

MS Wrestling: building confidence in year two

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

The Union County Middle School Wrestling team opened practice on Monday, Oct. 15 with higher expectations going into Season Two. The squad practiced the entire first week but decided to only have two days of practice last week because of fall break. This past Monday the high school began practice, minus the football players.

Right now, Coach Bob Williams and Coach Michael Smith-Foote are looking for those with the desire to hit the mat. "With the middle school we are looking for the kids who are just wanting to try it and see if they like it," Coach Williams said. "Right now we're not looking for athleticism but heart. Do they have the heart to go out there and work hard and meet somebody on the mat. That is the main goal, to meet a stranger on the mat and wrestle with him. With the athletic aspect of it, it may show up right now and it may not but if you've got the heart to get out there and wrestle is



Coach Michael Smith-Foote works with the UCMS wrestlers last week. Photo/Todd Forrest

the main thing." "We're looking for confidence too," Coach Smith-Foote added. "They can't be scared. If they'll walk out there on the mat and have the conviction to wrestle. Not to walk on the mat just to try it or do it, but to walk out on the mat with the intention of winning. The most important thing is, I just want them to enjoy it and I'm glad that we finally have wrestling up here in Union County. There are so many boys in this community that once they give it

a shot, and their parents give it a shot, they are going to be ridiculously successful in this sport."

Meets are usually on Tuesdays and Saturdays with a few meets on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Most meets will start at 4:30 p.m. or 5 p.m. Saturday meets start at 9 a.m.

Coach Williams is also getting some yard signs made to put out on the day of the meets. They will be near the drop-off areas of the schools and in and around town.

"We had a good turnout last year and we're hoping to get a lot more folks to come this year. It's hard not to get involved once you start coming to the meets," Coach Williams said.

The team is still taking on new players but right now nine 6th graders, eight 7th graders, and fifteen 8th graders make up the roster.

"They are all looking really good but we've got four or five who are really standing out and will anchor the team all the way up through their high school years," Coach Williams said. "I've been very impressed with all of them. There are going to be some really great things happen for Union County wrestling over the years."

The first meet will be the Eagle Classic Tournament on Nov. 3 at Riverview Middle School at 9 a.m. Then followed by a meet at Towns on Nov. 7th at 4:30 p.m.

The first home meet will be on Dec. 4th with Hayesville, NC at 5 p.m.

"It's made a lot of schools very nervous to see where this program is going to go," Coach Williams added.

Panthers sponsor canned food drive



Union County High School supports Neighbor's Hand

The Union County High School Quarterback Club is teaming up with Neighbor's Hand, a local ministry, in sponsoring a canned food drive at the last home game of football season.

Come on out to Mike Colwell Stadium on Nov. 2nd to support our Panthers! You will be supporting your community as well by donating canned goods as you enter Panther Alley.

All donated food will be distributed to the Ninth

District Food Bank and other food pantries and churches in Blairsville. This food drive will greatly benefit many families in our community just in time for the holidays. (Please keep in mind that out of date canned goods cannot be accepted.)

Join us for kick off Nov. 2nd at 7:30 pm! What a great opportunity to participate in a good cause and experience some Friday night fun!

Thank you for your support! N10Oct31Z5ICA

Football...continued from page 10A

the Red Zone six times and only put up 10 points," Coach Allison said. "You can't win ball games like that. Nobody can win ball games doing that."

The Wildcats put an exclamation point on their victory with a 53-yard scoring drive to take a 38-3 lead with 6:15 to play.

With freshman quarterback Joseph Mancuso behind center, the Panthers marched 80 yards thanks mostly to the running of Whittle and his fourth-down scoring rush at the 2:31 mark.

Whittle led the Panthers in rushing with 70 yards on nine carries. Bentley rushed 14 times for 63 yards and Hughes added 50 yards on 10 touches.

Burnette finished with 70 yards receiving, with Robert Prunier, Rivera, and Jacob Rogers each catching two passes.

The Panther sideline was able to get some good news when Barnett returned to the field on a late Panther kickoff.

Originally thought to be a serious MCL injury, Barnett was taped up by Trainer Allan Lee and was able to do some running and stretching on the sideline before being cleared for action.

Matthew Spiwak led the Panther defense with 16 tackles, Kim had seven, Craig Jones, Burnette and Barnett each finished with six.

"Two of our lineman were at 70 or 80 percent, Alex Drost is out, Whitmer is out,

Barnett had to come out, and Burnette was having issues," Coach Allison said. "When you start getting injuries at a school this size, it only takes a couple to really hurt you."

Despite suffering a devastating loss, the Panthers still have an opportunity to clinch its second winning season in 11 years when they host a winless Social Circle Redskins team on Friday.

"If we'll come out to play against Social Circle the way we did at Rabun, except this time, put the ball in the end zone, and not turn it over, we'll be alright," Coach Allison said.

This week is Senior Night for the Panthers and this class still has a chance to go out with two winning seasons in four years.

