

Sports

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Wrestling: Union opens with victories over Towns, White, Jackson

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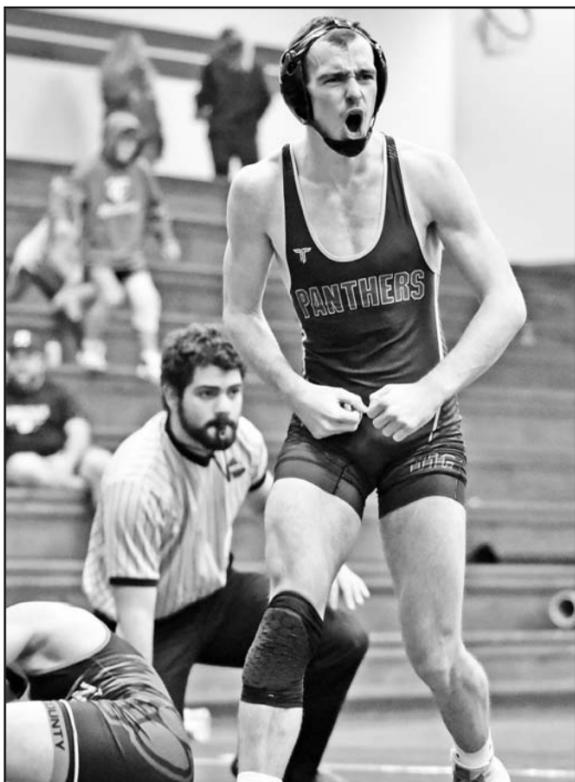
The 2020-21 wrestling preseason wasn't without its share of COVID-19 scheduling hiccups, but once the Panthers hit the mat they didn't disappoint with convincing wins over Jackson County, Towns County and White County.

Union County enters the season with expectations at an all-time high after qualifying a program-record five wrestlers (four underclassmen) to the State Sectionals in 2019-20.

The current season got underway with the Panthers originally slated to host Towns County on Tuesday, Dec. 8. However, the Union County schedule was amended, sending the Panthers to Towns County for a tri-match involving the Indians and White County.

The alterations had no impact on coach Justin Byers' squad as Union County defeated Class AAA White County 48-31 before a 72-6 dismantling of rival Towns County, who sent three of its grapplers to sectionals last year in Class A Public.

