

# Sports

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## Panthers wrap up 7-on-7 with two wins over Andrews, NC

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Union County resumed action last Thursday, June 13, hosting Andrews, North Carolina at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium in the final 7-on-7 of the summer.

The Panthers won two of three contests, with the second game ending in a 9-9 draw.

Union came out strong in the opening matchup, prevailing 25-6, beginning with Cade Dockrey's 30-yard scoring strike to Maddox Young on the second play. After Chetley Cox hauled in the PAT and an Andrews three-and-out, Tyler Parker's 1-yard grab made it 13-0.

Later, Parker bumped the margin to 19-0 with his second TD catch of the first game.

Andrews eventually got on the board, but Dockrey found Cox as time expired to bring the final tally to 25-6. Dockrey connected on five of his first six pass attempts, finishing 12 for 16 in the opening contest.

"I was really proud of Cade Dockrey, I thought he had a great day," Union County head coach Michael Perry said. "The biggest thing is, I'm seeing him grow as a quarterback. We had a post-wheel [route] concept and [Andrews] covered it real well, so he checked it down and didn't force anything. To me, that's showing great growth as a quarterback. I'm pleased with how he's progressing."

The second matchup began with the Union defense forcing a stop and Dockrey connecting with Cade Walden for an early score, followed by Cox's PAT reception.

A Kevin Kilpatrick interception on the Wildcats' second



The Rev. Jerry Helton, of the local FCA, delivers a message to Union and Andrews players after last week's 7-on-7. Photo/Todd Forrest

possession spotted Union a 9-0 lead, and the offense handed the keys to rising freshman quarterback Kamden Kendrick.

"[Kilpatrick] just came out [for football] and he had a really good week for us," Perry said. "I'm really proud of how he's doing."

Kendrick completed three of his first seven attempts before an interception put Andrews on the board. The Wildcats quickly answered with a touchdown on the third play of the series before knotting the score via a PAT as time expired.

"We played a lot of our young guys in the second and third game," Perry said. "We're trying to get those JV guys some experience."

Dockrey hit Parker for a score to begin the third session and Young hauled in the PAT. After Andrews' offense failed to put up any points, Dockrey and Cox hooked up for another Union touchdown, then Parker converted the point-after to spot the Panthers a 14-0 edge.

"Tyler Parker continues to make big plays for us at receiver, as well as Chetley and Maddox," Perry said. "Chetley and Maddox also help us out on defense."

"Braden Plott has been big for us on both sides of the ball," he said. "It seems like he's getting interceptions every single game. Connor Schuknecht is another one that plays both sides and he just

keeps doing all the things that Connor typically does."

Once again, the Panthers called upon the JV, and Andrews made it 14-6 on the ensuing possession. The offense went three-and-out, allowing Andrews to hit a deep touchdown to move within two in the final seconds. However,

the Wildcats' 2-point conversion was broken up in the back of the endzone to end the day.

At the conclusion of the previous 7-on-7, Perry rased concerns over coverage breakdowns in the secondary. This time around, many of those issues had been addressed.

"I saw a lot of progress

[in the defensive backfield]," Perry said. "The last game had a lot of busts, but we were playing a lot of different guys at that point. We have a lot to work on, on both sides of the ball, but we'll get there."

"I'm really pleased with our freshman group, they are a really good group. I want to single out Jax Dillinger. He's done a remarkable job for us. I'm really proud of the effort he's displayed in workouts and practice. When it's all said and done, he's going to be a very good football player."

Afterward, Rev. Jerry Helton delivered a brief message to both squads before the Fellowship of Christian Athletes hosted dogs.

Union County practices three days this week before taking off two weeks. The Panthers resume action following the GHSA-mandated July 4 dead week, switching to four practices a week.

Official practices kickoff during the final week of July with the acclimation period. The Panthers host Chestatee on Aug. 9 in a preseason scrimmage contest. The regular season gets underway Aug. 23 at Gilmer. Union County's 2024 home opener is Aug. 30 vs. Fannin County.

The Panthers get their first look at life in Region 7-AA when they welcome Murray County to Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium on Sept. 6.



Rising sophomore Bentley Rich's big gain set up a 1-yard TD pass to Tyler Parker. Photo/Todd Forrest



Rising junior QB Cade Dockrey scans the field vs. Andrews, NC. Photo/Todd Forrest

### River City Bank proudly supports UCHS Cheerleaders



Katie Mashburn, Sr Personal Banker at River City Bank, presents the sponsorship check to the UCHS Cheerleaders for the upcoming season.

River City Bank is pleased to announce our support for the Union County High School Cheerleaders for the 2024-2025 season. As a steadfast advocate for community engagement and youth programs, River City Bank is committed to empowering young athletes, who are an important part of our community's growth and development.

Cheerleading is a sport which builds teamwork, camaraderie, confidence and leadership skills among young indi-

viduals. Recognizing the hard work and dedication of high school cheerleaders, River City Bank is proud to provide their support.

"We are honored to extend our support to the high school cheerleaders. It is important that our bank, as a community partner, contribute to their growth and success," said Scott Nanney, Market President in Blairsville.

Come out and support our high school cheerleaders in the upcoming Football and

Basketball seasons at Union County High School. Go Panthers!

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# Shorthanded Panthers go 4-3 at Piedmont University camp

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**Demorest** - Playing with only three varsity regulars, Union County battled to win four of seven at Piedmont University's basketball camp last week.

Missing Kaden Combs (football), Cade Dockrey (football), Jude Ellis (injury) and Jaxon Theroth (football), the Panthers traveled to Demorest on Monday, June 10 for a three-day, two-night camp at Piedmont.

