

# Sports

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## Lady Panthers record two more shutouts at Swain, Social Circle

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Zero, zilch, nil, nothing, naught, and goose eggs. That has been the theme for anyone unfortunate enough to be on the Union County Lady Panthers' schedule in the first half of the 2015 season.

Six games in and the Lady Panthers are as stingy as ever.

Despite plenty of offense to go around, Union County is keeping it all to themselves. After taking care of Swain County, NC 9-0 early in the week, they went back on the road to rout Region 8-AA foe Social Circle, 7-0.

Following last week's shutouts, the Lady Panthers have outscored the opposition 43-0 in the first six games of 2015.

On Monday, the Lady Panthers went by themselves to Bryson City, NC to face Swain County and faced very little resistance in the one-sided win.

Just 79 seconds in, Camryn Carter put Union on the board with an unassisted goal. Two minutes later, Carter found Maddy Morlock - making it a 2-0 game.

Almost five minutes later, Morlock struck again, this time off an assist from Layne Baenninger and Rachel Vester. Sophomore Braedyn Robbins scored in the



Senior goalkeeper Joanna Van Pelt with a stop at Social Circle last week. Photo/John Innis

19th minute to put Union on top 4-0. Baenninger fed Morlock again for the fifth goal.

The sixth goal came when Baenninger set up fellow freshman Brenna Innis with just under 15 minutes left in the first half.

Vester stretched the lead to 7-0 at the half with the help of a Robbins assist. Early in the second half, Robbins set up Janey Thomas to make it 8-0.

Robbins was rewarded for her assists with her team's ninth

goal.

When the Lady Panthers traveled to Social Circle on Friday, they met a team with a 2-1-1 overall record and an 1-0 record in 8-AA, thanks to a 3-2 win over Rabun County.

But whatever confidence the home team possessed going into the contest, it quickly evaporated late in the first half when Union scored three goals in the final eight minutes of the first half to turn a 1-0

See *Another Shutout*, Pg 13A

## Panthers take care of business at Social Circle to remain undefeated

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**Social Circle** - The Union County Panthers mens soccer team faced perhaps its toughest Region 8-AA challenge of the season when the 9th ranked Panthers visited the 8th ranked Social Circle Redskins.

The Panthers jumped out to an early 3-0 lead that lasted into the second half. Union had a chance to stretch it to 4-0 but the Redskins' keeper came up with the stop on a Panthers penalty kick.

Trailing 3-0, Social Circle got on the board 15 minutes into the second half.

Holding onto a 3-1 advantage, sophomore Sam Seiler added an insurance goal with 13:58 left in the game. The Redskins would respond a minute later to make it a 4-2 game but couldn't get any closer.

Union's first goal came in the 11th minute on a Kyle Hamby goal, set up by a Brett Dietz assist. Twelve minutes later, sophomore Lawson Baenninger fed Dietz for the Panthers' second goal of the contest.



Sophomore Parker McCombs scored Union County's third goal of the contest to give his team a 3-0 lead at Social Circle.

With 5:33 left in the half, sophomore Parker McCombs scored on an assist from junior Jesus Mancillas.

Dietz finished with two assists, Alex Mancillas, Jesus Mancillas, and Baenninger had one assist each.

The victory at Social Circle puts the Panthers one win away from clinching a State playoff berth.

After hosting Towns County on Monday night,

Union County will host Rabun County on Friday in a game that will go a long way in determining playoff positioning in Region 8-AA.

The Lady Panthers will host Rabun beginning at 5 p.m. with the Panthers vs Wildcats to follow.

Friday's game will be the last Region contest for both Union County teams until April 17th when Oglethorpe County pays Blairsville a visit.

## Union splits doubleheader with Oglethorpe; remain tied for first in 8-AA

Panthers claim walk-off win vs Pickens, lose via walk-off at Gilmer in non-region action

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The Panthers baseball team wrapped up the week the same way they opened the week - with a win followed by a loss.

Union hosted Oglethorpe County in a Region 8-AA doubleheader on Friday and took the first game 4-1 thanks to a gem from pitcher Joseph Mancuso.

The second contest saw the Panthers fall into a 4-1 hole before battling back to within a run at 4-3 in the third. The Patriots would tack on two more in the fifth and hold on to a 6-3 victory.

Union County (6-2, 4-1) hosted Pickens County on Monday and won on a Hunter Hughes walk-off single that single that scored Chase Barnett in a 7-6 victory.

They would lose in similar fashion a day later when they went extra innings and gave up two runs at Gilmer in the bottom of the eighth, as the Bobcats took the walk-off victory on a two-run single. The losses drop the Panthers to 6-2 overall but they remain tied for first with Rabun County in Region 8-AA, with a visit to Wildcat territory coming up on Tuesday.

