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# Panthers remain tied atop 8-AA with two blowout wins

Union visits Banks County Tuesday in pivotal region showdown

By Todd Forrest Sports Editor sports@nganews.com

Union County (15-7, 6-1) collected its 15th win and secured a top-three seed in the upcoming Region 8-AA tournament with a pair of one-sided home victories over East Jackson and Athens

Ahead of those two wins, the Panthers saw a five-game winning streak end on Monday, Jan. 23, courtesy of a non-region loss at North Hall.

The Region 8-AA playoff picture should come into focus this week as Union County visits third-place Banks County (14-7, 4-2) on Tuesday before traveling to fifth-place East Jackson on Friday. Still tied with Providence (19-3, 6-1) for 8-AA's top spot, the Panthers can lock up a top-

two seed with a win on Tuesday.

The Leopards sit one game back of Union County and 7thranked Providence and can move into a second-place tie with a Tuesday win over the Panthers. Furthermore, with two losses in 8-AA, Banks County remains in the hunt for the No. 1 seed and could force a three-way tie atop the standings with home victories over Union County and

Panthers 78, Athens Academy 63 -- Union County ended one basket shy of scoring 80 points in three consecutive home games during a blowout win over fourth-place Athens Academy (13-8, 3-4).

Sophomore Hayden Hughes recorded a career-high 25 points on 6-of-14 shooting from 3-point range. With a half-dozen treys on Friday night, Hughes is 34 for 66 (52%) from downtown during January while averaging 15.5 points over the same span.

Senior Eli Underwood notched his third straight doubledouble and the 11th of the year, going for 10 points and 11 rebounds. Sophomore Jude Ellis scored 12 of his 15 points after halftime, logging seven boards, three assists and two steals. Sophomore Houston Hen-

ry had 11 points, six rebounds and six assists; sophomore Maddox Young added 8 points and freshman Cade Dockrey scored Despite the end result,

the Panthers trailed 15-9 near quarter before closing the frame with nine straight and an 18-15

Hughes' second triple started the run, then a 3-point play from Henry tied the game at 15-15. Dockrey put the finishing touches on the quarter with a trey at the buzzer, moving the Panthers on top for good.

Union County began the second with a 7-2 spurt, capping a 16-2 outburst that saw the home team seize control at 25-17. Dockrey opened the second with a dribble drive for two, followed by a Maddox Young 3-pointer and an Underwood post-up.

Two buckets by Young and an Ellis pull-up jumper kept the Panthers out front 31-23 as the Spartans' reigning 8-A Private Player of the Year, junior Kymel Williams, matched Union shot-Williams finished with a

game-high 28 points on 12-for-22 The Panthers eventually

opened up a double-digit margin when Hughes' baseline reverse layup and Henry's dribble drive produced a 37-27 advantage with 90 seconds remaining in the first half. Athens Academy answered with a deuce but missed two free throws on its ensuing possession,



Senior Taylor Carroll and his family were recognized during Friday's UCHS basketball Senior Night ceremony. Carroll has served as the boys basketball team's manager for two years. Senior Eli Underwood and senior cheer members will be pictured in a future paper. Photo/Todd Forrest

sending the teams into the locker 12 second-chance points; 16 turn-

Union County started the third with a 7-2 spurt, sparking a 20-9 stretch that resulted in a 57-38 lead at the quarter's 2:30

Underwood and Hughes were responsible for the Panthers first 15 points of the second half, with Hughes connecting three times from long range and Underwood scoring 6 points in

An Ellis bucket at the 3:12 mark ended the duo's string, but Hughes hit three free throws after taking an elbow to the abdomen on a 3-point attempt. Hughes' perfect trip to the charity stripe built Union's 19-point margin before Athens Academy trimmed the deficit to 59-44. But with time running down in the third, Henry put the Spartans' brief rally to bed with a triple at the buzzer.

Ellis and Underwood stretched the Union lead to 66-44 early in the fourth, then a Young free throw and a Dockrey layup kept the margin at 69-48 near the 5:30 mark. Ellis poured in seven straight Panther points for a 76-56 advantage inside two minutes, prompting coach Corey Garrett to call upon his reserves.

the two-minute mark of the first concluded the Union County scoring with a putback during the final minute. Junior Van Marevka grabbed one rebound.