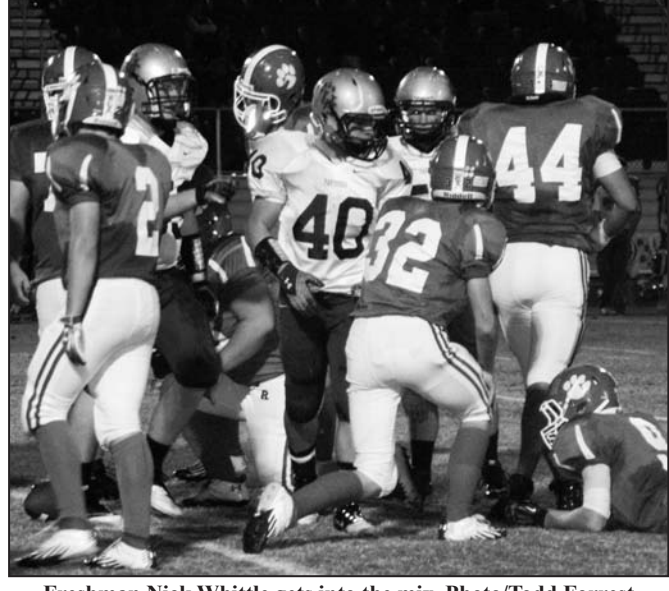
Union last finished above .500 in 2009 when the current group of seniors were freshmen.

Social Circle will travel to Blairsville on a 14-game losing skid - their longest in school history. The Redskins' last victory came on Sept. 23rd 2011 when they defeated Athens Christian by forfeit. Social Circle's last on-field victory came back in October of 2010.

Currently the Redskins are allowing 43.4 points a contest in 2012, the worst in Region 8-AA. Meanwhile, the offense is producing 13 points per game - the second lowest in 8-AA.



CJ Byers leads the Panthers onto the field. Photo/Todd Forrest



Freshman Nick Whittle gets into the mix. Photo/Todd Forrest

Upward indoor soccer registration



Online registration is now open for Upward Indoor Soccer for boys and girls in grades Kindergarten through 6th Grade at www.hobp.org or at www.fum-unioncounty.org.

The early registration price to participate is \$55. There will be an additional \$10 fee for registrations received after December 14th.

If needed, payment plans are available. Convenient once per week practices will begin the week of January 27, 2013, while games will be held on consecutive Saturdays between January 26 through March 2, 2013.

Everyone is encouraged to attend one evaluation. These will be held on December 11th and 13th from 6 to 7:30 PM at the House of Prayer Family Life Center.

Form and registration fees may also be dropped off, Monday through Friday, at First United Methodist's business office or the House of Prayer Family Life Center between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

For more information, contact either church office at FUMC (706) 745-2073 or HOP (706) 745-5925.

Upward Sports, the world's largest Christian sports program for children, was created with a vision to introduce kids and families to Jesus Christ and to provide the best sports experience possible for every child while ensuring equal playing time for all.

Each year some 1 million people around the world play, coach, referee, or volunteer in Upward Sports leagues and camps hosted by more than 2,600 churches.

Everyone is welcome to participate or volunteer in Upward Sports. The goal of Upward Sports is to bring out "the winner" in every child - regardless of the game's score. N10Oct31A15SH

Rec Basketball Registration

Basketball registration is still going on for all ages at the Union County Recreation Department, except for the 5 and 6-year old age group.

Seven- and 8-year old registration will come to an

end on Nov. 9th and registration for all other age groups will come to an end on Nov. 19th.

For more details contact UCRD at (706) 439-6074.

NASCAR 2012

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Johnson gets seventh Martinsville win

Jimmie Johnson put on a strong late-race run that gave him his seventh Martinsville Cup win, and allowed him to take the Chase points lead from Brad Keselowski.

Johnson was leading the 500-lap race with eight-to-go, when Carl Edwards spun, and slipped up into Dale Earnhardt Jr., causing both cars to hit the outside wall, and bringing out the race's last caution.

There were just five laps left when the green flag was dropped. Kyle Busch was right on Johnson's rear bumper, but he was unable to pull even or make a pass for the lead, and Johnson took the checkered flag for his first Chase victory of the season.

"We have learned from the past that we needed good tires at the finish, and that's what helped us today," said Johnson. "It's not going to be a cakewalk, because Brad (Keselowski) is a very talented driver, but I think we've shown that we're ready to go all the way."

Kyle Busch, Kasey Kahne, Aric Almirola, and Clint Bowyer were the remaining top-5 finishers.

Brad Keselowski, who started 32nd, finished sixth and trails Johnson by two points.

"This team has a tremendous amount of heart," he said. "I know it's going to be a duel all the way to Homestead, and we're ready to fight those three remaining races."

Jeff Gordon, Brian Vickers, Bobby Labonte, and Greg Biffle rounded out the top-10.

One of the biggest losers was Denny Hamlin. First, he was hit with a pit road speeding penalty, which cost him a lap, and then his car developed



Jimmie Johnson, winner at Martinsville



Juan Montoya spins around after contact from Jimmie Johnson during Sunday's Martinsville Cup race. Furnished by NASCAR

electrical problems, and had to be pushed to the garage.

