

# Wrestling: Union wraps up historic season at State Championships in Macon

By Todd Forrest  
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**MACON** - Union County Wrestling made history over the weekend at the Class AA State Championships.

Not only did the Panthers have the most qualifiers in program history, they also recorded their first-ever victory at the State Championships with senior Issac Tritt's opening round win in the 152-pound weight class.

Joining Tritt was junior Christian Martinez and Union County's first-ever freshman qualifier Sean Phillips.

"Overall, I am pleased with our performance at the State Tournament," Union County coach Justin Byers said. "We took more wrestlers than we ever have in the program's history and we had our first freshman to ever qualify for state. We wrestled very hard. When you get to this point in the season, everyone is at the top of their game and just the feel of the tournament can be overwhelming."

Tritt's weekend got underway with a pinfall victory over Gordon Central's Jasper Stepp. In the second round, however, he fell to the eventual State Runner-up Gavin Brady of Elbert County.

In the Consolation round, he pinned Pepperell's Ethan Sharpe, who brought an impressive 42-8 record to



L-R: Christian Martinez, Sean Phillips and Issac Tritt following their performances at Sectionals. Photo/UC Wrestling Facebook

Macon.

Unfortunately, Tritt would fall in the next round to Dade County's Dakota Johnson, one match shy of reaching the podium.

Tritt finishes his senior season with a 43-14 record.

At 182 pounds, Christian Martinez suffered a narrow 6-3 decision to Vidalia's Lawson Paradise in the

opener.

Following a bye in the Consolation bracket, Martinez saw his season come to a close via pinfall to Spencer's Tyrone Wright.

Martinez completes 2018-19 with a 32-22 record and Coach Byers is looking forward to having him for one more season.

"Martinez wrestled very

well and will return next year as a senior anchor for our team," he said.

Meanwhile, Phillips suffered a defeat at the hands of Dade County's Joe Page in his opening bout.

The Consolation round began with a bye before Phillips fell to Jacoby Cottrell of Chattooga County.

Phillips wraps up his

freshman campaign with a 31-16 record.

"Phillips, our lone freshman, did what he has done all year and that's fight hard in a weight class where he is giving up 8-10 pounds to every opponent," Byers said.

"All and all, I am proud of them and our whole team for what they have accom-

plished this year," Byers added. "But we as a program will not be satisfied until we have wrestlers standing on the podium on Saturday."

"Our future looks bright and with the wrestlers' hard work and dedication we will be back at state and we will be on the podium."

# Competition season gets underway for Mountain Gymnastics Center

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The season is off and running for Blairsville's Mountain Gymnastics Center following November's Judges Cup in Roswell.

In AAU Level 1, MGC's Madelyn Earley recorded a first place all around score of 34.65. She placed first on the bars and beam, third on the floor, and fourth on the vault.

Shy'Ann Beasley was first all around in AAU Level 2 with a score of 36.65. She nearly completed the sweep, placing first in each event with the exception of a second place score on the beam.

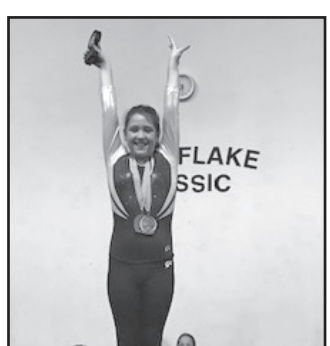
Adriana Viera was first all around in AAU Silver with a score of 35.325. She was first in three of four events while coming in fourth on the floor exercises.

Savannah Ryan placed second in Level 1, highlighted by a first place performance on the floor. Maieli Ravelo was third all around with a first place score on the vault. Raegan Albritton came in fourth and Aubree Goddard-Miller placed fifth.

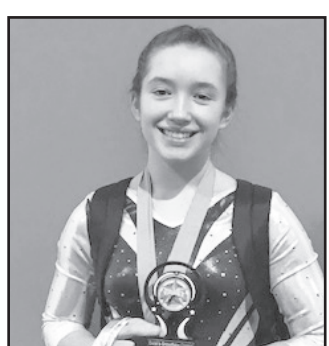
In Level 2 competition, Shaylyne Davis was second, Keely Shook placed third following a first place performance on the beam. Reagan Gwynn came in fourth with a first place score on the vault. Lindsey Hammond was fifth and Addison Harkins placed sixth.

Samantha Blackwell was second in AAU Silver following a first place showing on the floor. Carly Barnett placed third, Kara Lodge came in fourth and Naveah Leopold was fifth.

In USA Level 4 competition, Emma Schuette was third all around while Lola Patton was third place in Level



Naveah Leopold



Josie Poston



Mountain Gymnastics Center USA Level 6

5. Patton's performance was highlighted by a high score on the floor exercises.

Annalyse Kiernan placed sixth all around in Level 5.

Jacey Lee used a first place showing on the beam to propel her to a fourth place finish in Level 6. Meanwhile, Mia McCombs was third and Erin Raper was fifth in Level 7.

In December, MGC competed in the Kickoff Meet, where Schuette and Patton turned in first place all around performances in their respective USA levels.

Schuette scored a 34.95 with high scores on the vault, bars and beam. Patton posted a 33.625 thanks to first place

scores on the beam and the floor, along with a second on the bars.

Kiernan placed second and Chambers turned in a third place showing in their respective levels while Poston recorded the high score on the vault in Level 6.

