

Football: Panthers' schedule a little tougher in 2013

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Entering the 2012 season, Union County had just one State Playoff team on its slate. This year, Union will face four State teams, including a November showdown with the Class AA State Champion Jefferson Dragons.

As for Union's non-Region opponents, the Panthers will face an improved Towns County and Fannin County to open the season.

Practice began last week with Union hoping to build off its 6-4 record in 2012.

The Panthers haven't posted back-to-back winning seasons since 2000-2001 and will look to do it with new faces at quarterback, running back, wide receiver, and in the secondary. Unlike last season, one area Union should be improved is in the trenches and at linebacker, that's where the two returnees from the All-State and All-Region Teams reside.

All-State defensive lineman Luther Jones and All-Region middle linebacker Chase Barnett will be back to wreak havoc on opposing offenses this year. In 2012 Jones led the state in tackles-for-a-loss during the regular season, while Barnett led the Region in total tackles during the regular season.

Following Union's scrimmage with White County on Thursday, Aug. 22nd, the Panthers will host rival Towns County on Aug. 30th in the season opener.

The Indians will be under the tutelage of new Head Coach Blair Harrison and will feature the Wing-T offense in 2013.

The Panthers are 26-1 all-time against the Indians, but the one loss did come at Mike Colwell Stadium in 1993 (27-17). Union has won the previous three home meetings by a combined score of 89-6 but last year was the closest contest (17-14) in the history of the series, and the first time that the final margin of victory was less than five points. Although, Head Coach Brian Allison has never lost to Towns County as a coach or player.

Union's first road trip is to Fannin County on Sept. 6th. Last year, Union tipped the



Coach Allison and the Panthers look to post winning records in consecutive seasons for the first time in 12 years. Photo/Todd Forrest

scales in their favor with a 23-7 victory, giving Union the series lead at 23-22 and two straight over the Rebels for the first time since 2000-2001. However, Union County has never beaten Fannin three-straight times. Last time Union went to Fannin riding a two-game win streak over the Rebels, they fell 43-7 in 2006.

Last season's meeting was a bit of an anomaly with the Panthers only posting 23 points – the last time the victor didn't reach 24 points was 1994. Only two other times in the past 13 meetings has the winner failed to score 27 points. With two improved defenses entering 2013, this September could see another low-scoring affair.

Coach Allison's Panther teams are a remarkable 11-2 overall in road openers in his 13 years at Union County. The two losses came at Gilmer County in 1997 (33-7) and at Lumpkin County in 2011 (28-13).

Sept. 13th Union will travel to North Carolina for the first time since 2010 when they take on Andrews. Like Towns, Union has never lost at Andrews, going 11-1-1 in the series. Last season Union scored 26 straight points to break open a 14-14 tie in the second quarter.

The only time the Panthers fell to the Wildcats was in 1981 (21-6). The two teams finished in a 6-6 tie in 1969.

Entering Union's 34-0 loss

at Robbinsville, NC in 2010, the Panthers were riding a three-game win streak in North Carolina after beating Hayesville 41-26 in 2009, Murphy 21-13 in 1985, and Cherokee 37-0 in 1984.

Sept. 20th will be Union's bye week before traveling to Washington-Wilkes on Sept. 27th.

This year will mark Union's first football game ever at Washington-Wilkes and only the third time the teams have met. The Tigers took last year's contest 36-0. Previously, the teams hadn't met since 1966 when Washington-Wilkes won 54-14.

The Panthers return home on Oct. 4th when they host the Oglethorpe County Patriots. Last year's 21-14 win was Union's third-straight over the Patriots. Before the streak began, Oglethorpe owned six-straight over Union, dating back to 1992. The Panthers are 4-6 all time against Oglethorpe and won the last home meeting 42-28 in 2009. Union also won the first game of the series back in 1964 when the Panthers prevailed 26-0 in Lexington.

Union will visit Gainesville on Oct. 11th when they take on Riverside Military Academy. Union will be coming off a 41-13 beat down of the Eagles on Homecoming Night in 2012, ending a two-game skid to the cadets. Currently Union holds a slight edge in the series 3-2, however, Union has put up at least

41 points in its three wins. The Eagles' won the last meeting in Gainesville 37-20 during the 2008 season.