On Friday, Union County rallied to defeat Jackson County, who reached the final

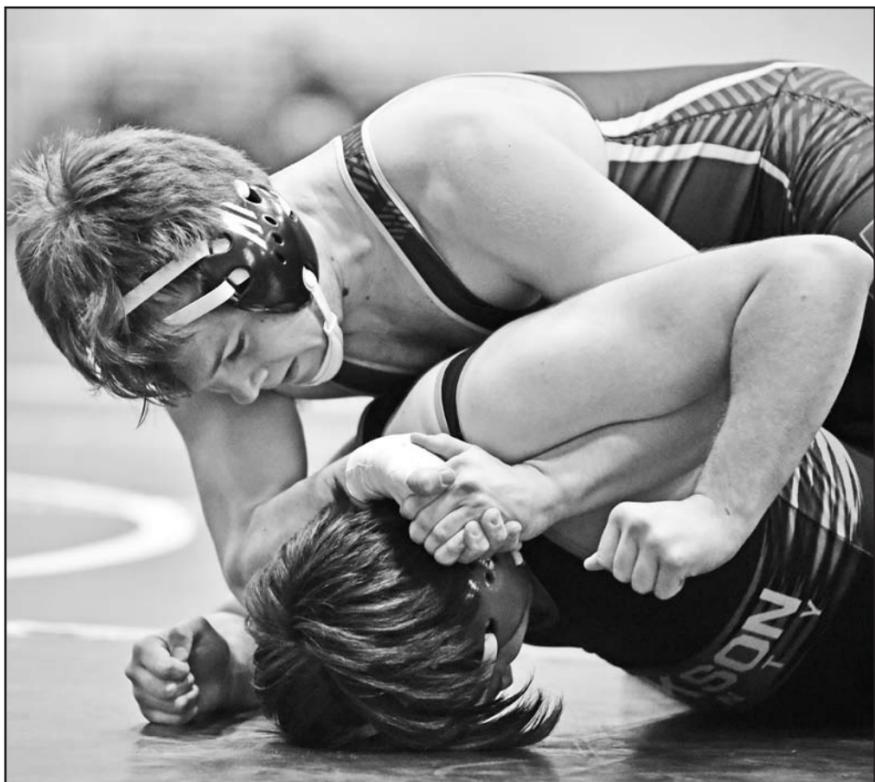


Senior Turner Cone celebrates a pin four in the Class AAA State Duals tournament a year ago, offering eventual State Champion North Hall its toughest test of the tourney.

Jackson County also

placed 10 wrestlers in Traditional (individual) State Championship Tournament, placing second at 195, third at 182 and sixth at 220.

In last Friday's clash,



Union County's Sean Phillips (top) overwhelms his counterpart from Jackson County. Photo/Todd Forrest

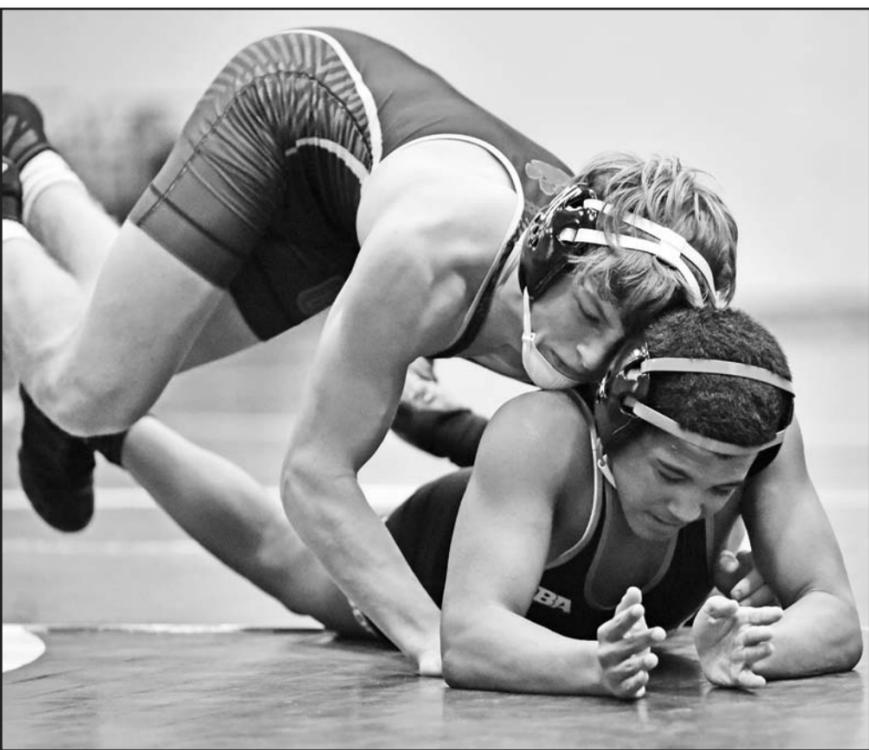
Union County dropped its first five matches to Jackson, falling into a 27-0 hole, only to battle back with six-straight wins for a 33-27 advantage.

The Panthers would go

on to take the match-up 44-33 for their third consecutive victory to begin the year.

Union County will honor its seniors on Wednesday when they host Pickens at The Pit.

Wrestling is expected to get underway around 5:30 p.m. with Senior Night festivities to follow. Union will also visit Lumpkin County on Tuesday at 4 p.m.



Union County takes on Jackson County in The Pit on Friday, Dec. 11. Photos/Todd Forrest

Four school records fall at recent swim meet

Clarksville - On Saturday, Dec. 12, the Union County High School and Middle School Panthers swim teams continued their Saturday tradition of excellence by competing in the Winter Snow Swim Meet in Habersham County.

Rachel Reid set the UCHS record for the second straight week in the 100-yard Breaststroke event.

Hannah Sheffield also shattered school records in the 200 Freestyle and the 100 Backstroke.

"It was another incredible day for our swimmers," Union County coach Kelly Helton said.

