

Sports

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Softball: Union erases early deficit, fends off late rally in win at White Co.

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Cleveland - Union County (1-0) overcame four errors and an early 4-1 deficit to notch its first official win of the year, an 8-7 victory at White County (3-1) on Monday, Aug. 8.

Junior right-hander Sierra Burnette went the distance, limiting the Warriors to just two runs over the final four innings after a three-run fourth awarded Union an 8-5 edge.

A two-out solo homer by junior Gracie Gladding spotted the Lady Panthers a brief 1-0 advantage in the first, but White County answered with four runs in the bottom half. The Warriors took advantage of a leadoff error, using two infield singles, a base knock to center and an RBI groundout to mount a 4-1 lead.

Union began chipping away in the second via a two-out ribby from senior Caroline Karnes, who scored Georgia Patton on a base hit to left field. Burnette escaped a two-run, one-out jam in the bottom of the frame, allowing Union County to regain the lead moments later.

The Lady Panthers generated more two-out lightning in the third, starting with a Burnette hit-by-pitch and a one-out walk to Gladding. Following a strikeout, senior Chloe Potts worked a base on balls to load the bags, and Patton plated a run with a free pass of her own.

Trailing 4-3, sophomore Sloane Dyer singled to center on a 1-1 count, propelling Union in front, 5-4.



White County wanted no part of Gracie Gladding, walking Union's junior catcher three times after her first inning homer. Photo/Todd Forrest

White County manufactured a run to knot the score at 5-5, but the Lady Panthers tacked on three more in the fourth for an 8-5 margin. Junior Katie Byers sparked the rally with a leadoff single, then came around to score on a Burnette double. An error off the bat of Jewell Massey and a walk to Gladding loaded the bags for Jaycee Seabolt, who drove in a run with a bloop single to right field. Facing a 3-2 count, Potts brought home Union's final run on an infield single.

An inning-ending double prevented the Lady Panthers from adding to their cushion, but Burnette kept the White County offense at bay to nail down the win.

A walk, an error and a sacrifice fly narrowed the Union margin to 8-7 in the bottom of the fourth. In the fifth, Byers cut down the would-be tying run at home following a two-out single to center.

The Lady Panthers stranded two in the sixth and Burnette tossed a 1-2-3 bot-



Sloane Dyer's two-out, two-run single capped off the Union comeback, moving Union back in front in the third. Photo/Todd Forrest

tom half. Union failed to take advantage of a leadoff error in the final frame, then Burnette hit the leadoff batter on a 3-2 count in the Warriors' half of the seventh.

A force at second marked the first out of the inning, then a pop-up to first and a grounder to third sealed the victory.

Burnette scattered six hits over seven innings, giving up three earned runs, two walks and striking out a pair. She finished 1 for 3 at the dish with an RBI double and a stolen

base. Seabolt added a double and an RBI to cap a 2-for-4 day; Karnes drove in a run while going 2 for 4, and Gladding went 1 for 1 with three walks on the heels of her first-inning home run.

Potts and Patton each went 1 for 3 with a run and one RBI apiece. Patton added two steals on the base paths.

Dyer had 2 RBIs during a 1-for-4 game. Byers went 1 for 4 with a run and a stolen base; Peyton Grisham scored twice as a courtesy runner. Massey stole



Caroline Karnes a base and scored. Brooklyn Brown tacked on a run.

The 5-9 hitters in the Warriors lineup ended the day with a collective 1-for-13 with two walks.

On Aug. 10, White County picked up an 8-6 road win at the defending 8-AA champs, Banks County.

Union County did not participate in the weekend tournament at Prince Avenue Christian but were back in action on Monday at Lumpkin County.

Union returns home on Tuesday to host Fannin County at 5:30 p.m.

The Lady Panthers are expected to attend another weekend tournament at the University of North Georgia, facing Bremen and Dawson County on Saturday.



Junior pitcher Sierra Burnette worked her first complete game of the season and the 10th of her career during Union County's victory at White County on Monday, Aug. 8. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior shortstop Georgia Patton stole two bags during a 1-for-3 game at White County. Photo/Todd Forrest



After going 1 for 3 at White, senior Chloe Potts' next hit will be the 35th of her career - second most among active players. Photo/Todd Forrest



Jaycee Seabolt patrols the hot corner for Union County. The senior went 2 for 4 with one RBI and a double at White County. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior Jewell Massey stole a base and scored at White after slapping two singles in the rain-shortened opener vs. Lumpkin. Photo/Todd Forrest

Football: With scrimmage canceled, Panthers turn attention to rivalry clash

Union and Fannin open 2022 Friday night at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium

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The one positive to come out of the scrimmage cancellation: the Panthers are healthy entering rivalry week.

