take a very brief 1-0 advantage.

Ty Laney had a two-hit day at the plate while John Ledford and Cole each scored twice. Fletcher also drove in a run; Loyd scored and knocked in one; Duncan scored a run; Cole Laney went 1-for-2 with a run and an RBI; Jace Vinez added

an RBI single; Lands singled and scored and Flemming added a run.

Fletcher struck out 11 during a four-inning no-hitter that saw him walk five and surrender an unearned run.

The two teams would square off again with Union County taking a 14-1 victory behind a three-inning no-hitter from Cole, who also went 1-for-2 with two runs and a pair of RBIs.

At the dish, Fletcher knocked in four runs while go-

ing 2-for-3 with a double and a grand slam. Ledford went 3-for-3 with three runs and three RBIs; Loyd was 2-for-2 with a double and 3 RBIs; Cole Laney went 1-for-2 with a run; Ty Laney, Vinez, Lands and Will Carringer also added one run apiece, while Duncan and Flemming each went 1-for-1 with a run and an RBI.

In the finals, Union rebounded with an 11-3 rout of Hebron as Cole Laney and Loyd combined to limit the Hebron bats to just two hits and one earned run.

Leading 3-1 after three, an eight-run fourth put the game away for Union County, who allowed one run each in the fifth and sixth, but it wasn't enough to threaten.

Fletcher went 3-for-4 with a double, two runs and two RBIs. Cole also drove in two runs as Ledford, Vinez and Flemming scored two runs apiece. Vinez also finished 2-for-3 with an RBI, Flemming was 2-for-2 and Ledford drew three walks.

Loyd finished 2-for-3 with a pair of walks while Duncan and Ty Laney added one run in the victory. Additionally, Carringer singled and Cole Laney drew a walk.

Chatuge Dam 5K Run/Walk to benefit Haven Project of Georgia

The inaugural Chatuge Dam 5K run/walk will be held October 19th at 8:30 AM at Clay County Recreation Park in Hayesville, NC to benefit Haven Project of Georgia. The race will start and end at Pavilion #1 at the Clay County Recreation Park (47 Clay County Recreation Park Road, Hayesville, NC) and will include a beautiful out-and-back across Chatuge Dam. Runners, walkers, wheelchair users, strollers, and dogs are welcome.

To register, go to www.active.com and look for The Big Dam Run 5K Run/Walk or see Haven Project's website (www.havenprojectga.org) for a paper registration form. Participants with disabilities can register for free by emailing havenprojectofga@gmail.com.

Race t-shirts are guaranteed to those who register by October 4th and will be given to later registrants as long as supplies last.

Awards will be given for the overall male and female winners, overall masters male and female winners, and three deep in ten-year age groups from 10 and under to 70 and over.

This race will benefit Haven Project of Georgia, a non-profit organization that serves individuals with disabilities and their families in north Georgia and western North Carolina by offering free education, advocacy, and respite programs. Haven is neighbors helping neighbors get access to the programs and services they need to live their best lives.



Union County Recreation Department

Basketball Registration

Age control date has changed.

Age you are September 1st is the age group you play in.

Age Group **Registration Ends**

9/10 yr olds October 18th

11/12 yr olds October 18th

Registration fee is \$50 and open to both boys and girls.

Registration can be completed online at unioncountygga.gov or at the Recreation Office located at 310 Wellborn Street.

If you need any additional information, please call 706-439-6074.