

Sports

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Union Softball hosts youth camp, season begins Aug. 1

By Todd Forrest
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Union County softball is just over a month away from the first pitch of the 2025 season, and the Lady Panthers have been active this summer, starting with a youth camp on June 9-10.

The camp attracted 24 young participants between the ages of 4-12 for a two-day event, concluding with a slip and slide on June 10. The event focused on the basics and gave the girls a preview of what to expect at the high school level.

“We tried to teach them what we teach as high school coaches,” Union County head coach Robby Roxbury said. “The great thing about it is, our high school girls love helping out. I would say probably 90-95% of our high school participated as coaches. It’s always nice to give back.”

The camp taught throwing techniques, infield and outfield fundamentals, baserunning, hitting and bunting. The second day, the youngsters learned sliding techniques with the help of a slip and slide.

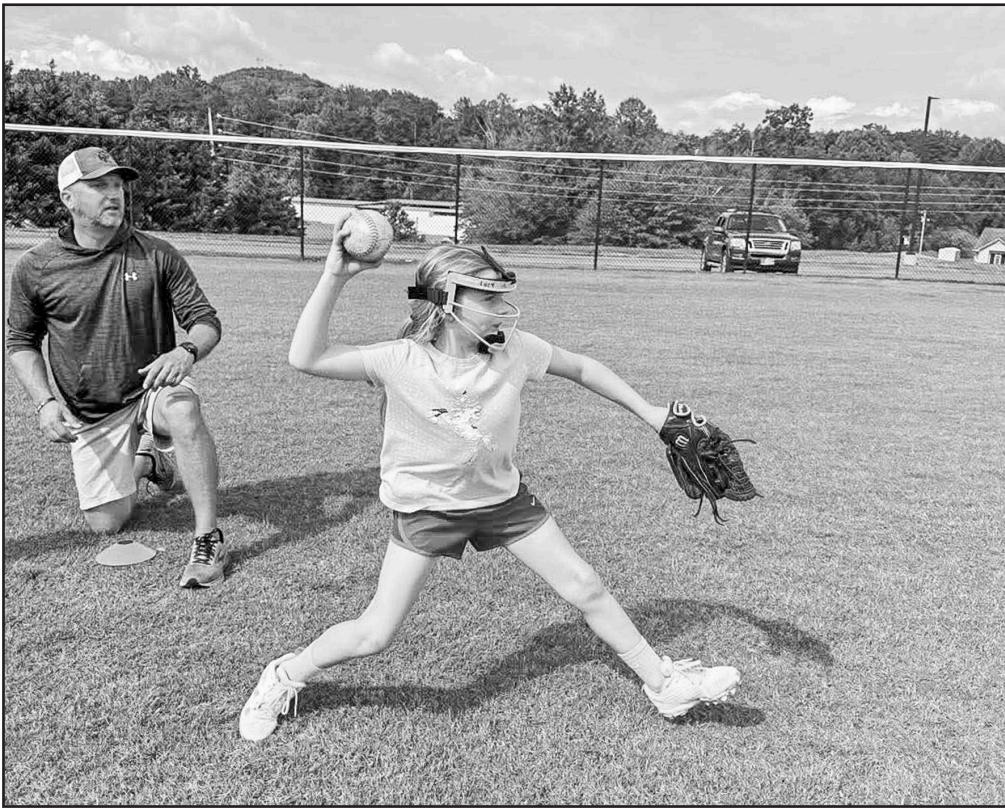
“That’s probably their favorite part,” Roxbury said. “The funny thing is, we never taught them headfirst slides, but everyone of them wanted to headfirst slide. They saw the high school doing it so they wanted to. But it’s all good. It was a lot of fun.”

Roxbury expressed his gratitude to the coaching staff, the high school players, and all the kids for being a part of the camp. He also thanked the Diamond Club for their assistance with daily setup and registration, as well as the high school for allowing the camp to be held on their premises.

Looking ahead, the Lady Panthers will be busy in July as they prepare for their season opener on August 1. From July 7-9, the team will attend a Fellowship of Christian Athletes camp at the University of West Georgia in Carrollton. This camp focuses on leadership and team building while giving Union County the opportunity to play six games.

On Tuesday, July 15, the Lady Panthers will scrimmage against Gilmer at Young Harris College. Additionally, Richmond Hill is scheduled to travel to Young Harris to face Union County on July 17.

