

# Sports

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## Mother Nature puts Union's Region Championship bids on hold

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
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With one week remaining in the baseball and soccer regular seasons, the marathon that was the 2015 season comes down to the wire after rain postponed three baseball and three soccer games last week.

Meanwhile, Union County golf is gearing up for the Region 8-AA Tournament on Tuesday, despite seeing limited action after both Union squads took down rival Towns County last Monday at Brasstown Valley Resort.

Union's track team begins its postseason at Rabun on Wednesday morning with the finals taking place this Friday afternoon.



Senior golfer Lydia Gray

The Class AA State playoff picture, that was expected to come into focus last week, will be decided over the course of the next 2-3 days.

On Tuesday, the Union



Senior Maddy Morlock

County men's soccer team will pay a visit to third ranked Riverside Military Academy in a contest that was postponed from Monday. The Union-Riverside meeting was supposed to settle



Senior Ryan Burks

the Region 8-AA Championship, now, the final 8-AA standings won't be determined until the Panthers host Oglethorpe County on Wednesday, in another makeup game.



Senior Kyle Hamby

The Oglethorpe County Lady Patriots and the Lady Panthers were set for last Friday before rain delayed Union County's Region 8-AA title aspirations until Wednesday,

which is also Senior Night for Union.

While the men need two wins to claim the crown, the Lady Panthers need only a home win over Oglethorpe to claim the top spot in the Region.

Across the street, Union baseball has clinched a berth in the State Tournament's field of 32, but are looking to improve its playoff positioning and remain in the mix for first place.

On Wednesday, Union, with two region losses, will square off with one-loss Rabun, needing to win by at least five runs to take the tiebreaker from the Wildcats.

On Friday, the Panthers will host a doubleheader with Social Circle, who is also fighting to improve its playoff position.

## Second Annual Whittle Memorial Golf Tournament raising money for scholarships

By Todd Forrest  
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Last spring almost 60 golfers took part in the First Annual Derrick Whittle Memorial Golf Tournament and this year's tournament is expected to exceed that number when the balls are teed up on Friday May 1st.

The proceeds raised from this tournament will go to scholarships for Union County High School students and will be awarded on May 19th

However, this tournament is going to feature something different that wasn't a part of



The Whittle family at last year's Whittle Memorial Golf Tournament. Left to right: Sharon Whittle, Leigha Whittle, Nick Whittle, and Jim Whittle. Photo/Todd Forrest

last year's tourney.

Registration will be at 7 a.m., the morning of the tournament, followed by the opening ceremonies at 8 a.m., which will be a tribute to Georgia's fallen law enforcement officers.

The ceremony will feature the Georgia Law Enforcement Moving Memorial. The Georgia Chapter of Concerns of Police Survivors and Georgia Chapter 7 of the Blue Knights International Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club sponsors the Moving Memorial.

The wall includes more than 675 names of law enforcement officers who died on duty in Georgia.

There will also be one Honor Guard representing three law enforcement agencies in Georgia to present the colors in front of the memorial along with a bagpipe player.

And weather-permitting, the release of white doves.

Following the tribute, the tournament will begin with a shotgun start and will feature a closest to the pin and long drive contests along with a chance to win a free truck with a hole-in-one on a designated Par 3. First and second prizes will be awarded along with door prizes.

"I think we'll have more of a turnout this year," said Sharon Whittle, Derrick Whittle's mother. "But it's hard to tell because sometimes the players don't register until the morning of the tournament but we've had more feedback from people this year."

There will be drinks and snacks available during the tournament and a complimentary lunch will be served at 12:30 p.m. to all players.

"A big thank you goes to Union General Hospital, who is our primary corporate sponsor," Sharon Whittle said. "They have been very generous and really need the recognition."

For more details regarding the tournament you may contact Jim or Sharon Whittle at 706-781-7581.

### Bass tournament

A bass tournament will be held on Lake Chatuge - Woods Grove Ramp, Saturday, April 25th from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. Cost is \$50 per boat with 60% payback. Standard tournament rules apply. All proceeds to benefit the Young Cane Lodge Scholarship Fund. Any donations to the Scholarship Fund will be greatly appreciated.

For further information please call 706-897-1894.

## Busse, Garrison, Payne take first at Wilbanks

By Todd Forrest  
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**Demorest** - Last week Union County's track and field faced off with Class AAAAAA's Habersham Central and Region 8-AA rival Rabun County at Wilbanks School where the Panthers' long-distance runners stole the show.

Stephanie Busse recorded a personal best when she clocked in first in the 3200M race. Emma Garrison finished in first in the 1600M event, and Cole Payne was first in the 800M race.

Garrison was also second in the 800M race. Julia Lindsey (pictured) was second in the 3200M race. Luke Collins set a personal record when he placed second in the 1600M event and Jakob Brown checked in second in the 3200M race.

The boys 4x100 and 4x400, along with the girls' 4x400 all came in second.

