

# Freshman lead the way as Union Cross Country sweeps

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

Both Union County Cross Country teams opened the 2012 season with first place finishes at Meeks Park. Five of Union's Top 10 overall runners combined were competing in their first ever high school meet.

The Lady Panthers were led by freshman Emma Garrison who finished first overall with a time of 22:05.

The boys were paced by senior Jeremy Webb who finished second overall with a time of 18:18.

Competing in the meet were Murphy and Hayesville, NC, Lumpkin County, Gilmer County, and Towns County.

Coach Jackie Hughes liked her chances last week following a solid week of practice.

"Overall I was very pleased with the way both teams ran on Thursday," Coach Hughes said. "Practices have been going well, and I felt pretty good about our preparation for the meet. This group is very competitive and always gives a great effort, but you never know for sure how they will perform until that first race."



Union County Lady Panthers took home first place at Meeks Park with freshman Emma Garrison finishing as the top overall runner with a time of 22:05. Photo/Todd Forrest

Rounding out the Lady Panther Top Five were sixth overall finisher, freshman Ansley Garrison at 24 minutes flat, freshman Rachel Vester came in 10th, 43 seconds behind Garrison.

Senior Kenna Bauman crossed the finish line 16 seconds behind Vester and brought home 12th, and sophomore Rachel Todd finished 15th with a time of 25:09.

The boys Top Five each finished within five minutes of Webb with eighth overall runner, freshman Cristian Garcia clocking in at 20:06, 12th overall and sophomore Aaron

Stafford completed the course in 20:48, 14th place went to sophomore Will Stone at 21:03, and coming in 15th was freshman Jacob Kelley at 21:13.

"Our runners packed very well in Thursday's race, which helped our score," Coach Hughes said. "Now I want them to close the time gap between our first runner and the next five or six."

Union will now travel to Hall County for a meet at Chestatee High School in Murrayville on Thursday.

"I was very pleasantly surprised with how easily and well the young runners adjusted

to the three-mile distance as compared to running two miles at the middle school level," Coach Hughes said. "Having a strong middle school program feeding into the high school program is really starting to help. Our focus will continue to be to build our endurance base and bring our times down a little each week."

The overall team finishes were Union's boys followed by Hayesville, Murphy, Lumpkin, Gilmer, and then Towns.

The girls race finished as follows: Union, Hayesville, Lumpkin, Gilmer, Murphy, and Towns.

# Wrestling Open-Mat

The Union County Panther wrestling coaches invite all students from ages 5-18 to join us for Panther Open Mat day.

Open Mat will take place every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30-5:30 in the Elementary School gym (The Pit).

Wrestlers will participate in proper techniques for stretching and conditioning, team building activities, learning individual wrestling skills and the UC Panther wrestling system.

The primary focus of Panther Open Mat is for young people to be physically active and have fun in a positive environment.

Wrestlers need to wear t-shirts and gym shorts with no zippers or buttons. Wrestling shoes are not required.

For more information contact: Coach Bob Williams at bwilliams@ucschools.org or Coach Michael Smith-Foot at msmithfoot@ucschools.org

# UCHS upcoming Cross Country

- Sept. 6 @ Chestatee
- Sept. 11 @ West Hall
- Sept. 19 @ Murphy
- Sept. 27 @ Fannin County
- Oct. 4 @ Unicoi
- Oct. 10 @ Buford

# Rec Basketball Registration

## Basketball Registration

Ages 5-8

Fee: \$40

Register the whole month of September

## Basketball Registration

Ages 9-14

Fee: \$40

Register the whole month of October

Check out the website

[www.unioncountyrecreation.com](http://www.unioncountyrecreation.com)

(706)439-6074

# UCMS football: Panthers slam the Warriors

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

The Union County Middle School football team picked up its first win of the season in convincing fashion.

The Panthers jumped on White County 20-0 after one quarter and never looked back, coasting to a 27-8 win. And although he has total confidence in his squad, Coach Casey Jones was a bit skeptical going into the game.

"We actually didn't have a good week of practice before White," Coach Jones said. "I told the guys after the game that

we got lucky because most of the time you're going to play like you practice. We've got to do a better job of practicing and preparing with a little more intensity, enthusiasm, and emotion.

"A lot of times, kids don't enjoy it very much but we've got to learn how to have better practices and that will certainly translate to the games.

"I still see us as the front runner although Rabun is in the driver's seat having beaten us and Lumpkin. I think we're the best team in the league. I'll take our 46 guys over anyone else's. We'll keep improving and we'll be ready," he said.

The Panthers were led by Bo Lynch's three touchdowns

and Nick Rodriguez added another score.

Now Coach Jones and his Panthers turn their attention to West Hall.

The Panthers will make the trip to Oakwood on Thursday and Coach Jones knows that his team be prepared when playing a much larger school.

"I assume they are pretty good so we will need to get ready," Coach Jones said. "I know they will be tough but overall I'm pleased. We had some people step in against White that will be able to start helping us."

Coach Jones like what he sees and his depth chart is beginning to take shape. "Our younger bunch

came in and they played really well," Jones said. "We had a sixth grader, get an interception. Even the older guys, they played well and blocked well. That was one thing we did not do against Rabun.