UCHS recognized its senior basketball players and cheerleaders between games on

The men's team paid tribute to Underwood and manager Taylor Carroll.

"Eli is an absolute coach's dream," Garrett said. "I don't have the words to explain how great of a young man Eli is. He has trusted me since day one, he is coachable and he is the best leader that I could have ever asked for to lead this young group. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to be his coach and I can't thank him enough for what he has done for me and this program over the last four years. We want to make sure that we send him out

'[Carroll] does everything from keeping clock, to filming, to laundry," Garrett added. "He knows the scout on every team that we play. He is a huge help to me and we are going to miss him when he is gone."

Game stats: Union -- 28 for 60 (47%) shooting; 9 of 23 (39%) from deep and 13 of 18 (72%) at the line; 42 rebounds (14)offensive); 34 points in the paint;

overs; 9 points off turnovers. Ath--28 for 63 shooting (44%); 5 of 20 (25%) from 3-point range and 4 for 9 (44%) at the line; 27 rebounds (9 offensive); 40 points in the paint; 12 second-chance points; 6 turnovers; 21 points off

Panthers 84, East Jackson 42 -- Wednesday night's 8-AA makeup game vs. the Eagles proved to be no contest as Union County raced ahead 8-0 and never looked back.

Dockrey turned in a breakout performance on the offensive end, scoring a career-high 17 points in 17 minutes on 7-of-10 Henry, playing in front of

the home crowd for the first time since his last-second heroics vs. Providence, supplied a 13-point, 11-assist performance to go with three steals and three rebounds. Underwood continued

doing his thing, scoring a gamehigh 19 points and hauling in 15 The Panthers established

Underwood down low early in the game, setting the tone for his program's most lopsided win since he was in the third grade -- a 73-25 victory at Murphy, North Junior Anderson Cruise Carolina on Jan. 8, 2014.

Underwood scored 8 points in the opening frame as the Panthers held a 19-8 advantage after one. Alongside buckets by Dockrey and Young, the senior leader continued to score at will early in the second when a trey from Young extended the Union lead to 28-13.

Underwood knocked down a 3-pointer at the two-minute mark and scored down low 90 seconds later to provide a 35-19 halftime cushion.

Union County, storming out to a 42-19 advantage on consecutive Henry baskets and a Hughes triple. The Panthers outscored East Jackson 20-7 in the period behind seven from Henry and a pair of 3's from Hughes. Marevka kicked off the

fourth with a jump hook, then Dockrey and Young made it a 62-29 game less than a minute in. Dockrey rattled off five straight, Ellis scored in the paint, and sophomore Kaden Combs knocked down a trey before Dockrey scored again to build a 74-37 lead.

Over the final 4:05, Marevka split two free throws and scored inside on back-toback trips; sophomore Braden Plott connected from downtown and converted a dribble drive, and freshman Gunnar Akins crashed the boards for two more.

points on 3 of 8 from downtown, contributing four rebounds and four assists. Young scored 9 points with three assists and three

with 5 points apiece; Combs had 3 points and a steal; Ellis ended the night with 2 points, seven boards and three assists. Akins had 2 points and two rebounds; Cruise hauled in three boards and dished out one assist.

over a month due to injury.

for 68 (52%) shooting; 7 for 23

The third frame was all

Hughes ended with 9

Plott and Marevka finished

The Panthers also welcomed back sophomore guard

Brayden Hogsed, who logged one assist in 4 minutes after missing 25-25, but North Hall finished strong once again, building a seven-point margin at the break.

Behind 47-42 in the third. Union County yielded a 14-2 Trojan run and faced a daunting 61-44 deficit entering the fourth.

Underwood finished with 11 points, 12 rebounds and two steals; Henry had 9 points, four assists and two steals. The Union point guard finished with more turnovers (six) than assists for the first time since the Jan. 3 loss at Providence; the Panthers are 2-6 this season when Henry's turnovers surpass his assist total.

