

UGH Sports Medicine program helping local athletes on the road to recovery

By Todd Forrest
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Injuries can be extremely stressful situations for student-athlete and their parents, but that's when the specialists at Union General Orthopedics and Sports Medicine step up to the plate.

And according to Dr. Jacob Stirton and his team, healing and recovery should be the only thing on everyone's mind during that demanding stage.

"This community really needed a sports medicine program," UGOSM Medical Director and Co-founder Dr. Stirton said. "It can take two hours to get to Atlanta, Athens or even Gainesville. That's a big trip, especially for someone who is injured. That's hard on parents, that's hard on the kids, that's hard on everyone."

That's why Dr. Stirton's office provides walk-in times of 7:30-8 a.m. and 3-4 p.m. everyday, allowing parents and student athletes the ability to visit a doctor without missing school, work or even needing an appointment.

"When high school athletes get injured, you want to be seen right away," Dr. Stirton said. "If you call your primary care doc and he's booked up for two or three weeks, there goes half your season. We want to see everyone the day or the day after



The staff at UGOSM (L-R): Ben Newell, Jacob Stirton, Amy Rich and Brian Hass. Photo/Todd Forrest

(the injury). Within 24 hours you get the imaging, the prognosis, the diagnosis and we either have you back on the field or have a plan for when you can get back. That is our goal and the athletes love it, the parents love it and the coaches love it.

"We tailor our program for ease of access for the patient and the parents. It's the parents that are getting the kids to their appointments and taking them back to school, so we need to make it as easy as possible, with multiple

(walk-in) times everyday." Since arriving in Blairsville approximately 6 weeks ago, Dr. Stirton and his staff have tended to more than 100 athletes from the local area.

The Union General Sports Medicine program covers student-athletes at Union County, Towns County, Mountain Area Christian and Young Harris College. Additionally, they don't just cover student athletes, they see active individuals of all ages and skill levels -- from the weekend

warriors and the marathon runners to the adult league basketball or softball player.

"My goals are to be a general orthopedic surgeon and take care of the entire community, from pediatrics to geriatrics, but with a special focus on the youth athlete."

Dr. Stirton is currently the team physician at both Union County High School and Young Harris College. Covering Towns County High School is Dr. Jonathan Lawrence, who is also

member of the Sports Medicine team.

"No one thought we would be this successful this quickly, but that just goes to show that there is a huge need here," Dr. Stirton said. "I cover Union County and Young Harris and our sports medicine program covers Towns County. We don't officially cover Fannin, Murphy or Hayesville but we see athletes from there all of the time."

While the need for the sports medicine program was

what helped lure Dr. Stirton to Blairsville, it was the scenery of the Blue Ridge Mountains that put North Georgia on his radar.

"I've been all over the country with my wife and this is the most beautiful part of the country, in my mind," he said. "This area is absolutely beautiful. I'm an active person too. I like sports, I like the outdoors and this is the perfect place for that."

"That was what drew me to the area, but I after I visited for the first time, the people were very welcoming. Everyone was just phenomenal."

For additional information you can visit: JacobStirtonMD.com or UnionGeneralHealth-System/UGOSM. You may also call the office at 706-439-6858. They are open Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. As previously mentioned, walk-in hours are from 7:30-8 a.m. and 3:30-4 p.m.

The office is located on the second floor of Union General Hospital.

Dr. Stirton background: Born in Chicago Illinois and raised in Germantown, Wisconsin.

Bachelors: University of Dallas (Biochemistry).

Med School: Texas-San Antonio. Residency: University of Toledo.

Advanced Training: University of Kentucky (Asst. Team Physician).
Wife: Elyse.

Youth Football: Union finishes off perfect day

Both Union County youth football teams took care of business last Saturday.

9&U: The 9U Panthers took on White County for the second time with the previous meeting being a scrimmage.

In the first quarter of the second meeting, No.13 Camden Kendrick would throw a touchdown pass to No.2 Jackson Nichols, giving the Panthers a 6-0 lead.

In the second quarter, Kendrick would run a 60-yard touchdown but the extra point was no good.

The Panthers would win

12-0 to improve to 5-0 on the season. Additionally, the Union defense has not allowed a point all season.

10&U: The 10U Panthers took on the Pickens County Dragons and it was a blow out.

In the first, No.8 Chetley Cox would score a rushing touchdown and No.25 Kasch Smith followed it up with a two-point conversion.

