

# Amber Gooch leads the way at Commerce, Tallulah

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**Commerce** - Woody Gap tennis visited Area foe Commerce last Tuesday with both No. 1's picking up convincing victories over the opposition.

Lady Falcon, No. 1 Amber Gooch took an 8-3 win over Madison Maddox.

Later, Falcon No. 1 Eli Gooch knocked off Dillon Haggard by an 8-2 score.

"Eli and Amber are both athletic and very competitive and this often makes them successful in their matches," Woody Gap Tennis Coach Glenn Kough said. "They will both be big contributors for Woody Gap at the Area competition."

Kaniesha Martin dropped her match 5-8 to Rachel Andrews.

In other singles action, Dakota Etheridge fell 1-8 to Jonathan Nichols.

In doubles competition, Staci Clark and Shelby Tumlin fell behind early but rallied their way back to force a tie-breaker. Unfortunately the duo came up just short, dropping their match 8-9 to McClaine Martin and Madi Lumpkin.

The Falcons' duo of Casey McKim and Konnor Sosebee also took their match into extra sets before falling 8-9 to Lin Tong and Dawson Knick.

"Clark and Tumlin were down 7-4 and took 3 straight, it ended up 8-8 so the tie breaker



Amber Gooch

decided it, which we lost 1-7," Coach Kough said. "Mckim and Sosebee were neck and neck the whole way and it ended up 8-8, again we lost the tie breaker, 0-7."

Lauren Adams and Brooklyn Dockery came up on the wrong end of in their match against the Lady Tiger duo of Hannah Davis and Katherine Sanders.

Thursday, the tennis teams traveled to Tallulah Falls for another Area squad in Habersham County.

Amber Gooch came out on top 8-5 in her match against



Eli Gooch



Lauren Adams

Emily Reynolds.

"I think this is the best Amber has played all year," Coach Kough said.

Martin dropped her match 3-8, while Clark and Tumlin and Adams and Dockery fell in doubles, 5-8 and 3-8, respectively.

Eli Gooch suffered a rare defeat at the hands of Eric Benson, 3-8.

Etheridge and Wood, and McKim and Sosebee came out

on the wrong end in doubles play.

Woody Gap's Monday match with Lakeview was postponed and won't be made up until April.

Thursday, Woody Gap will travel outside of their classification to take on Gilmer County from Class AAAA.

The Falcons and Lady Falcons haven't been afraid to challenge the larger schools such as Fannin County (AAA) and Lumpkin County (AAAA). Gilmer County High School boasts an enrollment in the neighborhood of 1,400 students, while Woody Gap has 100 students in grades K-12.

After facing stout competition, Woody Gap will benefit from Class A splitting its public and private schools, leaving them with only Commerce and Towns to compete with from northeast Georgia.

"This is the first year that the public and private schools are separated for the region and state tournaments," Coach Kough said. "So Lakeview, Tallulah Falls, and the academies in Athens will have their own. I don't know about the other teams which are west of us. We are not quite sure what to expect at the Area competition because this is a first and there will be no seeding, only drawing names for the first round.

"The Towns girls are very good and we do not match up with them very well, however, we can compete with the Commerce teams and the Towns boys team."

Joe Collins

**Tips from the Range**

*Note to readers: Since it is the beginning of golf season we need to re-visit the proper way to build the swing from the beginning. I have rewritten the first several lessons in tips so you can work on improving your swing from the ground up and in the right order.*

In the first lesson we looked at what arguably could be called the "DNA" of the golf swing and that is the issue of balance. Without proper balance, a golfer has a poor chance of making a good solid golf swing. The rub of that concept is that there are many influencing factors that can affect your balance. One of the most affective ways to make sure good balance has a chance of being consistent throughout the swing is to establish a good address position that correctly sets the center of gravity in the proper position before we draw the club away. This means that the first thing you need to master is how to correctly make your stance.

When starting out as a beginner or trying to find the source of your swing flaws, one must look at the basics of the swing. Professional golfers often find that their individual problems are corrected by working on basics. This may seem trivial but basics are extremely important.

The stance is the first basic I would like to "address" as we begin our journey down the path to the correct golf swing. It sets the stage for everything that happens during the swing and allows you a proper start on the backswing.