Union County and Fannin County will compete in two summer scrimmages on July 22 and July 24—the first



Union County softball coach Robby Roxbury works with future Lady Panthers during the team’s two-day youth camp on June 9-10. Photo/UCHS

will take place in Blue Ridge, and the second in Blairsville.

On Aug. 1-2, Union County will host Burke County and Rabun County in the season-opening Diamond Day event. The Lady Panthers will face Burke County, a squad they met in last year’s State tournament, on Friday, Aug. 1 at 5 p.m. Union County and Rabun will square off on Saturday, Aug. 2 at 1 p.m.

The Lady Panthers travel to Oconee County on Aug. 4, are at Gilmer on Aug. 5, at Barrow Arts and Science Academy (BASA) on Aug. 7 before finishing up the first week at Providence Christian on Aug. 9, where they will face Grayson and Providence.

The Lady Panthers wrap up their non-region slate on Aug. 11 with a trip to Rabun County.

Region play begins Aug. 14 with a trip to Rockmart. The Lady Panthers host North Murray on Aug. 19.

A few non-region games are sprinkled throughout August, September and October with Tallulah Falls coming to Blairsville on Aug. 23. North Hall visits on Sept. 3. The Lady Panthers host Gilmer on Oct. 6th before wrapping up the regular season with a Region 7-AA contest at Coahulla Creek on Oct. 7.

The Class AA GHSA State Tournament gets underway on Oct. 16 after the brackets are finalized on Oct. 12.



The Lady Panthers softball camp brought out 24 young softballers between the ages of 4-12. Photo/UCHS



Taking a break from the heat inside the dugout. Photo/UCHS



Campers work on infield drills at the UCHS softball field. Photo/UCHS

UCRD 7th grade volleyball wins MAC title



The Union County Recreation Department’s 7th grade volleyball team took home the Mountain Athletic Conference (MAC) championship earlier this month. The team is coached by Kim Rusk. The team is made up of Eden Barber, Aubrie Cox, Cambrie Cox, Molly Giddens, Eadi Green, Cayden Gunter, Mallory Gwynn, Valynn Ianham, Chloe Mashburn, Krysten Trask and Ava Wynn. The MAC consists of Fannin County, Gilmer, Pickens, Dawson County, Lumpkin County, White County, Chestatee and Union County.

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CAMP LOCATION

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Shorthanded Panthers break even at Piedmont, UNG, LakePoint

By Todd Forrest
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The Union County men visited three basketball camps over the last two weeks, facing tough competition despite being down to six players at times.

Football, church camps and injuries have thinned the Union County roster for much of the summer, dropping the varsity roster to six players, seven at most, during the last three summer camps.

“It’s been a pretty good summer, but we’ve been super shorthanded,” Union County head coach Corey Garrett said. “We’ve played a tough schedule this summer. For the most part, we’ve been going up against 4, 5 and 6A schools, who are throwing 10-12 players at us while we’ve got six or seven at best.”

Two weeks ago, Union County traveled to Piedmont University for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes camp, finishing 3-3 in pool play before advancing to the championship game of the Overtime Tournament on day three. The Panthers topped out at seven players for two of those contests, the rest of the time they played with six.

The Panthers defeated Strong Rock Christian Academy, Oconee County and West Hall. Union County lost to Habersham Central by 10-12



Members of the UCHS basketball team showing support for the youngsters during a youth camp earlier this month. Photo/Todd Forrest

points, fell on a last-second shot to Athens Academy and dropped a 2-point contest to Stephens County.

During the Overtime Tournament, the Panthers advanced to the finals before falling a second time to Athens Academy.

Last week, Union County spent three days at the Univer-

sity of North Georgia camp, competing in the top-flight bracket.

Union County lost a tightly-contested battle to South Gwinnett, eventually running out of gas down the stretch.

The Panthers bounced back with a double-digit win over North Forsyth in what Garrett called the team’s signa-

ture win of the summer.

“That was our biggest win of the summer,” Garrett said. “North Forsyth is a 6A school and we ended up winning by about 14 points.”

Lastly, Union County took a double-digit loss at the hands of another 6A opponent, Mill Creek.

At Emerson’s LakePoint

Sports over the weekend, Union started off with a loss to Tift County.

