

# Sports

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## Softball: Lady Panthers gearing up for fall with a full slate of games Union County concludes opening week of summer ball with 3-1-1 record

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Union County Softball's first week of preseason action is in the books and so far, head coach Stephen Mitchell likes what he sees from his young squad.

"What a difference a year makes," the second-year coach said after his team played five games last week. "We're so far ahead of where we were last year so right now we're trying to work on the little things like base running and situational hitting and defense."

The Lady Panthers wrapped up the first week of the summer schedule with a 3-1-1 overall record - the varsity finished 2-0 but had its final game rained out on Thursday evening.

On Tuesday, Union County traveled to Lumpkin County, where the junior varsity defeated White County's varsity, 5-3. The Lady Panthers' varsity squad thumped Lumpkin County, 8-2.

Union County welcomed the same teams to Blairsville a day later and the varsity took care of White County 10-6 and the JV tied Lumpkin County, 5-5.

The only loss of the week came on Thursday when the JV fell on a walk-off to the host team at Habersham Central. The varsity's contest was rained out.

"By the time Thursday rolled around I think we were a little tired," Coach Mitchell said. "But we continued to compete, and to me, that's very important."

"Overall, I saw a daily improvement in our offense.



Senior Megan Bright delivers to the plate in Union County's Wednesday afternoon game with Lumpkin County. Photo/Todd Forrest

On Tuesday, we were fouling off a lot of pitches to the right side but Wednesday I felt that our bat speed and our timing was a little better.

Four Lady Panther pitchers were able to get some work in on Wednesday with sophomores Allie Brey, Adaley Burnette, Rebekah Kelley, Tori Tracy and senior Megan Bright seeing action. Last season, Coach Mitchell leaned heavily upon the pitching duo of Bright and then-sophomore Trinity Queen, but he's confident there will be plenty of arms to go around this year.

"Not only are we able to get our older pitchers more rest, but we're going to get the younger girls more innings and we're hoping to find

situations for our pitchers," he said. "Not necessarily as starters or relievers, but spot situations where we can throw them in there and they can get us an out or two."

This week, Union County will visit Flowery Branch on Tuesday for a 4 p.m. contest with the Lady Falcons and a 5:30 p.m. meeting with Hart County. On Thursday, they will travel to Jefferson to face the hosts at 4 p.m. and Gainesville at 5:30 p.m.

"This will be a great opportunity for us to go up against some bigger schools and continue to get better in certain situations," Coach Mitchell said. "We're going to continue to work on bunting and situational hitting because I believe if we can



Sophomore shortstop Emma Roxbury applies the tag to a Lumpkin County base runner at second in Wednesday afternoon's 5-5 tie with the Lady Indians. Photo/Todd Forrest

score four or five runs, we're going to have a chance to win a lot of games this year."

Union County will participate in the next week's Summer Slam in Carrollton, where they will be in action on Monday and Tuesday at East Carroll Park. On July 24, they'll return to northeast Georgia for the final tune-up games of the summer at Lumpkin County when the Lady Panthers face Lumpkin at 10 a.m. and White County at 11:30 a.m.

The season opener is slated for August 2nd with the JV getting underway at 5 p.m. and the varsity to follow at 7 p.m. Both games will be against Class AAAA Pickens County.



Sophomore Caley Davis interacts with teammates in the dugout after reaching second base against White County. Photo/Todd Forrest



### 2019 Union County Softball Schedule

Date	Time	Opponent	Location
8/2	7:00	Pickens	Home
8/10	11:00	Habersham	Home
8/10	3:00	Commerce	Home
8/12	5:55	Lumpkin	Lumpkin
8/14	3:45	North Forsyth	North Gwinnett
8/14	5:40	Jackson	North Gwinnett
8/19	5:55	Gilmer	Gilmer
8/21	5:30	Pickens	Pickens
8/22	5:30	Monticello*	Home
8/24	11:00	East Hall	East Hall
8/24	1:00	Stephens .	East Hall
8/27	5:30	Elbert*	Elbert*
8/29	5:30	Putnam*	Home
9/4	5:55	Lumpkin	Home
9/5	5:00	Social Circle*	Social Circle*
9/10	5:30	Banks*	Home
9/12	5:30	Oglethorpe*	Oglethorpe*
9/14	11:00	Heard	UWG
9/14	1:00	Newnan	UWG
9/16	6:00	Madison	UNG
9/17	5:30	Rabun*	Home
9/18	5:55	Gilmer	Home
9/23	5:55	East Hall	Home
9/25	TBA	Region Playoff	TBA
9/26	TBA	Region Playoff	TBA



Senior Mary Wischmeyer returns with three years of starting experience under her belt. Photo/Todd Forrest



Returning junior shortstop Miranda Lockaby fires to first base vs White County. Photo/Todd Forrest