

Cross Country: men place 11th; ladies 13th at State Championships

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

Carrollton - Union County Cross Country was up bright-and-early on Saturday morning to compete for a Class AAA State Championship.

The mens AAA race got underway at 8 a.m. with the girls race to follow. With temperatures in the low-40's, each-and-every-one of the 200-plus race contestants were competing in the coolest temperatures they had faced all season.

However, the mens race was forced to restart after a runner tripped within the first 100 meters, sending the runners back to the starting line.

The second attempt at a restart was successful and the State Championships were underway.

Union County junior Lance Underwood placed 21st with a time of 17:37.

Timothy Murphy came in 70th with a time of 18:59. Senior Adam Bachman placed 87th - clocking in at 19:16.

In 97th was Gehrig Patterson with a time of 19:28, Will Harkins was 101st at 19:32, and Milo Bauman was 129th at 20:22.

Colby Ives rounded out Union's top seven runners with a 134th place finish - crossing the finish line in 20:26.

Bauman and Ives turned out to be the two most important times of the day as they defeated GAC's No.6 and No.7 runners to give the Panthers the edge over the Spartans, since both teams finished tied with 368 points.

In the team standings, Union was 11th, 85 points back of 10th place Morgan County, and tied with region-foe Greater Atlanta Christian. They were also 12 points better than 13th place Southeast Bulloch.

"When you look at the times from the AAA race compared to other races, I thought that AAA did phenomenal," Union Cross Country Coach Paige Dyer said.

As for other region runners, Dawson County's Jacob Poston placed second to lead his team to a fourth place finish.

Fifth place North Hall placed two runners in the top



Left: The guys at the starting line in Carrollton on Saturday morning Right: The girls team waits patiently at the starting line to begin the State Championship race. Photos/Todd Forrest



Lance Underwood led Union County with a 21st place finish in his third State Championship race at Carrollton. Photo/Todd Forrest

11 but it wasn't enough to top Dawson County.

East Jackson took home the individual and the team State Championship, with Westminster and Lovett rounding out the top three.

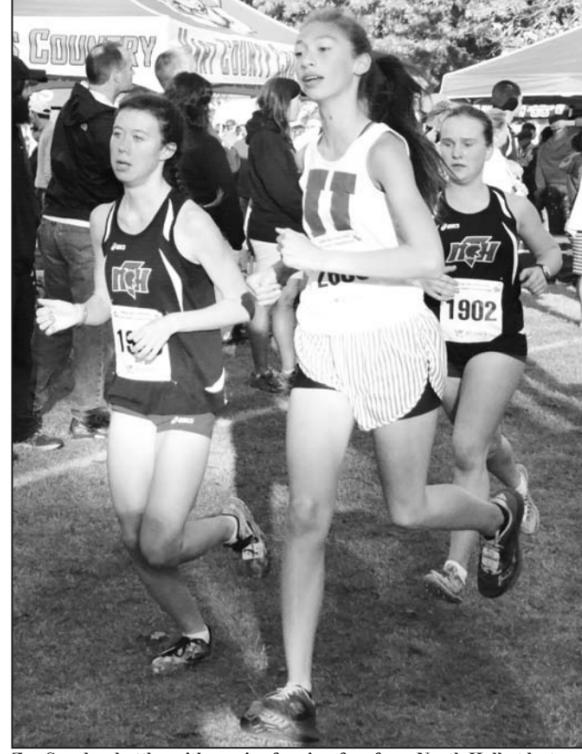
As for the Union County girls, freshman Zoe Sanchez was 22nd with a time of 21:14.

Lexie Ochoa took home 72nd at 24:05, Sadie Underwood placed 86th, finishing in 24:28, and Destiny Orelana was 97th, checking in at 24:57.

The six and seven girls, Allison Vincent (25:24) and Kaitlyn Gallagher (25:43) placed 115th and 120th respectively.

The Lady Panthers finished 18 points back of 12th place Jackson County with 389 points, but were 6 points better than 14th place Savannah Arts Academy.

"Having five freshmen girls in your top seven and still coming in 13th shows promise," Coach Dyer said. "We also had our No. 2 runner, Emmi Schakat out with an in-



Zoe Sanchez battles with a pair of region-foes from North Hall at last weekend's State meet in Carrollton. She placed 22nd. Photo/Todd Forrest

jury, so that was a factor." The most gut-wrenching news of the day came when Coach Dyer and former Cross Country Coach Jackie Hughes were checking other race times while on the bus ride home.

"My heart sank when I looked at the Class AA results," Coach Dyer said. "I had to ask Coach Hughes to take a look, to make sure I was reading it correctly."

Had Union County remained in Class AA and competed against schools its own size, instead of filing an appeal

"Knowing Lance Underwood like I know him, he would have pushed himself and we would have went home with two individual State Championships."

The team standings would have likely yielded a girls state title and the boys would have probably placed second. Especially when you consider that Union raced at 8 a.m., when the weather was coldest and times were the slowest.

