

Sports

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Panthers play one more time

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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The Union County Panther Baseball Team added one more game after their season came to an end at Elbert County last week.

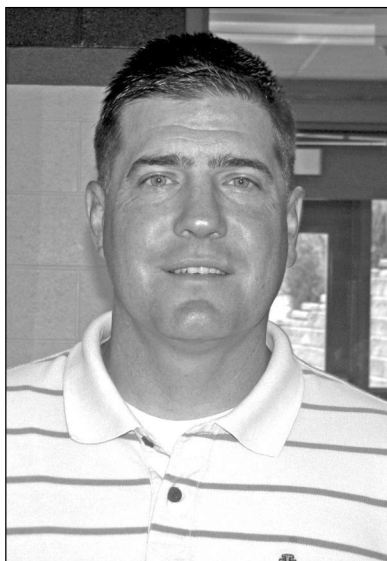
Despite their season officially coming to a close, Coach C.T. Hussion's squad responded with a 6-1 thumping of the Panthers of Jackson County.

Jackson had entered the game on an eight-game winning streak and had beaten every team from the North Sub-Region.

That was all fine and dandy, but Union County ace hurler, Daniel Coyne had other plans.

After giving up a first inning run following a walk, sandwiched between two singles, Coach Hussion decided to ride out his senior pitcher in the last game of his career and Coyne didn't disappoint.

He picked up his eighth win of the season. Coyne has been the Pan-



Baseball Coach C. T. Hussion.
thers go to guy all season long.

"After the first inning, he started rolling," Coach Hussion said.

The Panthers finish the regular season with a 12-10 overall record and break even in region play with a record of 8-8.

Allison anxious for spring to begin

By Todd Forrest
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Sixty potential Union County Panthers lined up for their first drills of the spring on Tuesday as Panthers' Head Coach Brian Allison evaluates his 2012 football squad.

Staying healthy will be the top priority for the Panthers between now and the final spring practice on May 15th, Coach Allison said.

"We will be mixing in full contact days with fundamental days," Coach Allison said.

Coach Allison's Panthers finished the 2011 regular season strong, winning two out of their last three games. Their season ended on Nov. 4th with a 28-14 Region 8 loss to Hart County. The loss might sound disheartening, but during the regular season, the Panthers lost their match up with Hart County 36-7.

With the start of official fall practice nearly three months away, Coach Allison is still expecting to see



Football Coach Brian Allison
progress from his team.

"We want to improve our team fundamentally and technically," Coach Allison said.

Despite coming off a 3-7 campaign in 2011, Union County returns several key players who are starving for success in 2012.

"We have everyone back that we expected to return," Coach Allison said. "We also have a couple

of new players that I am anxious to see on the field."

The Panthers' coaching staff returns intact and will remain the same from a personnel standpoint. Also returning is Coach Justin Byers, who has made sure the players remain focused and work hard in the off-season.

Coach Allison had nothing but praises when asked about the dedication of his players and Coach Byers during off-season workouts.

"Coach Byers has done a great job getting our kids stronger, faster, and quicker," Coach Allison said. "We have stressed this very hard since the season ended last November."

The Panthers will practice Tuesday through Friday this week and Monday through Thursday the following week.

Spring football practice continues through Monday, May 14th before concluding on May 15th.

Come out and catch a glimpse of the Panthers as they prepare for the 2012 football season.

Golf season is over; Panthers lose out in Region Tourney

By Todd Forrest
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The 2012 golf season came to an end last Tuesday in Braselton for Coach Brian Allison's Union County Panther Golf Teams.

The Lady Panthers' season was completed on Monday in Homer.

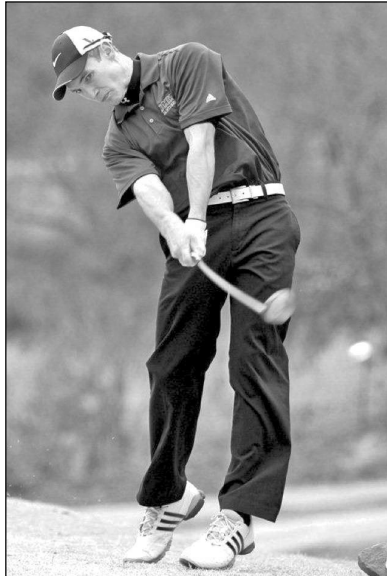
The boys squad that finished 9th in Region 8-AA match play, were led by James Rowe's 87 - which placed him 12th individually in the Region tournament.

