

Sports

See the Sports Section at ngame.com

Panther scrimmage yields mixed results

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

CLEVELAND - Union County Head Coach Brian Allison and his staff said that last Thursday night's scrimmage was a learning experience for everyone.

The Panthers traveled to Cleveland to take on a very deep and experienced Class AAA team.

Although the score was not kept on the scoreboard the final tally was White County - five touchdowns. Union County - three touchdowns.

Coach Allison's team is still battling the injury bug and it showed last week.

"We've got three starters out on defense and that makes a big difference when you're at a AA level," Coach Allison said. "I'm not making excuses for personnel. I think we came in there excited to play, the game didn't count and we learned a lot of positive things, things that we need to correct and things that we need to do."

"Early on we did some good things against a good AAA team," he said.

The Panthers had some trouble establishing the run, while the ground-and-pound offense is the Warriors' bread and butter.

"I don't care what your expectations are, but when you line up with eight new starters there is going to be some growing pains. I don't think we played particularly well but we did play hard. After a while that fullback beat on us and we got tired and he started hitting us. I give White a lot of credit, but we hung in there despite our lack of depth showing midway through the second quarter. We started getting tired up front, we



Sophomore linebacker Chase Barnett lays the lumber to a White County ball carrier. Photo/Todd Forrest



Luke Chatham, Lance Rich and Nic Sparks lead a gang of Panther defenders against White County. Photo/Todd Forrest

started getting knocked off the ball and I think that was the key. That's not a good recipe to be successful at any level."

Meanwhile, Union County Linebacker/Running Back Coach Justin Byers believes that the running game will be critical to Union's success and fortunately he took away some positive aspects from Thursday

night.

"We want to be a balanced offense and run the football," Coach Byers said. "It was a scrimmage and we went into it as a practice. Some things are going to look good and some things are going to look bad."

"It's hard to practice game speed. The running back has got to have the vision and the ability to make reads at game speed and it's difficult to do in practice. The beauty of it is, there is nothing I saw last night that wasn't correctable. Everyone came out healthy and we're going to start getting ready for Towns"

As for stopping the run, Byers chalks that up to inexperience but the desire to work hard and improve isn't going to be an issue in 2012.

"The effort is there and if there is no effort then you can't correct things, but the effort is there," Byers said. "We just got to work on a few basics and I don't foresee any problems for us at linebacker," he said.

"I think that fullback is going to pound on a bunch of people this season," Coach Allison added. "He is a good player. Would we being healthy have made a difference? I would like to think so. We were able to do some things that we wanted to work on with our ends and outside linebackers. Those are two areas where we aren't as sound as we need to be."

"The bottom line is, we've got to do a better job, and we will do a better job because I believe in our kids. We've just got to get a few people healthy," Coach Allison said.

Perhaps the bright spot of the game was Union's sophomore's and freshmen's impressive night and Coach Allison likes what he sees in that department. Freshman quarterback Joseph Mancuso threw for three touchdowns.

Andrew Brown, Sam Gilbert, and Nick Whittle each caught touchdown passes for the Panthers.

"Our young kids came in against their young kids and really dominated," Coach Allison said. "We moved the ball down the field."

Senior lineman CJ Byers is also ready to use Thursday as a learning experience to get ready for Towns County and the season.

"We wanted to get ready to see where we were at," CJ Byers said. "We didn't want to show everything that we have. We were just looking to get better and we found out some things that need some work. We just want to be ready when the season starts and to get healthy."

The Panthers visit the rival Indians on Friday, who fell 20-12 in Hayesville, NC last week. Union will be looking to improve to 26-1 all-time against Towns County.

"We'll watch the film on Monday and spend less time on the field," Coach Allison said. "Tuesday will be a regular practice and Wednesday's practice will be shortened just a bit."

Joe Collins

Tips from the Range

ders and will allow the club to follow the correct inside path it needs in order to be square at impact. Make sure that you don't re-grip the club during the start of the downswing or the club face will not square correctly at impact.