Last year marked Union's first contest with Greene County when they fell 37-19 in Greensboro. After defeating Union, the Tigers would ride that wave of momentum into a victory over Rabun County and a State Playoff appearance. In return, Greene will make it's first trip to Blairsville on Oct. 18th.

Revenge will be on the minds of the Panthers on Oct. 25th when Rabun comes to town. Last season the Wildcats scrapped Union's playoff hopes during a 38-7 thumping of the Panthers.

Union hasn't lost to Rabun at home since 2006 and had won five-straight entering last year. The Panthers will look to regain control of a series that has been back-and-forth since the late 1970s. The two teams are very familiar with each other, meeting a total of 48 times since 1958, with Rabun coming out on top 32 times. The Wildcats won 12 of the first 13 meetings to take command of the series from the get-go.

The Panthers visit Social Circle on Nov. 1st looking for their first victory over the Redskins away from Blairsville. Last year, Union's defense did a number on Social Circle during a 31-0 victory on Senior Night. The two teams met in 1994 and 1995 with the Redskins taking both contests by a combined score of 51-10. The victory was Union's first Senior Night victory in an astonishing 11 years.

The State Champs come to town on Nov. 8th when Union hosts Jefferson on Senior Night. The Dragons are 12-1 all-time against the Panthers with Union's lone win coming in 1992 by a score of 14-0. Last season Jefferson picked up a 42-7 victory on their Senior Night. The Dragons put up 50 points the last time they came to Blairsville (2008), however their one loss to the Panthers did come at Union.

In a strange twist, Jefferson's new Head Coach Ben Hall, actually played for Union in the early 90s but left for Franklin County in 1991, the year before the Panthers knocked off Jefferson.

Fish for Food Fishing Tournament

Matthew 25 Food Ministries presents "Fish for Food Fishing Tournament". 60% of tournament money goes to feed needy families in our area. The remaining 40% will go to tournament prize money.

Prize money will be awarded for 1st Place, 2nd Place and 3rd Place and biggest fish. Actual prize amount will depend on number of entries. Entry fee is \$50 per boat, the tournaments end in October, occurring the second Saturday of each month rotating between Lake Chatuge, Woods Grove Boat Ramp and Lake Nottely, Deaver Road Boat Ramp, from 7 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Tournament schedule: August 10 - Nottely; September 14 - Chatuge; and October 12 - Nottely. For contact information call David Crisp at 706-897-5347.

Marine Corps League Golf Tournament

The 17th Annual Marine Corps League Golf Tournament will be held at Chatuge Shores Golf Course, Hayesville, NC on October 10, 2013. The tournament benefits children, elderly, families and individuals in need within our communities throughout the year and charities of Union and Towns counties and worthy military charities.

For more information please call Bobby Jarrard at 706-896-6084 or Walt Scott at 706-897-9610.

Meeting of Union County Senior Singles

Coffee and conversation get-togethers are held every Saturday morning at 10 a.m. at G 'n G. Card and domino games are also part of the Saturday morning activities.

Activities may include group outings to plays, concerts, movies, hiking and other activities of interest. A monthly activities calendar is planned at each meeting.

Come join Union County Senior Singles, a non-demoninational group for those 55 and older. For more information call 706-745-9747 or 678-768-6313. N(Aug7/13)CA

Joe Collins



Tips from the Range

I have discussed the importance of the straight forward arm throughout the swing and how it guides the arms into and past impact, but the thing that I would like to explain a little deeper in detail is the function of the top of the spine, or rather, your head.

Since it is a short distance from the top of the shoulders to the back of the head, we control the top of the spine with the head position. It is very important that the head stay still during the whole of the swing to maintain the original address position of the spine. The shoulders need to rotate around the spine to produce a good club path on the downswing and a steady head position helps with this. Any forward movement of the head while the club is coming into impact will change the position of the spine and in relation, the club path. Head movement will also cause you a loss in power because it affects the most crucial fundamental, balance.