"We had a hard time staying on our blocks so we worked on that a lot in practice that week and they did a much better job. We did a better job of tackling which is something we didn't do a good job of in the first game. We've got to learn not go for the kill shot every time. To be a good tackler you gotta be able to break down and that's one thing we did well yesterday.

"Overall, I'm real pleased about it," he said.



Seventh grader Jacob Ross carries the ball for Union County as Cole Payne looks for a block. Photo/Todd Forrest

# Youth league holds four games at Union County

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

Last Saturday Union County hosted four North Georgia Youth League football games at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

The 7&U Panthers picked up a win over the Warriors from White County.

The 8&U Panthers also defeated White County and have yet to allow a point in two games.

The 9&U Panthers dropped one to Rabun County, while the 11&U fell to White County.

In other action, Union County's 10&U traveled to White County where they added another one to the win column.

Saturday, Union County's teams will be spread out, traveling to North Hall, West Hall, and East Hall.



Youth football pictures by Todd Forrest

# Football...continued from page 10A

Towns' ensuing drive would stall thanks to a sack by Davenport on third down.

The Panther offense again moved the ball when Bentley hit Rogers for a 27-yard reception that moved Union inside the Indian 30-yard line. That's when another fumble derailed the Panther's scoring opportunity.

As was the case most of the game, the defense answered the call and made the Indians punt the ball back to the Panthers.

Starting from midfield, Bentley carried the ball consecutive times to give Union a first down with under 6 minutes to play. That's where the drive stalled, and Union pinned Towns inside the 1-yard line following a beautiful punt by Hougrand. But after a meeting of the 'zebras' it was determined that the ball crossed the goal line and Towns was given the ball on the 20.

The Panthers then committed a costly penalty on a Towns County third down interception, before Burnette's interception sent most of the Indian faithful home for the evening.

They nearly missed one of the most miraculously finishes in team history.

Once again, Union fumbled while trying to run out the clock and two minutes later a one-handed touchdown grab by

Towns' senior fullback Wesley Bloodworth made the final 115 seconds worth sticking around for. That's until Rogers recovered the onside kick and the rest is history.

Union's All-State lineman Luther Jones said that fatigue was a factor late after the defense was forced to bail out the offense, time and time again.

Luther Jones just returned last week from a shoulder injury that has limited him to three practices since Aug. 1.

"I felt good and I was flying around until about midway through the fourth quarter," Luther Jones said. "That's when the fatigue bit me and it bit me bad."

"Towns was tough and we knew they would be and we still had them down with an opportunity to put them away and we didn't do it," Allison said.

With another rivalry game coming up this week against Fannin County, Coach Allison sees a lot of need for improvements.

"We're going to have to fix all these turnovers and penalties or we're not going to win many ball games," Allison said. "We'll look at the film and see where we are at. See what we did and what we didn't do. I'll take the win tonight but it's a little bitter. Bentley said that despite



The 1957 Union County Panthers: 1st Row: Coach Dave Hardin, Tommy Swartz, Herbert Dyer, Junior Denny, Curtis Young, Roy Dyer, Charles Owenby, Coach R. Neal Collins, 2nd Row: Alvin Dyer, Clark Rogers, Don Garrett, Wendell Runion, Max Helton, Bill Parker, Royce Hughes, Freddy Shuler, Principal C.R. Collins, 3rd Row: Waylon Mason, Milton Akins, Jim Conley, Bill McGlamery, Wendall Patterson, Earl Odum, Jim McAfee, Jack Groves - Manager 4th row: Clinton Helton, Rex Patton, Jim Everett, Tommy Reece, Jewel Tate, Tasker Patton, Neal Hunter - manager, Anthony Wright - Manager, Not Pictured: Jack Kelly, Keiter Foster

taking a beating after accounting for 245 of Union's total of 318 yards, he is happy to finish his career 4-0 against the Indians.

"It feels good," an exhausted Bentley said. "It did get sloppy at the end but the good thing is, we put some drives together and only punted two or three times, we just can't have turnovers on consecutive drives. That almost killed us."

When asked about his individual performance and the numerous hits he sustained, a smiling Bentley said, "I'll be

feeling it tomorrow."

The Panther quarterback threw for 134 yards to go along with his 111-yard rushing day.

Burnette and sophomore Robert Prunier combined for 77 yards of rushing on nine carries. Rivera and Kim led the way in receiving yards while sophomore linebacker Chase Barnett carried the load for the defense by being in on 21 tackles, 10 solo and 11 assists. Luther Jones finished with four tackles-for-a-loss and five quarterback hurries.

Matthew Spiwak ac-

counted for 15 tackles (10 assisted), Craig Jones had eight tackles, as did Byers.

Friday, Union hosts Fannin in its home opener.

Last season Union took care of the Rebels 30-15 and currently the Blues and Grey are coming off a humiliating loss at the hands of another rival, Gilmer County, 42-0.

The Panthers will be looking to tip the scales back in their favor with the all-time series tied at 22 wins each.

It also will be a special night, as beforehand, Union

County will honor it's first football team in school history - the 1957 Union County Panthers.

Coach Allison will also be looking to tie retired Head Coach Terry Rogers as Union's all-time winningest football coach.

What better way to spend Friday night than meeting the 1957 Union County Panthers, watching Coach Allison go for history, and then cheering on our current Panther squad, to set them up for the future with a 2-0 start over Union's biggest rivals.