Union had an opportunity to take first place all to themselves after they knocked off Oglethorpe County, 4-1 in the first game.

The Patriots and Rabun County had previously split a



Junior Joseph Mancuso delivers during game one of a twin bill with Oglethorpe. He finished with 13 K's in the win. Photo/Todd Forrest

doubleheader, then Oglethorpe dropped another Region contest at Social Circle to put the Panthers and Wildcats in the drivers seat in 8-AA.

Mancuso took the mound vs the Patriots in game one and mowed down the visitors with seven strikeouts to only two hits in the first five innings, allowing Union to build a 4-0 lead after five.

The Panthers got two in the second when senior Tyler Odom doubled off the centerfield fence - scoring Jackson Burks. Junior

Andrew Brown would later score Odom on a groundout to second.

A two-out walk to Mancuso in the third allowed Union to tack on another run. Freshman Patrick Baggett entered as a courtesy runner for the pitcher, Mancuso. Baggett would reach second on a throwing error before coming around to score after a third baseman short-hopped a throw to first on a Jake Sisum grounder.

A perfectly executed bunt by Hughes resulted in a one-out single in the fifth inning. He



Senior Hunter Hughes lines a double into left-centerfield during a 4-1 victory over Oglethorpe in game one. Photo/Todd Forrest

would later score when history repeated itself and an error was committed on another Sisum grounder to third.

Leading 4-0, Mancuso gave up a triple to open the sixth that led to a run when Mancuso was called for a balk. He would get out of trouble by striking out two after two runners reached.

Earlier, Oglethorpe loaded the bases with one out in the fourth only to get sat down on consecutive strikeouts by Mancuso. He finished with 13 K's in a complete game 3-hitter

"We definitely outplayed them in game one," Union Head Coach Brandon Braburn said. "Joe (Mancuso) threw a masterpiece."

Hughes finished the first game 2-for-3 with a run. Odom was 1-for-3 with a run and an RBI double. Brown recorded an RBI when his grounder brought in Odom. Junior Lance Rich was 1-for-3 with a double and a run, while Barnett finished 1-for-3.

In the second game, the Panthers defense struggled behind their senior pitcher Odom, who al-

lowed six runs but only two were earned in 4.2 innings. He would fan 8 hitters while surrendering one walk.

Junior Josh Daniel entered and allowed just one hit while striking out 6 in 2.1 innings, but the Panther bats were unable to mount a late-inning rally.

Union's lineup only managed four hits, no extra base hits and five walks to 11 strikeouts. Hughes, Sisum, Barnett, and Brown reached on base hits for the Panthers. Hughes, Sisum, and Rich scored Union's three runs.

In game two we really struggled offensively with situational hitting," Coach Braburn said. "With runners on and in scoring position we couldn't get the ball in play to put pressure on their defense. We saw three good pitchers from Oglethorpe but I think we are better than that offensively. Defensively we were mediocre at best, and our pitching gave us a chance, but we were falling behind hitters on every batter it seemed."

With one loss each in Region play, Union and Rabun will determine who stands alone at the top of the Region standing when the Wildcats host the Panthers on Tuesday at 5 p.m.

"Against Rabun the thing I'm looking for is pitching efficiency, making routine plays in the field, and obviously putting the ball in play more," Coach Braburn said.

## Track and Field impressive at Hayesville; first place in 10 events

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**Hayesville, NC** - Union County's track and field program left its mark in Hayesville, NC last week with 10 first place finishes, eight second place finishes, and seven third place finishes.

As the only out-of-state school participating, Union faced Swain County, Cherokee, Highlands, Nantahala, and the host school, Hayesville. But after facing some of the top track and field programs in Georgia at the White County meet, the Panthers and Lady Panthers fared significantly better against North Carolina competition.

Of the 31 events that Union County took part in, 25 resulted in a top three finish.

"Even though we are a young team in only our second year with the running events and in our first year with throwing, jumping and hurdles, our athletes looked and performed like they had several years experience in their events," Union County Track and Field Coach Shawnetta Reece said.

Bringing home the gold for Union County was Kim Coyne in the triple jump, the 100-meter dash, and as a member of the 4x400 relay team. She recorded a personal record (PR) in both events with a distance of 28-feet, 2.75 inches. In the 100M dash, Coyne finished with a time of 12.74 seconds. She also came in third in the 400M dash at 1-minute, 8 seconds (1:08).



Senior Eli Robledo took first place out of 17 competitors in the shot put. He also came in third out of 18 in the discus.

Stephanie Busse, Emma Garrison, Amy Cummings, and Coyne paced the 4x400 relay team to a first place finish.

Cummings was first in the 200M dash with a time of 27.32 (PR). She placed fourth in the 400M dash, clocking in at 1:10.