Jacob Kelley recorded a



second place finish in the 100M sprint - setting a personal record in the process. He also placed second in the high jump, recording another personal best.

Ralston Drake took home second in the 200M sprint with Kelley placing behind him in third. Zach Stone picked up a second place finish in the triple

jump.

Dylan Dockery took third and set a personal record in the 800M race, while Evan Browning was third in the 3200M race.

The Region 8-AA meet will begin at 10 a.m. on Wednesday at Rabun County with the finals at 4:45 on Friday.



Derrick Whittle

**UNION COUNTY LADY PANTHERS SOFTBALL CAMP**  
APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> 2015 10:00-1:00  
Fundamentals of throwing, hitting, fielding and baserunning  
Location: UCHS Softball/Baseball Complex  
CAMP GRADES 1<sup>ST</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup>  
CAMP COST: \$25.00 (Make checks payable to UC Lady Diamond Club)

**SEND FORM TO:**  
Camp Director- Jessica Stewart  
Mail to: 165 Elementary way Blairsville, Ga 30512  
(706) 897-7372  
jstewart@ucschools.org  
or drop off form at Union County Elementary School

**BRING TO CAMP:**  
Glove  
Bat/Helmet- optional  
water bottle  
tennis shoes and deats  
for concession-optional

"Registration will also be available the day of camp starting at 9:00am"

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

GRADE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PARENTS/GUARDIANS CELL PHONE #

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

T-SHIRT SIZE: (CIRCLE ONE)  
YOUTH: S M L ADULT: S M L XL

I certify that my dependent as listed above has had adequate physical exam and is physically able to participate in the camp activities. I authorize the coaching staff of the Union County Panthers camp to supply any treatment, which they deem necessary due to an accident, injury, illness that occurs to my dependent.

Parent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Area students compete in Air Rifle Junior Olympics

Three of our five North Georgia Airheads (a name agreed upon by the shooters) traveled with their coaches and parents to North Georgia College in Dahlonega on Saturday, 26 March to compete in the 2015 Civilian Marksmanship 3 Position Air Rifle Junior Olympics Georgia State Championships.

The tournament consisted of 20 shots from each of the prone, standing and kneeling positions. The match is fired on electronically scored targets at a distance of 10 meters, with a total score of 600 points.

They were joined by 22 shooters from other clubs in Georgia. Similar matches were fired in two other locations in Georgia. The Airheads have only been shooting since October 2014 and were against shooters who were "in the game" for several years.

The Airheads are shooting in the Sporter Rifle class.



Members of the North Georgia Airheads

They were competing against shooters firing in the Precision Rifle Class. There is a significant advantage to the Precision class both with respect to the guns and the support equipment and clothing.

Alexis Ledford was only 9 points behind the Precision group firing a 521/600 followed by McKenzie Henderson with 482/600 and Olivia Adams at 471/600. (Remembering the "scoring 10" is a dot.)

These athletes are preparing to complete this year's

season on 2 May, firing the Georgia 4-H State Championships at Rock Eagle 4-H facility in Eatonton, GA. We will be taking 5 shooters to this match to include Austin Adams and Madison Chalker in addition to the three mentioned above.

Oh yeah! Not to be forgotten, these athletes will be accompanied by Volunteer Coaches, A.T. Sorrells, Gene Blackburn, Steve Curlee and Ed & Verlee Jones. Wish them luck.

Submitted by Ed Jones

## NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Kenseth wins in Thunder Valley

BRISTOL, Tenn.—Matt Kenseth and his team outlasted rain, four red flag periods, and a slew of wrecks, to win Sunday's Sprint Cup race that lasted over ten hours, and consisted of 511 laps around the .54-mile track.

"What a race," said Kenseth. "I didn't think it would ever end. But this is what it takes to be a championship team. We've got to continue putting ourselves in a place so we can win."

Kenseth started on the pole, but relinquished the lead to Kevin Harvick early in the race. He never regained it until lap 481 after Kurt Busch, the leader, pitted for four fresh tires.

On lap 483 there was a big pileup of cars caused by Tony Stewart. One of the cars taken out was the No. 5 driven by Kasey Kahne.

"Well, Tony just decided to spin me," said Kahne. "I don't know what his deal was."

There was another caution on lap 392, when Kenseth's teammate Carl Edwards, who was running second, slipped and slid into the outside wall, bringing out the race's last caution.

Due to a light shower NASCAR red flagged the race and brought all the cars down on pit road. The track was dried in less than twenty minutes, and when the race restarted it was a green-white-checked finish.

Kenseth got a good jump on the second place car driven by Jeff Gordon. Jimmie Johnson, who had been involved in three separate accidents, got by Gordon for second. He was unable to catch Kenseth, and finished as runner-up.

"It was an awesome finish to a wild night," said Johnson. "The team won this race. They patched up my car every time I messed it up."

Jeff Gordon finished third, followed by Ricky Stenhouse, Ryan Newman, Tony Stewart, Kyle Larson, Justin Allgaier, Danica Patrick, and Austin Dillon.

