

Sports

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Panthers return to practice field three weeks out from scrimmage Union County football to honor Noah Helton this fall

By Todd Forrest
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With the Aug. 9 scrimmage game fast approaching, Union County returned to the gridiron last week following a two-week hiatus, starting four-day-a-week workouts through July 26.

According to head coach Michael Perry, first-year starting quarterback Cade Dockrey and his new batch of receivers are making progress, but until the pads are on, it's still too early to gauge whether it will translate to success on Friday nights.

"We're not in pads right now so it's hard to get a full sense of what you have until you start hitting and blocking," Perry said. "We're far from a finished product, but I'm proud of the kids' efforts."

"Cade [Dockrey] continues to make progress at quarterback and I feel good about our offensive line. Tyler Parker (WR) has had a really good summer and is looking sharp, and we need him to be."

"[Receivers] Maddox Young, Chetley Cox and Braden Plott are continuing to things that will put us in a good spot," he said.

At running back, senior Connor Schuknecht remains the No. 1 option followed by sophomores Bentley Rich, Brandon Lynch and freshman Micah Wallace.

"Connor and Bentley play the same spot on both offense and defense so we'll be switching them out a lot. They are almost the same type of player."

On the defensive side, senior linebacker Ethan Lester continues to make progress from knee surgery and should be 100% by the end of August, providing a boost to a linebacker corps replacing two starters.

Lester led the team with 127 tackles in 2023, earning Second Team All-Region honors. Lester recorded 24 tackles in a 35-21 win over No. 10 Athens Academy -- the most by a Panther in six years.

"Defensively, Ethan Lester is able to do a little bit more as he gets closer to being fully cleared," Perry said. "Connor Schuknecht is having a really good summer as a linebacker and a running back."

While the Panthers have filled in most of the gaps, the biggest question marks remain on special teams, where Union is replacing both kickers, its punter and long snapper.

"Kicker is a big question mark for us right now," Perry said. "We're hoping to get one of the soccer guys to come out and kick, but we're still wait-



The Union County offensive line, a unit expected to be the team's strength in 2024, runs drills last Wednesday, July 11 at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior QB Cade Dockrey and the wide receivers continue making progress. Photo/Todd Forrest

ing to figure that out, and our long snapper. Cody Meeks was our long snapper but Jaxon Tothorow is the leading candidate to take his place.

"Bentley Rich might be the punter," Perry added. "He boots it pretty good. But between now and the scrimmage, we're just trying to get the offense and defense installed and figuring out the question marks on special teams."

The Panthers begin the acclimation period on July 29

and will be in full pads on Aug. 5. Union will host Chestatee on Aug. 9 then visit Gilmer on Aug. 23 for the 2024 opener.

The home opener is Aug. 30 vs. Fannin County. The Panthers begin Region 7-AA play on Sept. 6 vs. Murray County. Union's first road game in 7-AA is Sept. 13 at defending State runner-up Rockmart.

Noah Helton - Union County will play the 2024 season in memory of Noah Helton -- a 2023 graduate who passed

away earlier this month.

"I can't tell you how much Noah Helton meant to our football team," Perry said. "We have '67' stickers already ordered for our helmets and we're going to put some kind of plaque at the fieldhouse. He was a great kid."

In honor of Helton, no one will wear No. 67 at UCHS for the foreseeable future.

"No one will wear No. 67 as long as I'm coach at Union County," Perry said.



Linebacker Ethan Lester is close to 100% healthy. Photo/Todd Forrest



Sophomore WR/DB Chetley Cox will contribute on both sides of the ball in 2024. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union FOOTBALL

HOME ■ AWAY ■

2024 SCHEDULE

AUG 23	AUG 30	SEP 6	SEP 13	SEP 20	SEP 27	OCT 4	OCT 13	OCT 25	NOV 1
@ Gilmer County	Vs. Fannin Co.	Vs. Murray Co.	@ Rockmart	Vs. N. Murray Co.	@ LFO	@ Ringgold	@ Coalhulla Co.	Vs. Sonoraville	Vs. No. Cobb Christian

North Georgia Rapids third at Gainesville meet

Gainesville - Our local area swim team, the North Georgia Rapids, successfully competed in the league's championship swim meet held in Gainesville this past week.

Twelve teams from throughout the North Georgia area comprise the league with approximately 400 swimmers competing. Our Rapids are in the smaller team division and finished the event with a strong third place finish.

The team's 20 swimmers range in age from nine to 17 with all having good results. Following a short break, they will return to the water to continue their future goals of raising their success level.

The following represent the team's efforts:

Boys 10U Overall finishes - Sawyer Yancey - 4th; Kevin Merritt - 10th; Sam Tippens - 12th.

