

Sports

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Injury bug bites hard as Lady Panthers fall to Lumpkin, at N. Hall

Union softball drops to 0-2 in region play for the first time under Stewart

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Union County Head Coach Jessica Stewart was well aware that the jump from Class AA to Class AAA would take some getting used to.

She was unaware that two key starters would suffer injuries prior to opening the season with four straight Region contests. The first to suffer a setback is one of the winningest pitchers in the history of the program, ace right-hander Laken Chambers.

Chambers, who is still able to hit, has been unavailable in the circle so far this season and could remain limited to offense-only for at least another week.

Meanwhile, new addition Bailey Rayfield, a 2015 All Region selection from Class AAAA's Bainbridge High School, has been unable to suit up since the regular season began and is currently out indefinitely.

The sophomore infielder's bat was sorely missed, especially during Union's 4-3, extra inning loss to Lumpkin County in the opener.

Starting for Chambers in the circle is junior Jillian Lawn, who pitched good enough to win in both games last week but was let down by a lack of run support, defensive miscues, or both.

In an 11-8 loss at North Hall, only two of the runs that Lawn surrendered were earned, as the Lady Panthers committed three errors.

Looking at this upcoming week through a 'glass half-full' perspective, opening the season with four region games allows Union the opportunity to immediately even up its region record at 2-2.

Dawson County pays a visit to Blairsville at 6 p.m. on Tuesday where the Lady Tigers will enter with a 2-3 record, fresh off an 8-3 win over Towns County, a 7-0 loss to East Hall, and a 12-3 loss to White County.

On Thursday at 5 p.m. the Lady Panthers travel to East Hall to face a 2-2 Lady Vikings squad. Last week, East Hall defeated Fannin County 11-4 but were forced to forfeit the win. Their 9-0 win over Oglethorpe County did stand while the other loss came in a 5-4 defeat to Jefferson.

Union will play a pair of de facto home games at Young Harris College on Saturday beginning at 10 a.m. with Class AAAAAA's Apalachee. At 2 p.m., Union will take on Monticello - now a member of Region 8-AA.

Lady Panthers 3 Lumpkin Co. 4 (9 inn)

Aggressive base running backfired on the Lady Panthers as two runners were thrown out on the base paths during the seventh inning of a tied game.

After clawing back from a 2-0 deficit, then, holding the Lady Indians in check with diving plays in the field during the sixth and seventh innings, Union sent the top of the order to the plate in the bottom of the seventh.

Second baseman Kendra



Senior Kendra Tanner finished with 3 hits vs Lumpkin. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Lydia Arrowood lays down a sacrifice bunt. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior Braden Poteete was 2-for-4 at North Hall. Photo/Todd Forrest

ra Tanner, who saved two runs with a diving stop in the hole to end the fifth inning, opened the inning by dropping a base hit in front of the leftfielder. Unfortunately, Tanner was thrown out trying to stretch her single into a double.

Up next was senior third baseman Lydia Arrowood, who made a diving tag on a Lumpkin runner at third in the same inning as Tanner's defensive heroics. After she snagged a grounder, Arro-

wood faked the throw to first, then turned around and with full extension, applied the tag to the runner for the first out of the fifth inning.

At the plate, Arrowood drew a walk to put the winning run on first with a hitless Chambers coming to the plate.

Following a pair of strikeouts and a walk earlier in the game, Chambers laced a line drive down the left field line that deflected off the



Freshman Mary Wischmeyer lines a base hit to right. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior Jillian Lawn winds and delivers to the plate. Photo/Todd Forrest

glove of the Lumpkin third baseman, preventing extra bases and keeping Arrowood at second.

Lawn reached on an error by the shortstop to load the bases with only one out.

Freshman catcher Mary Wischmeyer flew out to shallow centerfield for the second out, and with Arrowood tagging and going for the win, the Lady Indians' outfielder delivered a strike to home plate, easily cutting down Arrowood to end the scoring threat.

In high school softball, extra innings begin with a runner on second and Lumpkin took advantage with a one-out base hit to take a 3-2 advantage before Lawn pitched her way out of another jam with one of her 10 strikeouts.

In the bottom of the eighth, sophomore Ellie Garrison moved the Union runner courtesy runner, Maddie Sutton to third with a bunt. Garrison also made a sliding catch in centerfield to end Lumpkin's half of the seventh inning.

Sophomore Aladriel Arnold was plunked by a pitch and quickly stole second to, once again, put the winning run in scoring position.

Pinch hitter Madeline Tanner came to the plate where the sophomore deliv-

ered a clutch sacrifice fly to right field - knotting the score at 3-3, but the Lady Panthers were unable to deliver a clutch, two-out hit and the game went to the ninth inning.

Lumpkin advanced the runner to third with a grounder to second and brought them home with a groundout to first baseman Skylar Ludlum.

The top of the order was unable to deliver for Union in the ninth after Kendra Tanner moved junior Braden Poteete to third with a groundout.

Arrowood walked for third time in the game and stole second - putting the winning run in scoring position for the third straight inning.

