

Sports

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Lady Panthers blast Rabun to clinch State berth

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Tiger - The Union County Lady Panthers can finish no lower than third place in Region 8-AA following a convincing 5-0 victory at Rabun County.

Union was supposed to visit Oglethorpe County last Friday to determine second place but rain washed out the vital Region 8-AA matchup. The contest was rescheduled for Monday night.

Last Tuesday, deep in Wildcat country, the Lady Panthers got on the board in the 11th minute of the game when Maddy Morlock scored on a feed from Camryn Carter.

Unfortunately, Union was unable to add to its 1-0 lead in the first half.

"We missed a couple of opportunities but she hit it from the center of the 18 on a great pass from Cam (Carter)," Lady Panther Head Coach Tim Hunter said. "We put a lot of pressure on them but were not able to get another goal in the first half."

But the second half was a different story.

In a span of about 25 minutes, the Lady Panthers turned a 1-0 struggle in a 5-0 statement.

In the seventh minute of



Erin Innis scored Union's fifth goal at Rabun County.

the second half, history repeated itself when Carter hooked up with Morlock again.

Just 81 seconds later Mary Murphy hooked up with Morlock for a 3-0 Union County advantage.

In the 14th minute of the half Braedyn Robbins found Alyssa Arnold for a goal and in the 32nd minute Carter recorded her third assist when she hit Erin Innis for Union's fifth and final goal.



Maddy Morlock recorded a hat trick at Rabun County when she scored the first three goals of the game. Photos/Todd Forrest

"Erin had a great half and game overall as they really didn't have any answer for her on the field," Coach Hunter said. "She was able to dribble around everyone and set up our players for shot opportunities."

"In the second half we really opened it up and scored three goals in seven minutes. That slammed the door shut and we were able to sub liberally. I put some defenders up front and put all the seniors up

front, at one point in time, and Erin got her second goal of the season."

The Lady Panthers picked up their fourth straight win over Rabun while improving to 7-1-2 overall and 4-1 inside the Region, despite Rachel Vester playing sparingly after suffering an injury in the first half.

"Losing her speed hurt us offensively," Coach Hunter said.



Keeper Joanna Van Pelt led the defense in another shutout.

The victory was also another shutout for the Lady Panthers defense. Each one of Union's seven wins have come by holding the opposition to goose eggs in the scoring column.

In 10 games thus far, the Lady Panthers have allowed a total of 6 goals. In five Region 8-AA contests, Union has given up two goals, but just one goal has come in regulation, while the other goal came during an

overtime session.

"Marissa Spaulding played very well on defense and Joanna Van Pelt played well at keeper," Coach Hunter said. "Katie Miller probably played her best game at right defense for the season. Overall the back line of Marissa (Spaulding), Ansley (Garrison), Katie (Miller), and Emma (Smith) did a good job of shutting down their runs quickly and didn't allow them an open opportunity to score."

The Oglethorpe County game will be the final Region contest of the year for Union.

A win allows Union to host the first round of State, which is critical since this year, 8-AA has drawn the always loaded, private-school league otherwise known as Region 6-AA in the opening round. Last year's State Championship was between 6-AA's G.A.C. and Lovett.

The Lady Panthers have not hosted a State playoff game since 2004. The only other time the Lady Panthers have hosted was back in 2000.

On Wednesday, Union County will host Fannin County at 5 p.m. The Lady Rebels are 2-9-1 on the season and fell 6-0 to the Lady Panthers back on Feb. 21st in Blue Ridge.

The makeup game with Towns County has been permanently canceled.

Everett goes eight innings; keeps RMA from playing spoiler

Panthers two wins away from hosting first round after Senior Night scare

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Union County's hopes of hosting the first round of State were hanging by a thread on Tuesday when Riverside Military Academy did its best to spoil not only the postseason, but the Panthers' Senior Night as well.

