

Sports

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Middle School Panthers doing work

By Todd Forrest
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The Union County Middle School Panthers haven't been taking it easy over the summer.

Coach Casey Jones' squad has remained occupied since the end of spring practice in May. The Panthers have been in the weight room, on the field, as well as in the classroom going over plays and the terminology of the offense.

During June the team worked out two days a week, then following the dead week of July 4, the Panthers ratcheted up their practices to three times a week.

"Most of the time we come in for the first hour and lift," Coach Jones said. "Then we throw for the second hour. Basically it's what the high school does. I had them on the field, then I realized that we needed to go back to the classroom. The biggest thing was that I moved some kids around and I just needed to show them on the board where they would be and what they would be doing. Once they've seen it on the board they can process it a little better," he said.

The Panthers will travel out of town once before the start of the season, when they attend a camp at Flowery Branch on July 26, where they will participate in 7-on-7 drills.



Coach Jones teaches the offense to his team. Photo/Todd Forrest

"We mostly just try to lift (during the summer)," Jones said. "These guys work hard during the school year and we don't want to just sit around all summer and lose everything that we've gained. We're trying to just maintain what we've gained through the year."

Coach Jones and his staff also have some heavy lifting ahead of them as they try to replace nearly the entire team from 2011.

The Middle School Panthers finished 6-2 last season and were the runner-up for the league championship. In 2010, they finished with a perfect 8-0 record, but with only one starter returning in 2012, Jones is aware of how important this off season is for the Panthers.

"We've got a lot of new kids," Jones said. "That's why we've been inside and I've

been going over some stuff on the chalkboard. We're having to go back and do some teaching before we go out on the field. It helps for them to see it on the board before they get out on the field and actually do it."

Over the past two years, Coach Jones has had the luxury of having plenty of experience at his disposal but that doesn't mean that he will lower the bar for his new group.

"We've been fortunate that last few years to have a great group of kids and we've got some great players this year," Coach Jones said. "But we don't have much time. Our first game is Aug. 16."

The off season workouts have all been voluntary but despite official practice not starting until the end of the month, Coach Jones has been

impressed with the turnout from all three grades.

"We've consistently had 35-40 kids all summer," Coach Jones said. "That is mostly seventh and eighth graders. We have a handful of sixth graders who are too old for the 11-and-Under Recreation team."

The Panthers will kick off the season on the road before the home opener on August 23 against the defending league champion Rabun County, who handed Union its only losses in 2011.

"When we play Rabun, we'll find out where this team is at," Coach Jones said.

Coach Jones also said that Union County High School Head Football Coach Brian Allison is always right there, willing to help the Middle School and Recreation Department teams, whenever he is needed.

"We run a very vanilla package but use the same terminology as the high school," Jones said. "Our job at the Middle School is to prepare these kids for high school. Coach Allison is always helpful with whatever we need. A lot of other schools don't work hand-in-hand with their middle schools and that's what's great about Coach Allison. He will go all the way down to the youngest team and meet with the coaches. Essentially it's about getting all the coaches together and on the same page."

Future Panther Football Camp

July 24 through 26
Tuesday-Thursday

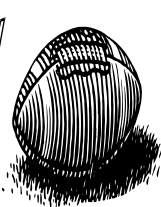


Receiving

Kicking

Blocking

Passing



Ages: 7-13

Early Registration \$50

Day of Registration \$60

CONTACT: Coach Allison (770) 639-7331 | Coach McCombs (706) 781-9893

TIME: 5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

LOCATION: Union County High School Stadium

INFO: -Water and Gatorade will be provided. Please bring Water bottle with name.

-Wear shorts, t-shirts, and cleats.

-Each child will receive a Football camp T-shirt

Please Return With Payment

Name: _____ Age: _____ T-Shirt Size: _____

Parent: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

*Please make checks payable to Future Panther Camps. 153 Panther Circle, Blairsville, GA 30512

This is an offensive position oriented camp.

Please Circle Campers Offensive Position: Quarterback Line Receiver/Running Back

Tucker discusses Tip-Off Tournament, camps

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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Union County Head Basketball Coach David Tucker's summer basketball camp season came to an end last week following a shooting camp at Union County High School.