“Nobody got hurt, so that’s something good to come out of [not playing the scrimmage at Chestatee on Friday],” Union County head coach Michael Perry said as his squad begins preparation for Friday’s season opener vs. Fannin County.

As for this week’s rivalry showdown, the Panthers are looking to reverse a two-game slide in the series, allowing the senior class to graduate with a 2-2 record against their western neighbors.

Coming off back-to-back Region 7-AA titles, the Rebels will look a bit different this year as they break-in their second new quarterback in as many years following the stability that came via three-year starter Luke Holloway (2018-2020). But despite another shake-up under center, Fannin County isn’t being taken lightly by Perry and the Union County coaching staff.

“I’ll tell you what, that new quarterback is the best player on their team,” Perry said after watching Fannin’s scrimmage vs. Stephens County. “He is really fast and good in the open field, so we’re going to need to do a great job containing him.”

Defensively, the Rebels were without the services of one of its defensive leaders vs.



Union County second-year head coach Michael Perry and junior quarterback Cayden Tanner during a summer workout. The scrimmage game at Chestatee scheduled for Friday, Aug. 12 was canceled due to Thursday’s incident at the primary school. Photo/Todd Forrest

Stephens, but he should return for Friday’s trip to Blairsville.

“Their best linebacker was hurt but I expect him to be back,” Perry added. “He’s a really good football player and he is supposed to be released to play this week.”

Another concern for Coach Perry is Fannin County’s skill level in the trenches.

“They have a lineman who is really good and they have a defensive end, No. 71, who is going to be a handful, but I think we’re up to the task,”

he said. “[Fannin is] a physical team, especially in the box, so we’ve got to get the running game going. If we’re able to do that, I expect things to be a lot more competitive than last year (a 34-7 Fannin victory in Blue Ridge). But I’m just looking forward to seeing what we’ve got and Fannin will be a nice test.”

While Perry learned a few things about his opponent last Friday, he would have rather provided his squad some valuable game experience.

“It’s disappointing and it puts us in a difficult spot not playing a scrimmage game,” he said. “Us and Chestatee were the only two teams in the state that didn’t get a practice game. But it is what it is and we just have to move forward.”

In light of the cancellation, Perry will add a minor wrinkle to his team’s four practices leading up to Friday.

“We’ll work on conditioning a little bit more, because that is important for us after not having a scrimmage game. So

it’s just a little more conditioning, that’s it. From a preparation standpoint, practice will be exactly the same.”

According to Perry, the Panthers are mostly healthy after running backs Connor Schuknecht and Liam Cone missed some time early in the month. But in their absence, junior Braylen Rader cracked the depth chart to offer Perry three legitimate ball carriers.

Additionally, the coaching staff is close to doling out kicking duties between juniors

Ethan McBride and soccer star Zuriel Mancillas.

Lastly, junior quarterback Cayden Tanner has recovered from offseason knee surgery and ready for the Rebels.

“I hate that he didn’t get a scrimmage game, but other than that, I have complete faith in him running our offense,” Perry said.

Game Notes

Kickoff on Friday night is scheduled for 7:30 p.m., marking the 31st meeting between the two schools. In the previous 30 contests, dating back to 1982, the Panthers and Rebels have split the series with 15 wins apiece.

Prior to the consolidation of East Fannin and West Fannin into Fannin County High, Union County went 11-5 vs. East Fannin, while going 3-5 against West Fannin for a cumulative record of 29-25 vs. all three schools.

After losing at home in 2020 and in Blue Ridge a year later, the Panthers are looking to avoid its first three-game skid to Fannin County since 2006-2008. However, you have to go back to 1994 to find Union’s last three-game series slide that featured two of the losses coming at home.

Prior to Fannin’s 2020 victory, Union County won six straight and eight of nine over the Rebels. During the Panthers’ run of success during the previous decade, Union’s offense posted the two highest scoring outputs in the series - a 63-point outburst in 2016 and a 49-point performance two years later.