To achieve the proper stance, one must first align the tips of your toes parallel to the designated target line. The target line is the desired path you want the ball to travel on so choose it wisely. There is no drill to correct carelessness.

Next, place your feet a little less than shoulder width apart and stand straight up from the ground with your back as straight as your spine will allow. From this position, keep your legs straight and bend from the waist so that your arms hang loose under the shoulders. Bring your hands together to a point directly under your chin and this will indicate where the grip of the club will fit in your final address position.

At this point, you should feel as though the upper body is "heavy" or leaning out over the ball and that your balance is forward toward the front of your feet. Notice that when you are in this position it would be impossible to use your lower body aggressively. This inability to use the legs affects the path of the club on the downswing. This poor distribution of weight that you feel is similar to the feeling you will

have when you are "over the top" on the downswing. This heaviness in the toes is the most common problem with balance even though your legs may be positioned correctly. The action of the downswing can pull the upper body toward impact as the arms enter the impact zone so beware of letting your balance lean forward on the downswing. You must stay away from the ball at impact so your arms will find the correct path throughout the downswing and can therefore extend through the hitting area.

Here is the difficult but crucial step for all golfers in finding the proper stance. While trying to keep the very bottom tip of the spine back over the heels and behind the back of your knees, bend said knees until you feel your center of gravity align over your ankles from the inside of the heels to the back inside area of the balls of your feet. This will place you in the athletic position that will allow you to return the club head to its original address position on the downswing. At this point, you should not feel as though you are leaning backward or forward but balanced completely on both feet. Imagine a balanced shortstop in baseball preparing to move left or right to field a ground ball and that feeling will tell you that your stance is correct.

It is very important that you maintain this center of balance as you start the downswing because the force you create from the top combined with the weight of your arms will try to pull you into the ball at impact. This ability to resist getting "heavy" over the ball is what separates a proper swing from a faulty one. It is vital that you hit the ball with the back of the forward hand and if you are heavy over the front of your feet through impact then the front wrist will break down and cause problems with contact at impact. The club will not continue on a true path past the ball at impact if the front wrist breaks down, this leaning forward balance problem promotes that breaking down of the front wrist. You will typically have to straighten your stance when this happens which causes you to pull the ball. The squaring of the front wrist keeps the arms rotating through impact and helps keep you away from the ball through the impact zone.

Practice this at home or at the range before your next outing and if you find your balanced stance, and hold it throughout the swing, you will find the fairway much more often. The stance sets the balance of the entire swing and promotes the usage of the big muscles in the body and that is very important in keeping the club moving in an uninterrupted path through impact so find a good balanced stance and stay with it.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

# UCHS basketball remembers the 2012-13 season

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Mike's Seafood hosted the 2013 Union County Basketball Banquet as the Cheerleading squad, Lady Panther, and Panthers basketball teams were honored on Sunday. Each were led by four stellar seniors who represented Union County High School with class over their four years.

Union County Cheerleading Coach Elizabeth Plott, and Head Basketball Coach David Tucker said goodbye to their seniors while honoring the athletes in their department of excellence.

The Union County senior cheerleaders are Cassidy Davis, Chelsi George, Chalonda Strickland, and Carlie Tanner. Lady Panthers seniors that made three State playoff appearances were Carly Adams, Jeanelle Arnold, Shawna Brown, and Hannah Hughes. The Lady Panthers finished 17-9 and won the Region 8-AA Regular Season.

The Panthers were represented by four seniors this season. C.J. Byers, Rhett McCombs, Zach Odom, and James Rowe guided the Panthers to an 18-8 season, the second highest win total since 2007.

The awards that were voted on by the cheerleaders went to Cassidy Davis - Best All Around, Chelsi George was named Most Spirited, the Most Improved award went to Molly Hayes. The Academic Award was given to Carlie Tanner. The Panther Award is given to the cheerleader who doesn't miss a practice or a game went to Amber Sykes. Coach Plott then handed out the Coaches' Award to Chalonda Strickland.

Union County Head Basketball Coach David Tucker was joined by Assistant Coaches Tina Dockery and Casey Jones to present the basketball awards.

"I'd like to thank all of you," Coach Tucker said. "Especially my wife, who has been with me now for 38 basketball seasons. I'd like to thank the parents and the kids for coming out and competing every night. I felt like we had a chance to win every time we took the floor. Both teams gave it their all, and I'm looking forward to next year."