Colton Stanley posted a 96, Blade Sczcepanski a 100, while Grant Schuette rounded out Union's top four with a 102.

Coming into the season, Coach Allison had some serious question marks surrounding two of his top five golfers.

"Stanley is the most improved player on the team," Coach Allison said. "And Grant Schuette was a surprise for us because he didn't play last year and has played well at times this year."

North Oconee's David Mackey was the overall low medalist with a 73, edging out Oglethorpe County's Nathan Mallonee by one stroke. North Oconee also took home the team Region title with a score of 322.



James Rowe

Oglethorpe County came in second, five strokes back at 327, thanks to Mallonee and Jake O'Brian's 79.

Jackson County, led by York DeLloyd's 78, finished a distant third at 353. Hart County's C.J. Griffin shot an 82 to help the Bulldogs lock up fourth place and a berth in the state playoffs at 356.

Rabun County didn't have anyone post a score under 88, but just missed advancing to state by six strokes with a 362. Meanwhile, Dawson County came into the clubhouse in sixth at 368, despite an 83 from Clay Glover.

The Union County Lady

Panthers had a tough time at Scales Country Club on Monday, finishing in 10th place. Hayley Nix posted a 120 to lead all Lady Panthers on the day as Union County came in three strokes behind 9th place East Jackson, and 17 strokes in back of Jackson County for 8th.

Coach Allison wasn't sure if Nix would be Union's top golfer at the start of the season, but called her the "most improved player on the squad."

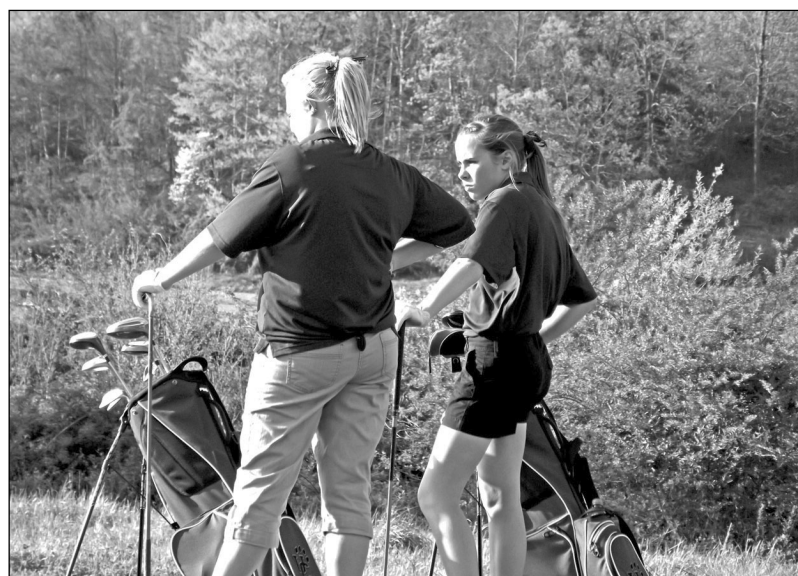
Other Lady Panthers scores include Kiersten Cox, who shot a 126, Natalie Fleming finished with 132, and Lydia Gray rounded out the Lady Panther team with a 142.

However, that day was a special day for Union's Kiersten Cox, not only was it the Region Tournament, but she also recorded her longest drive ever of 199 yards.

"I did that at Region on April 23, 2012 - my mom's birthday," she said. "So overall it was a very special day for me personally."

The low scorer on the day was Elbert County's Hannah Barger, who led the Lady Blue Devils to the Region crown, shooting a 73.

But she didn't do it alone. Elbert got an 85 from Katie McCall and an 88 from Alex Oglesby.