Date	Time	Opponent	Location	Notes
Aug 16	5:00 PM	@ Stephens County		@ Stephens County
Aug 16	6:00 PM	@ Elbert County		@ Stephens County
Aug 18	5:00 PM	@ Dawson County		@ Dawson County
Aug 18	6:00 PM	@ Chestatee		@ Dawson County
Aug 22	5:00 PM	vs Rabun Gap	High School Gym	
Aug 22	7:00 PM	vs Rabun County	High School Gym	
Aug 23	6:00 PM	@ Rabun County		@ Fannin County
Aug 23	7:00 PM	@ Fannin County		@ Fannin County
Aug 27	TBA	@ TBA		Coal Mountain Classic @ North Foyyth
Sep 1	6:00 PM	vs Fannin County	High School Gym	
Sep 8	5:00 PM	@ Athens Academy		@ Athens Academy
Sep 8	6:00 PM	@ Morgan County		@ Athens Academy
Sep 10	TBA	@ TBA		Rally on the Ridge Tournament @ Fannin County
Sep 12	6:00 PM	@ Andrews (NC)		@ Andrews
Sep 15	5:00 PM	@ Fellowship Christian		@ Banks County
Sep 15	6:00 PM	@ Banks County		@ Banks County
Sep 19	6:00 PM	vs Andrews	High School Gym	
Sep 20	5:00 PM	vs East Jackson	High School Gym	
Sep 20	6:00 PM	vs Banks County	High School Gym	
Sep 22	5:00 PM	@ Rabun County		@ Rabun County
Sep 22	6:00 PM	@ Rabun Gap		@ Rabun County
Sep 27	5:00 PM	@ Fellowship Christian		@ Fellowship Christian
Sep 27	6:00 PM	@ Providence Christian		@ Fellowship Christian
Sep 29	5:00 PM	@ East Jackson		@ Providence Christian
Sep 29	6:00 PM	@ Athens Academy		@ Providence Christian
Oct 3	6:00 PM	@ Hiwassee Dam (NC)		@ Hiwassee Dam
Oct 5	5:00 PM	vs Dawson County	High School Gym	
Oct 5	7:00 PM	vs Providence Christian	High School Gym	
Oct 13	TBA	@ TBA		Area Tournament

Date	Opponent	Location	Time
8/6	Lumpkin	Home	11:00
8/6	Commerce	Home	3:00
8/8	White	Away	6:00#
8/13	Alcovy	Away(Prince)	11:00
8/13	Prince Ave	Away	1:00
8/15	Lumpkin	Away	6:00#
8/16	Fannin	Home	5:30
8/20	Bremen	UNG	TBA
8/20	Dawson	UNG	TBA
8/23	Pickens	Away	6:00#
8/26	BASA	Oconee Tour(2)	4:00
8/26	PACE	Oconee Tour(2)	6:00
8/27	Savannah Chr.	Oconee Tour(2)	9:00am
8/27	Ware	Oconee Tour(2)	11:00am
8/31	Pickens	Home	6:00#
9/6	Commerce	Away	6:00#
9/8	Banks	Away	5:30*
9/12	Rabun	Away	6:00#
9/13	East Jackson	Home	5:30*
9/15	Providence	Home	5:30*
9/20	Banks	Home	5:30*
9/27	East Jackson	Away	5:30*
9/28	White	Home	6:00#
9/29	Providence	Away	5:00*
10/4	Banks	Away	5:30*
10/6	East Jackson	Home	5:30*
10/11	Providence	Home	5:30*
10/13	Rabun	Home	6:00#

Local Tropics Basketball Team more like a tropical storm for their opponents



Tropics Team (L-R): Gabe Clark, Coach Sam Hogsed, Ethan Hogsed, Jaxon Thoterow, Hayden Price, Coach Phillip Hardin, Isaac Milam, Charlie Wilson, Keaton Watkins, Tucker Engert, Easton Shumaker, Emory Hardin, Coach Greg Wilson – Dalton Championship

At first glance, the group of boys that make up our local Tropics travel basketball team look more like a traveling party of buddies. Don’t let the laughs, pranks, and hotel pool belly flops fool you! This team of young men have become a force to be reckoned with on the court.

