

Football: Panthers host Habersham Central in preseason scrimmage Friday

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For the first time in 287 days, Panther football will be under the lights of Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium when they scrimmage Habersham Central at 7:30 p.m. Friday.

The Raiders, who currently reside in Region 8-AAAAA, will offer Union County a rigorous challenge during the preseason instead of another one-sided shellacking, as was the case the last two years.

"It'll be different, that's for sure," Union County Head Football Coach Brian Allison said of the step-up in competition from last year's scrimmage. "(Habersham Central) is a quality program that will provide a good test to see where we're at to start the season."

The Raiders are coming off a 2-8 campaign but featured an offense that put up 35 points-a-game in a competitive region that featured Dacula, Gainesville, Lanier, and Winder-Barrow.

Habersham's first six losses of 2017 came by a combined 18 points. Loss No. 7 came to the eventual region champ Dacula, by a 35-28 score. Their final defeat was a 40-28 loss to 9th ranked Winder.

Their two bookend victories included a 72-55 season-opening win over East Hall (who defeated Union 62-42); their second W was a 21-12 victory at Apalachee to close out the year.

In mid-June, the Panthers



Head Coach Brian Allison and players following one of the Panthers' football camps during the summer. Photo/Todd Forrest

fell to the Raiders at Habersham Central's annual 7-on-7 tournament - Union's only loss in pool play.

According to Coach Allison, Friday's scrimmage will feature varsity players for the first two or three quarters before the younger guys take over in the third and fourth quarters.

Like the spring game, kickoffs will be dead with no blocking or returns. Extra point and field goal attempts will also

be dead with no rush from the opposing defense. However, any punt attempts will be live, according to Coach Allison.

"We're going to try and work on certain situations (this Friday night)," Allison said. "We want to see how we look in third-and-long, third-and-short, goal-line situations, and first-and-10 situations."

"We need to make sure that we're prepared for game one and for any situation that

could possibly occur."

Another focus of the Union County coaching staff will be keeping everyone healthy. As of this writing on Monday, Aug. 6 the only serious injury the Panthers are dealing with is Sawyer Drake's shoulder.

During a three-way practice with Chestatee and Commerce last month, the junior wide receiver suffered a dislocation of the SC joint and was

ruled out for a minimum of 6-8 weeks - from July 18.

The Panthers are hoping to have Drake back on the field sometime in September.

"Our guys are very excited for the opportunity to play another team," Allison said. "It's going to be a great situation for us to get to go up against a Class AAAAA program that only lost most of its games by a couple of points."

Habersham Central news

and notes - The Raiders are led by head coach Benji Harrison, who begins his fourth year while compiling an 8-22 record in three seasons.

Harrison was formerly the head coach of Jackson County from 2012-2014. At Jackson, he posted a 12-20 record with two state playoff berths.

Habersham also features a familiar face on staff as former Panther head coach Stan Luttrell serves as the Raiders' defensive coordinator.

Luttrell, who was Union County's head coach in 2004 and 2005, compiled a 4-16 record during two seasons in Blairsville.

In 2006, Luttrell became the second head football coach of Chestatee High School, leading the fifth-year program to its first winning season (7-4) and a playoff berth.

From 2006-2013, Luttrell compiled a 46-38 record as the War Eagles' head-honcho while leading Chestatee to three playoff berths. In 2013, his final season, Luttrell's War Eagle squad finished with a 9-3 record after reaching the State Sweet 16.

Luttrell's 46 victories are the most in Chestatee history - 37 wins ahead of the next closest coach.

Serving as running backs coach on Luttrell's Chestatee staff was current Towns County Head Football Coach John Cornett, who led the Indians to their first-ever playoff berth in 2017.

The Panthers and Indians will renew their rivalry on Aug. 31.

