

Sports

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Five-run fifth propels Panthers past Towns

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Young Harris - Union County (3-0) blew things open with five runs in the fifth inning, sparked by a bases loaded double off the bat of T Bentley in a 6-1 win over rival Towns County, at Zell Miller Field on the campus of Young Harris College.

Junior pitcher Calvin Duckworth struck out 11 in a complete game four-hitter, while senior Wes Aulet homered in the top of the fourth.

The Indians jumped out to a quick 1-0 lead following two singles and a throwing error. With two runners in scoring position, Duckworth induced a soft grounder to first to end the inning.

A Lane Everett single was all Union could muster in the second while Towns stranded two runners in the bottom half of the inning.

A two-out single by Zach Odom in the third went by the wayside, but Duckworth struck out the side in Towns' half of the inning.

Aulet led off the fourth by sending a 2-0 pitch high and deep over the left field wall, tying things at 1-1.

Bentley followed with a single, then Everett appeared to beat out a slow roller to short, but was ruled out despite the base umpire being out of position to make the call.

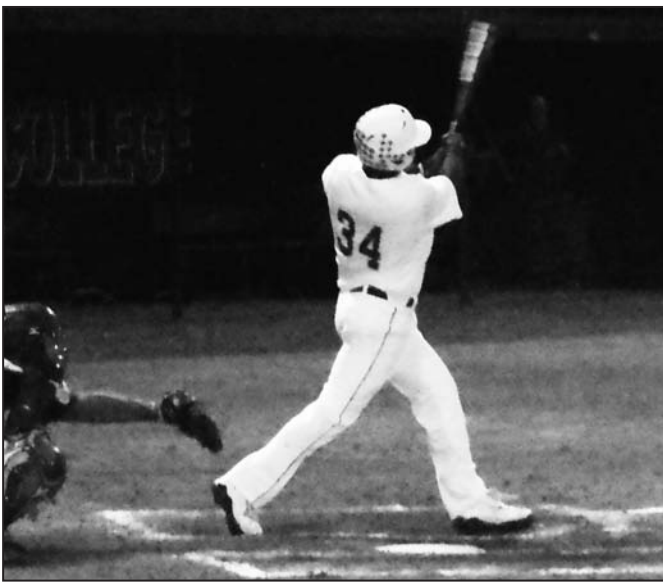
After Union County Head Coach Brandon Bradburn was given an explanation regarding the ruling, play resumed and Jared Croskey flew out to center. Bentley tagged, advanced to third, but was declared out for leaving the base early.

Coach Bradburn didn't put up much of a fight on that call.

"He did leave early but Lane (Everett) was safe by two steps at first," Bradburn said.

A two-out Indian single came for naught when Duckworth pulled the string and sat down an Indian looking with a 2-2 curve.

The Panthers went down in order in the fifth with three ground outs. Duckworth did the same in the bottom half of the inning with a come-backer to the mound, a strikeout, and a fly out to Cody Davenport in



Wes Aulet watches his home run sail over the left field fence to tie things up during Union's win over Towns. Photo/Todd Forrest



Kalvin Duckworth on the hill

left field. The Panthers came alive in the sixth when Odom earned his base by taking a 3-0 pitch in the back. Two pitches later, he swiped second.

Duckworth would eventually walk, putting two on for Aulet.

After homering in the previous at bat, the senior first baseman was hit by the first pitch he saw, loading the bags for Bentley.

With the wind blowing in, the Panther senior sent a high-fly off the left field wall, scoring Odom and Robert Prunier, who pinch ran for Duckworth.

Following an Everett strikeout, Croskey's chopper to short allowed Aulet to beat the throw home and put another run on the board.

Towns County would turn to its bullpen but a Cooper Patton grounder found a hole on the left side, bringing in Bentley. Catcher Lance Rich's sacrifice fly would score Croskey, staking the Panthers to a 6-1 advantage.

"Early in the game we didn't have the correct approach at the plate of how we needed to score runs," Bradburn said. "I just told them that anybody can catch an easy fly ball, but ground balls and line drives are hard to defend, and I believe they got the point."

The bottom of the sixth inning opened with a diving catch by Davenport on a slicing line drive to left. Duckworth would finish the Indians off himself by picking up two strikeouts, with the second one



Coach Brandon Bradburn and his Panthers before the first pitch vs Towns County at Young Harris College. Photo/Todd Forrest

freezing the Indian hitter on another hook.

