

# Sports

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## Track: Wilson second, Hunter third at State Championships

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**Nicholson** - Union County senior Jack Wilson's State runner-up finish in the discus headlined Union County's weekend at the Class AA State Championships at East Jackson High School.

Union County collected six top-five finishes on the day, with junior Lola Hunter placing third in the 3200-meter race. Sophomore Sofia Foster (shot put) and the girls' 4x800 relay team came in fourth, sophomore Jaxon Totherow placed fifth in the shot put and Hunter ended up fifth in the 800M event.

Hunter and Totherow just missed another top-five finish, coming in sixth in the 1600M and discus, respectively.

Wilson, an East Tennessee State signee, tossed 154 feet, 3 inches in Friday's discus finals, but it wasn't enough to surpass Shaw's Andre Thrasher, who took home gold with a 160-6.

Thrasher and Wilson were clearly the cream of the crop in the event, with no other competitor clearing 150 feet. East Jackson's Lester Jenkins placed third at 147-2, Columbus' Gavin Brown came in fourth at 140-5 and Redan's Michael Greene was fifth at 138-8.

Totherow's throw of 137-9 was good enough for sixth.

Wilson's runner-up performance marks the second straight year that Union County has logged a top-two finish at State, joining the 4x100 boys' relay team from a year ago.

Hunter finished 32 seconds back of Savannah Frances Tedder (State champ Academy) in the 3200M finals on Saturday, crossing the line in 12 minutes, 15.98 seconds. Anna Griffin, of Davidson Fine Arts, placed second at 11:58.90.

Savannah Fine Arts freshman McKay Bennett was fourth at 12:20.91. Columbus freshman Olivia DiQuattro came in fifth at 12:26.15.

Hunter finished sixth in the event in 2023 and fifth a year ago, giving her three 3200M podium appearances in her first three years of high school.

Foster placed fourth in the shot put, clearing a distance of 34-9.5 on Friday morning. Shaw senior Taliyah Schreane came in first at 41-8, A.R. John-



Senior Jack Wilson during the Class AA discus finals on Friday afternoon at East Jackson. Wilson placed second behind Shaw's Andre Thrasher. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior Lola Hunter earned four medals over the weekend, three individual medals and one relay medal.

Franklin County's Ta'Kiyah Merriett rounded out the top five with a throw of 34-9.

The girls' 4x800 team also came in fourth with a time of 10:50.83, falling in behind State champ Columbus (10:12.05), Savannah Arts Academy (10:14.76) and third-place Redan (10:29.60). Therrell's time of 10:55.43 was good enough for fifth.

Hunter finished fifth in the 800M race, clocking in at 2:30.77, less than three seconds back of third-place Paxton Kirby of Rockmart (2:27.78). Davidson Fine Arts' Anna Griffin took home gold at 2:23.31, Columbus' Kelby Mills was second with a time of 2:26.22 and Tedder was fourth at 2:27.45.

Redan's Tasania Colquhoun finished behind Hunter with a sixth-place time of 2:31.19. Additionally, Hunter earned a spot on the podium in the 1600M race, finishing with a sixth-place time of 5:37.07. Griffin earned her second State title of the weekend, clocking in at 5:13.25. Tedder was second with a time of 5:13.28, Kirby was third at 5:26.71, Savannah



Sophomore Jaxon Totherow was fifth in the shot put. Photo/Todd Forrest

Fine Arts freshman Ava Treece placed fourth at 5:31.38 and Franklin County's Megan Hightower ended up fifth at 5:31.21. Jackson's Bella Pearson wasn't able to overtake Hunter, ending up seventh at 5:37.83.

Totherow took home a fifth-place performance in the shot put courtesy of a 47-9 throw on Friday morning. Franklin County junior Candler

Stone was head and shoulders above the field, taking home a State title with a toss of 54-6. MyRhon Addison of Tattnall County was second at 52-6, Miller Grove's Maurice Seals was third at 49-7.5 and Sumter County's Joshua Coleman placed fourth at 48-3. Totherow edged sixth-place Jack Morris of Morgan County by more than 11 inches (46-9.5).