He was able to return to the race, but was 33 laps down, and finished 33rd.

"This day certainly ended in disappointment," said Hamlin. "We had a great car, but when these things happen, you have to suck it up. One of these days it'll be our time and we will capitalize on it."

Hamlin dropped from third to fifth in Chase points,

and is now 49 points behind the leader.

Top-12 Chase leaders with three races remaining: 1. Johnson-2291, 2. Keselowski-2289, 3. Bowyer-2265, 4. Kahne-2262, 5. Hamlin-2242, 6. Gordon-2237, 7. Truex-2228, 8. Kenseth-2225, 9. Biffle-2222, 10. Stewart-2220, 11. Harvick-2203, 12. Earnhardt-2151.

With three races left, put your money on one of three

drivers: Johnson, Keselowski, or Clint Bowyer. Kasey Kahne, Hamlin, and Gordon are too far back.

HAMLIN WINS MARTINSVILLE TRUCK RACE

Denny Hamlin won Saturday's Martinsville truck race with a late pass around Matt Crafton.

To Crafton, it was a bulldozer tactic.

Regardless of the point of view, Hamlin's pass after a restart with eight laps left allowed him to claim his second victory at the .526-mile short track and his second win in 15 career truck starts.

Irate at Hamlin's use of the front bumper, Crafton had some choice words for the driver of the No. 51 Kyle Busch Motorsports Toyota after the race.

With Hamlin parked on pit road, Crafton leaned into the driver's-side window to express his displeasure.

Hamlin's reaction was, "What did he expect? When you're the leader with a few laps to go, you've got to expect it. You can't wreck the guy - that's off-limits - but moving him off and out of the groove, that's standard protocol at this type of race track."

Crafton disagreed.

"If you want to call that a pass - that's just moving somebody," Crafton said. "Running in the back of somebody, that doesn't take anything. Anybody can do that. I didn't let the tires come up quite clean enough on the last restart. I do admit that. That's part of it. I didn't get my tires cleaned up, but I did not run into the back of him."

Nelson Piquet, Joey Coulter, Matt Crafton, Scott Riggs, James Buescher, Timothy Peters, Ryan Blaney, Parker

Kligerman, and Brian Scott were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Ty Dillon's one-point championship lead evaporated after his No. 3 Chevrolet blew a tire and hit the outside wall on Lap 151. After repeated trips to pit road for repairs, Dillon dropped to 28th, six laps down, and now trails James Buescher by 21 points.

Top-10 leaders after 19 of 22: 1. Buescher-716, 2. T. Dillon-695, 3. Peters-691, 4. Kligerman-680, 5. Coulter-670, 6. Crafton-664, 7. Piquet-626, 8. Lofton-618, 9. Sauter-573, 10. Paludo-568.

EARNHARDT EXPECTS A LIFE AFTER RACING

Two concussions, which he reported on Oct. 7, caused Dale Earnhardt Jr. to miss the Charlotte and Kansas races, and ended his chance at this year's Sprint Cup championship.

But he said his future well-being was more important to him than his love of racing.

"I can understand people's opinions that they would try to push through it or they would ignore it to stay in the car, because I did the same thing in the past," he said. "But you know, some concussions are kind of light and the symptoms are real light and if you don't have another incident, you feel like you can get through it."

"Some concussions are really bad. I don't care how tough you are, when your mind is not working the way it supposed to, it scares the (stuff) out of you. You're not going to think about trophies. You're not going to think about your job. You're going to think about, 'How can I get my brain to working the way it was before?'"

Earnhardt said he will be honest about another concussion if he feels symptoms again.

He realizes that if he continues to get concussions, it could mean an early end to his career.

"I don't really think about that too much," he continued. "One thing I can tell you is that I'm going to be honest with myself and with the doctors and do whatever they tell me to do. I want to be able to live a full life and not have any issues down the road, but I feel pretty fortunate to have recovered from this concussion rather quickly. I feel lucky that I made the choices that I did to give myself that opportunity. I just hope that I don't have any more big hits for a while and race for another five to 10 years and have some fun."

Earnhardt said he plans to switch to a more protective type of driving helmet.

Weekend Racing: NASCAR's Cup, Nationwide, and Truck teams will be at the 1.5-mile Texas Motor Speedway, just outside Ft. Worth, TX.

Fri., Nov. 2, Camping World Trucks Winstar Casino 350, race 20 of 22; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: SPEED.

Sat., Nov. 3, Nationwide O'Reilly Auto Parts Challenge, race 31 of 33; Starting time: 7 pm ET; TV: ESPN.

Sun. Nov. 4, Sprint Cup AAA Texas 500, race 34 of 36; Starting time: 2 pm ET; TV: ESPN.

Racing Trivia Question: What year was the Chase for the Sprint Cup Championship instituted?

Last Week's Question: Where is Cup driver Jamie McMurray's hometown? **Answer:** Joplin, Missouri.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodges@race500.com. N10Oct31C1DAC