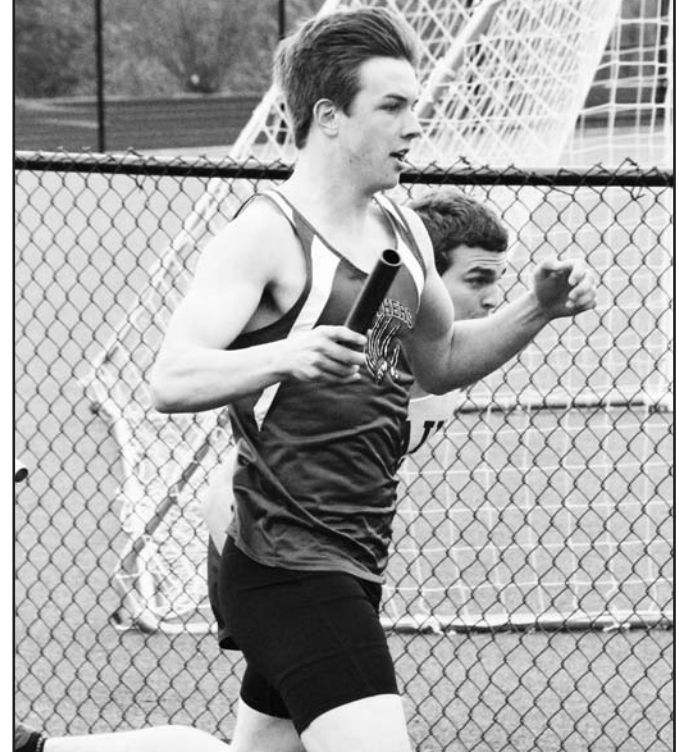
Garrison came in first in the 300M hurdles with a time of 53.87 (PR). Garrison was second in the 3200M at 13:03.

Ralston Drake came in first place in the 200M dash with a time of 23.40 (PR). Drake was

also a member of the first place 4x100 relay team that included Zach Stone, Will Stone, and Jacob Kelley. In the long jump, Drake was fourth with a distance of 17-6.75 (PR).

The boys 4x400 relay team of Zach Stone, Will Stone, Kelley, and Matthew Rich also took home first place.

Individually, Zach Stone was first in the 400M dash, clocking in at 56.09 (PR). In the shot put, Eli Robledo's PR distance of 38-feet, 5.25 inches (38-5.25)



Senior Ralston Drake was first in the 4x100M relay, the 200M race, and fourth in the long jump.

was good enough for first place. Nick Rodriguez was second in the shot put with a distance of 37-1.75 (PR). Robledo came in third in the discus at 99-1.

"I have a lot of confidence in our athletes," Coach Reece said. "Our athletes have been very willing to get out of their comfort zone and try new areas at a moments notice. I have placed two of our boys into a new event on very short notice, with limited practice in an effort to fill events, and they both finished in the top five out of a

minimum of 18 competitors."

Julia Lindsey was second in the 1600M event with a time of 6:15. She was fifth in the 3200M race at 14:09.

Busse was second in the long jump with a distance of 13-0.25. She also placed second in the 800M race at 2:50.05 (PR). Will Stone placed second in the triple jump and the 300M hurdles with a PR in each one. He had a distance of 37-1 in the triple jump and time of 48:39 in the hurdles.

Emmeline Stuart recorded

a PR with a second place time of 1:02 in the 300M hurdles. Dylan Dockery also clocked in with a PR in the guys' 300M hurdles, finishing in third place at 51.76.

Jakob Brown placed third in the 3200M race at 12:45.61 and fifth in the 1600M at 5:35.4. Kelley was third in the 100M dash at 11.37, and Rich took third place in the 400M dash at 57.99 (PR).

Zach Stone placed third in the triple jump at 36-7. Cole Payne was fourth in the 800M race with a PR time of 2:26.77.

Evan Browning came in fifth in the 800M race at 2:27.85 and sixth in the 3200M race at 14:40 (PR).

Kelley placed sixth in the high jump with a height of 5-feet, 4 inches (PR).

On Monday night, Union was in action in Fannin County but will return to the Tarheel State once more when they visit Murphy, NC on Wednesday.

Coach Reece is still looking to fill spots on the team as Union County currently doesn't field a full team.

"We are working to be able to compete as a team. In order to do so, we need to have all our events filled. Each event that we do not place an athlete in is lost points. We currently do not have pole vault, 110 hurdles or 100 hurdles, but plan to fill 110 hurdles soon. Hopefully we can fill the 100 hurdles without putting too much strain on the very small girls' team of nine, with two as throwers only. Most of our girls are maxed out on the number of events they can enter."