

Sports

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Union County athletics take a leap forward in 2013-14

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The past 10 months have been one heck of a ride for the die-hard sports fans in Union County. Years from now, when reminiscing and rehashing the glory days, the 2013-14 school year could go down in history as the year that traditions were born, winning began to snowball and success was becoming contagious. Nearly every team at Union County High School made it beyond Region play and Woody Gap tennis reached State for the second consecutive year. And from the looks of things, these young Panthers and Falcons show no signs of letting up in the near future. Underclassmen were the majority in almost every sport during 2013-14.

Union County High School would finally see a track program come to fruition under the tutelage of Coach Shawnetta Reece. Despite only attending one meet regular season meet, Union County had an impressive showing at Region and Sectionals, to springboard the upstart program into the State meet in Albany.

Sports would open in August and the Panther football team reached the State for the first time in 12 years. However, State competition was nothing new for the Lady Panthers softball team and Union County Cross Country. Both sports were dominated by underclassmen and appear to have raised the bar going into this fall.

With just two seniors and a skilled crop of freshman, the softball team reached State for the fifth consecutive season and both Cross Country squads returned to Carrollton where sophomore Emma Garrison made it 2-for-2 at the State Meet, claiming Union County's third Cross Country State Championship and eighth State title overall.

Just like the fall, the winter time saw Union extend another streak while putting an end to a drought.

The Panthers basketball squad and first-year Head Coach Casey Jones returned to the State Tournament following a five-year absence. Union relied heavily on a deep junior class that had some headaches early but came together in time for the 8-AA playoffs.

On the other hand, the Lady Panthers were making their fourth consecutive trip to State and their sixth in seven years. Like the guys, the girls also featured a deep junior



Rising junior Emma Garrison nears the finish line in Carrollton. She went on to claim consecutive State titles. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior gunslinger Lane Everett fires away in Union's win over Riverside. Everett threw a perfect game earlier in the season. Photo/Todd Forrest

On the mat, seniors Jonathan Floyd, Chase Stancil, and sophomore Justin Eigel had a strong showing at the Area 4-AA Tournament to reach the State Sectionals in Dublin.

As springtime approached and temperatures began to rise, the expectations also rose for the Lady Panthers soccer team along with Panther baseball. Both squads had high hopes for 2014 and neither would disappoint.

The Lady Panthers were one penalty kick away from knocking off a fifth ranked and unbeaten Jefferson. As the Lady Dragons escaped Blairsville following two rounds of penalty kicks, they took Region 8-AA title with them. The loss would be the only one Union

would suffer during the regular season. Second-year Head Coach Tim Hunter and his young squad would quickly regroup and went on to finish second in the Region and secure their second consecutive trip to State.

Second-year Head Baseball Coach Brandon Bradburn lost eight key players from the 2013 Sweet 16 team but still managed to overcome some inconsistencies early on to also finish second in 8-AA.

The Cinderella story of the school year was without a doubt the boys soccer team.

They entered this season needing to replace more than 90 percent of its scoring from last year. In March, the Panthers fell to Towns County for the first time in the 18-year history of Union



Luther Jones scores the first touchdown of his high school career. It came in the first half at Social Circle. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union will have rising senior Camryn Carter back for another year.



Rising sophomore Laken Chambers' game-winning grand slam last fall.

County soccer. With a roster full of freshmen and sophomores, they could have easily closed up shop and chalked 2014 up as a rebuilding year. But that wasn't the case. The Panthers turned things around and took out Rabun County on the road, and without any seniors, Union secured a spot in the State Tournament.

Another Cinderella story

unfolded at Woody Gap High School.

If reaching the State Tournament as the smallest public school in the State is a difficult task, then try doing it twice.

And they did. For the second straight year, the Woody Gap men traveled to Dalton and earned the right to represent Suches in the GHSA Class A State Tournament.

During April, Union County High School decided to test the track and field waters in 8-AA and found them to be warm and welcoming.

Despite five State Championships on its resume, the Union County track program was dormant from the 1980's until 2008 when Chris Jones collected his third State title in track and fourth overall. When Jones said goodbye to Union County High School, the track program also said adios.

Following Spring Break, Union County attended its first



Senior Dylan Coyne was named First Team All-Region and added a triple double on Senior Night.

track meet in six years, and despite limited training and preparation, Garrison, who had just walked off the soccer field onto the track, Julia Lindsey, and Kim Coyne picked up first place finishes.