Young had six points and a game-high six assists; Dockrey had 2 points and a career-best eight boards. Marevka chipped in 2 points and Plott added a steal. Game stats: Union -- 24

for 53 shooting (45%); 10 for 27 (37%) from deep and 7 of 8 (88%) at the line; 29 rebounds (12 offensive); 26 points in the paint; 14 second-chance points; 23 turnovers; 14 points off turnovers. NHHS -- 32 for 67 (48%); 9 for 23 from deep (39%) and 5 of 7 (71%) at the line; 31 rebounds (16 offensive); 46 points in the paint; 16 second-chance points; 16 turnovers; 23 points Up next: Union County

Game stats: Union -- 35

(30%) from 3-point range and 7

for 12 (58%) at the line; 45 re-

bounds (15 offensive); 44 points

in the paint; 7 second-chance

points; 11 turnovers and 17 points

off turnovers. EJHS -- 16 for 54

(30%) shooting; 6 for 20 (30%)

from three and 4 of 8 (50%) at the

line; 26 rebounds (7 offensive);

16 points in the paint; 0 second-

chance points; 19 turnovers; 2

**78** -- The Panthers suffered a

letdown in Clermont on Monday

night in their first action fol-

lowing the upset of then-No. 3

Jan. 14, the Trojans took a 42-35

advantage into halftime before

using a 19-9 third frame to pull

away. The Panthers battled back

to within 10 at 63-53 early in the

from the floor but turned it over

23 times and surrendered a 48%

shooting clip to the home team.

points on 8-of-15 shooting and

Hughes added 15 points on 5 of

thers had no answer for North

Hall's Matthew Ray, who scored a game-high 27 on 10 of 19 from

North Hall raced ahead 23-18 af-

8 from downtown.

the floor.

fourth but would get no closer.

Panthers 65, North Hall

In a makeup game from

Union County hit 45%

Ellis scored a team-high 20

Unfortunately, the Pan-

points off turnovers.

Providence Christian.

and Banks County's varsity action gets underway at 6 p.m. Tuesday in Homer. The Panthers can lock down a top-two seed in 8-AA with a win, while a loss drops Union into a tie for second with the Leopards. The Panthers defeated Banks County 72-58 on Jan. 10 in Blairsville. Union's last win at Banks

came during the 2010-11 season, but it's worth noting the two schools were in different classifications between 2013-2018 On Friday, Union County

travels to East Jackson (7-15, 1-6), where the Eagles are an entirely different animal, sporting a respectable 5-5 record in Nicholson. East Jackson is 2-10 away from home. Union's final regular

season game is at home next Tuesday, Feb. 7 vs. Fellowship "I want to keep hitting on

our crowd turnout and how much we appreciate them," Garrett said. "We're getting down to the nitty gritty and I want to keep this energy rolling in case we host the region tournament or a State [playoff] game. I really want to give a big thank you to the home crowd, it's a big deal how much Union County's only lead they help us. We know that home of the night came at 13-12 before court advantage is real thing for us, so we want to thank them and ter one. The Panthers battled back encourage them to keep coming to even the contest at 23-23 and out."

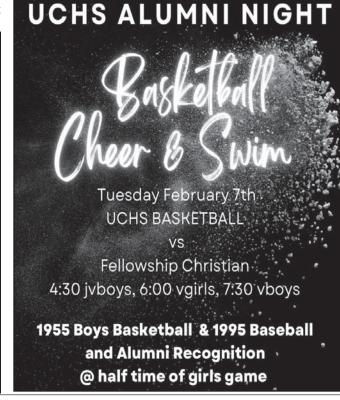
The Union County Recreation **Department presents the Annual** 



When: Saturday, March 18th from 6 PM - 9 PM Where: The Union County Sports Center Cost: \$60 per couple, \$30 for each additional daughter.

Tickets include dinner, dancing, a limo ride, and fun! Semi formal dress is suggested. Pictures will be an additional fee. Tickets go on sale January 30th to Union County Residents only. If tickets are still available, they will go on sale to everyone February 20th. TICKETS ARE LIMITED AND MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE at the Union County Recreation Department located at 519 Industrial Blvd.

Please call 706-439-6074 with any questions.



Lady Panthers knock off Athens Academy; upset by East Jackson By Todd Forrest Sports Editor sports@nganews.com

Union County (12-10, 3-3) suffered a setback on Tuesday with an upset loss to East Jackson but rebounded with a Friday night victory over secondplace Athens Academy.

The Lady Panthers dropped a non-region makeup game at North Hall on Monday night, but head coach Brad Cochran likes where his team is heading into the postseason.