"We had 10 middle school personal-best times and seven high school personal-best times."

The middle school team proved they are on the same road to high achievement with Nicolas Nushstayev breaking the UCMS record in the 50 Freestyle.

Other notable accomplishments from Saturday included a

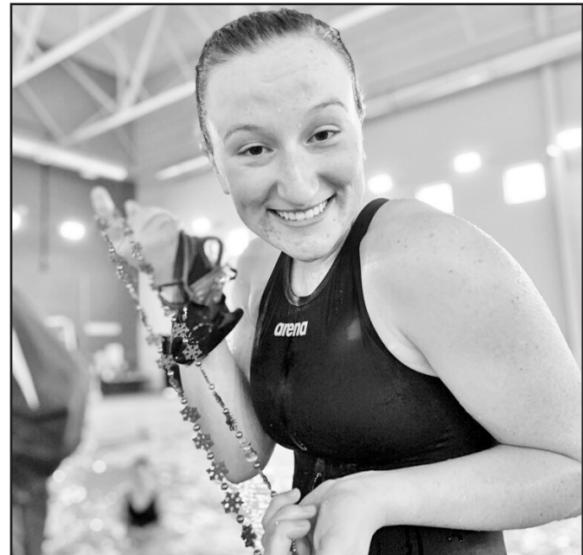
second place overall finish by the UCMS girls; a fourth place overall finish from the UCMS boys and a UCMS third place combined finish.

Meanwhile, the high school Panthers turned in a fifth-place combined finish.

UCHS returns to the pool this Saturday, Dec. 19.



Rachel Reid



Hannah Sheffield

UNION COUNTY MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL WINTER SNOW MEET HIGHLIGHTS

50 FREESTYLE

- 1st Nicholas Nushstayev **MS Record**
- 1st Lily Helton (MS)
- 2nd Andrew Nushstayev (MS)
- 6th Lilly Collins (MS)
- 7th Blake Caputi (HS)
- 7th Ava Wheeler (MS)

50 BREASTSTROKE

- 3rd Andrew Nushstayev (MS)
- 4th Nicholas Nushstayev (MS)
- 6th Olivia Loyd (MS)
- 8th Ava Wheeler (MS)
- 9th Emerson Kight (MS)

100 BREASTSTROKE

- 2nd Rachel Reid **HS Record**
- 2nd Hunter White **State Time**

200 MEDLEY RELAY

- 2nd Lilly Collins, Reese Jones, Lily Helton, Grace Cook (MS)

200 FREESTYLE RELAY

- 2nd Blake Caputi, Grayden Cobb, Liam Smith, Hunter White (HS)
- 3rd Lily Helton, Bella Moss, Olivia Loyd, Grace Cook (MS)
- 5th Ava Wheeler, Emerson Kight, Reese Jones, Lilly Collins (MS)

400 FREESTYLE RELAY

- 4th Grayden Cobb, Preston Perren, Liam Smith, Blake Caputi (HS)

100 FREESTYLE

- 1st Grace Cook (MS)
- 3rd Hunter White (HS)
- 7th Olivia Loyd (MS)
- 8th Blake Caputi (HS)
- 10th Liam Smith (HS)

50 BACKSTROKE

- 1st Eli Gwynn (MS)
- 2nd Lilly Collins (MS)
- 4th Bella Moss (MS)
- 6th Jada Taylor (MS)

100 BACKSTROKE

- 1st Hannah Sheffield **HS Record**
- 7th Liam Smith (HS)

50 BUTTERFLY

- 1st Grace Cook (MS)
- 3rd Reese Jones (MS)
- 6th Emerson Kight (MS)

100 IM

- 1st Lily Helton (MS)
- 2nd Eli Gwynn (MS)
- 4th Reese Jones (MS)

200 FREESTYLE

- 1st Hannah Sheffield **HS Record**

OVERALL TEAM SCORES

- 2nd MS Girls Team
- 3rd MS Combined Team
- 4th MS Boys Team
- 5th HS Combined Team
- 10 MS Personal Best Times
- 7 HS Personal Best Times



UNION COUNTY SCHOOLS
SWIM TEAM