The AA races were held at noon so times were much faster and there was no dew remaining on the track at that point.

"Racing that early probably slowed us down a little bit," Dyer said. "It was cold and our runners were freezing. Our bus was also late on Friday so we didn't get to bed until later, then we had to be up at 5 a.m. to leave the motel by 6:30 a.m. Little things like that can make a difference and certainly could have slowed the times (for everyone in AAA)."

"But I was proud of both of our teams regardless. It was our goal to get there and I think they did well. Our times improved tremendously over last year, some of them even shaved a couple of minutes off."

"Next year our goals are going to be different. I would like to finish higher in the region and be in the top six at State. I really believe that we have the talent to do that."

Union only loses one senior runner off each team (Bachman and Gallagher), among those that competed at State.

"I believe Lance would have went for the championship if he was close enough to compete with the leaders at the very end," Dyer said.

Shockers win second straight tournament



Back Row: Aubrie Banton, Rebekah Chambers, Allie Brey, Hannah Patton, Jessica Lara-Noyola, Caley Davis. Kneeing: Sierra Burnette, Kaylee Helton, Adaley Burnette, Tori Tracy. Blairsville's Shockers (12U Fast Pitch Softball Team) win their second Championship in-a-row on Oct 29. The Shockers have won both Tournaments in dramatic form by out scoring their opponents 109-19 and going undefeated the whole way.

Basketball underway at Gilmer Co. on Nov. 17th



Lawson Baenninger returns after leading Union in scoring as a junior. The first game will be at Gilmer next week before both Union County teams host Towns on Nov. 22. Photo/Todd Forrest

Blairsville Pickleball Club holds first Annual Banquet



(L-R): Christine Ferras, BPC Secretary; Nolan Lang, Interim President, both of Blairsville, GA

Starting with just twenty members in the summer of 2015, the Blairsville Pickleball Club now boasts 115 active members who play the sport locally and in several other venues. Over fifty of the members gathered at "The View" community room in Blairsville on October 28th for a delicious catered meal and good fellowship. Officers and committee chairs were recognized with a variety of gifts, and slides of the year's activities were projected on the large wall screen. Nolan Lang, Interim President of the club, commended David Block, former Ambassador who orga-

nized the club; Charles Smith, Treasurer; Christine Ferras, Secretary; Nancy Smith, Publicity; and Pam Collins, Committee Chair. Nolan Lang was also given a surprise gift by Christine and Joe Ferras for the work he has contributed to the advancement of the club.

The club has plans to offer more instruction time and special clinics by the current Ambassadors, Kathi and Bud Patrick.

The public is invited to come to Meeks Park tennis courts on Tuesday and Thursday mornings to meet the players, learn about the sport, and play Pickleball! N/NOV25/CA

Bowling scores

Monday Night Ladies: Pat Craig 206, Linda Nichols 203, Series 545.

Monday Night Men: Stanley Tyler 228, Series 635, Jeb Plott 236, 242, Series 662, Dewey Allen 231, Series 613, Walter Carpenter 233, Ray Everett 232, 265, Series 688, Derrick Rice 223, Series 602.

9 Pin No Tap League: Dee Tyler 300, Mike Lamb 300.

Young At Heart Seniors:

Gene Clopton 217, 214, Dewey Allen 220, 244, Series 632, John Delphino 206, 278, 228, Series 712, Paul Napolitano 222, 204, Bryan Cuthbert 220, Del Neiffer 203, 211, Sandy Groover 200, Ron Wingate 200, Stanley Tyler 233, Bob Landis 211, 257.

Thursday Night Fun: Chuck Reeves 223, Shay Roberts 237, 267, 227, Series 725, Greg Wittenberg 243, 227, Series 659, Ray Everett 227, 246, Series 665.

Upward Indoor Soccer 2017



The House of Prayer and First United Methodist churches are glad to announce that registration is now open for the Upward Indoor Soccer 2017 season. Boys and girls in grades Kindergarten through 8th Grade can now sign-up at www.hopb.org and www.firstmethodist-blairsville.com.

The registration price to participate is \$60, through December 16th, and an additional \$10 will be applied thereafter, with registration closing on January 28th. Payment plans are available, if needed. Convenient weekly practices commence the week of January 9th, while games will be held every Saturday between January 28th through March 4th.

Registrants should attend the evaluation that will be held on Thursday, December 8th on a drop-in basis between the hours

of 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. at the House of Prayer Family Life Center located behind the sanctuary. For more information regarding registration, call the church offices at House of Prayer (706) 745-5925.

Established in 1995, Upward Sports is the world's largest Christian youth sports provider. It remains unique by providing a substitution system that ensures every young athlete plays, while requiring only an hour practice each week and one game.

Upward Sports develops total athletes mentally, athletically, spiritually, and socially - producing players who excel both on and off the field. Today, approximately 6.2 million players have participated at more than 2,000 churches in 47 states, in camps, clinics, and leagues through Upward Sports' Recreation Division.

Information regarding Upward Sports can be found online at www.upward.org.