

# Sports

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## Morlock's No. 4 Seminoles survive OT scare at Clemson

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**Clemson, SC** - As Cade Klubnik's fourth-and-2 overtime pass attempt floated harmlessly to the Death Valley turf on Saturday afternoon, Kyle Morlock and his Florida State teammates raced onto the field in celebration of the Seminole's first win over the ACC's top program since 2014.

Now, No. 4 Florida State looks every bit the part of a program ready to wear the crown it once seemed Dabo Swinney's Tigers would hold in perpetuity.

With Clemson's College Football Playoff hopes on the line, along with an opportunity to lower the temperature on Swinney's coaching hot seat, the Tigers, for much of the day, looked every bit the part of the program that's won seven of the last eight ACC titles.

But things went awry for Clemson late in the third when Kalen DeLoach dropped Klubnik for a sack and then returned the resulting fumble 56 yards for a touchdown, knotting the score at 24-24. The Tigers answered with a late drive that moved all the way to the FSU 12-yard line. But with 1:47 to play, Clemson kicker Jonathan Weitz's go-ahead 29-yard field goal sailed wide left.

After giving up early completions of 25 and 15 yards on the ensuing series, the Tigers' defense stiffened, denying Florida State on four straight plays in Clemson territory to force overtime.

But senior quarterback Jordan Travis made his only completion of the extra session count - a 24-yard touchdown



Union County's Kyle Morlock celebrates a Seminoles TD on Saturday during Florida State's come-from-behind victory at Clemson. Photo/Todd Forrest

toss to Keon Coleman, awarding the Seminoles its first and only lead of the afternoon.

With a raucous Memorial Stadium crowd at their back, the Tigers raced out to early leads of 10-0 and 17-7 before Travis' second effort on a 2-yard touchdown run brought the Seminoles within 17-14 at the break.

As for Morlock, the 2020 Union County High School graduate recorded each of his two receptions during the first half for 18 yards. His two catches matched his career-high during FSU's 45-24 win over LSU.

He has 5 catches for 57 yards on the season. "I just want to thank

everyone from Union County, Blairsville and the surrounding counties that have poured out their love and support, it means so much," Morlock said after the Clemson win. "I want to give a huge shoutout to my family, (UCHS wide receivers coach) Paul McBride, and everybody that's been there for me along the way."

Morlock's college career began at Shorter (Rome), where he was a two-time all-american, catching 57 passes for 890 yards and 11 TDs in 24 games over two seasons.

At UCHS, Morlock had 28 receptions, 591 yards and 6 TDs as a senior in 2019, despite missing over a month due to injury. During his junior

year, Morlock logged career bests of 47 catches, 757 yards and 8 scores.

Over his first two seasons at UCHS, he combined for 14 receptions, 161 yards and 2 TDs.

Morlock is the son of Steve and Suellen Morlock and the brother of Madison Morlock Rowe.



Kyle Morlock (84) and No. 4 Florida State at Clemson. Photos by Todd Forrest

# Softball: Lady Panthers can't protect early lead at Banks, split weekend games

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Third-place Union County (7-8-1, 1-3) suffered a costly 6-2 region loss at Banks County (15-4, 5-0) on Tuesday, Sept. 19, dropping the Lady Panthers to 1-3 in 8-AA and all but out of contention for consecutive region titles.

Union split two games over the weekend, routing Savannah Christian 15-2 and getting blanked 8-0 by Prince Avenue Christian.

**Lady Panthers 2, Banks County 6** - Union County scored two in the first but faced a 4-2 deficit after three. The Leopards added two in the sixth for a 6-2 final tally.

Gracie Gladding's first-inning homer accounted for Union's only runs during the senior catcher's 2-for-3 day. After Georgia Patton's leadoff single setup Gladding's two-run bomb, the Lady Panthers were limited to only two hits the rest of the way.

Meanwhile, freshman pitcher Izzy Anthros held Banks to only four hits, but three costly errors gifted the Leopards four unearned runs.

Union stranded Katie Byers' leadoff single in the second, then a hit-by-pitch, two singles and two errors helped Banks push ahead 3-2 in the bottom half.

Gladding's two-out single in the third marked Union's final hit of the day, and Banks took advantage of a wild pitch to take a 4-2 edge. The Lady Panthers stranded two in the fifth but left the tying run in scoring position.

The Leopards' two-run, two-out double broke things open in the sixth following a leadoff error.

**Lady Panthers 15, Savannah Christian 2 (6 inn)** - A seven-run third built a commanding lead before Gladding capped off the scoring with a three-run homer.

Gladding finished 4 for 5 with a run and 4 RBIs; Patton knocked in one and scored twice during a 4-for-4 performance. Mikala Souther went 1 for 2 with a pair of runs and 3 RBIs.

All seven runs during



Senior catcher Gracie Gladding homered twice and drove in six runs last week for the Lady Panthers. Photo/Todd Forrest

the Union County third came with two outs, beginning with an RBI single by Gladding. An error off the bat of Sloane Dyer tied it 2-2, then Lily Helton's double put the Lady Panthers ahead to stay at 3-2.