“We shot the ball well, we just didn’t have the physicality inside,” Garrett said. “We were down four at halftime, then it was a 6-point game late, but (Tift) start getting run outs and dunks and they pulled away by 16-20.”

In the second game, Union County blew out Calhoun County by 20-plus.

On Sunday, the Panthers suffered a loss to Kennesaw Mountain, but rebounded with a win over Kendrick.

According to Garrett, his team has relied on a 6-man rotation of Ryland Chambers, Ethan Hogsed, Vince Marevka, Holden Payne, Jackson Nichols and Jacob Rodriguez.

When available, Hayden Price expanded the rotation to seven. However, the Panthers have been without Cade Dockrey (injury) and Micah Wallace (football) for most of the summer.

“On offense, I think we’re going to be fine,” Garrett said. “I’d like to find a way to make Vince more of a focal point of the offense. Our guards need to work on when and where to get him the ball in the post.

“We’re going to be fine shooting the ball, and then when Cade gets back, he’ll give us a downhill slasher type of player that can attack the rim.

So I think we’re built to have a pretty good season if we can gel and find a bit of chemistry.”

This week, Union County is back at Towns County on Tuesday before hosting Hayesville, NC and White County on Wednesday.

Old Union Women’s



What a day for golf! On June 16th, the ladies of the Old Union Golf Association hit the Old Union Golf Course for a fun ‘Best Nines Net’ game. The weather was just perfect....sunny, not too hot, with a nice little breeze. Everybody was all smiles, swinging clubs and having a blast on the beautiful and well maintained DC course.

The players were able to discard their worst nine scores and submit their best nine scores. The winners are: Flight A: first place, Glenda Geddings, \$9.50; second place, Nancy Outlaw, \$7.75; Flight B: Vi Copenhaver, \$9.50; second place, Mary Mott, \$7.75;

Golf Association: ‘Best Nines Net’ game

Flight C: first place, Cynthia Moorehead, \$9.50; second place, Kathleen Bolin, \$7.75; Flight D: first place, Mary Tribble,\$9.50; second place, Debbie Estes, \$7.75. The total purse payout was \$114.98. Only two gals had gross birdies. Congrats to KalyN Kight who had two birdies for \$7.67, and congrats to Susan Furman for her birdie for \$3.83. The total purse was \$11.50.

The Skins game was exciting with the following net results: Mary Tribble with two eagles, #5 and #11, for \$7.67; Susan Furman had one eagle, #17, for \$3.83; Mary Mott had one birdie, #12, for \$3.83; Linda Miles had one eagle, #1, for \$3.83 and Vi Copenhaver had one birdie on #15 for \$3.83. The total purse paid out was \$22.99.

Chip-ins were scarce

this week. Congrats to Mary Mott for two on #9 and #13 for \$7.66, and congrats to Shirley Dallas for her chip-in on #10 for \$3.83. Total purse paid out was \$11.49.

The Closest to the Pin honors on #16 for Monday went to Gail Cole who won a free round of golf at Old Union or a \$25 gift card to the pro shop.

Thanks, again, to Old Union Golf Course for their continued generosity to the ladies’ league. After golf, the ladies convened at K&L Gyros for continued fun and laughter.

The Old Union Women’s Golf league is comprised of all levels of talents. If you are interested in joining this fun group of ladies, please contact Cynthia at 706-633-7587 or Karen at 352-638-3649. N(Jun25 Z15)CA

Final Round Ahead: Lucy Wiegert Balances Golf, Grit & Giving Back at Young Harris College

By Nicole Klucharich
Young Harris College
Athletic Communications

Young Harris Athletics’ next student-athlete spotlight of the summer is Lucy Wiegert, a rising senior on the women’s golf team.

Wiegert is from Cochran, Georgia, and a graduate from Bleckley County High School who has made a significant impact in the Enchanted Valley over the last three years. Get to know Lucy Wiegert on and off the course below!

In her junior season, Wiegert delivered another round of solid performances on the green. A highlight of Wiegert’s took place at the Agnes McAmis Memorial in mid-March, where she earned a second-place tie with a steady two-round total of 150. Her results read 76 (+5) and 74 (+3), which ultimately helped lead the team to an overall third place finish. Wiegert was later named Mountain Lion of the Week for this stellar outing.