The Lady Indians were able to get out of the inning by forcing a pop up for the second out and inducing a grounder to second base to end the game.

Lumpkin struck early with two runs in the first inning off a triple and an error.

Union tied the game in the fifth when Kendra Tanner singled and scored on a wild pitch and Wischmeyer brought home Chambers with an RBI groundout.

The Lady Panthers left two runners on base in the first, fourth, seventh, and ninth innings. They left one aboard in the second, third, fifth, and eighth.



Sophomore Skylar Ludlum

Union County stats:
HITTING - Kendra Tanner 3-for-4, 1 run, 1 BB. Arrowood 0-for-0, 3 BB, 2 sacrifices. Chambers 1-for-4, 1 run, 1 BB. Lawn 1-for-5. Wischmeyer 1-for-4, 1 run. Maddie Sutton 1 run. Garrison 0-for-3. Arnold 0-for-2, 1 BB, 1 HBP. Megan Lockaby 0-for-3. Madeline Tanner 0-for-0, 1 RBI. Poteete 0-for-3. Courtney Moose 0-for-1.

PITCHING - Lawn 9 innings pitched, 1 earned run, 4 hits, 10 Ks, 2 BBs.

Lady Panthers 8 North Hall 11

Gainesville - The North Hall Lady Trojans stormed back with five runs in the fourth and six runs in the fifth inning to overcome a 3-0 Union advantage.

The Lady Panthers tied the score at 5-5 with two runs in the top of the fifth but North Hall answered with six in the bottom half of the inning. Union refused to go away and sliced a six run disadvantage in half with three runs in the sixth but were unable to do further damage.

The Lady Trojans, who were also without the ace of their pitching staff due to injury, generated enough run support to beat the Lady Panthers in a battle of the bruised.

Despite allowing 10 hits from the circle, Lawn tried her best to help her own cause by going 2-for-4 at the plate with a double and 2 RBIs.

One positive from the loss: the much-needed bats of Chambers, Poteete and Arnold awoke with Chambers driving in four runs, Arnold contributing a 2-run double, and Poteete finishing with two hits.

Arrowood continued to generate offense at the top of the lineup scoring three times while going 1-for-3 with a walk.

Union County stats:
HITTING - Kendra Tanner 0-for-4, 2 runs, 1 BB. Arrowood 1-for-3, 3 runs, 1 BB. Chambers 2-for-3, 4 RBIs, 2 runs, 1 BB, 1 SB. Lawn 2-for-4, 2 RBIs, 1 2B. Wischmeyer 0-for-2, 1 BB. Garrison 1-for-4. Arnold 1-for-4, 2 RBIs, 1 2B. Poteete 2-for-4, 1 run. Moose 0-for-3.

PITCHING - Lawn 6 innings, 2 earned runs, 10 hits, 2 Ks, 2 BBs.

Football: Union to host final scrimmage on Thursday

Panthers host annual Meet the Team event last Friday

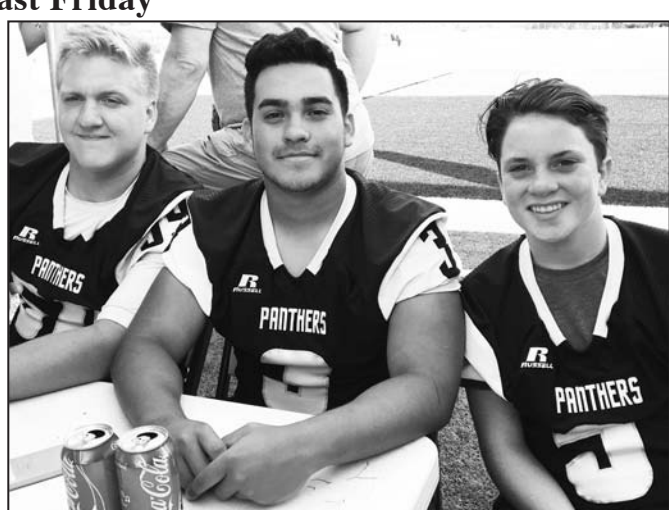


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As the regular season nears, Union County football players, coaches, and cheerlead-

ers once again reached out to the community with its annual Meet the Team last Friday at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

The event allows Panther fans the opportunity to get pictures and autographs, or just chat



with their favorite Union County football player or cheerleader.

This Thursday the Panthers will host Rabun Gap in their last tune-up game before the season begins eight days later on Friday, Aug. 26 when Union

hosts Gilmer County.

Action will get underway at 7:30 p.m. this Thursday evening so don't miss this one last chance to support the Panthers as they prepare for 2016.

Local 9&U travel baseball team opens its season at 6-0



The Mountain Storm youth baseball team has started the year on a high note going 6-0.

The team has taken home first place finishes in their first two tournaments which were played in Loudon and Knoxville, TN. Players from Blairsville, Murphy and the surrounding area make up the team.

The team will compete throughout the year against some of the best baseball talent in the Southeast.

If you would like to help sponsor the team or would like more information, please feel free to email the team at mtnstormbaseball@yahoo.com