

Wade Hodges: Introducing Union's newest assistant football coach

Community turns out for Meet the Team, witnesses upset in the 'Hot Wing Eating Contest'

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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Now that Meet the Team is in the books, Union County football is just days away from taking the field and competing against someone in a different colored uniform.

The Panthers will host Rabun Gap on Thursday in the first, and only, preseason scrimmage before the regular season opens at Gilmer County on Aug. 25.

Fans can expect Thursday to be your typical, run-of-the-mill scrimmage where the No. 1 priority is keeping everyone healthy. The varsity squads will play two quarters with the JV and freshman taking over during the second half. Also, don't be surprised if there are no kick returns. It's unlikely there will be any live situations on kickoffs or punts.

As for Friday's Meet the Team, fans of all ages were in attendance as Panther players, coaches, and cheerleaders were all on hand for pictures, autographs, and more.

Once again, the highlight of the event was the Wing Eating Contest, but this time, it resulted in a monumental, Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium upset.

UCHS cheerleader Kaylee Young took on the Union County football team and outlasted them all. Mean, nasty linebackers, giant offensive linemen, and headhunting defensive backs were no match for Miss Young.

Meanwhile, new Union County outside linebackers coach Wade Hodges was attending his very first Meet the Team.

Prior to UCHS, Hodges coached offensive and defensive line, plus middle school baseball, for three years at South Effingham High School, located 20 miles northwest of Savannah.

Over the weekend, Coach Hodges took time out of his busy schedule to chat with the North Georgia News. So here is Union County's newest football coach / math and engineering teacher: Wade Hodges.

NGN: Where did you begin your football career, high school and college?

WH: I graduated from Effingham County High in 1992 and played football at Wingate College but I got my teaching (degree) later on at Georgia Southern.

NGN: Your daughter plays softball here at Union County, but you have a son that's playing baseball at Kennesaw right now, correct?

WH: Yes, my son Garrett is a sophomore at Kennesaw right now. I also have another daughter, Krysten, who is a



Union County football's first year assistant coach Wade Hodges during practice last week. Photo/Todd Forrest



The Union County cheer squad encourages fellow cheerleader Kaylee Young during her victory in the Wing Eating Contest. Meanwhile, the UCHS football players look on in disbelief as their teammates suffer a shocking defeat at the Meet the Team community event on Friday. Photo/Todd Forrest

sophomore in high school. My wife April is also in education. She's the principal at Blue Ridge Elementary.

NGN: Will you be coaching anything else besides football at Union County?

WH: Baseball. I'm going to help out with baseball too.

NGN: What was it about Union County and Northeast Georgia that attracted you to the area?

WH: My wife and I have always wanted to retire to this area and we've vacationed up here. Our kids are also going to college up here. Garrett is at Kennesaw and Katelynn is going to Young Harris, so we decided to speed up the process. We sent some resumes around to see what would happen and that's how we ended up here. My only regret is that we didn't

move here sooner.

NGN: So far, what do you enjoy most about Union County and the mountains.

WH: The weather (laughing). It's definitely cooler up here.

NGN: Have you tried Sorghum Syrup yet? If not, you probably will during the Sorghum Festival.

WH: I haven't had a chance to try the Sorghum syrup yet, but I will. I'm looking forward to it.

NGN: Now that you've had two weeks of practice, how are the outside linebackers coming along? We should have a nice blend of youth and experience at that position.

WH: They are coming along really well. We do have some experienced football players at that position. We're mostly

seniors and juniors with a few younger guys backing them up.

The seniors are eager to pass along what they know to the younger guys so we'll be fine at that position for years to come.

NGN: If you didn't get into coaching or education, what career do you believe you would have chose?

WH: I didn't go right into education out of college so that I know. I worked for 17 years at Bell South and Georgia Power.

NGN: Bulldogs or Yellow Jackets? Do you have a college football preference?

WH: Georgia Southern (laughing).

I'll pull for the other Georgia teams, unless they're playing Southern. (Georgia Southern) was about 30 minutes away down in Effingham so we always went to the games. I've always followed Georgia Southern.

NGN: You were closer to Jacksonville, Fla than Atlanta. Are you a Jaguars fans?

WH: No, I'm a Falcons fan. Definitely a Falcons fan.

2017 VARSITY FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

August 17	H	Rabun Gap (Scrimmage)	7:00
August 25	A	Gilmer County	7:30
September 1	A	Hayesville, NC	7:30
September 8	H	Andrews, NC	7:30
September 15	H	Banks County	7:30
September 22	H	Greater Atlanta Christian	7:30
September 29	A	East Hall	7:30
October 6	H	Dawson County	7:30
October 13	A	North Hall	7:30
October 20		OPEN	
October 27	H	Fannin County	7:30
November 3	A	Lumpkin County	7:30

Union County Recreation Senior Autumn WALK-It-OUT Program

2017 Senior Walking Program
Ages: 55 and over

Fall is coming soon and UCRD is continuing with our walking program! We have two different walking programs designed to fit your individual pace. Our first group will walk at a high intensity level and our second group will be a low intensity level. The Program Director of Union County Parks and Recreation will be leading a free walking session two times a week for 6 weeks in session 2. This is a great time to socialize and exercise with a fun group. We will meet at Meeks Park Walking Trail and walk it out for 60 minutes. (You did not need to be a part of session one in order to participate in the Fall session.)