Away from the course, Wiegert is a sport and recreation major who is involved in several extra-curriculars at Young Harris. She is a part of the following organizations on campus: FYTT (First-Year Transition Team), Phi Delta, Upsilon Delta Sigma, and Lambda Pi Eta (Communica-



Lucy Wiegert on the green

tion Honors Society). Outside of campus, she attends All Saints Lutheran Church in Blairsville, which she calls a “second home.”

This summer she is staying close by as a student-worker at the Harp Recreation and Commencement Center, in addition to working part time in the Pro Shop at Brass-town Valley Resort. Entering her senior year, Wiegert has prominently made her presence known in the area and community.

With graduation only one short year away, Wiegert wishes to fulfill her lifelong dream of being a camp counselor. She hopes to work as a camp counselor in the greater north Georgia area to experience different kinds of work

environments. Long-term, she plans to head into the recreation industry to begin her career.

Young Harris College Director of Golf, John Lichtenwalner, speaks very highly of the third-year athlete: “Lucy has been a great team leader from the day she arrived on campus.

Her work ethic, time management, and golf performance are all aspirational for our younger players. She balances many different activities on campus, while also being an All-Conference golfer. Lucy is a great example of a well-rounded student-athlete, and I am thrilled to have her in our program for one more season.”

Wiegert represents Young Harris in many ways and feels like YHC is a one-of-a-kind community: “Representing Young Harris means that I am a part of something bigger than myself. I get to carry myself with confidence knowing that this school cares about me and I care about the people here. My heart is Mountain Lion purple!”

Wiegert’s junior year was special, as she was able to lead the way for several new faces and younger girls. “Our team loves to support each other’s wins, and it is even more special when my teammates are some of my best friends,” she says.

With her sights set on her senior season, she is looking forward to one more season of traveling and bonding with the other girls, which are some of her favorite parts of being a student-athlete.

This close-knit group will be back in action for the 2025-2026 season soon!

Basketball: Lady Panthers host Skills Camp for local college coaches



NCAA Basketball legend Ronnie Carr addresses campers on Wednesday, June 18. Photo/Todd Forrest



Shorter University assistant women’s basketball coach Marcus Hunt Jr (left) looks on during last week’s UCHS Basketball Skill camp. Photo/Todd Forrest



UCHS coach Thomas Nelson during last week’s camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

Union County High School, head girls’ basketball coach Thomas Nelson and assistant Penny Johnson hosted a skills camp on June 17-19, allowing local college coaches an opportunity to scout and instruct local talent entering grades 6-12.

The instructors included Ronnie Carr, who was drafted by the Atlanta Hawks out of Western Carolina University. He made the first 3-point field goal in college basketball history on Nov. 29, 1980.

Carr spoke to the campers on day two about treating people the right way and keeping a positive attitude, citing his own personal experiences.

Carr overcame a serious automobile accident following his junior season at WCU. While attending a college summer camp at UNC, alongside future hall-of-famers Michael Jordan and James Worthy, Carr was struck by a vehicle and spent the next seven weeks in a Chapel Hill, NC hospital.

Other instructors included Allie Craig Cruce, assistant Coach at Young Harris College; Christian Buckmire, assistant coach at Piedmont University.

Marcus Hunt Jr., assistant coach at Shorter University, was in attendance on June 18.

Tiek Fields, head coach at Truett McConnell University attended on June 19.

Mountain High Hikers Schedule

Mountain High Hikers offers three hikes in the local area each week: Tuesdays - a long hike from 8-14 miles and a shorter hike of 5-8 miles. Thursday we lead a leisure hike usually around 5 miles. We also maintain over 100 miles of trails in North Georgia and Western NC area and run trail maintenance hikes on Thursdays each week.

For more information visit <http://www.mountain-highhikers.org>. NT(Jun25 Z2)CA

Learn to play Pickleball

The Blairsville Pickleball Club, in conjunction with the Union County Recreation Department, will hold free beginning pickleball classes every Tuesday evening starting at 6 PM, weather permitting.

Classes will start April 1st and continue through October 28th. No registration is required, and all required equipment is provided. Certified instructors will teach the classes, and all ages are welcome!

The classes will take place at the outdoor courts at the Union County Pickleball Complex at 108 Chase Drive, Blairsville (next to the Recreation Center). N(Jun25 Z3)CA

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