It is vital to have a proper weight transfer during the swing, and if the head moves forward of the ball on the downswing, you will block this transfer and cause serious problems with your balance. If the head moves forward on the downswing, the lower body is then forced to stop its rotation in order to maintain balance. Balance is the main key to a good golf swing so once the hips and lower body stop turning anything can happen. This is something I struggle with, as do many of you.

The golf swing depends on the big muscles of the legs, back, shoulders and forearms in order to work consistently. If you change your spine position on the downswing, you will activate the smaller muscles like those in your hands and this is a big no-no.

North Georgia Rapids shine at Championship Meet



The North Georgia Rapids Swim Team.

The North Georgia Rapids Swim Team competed over a two day meet to end the summer season this past weekend.

Fourteen teams from throughout north Georgia participated in the competition.

The Rapids more senior swimmers performed extremely well overall. Tanner Gay, who is ending his career as a "Rapid", competed in style on Friday night by winning the overall high point trophy for the men's 15-18 age group.

Brennan Wilkes swam an impressive personal best in the 50-yard freestyle and is anxiously looking forward to the approaching high school season this Fall.

Leanna Gambrell and Megan Foster both had personal best times competing in the girl's 13-14 age group, along with Blake Holman who also made a strong showing in the boy's 13-14 age group. Good luck Tanner – we will miss you!

The team's younger swimmers made an equally, if not stronger, showing during their competitive events. Gracie Weldon, swimming in the girl's 11-12 age group, which consisted of sixty swimmers, had three personal best times, winning two ribbons. Brendon Bowman had a tremendous afternoon swimming four personal best times, earning three second and one first place medals. This contributed to Brendon's second place high point trophy in his age group.

The smaller muscles are very detrimental to the performance of a good swing when used at the wrong time.

There is a sure fire way to maintain a steady head and that is to find the "pivot point" of your swing. This is something I work on constantly with competitive players and it will help you as well. It is located on the inside of your back foot from the rear inside of the heel to the base of the big toe of the back foot: never on the front inside of the back big toe! You will feel a slight pressure on the inside of the back knee and it will force your hips to work in a balanced way on the backswing by keeping the center of gravity in the rear of your swing. This is optimum for weight transfer and extension through impact.

If you want to drastically affect your swing in a positive way look to the position of the head on the downswing. One way to do this is to work with a drill I learned from Steve Eubanks several years ago. First, turn your back to the sun so that your shadow is on the ground. Next, place a tee in the ground on the forward side of your shadow in the middle of the head. Make practice swings and focus on keeping your heads shadow behind the tee throughout the swing. This will tell you if you are moving or not. You will be surprised just how little you will feel in relation to how well you are keeping your head steady.

I have now run my first series of "Tips", the Basic Swing Fundamentals, for the second time. There is a lot of information when looking at how to swing the club and I hope I covered it sufficiently.

I reason that the swing is no good if you can't play the game so next week I would like to begin looking into making your way around the course. There is a lot of information to help you figure out the best way to play your own game.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

POOL RULES



Luke Gambrell earned three awards with his best being a third place medal in the 50-yard freestyle for the boy's 9-10 age group. Hunter White, having recently "aged up" to the next level, had a strong performance, achieving three personal best times and winning four ribbons in a field of fifty swimmers.

The team's three eight year old swimmers saw excellent results with Taylor McCormick and Courtney Foster earning ribbons and achieving personal best times. Taylor won four ribbons while Courtney earned three. Lucas Whittaker, age eight, swam two personal best times, earning two ribbons.

The team's top age group performance was clearly the youngest swimmers. Wyatt Nichols, Cole Orlando and Eli Gwynn, making up the six and under boys, had an awesome morning. Wyatt won the high point trophy, going undefeated in his swims and Cole won the second place trophy, close behind his teammate.

Eli, the team's youngest swimmer, having just turned six, had two personal best swims and is excited to continue his competitive efforts, following in the footsteps of his teammates.

The North Georgia Rapids Swim Team practices at the Union General Wellness Center. If you are interested in swimming with us, please contact Barry Gay (706)835-1662.