And now Coach Tucker is getting ready for some sweeping changes ahead for the 2012-2013 basketball campaign.

Union County basketball will no longer take part in the White County Tip-Off Tournament. That's because they'll be hosting their own.

The Panthers and Lady Panthers have traveled across Blood Mountain to White County for the Tip-Off Tournament since 2002.

That changes as they open the regular season on Nov. 19 and 20 at the Union County High School Tip-Off Tournament. Teams participating will be Union, Andrews NC, Hiwassee Dam NC, and Lumpkin County.

"I didn't have any trouble getting those teams to participate," Coach Tucker said.

"We usually go to White County for a Tip-Off tournament, but last year we played at 7:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.," he said. "This year, when we play here, the last game will start at 8:30 p.m. and we'll only have a 10 minute break between games."

"Last year at White, we got in at 11 p.m. both nights and that's not fair to the kids," Coach Tucker added.

Coach Tucker also has



David Tucker

plans for Union County to begin hosting its own Christmas Tournament in the near future. This year, however, the Panthers are already locked in to the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament in Towns County.

In 2010, Union County's boys became the first and only boys squad to win three Battle of the States titles (2000, 2006, 2010) and have participated in the three-day tournament in 12 straight years and have 13 overall appearances.

The wheels are already in motion as Coach Tucker has more teams lined up after the 2012-13 season.

"Next year, I've got Tellico Plains locked in," Coach Tucker said. "Andrews said that they want to come because nobody ever invites them because they are so small. They are welcome to come, their size is no big deal to me."

In addition to lining up regular season tournaments, Coach Tucker has been busy this summer with basketball camps.

The final camp, held last

week, was intended for boys and girls between kindergarten and 12th grade and was strictly a shooting camp.

"This is all ball handling and shooting," Coach Tucker said. "We don't play, and a lot of people don't understand that. But what we do is work on your shot for three days."

Prior to last week's camp, Coach Tucker hosted a skills camp, also for ages kindergarten through 12th grade.

Over the summer Coach Tucker has joined with Middle School Coach, Casey Jones, Gary Tucker, the head girls' coach at Tellico Plains High School, Shawn Yates, Tellico Plains boys' coach, Mindy Cox, a coach at Niota Elementary School, Jon Tucker, an assistant coach at Tennessee Wesleyan College, Alli Moreland, a player from Tennessee

Wesleyan, and Madison Lee, a player from Lee University.

"That way the players don't have to listen to me the whole time," Coach Tucker said. "They have to listen to my mouth enough anyway."

Many of Coach Tucker's current varsity players also attended the camp and that's something that their coach likes to see.

"I'd rather have them in the camp than teaching the camp," Coach Tucker said. "I don't care how good any of those players are, they still need to go through this stuff and focus on the fundamentals"

Coach Tucker also praised the local community for all of their support and allowing him to host his camps

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Players learn the fundamentals at Tucker's Shooting Camp last week at Union County High School. Photo/Todd Forrest

Callie Dyer chooses Young Harris College

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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Union County's Callie Dyer will still be wearing softball purple next season, but it won't be as a Lady Panther. Instead, she will be known as a Mountain Lion, a Young Harris College Mountain Lion.

After completing her college visits, Dyer made the choice for her, knowing Young Harris already felt like home.

With an academic scholarship in tow for the 2012-2013 school year, Dyer believes she will have a softball scholarship for her second year at YHC.

"I felt like Young Harris was the school for me," Dyer said. "I had visited other schools but I just felt like anywhere I visited it wouldn't make me happy if I went any-



Callie Dyer

where else."

The recent Union County High School graduate will be walking on as a softball player at Young Harris College this summer, with plans to have an athletic scholarship in tow her freshman season.

"I plan to really work hard," Dyer said. "Young Harris was really awesome this year because they gave me a good academic scholarship so that made up for not having a

softball scholarship. But I want to work really hard so they can see what I'm made of."

