

Sports

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Track: Barrett overcomes the elements to set another school record

Winter weather makes a comeback but can't slow Barrett, McBride, Sanchez and Underwood

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

Tiger - On Thursday, April 6, Union County's track and field team participated in a meet at Rabun County where snow, sleet, rain and wind wreaked havoc.

As Old Man Winter returned to North Georgia with a vengeance, bringing record low temperatures, Union County junior Riley Barrett upped the ante with a record breaking performance of his own.

Barrett took home the gold in the 100M and 200M races - clocking in at 11.28 seconds in the 100M to set a new Union County High School record.

On his heels was another Panther runner, fellow junior Cole Wright, who crossed the finish line in 11.44.

In the 3200M race, junior Lance Underwood came up four seconds shy of a school record with a time of 10 minutes and 40 seconds during his own first place showing.

Underwood also took second in the 1600M race. Meanwhile, the 4x400



Union County's Riley Barrett (third from left) edged teammate Cole Wright (far right) in his record breaking race. Photo courtesy of Jenni Dixon

relay A-team of Chad Buzzard, Bryan Nelson, Adrian Shaw and Underwood turned in a first place finish.

As for the Lady Panthers, freshman Zoe Sanchez deliv-

ered another first place performance in the 3200M race.

Evelyn McBride continued Union's dominance by placing first in the 400M.

"We battled through

flakes of snow, sleet, rain, wind and very frigid temperatures." Union County Head Coach Shawnetta Reece said. "Wind chill values dipped down to the mid 30s and gusts were up to

25 mph. This was by far the coldest meet since the program restarted in 2014. We had to spend extra time getting our muscles warm in this weather to avoid injuries. We definitely

left this meet mentally stronger, but most importantly, we left healthy and uninjured."

Jessie Holbrook took second in the 3200M race and Aladriel Arnold was second in the 400M.

The 4x100 boys relay team of Barrett, Shaw, Wright, and Chayton Schafer finished second.

Kanon Hemphill was third in the 200M race.

Will Harkins placed third in both the 800M and 1600M race.

Shaw took third in 400M race while Latty Ryals was third in the 800M and 1600M events.

Jordan Stubblefield placed third in the 100M.

The 4x400 girls relay team of Arnold, McBride, Sanchez and Destiny Orellana Irvin took home third.

Individually, Orellana-Irvin was fourth in the 800M.

The boys 4x400 relay B-team of Kyle Morlock, Timothy Murphy, Cole Payne, and Harkins came in third.

Individually, Payne was fourth in the 800M and Nelson was fourth in the 400M.

The field results were unavailable from the meet.

Panthers use nine-run first to knockout Robbinsville early on Senior Night

Rebels take two-of-three after opening the series with consecutive 10-0 victories over UC

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

The Panthers (8-14, 3-12) dropped two of three to rival Fannin County last week after suffering a pair of 10-0 losses to open the series before avoiding the sweep with a 13-3 victory in game three - the nightcap of a Friday doubleheader in Blue Ridge.

On Wednesday, Union County hosted Robbinsville, NC for Senior Night and used a nine-run first inning, followed by a four-run third to put the Black Knights away during a 13-0 victory.

Cayden Rich, Dawson Groves and Kyle Walker combined for a five-inning shutout, allowing just two hits and three walks while striking out five.

Groves, one of two Panther seniors honored after the game, made his pitching debut in the third and worked a perfect inning. He returned to the mound in the fourth and pitched around a two-out walk to escape unscathed.

Groves, a knuckleball specialist, gave way to Walker in the fifth after tossing two no-hit innings and fanning three on 32 pitches.

At the plate, Groves drove in three runs during a 2-for-3 performance. Fellow senior Slade Thompson finished 1-for-3 with a run and a double.

Union County sent 14 batters to the plate during its nine-run first inning that opened with two walks and two hit batters to gift wrap the Panthers an early 1-0 lead.

A bases loaded double by Candler Colwell made it a 3-0 game then a Groves base hit scored two more for a 5-0 advantage.

A Black Knight error off the bat of Cole Davis would plate courtesy runner Pierson Allison for another Union run.

Following a Thompson double that put runners on second and third, leadoff hitter Patrick Baggett scored both runners with a single to right.

Logan Dyer doubled to put two more Panthers in scoring position and RJ Banton brought in the final run of the inning when he reached on an error.

With a nine-run lead, Rich pitched two scoreless innings, allowing one hit, two walks, and striking out one.