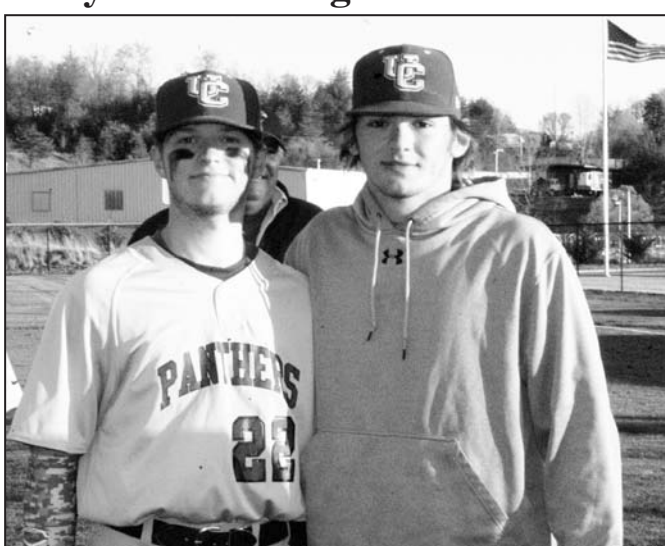
The visiting Eagles and their ace Collin Pettell stifled the Panthers' bats for eight innings, however Union's senior ace Lane Everett was just a little bit better and let his team to steal a run in the eighth, allowing the Panthers to come out on the winning end of their first extra-inning affair of the season.

"Our two seniors really came up big for us," Union Head Coach Brandon Bradburn said. "Lane threw exactly 100 pitches in eight innings of work, only allowing three hits. He didn't have his best game offensively, but I really liked how he didn't let that affect him on the mound."

The Eagles, who were fighting for their postseason lives, needed a win in Blairsville to reach State, and they gave the Panthers all they could handle.

"(Riverside's) ace pitched a great game against us," Coach Bradburn said. "He has three above average pitches, and he can throw them at any time he wants for strikes."

Last month, Union went to Gainesville and blasted Riverside



Seniors Garrett Nix and Lane Everett. Nix picked up the game-tying RBI and Everett got the win on the mound. Photo/Todd Forrest

10-1, but this was a different Eagle squad with Pettell on the mound. Right away they proved they wouldn't be intimidated and put up a run in the first inning.

Union got the run back in the fourth when senior Garrett Nix came through on Senior Night with an RBI walk.

"Garrett came through in the clutch with a bases loaded walk, on a full count," Coach Bradburn said.

The game went into extras and Coach Bradburn continued to ride the right arm of Everett, who sat the Eagles down in order in the eighth inning. Riverside's coaching staff also decided to rest its hopes on their ace but weren't

as fortunate. In Union's half of the eighth, sophomore Lance Rich entered the lineup and took the first pitch he saw in the back to put the winning run aboard. The Eagles shot themselves in the foot again when a pick off attempt bounced into right field, allowing Rich to move into scoring position. Junior Jackson Burks would ground Pettell's 2-0 offering to short but an errant throw struck a Riverside coach sitting in the entrance to the dugout which resulted in pinch runner Brown being awarded home for the game winner.

"It was a crazy way to end a game," Coach Bradburn said. "All in all, it was one of the most intense and hard fought games



Joseph Mancuso (9) celebrates Union's win via a walk-off throwing error/interference in the bottom of the eighth. Photo/Todd Forrest

I've ever coached and I am very thankful we came away with a win on Senior Night."

The Eagles took a 1-0 lead in the first after Everett hit a batter and allowed a one-out walk. With two aboard, Pettell singled to center giving Riverside an early advantage.

Everett would settle and put away the next eight Eagle batters but Union suffered from a power outage at the plate. A one-out single by Chase Barnett went to waste in the second inning. Hunter Hughes drew a one-out walk in the third but was the victim of a questionable call on the base paths, and the Panthers continued putting up goose eggs in the run column.

and threw a strike to Mancuso at first for a 6-3 double play.

