

# XC: Sanchez wins second-straight Region title; both teams qualify for State

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**Lexington** - Union County Cross Country fell victim to another Fall Break hangover as the boys and girls finished third and fourth, respectively at the Region 8-AA Championships last Tuesday, Oct. 22.

Hosted by Oglethorpe County, the defending State Champion Union boys team was led by junior Luke Gambrell's second place finish, but it wasn't enough to overcome first place Banks County and second place Oglethorpe.

Meanwhile, the girls were paced by senior Zoe Sanchez, who finishes her high school career as a back-to-back Region 8-AA Champion.

The girls team, however, fell to fourth place behind Oglethorpe, Banks and Rabun.

With a pair of top-four finishes, both squads qualify for this weekend's State Meet in Carrollton, where coach Paige Dyer is expecting her runners to show up with a chip on their shoulders following a ho-hum performance at region.

"We're doing some pretty good workouts for State because I think Region was an eye-opener," Dyer said. "The other teams (at region) ran a good race, but we just had a really bad race.

"Anytime you take a week off and get out of your regular routine, it's going to have a major impact on you. They were running on their own last week but it's not the



Zoe Sanchez began pulling away at the 1-mile mark. Photo/Todd Forrest

same as practice. Plus, the state practices are always more intense since its the last race and there's no reason to hold anything back. And I honestly think we can accomplish a lot in the time between region and state, just like last year."

The Union County girls finished last week's Region meet with 85 points - nine back of third place Rabun County, 19 behind second place Banks and 41 out of first place (Oglethorpe).

Sanchez took home the individual Region title with a time of 20:35. In second place was Monticello's Mari Jablonski at 21:02.

And despite winning

back-to-back region titles, Sanchez knows she needs to pick up the pace if she wants to repeat at the State Champion.

"I didn't have my best race today and that's what I was worried about. I was afraid if I didn't have my best race then somebody else would have theirs," Sanchez said. "I don't know what it's going to take to win state, but I do know it's going to involve a lot of training and pushing myself.

"A lot of it is mental but there is a lot that I can get done in a week-and-a-half. I'm hoping that I'll be able to build myself up mentally and physically before state.

"But it's a great feeling



Luke Gambrell crosses the finish line at Region. Photo/Todd Forrest

(to win region) and it's nice to have a repeat for my senior year."

Rounding out the Union County top-five was Sadie Underwood in eighth with a time of 22:52; Lexi Ochoa was 23rd at 25:37; Campbell Chambers came in 26th at 26:07 and right behind her was Hana Gregory in 27th at 26:09.

Other Union runners were Allison Vincent in 29th at 26:45 and Jessie Holbrook in 33rd at 28:06.

In the boys race, Gambrell was second with a time of 17:21, clocking in 23 seconds behind Banks' Griffin Stephens and eight seconds ahead of Banks' Buck Ledford.

at the end.

"Being on Fall Break last week probably hurt us a little, but for myself and the team, I think we've trained so hard for so long that we know what it will take for us to improve when we get to State."

As for Gambrell's teammates, Hunter Hartzog was seventh with a time of 17:46; Thomas Mellendorf was 11th at 18:33; Gauge Shumaker placed 13th with a time of 18:53 and Malachi Patrick was 14th, clocking in at 18:54.

In 18th place was Marcus Forrester at 19:15 and in 20th was Trevor Guild with a time of 19:38.

In the team standings, Banks County was first with 38. Oglethorpe placed second with 45, Union was third with 47 and Monticello rounded out the top-four with 127.

"That was not our typical performance at Region, both this year and last year," Coach Dyer said. "If we run our normal race, like we had all season, there is no way we come in third and fourth. We know what we have to do to get better for the State meet, it's just a matter of going out and getting it done."

The State Championships are Saturday morning at Carrollton High School beginning at 11 a.m. for the boys and 11:45 for the girls.

"I think the girls have the capability to do very well at State and the boys have the capability to repeat at champions, but it will be all be determined by how bad they want it," Coach Dyer said.



Sanchez receives her Region Championship medal. Photo/Todd Forrest



Hunter Hartzog in a photo finish for sixth and seventh. Photo/Todd Forrest



Sadie Underwood crosses the finish line eighth. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Volleyball: Union County's run comes to a close at Gordon Lee in the Elite 8

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**Chickamauga** - Union County Volleyball's impressive postseason came to a halt last weekend following a 3-0 loss at Gordon Lee.

The Panthers would drop the first two sets, each by a score of 25-14. Gordon Lee would take third and final set 25-10.

In just its third season, Union County's volleyball program is on the rise and should become a regular in the State Tournament.

Next week's *North Georgia News* will feature a look back at the 2019 season plus a full interview with coach Megan Swanson, who will reflect on her second year at the helm.



Senior Kait McCarter goes up for a block. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Youth Football: Union County splits vs Fannin, Pickens as playoffs approach

It was the last regular season football game for both teams as playoffs start next week.

**10U** - The Panthers took on the Fannin County Rebels for the second time with Fannin winning the previous meeting.

Trailing 6-0, the Panthers first drive ended up with a three-and-out, but late in the first, Carter Conley would record a big interception to keep Fannin off the board.

Early in the second half, Chetley Cox would run for a touchdown but the extra point was no good.

Trailing 13-6, later in the half, Brandon Lynch would score a touchdown and Jaxon Tothorow would get the two point conversion for a 14-13 lead.

Unfortunately, Fannin County would score the game



winning touchdown and go on to win 19-14.

**9U** - The Panthers took on the Pickens County Dragons and it was a blowout.

Kevin Kilpatrick would have two rushing touchdowns in the first half and added another touchdown in the second half, along with Micah Wallace.

The defense would step up

big, allowing just one completion in the passing game as the defensive backs of Haze Burnett, Kyler Juracka, Jackson Nicols, Corbin Combs and Hudson Collins all did a great job.

The defensive line made some big stops and tackles for a losses by Kamden Kendrick, Jax Dillinger, Arthur Galindo, and Mikey Davis in a 26-0 victory.