

Football: Helcher's 3 touchdowns spark Union's second-straight win

By Todd Forrest
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Junior quarterback Logan Helcher accounted for all three of Union County's second-half touchdowns as the Panthers (2-2) pulled away from Class AAAA Pickens County 28-14.

Playing with a heavy heart following last weekend's automobile accident involving junior offensive lineman Hunter Payne, Union County opened the second half with 21 unanswered points to build a 28-7 lead early in the fourth.

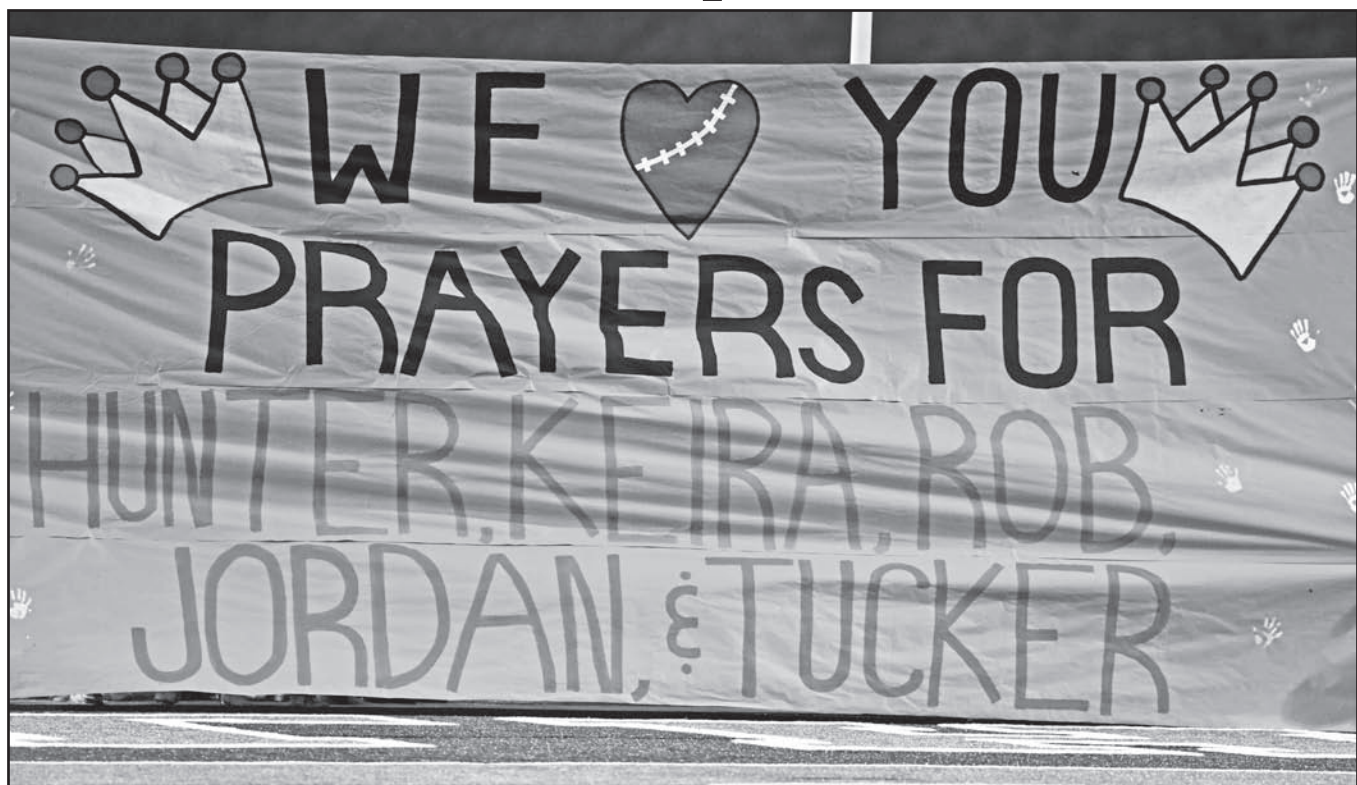
"I think they have used [Payne] as motivation," Union County head coach Brian Allison said. "They miss their teammate, they miss their friend and we would love to have him out here. We're just thankful that [the accident] didn't turn out worse than it did."

Tied 7-7 at the break, Helcher hit senior Noah Underwood for a 14-yard score -- and a 13-7 lead -- after both offenses traded punts to begin the third. The Union defense would raise its level of play, forcing consecutive interceptions after surrendering almost 100 yards passing in the second frame.