'The East Jackson loss hurt our chances at the No. 2 seed, but as long as we finish third, we avoid [top-seeded] Banks County until the region championship, and that's the most important thing to me," he said. "We still have to beat East Jackson at their place, but I think we'll be better prepared for them the second time around."

The Lady Panthers visit third-ranked Banks County (17-3, 6-0) on Tuesday, looking to halt the Leopards' 13-game winning streak. Union County travels to East Jackson on Fri-

Lady Panthers 47, Athens Academy 44 - Things didn't go as planned when Union County visited Athens Academy on Jan. 6.

In the first game following junior Lara Turner's injury, and without the services of their head coach, the Lady Panthers struggled from the jump in a 41-27 loss. But the rematch proved much different as a full-strength Union County squad led most of the night, then fended off a late rally to take down the Spartans, 47-44 in Blairsville.

Sophomore Ariel McCarter led the way with 15 points, 6 rebounds and two steals. Corinne Hill had 10 points, seven boards and three assists.

Hill, McCarter and Turner led the early charge, pacing the Lady Panthers to early leads of 6-0, 8-2 and 10-4. The trio combined for 14 of the team's 17 first-quarter points. A 3 by junior Kamryn Mull opened up a 13-5 advantage and Union County, led 17-13 after one.

Junior Morgan Warren opened the second quarter scoring, but points were at a premium the rest of the half as Athens Academy took a 22-21 advantage into the break.

Like the first half, Union County exploded out of the gates after halftime, scoring 14 straight points to mount a 35-22



look at a game-tying 3-pointer.

Despite getting off an open look

from the corner, the Spartans'

jumper bounced off the iron as

sheet with 8 points, 10 rebounds.

four assists, three steals and three

blocks. Mull had 6 points on 2 of

4 from long distance, chipping in

three rebounds and three assists

in the win. Brown finished with

4 points and five boards; Warren

for 54 (35%) shooting; 7 of 10

(70%) at the line and 2 for 13

(15%) from 3-point range; 34 re-

bounds (10 offensive); 24 points

in the paint; 7 second-chance

points; 19 turnovers; 9 points

off turnovers. AA -- 17 for 51

shooting; 9 of 18 (50%) at the

line and 1 for 12 (8%) from deep:

34 rebounds (10 offensive); 28

points in the paint; 7 second-

chance points; 19 turnovers; 6

Hill and Ivie Chapman after the

words for our two seniors,"

Cochran said. "Both of them are

great and both are dedicated to

this program 100%. They are

love her for it. She is a great

leader and she wants to win. It

doesn't matter if she's playing

or not playing, she wants this

thing on that floor - practice and

games. She's not very vocal, but

UCHS recognized seniors

"I don't have enough

"Ivie is the mom and I

"Hill, she leaves every-

points off turnovers.

Panthers for life.

**Game stats:** Union -- 19

added 4 points and a rebound.

Turner stuffed the stat

day, Jan. 24. Photos/Todd Forrest lead just past the midway point

of the frame. 'At halftime, I begged

the girls to be more patient and let the offense flow for us," Cochran said. "[Athens Academy] tweaked its defense a little bit, but all we had to do is be more patient and work the ball around. And once we did, we were able to open up a good lead."

Mull, Turner and sophomore Katelyn Brown poured in the first 12 points before Hill capped the run with a mid-range jumper. The Spartans answered with consecutive buckets until a Turner jumper and a Warren layup kept the margin at a comfortable 39-28.

Over the period's final 49 seconds, Athens Academy scored four-in-a-row to move within striking distance at 39-32.

Both offenses struggled early in the fourth, but Hill scored off a turnover near the 4:40 mark. The Spartans responded with a 3-pointer moments later, then went 1-for-2 at the line and converted a steal into 2 points, slicing the margin to 41-38 with 2:45 remaining. Union answered with a

putback from Hill and a breakaway layup by McCarter. The Spartans split two free throws and McCarter made 2 of 2, extending the margin to 47-39 with 1:24 to play.

Those two free throws proved vital as the Lady Panthers wouldn't score again.

Athens Academy scored in the paint at the 1:10 mark, and again with 44 seconds left. A Union County turnover resulted in a 1-for-2 visit to the charity stripe for the Spartans with 21 seconds remaining.