Mixed 12U - Henry Kazmierzak - 1st; McKynlee Simpson - 14th.

Mixed 14U - Wyatt Yancey - 6th; Kimberly Simpson - 11th; John Tippens - 12th; Connor Whitney - 14th.

Mixed 18U - Lily Helton - 7th; Nicholas Nushtayeva - 7th; Hunter Yancey - 9th; Andrew Nushtayeva - 10th; Clara Kazmierzak - 11th; Wyatt Nichols - 14th.

Although not earning individual points, other swimmers had numerous personal best times. These athletes



continue to practice hard and will be valuable performers in future competition: Genevieve Conley, Ian Lander, Wyatt Chandler, Carter Tippens and

Henry Livingston. The team competes year round and practices at the Union General Hospital's Wellness Center.

If you would like more information about the team, contact Coach Barry Gay at (706)835-1662.

UCHS 2024 Softball schedule

DATE	OPPONENT (R) = Region Play @ = Host Location, vs. = Additional Team	LOCATION	TEAM	TIME
August 1	Pickens County - Dragons 500 Dragon Dr., Jasper, GA	Away	Varsity	4:00 / 6:00 PM
August 2	Lumpkin County - Indians 2001 Indian Dr., Dahlonega, GA	Away	JV	5:00 PM
August 3	Woodland High School - Wildcats	Home	Varsity	12:00 / 2:00 PM
August 6	White County - Warriors	Home	JV / Varsity	4:00 / 6:00 PM
August 8	Dawson County - Tigers	Home	JV / Varsity	4:00 / 6:00 PM
August 10	vs. Alcovy - Tigers @ Prince Avenue - Wolverines 2201 Ruth Jackson Rd., Bogart, GA	Away	Varsity	11:00 PM 1:00 PM
August 12	White County - Warriors 2800 Hwy 129 North, Cleveland, GA	Away	JV / Varsity	4:00 / 6:00 PM
August 15	Rockmart - Yellow Jackets (R) 990 Cartersville Hwy., Rockmart, GA	Away	Varsity	5:30 PM
August 16	Tallulah Falls - Indians	Home	JV	4:30/6:00
August 17	@ Lumpkin County - Indians vs. Lanier High School - Longhorns 2001 Indian Dr., Dahlonega, GA	Away	Varsity	10:00 AM 12:00 PM
August 20	North Murray - Mountaineers (R)	Home	Varsity	5:30 PM
August 22	Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe (LFO) - Warriors (R) 1850 Battlefield Pkwy, Fort Oglethorpe, GA	Away	Varsity	5:30 PM
August 23	Gilmer County - Bobcats	Home	JV	4:30 / 6:00 PM
August 26,	Gilmer County - Bobcats 408 Bobcat Trail, Ellijay, GA	Away	JV	4:30 PM
August 27	Sonoraville - Phoenix (R)	Home	Varsity	5:30 PM
August 29	Ringold - Tigers (R) 29 Tiger Trail, Ringgold, GA	Away	Varsity	5:30 PM
September 5	Murray County - Indians (R)	Home	Varsity	5:30 PM
September 6	Pickens County - Dragons	Home	JV	4:00 / 6:00 PM
September 9	North Cobb Christian - Eagles (R) 4500 Eagle Dr., Kennesaw, GA	Away	Varsity	5:30 PM
September 10	Coahulla Creek - Colts (R)	Home	Varsity	5:30 PM
September 12	Rockmart - Yellow Jackets (R)	Home	Varsity	5:30 PM
September 17	North Murray - Mountaineers (R) 2568 Mount Carmel Church Road, Chatsworth, GA	Away	Varsity	5:30 PM
September 19	Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe (LFO) - Warriors (R)	Home	Varsity	5:30 PM
September 21	Gilmer County - Bobcats	Home	Varsity	10:00 AM
September 23	Lumpkin County - Indians	Home	JV	5:00 PM
September 24	Sonoraville - Phoenix (R) 7345 Fairmount Hwy SE, Calhoun, GA	Away	Varsity	5:30 PM
September 26	Ringold - Tigers (R)	Home	Varsity	5:30 PM
October 1	Murray County - Indians (R) 1001 Green Rd., Chatsworth, GA	Away	Varsity	5:30 PM
October 3	North Cobb Christian - Eagles (R)	Home	Varsity	5:30 PM
October 8	Coahulla Creek - Colts (R) 3361 Crow Rd. NE, Dalton, GA	Away	Varsity	5:30 PM
October 9	White County - Warriors 2800 Hwy 129 North, Cleveland, GA	Away	Varsity	5:30 PM
October 14-15	1st Round of State			
October 21-22	2nd Round of State			

GRAPPLE Fest 2024

AUGUST 3rd 4pm-8pm
UNION COUNTY SCHOOL CAMPUS
(Near the "rubber" gym below the elementary school)

Join Union County Wrestling for live outdoor wrestling (ALL AGES!) with competitors from all over the Tri-State area!