"Coming in, the key for us was to stop [Pickens County's] run game," Allison said. "They were running the ball very well coming in, and I think we did a really nice job [slowing] their run game. They had 35 carries for 105 yards (3 yards per carry), and I believe their quarterback probably had 40 yards just from scrambling when they went empty [in the backfield]."

"I feel like we did such a good job vs. their run game that it forced them to go spread and start throwing the football. They're very good up front on both sides of the ball and we couldn't get pressure on their quarterback. He's just a freshman and did a nice job throwing the football."

The Panthers' first pick of the half was hauled in by senior JJ Littles at near midfield. Unfortunately, their 37-yard field goal sailed wide left after a



The Union County football players had a lot on their minds last week, but according to Coach Allison, they used it 'as motivation.' Photo/Todd Forrest

third-down personal foul penalty tacked 15 yards onto a chip shot from 22.

The ensuing Dragons' possession was short-lived as senior Kaston Hemphill snagged the first-down throw on the far sideline, setting Union County up at the Pickens' 26-yard line.

On the second play of the series, a screen to Hemphill went for 9 yards plus a personal foul on the Dragons. With 1st and goal from the five, Helcher kept it himself to make it a 19-7 game. Then, a 2-point conversion pass to senior Mason McCombs spotted the Panthers a 21-7 advantage at the 3:42 mark of the third.

Pickens answered by driving deep into Union County territory but the defense turned the visitors away at the Panthers' 27.

With an opportunity to take a commanding lead, Helcher went to work, orchestrating a 73-yard drive that gave his team a 28-7 lead with 9:38 to play.

Faced with a 3rd and 7 during the drive, Helcher moved the sticks with a completion to Underwood. Two plays later,

the Union quarterback kept it himself for 12 yards. Following a give to Carson Walker for 6 yards, Helcher used his legs for pickups of 8, 9 and 11 yards -- the third resulting in a touchdown.

After the defense forced a quick three-and-out, the Panthers' offense was back on the move until a fumble breathed new life into the Dragons with under 6 minutes to play. Starting at their own 42, Pickens needed only four plays and 61 seconds to slice the Union County lead in half at 28-14.

With 4:37 remaining, Hemphill recovered the Dragons' onside kick attempt, and Helcher picked up a critical first down with another timely throw to Underwood.

Three plays later, Union's second fumble in four minutes kept Pickens County on life support with 1:38 to play, but the defense did its job and secured the 14-point victory.

During the first quarter, both offenses struggled to get on track with the two squads tallying four punts and a turnover on downs.

Three plays into the sec-

ond period, a third-down hand-off to Walker broke the scoreless tie when the junior running back weaved his way through traffic for a 17-yard touchdown.

On the ensuing Pickens County drive, the Dragons immediately went to the air for 29 and 27 yards. On 4th and 9 from the 25, Pickens' 42-yard field goal barely cleared the crossbar, but a false start took the 3 points off the board. However, the Dragons would connect for 20 yards on 4th and 14 to set up 1st and goal.

Union County kept Pickens out of the endzone, forcing another field goal try, this time from 22 yards. The Dragons weren't as fortunate this time as a low snap kept the shutout intact.

The Panthers weren't as fortunate on the next Pickens County possession after a punt gave the ball back to the Dragons with 5:10 to play before the half.

Starting from their own 25, a quick 17-yard gain had Pickens on the move. After converting 3rd and 2, a penalty brought up 2nd and 17, but a 10-yard gain followed by a

third-down pass interference penalty awarded the Dragons a fresh set of downs at the Union 11. Five plays later, Pickens tied the game with a 2-yard touchdown run with 27 seconds on the clock.

"For three-and-a-half quarters we only made one mistake and it was the pass interference in the endzone," Allison said. "Then we turned it over twice in the final four minutes so we need to fix those mistakes and get better. But I feel like, when compared to the Chestatee game, our mistakes have come down."

Moments later, on the kickoff, Walker broke free and immediately had Union in field-goal range at the Dragons' 30, but a holding penalty negated the return and sent the teams into the locker rooms tied 7-7.

Both teams would exchange punts to begin the third but Union's second possession started near midfield. On 1st and 15, following a false start, Helcher went up top and hit Hemphill for 39 yards down the Dragons' sideline.