Following a Byers single and a Peyton Grisham walk that loaded the bags, Souther drove in one with a second-straight walk. Massey scored two via a SCA error and Patton's RBI single made it 7-2 in the middle of the third.

Union worked its two-out magic again in the sixth, putting up eight after Gladding doubled and Sloane Dyer reached on an error. With two down and runners at second and third, Grisham drew a walk and Souther's bases-loaded single made it 9-2.

After Massey's two-run single, Patton reached and Anthros plated another with a base hit to right. Gladding, up for the second time during the inning, belted a three-run shot to left that broke things open at 15-2.

Anthros tossed 2 2/3 innings, allowing a hit and two

unearned runs. Sophomore Ayla Jamison worked 3 1/3, striking out four and giving up three hits.

Dyer scored twice during a 1-for-4 day. Anthros and Byers both ended 1 for 5; Grisham came around to score twice and walked three times.

**Lady Panthers 0, Prince Avenue 8 (5 inn)** - Brooklyn Brown's pinch-hit single, a Helton hit-by-pitch and two Gladding walks was all the offense Union County could manufacture in Prince Avenue's one-hit shutout.

The trio of Jamison, Jasllyn Roberts and Zady Diaz combined to give up 12 hits and seven earned runs.

Prince Avenue scored two in the first, five in the fourth and one in the fifth.

The Lady Panthers host East Jackson (7-9, 0-5) on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m., then travel to Pickens on Wednesday at 6 p.m. The week wraps with a 5:30 p.m. home showdown with second-place Providence Christian (8-6-1, 3-1).

# JV Football runs out of time vs. Stephens

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With the varsity off until Oct. 6, the Panthers' junior varsity took center stage last week in a 30-26 heartbreaker vs. Stephens County.

Union County freshman quarterback Chetley Cox accounted for all four Panthers touchdowns, including a late fourth-and-4 throw to fellow-9th grader Brandon Lynch, cutting the final margin to 30-26.

With 1:56 to play, the Union defense forced the Indians into a fourth-and-long with 3 sec-

onds left, but Stephens kept the offense on the field, electing to run out the clock on the final play. Union County struck first when Cox capped off a 76-yard opening drive with a pass to sophomore Tyler Parker.

Trailing 7-6 late in the first, Cox put his team back in front with a 1-yard keeper. Cox went back to Parker at the 6:25 mark of the half, then a 2-point pass to freshman Bentley Rich spotted Union County a 20-7 advantage.

Stephens used a field goal at the horn to cut the Panthers' lead in half at 20-10, then opened the third with a touchdown to

move within a field goal.

Union answered by driving to the Indians' 4-yard line, but were turned away on four consecutive plays. Stephens took over and went 96 yards for a 24-20 edge.

Stephens County added another touchdown run with 5:46 to play but a blocked PAT kept the score at 30-20.

Cox drove the offense down the field, eventually finding Lynch out of the backfield on fourth down.

Down to one timeout, Union denied Stephens a first down but the clock ran out before regaining possession.



Freshman Brandon Lynch brings Union within one score with late fourth-down TD reception vs. Stephens County last Thursday at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium. Photo/Todd Forrest

# XC: Hunter, Union County ladies dominate at Stephens' Reservation Run

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Sophomore Lola Hunter and the Union County ladies swept both gold medals at Stephens County's Reservation Run on Tuesday, Sept. 19.

The Union men placed second in Toccoa behind a pair of top-seven finishes from seniors Benton Gregory (third) and Wes Seiler (seventh).

Hunter's time of 21 minutes, 2 seconds was 24 seconds better than Franklin County's Megan Hightower. Ellie Adams came in third at 22:57, Hannah Kazmierzak placed fourth at 23:21 and Natalie Payne was fifth at 23:26.

Noel Hyatt finished eighth with a time of 24:07, and Lydia Wagner crossed the line at 24:32 to give Union six of the top-10 spots. Avery Hussion came in 13th at 24:55; Clara Kazmierzak was 19th at 25:29.

Katie Payne placed 26th (26:45), Averie Tanner was 30th (27:35), Jolie Schmitt came in 32nd (27:46) and Abby Barrett was 42nd (29:49).

Union's 21 points was 39 better than second place Stephens County.

During the guys' race, Gregory's 17:46 and Seiler's 18:35 paced Union to a second-place finish, 5 points back of first-place Franklin County.

Oliver Hillman placed 11th at 18:58, Ty Hogsed was 13th at 19:19 and Andrew Nushtayev came in 14th at 19:19. Zander Rotko came in 15th (19:37), Anderson Clouse



Union County junior Hannah Kazmierzak placed fourth at Stephens County's Reservation Run. Photo/Todd Forrest

was 24th (20:35), Noah Payne placed 26th (20:49), Logan Duckworth ended up 32nd (21:27) and Bryson Brooks was 42nd (22:20).

