

As season approaches, annual Meet the Team event offers plenty for Panther fans on Friday

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

If you haven't noticed by now, our blood has begun to turn a darker shade of purple over the last few days.

Schools are back in session and it's almost that time of year again.

Finally. It's time to break out the purple and gold Panther gear, begin dusting off the fall wardrobe that should include plenty of purple sweatshirts, jackets, hoodies, and other apparel needed for three intense months of Union County football.

The Fourth Annual "Meet the Team" will be held this Friday at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium at 6:30 p.m. to mark the unofficial start of the 2013 season.

This event has been gaining momentum over the years and the attendance at the 2012 edition more than doubled the turnout from 2011.

The Union County Panther players will be on hand to sign the free pictures that our handed out upon arrival. Last year, the gracious Panthers signed for more than an hour until every single autograph demand was met.

"Meet the Team" was an idea created by Jacque Bentley. After chairing the event for two years, Bentley passed the reins to Quarterback Club Secretary Kathy Mancuso in 2012, who has done a wonderful job in the further development the yearly event. Each year, the event has grown. With new ideas and larger crowds it will only continue to improve with the enthusiasm that Mancuso brings under her leadership.

The first event in 2010 was held at Zaxby's of Blairsville, who originated the idea of the hot-wing eating contest. This heated (in more ways than one) free-for-all has become one of the highlights of the evening with players, cheerleaders, family, friends, and fans all cheering the brave contestants.

Last year's champion was sophomore linebacker Chase Barnett. This year, the junior will be back to defend his crown and looks to be the last man standing when the sauce clears on Friday night.

As an addition to the last year's event, the high school cheerleaders performed and participated in the Wing Eating Contest.

Games and contests between the children attending were held on the field with plenty of competition between all ages



The Zaxby's hot-wing eating contest was one of the highlights of last year's Meet the Team. Even the cheerleaders weren't afraid to get in on the action and challenge the guys. Photo/Todd Forrest



Meet the Team Day will feature contests for all ages and skill levels.

This is a can't-miss event and a good way to ring in the 2013 season which looks to be a promising one. Everyone is invited to attend and for all the die hard Panther fans out there, this is a good way to ease the pigskin withdrawals.

For those new to Union County football, this is an excellent opportunity to meet the beloved Panthers and get into the habit of spending your Friday nights at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

The pads will begin popping on Thursday, Aug. 22nd when hosts White County for a 7 p.m. scrimmage.

Things will get very intense, very quickly when rival Towns County visits on Aug. 30th for the season opener. The Indians and their new head coach are already expecting to celebrate victories over rivals Hayesville, NC and the Panthers to kickoff the 2013 season.

Come out and meet the Panthers on Friday night before they meet the Indians on the field at the end of the month.



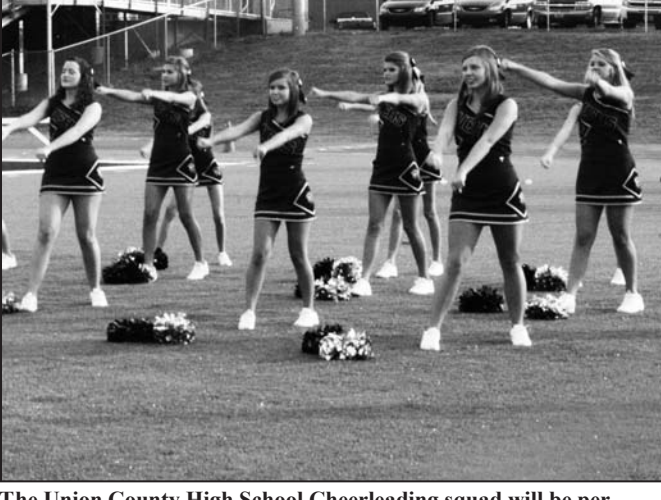
When the smoke cleared, and the barbecue sauce and tears were wiped away, sophomore Chase Barnett was crowned the champ of the hot-wing eating contest. Barnett will be back as a junior this year to defend his title. Photo/Todd Forrest