Duckworth led off with a single in the seventh and Aulet reached on an error, but an inning ending double play halted the Panthers' hopes at claiming another insurance run.

Duckworth rang up the first two Indian hitters looking, before getting a ground ball to short to end the game.

Bentley finished 2-for-4 with 2 RBIs, a run, and a double. Aulet scored twice during a 1-for-3 game that included his first homer of the season. Odom singled, scored and stole two bases, Croskey scored once and drove in another.

Duckworth, Everett, and Patton each singled, Davenport drew a walk with Everett adding a stolen base.

Duckworth went 7 innings, allowing one earned run on 4 hits. He struck out 11 Indians and gave up a walk in an 87-pitch performance.

Joe Collins



Tips from the Range

The last couple of weeks have been a bit complicated and I hope it helped in your understanding of how things work during the swing; at least now you will have several questions for your instructor.

The article last week has turned out to be very popular and I know many of you are now hitting the ball farther because you have been practicing, right? Well, as I have stated many times, the swing works best when the large muscles are in control and there is minimum involvement from the hands. But, the question still remains as to just how much hand involvement there should actually be? The answer may surprise you.

The great Ben Hogan said that you should hit the ball as hard as you can with your trailing hand as long as your arms are following your hip turn. This is a true statement but you have to remember that he was one of the hardest working pros on tour and practically dominated during the middle to late 1940's. He could afford to work the hands into the swing because his timing was nearly perfect. But what about we average golfers who play for enjoyment and not to earn our keep? Well, we can still have fun hitting the ball hard with our trailing hand if we follow a few basic rules.

First you must realize that the club should be controlled with the core of the body which simply means that you move the arms with a controlled turn, something we looked at a couple of weeks ago. The turn is very complicated and must be in coordination with each golfer's natural ability. The basic concept being that we turn the club with our chest and return it the same way to impact. This helps keep things under control and the big muscles in charge. Swing your triangle back and through to keep the arms extended.

Next we must understand that the weight transfer builds the necessary energy through the shifting of the center of gravity back and through, combined with the coiling of the upper body around the spine, to deliver enough club head speed to play the game comfortably. This is also a way of using the big muscles in the legs, back and chest to speed the arms on their way to impact without having to add the hands.

Balance is a major fundamental, and could be argued the

most important aspect of the swing in producing an aggressive move into the ball. This promotes the proper amount of acceleration through impact. It also keeps and maintains the spine in the central location which is established at address. Balance is so important too in allowing you to use your hands the correct way other than simply holding the club. But, the hands can add power. Surprised I am saying this?

The over use of the hands is certainly a negative in producing a consistent shot pattern and many pros limit the hand action to almost nothing noticeable on most shots. However, they do worry about using the hands in normal shots and especially around the green for certain shots like the "flop shot".

The action of the hands is all together a dangerous thing for an instructor to talk about because the proper golf swing is dependent of the motions of the body and its adjoining larger parts and larger muscles. It is true though, and most instructors will agree, that you can't hit the ball without the hands. They hold the club right? Right, but they do add the finishing touches to squaring the clubface when the sequence of the swing is correct.

I bring to your attention all these things to illustrate and explain where exactly the hands should activate. The hands can pour on the power as long as the weight transfer has taken place, the lower body is leading the upper body which in turn is starting the arms descent into the downswing and the realignment of the chest and arms has occurred at the halfway point of the downswing. Then and only then can you successfully add power with the hands. Do not allow the hands to hit from the top of the backswing. This will cause you to cast the club and your accuracy and power will be gone. Simply put, allow the arms to drop out of the top of the swing before the hands add speed.

Working with the hands is tricky and you must be careful of letting them take over your swing and override the body and its functions. Do everything else in the swing first and let the hands work last, just as the arms enter the impact zone. This will allow you the enjoyment of hitting the ball hard with the trailing hand.

Keep up the practice as spring is just around the corner and if you need any equipment or adjustments to your clubs, go see my buddies down at Golfopia in Hayesville or at The Club Shoppe over in Murphy.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

Union soccer picks up Region wins

By Todd Forrest
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Both Union County soccer teams picked up a victory in the Region 8-AA opener at Social Circle on Friday.