Up 47-44 with 12 seconds hard to find." left, the Lady Panthers missed Lady Panthers 48, East the front end of a 1-and-1, allowing Athens Academy one final

Jackson 51 - Union County missed 8 of its final 10 free throws and the Eagles hit their last 10 at the line to overcome a 26-20 halftime deficit.

"We missed free throws, we had bad possessions and we didn't protect the basketball,' Cochran said. "We allowed one girl to beat us and we just didn't take pride in our defense.'

The Lady Panthers held a 29-22 advantage early in the third but East Jackson rallied to a 33-32 lead at the period's 1-minute mark. Union County missed four straight free throws to finish the frame and the Eagles took a 35-32 edge into the fourth.

A short jumper from Hill, followed by a putback and a trey by McCarter, awarded Union a 39-35 lead with 5:20 remaining. Warren crashed the boards on the ensuing possession and the Lady Panthers owned a 41-37 advantage approaching the quarter's

All tied up at 41-41, Mc-Carter knocked down a jumper at the 3-minute mark, but East Jackson immediately attacked for a quick layup and a 43-43

McCarter split two free throws, but an Eagles fast break put the visitors back on top 45-44. Union's final lead of the night came on Hill's jumper in the paint with 1:44 to play, but East Jackson went back in front 20 seconds later via a dribble drive for two.

The Eagles knocked down two free throws with 38 seconds left and Mull answered with a drive 13 seconds later, keeping a McCarter triple from the right Jackson -- tip-off is at 7 p.m.

she leads by example, and that's the Lady Panthers within a point wing

quick turnover but failed to convert it into points and East Jackson hit two more free throws with 9 seconds remaining. Down 51-48, the Lady Panthers got off two looks from 3-point range but couldn't force overtime.

McCarter finished with 25 points; Hill had 12, Turner scored 7 points and Warren added 2 points.

No team stats were available for the East Jackson game. Lady Panthers 49, North

Hall 55 - Union County entered the break tied 25-25 and scored the first 5 points of the third quarter, but couldn't hang on down the stretch in a non-region makeup contest on Monday,

Trailing 42-38 after three, the Lady Panthers fought back to within a basket at 42-40 and 44-42, but the Trojans put the game out of reach with an 11-4 run. McCarter went for 19

points, seven assists, five rebounds and four steals. Turner had 12 points and seven

North Hall scored the game's first 5 points, but Union County outscored the home team 15-9 to grab a brief 15-14 edge during the second frame. With the Lady Panthers trailing 25-23 with 13 seconds left in the first half, McCarter found Warren on an inbounds pass to even the score at the intermission.

Following a Trojans' miss to start the third. Hill hit Mc-Carter for a 15-footer and a 27-25 lead. On Union's next trip, Turner's penetration led to

North Hall moved within Union County forced a a point at 30-29 via two visits to the free throw line, then took the lead for good with a basket in the paint with 5:23 left in the

> The Trojans kept their foot on the gas, drilling 3s on the next two possessions, stretching the lead to 37-30 just 63 seconds McCarter started the

> fourth with a runner in the lane. Later, with her team down 46-40, Turner sank a pull-up jumper with 5:49 to play. McCarter hit two free throws at the 5:15 mark to move

> within two at 46-44, but the Lady Panthers wouldn't get any closer as North Hall rattled off Warren ended the night

> with 8 points and four rebounds. Hill had 6 points, five rebounds. three steals and two assists. Mull added 4 points and three boards; Brown pulled down seven rebounds to go with three steals and two assists. Game stats: Union -- 18

> for 47 (38%) shooting; 3 of 11 (27%) from three and 10 of 18 (56%) at the line; 38 rebounds (13 offensive); 24 points in the paint; 10 second-chance points; 20 turnovers; 10 points off turnovers. NHHS -- 20 for 48 (42%); 9 for 29 (31%) from three and 6 of 14 (43%) at the line; 27 rebounds (7 offensive); 22 points in the paint; 5 secondchance points; 17 turnovers; 9 points off turnovers.

> **Up next:** Union visits No. 3 Banks County on Tuesday at 6 p.m. The Lady Panthers head back on the road Friday at East

## Wrestling: Union Co. preps for Area with top-10 at Sweet Onion Invitational By Todd Forrest

Sports Editor sports@nganews.com

Lyons - In the final tuneup ahead of this weekend's Area Tournament at Union County High School, the Panthers collected 116 points to finish seventh out of 16 teams at Toombs County's Sweet Onion Invitational on Saturday.