2018 VARSITY FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

August 10		Habersham Central (Scrimmage)	
August 24	H	East Hall	7:30
August 31	A	Towns County	7:30
September 7	H	Fannin County (MS/Rec night)	7:30
September 14	A	Monticello	7:30
September 21	H	Putnam County (Homecoming)	7:30
September 28	A	Elbert County	7:30
October 5		Open	
October 12	H	Banks County	7:30
October 19	A	Oglethorpe County	7:30
October 26	H	Social Circle (Senior Night)	7:30
November 2	A	Rabun County	7:30

Junior Varsity Schedule

August 30	A	Dawson County	5:30
September 6	H	Gilmer County	5:30
September 13	H	White County	5:30
September 20	A	Pickens County	5:30
September 27	A	Lumpkin County	5:30
October 11	H	Rabun County	5:30
October 18	A	Fannin County	5:30

1-12-18

UC Softball home opener Tuesday



Union County Softball's 2018 season began Monday at Habersham Central. On Tuesday, the Lady Panthers will host the home opener vs Pickens at 5:55 p.m. before visiting Pickens on Thursday at 5:55 p.m. The junior varsity will be in action prior to both Pickens games at 4 p.m.. The next Union County home game is Monday, Aug. 13 vs Dawson County. The JV gets underway at 4:30 p.m. with the varsity first pitch scheduled for 5:55 p.m. Photo - senior Bailey Rayfield by Todd Forrest.

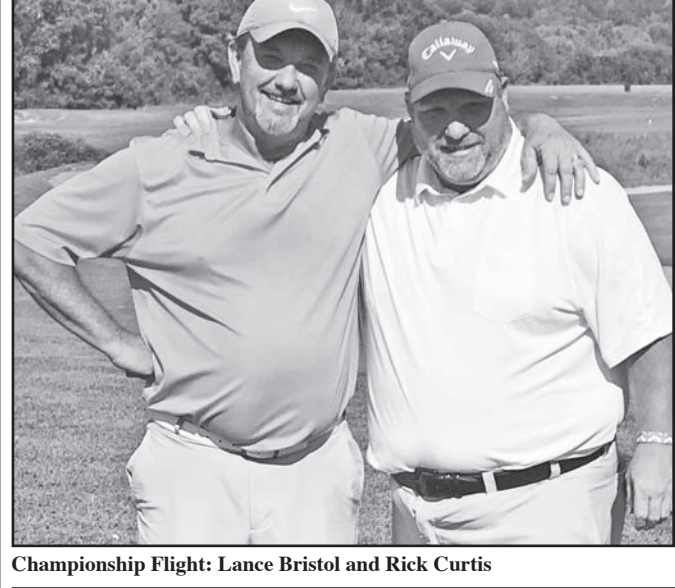
2018 Union County Softball Schedule



Date	Time	Opponent	Location	Notes
8/6	4:00	Habersham	Habersham	Varsity DH
8/7	5:55	Pickens	Home	JV Before (4:00)
8/8	5:55	Pickens	Away	JV Before (4:00)
8/13	5:55	Dawson	Home	JV Before (4:30)
8/15	4:30	Towns	Away	
8/16	5:55	Lumpkin	Away	JV Before (4:00)
8/20	4:30	Towns	Home	
8/23	5:00	Monticello*	Away	
8/25	11:00	East Hall	Away	
8/28	5:55	Elbert*	Home	JV Before (4:00)
8/30	5:00	Putnam	Away	
9/4	5:55	Dawson	Away	JV Before (4:00)
9/5	5:55	Lumpkin	Home	JV Before (4:00)
9/6	5:55	Social Circle*	Home	
9/11	5:55	Banks*	Away	JV Before (4:00)
9/13	5:55	Oglethorpe*	Home	
9/14	TBA	TBA	Madison	Madison Tournament
9/15	TBA	TBA	Madison	Madison Tournament
9/18	TBA	Rabun	Rabun	
9/21	TBA	TBA	Dalton	Ft Oglethorpe Tournament
9/22	TBA	TBA	Dalton	Ft Oglethorpe Tournament

9/24-9/28 Region Playoff Series TBA 10/1-10/6 Region Tournament TBA

Old Union Member-Guest winners



Championship Flight: Lance Bristol and Rick Curtis



First Flight: Tim Anderson and Tim Hughes



Second Flight: Gary Chambers and Jody Moss

Meet the Players - Aug. 17



Union County Football's annual Meet the Team event is scheduled for Friday Aug. 17 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. - weather permitting.