MGC's weekend at January's Snowflake Invitational was highlighted by the performances of Leopold and Poston, who claimed the Champion Cup for their sessions on the vault. They had the highest vault score of the entire session among all girls competing in their respective levels.

In AAU Level 2, Davis recorded a 36.275 all around



Mountain Gymnastics Center AAU Level 2

score, good enough for first place. She would turn in first place scores on the vault and bars along with fourth place finishes on the beam and floor.

Beasley was second, Shook placed third, Harkins ended up fifth, Hammond came in sixth and Gwynn finished seventh.

Schuette was tops on the bars and the floor, second on the vault and third on the beam, en route to a first place all around tally of 36.9 in USA Gold.

Chambers would place seventh in USA Gold.

In Level 6, Kiernan was first on the vault and third all around. Poston was first on the vault and fifth all around. Patton

also came in fifth in her respective meet while Lee was first on the beam and ninth overall.

McCombs was first on the vault and bars during a second place all around finish. Raper was fourth all around to round out the Level 7 scores.

As for AAU Levels 1 and 2, Earley was second thanks to a high score on the floor. Ryan was third, Ravelo placed sixth, Albritton came in seventh and Goddard-Miller finished eighth.

Barnett was third all around following a first place performance on the vault. Blackwell also recorded a third place all around score.

Leopold was first on the

vault and sixth overall. Lodge also turned in a sixth place performance.

Earlier this month, MGC took part in the Atlanta Centennial Classic and Emma Schuette led the way with a third place finish in USA Gold.

Schuette would place first on the vault and fifth on the bars. Chambers came in 12th to round out the USA Gold competitors.

In Level 6, Patton was fifth while Lee and Poston each recorded eighth place all around scores.

McCombs was sixth and Raper eighth in Level 7.

# Ira Weaver American Legion Post 121 Golf Tournament



By: SM Stratman

The Ira Weaver American Legion Post 121, 78 Old blue Ridge Highway, Blairsville, GA is excited to announce the upcoming Second Annual American Legion Golf tournament on May 4, 2019.

We hope all are previous sponsors will again support this year and anticipate new sponsors to help. We also want to notify all golfers of the date of the tournament so arrangements can be made to attend and help support the American Legion in this charity tournament.

You can register by visiting Old Union Golf Course or calling Cameron Forrest at 706-745-4653. You may also call Steve Stratman at 912-856-7951 or email him at smstratman@legionpost121.org. Pre-registration

makes the whole tournament easier for everyone.

The cost is \$65 per player, Captain's Choice, with \$5,000 hole in one; door prizes, longest driver, closest to the pin and lunch. Come support us.

The American Legion is the largest and one of the oldest and most inclusive of all Veteran's organizations worldwide. Due to its large size, it has more influence with Washington officials than most other veteran's groups.

The American Legion is a patriotic veteran's organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. It is committed to mentoring youth, advocating patriotism and honor, and promoting strong national security, and continued devotion to our fellow service members and veterans.

Most military veterans are eligible to join the American Legion. You have to have served on active duty for at least some of your service. You have to have served during cer-

tain periods of time, but those periods are very expansive.

If you are a military veteran of any service and are interested in experiencing the type of camaraderie that you experienced during your time in the military, you can join.

You can call Commander Mike Ayers (678) 378-4663 or Adjutant Jack Waters at 813-334-7235.

Our meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month except December at the Major Leon Davenport Veteran's Center at 78 Blue Ridge Street. The meetings start at 6:30 PM.

Prospective members are welcome to just come to a meeting.

The more members we have, the more clout we have when our representatives go to Washington. Also, the more members we have, the more we can do to help veterans who need a hand up from a comrade. NT(Feb20,21)4/CA

# Panther baseball opens this week

The Zach Odom era got underway this week at Union County High School as the Panther baseball program was scheduled to open the 2019 season at Commerce High School on Monday.

The home opener is scheduled for Tuesday at 5 p.m. (weather permitting) when Union County hosts Commerce in the second half of a home-and-home to begin the season.

Odom was announced as the new Panther head coach last spring when he took over for Robbie Roxbury.



Zach Odom

Odom will benefit from Union County moving back

down to Class AA after spending the last two seasons in 7-AAA with the likes of 2017 State Champion North Hall, who headlined a loaded region.

The Panthers are scheduled to host Gilmer on Thursday beginning at 4 p.m.

Next week, Union County will travel to Fannin County on Feb. 26 and Gilmer on Feb. 28.

Region 8-AA play gets underway with a doubleheader at Banks County on March 1.

# Local hikers seek donations for "Make A Wish" hike

Local hiking club, Mountain High Hikers, has three lady volunteers, Pat Hill, Irene Reiner and Donna Papazian, hiking 17 miles of the Bartram Trail in Georgia to raise funds for critically ill children.

The team goal is \$7,500 and we need your help! Your tax deductible pledge will fund "wishes come true" for Georgia children fighting life threatening illness.

Please log on to the team site: [site.wish.org/goto/mtnhikers](http://site.wish.org/goto/mtnhikers). It is so easy and safe to make your donation, any amount is deeply appreciated.

If you do not own a computer please call team leader Irene Reiner at 706-970-9822 and she will happily aid you with making your donation. Thank you!

NT(Feb20,F3)SH

# Camp Learn-a-Lot



Calling all happy campers! On Thursday, March 7th the Union County Primary School will host a night of reading, writing and math activities for the whole family. Please plan to join us from 5:30 - 6:30 for this fun filled event. NT(Feb20,Z3)CA