

Sports

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UCHS Athletic Department changes hands

By Todd Forrest
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Their has been a changing of the guard within the ranks of the Union County High School and Middle School Athletic Departments. Last week, the Union County Board of Education approved it's new athletic directors for the 2012-13 school year.

Union County High School Principal Ed Rohrbaugh will become the new athletic director with three assistants who each will handle a particular sport.

Rohrbaugh has been a part of the Union County School System for 20 years as a teacher, coach, and administrator. Rohrbaugh played quarterback at Troy University in Troy, Alabama from 1976-1979.

The three selected to work under Rohrbaugh this year are Union County Head Football Coach Brian Allison, Union County Middle School Athletic Director Mandy Hunter, and former Union County Head Baseball Coach C.T. Hussion.

During the fall sports season, Hussion will handle softball, Hunter will be responsible for football, Rohrbaugh



Top (left to right): Ed Rohrbaugh, Brian Allison. Bottom: Mandy Hunter, C.T. Hussion.

will be over Cross Country, while Allison coaches the Panther football team.

Following the football season, Allison will take over as the Athletic Director for the basketball season while Hussion does the same for wrestling.

In the spring, Allison will double as coach and Athletic Director for the golf teams, Hunter has boys and girls soccer, and Hussion will handle baseball.

These changes come on the heels of Jim Hughes' retirement last May, after more than 25 years with Union County High School.

"I'm honored that it takes three or four people to replace me," Hughes joked at a recent softball game. "But seriously, I'm proud of them and they will all do great."

Hunter, who led Union County to a Region basketball title under Coach Hughes in 1994, is looking forward to the

opportunity to help fill the role of her former coach.

"As a player, a coach, and now one of the athletic directors, Union County sports have always been a huge part of my life," Hunter said. It's an honor to be a Panther at all levels."

Hussion, Union County's former baseball coach, laid out the groundwork of the new positions and how they will operate during the school year.

"Ed Rohrbaugh will be over the Athletic Department and the three of us will be helping," Hussion said. "The responsibilities that each of us were given are geared more toward our strengths, not just in sports but all of the duties as well. What really helps us is that we were able to divide up each sport so we can provide a contact point for each of the coaches. It really lessens the load on all of us. There are other duties that come with the job that we were able to divide up as well."

A school's athletic director is an administrator that oversees the school's sports programs. They will serve as supervisors for coaches, manage budgets and publicize the school's athletic events, both intramural and interscholastic.

Football conditioning over; full contact drills are on

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Union County football's conditioning process is in the books and it's time for pads and contact drills.

Since spring football concluded in May, the Panthers have been anxious to hit someone. Although knocking your teammates around becomes old hat after a few weeks and then it's time to lay the lumber to someone who's not wearing the Purple and Gold.

Assistant Coach Justin Byers believes this group is prepared to make the jump from conditioning to full pads.

"We picked up where we left off over the summer," Byers said. "The intensity has increased and we will try to progressively build on what we've worked on all summer long. We had a great turnout all summer long. We've averaged about 95 percent attendance."

The Panthers are still expecting to run their high tempo, spread offense this season, so conditioning plays a vital role in an offense that never takes a break to huddle and has its plays called from the sideline.

"We're going to add a few more agility stations and work on some of our high speed, no huddle stuff



Coach Allison and Coach Byers work with the offense. Photo/Todd Forrest



Passing drills at Union County High's football practices. Photo/Todd Forrest

that we do," Byers said. "We also throw in some good old fashioned conditioning and try to make everything as game realistic as possible."

The Panther coaching staff brought the team in on Friday to stretch and flex for about 30 minutes before sending them home for the week-

end.

On Monday afternoon, the Panthers returned for a regular practice and then met back up on Tuesday for a quick walk-through at noon before loading the bus to Camp Jabez in Fannin County.

Then on Wednesday and Thursday, the Panthers will be

back on the field for another practice and will return to school on Friday.

"We'll get up Wednesday and have another full day of football," Byers said. "On Thursday we'll have another morning workout, then they'll get up on Friday and go to school."

As for the progress of the Panther squad Coach Byers believes it's still a work in progress but the team is headed in the right direction.

"We're getting there," Byers said. "We work them pretty hard. We doubled up on their running yet they always bounce back the next day."

With school starting back, the coaching staff has begun the process of getting the team prepared for afternoon practice. There has also been a change in the school calendar this year and the high school will be letting out 30 minutes earlier than last year, which gives the coaching staff an extra half-hour of practice.

"That allows us to get over here and get ready," Byers said. "Normally we wouldn't begin until after 4 p.m. This year we'll be dressed out and on the field by 3:30 p.m."

"That will definitely help, especially when the season rolls around," added Assistant Coach Cullen Robertson.

Lady Panther Softball on the hunt for three-peat

By Todd Forrest
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Union County's quest for a three-peat of region titles begins on Wednesday with the first official practice of the season.

Head Coach Jessica Stewart's squad completed its summer league season last Tuesday at North Georgia College. Overall, Coach Stewart is pleased with the results of the summer league and has a better idea of what to expect moving into the 2012 season.

"The summer league was great," Coach Stewart said. "We know exactly what we need to improve on the next two weeks. We competed in about 20 Summer League games against several different squads. This is the first season we have played so many summer games and I really needed these games this season to get some girls where they need to be when the season starts. I think our defense is going to be one of our strengths this year with five of nine starters being seniors."

At critical points in 2011, defense was an Achilles heel for Union County, but with two-time Class AA Pitcher of the Year Angie



Lady Panthers' infield: Courtney Busbee, Bailey Byers, Hannah Hughes, Crystal Busbee, Shawna Brown, and Amber Seeba during a summer league game. Photo/Todd Forrest

Hughes striking out more than 450 hitters per season, it was easy for a defense to become lackadaisical.