As a result, Union leaned heavily on two returning starters, Houston Henry and Hayden Hughes, along with Maddox Young and rising sophomore Ethan Hogsed.

Ryland Chambers, Holden Payne and Kainen Shirley also contributed for the Panthers.

Union County opened with a 63-53 victory over Athens Christian - the reigning 8-A (D1) champion. Later, Union defeated Oconee County by 12 and Gulf Point Latin (Navarre, FL) by nearly 50 points.

The Panthers' lone loss of day one came via North Oconee, the Class AAAA State champ, by nearly 30 points.

On day two, Union County held off West Hall, 66-60 before running out of gas in a 74-49 loss to Paulding



Rising-senior Maddox Young drives to the hoop vs. Paulding County on day two of last week's Piedmont University basketball camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

County. The Panthers led by as many as five during the second half vs. Paulding until a 23-4 run put the game out of reach.

On Wednesday, Union County lost in sudden death to West Hall in the overtime

tournament. Each game consisted of a 2-minute OT session with a 30-second shot clock. After finishing tied, Union County was whistled for a foul in sudden death, allowing West Hall to end the game with a free throw.

This week, Union County travels to Dahlonega for the University of North Georgia camp.

The Panthers will face three state champions in Lakeview, North Oconee and Riverwood. Action gets



Rising senior point guard Houston Henry scores inside during Union's 66-60 win over West Hall on Tuesday, June 11. Photo/Todd Forrest

underway at noon Tuesday with games to follow at 3 and 6 p.m.

Union plays four games on Wednesday starting at 2 p.m. The junior varsity starts at 9 a.m. Thursday's games begin at 2 p.m.

Later in the week, the Panthers travel to Emerson for a weekend camp at the LakePoint Sports Complex.

Union County will host its annual boys youth basketball camp from June 25-27.

# Lady Panthers display growth on and off the court at Emmanuel camp

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**Franklin Springs** - Union County attended the Fellowship of Christian Athletes camp at Emmanuel University for three days of devotion and basketball.

On the court, the Lady Panthers defeated Fitzgerald and Madison County while dropping three games by a combined margin of 10 points.

During the opener, Union County, playing at full strength for the first time all summer, lost to Murray County by 3 points. Later, the Lady Panthers fell to Temple by four and to Tift County by three.

Tift County went 25-5 a year ago, reaching the Elite Eight in Class 6A. Temple advanced to the Sweet 16 in Class A (D1) and Murray County reached the Class AA Final Four after surviving a tough test from Union County during the round of 16.

As for Fitzgerald, they lost to Butler in the first round of the Class AA postseason. Madison County went 11-15 last winter in Region 7-AAAA



The Lady Panthers basketball team prays together during last week's FCA camp at Emmanuel University. Photo/Thomas Nelson - Facebook

-- a region that included North Oconee (final four) and Chestatee (elite eight).

"I played five-in, five-out [at camp]," Union County head coach Thomas Nelson said. "We lost three close games, so if I had kept the starters in, we

might have gone undefeated." With his first look at a full roster, Nelson is pleased with the team chemistry displayed at Emmanuel.

"I was very impressed with how well they played together," he said. "They share

the ball well. They really do. Our point guard (rising sophomore Regan Trlica) is making huge strides. Hope Taylor has made huge strides, and not to mention, we have Katelyn Brown and Ariel McCarter coming back. Slone Dyer and Hensley Adams

have stepped forward and really improved a lot. Then you've got Aubrie Akins, who's really been working hard. So I have six seniors who have really bought in and are taking some ownership of the program."

When asked what

improvements he's seen since the first week of camp, Nelson cited the development of the younger girls.

"Their adjustment to game speed at the varsity level has really gotten better," he said. "Of course, at the Emmanuel Camp, we played much better competition, so they didn't have any choice. It was either get tough or get blown out. But they really picked up the pace a lot. We still have a lot of room for improvement, but they made huge strides between our little camp at Union and [Emmanuel]."

The girls spent three days and two nights at the Emmanuel Camp - an event that featured several off-court activities hosted by FCA.

"We played five games and had a lot of meetings and gatherings that focused on bringing the kids closer to Christ," Nelson said. "Anytime you can take a group of kids and get them closer to Christ, that's huge, man."

The Lady Panthers tipped off their annual three-day youth camp Monday. Later this week, Union travels to the University of North Georgia for two days of games beginning Friday.

# UCRD: 12U, 14U baseball teams headed to GRPA State Tournament



Union County Sheriff Mack Mason (back row - center) threw out the first pitch at last week's 14U baseball tournament hosted by Meeks Park and the UCRD. The Panthers defeated Lumpkin County 19-5 in the District 7 Championship game. Union County will begin the Class C State Tournament in Appling County on June 25. The team is coached by Tyler Knight and Justin Thomas. Photo/Jenni Dixon - Facebook



Habersham County hosted the 12U A/B/C District 7 Tournament, where Union County finished third overall, coming out on top in the Class C Division. Following an opening-round loss to Gainesville, the Panthers rebounded with five consecutive wins, defeating Jackson County 18-8, Madison County 14-2, Dawson County 10-5 and Lumpkin County 14-6. Union's bid for the overall tournament championship came to an end at the hands of Commerce. The Panthers are coached by Tim Mason, Matt Pankey and Todd Littler. The State Tournament is in Gainesville starting June 25.

# UCHS Softball hosts Summer Youth Camp



Union County High School's annual youth softball camp attracted nearly 30 youngsters to last week's two-day event on June 10-11. Future Lady Panthers learned fundamentals, skills and had a good time while working under the UCHS softball team and its coaches.

## YOUTH BOY'S BASKETBALL CAMP

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9:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
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