

Softball: Lady Panthers 3-0 in region following wins over Elbert, Putnam

By Todd Forrest
Sports Editor
sports@nganews.com

Union County is currently undefeated in Region 8-AA, setting up a Thursday showdown with the defending Class AA State Champion Social Circle.

The Lady Redskins are currently 2-1 in region play and reside in sole possession of third place behind undefeated Union County and Banks County.

Social Circle's lone region loss was a 10-0 shutout at the hands of Banks, who the Lady Panthers will host next week.

As for Union, they've kept pace with Banks County by way of routing Putnam County and surviving a thriller at Elbert County.

Originally scheduled for Tuesday, wet weather pushed back the Lady Panthers' trip to Elberton by one day. And when the two teams finally squared off on Wednesday, they made it worth the wait.

Locked in a 0-0 tie through five-plus innings, the Lady Blue Devils took advantage of an error to put the lead-off hitter aboard in the bottom of the sixth. After moving her to second with a bunt, a one-out single gave Elbert a 1-0 advantage heading to the seventh.

Krysten Hodges opened the Union half of the inning with a base hit - bringing in Aubrie Banton as a pinch runner.

Caley Davis sacrificed her to second with a bunt and Lexi Sisum flew out to left for the second out, bringing Ansley Collins to the plate with the



Teacher Appreciation Day: Union County senior softball players recognized their favorite teachers before last Thursday's 15-0 victory over Putnam County Photo/Todd Forrest

game on the line. After taking a first-pitch strike, the sophomore delivered an RBI double to even the score at 1-1 entering the Elbert half of the seventh.

Junior Trinity Queen worked a 1-2-3 inning to send the contest into extra frames, where Hannah Patton led off the eighth with a walk.

With Kaylee Helton running for the Lady Panther catcher, Miranda Lockaby used a sacrifice bunt to advance her into scoring position.

Following a Queen fly out, Rebekah Kelley reached

on a two-out error to keep the inning alive for Hodges, who singled to left for a 2-1 Union County lead.

Queen induced a fly out to right to open the bottom half of the eighth before fanning the next two hitters to end the game.

The win was Queen's third of the year as she struck out nine, scattering four hits and one unearned run over eight innings.

Lockaby finished 2-for-3, Hodges was 2-for-4 with an RBI and Collins went 1-for-4 with an RBI double.

Sisum, Queen and Davis each added a hit for Union County; Patton drew a walk.

The Lady Panthers hosted Putnam County on Thursday for Teacher Appreciation Day and made quick work of the visitors in a 15-0, three-inning shellacking.

Senior Megan Bright picked up her third win during an abbreviated no-hitter that saw Union County jump out to a 3-0 lead after one and never look back.

An RBI double by Lockaby put the Lady Panthers on the board before she scored

on a wild pitch. Later, Kelley made it a 3-0 game with an run-scoring ground out.

Putnam's lone base runner reached on a one-out walk in the second but was quickly thrown out at second on a stolen base attempt.

Bright led off the second by doubling off the "Home Depot" sign in left. Collins, her courtesy runner, scored on a wild pitch. Sisum walked and scored; Lockaby, Mary Wischmeyer, Patton and Queen all drove in a run in the second as Union built an 8-0 lead.

Bright struck out the side

in the third and the Lady Panthers ended things with seven in the bottom half of the inning.

Allie Brey walked and scored on an Adeley Burnette double, Jessica Lara walked and scored, Collins and Tori Tracy each recorded an RBI single, Emma Roxbury walked, Banton and Rebekah Chambers each singled in a run and Brey ended things with a two-run double.

Union will host Lumpkin on Wednesday following a 4 p.m. JV game. Thursday's Social Circle game gets underway at 5 p.m.

Cross Country: Union records a pair of top-fives at War Eagle Invitational

By Todd Forrest
Sports Editor
sports@nganews.com

Gainesville - Zoe Sanchez placed second overall to lead the Union girls to a fifth place finish and Luke Gambrell was sixth as the guys team took home fourth at Chestatee's War Eagle Invitational.

In one of the deepest fields that Union County will see this fall, both teams turned in impressive performances, both individually and team-wise.

Sanchez placed second with a time of 21:22, less than 50 seconds back of first place North Hall's Caylee Wagner.

Meanwhile, Gambrell's time of 17:56 was 89 seconds behind North Hall's Andrew Jones, who turned in a blistering 16:27. Just edging Gambrell was Commerce's Brandon Martin, who clocked in at 17:43.

Union's Hunter Hartzog just missed a top-10 with a time of 18:19 - good enough for 11th and eight seconds back of 10th.

Malachi Patrick was 32nd, Guage Shumaker came in 37th and Thomas Mellen-dorf was 40th.

Marcus Forrester placed 42nd and Trevor Guild was 46th to round out the Panther top-seven.



