

Sports

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Chambers' sixth inning slam lifts Lady Panthers past North Murray

By Todd Forrest
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Revenge was grand for the Union County Lady Panthers (3-1) as they rallied from a 5-0 deficit thanks to the two-out heroics of freshman Laken Chambers.

The game started with a bomb and ended with a blast as Union took a 7-6 victory over the Lady Mountaineers, who ended Union's 2011 season prematurely with an upset in the opening round of the State Tournament.

North Murray's Baylee Sutton led off the game with a high fly off Chambers that cleared the centerfield fence, sparking the Lady Mountaineers to a two-run first. They would add three more in the second taking a 5-0 lead.

"After getting down five in the second I just reminded the girls that there was plenty of softball left and we had to keep trying to get it back one run at a time," Union Head Coach Jessica Stewart said.

Union posted three in third to get within two runs but North Murray got one back in the fifth for a 6-3 advantage.

That score would remain intact into the sixth inning, until Chambers came to the plate.

Junior Hallye King led off the sixth by lining a base hit into left field. Senior Allie Stroman battled for a full-count walk, then junior leadoff hitter Crystal Busbee drew another walk, loading the bases with one out.

Following a pop-out to second by Madison Rich, Chambers lined a two-out blast over the centerfield fence on the second pitch she saw for a grand slam - the first homer of her high school career.

"I didn't expect to get the grand slam from Chambers but I am well aware of what she is capable of," Stewart said. "It was good for the team to battle back and added a little fun at the end."

Chambers returned to the rubber in the top of the seventh where she got the leadoff hitter to bounce back to the circle before giving up a one-out walk to Megan Pittman.

Pittman tried to put herself into scoring position with a steal but was cut down at second by junior catcher Courtney Busbee. The final out of the game came on a grounder to shortstop Crystal Busbee.

North Murray got its runs on a homer then a pair of singles



Freshman Laken Chambers sends the 1-0 pitch over the centerfield fence for a game winning grand slam. Photo/Todd Forrest



Sophomore centerfielder Maddie Garrett singles during the second inning of Union's win over North Murray. Photo/Todd Forrest

sandwiched around a sacrifice in the first.

The second opened with two strikeouts by Chambers but a walk, an error, a triple, and a wild pitch brought home three in the second.

The fifth inning started off with a leadoff double and an RBI single.

Union's three-run third opened with a single by Crystal Busbee, a walk by Rich, who later scored on a throwing error, and RBI single from Chambers, and RBI groundout from junior Kelsey Nix, and a single to left by sophomore Maddie Garrett. King doubled but a perfect relay from the shortstop nailed Garrett at the

plate, limiting the Lady Panthers to three runs.

Chambers picked up the win from the circle (2-0), striking out seven and walking three. After a tough start the freshman settled down and retired nine of the final 10 batters she faced. She also went 3-for-4 at the plate with a double, a grand slam, and five RBIs.

Garrett finished 2-for-4. Crystal Busbee was 1-for-2 with two walks and two runs. Courtney Busbee drew three walks, King was 2-for-3, Kelsey Nix drove in a run, and Stroman walked and scored. Freshmen Kendra Tanner, Madison Horinek, and Lydia Arrowood added a run each.

Union puts up seven unanswered runs during rout of Lady Rebels

By Todd Forrest
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The Lady Panther bats came to life as they posted two runs in the fourth and three in the sixth to blow things open in a 7-1 victory over Fannin County.

In a rivalry that usually comes down to the last at bat, Union's seven runs and six run margin of victory is their largest over Fannin in almost three years (10-2 in September of 2010).

Junior Crystal Busbee pitched another gem, overcoming five Union errors as the Lady Panthers knocked off the Lady Rebels for the second time in four days.

Fannin took an early 1-0 lead in the second following two walks, and error, and an RBI single.

Union snatched the lead away in the bottom half of the second after Hallye King singled, Arrowood was hit-by-a-pitch, Crystal Busbee walked, and Madison Rich reached on a fielder's choice. Laken Chambers was hit by a pitch, bringing in the first run. Kelsey Nix brought in the second run when she reached on an error.

Crystal Busbee worked around leadoff singles in the third and fourth innings - keeping Fannin off the board.

The Lady Panthers opened up a 4-1 lead in the fourth, after Crystal Busbee led off with a single to left. She would advance to second on a passed ball and later score on Chambers' opposite field single. A Kelsey Nix walk and a Courtney Busbee single loaded the bags for Maddie Garrett who singled home Chambers.

Fannin loaded the bases in the fifth but Crystal Busbee got out of the jam with a strike out to end the Lady Rebel threat.

Fannin went down in order in the sixth and Union put the game away with a three-run inning.

The Lady Rebels recorded two quick outs until Courtney Busbee reached on an error and Madison Horinek entered as a courtesy runner for the Lady Panther catcher. Garrett reached on a single and King walked to load the bases.

Freshman Kendra Tanner singled to center, scoring Horinek. Stroman drew a walk that brought in Garrett and Crystal Busbee scored King on another free pass.



Junior Crystal Busbee slides around the tag of the Fannin catcher to score on a passed ball in the fourth inning. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior Hallye King doubles to left-center. Photo/Todd Forrest

"It was a big confidence booster putting up seven runs on Fannin," Union Head Coach Jessica Stewart said. "They have a solid pitcher that has given us trouble all summer. We made a few adjustments and hit the ball well against them."