Coach Tucker then challenged his younger players to step up in place of the outgoing seniors and continue to work on their games during the off-season.

"It's time for the sophomores and juniors to step up," he said. "These four seniors on the boys and girls have paved the way, so make sure you practice shooting the basketball."

Before handing out the hardware, Tucker took a moment to acknowledge the team's manager, April Zollinger.

"I'm not going to talk about everybody like this, but April was right there as our scorekeeper or whatever we needed. People think being the manager is easy, but when you're the manager for Casey (Jones), Coach Dockery, and



Union County Cheerleading award winners. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County Lady Panther award winners. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County Boys basketball award winners. Photo/Todd Forrest

myself, it's a tough job. So, April, we thank you."

The basketball awards began with senior Zach Odom and sophomore Brooke Maddox receiving the Free Throw Award for the 2012-13 season. Odom hit 96-of-113 free throws for 80 percent. Maddox was even deadlier from the stripe, hitting 29-of-35 for 83 percent.

The Do-It-All Award, and the Hustle Award on the girls side went to Arnold as the senior with the no-quit attitude was presented with a plaque from her coach, while the boys' Hustle Award went to Byers. Arnold led the Lady Panthers in total rebounding and steals. Byers was second in blocks and third in total boards.

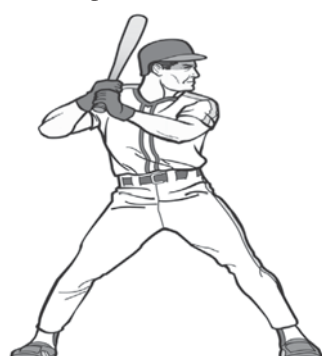
Another total job that goes unnoticed by many is the work done on the defensive end. The Union County Defensive Awards went to Brown for the Lady Panthers. Brown led Union with 64 defensive board in 2012-13 and was second on the team in blocked shots. The boys award went to junior Dylan

Coyne, who was second on the team in rebounding, steals, and blocks.

The Region 8-AA Player of the Year, Lauren Zollinger was given the Offense Award and the Most Valuable Player Award. The junior led Union in scoring, three-pointers made, free throws made, assists and shot a team-high 49 percent

## Batting Cages

Meeks Park Automatic Batting Cages now open for the season. Mon, Tues, Thurs, and Fri 5:30pm- 7:30pm. Sat from 10am-2pm closed on Wed.



from the floor.

McCombs was presented with the Offensive Award and Most Valuable Player for the boys.

The senior who reached 1,000 points in his 50th game, - a school record, led the team in scoring, field goals made, free throws made, three-pointers made, and was third in assists.

The Coaches Award was given to Hughes for her ability to adjust over the course of the season, and adapt during the course of a game, Tucker said. The versatile Lady Panther forward finished in the top five in every statistical category in 2012-13.

For his leadership on and off the floor, in the classroom, and the community, Rowe received the Panthers' Coaches Award and the Panther Award. The senior forward was third in scoring, first in assists and rebounds, and fourth in steals.

For leading by example for four years, adjusting to coaching and role changes, philosophies, and injuries, Odom picked up the boys' Do-It-All Award. The First Team All-Region selection was second in scoring, free-throws made, three-pointers made, assists, and steals.

At the opening of the banquet, Jay Stroman, on behalf of the Tip-Off Club thanked all the volunteers who worked concessions and sold raffle tickets.

"We raised more money this year than we have in the past 10-12 years. I'd like to single two people out if I could: Leslie Hughes for keeping the concession areas straight and Sondra George for all her help on the program."

For those who need their fix of Union County basketball before November, this spring and summer will have plenty to offer local basketball fans. The teams will hold practices on May 23rd, 24th, and 29th before heading off to Tennessee Wesleyan in Athens, Tenn for camps.

The girls camp will take place May 30th-Jun. 1st, while the boys travel to the Volunteer State from Jun. 3rd-5th.

Union County High School will host a camp from Jun. 17-22nd.



Coach David Tucker is presented with a gift from senior C.J. Byers. According to the Panther seniors, Coca Cola and crackers were two must-have items for Tucker during game time. Photo/Todd Forrest