When the above mentioned elements are in place, things become pretty simple. You push of the inside pivot point and rotate the hips to transfer the weight to the front foot while keeping your back toward the target for as long as you can. Let the arms fall to the inside of the backswing path so the forward arm will rotate the club face square. Don't force any action with the hands and make sure you keep your head behind the ball.

The downswing is a complicated motion and requires some dedicated movement. Take it slow and make sure the positions you place the club in are correct in relation to your balance because balance is the key to making the swing happen correctly.

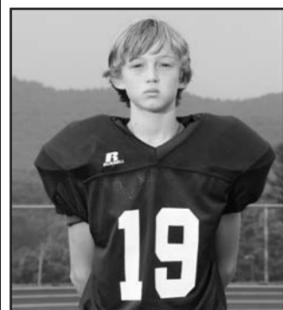
I can't close without saying that it is with a heavy heart that I dedicate this week's "Tips" to the memory of one of my friends, Charles "Chuck" Matlack. Golf has lost a fine man and a truly great player.

R.I.P Chuck, we will miss you.

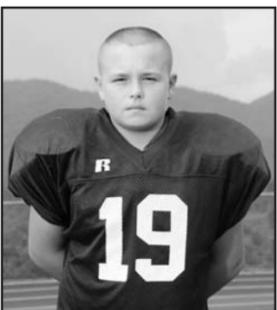
Good luck and I will see you on the course!

UCHS Quarterback Club updates Football All Academic Team

The Quarterback Club has a new addition to the All Academic Team and a correction on a mislabeled picture. Austin Patee and Cole Wright, both members of UCHS Panther Football are also members of the All Academic Team.



Cole Wright



Austin Patee

Lady Panthers rebound from first Region loss

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

The 9th ranked Union County Lady Panthers (9-2) won three of its four games last week, with wins over Gilmer County, Lumpkin County, and sub-region foe, Rabun County.

Their lone setback of the week came at the hands of Oglethorpe County in extra innings.

Union County answered Coach Jessica Stewart's challenge following their upset loss to Oglethorpe by taking care of a tough Class AAAA Lumpkin County squad and a familiar face at Rabun County.

**Lady Panthers 7
Rabun County 0**

TIGER - The pitching duo of senior Bailey Byers and junior Chelsey Cook combined for Union's first shut out of the season.

Byers picked up the win in four innings of work - allowing just three hits.

Cook went the final three frames only giving up two hits.

"We looked good, we continued to hit the ball well getting 13 hits," Head Coach Jessica Stewart said. "Byers and Cook pitched good. It was a good region win on top of going 3-1 on the week."

The Lady Panthers pounded out 13 hits while scoring two in the first, two in the third, then one in the fourth, sixth and seventh.

Shawna Brown continued to rock opposing pitching to the tune of three hits and two RBIs.

Hannah Hughes smacked two hits - including a double and scored twice. Amber Seeba also added two hits.

Madison Rich scored three times and had two stolen bases and a walk. Carly Adams doubled and drove in a run.

Byers, Cook, and Hayle King each singled as well.



Hannah Hughes powers a pitch into the parking lot for her second homer of the week. This one tied the game. Photo/Todd Forrest



Shawna Brown has been Union's toughest out of the season and hit a grand slam for her first home run of 2012. Photo/Todd Forrest

**Lady Panthers 7
Lumpkin County 5**

Following a loss to Oglethorpe, Coach Stewart was proud of how her team responded.

"I told them we needed to bounce back and they were resilient," Coach Stewart said.

The Lady Panthers prevailed thanks to a four-run third inning.

Lumpkin would jump out to a 2-0 lead in the second but Union would rally.

Brown singled and scored in the bottom half of the inning.

The following inning, Byers, Cook, and Hayle King each singled as well.

before handing things over to Crystal Busbee - who nailed down the two-inning save.

"Byers started off well but I think she got tired," Coach Stewart said. "I brought in Crystal and she shut them down in the seventh."

