

Baseball: Panthers blank North Murray 6-0

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

Chatsworth - Senior pitcher Lane Everett fired a complete game shut out to open the 2014 season.

Everett is coming off a 2013 season that saw him pick up First Team Region 8-AA honors and lead the Panther staff to the Sweet 16.

In the shutout at North Murray, he struck out 9 batters and didn't allow a walk as the Panther bats churned out six runs in support of its ace.

Sophomore Josh Daniel led off the contest with a walk and Everett followed with an RBI triple.

Senior Robert Prunier extended the lead to 3-0 when he brought home two. Sophomore Joseph Mancuso made it a 5-0 game with an RBI single, and Prunier scored the final run off a Mountaineer wild pitch.

"Not having seen any live pitching due to weather and our scrimmage being cancelled, we went up there and played pretty good," Union County Head Coach Brandon Bradburn said. "We still have a long ways to go and need to focus on situational hitting, but overall it was a great start to the season and I was so glad to see Lane come in there and dominate with pin-point control."

With the loss of eight players off last year's Region runner up squad, Coach Bradburn will have his work cut out for him, especially on the offensive side. The Region's Most Outstanding Player, Zach Odom is already smacking homers at Young Harris College and Wes Aulet is at Monteith College.



Second year Head Coach Brandon Bradburn (middle) will look to the experienced duo of senior Lane Everett (right) on the mound and junior Chase Barnett (right) behind the plate to get back into the State Tournament. Photo/Todd Forrest

Clean up hitter T Bentley, centerfielder Jared Croskey, left fielder Cody Davenport, and second baseman Copper Patton have also left, leaving six spots to fill in the lineup.

Luckily for Coach Bradburn, he returns one of the top

pitchers in Class AA in Everett, along with junior Tyler Odom, and sophomore Joseph Mancuso. Bradburn is also expecting some younger players to step up and fill the role of the No. 4 and No. 5 starter.

The Panthers have two

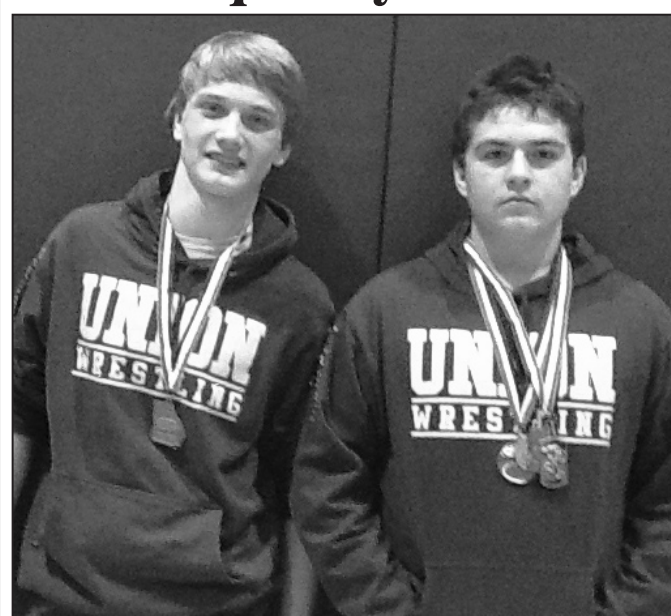
more weeks to prepare. With games against North Murray, Gilmer, and Murphy, NC, the Panthers will have a chance to fine tune for the Region schedule which opens on March 7th with a doubleheader against Oglethorpe County at 5 p.m.

2014 Baseball schedule

2014 Varsity Baseball Schedule			
Date	Opponent	Location	Time
2/14	Chestatee (S)	HOME	5:30
2/18	North Murray	North Murray	5:00
2/25	North Murray	HOME	5:00
3/1	Gilmer	Gilmer	11:00
3/1	Fannin	Gilmer	2:00
3/4	Murphy	HOME	5:00
3/7	Oglethorpe (DH)	HOME	5:00
3/10	Towns	HOME	5:00
3/11	Rabun	HOME	5:00
3/12	Towns	Towns	5:00
3/18	Jefferson	Home	5:00
3/21	Greene (DH)	Greene	5:00
3/24	Robbinsville	Robbinsville	4:00
3/25	Riverside Military	Riverside	5:00
3/28	Murphy	Murphy	4:30
4/1	Rabun	Rabun	5:00
4/4	Social Circle(DH)	HOME	5:00
4/8	Jefferson	Away	5:55
4/9	Hayesville	Home	5:00
4/15	Riverside Military	Home	5:00
4/19	Washington Wilkes(DH)	Away	Noon

(S) - SCRIMMAGE BOLD - REGION GAME(S) DH - DOUBLE HEADER

8th graders Breedlove, Nelson qualify for State



Union County Wrestling has their first state qualifiers after last weekend. After three years with a Middle School wrestling program, Eighth graders Bryan Nelson at 150 pounds, and Grizzly Breedlove at 210 pounds, qualified for State at the Gilmer Tournament. Both young men took first in their respective weight classes. They will be wrestling at the Georgia Dome at noon on Saturday to see if Union County will have its first state placer as well. Both wrestlers are first year wrestlers. Nelson won the King of the Mountain in Hiawassee, as well as the League Championship. Breedlove has been in the finals in five of the six tournaments this year and placed in each one. The Gilmer match was his first tournament win.