**Session Two Registration begins on August 7 and ends August 31 at the Recreation Office (310 Wellborn St.)

Registration must be done in person due to cap on participants per session! If you have any questions, please call our office at (706) 439-6074.

Warriors Veterans Outreach Golf Tournament September 8th

Warriors Veterans Outreach and Warriors Scholarship Fund are joining together in conducting a golf tournament. Money raised will be contributed to the Warriors Veterans Outreach, an organization that assists local veterans in need of help.

The tournament, a four person, best ball event will be held at the Old Union Golf Course with a shotgun start at 1 p.m. on September 8th. Food will be provided by Chick-fil-A prior to the start of the contest.

Cost of the tournament is \$220 or \$55 for individuals. Trophies will be awarded

in various categories: first and second place for mens foursomes; first and second place for ladies foursomes; closest to pin on selected holes for both men and ladies and longest drive on selected holes for men and ladies.

In case of bad weather, rain date is September 15. Registration deadline is by September 1. Prior to and during the tournament, there will be raffles on some very nice items. Drawings will be held after the end of the tournament.

For registration or questions, please call Skip Belton at 706-745-2273 or Charles Sowers at 706-745-5123.

Trout stocking sites week of August 7-11, 2017

Fannin: Rock Creek
Union: Cooper Creek
Note: Information is subject to change. Please call the hatchery at 706-838-4723 for questions. Stay up-to-date with stocking and events through Facebook www.facebook.com/chattahoocheeforestnfh. The hatchery also provides trout for the state. Please contact Georgia DNR for information on sites stocked by the state.

The Racing Roundup: Tri-County and Blue Ridge results

By Blake Lynch
North Georgia News
Sports Special

Tri-County Racetrack had the weekend off. They will be back in action this Friday night, August 18th. It's Fan Appreciation Night. They will have vintage cars and a kids bicycle race.

The gates will open at 5 p.m. racing starts at 7:30 p.m. Grandstands are \$7 and pits are \$30; kids 11-16 are \$15 and kids 10 and under are free. Don't forget your arm bands from August 4th to receive your free admission.

Blue Ridge Motorsports Park started out with an exciting dash for cash to begin the night which was won by #7 Jason Deal for \$500.

Charles Devine, Jr. #14 took home another first place finish in Street Stock.

Blairsville's own #01 Jacob Lynch finished 4th.

Modified Street was won by #17 Brad Thomas.

Crate Late Models had an upset with T-31 Shane Tankersley taking home the win.

Jason Deal #7 the winner of the dash for cash lead half the race but had to return to the pits due to mechanical problems which caused him to fall back in the field.

The B-4 Brian Jackson took home the win in the Limited Late Models.

Franklin Burke #32 got to visit Victory Lane again this week for the pony class.

Beginner class was won once again by #4 Jacob Parris.

The front wheel drive was won by #18.



#01 Jacob Lynch



#32 Franklin Burke



#7 Jason Deal



#17 Brad Thomas

Union County volleyball officially gets underway

August 15	@Dawson Tri Match	Varsity and C Team
August 16	Pickens and Fannin at Home Tri Match	C Team Only
August 17	@Sonoraville Tri Match	Varsity and JV
August 23	@Fannin with Pickens Tri Match	C Team
August 24	Tellico Plains	ALL TEAMS
August 28	Hayesville	JV and Varsity
August 30	@Fannin Tri Match	C Team
August 31	@Tellico Plains	All Teams
Sept 5	REGION @North Hall	Varsity and JV
Sept 7	@Sonoraville	Varsity and JV
Sept 11	@Pickens Tri Match	C Team
Sept 12	REGION East Hall	Varsity and JV
Sept 13	@Fannin with White Tri Match	C Team
Sept 16	@Tallulah Falls 6 Team Play Date	Varsity Only
Sept 19	REGION @Fannin with GAC	Varsity and JV
Sept 21	@Gilmer	Varsity and JV
Sept 25	@Hiwassee Dam	Varsity and JV
Sept 26	REGION @Lumpkin with Dawson	Varsity and JV
Sept 27	@Pickens Tri Match	C Team
Sept 28	@White	All Teams
Oct 2	Hiwassee Dam	Varsity and C Team
Oct 3	@Pickens	All Teams

For more details on Union County's first year volleyball program, pick up a copy of next week's North Georgia News, which will also include the 2017 Fall Sports Preview.