Adams finished with two hits and an RBI, Byers added two hits.

**Oglethorpe County 6
Lady Panthers 5 (8 innings)**

Hughes' game tying, two out home run in the bottom of the seventh wasn't enough for the Lady Panthers as they fell 6-5 in extra innings.

The bats of Hughes and Brown were almost enough to overcome some Lady Panther base running gaffes, and a questionable infield fly rule call, but in the end, they eventually succumbed to the Lady Patriots.

The loss was Union's first to an 8-AA South opponent since September of 2009.

Oglethorpe scored two in the eighth inning thanks to two singles, a hit by pitch, and a wild pitch.

Union was unable to overcome the two run hole despite a fielding error that allowed Union to get one run back. An Allie Stroman walk brought the game-winning run to the plate but Crystal Busbee grounded out to third.

Trailing 3-2 entering the top half of the seventh, two Oglethorpe singles and a sacrifice bunt gave the visitors an insurance run, but the 4-2 lead would be short lived.

Following a Crystal Busbee double, Hughes sent a high fly over the right field fence to knot the score at 4-4.

"I wasn't trying to hit a home run, the pitcher just pitched it in the spot I like the best," Hughes said. "I had a pretty good feeling it was gone when I hit it because of the spot it hit the bat. This home run was very special to me. It left me with an amazing feeling."

Brown singled and scored in the sixth and Rich reached on a fielder's choice and scored in

the sixth and Rich reached on a fielder's choice and scored in

the first inning.

Oglethorpe was sparked early by a two-run home run in the top of the first inning. The Lady Patriots added their third run thanks to a Union County error in the second.

Byers threw all eight innings for the Lady Panthers, allowing nine hits.

Hughes and Brown finished a combined 5-for-8 with two RBIs and two runs.

Rich scored a run, Seeba walked twice, Stroman walked and Byers added another run.

Adams singled and reached on an error but that wasn't the only contribution the center fielder made. Adams' juggling, barehanded, running catch was worth a slot in Sportscenter's top-10 plays of the week and more importantly kept Oglethorpe from adding additional insurance runs.

**Lady Panthers 9
Gilmer County 1**

ELLIJAY - Junior Chelsey Cook picked up her second win of the season and fanned three hitters in Union's 9-1 win at Gilmer.

It didn't hurt that she was rewarded with a grand slam by Brown and a solo shot by Hughes.

The Lady Panthers were able to turn the contest into a runaway with five in the sixth to take a 9-0 lead.

Adams and Crystal Bus-

bee opened the inning with singles, following a fielder's choice by Rich, then Hughes' single would load the bases for Brown.

"I knew it was a hard hit but I didn't know it was going over," Brown said. "But I knew it the moment I rounded first and saw it go over the center fielder's head."

In the previous inning, Hughes would smack an opposite field, solo shot to extend Union's lead to 4-0.

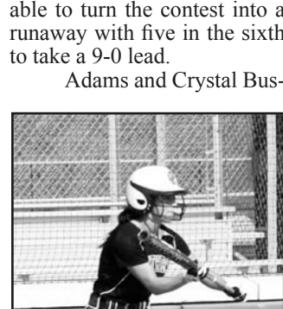
Stroman doubled in the second and was later knocked in by Rich.

The Lady Panthers got two in the first when Rich walked, Hughes singled, and Brown was hit by a pitch. That allowed Courtney Busbee and Seeba pick up an RBI.

This week Union will host Jefferson on Tuesday at 5:30 in a Lanier Point rematch before making the trek to Greene County on Thursday for another 5:30 meeting.

"Jefferson will be the biggest game of the season so far for us," Coach Stewart said.

"We came out on top by two runs at Lanier Point so I know they'll be ready to play. We do play Jefferson again but this one is the game that counts towards region seeding for the tournament. It's at home so hopefully we'll have that advantage and do what we need to do," she said



Madison Rich bunts



Carly Adams singles

UCHS softball & football pictures by Todd Forrest