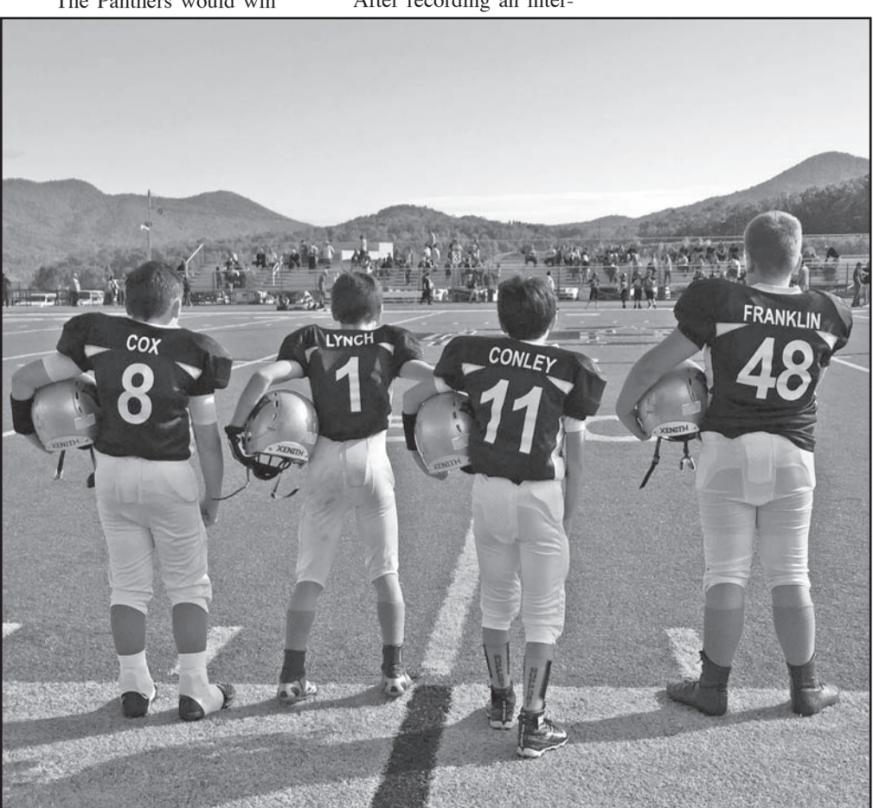
Cox completed a pass to No.13 Grant Smith to score the next touchdown and the extra point was converted by No.1 Brandon Lynch.

After recording an inter-

ception later in the first, Cox would carry the ball all the way to the two-yard line in the second quarter. On the next play he would throw the ball to No.11 Carter Conley for the touchdown.

Leading 29-0, Lynch would have a big run for 30 yards, and No.54 Alan Godinez would run for a 10 yard touchdown. In the fourth, Lynch would strip the ball and return it all the way for the touchdown.

No. 20 Easton Shumaker had an extra point conversion, as did No. 48 Gunner Franklin, during Union's 43-6 win.



Chetley Cox, Brandon Lynch, Carter Conley and Gunner Franklin walking out to midfield for the coin toss.

XC: Sanchez fourth; boys team seventh at Unicoi

Helen - Heading into Fall Break and next week's Region 8-AA Championship meet, Union County Cross Country is coming off the Runner's Fit Mountain Invitational at Unicoi State Park.

Individually, Zoe Sanchez placed fourth overall with a time of 19:36. Meanwhile, the Union County boys team came in seventh behind a 12th place finish by Luke Gambrell and a 25th place finish from Hunter Hartzog.

In the boys' race, Union County edged region rival

Banks County (who finished eighth) by 42 points. Other region foes, Rabun County and Elbert County came in 31st and 32nd out of 32 teams.

On the girls' side, Union County finished behind Banks and Rabun County, despite Sanchez's performance.

Banks was ninth with 293 points, Rabun was 14th at 389 and Union 17th at 404.

Behind Sanchez was Sadie Underwood in 46th (22:52), Hana Gregory in 103rd (24:32), Lexi Ochoa in 119th (25:08), and Allison Vincent in 132nd

(25:45).

Also competing for Union County was Campbell Chambers in 141st (26:13) and Rachel Reid in 145th (26:36).

The boys' times were: Gambrell in 12th at 16:50, Hartzog in 25th at 17:18, Thomas Mellendorf in 44th at 17:48, Malachi Patrick in 69th at 18:26 and Trevor Guild in 88th at 18:44.

Rounding out the top seven were Marcus Forrester in 95th (18:51) and Gauge Shumaker in 98th (18:57).



UCHS cross country runners lead the field at the Run Above the Clouds in Suches. RATC photos by Todd Forrest

Local Racing: Overton wins his first Tarheel 50

Brasstown, NC - Tri-County Racetrack hosted the last race of the season this past Friday night, with the 602 Thunder Series and the \$10,053 to-win Super Late Models.

Here are the top five from each class.

Street Stock - Coming in first was No.99 Jim Twiggs. Finishing in second was No.5 Carson Shields. Coming in third was No.32 Logan Exum. Coming home in fourth place was No.01 Jacob Lynch. Finishing in fifth was No.169 Jim Weller.

602 Thunder Series - Coming in first was No.44 Rod Roberts. Coming in second was No.88 Ricky Smith. Coming in third was No.44 Bobby Elkins. Finishing in fourth was No.17w Chris Woods. Finishing in fifth was No.6 Mark Wilbanks.

FWD - Coming in first was No.32 Justin Queen. Coming in second was No.1 Jacob Sharp. Finishing in third was No.29r Sean Rice. Coming in fourth was No.13 Josh Deese. Coming in fifth was No.13 Sandi Klaucke.

Pony - Coming in first

was No.1 Adam Brooks. Coming in second was No.8 Johnny McClure. Coming in third was No.28 Kevin Mulkey. Coming in fourth was No.22 Tucker Anderson. Finishing in fifth was No.00 Chris Mulkey.

Tarheel 50 - Coming in first was No.2 Brandon Overton. Coming in second was No.79 Kyle Hardy. Coming in third was No.17m Dale McDowell. Coming in fourth was No.7m Donald McIntosh. Coming in fifth was No.1c Kenny Collins.