Sophomore Sofia Foster was fourth in the shot put. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union County junior Leslie Rash also earned a podium spot by placing seventh in the discus throw. Rash's toss of 96-10 was enough to hold off Hart County's Endiyah Burton (95-1) and Franklin County's Peyton Dailey (91-4) to earn a top-seven finish.

Leading the way in the girls' discus were Miller Grove's Saniyah Francis (120-8), Schre-

ane (117-9), Laney's Chiquita Gaffney (107-3), Sonoraville's Ashley Fountain (106), Morgan County's Quinn Takacs (99) and Appling County's Briah Rooks (98-7).

UCHS athletes missing a podium spot were sophomore Oliver Hillman (10th - 3200M); the boys 4x800 relay team (11th) and the girls' 4x100 relay team (11th in prelims).

## Union County Rapids 10U Soccer Team Wraps Up Stellar Season with 8-1 Record



Union County Rapids 10U Soccer Team

The 10U Union County Rapids soccer team closed out their impressive season with a dominant 8-1 record, showcasing teamwork, grit, and a deep bench of young talent.

Led by a strong core of players, the Rapids were a force on both ends of the field. Ezra "Big E" Allison anchored the defense with power and poise, while Callaghan "Cal" Byrne and Andrew "Striker" Meraz-Davis delivered key

goals throughout the season. Brian "Grandpa" Cook's field vision and calm demeanor brought leadership to the mid-field, and Ezra "Energizer" Mlodzik's endless hustle kept the tempo high.

Charlie "Char" Stallings and Jamison "Jimmy" Spade brought consistent energy and skill, often setting up crucial plays. Joshua "Joshie" Wright made his mark with sharp passes, timely positioning, and

stellar keeper play while Judah "Snacks" Young lived up to his nickname with relentless effort and clutch moments.

Coach-led and family-supported, the Rapids' season was defined by unity, sportsmanship, and a love for the game.

With their standout season now behind them, this talented squad has set the bar high for future Union County teams.



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# Panthers score 38 points, force three turnovers in spring victory

By Todd Forrest  
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Panther fans received a preview of the 2025 season on Thursday night when Union County defeated Christian Heritage 38-21 in a spring scrimmage game.

Rising juniors Bentley Rich and Rob Thompson led the Panthers' offense with Rich tallying three rushing scores and Thompson hauling in a pair of touchdown catches -- one apiece from rising senior Cade Dockrey and sophomore Kamden Kendrick.

On the other side of the ball, Union's defense came up with a pair of interceptions, one each from rising sophomore Sean Rosa and rising junior Chetley Cox, each resulting in Panther touchdowns.

"Going into the game, we weren't worried about what the scoreboard says," Union County first-year head coach Rob Stowe said. "But the bottom line is: We still have a ways to go. We have a lot of things we need to work on and improve our fundamentals a whole lot. We need the guys to get to the level we expect them to play at. But the cool thing is, they want to. These guys want to be pushed and are just beginning to reach their full potential."

Neither offense cracked the scoring column until the second quarter after Christian Heritage's opening drive stalled at the Union County 37-yard line. The Panthers' first series of the night, with Dockrey behind center, stalled when they dropped a would-be fourth-down touchdown catch deep in Lions' territory.

"During the first quarter, we had more drops than catches, and that's uncharacteristic, because those guys were catching balls all spring long," Stowe said. "It was probably just nerves from coming out and trying to impress early."

With both offenses struggling to find the endzone, the Panthers' defense finally delivered a much-needed spark when Rosa picked off a deep throw over the middle and returned the interception 34 yards to the Christian Heritage 31. From there, Kendrick hit Cox for 11 yards on third down, and one play later, Rich rumbled inside the 5-yard line, setting up his first touchdown of the night from 4 yards out.

The Lions answered by driving inside the Union County 30, but rising junior Gunner Franklin's fourth-down sack handed the ball back to the offense, where Dockrey went up top to Thompson for a 65-yard scoring strike with 6:20 left in the half.

After rising junior Grant Smith's PAT made it 14-0, the defense surrendered a 51-yard touchdown pass, but Kendrick answered by moving the offense into the red zone until an interception denied the Panthers another scoring opportunity before the break.