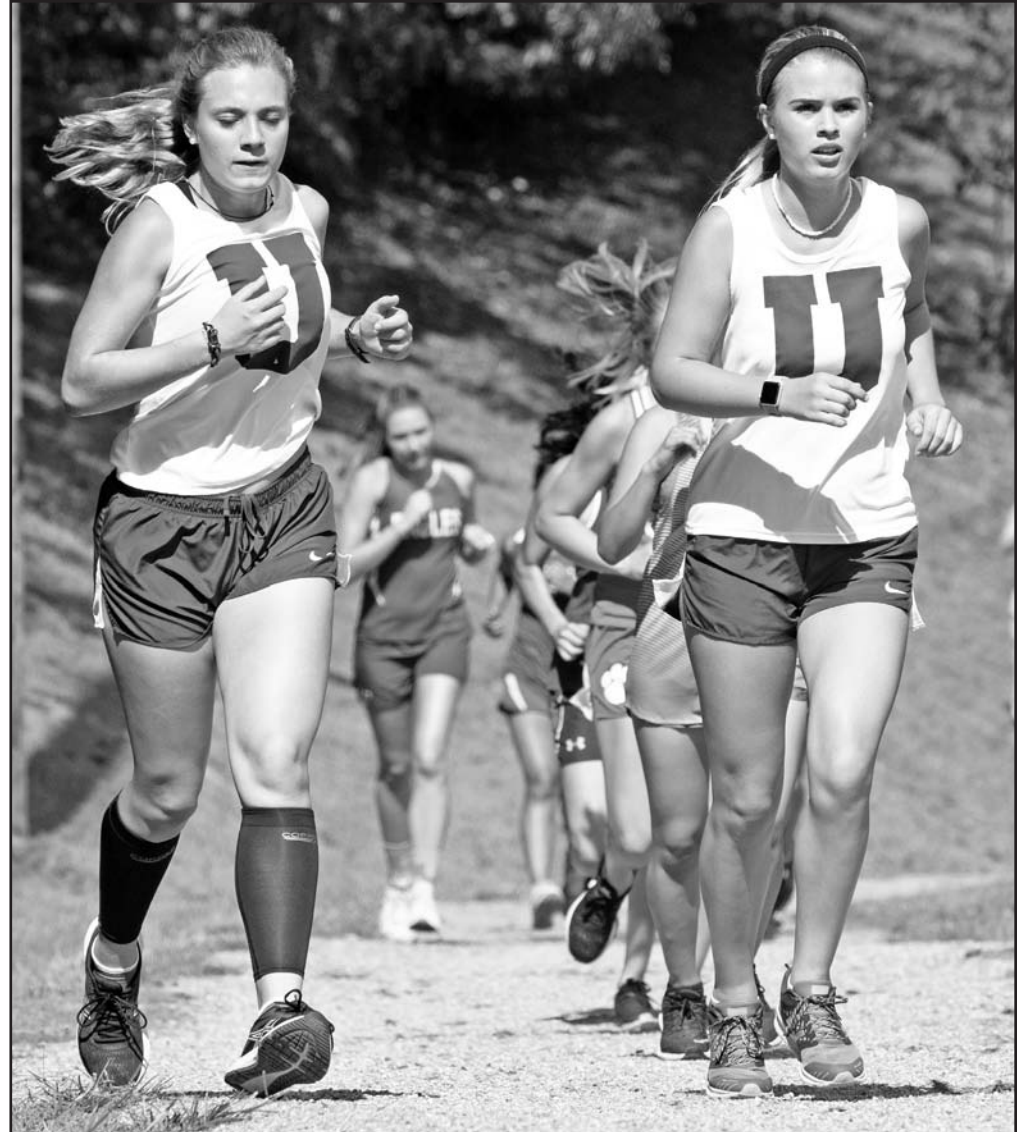
4. 126 Union County HS (18:56 1:34:40 1:42)		
1	6	Luke Gambrell 17:56
2	11	Hunter Hartzog 18:19
3	32	Malachi Patrick 19:16
4	37	Guage Shumaker 19:31
5	40	Thomas Mellendorf 19:38
6	(42)	Marcus Forrester 19:41
7	(46)	Trevor Guild 19:49

5. 172 Union County HS (25:26 2:07:10 6:12)		
1	2	Zoe Sanchez 21:22
2	17	Sadie Underwood 24:29
3	47	Lexi Ochoa 26:46
4	50	Rachel Reid 26:59
5	56	Jessie Holbrook 27:34
6	(68)	Allison Vincent 28:24
7	(69)	Campbell Chambers 28:25

On the girls' side, Sadie Underwood was 17th overall, Lexi Ochoa placed 47th, Rachel Reid came in 50th and Jessie Holbrook was 56th.

Allison Vincent (68th) and Campbell Chambers (69th) were Union County's sixth and seventh place runners.

Union will be in action Thursday at North Hall, beginning at 5:30 p.m.



Union County Cross Country Photos by Todd Forrest

Panthers Roll... continued from 2C

through the air for 279 yards and a score.