During last weekend's trip to south Georgia, Union County collected six top-five finishes, headlined by sophomore Payton Legatt's first-place performance at 157 lbs. Junior Anderson Clouse took home silver at 132 and junior David Heredia was third at 165.

Freshman Thomas Gary (120), junior Zander Rotko (138) and sophomore Asa Smith-Foot (150) each came in fifth place in their respective weight class.

Leggatt opened his title run with a pinfall victory over Charlton County's Thomas Johnson, followed by an 11-2 major decision vs. Rylan Sawyer of West Laurens.

He pinned Vidalia's Jack Godbee in the semifinals before edging East Laurens' Roman Coley via a 10-9 decision in the

Clouse dropped a major decision to Lowndes County senior Tyson McCollough in the finals. He picked up a major decision over Pierce County's Braden Thome in the semis after pinning East Laurens' Tex Edge in the quarters. The junior's weekend began with a 22-second pin of West Laurens' Zane Seymour.

Heredia received a first-Union County Rec. Baseball,



**Payton Legatt** 

round bye before needing just 44 seconds to pin Lowndes County's Brian Goosdem. Heredia fell in the semis to the eventual champion, West Laurens senior Drake Wood via a 6-4 decision.

In the consolation bracket, Heredia pinned Pierce County's David Lyons, then took home bronze by pinning Coffee County's Lawson Moseley.

Gary opened with a 120lb pinfall victory over Charlton County's Jonathan Strag, then collected a 16-11 decision over Pierce County's Shawn Szabo. Gary suffered a semifinal pinfall defeat to Bryan Cates of Coffee County, then fell to Toombs County's Samuel Register in the

Gary took home fifth with a forfeit victory over Dayvion Huttoe of Dodge County.

Rotko was fifth at 138, finishing his tournament by pinning Coffee County's Gunner Merritt in 24 seconds. Rotko opened the weekend with pinfall victories over Cody Brown and Ethan Story, but fell in the semis

to Peach County's Zachary Davis. Rotko dropped his first consolation match to Lowndes County's

Union's final top-five finisher, Smith-Foot, pinned Screven County's Carson Ellis in his consolation bracket finale. He started the event by pinning Matthew Siegler of Burke County and Sam Kelly of Toombs County.

East Laurens' Cole Page pinned Smith-Foot in the semifinals, followed by another pin at the hands of Charlton County's Michael Johnson.

Every Union County wrestler advanced at least one round with sophomore Logan Duckworth (106), freshman Riley Moettenson (113), senior Colson Lotts (144), senior Huck Whisenhunt (175) and freshman Jackson Arthur (285) all finishing the tournament with a 1-2 record.

UCHS hosts the Traditional Area Tournament beginning 10 a.m. Saturday at the high school gym. The teams attending are Banks County, East Jackson, Fannin County and Union.

#### Union County swimmers wrap up 2022-23 season The Union County High

School Swim team concluded its 2022-23 season on Thursday, Jan. 26 at the Last Chance Meet in Adairsville.

The team attended a total throughout Georgia and North Carolina this season. Head coach, Kelly Helton and assistant coach, Megan Foster are extremely proud of each swimmer for their flexibility, dedication, and perseverance during a season filled with logistical challenges.

Each swimmer earned multiple personal best times. School records were broken by Lily Helton in the 100-yard Breaststroke and Courtney Foster, Lily Helton, Lilly Collins, and Reese Jones in the 400-yard Freestyle Relay. Last weekend, the Girls A Relay team took home a second place win, complete with medals, in the 200-yard Freestyle Relay.

Graduating in the spring is girls' captain, Courtney Foster. Courtney has accomplished a long-running swimming career of nearly 13 years, and she concluded her time pouring into the sport last weekend with a final race of 100-yard Backstroke.



Courtney is a well-rounded student and a versatile swimmer with a bright future ahead of her. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

The team would like to thank each and every individual who has poured into the swimming program and made this season possible and the best one

Bottom row (L-R): Coach Kelly Helton, Boy's Captain Eli Gwynn, Manager Harley Helton. Girl's Captain Courtney Foster. Coach Megan Foster. Middle row (L-R): Sophia Licavoli, Reese Jones, Delilah Hernandez, Lilly Collins. Top row (left to right): Lily Helton, Andrew Farmer, Nicholas Nushtayev, Samantha Odom, Olivia Loyd.