Autograph seekers won't be disappointed as all Panther players and coaches will be on hand to sign autographs and pose for pictures until each and every request has been granted. Photo/Todd Forrest



Fans of Union County Head Coach Brian Allison will be able to chat with the Panthers' head honcho, even while he enjoys a slice of pizza. Photo/Todd Forrest



The Union County High School Cheerleading squad will be performing again this year. They will also be available for pictures and autographs. Photo/Todd Forrest



Meet the 2013 UCHS Panther Football Team and Coaches

UCHS Football Field
Friday, Aug. 16, 2013
6:30 - 8:30 PM (No Cost)

Autographs
Games

Wing Eating Contest
(Compliments of Zaxbys)

Door Prizes
Free Popcorn

Bring your Camera for Photos
Food will be available for purchase

Celebrate with the team before the season begins.
Meet the 2013 Panther Football Players.
Take your picture with your favorite player.
Special Appearance by UCHS Cheerleaders

2013 UCHS Football schedule

- Aug. 22nd vs White County (Scrimmage) 7 p.m.
- Aug. 30th vs Towns County 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 6th @ Fannin County 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 13th @ Andrews N.C. 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 20th BYE WEEK
- Sept. 27th @ Washington-Wilkes 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 4th vs Oglethorpe County
- Oct. 11th @ Riverside Military Academy 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 18th vs Greene County 7:30 p.m.
- Oct. 25th vs Rabun County 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 1st @ Social Circle 7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 8th vs Jefferson 7:30 p.m.

Fish for Food Fishing Tournament

Matthew 25 Food Ministries presents "Fish for Food Fishing Tournament". 60% of tournament money goes to feed needy families in our area. The remaining 40% will go to tournament prize money.

Prize money will be awarded for 1st Place, 2nd Place and 3rd Place and biggest fish. Actual prize amount will depend on number of entries. Entry fee is \$50 per boat, the tournaments end in October, occurring the second Saturday of each month rotating between Lake Chatuge, Woods Grove Boat Ramp and Lake Nottely, Deaver Road Boat Ramp, from 7 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Tournament schedule: September 14 - Chatuge; and October 12 - Nottely.

For contact information call David Crisp at 706-897-5347.

Marine Corps League Golf Tournament

The 17th Annual Marine Corps League Golf Tournament will be held at Chatuge Shores Golf Course, Hayesville, NC on October 10, 2013. The tournament benefits children, elderly, families and individuals in need within our communities throughout the year and charities of Union and Towns counties and worthy military charities. For more information please call Bobby Jarrard at 706-896-6084 or Walt Scott at 706-897-9610.

Trout stocking sites week of August 5-9, 2013

Fannin: Rock Creek and Toccoa River
Lumpkin: Etowah River and Nimblewill Creek
Union: Cooper Creek

Note: Information is subject to change. Please call the hatchery at 706-838-4723 for questions. The hatchery also provides trout for the state. Please contact Georgia DNR for information on sites stocked by the state.

BMTA Hike

Scenic BMTA Hike, Saturday, August 24th, 5 miles in and out along Emery Creek in the Cohuttas. 12 stream crossings ending in a pair of waterfalls. Bring hiking poles and wear sturdy shoes. Rough footing as trail climbs over some large boulders. Plan to get wet! Meet at Home Depot in Blue Ridge. Pre-registration required. Contact Pam and Richard Sullivan, pams11@tds.net or 706-374-5281.



Mountain High Hikers schedules two hikes each Tuesday, occasional specialty hikes, and regular trail maintaining trips - all in the beautiful mountains of Georgia and North Carolina. Check the website www.mountainhighhikers.org for schedule and meeting locations.

NASCAR 2013

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

It's "Rowdy" Kyle at the Glen

Kyle Busch displayed one of his better driving performances on the way to victory in Sunday's Sprint Cup race.