NASCAR 2014

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Dale Earnhardt Jr. wins Daytona 500

Dale Earnhardt Jr. is back on top after a convincing win in Sunday's Daytona 500.

Wrecks, rain, nor a stopped up car grill, could keep him from entering the Daytona 500 Victory Lane for the second time in his career.

He overcame a 6 hour and 22 minute rain delay, several big wrecks, four restarts near the end of the race, and even a black plastic bag that blew up on the grill of his car and stayed there for the last three laps of the 200-lap race.

"Man, to win this race was work," he said. "But what a feeling. All night long we had an awesome race car. We could fight them all off there at the end. I got some help from Jeff (Gordon) there at the end, and that really helped."

"The team put a lot into this car, and I think I just about got it all out."

His last win came 55 races ago, in 2012.

Denny Hamlin, winner of the Sprint Unlimited and Gatorade Duel races, finished a close second, but never threatened the swifter Earnhardt.

"We're happy to finish second, but obviously disappointed," said Hamlin. "We knew we had a good car, but after the rain something happened to it. It wasn't until the last few laps, that it seemed to come back."

The rain delay occurred after lap 38. All the fans and drivers could do was wait the bad weather out. NASCAR had over a dozen pieces of track-drying equipment, that seemed to work well and efficiently, but each time the track would be almost dried, another shower popped up.

On lap 123, Tony Stewart's No. 14 was taken to the garage with fuel pump problems. He finished 35th.

Clint Bowyer's No. 15 lost an engine on lap 125, and he wound up 42nd.

The first big wreck came during lap 147, after Kevin Harvick slipped up the track and into the No. 33 car driven by Brian Scott. Nine other cars were involved, including, Austin Dillon, Danica Patrick, Michael Waltrip, David Gilliland, Josh Wise, Aric Almirola, Michael Annett, Marcos Ambrose, and Paul Menard.

Most of the cars like the No. 66 Toyota driven by Waltrip did not return to the track.

"I saw a bunch of cars getting together up ahead of me, and I let off the gas," said Waltrip. "The next thing I knew, a black car had hit me and I was knocked into the middle of the pile."

Danica Patrick was finished for the night and was



Dale Earnhardt Jr. wins Daytona 500 credited with a 40th-place finish.

The last big wreck came on the last lap as the field of cars was exiting turn-4 and heading for the checkered flag. Only nine cars were able to cross the stripe under their own power.

Top-10 unofficial finishers: 1. Dale Earnhardt Jr., 2. Denny Hamlin, 3. Brad Keselowski, 4. Jeff Gordon, 5. Jimmie Johnson, 6. Matt Kenseth, 7. Ricky Stenhouse, 8. Greg Biffle, 9. Austin Dillon, 10. Casey Mears.

SMITH TAKES DAYTONA NATIONWIDE RACE

Regan Smith got a push from Trevor Bayne as the field of cars headed to the finish line on the last lap of Saturday's Nationwide race to beat Brad Keselowski by .013 seconds.

"We cleared the 7 (Regan Smith) on the restart, and he got a really strong push from the 6 (Trevor Bayne) and that was too much for me to be able to hold off," Keselowski said. "Coming off of (Turn) 4, we were all real tight there, and Kyle (Busch) wasn't able to stay with me and push, and that was enough to get Regan the win."

Keselowski and Kyle Busch couldn't make enough headway in the inside lane to counteract the efforts of Smith and Bayne up top, as drivers tested the limits of NASCAR's new rule against push-drafting, a ban communicated drivers in January.

Trevor Bayne finished third, followed by Kyle Busch, Elliott Sadler, Brendan Gaughan, Ty Dillon, Dylan Kwasniewski, Ryan Sieg, and Kyle Larson.

Saturday's Nationwide race saw the first enforcement in a points event of the "no-pushing" rule. In the sanctioning body's view, James Buescher was bump-drafting too aggressively after a lap

76 restart and was hit with a pass-through penalty that cost him a top-10 running position.

ROWDY KYLE GETS CLOSE TRUCK WIN

Kyle Busch caught and passed Timothy Peters a few feet from the finish line to win Friday night's Truck Series race at Daytona.

Busch's victory was his first at Daytona in the Truck Series and the 36th of his career.

"Certainly I'm going to cherish this one," Busch said. "It's a big win for KBM (Kyle Busch Motorsports), not necessarily just myself. Certainly, it's great for Toyota, too, and having Toyota get on the truck tonight and being in Victory Lane is pretty special."

The remaining top-10 finishers were: Johnny Sauter, Ryan Truex, Ron Hornaday, Ryan Blaney, Jeb Burton, Joe Nemechek, Jimmy Weller, and German Quiroga.