The Lady Panthers came out on top 1-0 in a defensive struggle, while the Panthers outscored the Redskins 4-1 in the second half, en route to a 5-2 victory.

The Lady Panthers improved to 4-0 on the season thanks to a Camryn Carter goal, assisted by Kristena Zeger. The lone goal by Carter was the only one that found the net as Union attempted 29 shots on the evening.

"The girls didn't shoot the ball well at all," Union County Head Coach Tim Hunter said. "We had a lot of opportunities to score but couldn't capitalize. They did a good job on their back line trapping us offside and we did a very poor job up front getting caught easily. We also shot at the keeper's chest at least five times."

Goalie Ansley Gutierrez played one of her best games of the season, with her second shutout of 2013.

"Gutierrez played very well at keeper and came up big every time she was tested at the back and made one huge save on a one on one play with a Social Circle forward," Hunter said.

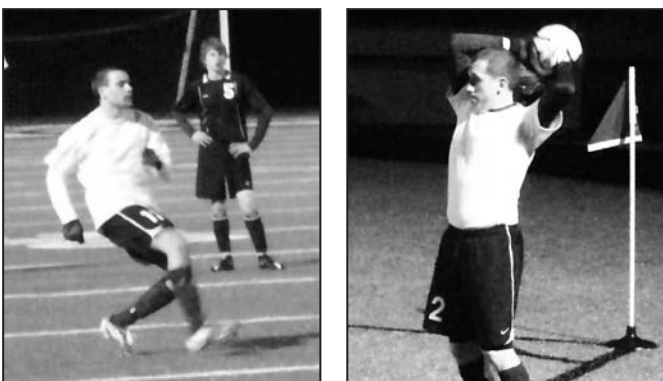
"Zeger also played very well for us in midfield especially in the second half. We didn't play well but we did manage to extend our unbeaten streak, but more importantly we secured our first region game with a win," he said.

During the Panthers' victory at Social Circle, Jair Gonzalez's first half goal gave Union a 1-0 lead but Social Circle tied things up before the break.

"Gonzalez scored the first goal on a corner kick," Hunter said. "Jesus Mancillas went for the ball and collided with the keeper, the ball bounced to Jair



Kenna Bauman (left) and Maddy Morlock (right) at Social Circle.



Tim McKenna (left) and Eric Hougrand (right). Photos/Todd Forrest

who scored the opening goal of the game. Eric Hougrand made a great corner kick to give us the opportunity to score. We almost had the half closed out when Social Circle nailed the equalizer when we got countered on the right side and we lost an open player who was streaking in from left center."

In the second half, Gonzales, and Hougrand added a goal, while T.J. Smith netted two more as Union blew things open early in the half.

"We made some formation and player adjustments at the half and we went off in the first 10 minutes of the second half. Hougrand really came to play in the second half and started off our goal scoring opportunities. He ended up with 4 assists for the game. We then killed the rest of the clock and were able to play everyone on the bench."

Earlier in the week the Panthers dropped a non-region

contest at Banks County 1-0.

The Leopards lone goal came in the first half.

"We dominated possession the first half of the game and missed several open shot opportunities," Hunter said. "We played well enough to win the game, but just didn't capitalize and Banks did. We also didn't play with the effort level that I expect and were beaten to the ball too many times."

The Lady Panthers took a lopsided 7-1 victory at Banks.

Zeger scored 3 goals with an assist, Maddy Morlock had 2, then Erin Innis, and Carter added 1 each. Mary Murphy also picked up an assist.

"The girls came out sluggish but still managed a 4-0 first half lead," Hunter said. "We were playing on a really wet natural grass field and it took a little time to adjust. Marissa Spaulding and Kenna Bauman played very well on defense."

Woody Gap tennis opens at Fannin

By Todd Forrest
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The 2013 edition of Woody Gap tennis is officially underway.

Last Tuesday, the Falcons and Lady Falcons traveled to Blue Ridge to take on Fannin County in cold, wintery conditions.

Lady Falcon senior Amber Gooch came away victorious in singles action 8-1, while Lauren Adams and Brooklyn Dockery picked up a win in the doubles 8-6.