"We were limiting our quarterbacks on what they could do running the ball, and that's going to be a big part of our offense," Stowe said. "But once we take the reins off them, you'll see our offense excel because both quarterbacks are capable of hurting the other



Rising junior Bentley Rich scored three touchdowns on Thursday during Union County's scrimmage victory over Dalton's Christian-Heritage. Photo/Todd Forrest



Rising junior Rob Thompson takes it to the house after hauling in a second-quarter touchdown pass from Cade Dockrey. Photo/Todd Forrest

team with their legs."

The Union County defense granted the Panthers one last crack at the endzone during the final minute, but Dockrey's desperation heave to Cox sailed out of the back of the endzone as time expired.

"The important thing is, even though we played sloppy at times, we were still able to find some success," Stowe said. "There's not a whole lot you can expect after eight practices against a team you haven't done any preparation for."

We had to work hard just to put in a few plays on offense. So we didn't do anything

complicated. We'll continue to install our offense throughout the summer, but we saw enough good things to know we can be successful."

Up 14-7 at the break, the third quarter was all Union County, outscoring the Lions 21-0 to mount a 35-7 lead entering the fourth.

Kendrick drove the Panthers down the field to start the second half, culminating with a 28-yard touchdown pass to Thompson. And on the next play from scrimmage, rising junior defensive end Jaxon Totherow deflected a pass that was corralled by Cox and

returned to the Lions' 14-yard line. From there, three handoffs to Rich spotted Union County a 28-7 lead.

"On defense, we saw some formations that we haven't seen in practice, but the biggest thing is, I wanted to see how our guys respond when the lights come on and get some quality reps against an unfamiliar opponent. You can never duplicate in practice what you'll see in a game."

On the Panthers' ensuing possession, Kendrick's 33-yard keeper set up a 2-yard touchdown run by Rich, building a 35-7 advantage with 2 minutes



Rising senior QB Cade Dockrey saw live game action for the first time since tearing his ACL last August. Photo/Todd Forrest



Rising sophomore Kamden Kendrick saw action on both sides, breaking up two passes at DB and throwing a TD pass at QB. Photo/Todd Forrest

left in the period.

"Rich ran the ball very well and is going to be someone we lean on hard this season," Stowe said. "Daniel McPhee also came in and played his first snaps ever at running back and did some good things. But it all comes back to [the offensive line]. We have a chance to be pretty good on the line of scrimmage as long as we can find some depth from among the younger guys. But if we can continue to improve up front, I think we have a chance to be really special."

Christian Heritage connected on a 70-yard touchdown pass on its next possession before the junior varsity squads took over in the fourth.

On the Lions' first series of the final frame, Union defensive end Eric Morales pounced on a fumble, setting up a 34-yard field goal by freshman Christian Jordan.

Christian Heritage added

a late touchdown pass, bringing the final score to 38-21.

"Overall, it was a successful spring," Stowe said. "We were able to install our base offense and defense [during the spring] and everybody got a chance to play on Thursday night. We were able to put some plays on film and now we'll be able to go back and see what adjustments need to be made here and there."

The Panthers will take the rest of the school year off before getting back on the field in June for summer workouts, camps and 7-on-7 sessions.

"I'm so thankful and blessed to be here around great people," Stowe added. "We have a great administration, booster club, assistant coaches and kids. This community has really taken me in and if we all roll our sleeves up and pull in the same direction, this team has a chance to do some very special things."

## Old Union hosts Third-Annual Mountain Made Golf Tournament



Blairsville's Old Union Golf Course hosted the third Mountain Made Golf Tournament on Friday, May 9.

The fundraiser tournament for Union County football attracted 92 players.

The Leon's Flooring team of Jett Busbee, Cade Dockrey, Hayden Price and Eli Sosensky finished first (gross).

The team of James Cook, Hunter Hughes, Shorty Hughes and Dustin Thompson came in first (net).

The Quarterback Club would like to thank all the sponsors and volunteers, whose valuable contributions were instrumental in making the event a huge success.



UCHS head football coach Rob Stowe (L) and his team.



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JUNE 2025

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