TELEVISION RATINGS: Last week's Sprint Unlimited race at Daytona earned a 2.0 rating and 3.5 million viewers on Fox Sports 1, the largest audience on FS1 since the network renamed itself last August. Despite the record, the telecast declined by 43 per cent in ratings and 38 per cent in viewership from last year on FOX. It ranks as the lowest rated and least-watched race since at least 2001, when statistics were first given.

Thursday's Budweiser Duels averaged 3.122 million viewers, making it the most-watched NASCAR "Duel" event since 2000.

WEEKEND RACING: The Cup and Nationwide teams are at the 1-mile Phoenix International Raceway. The trucks do not race again until March 29.

Sat., Mar. 1, Nationwide Series, race 2 of 33;

Starting time: 3:30 pm ET; TV: ABC.

Sun., Mar. 2, Sprint Cup, race 2 of 36; Starting time: 2:30 pm ET; TV: FOX.

Racing Trivia Question: Who was the first American driver to win a NASCAR race held outside the United States?

Last Week's Question:

Richard Petty said in an interview that the only way he thought Danica Patrick could win a race is if every other driver stayed home. What is your opinion?

Here are three of the several replies we received.

"Richard Petty is the 'KING' of NASCAR drivers and probably knows as much about car driving and car racing as anyone alive. Richard made a big mistake when he trashed Danica and I feel he owes her an apology 'BigTime'. Any fan that has watched Danica compete, knows that she drives fast, careful and does not take dumb risks and is very capable of winning a Sprint car race."...H.E.S.

"I agree with Richard Petty that she probably will never win a race, but she is on the track, trying, so I believe she deserves a little more respect than that."...J.P.

"Amen, I agree with him."...B.H.

Meanwhile in an ESPN interview, Petty accepted an offer by Tony Stewart to a head-to-head race with Patrick.

"I'm 76 years old, OK?" Petty said. "It's been 25 years since I've been in a race car. But I'll take that challenge." When pressed, he reaffirmed, "Oh, yeah. When is this going to happen?" When asked by Fox hosts about his critique of Patrick's career, he stated, "I judge by results."

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodges@race500.com.

3-on-3 basketball tournament

Union County will be hosting a 3-on-3 basketball tournament on March 14th.

The double elimination tournament is open to boys and girls ages 10 and under, 11-14, 15-18, and 18 and over.

No more than four players per team and there is a fee of \$45 per team.

Pre-register by March 13th. For more information contact Casey Jones at (706) 897-4600 or cjones@ucschools.org.



Blairsville Jeep Owners Group II news

Presidents Day our group visited the Union County Senior Center and Lazy R Nursing Home handing out Valentine's Day cards and candy to the residents. Moving along we also gave cards and candy to the volunteers at the Humane Society Mountain Shelter Blairsville Thrift Store and the volunteers at our Union County Hospital.

Our goal as a group is to add to the quality of life in our county, and we find activities that emulate

that goal give meaning to our group. Jeep rides over our local network of USFS roads let us enjoy our jeeps and pets in an outdoor environment second to none. We stop only to appreciate what Union County gives us and we will do our part to give back.

If you have a jeep and would like to join us, meet other people in the area, please contact us at 706-340-3772 for membership information.

Bowling scores

Monday Night Ladies: Pam Bierce 213, 189; Sarah Chumbley 189, 190; Joyce Trenton 202; Shae Roberts 214, 211.

Monday Night Men: Barry Kives 246; John Stevens 223, 243; Ray Everett 214, 252, 267, Series 733; Jeb Plott 246, 251, 267, Series 764; Mike Davis 211; Gary Brown 277; Ken Sampson 223; Taz Matetzschk 213, 223; BJ Gilbert 214; Ernest Rice 226; Austin Hedden 287; Joe Teague 202, 205, 224; Derrick Rice 225, 226, 216; Larry Cannan 226, 236, 200; DeJay DeJoseph 201, 226; Jason Swanson 235; Bob Bischoff 202; Johnathan Everett 206; Bob Brown 235; Richard Tanner 215; Pete Craig 217; Bill Smith 208, 248; Curtis Corn 213, 203; Dewey Allen 212; Kevin Mohan 234,

211, 223. Young @ Heart: Dewey Allen 259; Nell Rice 224; Ron Gaucher 225.

Thursday Night Fun Mix: Kirk Bass 205; DJ DeJoseph 206; Taz Matetzschk 256, 268, 185, Series 709; Dennis Snyder 205, 235; Mark Snyders 205; Ray Everett 269, 266; Jay Burrell 204, 207; Bonnell Thomas 205; Jerry Thomas 235; Shae Roberts 225, 212; Doug Mason 220; Jason Swanson 203; Scott Kistenmoch 218; Steven Bottinell 201; Daniel Brown 236; Jeb Plott 204, 215, 201; Devan Persaud 214; Dewey Allen 211; John Moore 201; Denise Baldwin 204; Zach Moore 224; Tim Moore 224; Mike Davis 206, 214; Larry Cannan 254, 224; Bob Landis 216, 247.