### **Ira Weaver American Legion Post 121 schedules** Veterans Affairs Seminar and Patriots Golf Tournament



The American Legion Blairsville Post 121 has various upcoming events focusing on one or more of its Four Legion Pil-On Saturday, Feb. 11, fo-

cusing on Veterans Affairs and Children and Youth Pillars, Veterans and their families and friends can enjoy bowling beginning at 1 pm in Galaxy Bowling of Blairsville. The focus on the veteran provides an opportunity to get out and become involved with people of like-mind and similar experiences. The cost is \$15 for shoes and three games. For the Children and

Youth Pillar portion, the Post will have information on scholarships available. "Older Veterans may be wondering why this is important," noted Mike Merritt Post Commander, "but if your grandchildren or another Veteran's children are college-bound, the American Legion has various scholarships available that they may qualify to apply for."

The Post is hosting a seminar on Thursday, March 23 in the View Ballroom at the Butternut Creek Golf Course which centers on Veterans Affairs. "The seminar is a great opportunity for veterans to get info about services in the area that may be beneficial to them," said Kathy Merritt, Senior Vice Commander. "We're going to have the Veterans Administration, Red Cross, Comfort Keepers, AVITA, Union County Transportation, AirMed, Trout Unlimited and more," she added.

Additionally, there will be a couple of opportunities to see how veterans can volunteer for organizations within the community. These opportunities allow the veteran to engage with the community in other ways that may be of interest to them. The event is free to all

veterans and includes lunch and morning coffee and goodies provided by United Community Bank, Abide Coffee and G&G. Many of the surrounding businesses are also providing goodies for door prizes. Veterans can register at legionpost121.org.

Recently, the Merritts interviewed with Pat Malone for "This Week In Blairsville" on WJRB 95.1 FM. The interview will air Saturday at 10 AM and 11:30 PM and Sunday at 12:30 AM, 1:30 PM and 11:30 PM this weekend. Mike focused on wrapping up last year's activities, the strategic plan and the budget, and Kathy closed with what's next for the Legion. Tune in to hear in their own words the great things

happening with Post 121. Early registration for the American Legion "Putting With Patriots Golf Tournament" can be found on legionpost121.org. All proceeds go towards Veteran outreach programs and activities. The cost is \$100 per person and the event is scheduled for Friday, June 23 at the Butternut Creek Golf Course. "We will have coffee/Danish, boxed lunches, swag bags, 19th Hole Celebration, awards ceremony for winners, and door prizes," explained Nancy Kunz, Post tournament director. "If you're interested in ing or any Post activities email sponsoring a hole sponsorship is the Post at alpost121@gmail.

tent and table so you can pass out coupons, swag and other goodies while you promote your business to the golfers," she said. Please contact Nancy at alpost121@ gmail.com for more information.

All members, and interested veterans, are encouraged to attend the next meeting on the third Tuesday, Feb. 21 at 6:30 PM in the Leon Davenport Veteran's Center, 78 Blue Ridge Highway. The Legion Auxiliary will also begin its meeting at the same time in the same building. The Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion Riders have moved their meetings to the Post meeting. The American Legion is

the largest and one of the oldest and most inclusive of all veterans' organizations worldwide and devotes itself to mutual helpfulness, mentoring youth, advocating patriotic honor, promoting strong national security, and continued devotion to fellow service members and veterans. For more info on the meet-

\$100 or \$200 for Hole Sponsor com or visit the website at legion-Plus which allows you to have a post121.org. N(Feb1,Z10)CA

#### Softball, T-ball Registration Fee is \$65 for 5-8 yearolds. Fee is \$80 for 9-14 year-

Baseball, softball, and T-

ball registration opens January 4th, 2023 at the Union County Recreation Department for boys and girls ages 5-12, and boys to age 14. Age you are on September 1st 2023 is the age group you play in.

You must register your child by Monday, Febru-

ary 8th. You may register online at unioncountyga.gov or in person at the Union County Sports Center located at 519 Industrial Blvd. Please call 706-439-6074 with any ques-We are always in need

of volunteer coaches. If you are interested, please come into the Union County Sports Center to complete an application. N(Jan18-Feb1,Z3)CA