Three plays later, Helcher found Underwood underneath

and the senior tight end powered his way into the endzone from 14 yards out.

Game Notes: Union County scored its first win over Pickens since 1983. Friday also marked the first meeting between the two since 1991.

The Panthers have now won six of the 11 meetings with the Dragons.

Helcher's 144 yards rushing was a career-high and the first 100-yard game for the junior QB.

Walker went over 100 yards rushing for the second straight night with 128.

After getting limited to negative yards rushing (-8) at Commerce, Union has gone over 200 yards on the ground in each of its last two contests.

Up next: Union County hosts Woodland-Cartersville from Class AAAA. The Wildcats enter with a 3-0 record and have outscored the opposition by a combined total of 107-26. However, Woodland's three opponents currently have a combined record of 2-8.

Despite the lack of quality wins, Coach Allison is still impressed with the Wildcats on both sides of the ball.

"They're a well-coached team and they're fundamentally sound," he said. "Defensively, they're a 4-3 defense and they're very good at what they do. Their 4-man front is solid and very physical."

Meanwhile, Woodland features a run-heavy offense out of a T-formation, utilizing three running backs and two tight ends.

While the Wildcats rely on three running backs, without question, the star of the offense is junior back Asa James, who leads the team in both yards rushing and yards receiving.

"They don't do a lot on offense, but what they do, they do it well," Allison said. "We will have to stop the run and do a good job tackling No. 22 (James), he's a really good player. The quarterback can run and he throws it pretty accurately too, so we have to make sure we take care of our responsibilities."

Cross Country: Union County runners begin postseason prep at Unicoi

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Helen - Union County Cross Country battled the competition and rainy conditions during a Region 8-AA tune-up race at Unicoi State Park on Tuesday, Sept. 29.

The Runner's Fit Mountain Invitational, initially scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 1, was split into two races to reduce the number of runners participating at once. As a result, Union County, and 15 other squads from across north Georgia, drew the Tuesday meet.

The Union men finished sixth, 14 points back of fifth-place North Hall and two points better than seventh-place Tallulah Falls.

Senior Luke Gambrell paced the Panthers with a seventh-place time of 17 minutes, 17 seconds. Junior Hunter

Hartzog was 14th at 18:02 and senior Hunter Payne placed 43rd, clocking in at 19:43.

Freshman Zander Rotko came in 50th at 19:42; senior Daniel Griggs was 69th at 21:05 and senior Zach Jackson finished 84th at 21:42. Sophomore Brady Hussion rounded out the Union County top-seven at 87th - crossing the line in 21:46.

The Union County ladies finished eighth overall with 204 points - three points back of seventh-place Franklin County and seven points better than ninth-place Tallulah Falls.

Junior Hana Gregory came in 24th with a time of 23:18 to lead the Purple and Gold. Junior Allie Brey finished 36th at 24:17; junior Campbell Chambers was 47th at 25:38 and junior Rachel Reid placed 53rd with a time of 26:14.

Junior Katelynn Rash took home 58th at 27:30 while freshmen Natalie Payne (29:08) and Abigail Pruitt (29:51) fin-



Junior Allie Brey was 36th at Unicoi. Photo/Todd Forrest

ished 63rd and 64th, respectively.

The Union guys placed fifth in the JV boys race be-

hind a 20th from freshman Benton Gregory (21:29). In his rearmview were a pair of Panthers with freshman Wes



Junior Hunter Hartzog placed 14th at Unicoi. Photo/Todd Forrest

Seiler taking 22nd at 21:32 and freshman Anderson Clouse in 23rd at 21:36.

Junior Brady Guild came

in 36th at 23:02, sophomore Ethan Rouse placed 40th at 23:16 and sophomore Jackson Pirie was 55th at 25:26.

Old Union Ladies Golf Association Club update

What a gorgeous day Monday, September 28, turned out to be for the Old Union Ladies Golf Association members! The weather was amazing, and the golf course was in picture perfect shape. The greens were aerated this week just in time for the second round of the club championship which has been postponed until Friday, October 9.

The ladies had some amazing scores for Monday due to the aeration, 2 putt rule. The scores will not be posted in Ghin. Congratulations to Geni Preece with an 83 and Gloria White with a 88. What great rounds, ladies!

