

Sports

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UCHS athletics pass first round tests with flying colors

Soccer sweeps with a pair of shutouts, baseball outcores Manchester 19-5, Garrison to race for State title

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Extending the sports season into May is becoming a common occurrence in Union County with the Panthers baseball team and both its soccer squads reaching the Sweet 16 in three-of-the-last-four years.

Also, Union County senior and two-time State Champion Emma Garrison has earned the opportunity to close out her UCHS career the way it began - standing atop the podium as a State Champ. Over the weekend, Garrison qualified for the Track and Field State Championship meet with a third place finish in the 1600 Meter race.

Last week, Union County made it look easy with the Lady Panthers soccer team scoring seven goals in the opening 16.5 minutes during a 9-0 victory over Chattahoochee County on Friday.

The baseball team followed up the Lady Panthers' dominance with a 12-3 game two victory after taking game one 7-2 over Manchester.

All of this came on the heels of the Union County men's soccer team, who opened the post-season on Thursday with a 6-0 win over Temple.

Union's guys have been



Senior Rachel Vester vs Chattahoochee County. Photo/Todd Forrest

playing shorthanded over the last three weeks without the services of starting junior midfielders Lawson Baenninger and Sam Seiler, who returned for the opening round of State. However, the Panthers were without junior starter Adam Bachman, but had little trouble with the Tigers.

Bachman will return for this week's contest as the Panthers (9-3-1) will play the role of Union County's road warriors

as they travel to No. 8 Putnam County to square off with the 16-1-2 Eagles on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.

Meanwhile, baseball and Lady Panthers soccer will remain at home on Wednesday with the Lady Panthers (11-2) hosting Berrien County, the No. 2 team from Region 1-AA, who will enter Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium sporting a 10-8-1 record, fresh off a 3-1 win over Putnam County.



Senior Jesus Mancillas vs Temple. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union County (17-7) baseball will host Bleckley County (18-9), who edged Early County 3-2 and 8-6 in round one.

The Royals finished the regular season as the No. 2 seed from Region 4-AA.

Union County is the only team remaining from 8-AA after No. 3 Rabun County and No. 4 Oglethorpe County were swept.

No. 2 Social Circle split its first two games before dropping the third to Heard County.

Riverside and Social Circle's soccer teams will join Union's boys in the second round, while Rabun County fell to Bremen in round one.

On the girls side, Social Circle and Rabun County advanced, while Oglethorpe County was eliminated by Bremen.

Union County Track and Field participated in the State Sectionals on Saturday at Greater Atlanta Christian but were unable to complete all events due



Senior Lance Rich vs Manchester to seven weather delays.

However, Garrison managed to beat the weather and the majority of the field in the 1600M event - placing third and qualifying for the State Championship meet.

The multiple-time Region champ clocked in with a time of 5:25 - her best time in the event since 2014.

As of this writing, Union was scheduled to conclude sectionals on Monday evening.

Lady Panthers blast Chattahoochee Co. behind Sherman's hat trick

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Despite a late start, the Lady Panthers made quick work of Chattahoochee County with seven first half goals that resulted in a shortened contest.

Leading 1-0, just past 11 minutes in, Union County exploded for six goals during a span of 5 minutes and 7 seconds.

A goal by senior Rachel Vester, less than two minutes in put the Lady Panthers on the board, then freshman Madison Yost kickstarted the scoring barrage with a goal in the 12th minute.

Exactly 83 seconds later, senior Ansley Garrison made it a 3-0 game. Freshman Anzly Sherman scored the first of her three goals just 24 seconds after Garrison's score.

Sherman struck again almost two minutes later to make



Anzly Sherman beats a pair of Chattahoochee County defenders for her third goal of the game. Photo/Todd Forrest

it 5-0. Less than 50 seconds later, Sophomore Brenna Innis extended the lead to 6-0.

Innis would bring the first half to a close with another goal, just 27 seconds later.

Leading 7-0 after less than 17 minutes of action, the first half was shortened due

to a "mercy rule," which also shortened the second half to 20 minutes.

During the 16-minute, and 37-second first half, sophomore Layne Baenninger recorded four assists, Vester had two, and junior Braedyn Robbins dished off one assist.



Brenna Innis (4) and Ansley Garrison (2) combined for three goals during Union's 9-0 first round victory. Photo/Todd Forrest

With the second half trimmed to just 20 minutes, junior Joanna Irvin scored Union's eighth goal off an assist from Sherman with 6:59 to play.

Sherman scored her third goal of the game just 17 seconds later with freshman Maddie Sutton picking up the assist.

Sophomore keeper Emmi Schakat recorded her ninth



Sophomore Layne Baenninger

shutout of the season.

The Lady Panthers will be at home on Wednesday looking to reach the Elite 8 for the second straight year when they host Berrien County at 4 p.m..