On the boys side, Dakota Etheridge and Easton Wood had two wins in doubles action, both by scores of 8-3.

Eli Gooch played two matches against the Rebels' No. 1 and No. 2 singles players and won three games.

Shelby Tumlin won a game against the Lady Rebels' No. 2 player.

No. 3, Kaniesha Martin won two games.

Senior Staci Clark and Rebecca Etheridge lost a close one in the No. 1 doubles match, 6-8.

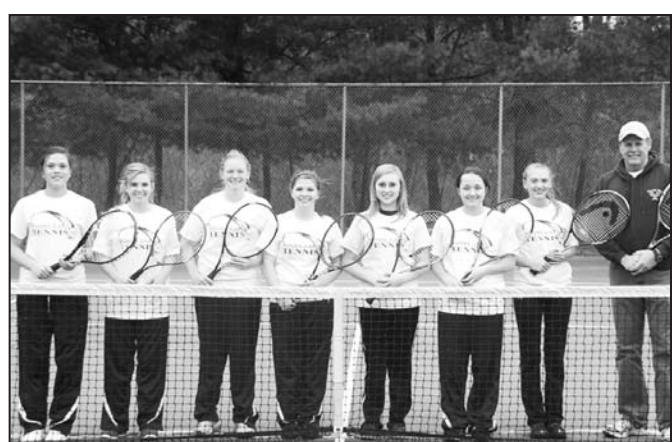
On Thursday, Woody Gap braved the elements once again as they traveled to White County.

Amber Gooch and Tumlin each picked up 8-5 singles victories.

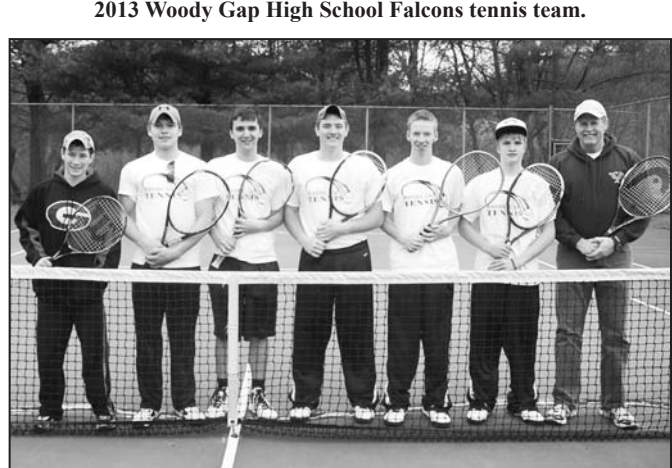
"The Lady Falcons had a very good day," Woody Gap Head Tennis Coach Glen Kough said. "Amber won again at No. 1 singles, continuing her winning ways, and Shelby won her match as a singles player. And all the other players performed well, winning numerous games in their matches."

Eli Gooch won his match 8-6 and Etheridge was victorious 8-2.

Etheridge and Wood would team up for an 8-2 doubles victory over the



2013 Woody Gap High School Falcons tennis team.



2013 Woody Gap High School Lady Falcons tennis team.

Warriors. "We endured the frigid temperatures, playing against White County," Coach Kough said. "Eli Gooch defeated his opponent, and our No. 1 doubles team had a strong performance."

Martin would win four games in No. 3 singles action, Clark and Rebecca Etheridge won five games in No. 1 doubles. Adams and Dockery won three games in No. 2 doubles.

Coach Kough is looking to use these matches to prep his team for the rest of the season, especially the Class A, Area 4 Region Tournament at The Darlington School in Rome on April 22nd.

"My expectations for the tennis teams are to see individual improvement

throughout the season and to be competitive with most of the teams we will play," Coach Kough said.

On Monday, Woody Gap traveled to Rabun County. Then on Wednesday, a match at Region foe Lakeview Academy at 4 p.m. On Thursday, Woody Gap will visit Towns County for another Region match up at 4 p.m.

Mar. 12th, Woody Gap travels to Lumpkin County for a 3:30 p.m. match, Mar. 19th will be in Commerce at 4 p.m. The month of March closes with a contest at Tallulah Falls on Mar. 21 at 4 p.m. and at Gilmer County on Mar. 28th, also at 4 p.m.

After spring break a possible match with Dawson County is in the works.