The Tropics have just completed their southeastern travel season with a 19-4 record in 7th grade tournament play. They have been in the gold bracket championship game in 5 of 6 of those tournaments and won 3 of them. Tournament wins include the Fannin County Christmas Clash, Dalton PSA May Mayhem, and the Athens Classic City Shootout.

The Tropics were formed 2 years ago and are comprised of boys from Union, Towns and Fannin Counties, and Andrews, North Carolina. Coach Greg Wilson explains, “Our goal was to create a team that met a few key requirements. First, the kids had to personally want to put in the work. Second, they had to like each other and third, they had to have a team mentality. Honestly, we weren’t looking for a team full of ringers out of the gate. We were wanting to grow a basketball family. As we all know though, not all family gatherings are smooth sailing! We took our share of

losses early on in an effort to be where we are today. I couldn’t be more grateful for the dedication and unwavering support by our coaches, the team and their families.”

Aside from teaching basketball skills, the Tropics have provided an opportunity for athletes in neighboring counties to join together and create friendships. Coach Phillip Hardin of Towns County states, “aggressive, challenging and extreme fanatics sometimes describe rival sports teams from small towns. But what happens when basketball fanatics from rival counties, such as Union, Towns, Fannin and Cherokee, are placed on the same team? You get the Tropics. The Tropics may have started as rivals from neighboring counties but have developed into a family.”

For anyone interested in forming travel teams for their children, there is a definite time and financial sacrifice needed. The Tropics were able to create local fundraising events to help buffer the costs of travel and uniforms. Coach Sam Hogsed praises our local community for their “giving nature and willingness to help.”

As fall approaches and school basketball seasons start up, the Tropics will each go to be a part of their home teams and they will even face each

other in some instances. But no matter what happens on the court during this season, these boys will always be a Tropics. Coach Wilson emphasizes the importance of this team by stating “The end result of all this hard work and persistence was not to win at all cost. It was to create plenty of great memories that both the boys and their families can have for a lifetime.”

In a sports world riddled with politics and prima donnas, it’s important to peek into an old, hot and scream-filled gym and remember why we love the game. Kids and adults, both, need to hear the squeak of 20 sneakers during controlled chaos and know that a greater purpose is being served. They need to know that the gut punch feeling after a hard loss can be a springboard toward achieving sheer bliss as a gym erupts from a hard-fought victory. They need to learn that the sum is greater than it’s parts. The Tropics embody that vital need for youth sports.

To the boys who participated with the team, we wish you the best of luck with your future endeavors and we thank you for being a positive example for our communities! As it has echoed throughout all kinds of arenas, in all kinds of towns, in the huddle: Tropics On Three! NT(Aug17,ZB)CA

Isaiah 117 House to host annual golf tournament to benefit the Union County house September 23rd



Isaiah 117 House, a Tennessee-based organization that cares for children awaiting foster placement, will soon be hosting their annual golf tournament to benefit the Union County house.

On Friday, September 23, 2022, the nonprofit will host their tournament at Old Union Golf Course. The event, a four-person scramble, will include lunch from Chick-fil-A and will have several opportunities to win prizes. Also, every participant will receive a free Titleist logo golf hat and a sleeve of Titleist Pro V1 logo golf balls.

Registration will begin at 11:30 with lunch served at

12:00 provided by Chick-fil-A Blairsville and a shotgun start at 1 PM.

The event also has 5 sponsorship levels available – Title, Advocate, Partner, Team, and Hole sponsorships. Each sponsorship level includes marketing benefits, and some include the benefit of multiple teams in the event.

To register a team, or to become a sponsor, visit www.isaiah117house.com/golf and choose Union county. For more information, please visit Isaiah 117 House Union County GA on Facebook or contact Wes Cook at 706-400-8600 or uniongolf@isaiah117house.com

Isaiah 117 House is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization that provides physical and emotional support in a safe

and loving home for children awaiting foster care placement. Currently, when a child is removed in a county without an Isaiah 117 House, the child must wait in the child welfare services office. The child is often dirty, hungry, tired, scared, and unable to bring any personal possessions. Isaiah 117 House allows for that same child to never go to an office, but rather a home with loving volunteers to care for them.

Isaiah 117 House provides for that child’s needs, whatever they may be, in these critical moments between removal and placement. Isaiah 117 House has locations in Tennessee, Indiana, Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia. To learn more about Isaiah 117 House, visit www.isaiah117house.com. NT(Aug17,ZB)CA