Two teammates Joey Logano and Brad Keselowski were involved in the race's first wreck during lap 19. Keselowski, who was running just ahead of Logano spun and lost it. Logano had no place to go and ran into the rear of Keselowski's No. 2.

The first major pileup occurred during lap 278. The No. 41 driven by Kurt Busch got sideways, and slipped off the track into Jimmie Johnson's No. 48. Nearly half of the field either spun or bumped into another car.

The second big one came on lap 310. Jimmie Johnson was in a hurry trying to get back to the front and brushed the rear of No. 26, driven by Jeb Burton. Both cars spun out. Several cars be-

hind them slipped, slid, and ran into each other, including Kevin Harvick, who broadsided the No. 18 driven by David Ragan that was sitting in the middle of the track.

"I don't know what happened with Jimmie," said Jeb Burton. "I've never had any problems with him, I just know that he tapped me, and sent me spinning. You try to give those guys as much room as you can."

Denny Hamlin started the race as usual in his No. 11 Toyota. During the first red flag period at lap 23, he relinquished his seat to Erik Jones, because of muscle spasms in his neck.

The start of the race was rain delayed, then after 23 laps had been run; it was stopped for almost four hours. There were two more brief red flag periods due to light showers. The race, which was scheduled to start at noon, did not end until 10:35 pm ET.

Top-16 Chase leaders after 8 of 26: 1. Harvick-314, 2. Logano-284, 3. Truex-281, 4. Johnson-258, 5. Keselowski-255, 6. Earnhardt-241, 7. Kahne-237, 8. Kenseth-236, 9. Gordon-224, 10. Almirola-226, 11. Hamlin-223, 12. McMurray-223, 13. Patrick-211, 14. Menard-210, 15. Edwards-203, 16. Newman-201.

### LOGANO LEADS WIRE TO WIRE AT BRISTOL

Joey Logano put on a strong performance in Saturday's Xfinity Series race as he led every lap of the 300-lap race.

"That's amazing," said Logano. "To be able to lead the entire race surprises even me. When you get into leading a lot of laps, something usually goes wrong. Today everything went right."

Daniel Suarez, the young Joe Gibbs Racing driver from Monterey, Mexico, who is in his rookie season as an Xfinity driver finished second. It was his best career finish and first race at Bristol.

Suarez's transition to the Truck and Xfinity Series level hasn't been quite as smooth a ride as he had hoped. He has finished outside the top-10 more often than inside in his first 13 races.

"All day long we had a good car," he said. "We improved the car at every single stop and that's the most important thing is to learn, to improve. To be honest my team is doing an amazing job. They are having a lot of patience with me as a rookie and it's been a good day. I'm very happy."

Chris Buescher was third, and then it was Erik Jones, Ty Dillon, Chase Elliott, Kevin Harvick, Brian Scott, Brendan Gaughan, and Elliott Sadler.

Top-10 points leaders after 7 of 32: 1. C. Buescher-258, 2. T. Dillon-258, 3. Elliott-246, 4.



Matt Kenseth, winner of Bristol Sprint Cup race

D. Wallace-236, 5. Reed-220, 6. Sadler-215, 7. Gaughan-211, 8. Smith-211, 9. Scott-205, 10. Suarez-202.

### KYLE BUSCH TALKS ABOUT HIS INJURIES

In a press conference last week Kyle Busch said he does not know when he will get back into a race car but hopes he can return by July as he continues to recover from a broken right leg and a broken left foot suffered in a crash Feb. 21 at Daytona.

He said he is healing well and still has a small crack in his right leg as well as a walking boot on his left foot. Kyle Busch suffered a broken right leg and a broken left foot in a Feb. 21 crash at Daytona.

"First and foremost, I have to please my doctors. ... They say my recovery is going faster [than expected]," Busch said. "I don't even ask. They won't release me a timetable."

Busch said the wreck was his fault, being greedy trying to win the race. He was trying to push teammate Erik Jones, who ended up spinning. While Jones was spinning, he took the air off the rear of Busch's car, sending him into the skid into the wall.

NASCAR has made no decision on whether it will waive the rule that a driver must compete each race weekend in order to be eligible for the Chase for the Sprint Cup. NASCAR also could waive the rule that requires a driver to be eligible with a win and a top-30 placement in the regular-season standings, although it has not waived that rule when issuing past waivers.

**Weekend Racing:** The Cup and Xfinity Series will continue their short track racing as they head to the .75-mile Richmond track for two night races. The trucks do not race again until May 8.

Fri., Apr. 24; Xfinity Series race 8 of 32; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sat., Apr. 25; Sprint Cup race 9 of 36; Starting time: 7 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

**Racing Trivia Question:** What year did Tony Stewart break into the Sprint Cup ranks?

**Last Week's Question:** How many Cup championships did NASCAR Hall of Famer Joe Weatherly win? **Answer:** Two, in 1962 and '63.

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