

Sports

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UCRD sending two more to Dizzy Dean State Tournament

10&U Baseball two wins away from District 6 Title and a State Tourney berth

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Afternoon thunderstorms were guilty of postponing two of Union County's District 6 Championship Games, but for the opposition, Mother Nature was simply delaying the inevitable.

The Union County Recreation Department's 10&U Softball team handled its business with ease in Fannin County. Meanwhile, the 14U Baseball team also dominated its tournament in Gilmer.

Two more UCRD teams opened late last week with the 12&U Baseball team suffering two quick losses to pull the plug on its State Tournament hopes.

Last but not least, the 10&U Baseball team dismantled the opposition by a combined score of 50-1 over three games, en route to a 6 p.m. Monday showdown with Towns County - the only other unbeaten team.

A win over Towns would send the Panthers to Tuesday's 6 p.m. title game, one win away from continuing the season. A loss results in a second game on Monday - an elimination showdown slated for 8 p.m.

BLUE RIDGE - Union County 10&U Softball faced Jefferson in a rematch from the semifinals and used overpowering pitching to build an early advantage until the bats exploded for five runs in the fourth and two in the fifth. The 12-1, five-inning victory clinched a District 6 title, sending the Lady Panthers to the State Tournament in Boynton.

Chevale Kinderknecht got the start from the circle and tossed three no-hit innings, striking out nine and walking five. Sloane Dyer took over in the fourth, working the final three outs and striking out one to combine with Kinderknecht on a four-inning no-hitter.

Jefferson's lone run came in the fourth when two walks, a stolen base, and an error trimmed Union's margin to 10-1.

The Lady Panthers put the game out of reach in the fifth, thus ending the tournament with a 12-1 victory.

In Union's half of the fifth, Ella Akins, Dyer, and Kinderknecht each walked to load the bases for Kaylee Radar, who delivered a two-run single in the final at bat of the tournament.

Runs were hard to come by in the early stages as the Lady Panthers manufactured one run in both the first and second innings.

The first saw Aubrie Akins



Top: Union County 10&U Softball team following its District title-clinching, 12-1 victory over Jefferson at the Fannin County Recreation Department on Tuesday. Bottom: Later that same evening, the 14&U Baseball team took care of business in their title game by knocking off the host team Gilmer, also by a 12-1 score, at the Clear Creek Complex. Photos/Todd Forrest

score Kinderknecht with a two-out RBI single. Another base hit, this time off the bat of MacKenzie Bohannon, drove home Zady Ludlum, who singled to lead off the second, spotting Kinderknecht a two-run advantage.

Jefferson missed an excellent scoring opportunity in the bottom half of the second when they loaded the bases with three walks before Kinderknecht responded by firing a fastball past the Lady Dragon hitter to get out of trouble.

That was the last time Jefferson would be within striking

distance of the eventual district champion.

Kinderknecht proved she can also handle the bat when she stretched the lead to 3-0 by knocking in Dyer with a line drive to center. Aubrie Akins made it 4-0 by scoring Kinderknecht, and later, Ayla Stepp drove in the fifth run with a one-out single that plated Radar.

The Union County pitching duo proved dangerous at the plate as Dyer singled and scored on a Kinderknecht fourth inning double. Bella Moss, who led off the inning with a walk, also scored

on the two-bagger.

With two down and the bases loaded, Stepp, Bohannon, and Avery Hussion each drew an RBI walk to end the inning at 10-0, due to the five-run limit.

Kinderknecht finished 2-for-2 with three runs, two RBIs, and two walks; Aubrie Akins also went 2-for-2 with two RBIs. Dyer scored three times during a 1-for-2 day that included a pair of walks. Radar, Bohannon, and Stepp would each drive in two runs while Hussion added one RBI.

Ludlum and Lily Helton recorded one hit apiece; Moss and

Ella Akins had one run each; Izzy Anthros drew a walk.

As for Union County's 10&U baseball squad, they have yet to receive a challenge.

In game one, they "run-ruled" West Jackson 11-1. On Saturday, they posted a football score during a 26-0 victory over Gilmer.

In Sunday's semi-final game, the Panthers pulled away from Clay County, NC with a nine-run second inning that opened up a 10-0 margin.

Union County would tack on three more in the third, then

keep Clay off the board through four innings, bringing the mercy rule into play.

For further 10&U Baseball details and results, check out next week's *North Georgia News*.

ELLIJAY - Tyler Loyd scored three times while the righty-lefty combo of Connor Shields and Lake Hughes tossed a two-hitter as Union's 14&U Baseball throttled Gilmer by a score of 12-1 in last Tuesday's district title game.