Chambers went 1-for-3 with a run and two RBI. Crystal Busbee was 1-for-2 with two runs, and RBI, and three walks, King was 2-for-3 with a run and a double, Garrett finished 2-for-4 with a RBI and a run, Tanner went 1-for-3 with an RBI.

Stroman picked up an RBI, while Lydia Arrowood and Horinek each scored a run.

Crystal Busbee (1-1) gave up one run over seven innings of work. She allowed six hits, two walks and struck out four.

Union will visit Rabun County on Thursday and Oglethorpe County on Saturday for a double header. Oglethorpe pulled an extra inning upset in Blairsville last year, adding some extra motivation to this

weekend's matchup.

However, Union's pitching duo of Chambers and Crystal Busbee gives Coach Stewart two potent arms, and that is vital with 8-AA play opening this week.

"They're probably the best 1-2 combo pitching wise I have had," Stewart said. "I feel very confident with whoever I choose to give the ball to this year. They will more than likely split all the games. Both Rabun and Oglethorpe should be good games and we are looking forward to starting Region play and getting one step closer to another Region Championship goal. We are young but I expect us to continue to grow as the season goes on and get better each game. These girls have a tremendous work ethic and when they fail at something it motivates them to come in stronger and work harder."

Union's Monday rematch at North Murray was postponed due to rain. The makeup date will be Sept. 26th at 5 p.m.

Middle School Football: Panthers hold on to four touchdown lead vs Wilbanks in season opener

By Todd Forrest
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The Union County Middle School Panthers opened their season with three dominating quarters of football.

The Panthers took a 28-0 lead during the third quarter before Wilbanks mounted a furious rally to make it a 28-22 final.

Union struck early when quarterback Cole Wright found pay dirt from three yards out to give the Panthers a quick lead.

Cole Dockery put the Panthers on the board for the second time with a five-yard touchdown run.

The final score of the first half came when Wright found Kanon Hemphill on a 12-yard touchdown strike to give the Panthers a 22-0 lead at the break.

Union's defense played lights out in the first half, not allowing a first down during the first two quarters of action.

The turnover bug bit the Panthers three times in the second half allowing Wilbanks to get back into the game.

Union coughed up the ball after Wright hooked up with Hemphill again, this time on a 65-yard touchdown pass, staking the Panthers to a 28-0 lead.

The first fumble led to a Wilbanks score. The Panthers would then fumble on consecutive kickoffs to see their lead trimmed to just six points.

Finally the offense was able to hold on to the ball and run out the clock and preserve the victory.

Despite being handicapped the defense only allowed two first downs in the entire second half.

Logan Dyer recovered a Wilbanks fumble while Clay Carroll recorded a sack.



ally well and forced a couple of turnovers so overall I thought we played pretty good," Union Head Coach Casey Jones said.

Wright finished the game with more than 100 yards on the ground and 150 through the air.

Next week, Union travels to Fannin County and Coach Jones says that cutting down turnovers and better tackling will be the focus in practice this week.

"This biggest thing this week is, we need to tackle better and taking care of the football," Coach Jones said. "We didn't tackle very well and we need to get better there. We've got five new starters on the offensive line and a lot of new starters on both sides of the ball so we're going to have some growing pains. But for it being the first game of the year, I think we looked pretty good overall."

Kickoff on Thursday at Fannin County will be 5:30 p.m.



Union County Middle School Panthers in action during the season opener against Wilbanks. The Panthers held on to win 28-22 despite leading 28-0. Photos courtesy of Sarah Jayne Photography.

Megan Rowe fires a hole-in-one



Megan Rowe with family and friends after her ace on the 12th Hole.

Megan Rowe of Blairsville made a hole-in-one on hole #12 at Butternut Creek Golf Course on Saturday, July 20th.

Playing companions and witnesses included her mother, Michelle Rowe, and grandparents, Harold and Odena Gibson.

Megan hit a pitching wedge on the hole which was playing 92 yards from the red tees. At age 13, Megan is believed to be the youngest female golfer to accomplish the rare feat of a hole-in-one at Butternut Creek.

2013 UCHS Softball schedule

- Aug. 22nd: @ Rabun County 6 p.m.
- Aug. 23rd: vs Walnut Grove (@ North Georgia) 5 p.m.
- Aug. 24th: @ Oglethorpe County (DH) 1 p.m.
- Aug. 27th: vs Jefferson 5 p.m.
- Aug. 28th: @ Fannin County
- Aug. 31st: vs Greene County (DH) 12 p.m.
- Sept. 5th: vs Rabun County 6 p.m.
- Sept. 6-7th: @ Oconee County Tournament TBA
- Sept. 10th: @ Social Circle (DH) 4 p.m.
- Sept. 11th: @ White County 5:30 p.m.
- Sept. 12th: @ Jefferson 6:45 p.m.
- Sept. 16th: @ East Hall 5:30 p.m.
- Sept. 19th: vs Washington-Wilkes (DH) 4 p.m.
- Sept. 24th: 1st Round of Region Tournament TBA
- Sept. 28-30th: 2nd Round of Region Tournament TBA
- Oct. 5th: Region Championship TBA

Mountain Gymnastics registration

Fall Registration for Gymnastics, Preschool, and Tumbling Classes has begun. Classes began the week of Aug. 5th.

Stop by the gym to sign up for a class. See our schedule at www.mtngym.com or call (706)745-3325.