During her softball career at Union County High School, the entire state took notice of Callie Dyer's physical abilities.

While patrolling center field at Union County High School, Dyer broke the school record for RBIs and the state record for doubles. Dyer also ranks among the top three in nearly every other offensive statistic at Union County.

Dyer also was blessed with a cannon for an arm that struck fear in the hearts of base runners throughout North Georgia. Although, a humble Dyer realizes where those athletic talents come from.

"I have been blessed with softball and knew it was what I needed to do," Dyer said. "God gives everyone

different gifts and I know athletics was my gift from him. In the Bible it says, 'when much is given, much is required,' and I knew with as much talent as I had been given from God in softball that I needed to lift his name up in the talents that he has given me."

Dyer also looks forward to joining former teammate, Tori Dyer at Young Harris and hopes that the school will continue to recruit local talent as they make the jump to Division II.

"Knowing that I get to play with Tori, a teammate that I have played with since T-ball, really excites me," Callie Dyer said. "I would like to see Young Harris look more locally for athletes to play at the next level because we have some amazing athletes in Union County and the surrounding counties."

Quarterback Club Meeting

There will be a Quarterback Club meeting this Tuesday evening, July 17 at 6 p.m. at the Quarterback Club room in the field house at the stadium.

We look forward to you being there and learning what is new for this year.

Thank you to the 22 people who attended the Quarterback Club meeting on Tuesday, 6/26/2012 and received WHA points.

Thank you. You make the club better by your involvement, suggestions, and comments.

UC 2012 Football Schedule

Aug 23 @ White Co. (Scrimmage)
Aug 31 @ Towns Co
Sept 7 vs Fannin Co
Sept 14 vs Andrews
Sept 21 - Bye Week
Sept 28 vs Wash.-Wilkes
Oct 5 @ Oglethorpe Co
October 12 vs Riverside

October 19 @ Greene County
October 26 @ Rabun County
November 2 vs Social Circle
November 9 @ Jefferson

Homecoming is tentatively scheduled for October 12th vs Riverside.

Church Softball Meeting

There will be a meeting for all teams interested in participating in the Church Softball League. The meeting will be held at the Meeks Park

office on Thursday, July 26 at 5:30 p.m. For more information you may contact the Recreation Department at (706) 439-6074.

UCHS Softball Scrimmage Games

The Union County High School Softball complex will play host to three scrimmage games on Tuesday, July 17 beginning at 4:30 p.m.

Teams participating will be the host Lady Panthers, the Fannin County Lady Rebels, and the Gilmer County Lady Bobcats.

The first game will be

between Gilmer County and Fannin County at 4:30. Union County will play its first game at 6:10 against the Lady Rebels. Union County will close out the three game set when they face Gilmer at 7:45.

Union's season begins on Aug. 10th at the Lanier Point Tournament in Gainesville.

MUSA Registration

The Mountain United Soccer Association is ready for Fall Soccer. Registrations are currently being accepted. Forms will be mailed to all players who have participated in a previous season. Forms are also available by visiting the league's website: www.mountainssoccer.org.

The spring 2012 season was a big success. Our younger teams played in Blairsville, Hiwassee, and Blue Ridge. The older age groups competed throughout Georgia. We had players registered from all the surrounding counties as well as some from North Carolina. In Blairsville, Cott Beverage is our community host for the soccer fields. In Hiwassee, the fields at the Towns County Fairgrounds are utilized through the cooperation of the local recreation department. The league is grateful for their

commitment and support. The fall season will begin in early September. Anyone who is interested in playing needs to register promptly. In some cases space is limited. M.U.S.A. is a volunteer run organization and is also a 501C3 non profit. Any and all donations are directed to the youth player. Field Sponsors, Sign Sponsors, and Team Sponsors are always needed. If you are interested in supporting the youth soccer player in our community through sponsorship and/or a donation, please contact the Association. For additional information contact the league at 706-835-1077, musa.soccer@gmail.com, or visit www.mountainssoccer.org on the web. You can Like "Mountain United Soccer Association" on Facebook and also follow the league on Twitter @MUSoccerA.