The turnover bug finally bit Union County when they coughed up the football just shy of the end zone on the first possession of the second half. Starting at its own 1-yard line, East Hall's drive would stall at midfield after a sack by Cayden Rich resulted in a 7-yard loss.

Following a Vikings' punt, the Panthers began at its own 24-yard line, where Morlock took a quick slant from Pierson Allison at the 34, split a pair of defenders and raced 61 yards before getting pulled down at the 15.

Three plays later, after a block-in-the-back negated a Union touchdown, a tunnel screen to Morlock went for 14 yards, allowing Daniel to lunge into the end zone from a yard out on the very next play. His third rushing score equaled his three-touchdown performance vs Putnam County, last season. However, his four total touchdowns marked a new career-high for the junior running back, who was making his very first varsity start.

Leading 35-0, the Panthers took over at midfield where Daniel immediately tore off a 35-yard run into the Vikings' red zone. Following a 5-yard run from both Sutton and Daniel, Sutton took it from there and needed just two carries to blast his way into the end zone from five yards out.

Sutton's night concluded with 74 yards on eight carries.

With 1:04 left in the third, Union County had its largest lead of the night at 42-0.

The 42-point margin would only last 106 seconds as East Hall connected on completions of 14 and 20 yards before a winning a 39-yard jump ball that resulted in its first points of the season.

The two-point conversion made it 42-8 with 11:18 remaining, but the Panthers quickly responded with a 6-play, 55-yard drive, capped off by freshman Caleb Rogers' first career rushing touchdown at the 7:31 mark.

Rogers' 10-yard touchdown run was aided by nice block from H-back Dalton Allen, who sealed off the running lane and freed up Rogers for the score. Rogers would get four carries on the night, resulting in 17 yards and a TD.

As for the remainder of the Panthers' receiving corp, Drake had a team-high six grabs for 73 yards, McCombs caught three passes for 38 yards and Rich had two receptions for 26 yards.

Leading tacklers were Hemphill with 10 and Sutton with nine. Underwood had five tackles and Clayton Lester finished with four. Drake, Rich, John Mancuso and Josh Orr all added three tackles each.

The Vikings' 352-yard aerial performance marked the first time a Union County defense allowed a 300-yard passer since its last visit to East Hall. In a 62-42 Panther loss in 2017,

senior All-State quarterback Austin Parker completed 18-of-26 for 437 yards and three touchdowns.

While Union's next opponent, Towns County, doesn't feature a spread-out, "air raid" passing attack like the Vikings, Coach Allison realizes that the Indians will offer a different set of challenges to a Panther defense still trying to gel.

"It'll be an interesting match-up," he said. "I've seen each of their games and they've gotten better every time, so it will be interesting to see where they are at on Friday night."

"Our emphasis this week is about getting better and not worrying about what the other team is doing. We have a lot of areas we need to improve on. Our technique was very poor at

times and that's one of the areas where we need to get better.

"Other than that, I'm just excited about the home opener and looking forward to it."

Towns County hasn't visited Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium since 2015 and will be coming off a pair of one-sided losses: 56-12 to Gilmer and 35-0 to Hayesville, North Carolina. But in a rivalry game, records and past performances go out the window. Even last year's meeting saw the two teams locked in an early dogfight until a pair of interceptions by the Union defense, including a pick-six, opened the flood gates in a 45-7 Panther victory.

Kickoff is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on Friday night.

GAME CAPSULE: vs TOWNS CO.

- Nickname:** Indians
- Location:** Hiawassee
- Head Coach:** Jason Roquemore - 1st season
- Current record:** 0-2 (vs Hayesville, at Gilmer)
- 2018 record:** 3-7
- UC all-time record vs Towns:** 30-1
- UC all-time home record vs TC:** 14-1
- UC record over last five meetings:** 5-0
- Coach Allison record vs TC:** 13-0 (6-0 at home)
- Allison record vs TC coach:** First meeting
- Last meeting:** 2018 (W 45-7)
- Last loss:** 1993 (27-17)

Whicker participates in AAU Junior Nationals at Disney World



Union County junior Emma Whicker

Union County High School junior Emma Whicker was selected to play in the 46th AAU Girls' Junior National Volleyball Championships at the Walt Disney World Resort over the summer.

A member of Cross Court Volleyball Academy (CCVA), based in Dalton, Whicker was chosen from among a talent pool from across Northwest Georgia, including Murray County - a Union County opponent from earlier this season.

Under the direction of coaches Courtney and Chelsea

Wilson, CCVA placed third in the 16-and-under age division. CCVA consisted of nine players, seven of which were rising juniors with one rising sophomore and one rising freshman.

Whicker's teammates included Amariah Simmons of Christian Heritage (Dalton), Vianca Gamboa (Murray Co.), Taniya Crowder (Chat-tanooga Central), Markella Johnson (LaFayette), Alexis Carlock (Dalton), Gracie Milford (Ringgold) and Jarell Mallozzi (Murray Co.)