Vendors, Craft Booths, Live Wrestling, Concessions, Bounce House, and Children's Activities!

An EVENT like NO OTHER!
FREE ADMISSION
AUGUST 3rd 4pm-8pm

union county VOLLEYBALL CAMP

JULY 17-19TH
5:30-8:00 P.M.
@UCMS GYM
UPCOMING 3RD-8TH GRADERS

\$60 FEE
INCLUDES SHIRT

REGISTER HERE

Travel Baseball for seasons

Fall 2024 and Spring 2025

Sign Ups are open for the seasons in the following age groups:

Ages 9-10
Ages 11-12
Ages 13-14

For more info contact
Derek at 706-994-8973

Jim Hughes records hole-in-one at Old Union GC

Old Union Golf Course would like to congratulate Blairsville's Jim Hughes on his recent hole-in-one.

Hughes' ace came at the Par three 13th hole on July 10.

Prior to his retirement, Hughes served as Union County High School Athletic Director. Hughes won two region championships (1994 and 2009) as Union County Lady Panthers basketball coach.

Old Union is hosting its annual Junior Golf Clinic this week on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30-11 a.m.



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Union County 2024 Volleyball Schedule

DATE	OPPONENT (R) = Region Play, @ = Tri-Match Host, vs. = Additional Team	LOCATION	TEAM <small>MAXPREPS Link</small>	TIME
June 24-26, 2024	White County Camp 2600 Hwy 129 North, Cleveland, GA	Away		5:00 PM 7:00 PM
July 8-9, 2024	Gainesville Training Camp 830 Century Place, Gainesville, GA	Away		5:00 PM 7:00 PM
August 8, 2024	Pickens County - Dragons	HOME	JV / Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
August 13, 2024	Rabun County - Wildcats Stephens County - Indians	HOME	Varsity Varsity	5:00 PM 7:00 PM
August 15, 2024	@ Franklin County - Lions vs. Commerce - Tigers 6570 GA Hwy 145, Carnesville, GA	Away	JV / Varsity JV / Varsity	5:00 / 6:00 PM
August 19, 2024	Andrews, NC - Wildcats	HOME	Varsity	6:00 PM
August 20, 2024	@ Stephens County - Indians vs. Tallulah Falls - Indians 323 Indian Trail, Toccoa, GA	Away	JV / Varsity JV / Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
August 22, 2024	@ Dawson County - Tigers vs. West Hall - Spartans 1665 Perimeter Rd., Dawsonville, GA	Away	JV / Varsity JV / Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
August 26, 2024	Rabun Gap-Nacoochee - Eagles	HOME	JV / Varsity	5:00 / 6:00 PM
August 27, 2024	@ Banks County - Leopards vs. Habersham County - Raiders 1486-A Historic Homer Hwy, Homer, GA	Away	JV / Varsity JV / Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
August 29, 2024	Hiwassee Dam, NC - Eagles	HOME	JV / Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
September 5, 2024	Commerce - Tigers Dawson County - Tigers	HOME	Varsity Varsity	5:00 PM 7:00 PM
September 7, 2024	Gordon Lee Tournament Gordon Lee High School 105 Lee Cir., Chickamauga, GA	Away	Varsity	TBD
September 10, 2024	Rockmart - Yellow Jackets (R) Sonoraville - Phoenix (R)	HOME UC Rec Center	JV / Varsity JV / Varsity	5:00 / 7:00 PM
September 12, 2024	Andrews, NC - Wildcats 50 High School Drive, Andrews, NC	Away	JV / Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
September 17, 2024	@ Ringgold - Tigers (R) vs. Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe (LFO) - Warriors (R) 29 Tiger Trail, Ringgold, GA	Away	Varsity Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
September 19, 2024	Hiwassee Dam 267 Blue Eagle Cir., Murphy, NC	Away	JV / Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
September 24, 2024	@ Murray County - Indians (R) vs. North Murray - Mountaineers (R) 1001 Green Rd., Chatsworth, GA	Away	JV / Varsity JV / Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
September 26, 2024	East Jackson *Senior Night	HOME	JV / Varsity	6:00 PM 7:00 PM
October 1, 2024	@ Coahulla Creek - Colts (R) vs. North Cobb Christian - Eagles (R) 3361 Crow Rd. NE, Dalton, GA	Away	JV / Varsity JV / Varsity	5:00 PM 6:00 PM
October 12, 2024	AREA TOURNAMENT	TBD	Varsity	TBD
October 14, 2024	AREA TOURNAMENT	TBD	Varsity	TBD