Howbeit, Hughes has graduated so Coach Stewart has been stressing fielding and expects to turn last year's weakness into this year's strength.

"I have always been big on defense," Coach Stewart said. "With Angie, the defense only had to make an average of seven plays a game. That may hurt us a little but I have always pushed the importance of making good plays and we have worked really hard in

practice. I think our outfield will be fine this year. We will have senior Carly Adams in center field and she is capable of being outstanding there."

With Hughes being the ace of the staff for four years, the other pitchers didn't see much action, therefore no one was able to emerge from the pack as a solid number two pitcher.

But during the summer, Coach Stewart believes that she's discovered someone that she can trust in big game situations.

"Losing Angie, the two-time Class AA pitcher of the

year is really tough," Stewart said. "We have three pitchers that are competing for that number one spot. I think as of now, after the summer, senior Bailey Byers has stepped up and taken that lead role. However, I think Chelsea Cook and Crystal Busbee are both capable of winning games for us and will be called upon to do so."

The Lady Panthers should still have plenty of offensive firepower with three returning starters, Adams, Courtney Busbee, and Hannah Hughes who each hit over .300 last season.

Returning first baseman, Hannah Hughes was First Team All-State in 2011, and catcher Courtney Busbee was named All-State Honorable Mention as a freshman.

"We lost our leading run producer in Callie Dyer but I strongly believe Hughes will take care of that this year," Stewart said. "Senior Shawna Brown and Byers are definitely capable of big numbers for us. I think to win games this year we will need to score three or four runs a game. The hitters we have will be able to produce those for us."

Many have suggested that 2012 will be a rebuilding year. **See Softball, Page 11A**

Striking a balance

Golfers are constantly asking me for the "magic move" to assist them with their swing. Too answer a question like this, one must first realize that there are some common fundamentals in each and every proper golf swing. Of these certain fundamentals, only one is a sure fire way to help with any decent effort at attempting the golf swing and that fundamental is Balance.

Balance is the first thing that goes away when we feel nervous or tired and it is the least emphasized aspect in most modern day literature. I have seen really good golfers try many different things to fix their faults and all they really succeed in doing is learning a bad habit. Have you ever been on the golf course and everything seems to go just right? You can't wait to get back out there and play again, but unfortunately the next time you tee it up you feel as though someone else showed up instead of you. All of the sudden an "A" game turns into something that reminds you of Charles Barkley and that thing he has that almost passes as a golf swing.

Poor Charles lost his balance and instead of breaking it down, he tried to fix something that was not the actual problem. Now his confidence is shot and without the help of a "shrink," he is doomed. He developed a bad habit trying to fix the wrong thing. All that really happened was that his balance got off.

To make proper impact, you must stay away from the ball and let the arms extend through the hitting area. The path of the club head must be from the inside. Has anyone ever said to you, "you came over the top?" Well that is an example of bad balance. The upper part of the body is ahead of the lower body and the path of the club gets outside of the takeaway path. You must always start from the ground up to swing the club properly and this means starting the downswing with the lower body.

Next time you play or hit some balls for practice, make sure you stay away from the ball throughout the swing and let the arms find their path on the downswing. Once you get to the top, start your downswing with a reverse hip turn and see how smooth the swing feels then. Don't force the arms simply let them drop behind the hip turn while keeping your back to the target as long as possible. Remember to always keep the spine at the original angle that you had at address and stay behind the ball.

Good luck and I'll see you on the course.

Joe Collins is a sports and news staff writer for the Towns County Herald and the North Georgia News. He's also a pretty good golfer too.



Tips from the Range

UCHS 2012 Football Schedule

Aug 23 @ White Co. (Scrimmage)	Oct 19 @ Greene Co
Aug 31 @ Towns Co	Oct 26 @ Rabun Co
Sept 7 vs Fannin Co	Nov 2 vs Social Circle
Sept 14 vs Andrews	Nov 9 @ Jefferson
Sept 21 - Bye Week	Homecoming is currently scheduled for October 12th vs Riverside.
Sept 28 vs Wash.-Wilkes	
Oct 5 @ Oglethorpe Co	
Oct 12 vs Riverside	

Quarterback Club Report

Players volunteer at Green Bean Festival

Five football players from Union County Middle and High School showed up and worked the morning shift from 7-11 a.m. at the Green Bean Festival.

With players announcing it after football practice and the e-mails to parents from the Quarterback Club, the Quarterback Club keeps trying to emphasize the message and the directive that "giving back to the community" is a very important part in life. Learning it at a young age is also

important.

Three Middle School players gave of their time: Jacob Ross, Sean Dobbins, and Matthew Stewart. The two High School players were: T Bentley and Brett Dobbins.

This is the second year that High School and Middle School football players have helped out at the Green Bean Festival.

The Quarterback Club wishes to thank Janet Hartman for including the players in her volunteers.



Left to Right: Jacob Ross, T Bentley, Sean Dobbins, Matthew Stewart, Brett Dobbins



T Bentley and Brett Dobbins work at the Green Bean Festival

QB Club Meeting and Picture Day

This Tuesday is our Quarterback Club meeting, July 31, at 6 p.m. in the Quarterback Club room.

This Friday, Aug. 3 at 6 p.m. is the player and parent cookout at the field for High School players and parents.

Also on Friday, Aug. 3, is the High School football team picture and individual football pictures.

Picture forms were given out to the High School players last Thursday right after prac-

tice along with the football program ad and a cover sheet that had the player's name on it.

Make sure you view the packet, decide which photo package you would like to buy and have the form and check ready for Friday to be turned in by the player at the time of pictures.

It is going to be a great year for football, so you'll particularly want to remember this year.