Ethan Hill took home 50th (23:00), Finn Lanham came in 52nd (23:49), JT Neal was 59th (24:09), Ean King placed 63rd (24:47) and Cooper Allen finished 78th (30:08).

Later in the week, the girls took home third at Murphy, North Carolina's Bulldog Meet on Thursday. Hunter placed third at 20:21, Adams was 13th (22:37), Natalie Payne came in 17th (23:27), Hyatt was 22nd (24:24) and Wagner finished 23rd (24:42).

Hussion was 25th (25:01), Mackenzie Bourbeau came in 30th (25:11), Katie Payne placed 33rd (25:33), Tanner was 38th (26:07), Schmitt finished 44th (27:14) and Barrett ended 54th (29:24).

The Union County men were led by Seiler's 11th-place finish (19:05) and Rotko's 15th (19:21). Hillman came in 21st (19:33), Nushtayev was 23rd (19:37) and Hogsed placed 25th (19:51) to round out the Panthers' top five. No team scores were available for the guys' race.

Union County races at White County's Mountain Invitational on Sept. 28

# Volleyball: Panthers head into the 8-AA home stretch 1-3 in region action

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First-place Banks County dealt Union County a 2-1 home loss on Tuesday, Sept. 19, ahead of the Panthers' busy four-match region slate this week.

The Panthers travel to Banks County on Tuesday for a tri-match with Athens Academy. Union hits the road once again on Thursday, visiting East Jackson to face the Eagles and Athens Academy.

As of this writing, Union County, East Jackson and Athens Academy are each battling for a top-four seed in next month's Region 8-AA tournament.

Meanwhile, Banks County, Providence and Fellowship Christian are all bunched together atop the standings.

Against Banks County last week, the Panthers took the second set 25-22 but couldn't recover from a 9-0 hole in a 15-7 set-three loss.

Union County jumped out front 4-1 in set one but Banks rattled off 10 straight points. The Panthers inched back within five on two occasions at 15-10 and 18-13 before the Leopards pulled away 25-15.



Charlei Robinson serves vs. Banks County. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union raced ahead 4-0 and 10-4 in set two and held a 12-9 edge on Charlei Robinson's kill. But Banks County scored nine of the next 11 points to grab an 18-14 advantage.

Maddy Adams moved Union within a point at 20-19, and Reese Jones' ace spotted the Panthers a 22-20 lead. Two kills from Katelyn Brown provided Union a bit of breathing room at 23-21 and 24-22 before Robinson's ace ended the set.

The Panthers also hosted Rabun Gap in Tuesday's non-region finale, falling 2-0 (25-

16, 25-15).

The Eagles took a quick 10-4 advantage when Mallory Rouse's block and a Brown kill had Union within four at 12-8. The Panthers kept it interesting for a moment at 17-15 until Rabun Gap put them away with an 8-1 run.

Union County grabbed early leads of 4-1 and 5-2 in set two, but Rabun Gap stormed ahead 14-7 and never looked back in a 25-15 win.

On Thursday, Sept. 21, the Panthers dropped a 2-0 (25-17, 25-12) road contest to Habersham Central.

# Local Racing Report: Tri-County

By Blake Lynch  
Racing Reporter  
North Georgia News

**Brasstown, NC** - Jason Deal's No. 7 was back at the track with David Payne driving it. Jason is a regular driver and track champion that was hurt in a work accident this summer.

Deal required surgery on Saturday and couldn't attend the race as planned.

This series was rescheduled from a previous rain out.

**602 A:** The winner was No. 56 Colton Berrong. Second was No. 23 CD McKinnon. Third was No. 117 Dylan

Beaver. No. 44 Bobby Elkins was fourth. No. 100 Copper Twiggs was fifth.

**602 B:** No. 22 Jody Russell finished first. No. 1 Daniel Helton was second. No. 30 Josh Wooten was third. No. T4 Tim Wright was fourth. No. 50 Jerry Byce came in fifth.

**Crown Vic:** The winner was Ricky Dyer.

**Open Wheel:** No. 7 Seth Wimpey took the win. Second was No. 77 Brawley Stillwell.

**Street Stock:** No. 21 Troy Turner picked up the win. A close second was No. 4 Roger Beaver. No.192r Robby

Lynch was third. No.01. Jacob Lynch was fourth. No. J69 Jim Weller placed fifth.

**Limited:** No. 22 Tucker Anderson took home the win. No. 81 John Howard came in second. No. 7 driven by David Payne for Jason Deal came in third. No.17 Brett Shook came in fourth. No. 11c Preston Crisp rounded out the top five.

**FWD:** No. X Tank Ingram was the winner. Following him was No. 32 Jim Exum for second. No. 28 Jason Coats was third. No. 8. Shawna Harkins was fourth. No 100 Travis Key was fifth.



No. 7 Strong: David Payne drove Jason Deal's No. 7 car in honor of the injured Deal.