Starting fifth, he didn't take the lead in the 90-lap race until lap 65. During the last 25 laps, he survived four restarts, and fought off six challenges by runner-up Brad Keselowski, and third-place finisher, Martin Truex.

Each time someone tried to pass, Busch raced that much harder. The last restart came with three laps-to-go. When the green flag was given, Busch was gone. The best the other leaders could hope for was to finish second.

"We really had an awesome car," said Busch. "The engine ran great and it was fun to drive. I knew that I had to keep my position, because if someone got out in front of me, it was going to be hard to pass them back."

At the end, Brad Keselowski had the second-fastest car.

"My car was really good after five or ten laps," said Keselowski. "But on that last short two-three lap restart, we couldn't quite catch Kyle."

Martin Truex tried several times earlier in the race to get around Kyle, but never succeeded.

"This being a road course, I'd say we held our own," said Truex. "We were good on short runs, but couldn't quite catch Kyle near the end."

Carl Edwards was fourth, followed by Juan Montoya, Clint Bowyer, Joey Logano, Jimmie Johnson, Kurt Busch, and A. J. Allmendinger.

Polesitter Marcos Ambrose, who led the most laps, got bumped into the wall on lap 83 by Max Papis, who was substituting for Tony Stewart. Ambrose finished 31st.

Jeff Gordon spun coming out of a turn on lap 15, and hit the inside fence, heavily damaging his car. He returned to the track but finished 36th.

During lap 80, Kasey Kahne spun, and was then hit by his team-



"Rowdy" Kyle Busch, Cup winner at the Glen

mate Dale Earnhardt Jr. The track was blocked and several more cars ran into them.

Top-10 leaders with four races before the Chase begins: 1. Johnson-808, 2. Bowyer-733, 3. Edwards-728, 4. Harvick-707, 5. Kyle Busch-693, 6. Earnhardt-670, 7. Kenseth-659, 8. Keselowski-634, 9. Biffle-627, 10. Truex-625.

KESELOWSKI GETS NATIONWIDE VICTORY

Brad Keselowski held off Sam Hornish Jr to win Saturday's Watkins road course race at Watkins Glen.

Brian Vickers finished third, followed by Regan Smith, Elliott Sadler, Parker Kligerman, Justin Allgaier, Cole Whitt, Nelson Piquet, and Trevor Bayne.

Top-10 leaders after 21 of 33: 1. A. Dillon-730, 2. Hornish-727, 3. Smith-725, 4. Sadler-718, 5. Vickers-712, 6. Allgaier-685, 7. Scott-674,

8. Larson-665, 9. Bayne-661, 10. Kligerman-656.

DRIVER CHASE SCENARIO

Jimmie Johnson has clinched a berth in this year's Chase which begins September 15, after the Richmond race.

Clint Bowyer will make the Chase. The Michael Waltrip Racing cars aren't as fast relative to the competition as they were last year, but that doesn't mean he won't be in the final number.

Kevin Harvick has had a so-so season. He's run well at some tracks, and at others he's bombed. This will be his last year at Richard Childress Racing. He will probably make the Chase, but don't look for him to challenge for the championship.

Carl Edwards and his Roush Fenway Ford team are still searching for the right package with the new Gen-6 car, but Edwards has shown speed in qualifying, even if he hasn't converted excellent starting spots into quality finishes. But he's running fast enough to qualify for the Chase.

All Dale Earnhardt Jr. needs to grab a Chase spot is have a respectable finish next Sunday at Michigan and the sort of steady, consistent performances in the final four races that have become commonplace for Earnhardt and crew chief Steve Letarte this year.

Jeff Gordon made a statement, two Sunday's ago at Pocono, where he got his runner-up finish the old fashioned way, by earning it. But after his dismal 36th-place finish at the Glen, he needs to have better luck in the final four races if he is to make the 12-driver field.

FREE Baseline Concussion Testing for all School-Age Athletes.

To schedule or ask questions call

PRO MOTION REHAB & WELLNESS CENTER

at 828-837-0400

Located in Murphy, NC