Panthers cruise into second round with sweep of Manchester

Union faces a step-up in competition from 18-loss Manchester to 18-win Bleckley County

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The Manchester Blue Devils held an early 2-0 advantage in game one over the two-time defending 8-AA Champion Union County Panthers thanks to a run in the first and another in the third.

Their lead was short-lived as the Panthers got two in the third and four in the fifth, en route to a 7-2 victory. Union continued to pound Manchester pitching with two runs in the first inning of game two, and one more in the second.

After being held scoreless in the third inning, the Panthers scored in the final four innings, including six in the sixth to turn a 5-2 contest into an 11-2 blowout.

Senior Lance Rich improved to 5-2 on the year with 11 Ks over a 7-inning complete game on the mound.

Sophomore Candler Colwell finished 2-for-4 at the plate with 3 RBIs, two stolen bases, and one run scored.

Senior Andrew Brown drove in a pair of runs, sophomore Patrick Baggett went 2-for-5 with an RBI, three stolen bases and scored twice.

Senior Joseph Mancuso, after tossing a complete game and picking up his fifth win of the year in game one, scored three times in game two with three stolen bases, on two walks and a single.

Sophomore Crawford Colwell drove in two runs and sophomore Slade Rowan scored twice.

Sophomores Logan Dyer and RJ Banton each doubled in game two, junior Dawson Groves and Rich both singled. Senior Will King and freshman Chayton Schafer also added



Joseph Mancuso recorded his fifth mound win of the year in Union's game one victory over Manchester. Photo/Todd Forrest

one run each.

Baggett opened the first with a single then advanced to third on a steal and a passed ball, allowing Brown to bring him home with a sacrifice.

Mancuso singled to left and Banton drove him in with a double for a 2-0 lead after one.

Banton walked with one-out in the third and reached second on a ground out when Candler Colwell delivered an RBI-single to make it a 3-0 game.

Mancuso and Rich recorded back-to-back, two-out walks in the fourth and Mancuso later scored following a pair of wild pitches.

The Blue Devils put two aboard with one out in the bottom of the fourth but only managed one run after a base runner was caught stealing and

Rich got a strikeout. Groves singled to lead off the fifth and Schafer entered as a courtesy runner for the catcher. Following a sacrifice fly and a walk, Schafer scored on a Baggett single to extend the lead to 5-1.

Manchester cut the lead to 5-2 after taking advantage of an error but the Panthers put the game, and the series away with six runs in the sixth.

The inning began with walks by Mancuso and Rich. With Rowan running for the pitcher, a balk was called on the Blue Devils pitcher, allowing Mancuso to score. Banton was then plunked to put two aboard with nobody out and King entered as a pinch runner.

Candler Colwell beat out an infield single that scored Rowan - making it 7-2.

Crawford Colwell sin-



Crawford Colwell drove in two runs at the plate and provided a superb defensive performance in centerfield vs Manchester. Photo/Todd Forrest

gled to bring home King and Candler Colwell. Crawford Colwell eventually made it 10-2 when he scored on a passed ball.

Baggett reached on an error and Brown scored him with a double to give Union an 11-2 lead midway through the sixth.

Rich worked around a leadoff double in the bottom half of the sixth thanks to a running catch by Crawford Colwell in centerfield and two strikeouts.

Rich led off the seventh with a single and Rowan, the courtesy runner scored on a ground out by Candler Colwell to make it a 12-2 game.

Manchester manufactured a run on the basepaths in the seventh when they traded an out at second base for a run.

During the first game,

Baggett, Brown, and Candler Colwell each recorded two-hit performances, while Groves doubled in a run.

Rich, Mancuso, and Banton, along with Brown, Groves, and Candler Colwell all drove in a run.

Brown swiped two bases, Baggett and Candler Colwell stole one.

The Blue Devils used small-ball in game one following a lead-off single to take a 1-0 lead in the top-half of the first.

A walk and two Union errors led to another run in the third and a 2-0 Manchester advantage.

Baggett singled and scored on a Brown base hit to open the bottom of the third.

A two-out single by Banton drove in Brown to tie the game at 2-2.



Candler Colwell following a steal of second base.

In the fifth, Brown and Mancuso walked with one out. Brown later scored on a passed ball and Rich used a ground out to short to score Mancuso.

Banton walked and Groves doubled to deep left to bring home Rowan, who ran for Banton.

Crawford Colwell singled to left to score Groves and give Union a 6-2 lead after five innings.

In the sixth, Mancuso picked off a Blue Devil at third and Candler Colwell chased down the runner and applied the tag before he could cross home plate.

Davis singled to open the bottom of the sixth but was thrown out trying to advance to second, Baggett walked, and Brown singled to put two on for Mancuso, who laid down a bunt to score Baggett and give the Panthers a 7-2 lead entering

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