Hayley Nix and Lydia Gray size up their next shot during region competition.

North Oconee had two girls place inside the Top Nine (McKenzie Hendrick and Crocket Floyd) to put the Lady Titans in second place, 24 shots behind Barger's Lady Devils.

Madison Caldwell's 84 was the third lowest score of the tournament and was enough to put Dawson County in third place, while Rabun County rounded out the Top Four, thanks to Mollie Vinson's 95.

Cara Gowder's 80 was good enough for second individually, but not enough to propel the rest of her Banks County squad into the state playoffs, as the Lady Leopards

finished just one shot out of fourth and a trip to state.

For Union County, the season may be at an end, but the memories will last a lifetime.

Lady Panther golfer Kiersten Cox shared her most memorable moments from the 2012 season and the story that tops her list is the bus ride over to Big Canoe Golf Course.

"That was the most enjoyable bus ride I've ever experienced," said Cox. "We laughed a lot and the guys gave me a hard time, but it was hilarious, and I ended up placing first that day."

Boaz Media and Network Solutions opens

By Janice Boling
Staff Writer
North Georgia News

Boaz Media and Network Solutions recently hosted an open house and Blairsville Union Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting ceremony. Nearly 50 people gathered to celebrate the occasion.

It was a fun morning with door prizes, raffles, and a delicious lunch

See Boaz, Page 11A



Boaz Media is open for business in Blairsville. The group is a Quarterback Club sponsor. Photo/Janice Boling

Alex Jordan receives state honors from SOGA

Special to NGN
North Georgia News

Alex Jordan is now in the record books, having achieved something no other Union County student has ever attained.

The Union County High School senior has been honored with the title of Special Olympics Georgia Athlete of the Month April 2012.

Alex is the first student from Union County to be awarded Athlete of the Month by SOGA.

His mentors say Alex is everything an athlete should be, and his school spirit is off the charts.

The North Georgia News has learned that Alex is the embodiment of UCHS' Athlete's Oath, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Alex is quite the competitor, as he competes in basketball, bowling and various athletic ventures.

His favorite sport to com-



UCHS Coach Carson Turlington presents Alex Jordan with state honors for his outstanding athletic achievements for the month of April. Alex is the first UCHS student to earn such an honorable distinction bestowed upon a local student athlete.

pete in is basketball, and he spends many an hour honing his hoops skills, the newspaper has learned.

At the Union County Winter Games last November he earned several medals during the Individual Skills Competition.

Beyond Special Olympics, Alex attends all the varsity football games and exudes school spirit. He was most recently voted Union County's No. 1 Fan.

Alex has overcome many obstacles related to his Cerebral Palsy over the years. He has a never-quit attitude and he always wears a smile on his face.

Alex is an inspiration and encouragement to all his fellow Special Olympics Athletes as well as teachers and fellow students.

"Alex's enthusiasm and positive attitude is contagious; we should all be more like him," bragged Union County Parent Mentor Becky Tracy.

Towns/Union will hold their Spring Special Olympics May 10th, from 9 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. at Frank McClure Stadium in Hiwassee.

Please come out and show your support for these awesome athletes. If you would like more details on Towns/Union Special Olympics contact Becky Tracy at (706) 745-9615 extension 4404 or btracy@ucschools.org.

Men's Softball Registration

Another Union County Recreation Department's Men's Softball Season is just around the corner for anyone who is interested. There will be an organizational Adult Men's Softball League meeting on May 9th, 2012. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. at the Union County Recreation Department Central Office. For more details you can contact the U.C.R.D. office at (706) 439-6074.

Summer Day Camp Registration

The Union County Recreation Department Summer Day Camp Registration begins May 1st. Registration forms will be available on the Website, www.unioncountyrecreation.com or can be picked up at the Union County Recreation Department Central Office at 310 Wellborn Street. The fee for the camp is \$70 per week; a discount will be given for multiple children and includes breakfast, lunch, and most all activities. Camp will be held at the Union County Kidz Corner - formerly known as Mountain Learning and Childcare Center. Spots fill fast so get your registration in now.