"One of the best things about the game was our defense," Coach Bradburn said. "It was easily the best defensive game we've had all season. Hunter Hughes has really solidified his spot in the infield. I've always known he was an athlete, and a very good baseball player. We have had him all over the place defensively, but it is clear that he has to be in the infield with his glove."

Afterwards, Union honored its seniors Nix and Everett.

"The one thing I will remember about Lane is how mentally tough he is," Coach Bradburn said. "One thing I will remember about Garrett is how willing he is to do whatever it takes to win and be a great teammate."

On Tuesday, Union visits Washington-Wilkes for a 2 p.m. doubleheader. The teams were supposed to meet on Saturday but were rained out. The Panthers need the two wins to clinch second and home field for the first round of State.

Wilkes is currently seventh in Region 8-AA with their only wins coming over last place Greene County, but Coach Bradburn says that the Tigers are a scrappy ball team that won't roll over to anyone, especially at home.

"We will have to get the bats going against Washington Wilkes and hopefully ride that momentum into the playoffs," Coach Bradburn said.

Golf: freshman Horinek paces Lady Panthers into State Sectionals

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Monroe - The Union County Lady Panthers golf team is headed to the State Sectionals in Waycross next month.

Union County was led by freshman Maddie Horinek who finished second overall with a score of 96.

The challenging Georgia Club played host to the Region 8-AA Golf Tournament and the Lady Panthers took third with a two-person total of 201.

Horinek's 96 and Kacie Godwin's 105 were enough to get Union County into Sectionals.

The Panther men weren't quite as lucky. They also finished third in 8-AA but their four-person total of 372 was 12 shots back of the 360 needed to advance to Sectionals.

Grant Schuette and Nathan South each fired a 90. Brady Lawn and Jeremy Herum each shot a 96. Brett Baker finished with a 97 and Colby Jones a 98.

Other Lady Panther scores were Lydia Gray, who

shot a 110 and Autumn Johnson shot a 126.

Sectionals will be held at The Lakes Golf Course at Laura S. Walker State Park in Waycross.

The Lakes was voted the 2009 Best Municipal Golf Course and takes advantage of the native sand for many of the bunkers. The course is also home to three large lakes and the Okefenokee Swamp.

From the back tees (black) the course plays at nearly 6,600 yards. From the front tees (red) the course has a 66 rating and a 106 slope.



Lady Panthers golf team: (L-R) Kacie Godwin, Autumn Johnson, Lydia Gray, Maddie Horinek

Garrison continues to own 8-AA as Union track sends six to Sectionals



Kim Coyne, Allie Stroman, Madison Rich, Emma Garrison, Julia Lindsey, and Amy Cummings are all headed to Sectionals.

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Jefferson - Union County's Emma Garrison is the Region 8-AA Champion in the 1600M race and placed second in the 800M event.

Julia Lindsey placed second in Region in the 3200M event. She and Garrison advance to Sectionals in two events. Lindsey will run in the 3200M and the 1600M, while Garrison will take part in the 1600M and 800M.

Cristian Garcia is also advancing to Sectionals after taking fourth place in the men's 800M event.

The ladies' 4x400 relay team of Garrison, Kim Coyne, Amy Cummings, and Allie Stroman came in fourth place to reach Sectionals.

Jakob Brown just missed out on Sectionals after running a 12:35 in the 3200M event.

In order to qualify for Sectionals, each runner must get past Region Preliminaries by finishing in the top three in their heat, or have the next

two fastest times. Then they must get past Region Finals by finishing in the top four of all the qualifiers from the preliminaries.

"It is a great accomplishment for these runners to advance past Region in the limited amount of time that we had in our season," Coach Shannetta Reece said. "We have our focus on doing well at Sectionals so we can advance to the State Championships."

The Sectional Meet is Saturday at Greater Atlanta Christian in Norcross.