Garrison went on to win her first Region title in track and her third overall in the 1600M. Lindsey finished as Region runner up in the 3200M. The girls 4x100 relay team of Emma Garrison, Kim Coyne, Amy Cummings and Ally Stroman went on to finish 15th at State. Garrison was third in 800M and fifth in 1600M at State. Lindsey was 11th in the 3200M.

The Lady Panthers golf team placed seventh at the State Tournament at Pointe South Golf Course in Augusta.

Freshman Maddie Horinek was low medalist and Kacie Godwin was second for the Lady Panthers. Lydia Gray and Autumn Johnson rounded out Union golf's representatives at State.

Ladies Butternut Creek Invitational

The Butternut Creek Ladies Golf Association invites you to the 2014 Ladies Invitational on Thursday, June 12, 2014 for a fun and great day of golf.

Our theme for this Invitational is "Around the World in 18 Holes of Golf". Each hole will show different things about different countries! The banquet hall tables will be decorated in ways to show off our country. Door prizes, goody bags, raffle tickets for beautiful baskets for different countries, Mulligans and sandies; all this plus a great day of playing golf with different ladies from different clubs.

Registration & breakfast will

begin at 7:30 a.m. Breakfast will be prepared by the Butternut Creek Ladies. We will have a Shotgun start at 8:30 a.m. Our game is a Scramble Format with an A, B, C, D player making up the team. Teams flighted by the Butternut Creek Tournament chairperson and her assistants.

The \$55 cost includes breakfast, golf, lunch & prizes! Please mail entry to: Lilly Adams, 21 Holloway Road, Blairsville, GA 30512 by the deadline of June 6th. Phone 706-745-2725 or 706-781-4529, email lliadams@windstream.net. Make your registration by listing the following: name of your golf course - contact & phone - player & GHIN.

What's happening!!
Union County Recreation

cool in the **pool**

Yes, the Union County Pool at Meeks Park is now open daily from 12 pm to 6 pm

Adult Water Aerobics Start June 3
M-W-F at 10am to 11am

ZUMBA
FITNESS

Daily Classes are going on right now!!

For further information and prices check out our web site at WWW.meekspark.com or call our office at 706-439-6074

534 UC Middle School students hike Appalachian Trail

With the school year almost over, 534 Union County Middle School students had wonderful adventures while hiking several miles on the famed Appalachian Trail (A.T.).

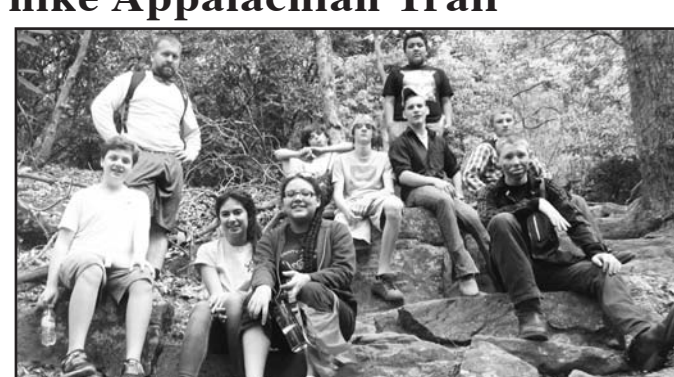
On May 9, one hundred and fifty-eight 8th grade students and 15 teachers undertook the strenuous hike to the top of Blood Mountain under windy and cloudy skies. During the hike, they heard lessons about the A.T., invasive species, leave-no-trace, and the history of Blood Mountain and the unique A.T. Shelter at the summit that was built of stone by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1937. During this hike, the students had the special experience of hiking up into a windblown cloud! On May 13, 191 6th grade students and 17 teachers hiked to the official start of the A.T. at the top of Springer Mountain from USFS Rd. 42. On the summit of Springer, they saw great views of the valley below, and listened to lessons about leave-no-trace and about Benton MacKaye, the "father" of the A.T. On the following Monday, one hundred and 85 7th grade students and 15 teachers hiked in small groups on the A.T. from Woody Gap north to Preaching Rock and south to Ram Rock Mountain. Before starting the Woody Gap hike, the students were told stories about Ranger Arthur Woody and his many contributions to the National Forests

by Eric Wood from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. The students also had lessons in leave-no-trace during this hike.