The Panthers put up four runs in the first when Bailey Brown was plunked by a 2-0 pitch, Loyd singled, Logan Anderson walked, Thomas Dyer tripled, and Shields singled.

Anderson and Dyer drove in one apiece in the second, making it a 6-0 game. Chris Fletcher stretched the score to 7-0 in the third when he doubled and scored.

Still on top 7-0 through five, the Panthers put the Bobcats away with a five-spot in the sixth.

The first five hitters in the Union County lineup each scored in the inning: Brown, Hughes, Loyd, Anderson, and Dyer all touched home in the would-be final inning.

Hughes worked a perfect bottom half of the sixth to end things one inning early, via the "mercy rule."

Hunter Fleming walked and scored for Union. Shields tossed two innings, fanning one and surrendering one hit. Hughes finished the game, working four innings, giving up one hit and striking out 10 - including four in the third inning due to a dropped third strike.

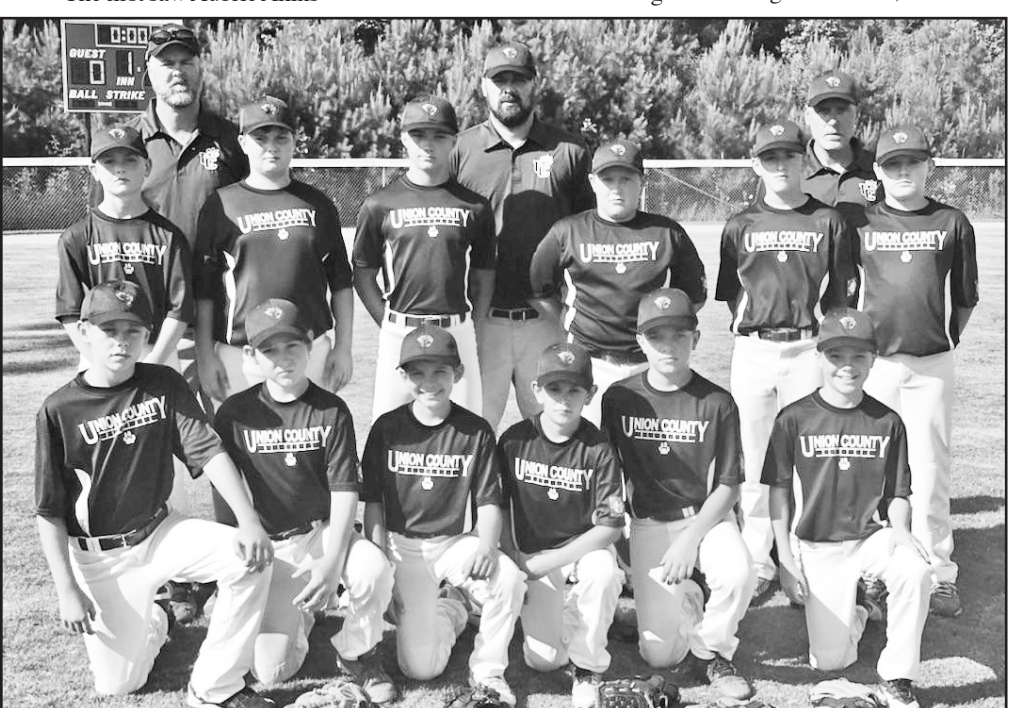
Finally, Union's 12&U Baseball weren't as fortunate, opening their tournament with a 13-1 loss to Dawson County.

The Panthers were unable to rebound on Friday, falling 10-3 to White County.

The 12&U All-Star Baseball team's roster is as follows: Talon Arey, Mason Bohannon, Kaden Combs, Jordan Gilliam, Houston Henry, Hayden Hughes, Darin Patterson, Braden Plott, Braden Rich, Eli Sosensky, Moses Stevens, Braden Tanner. Coaches: Kevin Hughes (HC), Tommy Arey, Jason Plott.

For more details, on the 10&U Baseball's Championship Game along with 10&U and 12&U Softball's State Tournament, pick up a copy of next week's North Georgia News.

For same-day results, you may still follow on *Twitter* or *Facebook*. @hotrodtodd25 on *Twitter* or www.facebook.com/hotrodtodd25.



The Union County Recreation Department's 12&U All-Star Baseball team. Photo/Submitted



The Union County 12&U All-Stars in action vs Dawson County on Thursday night. Photos/Todd Forrest



The Union County 10U Baseball team (L-R) fielding, sliding into third, and hitting during its 13-0 win over Clay County, NC on Sunday. Photos/Todd Forrest