Union's four-run third began with a base hit by Baggett and a one-out error off the bat of Coleson Daniel.

A Dell Ruff walk loaded the bases for Jonathan Everett, who made it 10-0 off an errant Robbinsville throw to the plate on a comebacker to the mound.

Crawford Colwell drove in the 11th run with a single to left and Groves followed suit with a run scoring single of his own. A Hunter Kelley walk would plate the final run off the game with one down.



Senior knuckleballer Dawson Groves thrilled his teammates and provided Coach Roxbury with two scoreless innings while making his season debut on the mound in Union's 13-0 win over Robbinsville, NC. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Slade Thompson doubles in the nine-run first inning of Union's 13-0 win over Robbinsville, NC. He would later score to give the Panthers an 8-0 lead. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County baseball seniors (L-R) Slade Thompson (2) with family and Dawson Groves (20) with family at last week's Senior Night festivities for the Class of 2017. Photo/Todd Forrest

With the Panthers still leading by 13, Walker took the mound in the fifth and worked a perfect inning by getting a pair of ground balls and a strikeout to end the game.

In the final game of the week, Union exploded for eight runs in the third during a 13-3 win at Fannin County. After getting shutout in consecutive meetings with the Rebels, the Panthers jumped out to a 12-0 lead before Fannin responded with three in the bottom of the fourth.

Union tacked on another run in the fifth and the starter, Davis, pitched around a lead-off double in the bottom half of the inning to end the game after five.

Davis fanned seven hit-

ters in five innings while allowing 3 runs, 3 walks, and 6 hits in the 10-run victory.

Banton went 3-for-4 at the plate with a run and 3 RBIs. Ean Harkins also drove in three runs for Union while Baggett and Crawford Colwell knocked in two each.

After each team left three runners on base over the first two innings, the Panthers exploded for eight in the third thanks to a Fannin error and walk that set the table for the heart of the Union County lineup.

With two aboard, Banton laced a base hit into right field to score Baggett. Ruff drew a base on balls to load the bases for Crawford Colwell, who made it 3-0 with a two-run

double.

Following a Candler Colwell walk, Carter Wright brought home two more when his fly ball to left resulted in the second Rebel error of the inning. Davis drew a walk to put two on and Harkins cleared the bases with a double. Baggett hit one on the screws to make it 8-0 with a RBI single - scoring Harkins.

The Panthers added four more in the fourth after consecutive, one-out, hit batters and a Davis single loaded the bases. Harkins drew a seven-pitch walk for his third RBI and Baggett drew another walk for a 10-0 advantage.

A two-out, two-run single from Banton capped off the scoring and spotted Union

a 12-run lead.

Fannin took advantage of a bases loaded walk and a two-out, two-run single in the bottom of the fourth to pull within nine at 12-3.

The Panthers pulled ahead 13-3 after a Candler Colwell single and a Wright walk allowed Davis to plate another run with a fielder's choice.

The first two games of the series were unkind to Union as they suffered a pair of 10-0 defeats to Fannin with the first coming in Blairsville on Tuesday.

Banton got the start for Union and surrendered 4 unearned runs and 3 hits in 3 innings despite tossing two scoreless innings to open the contest.

Fannin's four run third was followed by a run in the fourth to take a 5-0 lead.

The Panthers were only able to muster three hits and one walk while striking out seven times in six innings.

Dyer, Banton, and Ruff finished with one hit apiece while Dyer drew a walk.

Harkins relieved Banton in the fourth and went 2 2/3 innings - giving up two hits, 4 runs and 4 walks.

Allison recorded the final out of the sixth after allowing 2 hits and 2 runs.

When the dust settled in the top of the sixth, Fannin had tacked on five more runs for a 10-0 lead.

A Dyer single was all the offense Union could generate in the bottom of the sixth and the game was ended by the "mercy rule" prior to the start of the seventh inning.

In game one of Friday's doubleheader, the Rebels finished off Union in five innings with another 10-0 victory.

Fannin County ace Will Shirah was perfect through five innings with 9 strikeouts when the game was called.

Walker started the game for Union and allowed six runs, but only one was earned in two innings.

Everett and Rich also threw one inning each with Everett giving up three earned runs.

Rich tossed a scoreless fourth despite walking three and escaping from a bases loaded jam.

The season will come to an end this week with a three game series vs East Hall.

The final home game of 2017 will be Tuesday at 5:55 vs the Vikings.

The series and the season will wrap up with a Friday doubleheader at East Hall.

First pitch is scheduled for 5 p.m. in Rabbittown.