Thirty-five volunteer trail guides helped with these hikes over the three days, with several volunteers helping on multiple days. The volunteers represented the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (GATC), Mountain High Hikers (MHH), and the Union County community. In addition, great support was provided in the planning and on the ground effort by personnel from the Blue Ridge Ranger District Blairsville Office of the US Forest Service.

UCMS Teacher, Bob Williams, who had the lead role in planning the hikes, summarized the experience as follows: "The 2014 UCMS AT hikes proved to be incredible events for the students, teachers, and trail guides. Several teachers and students reported how much they enjoyed their trail guide. The fellowship and instruction was welcomed and much appreciated by all. A simple 'thank you' does not convey the gratitude, we at UCMS feel for the support and fellowship provided by the GATC, Mountain High Hikers, the ATC, and the US Forest Service in our quest to get kids in the woods."

Submitted by Dayton Miller



Coach Casey Jones encourages 8th graders on Blood Mountain climb.



7th graders prepare to hike A.T. at Woody Gap



6th grade students climb Springer Mountain

Union County Panthers basketball presents the **Allan Ross Fundamental Camp**

ALLAN ROSS FUNDAMENTAL CAMP

June 5th-7th
Registration - with payment in full - should be returned to:
Coach Casey Jones @ Union County Middle School or mailed to Michael Ross:
P.O. Box 1306
Blairsville, Ga 30514

Seventeen years after the passing of Panthers Head Basketball Coach Allan Ross, Union County High School basketball is teaming up with Michael Ross' Elite Level Training for the return of the Allan Ross Fundamental Camp. Along with Union County Head Coach Casey Jones, Michael Ross is excited to announce the return of his father's basketball fundamental camp.

Location: Union Co. Middle School gym
Session 1: Grades 3-6th 10 a.m. - noon
Session 2: Grades 7-10th 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

This camp will be put on and run by both the Union County High School Boys' Basketball Program and Elite Level Training. Price for the Allan Ross Fundamental Camp is \$55. The only accepted method of payment will be cash or checks. Please make all checks payable to Michael Ross. For more information contact Casey Jones at cjones@ucschools.org or Michael Ross at rossm24@yahoo.com

TUCKER'S BASKETBALL CAMP
Union County High School
June 23-26, 2014
David Tucker
106 Sherwood Ave.
Box 26
Calhoun, TN 37309
(423) 336-3045

Union County High School is hosting a basketball skills camp for boys and girls K-12th grade. The camp will begin daily at 8:30am and end at 11:30am. Every camper will receive a camp t-shirt. There will be an awards ceremony on Thursday at 11:00am. The cost for each camper will be \$60.00. You may bring this form and money on June 23rd, or mail this form and money to David Tucker at the address above.

David Tucker - Union County Panthers Head Girls Coach
Tina Dockery - Union County Panthers Assistant Girls Coach
Mandy Hunter - Union County Panthers MS Girls Coach
Junior Tucker - Walker Valley High School
Mindy Cox - Niota Elementary School
Jon Tucker - TWC Assistant Coach

Activities will include: Ball handling drills, dribbling drills, shooting drills, offense and defense instruction, contests, 5 on 5 play, 3 on 3 play, and one on one play.

Camper's Name _____ Grade _____ Shirt Size _____
Do you have health insurance on this child? Yes _____ No _____
Emergency Contact _____ Phone # _____
Parent Signature _____ Date _____

MUSA says 'thank you' to its sponsors

Mountain United Soccer Association (M.U.S.A.) would like thank the following Sponsors for helping make this Fall and Spring Soccer seasons a huge success:

High Mountain Health Care, Mike's Seafood Market & Grill, United Community Bank, Corrugated Replacements, Inc., Scott Carter Insurance & Investments, Brasstown Pharmacy, Dan's Grill, North Georgia Beverage, Mountain Lakes Mortgage, The Sawmill Place,



Alexander's Store, Pro Therapy, Jay's Medical Equipment, Armadillo Grill, and Aspen Health & Home.

Ross Camp update: Registration now available on first day of camp from 9-10 a.m. at UCMS Gym. Camp fee is \$40 for two days and \$55 for three.