The game was Hat'em where the 3 highest NET scores were thrown out. Two places were paid with 2 places in 4 flights. First place winners collected \$7.75 each, and second place winners earned \$5.00 each. Flight

A, 1st place Geni Preece; 2nd place Karen Mussoline. Flight B, 1st place Cindy Flanders; 2nd place Diane Walker. Flight C, 1st Place Vi Copenhaver; 2nd place Charlotte Maddox. Flight C, 1st Place Gloria White; 2nd place Cynthia Panter.

Two birdies were made by Martha Zimmer and Gloria White, \$4.25 each. Two chip-ins were made by Cynthia Panter and Vi Copenhaver, \$4.25 each. Closest to the hole was Nancy Hamilton who won a free round of golf courtesy of Old Union Golf Course. Congratulations to all!!

Recently, the Old Union league collected monies for Folds of Honor. The generous ladies of Old Union league donated \$500 with Jinna Wheeler and Jane Childers giving exceptional donations for this worthy cause! The contribution to Folds of Honor will be

made in the name of two fellow golfers in the league..... Geni Preece and Gwen Gibson who both served our nation proudly. Thank you, ladies, for your service to our country.

The ladies are very excited about their upcoming closing banquet which will be held at 11:30 AM on October 2, at Meeks Park. The league rented pavilion # 1, and Rib Country BBQ catering. The sides, salads, desserts and beverages will be furnished by the league ladies. Since there are many picnic tables under Pavilion #1, the ladies will have no problem social distancing. During the closing banquet, the winners of the 2020 Match Play will be announced along with other recognitions such as Most Improved Player.

The 2021 season will begin this coming May. If you are interested and would like to join or come as a guest, visit the website at www.OU-WGA.com or call/text Karen at 352-638-3649 or Connie at 706-633-7587. N10c7Z9JCA

Primitive Weapons Deer Hunting Season Opens Oct. 10

Deer hunters, the week-long primitive weapons deer hunting season opens Saturday, Oct. 10.

Last year, almost 30,000 hunters took to the woods with muzzleloaders, bringing in more than 6,000 deer, according to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division (WRD).

"Fall is here and it's time to zero in your muzzleloader, because primitive weapons season is just around the corner," said Charlie Killmaster, state deer biologist with the WRD Game Management Section. "So few hunters take advantage of hunting with muzzleloaders compared to firearms, but it is like the calm before the storm. And, if you do head to the woods during this week-long season, be sure to take a kid hunting with you, and remember they can use any modern rifle during the primitive weapons season."

Over one million acres of public hunting land is available to hunters in Georgia, including more than 100 state-operated wildlife management areas. Many areas offer special hunts throughout the season, including primitive weapons hunts. Dates and locations for hunts are available in the 2020-2021 Georgia Hunting Seasons and Regulations guide (<http://www.eregulations.com/georgia/hunting/>).

Youth, under 16 years of age, may hunt deer with any legal deer firearm during Primitive Weapons Season, including during any wildlife management area primitive weapons hunts.



Brian Roland at Dixon Memorial WMA

Quick Basics: During the primitive weapons season, hunters may use archery equipment, muzzleloading shotguns (20 gauge and larger) and muzzleloading firearms (.44 caliber or larger).

The season bag limit is 10 antlerless deer and two antlered deer (one of the antlered deer must have at least four points, one inch or longer, on one side of the antlers). Special regulations apply to archery-only counties and extended archery season areas.

All deer hunters, including archers, are required to wear a minimum of 500 square inches of daylight fluorescent orange above the waist during primitive weapons season. Scopes and other optical sighting devices are legal for muzzleloading firearms and archery equipment.

To pursue deer in Georgia, hunters must have a valid hunting license, a big game license and a current deer harvest record (available in the Outdoors GA app or as a paper copy print-able from your license account). Licenses can be purchased online at www.GoOutdoorsGeorgia.com, by phone at 1-800-366-2661, or at a license agent (list of agents available online).

Once you harvest a deer, you must report it within 24 hours through Georgia Game Check. Deer can be checked on the Outdoors GA app (useable with or without cell service), at www.GoOutdoorsGeorgia.com, or by calling 1-800-366-2661.

For more information, visit <https://georgiawildlife.com/hunting/hunter-resources>.

BASKETBALL

**Union County Recreation Department
Basketball Registration
has been extended to Friday, October 9th**

Ages 5-12

Age you are September 1st is the age group you play in.
Registration fee is \$50 and open to both boys and girls.

Registration can be completed online
at unioncountyga.gov or at the Recreation Office.

If you need any additional information,
please call 706-439-6074.