

Sports

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Yost breaks the UCHS record with her 88th career goal

By Todd Forrest
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LEXINGTON - Senior Madison Yost surpassed Jamie Weldon atop the Union County career goals list when she scored in the 13th minute of Friday's region battle at Oglethorpe County.

"It's a tremendous honor," Yost said "I'm just overwhelmed with happiness. I've never been more excited."

Entering the week, Yost was three goals away from entering the UCHS record books as the Lady Panthers' all-time greatest goal scorer while her team needed just three wins to clinch the Region 8-AA title.

Both of them moved one step closer on Tuesday when Yost scored twice during the Lady Panthers' 4-1 victory over Elbert County. Yost's two goals tied her with Weldon (Class of 2003) as the most prolific goal scorer in team history.

"Against Elbert, I was so nervous and kept panicking and missing my shots but it's such a huge relief to finally break the record," Yost said. "These last three games have been very physical and I actually hurt my quad so I've been having to spend a lot more time with the athletic trainer."

On Friday, Union County visited Oglethorpe County in a showdown between the last two unbeaten teams in Region 8-AA. And after her teammates provided a 2-0 cushion, Yost made it 3-0 off an Allison Fair assist with 27:57 showing on the first half clock.

"Allison (Fair) played me a beautiful ball but every-body has been so selfless and setting me up with great balls," Yost said. "But it was just me and the goalkeeper and I kept saying to myself 'don't panic, don't panic' and I went for the bottom right-hand corner and it went in."

With the hoopla in the



rearview mirror, Yost and the Lady Panthers can focus on locking down Region 8-AA. This year's senior class won the region as freshmen in 2016 but two seasons in Class AAA saw Union miss out on the postseason in consecutive years.

Back in Class AA, Yost and the Class of 2019 are ready to go out the same way they came in: as region champs.

"It would be incredible to be named region champions during my senior season," Yost said. "We're one win away from winning region and I can't wait to get that opportunity in our next (region) game."

Head Coach Tim Hunter interview: Following Friday's victory, the *North Georgia News* caught up with Coach Hunter, who coached both Yost and Weldon. Hunter would discuss Yost, Weldon, what it was like coaching them and how they compare despite playing 16 years apart.

NGN: What's the past week been like trying to balance winning a region title while wanting Yost to break the record at the same time?

TH: Here's the thing, she's really such an unselfish player that sometimes you wish she would be a little more assertive with the ball. She's a great scorer, a great teammate and a great defensive player.

Coming down here today, I told her to go for the win because I knew she would get a goal doing that.

NGN: Are there any similarities between Yost and Weldon or are they two totally different players?

TH: They have very different styles. Madison is very fast, left-footed and more of a finesse player. Jamie was a big, physical, bruising player, who was also extremely skilled.

Madison plays better with her back to the goal, setting up passes and quick 1-2s. Where as Jamie was just a physical specimen.

I tell you what, I would love to have a situation with both of them on my team and put one on each side. We would pretty much be the terror of the state.

NGN: How has the game changed since 2003 and have you changed your coaching style/philosophy



(Clockwise from top-left) With only the goal keeper to beat, Madison Yost lines up her shot. (Top-right) Yost pushes a left-footed kick past the Lady Patriot keeper to break the UCHS record. (Bottom) Fellow senior Sophia Romano (left) is the first teammate to greet the new record holder. Photos by Todd Forrest

over the past 16 years?

TH: The game has changed but my coaching style has not. Well, maybe I've changed a little bit.

Originally I was a big 4-3-3 or sometimes a 3-4-3 but I concentrated a lot on my forwards. Now, I'm a little bit more of a midfield coach but

many of the core things that we've done haven't changed at all and I think that's why we've been successful for 20 years.

Union soccer caps of perfect week as postseason comes into focus

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The Lady Panthers are one win away from locking down a Region 8-AA title while the fourth place Panthers are just one victory shy of securing a state playoff berth.

The Union men led Elbert County by one game for the final playoff spot going into Tuesday's matchup where they survived a scoreless first half to pull away in a 3-1 victory.

Senior Colby Ives got Union on the board with a corner kick in the 46th minute. MJ Delatte converted a penalty kick in the 64th minute and moments later, Brian Smith scored off a feed from David Van Pelt.

Smith continued his stellar play at Oglethorpe County on Friday when he broke a scoreless tie late in the second half to spark Union to a 2-0 victory despite playing without the services of the injured Kobi Robbins.

Kyler Robbins, who assisted on Smith's goal in the 65th minute, used a free kick in the 75th minute to put the Panthers ahead 2-nil.

Sophomore goal keeper Aaron Helton recorded the shutout, notching three saves, including a leaping deflection, tipping the shot over the crossbar in the 26th minute.

Union County hosts Towns County on Tuesday before visiting a Social Circle squad that's tied with Putnam County atop the Region 8-AA standings at 4-0 and 7-3-1 overall.

Record-wise, the Panthers are tied with Rabun County for third place at 3-2 but the Wildcats own the tiebreaker thanks to a head-to-head overtime victory on March 5.

Behind Union County is Banks County at 2-3 and Elbert County at 1-2 but the Panthers own the tiebreaker over both teams with Social Circle and winless Monticello remaining on the region slate.

The Lady Panthers, meanwhile, passed its toughest region test on Friday when they visited Oglethorpe County



Mattison Ruff at Oglethorpe on Friday after recording 3 assists vs Elbert on Tuesday. Photo/Todd Forrest

for a battle of 8-AA unbeaten without injured starter Anzly Sherman.

Union County exploded for three goals in less than 10 minutes beginning in the game's third minute when Gracie Bridges put her team on the board off an assist from Yost.

Sheyenne Dyer fed Sophia Romano in the 10th minute to make it 2-0; Yost gave the Lady Panthers a 3-0 advantage in the 13th minute off a pass from Allison Fair.

The three-goal lead would hold until the 77th minute when the Lady Patriots used a header goal to break up Sadie Underwood's shutout bid.

Despite giving up a late goal, Underwood the Union defense did a tremendous job silencing a potent Oglethorpe County offense, led by the 2018 Region Player of the Year.

Earlier in the week, the Lady Panthers took care of business during a 4-1 victory over Elbert County.

"Ellie Garrison and Mad-die Sutton locked down the defensive interior for us vs Elbert County," Coach Hunter said.

Desaray Patterson -- off a feed from Yost -- put Union

on the board in the 16th minute. The next two goals belonged to Yost in the 21st and 32nd minute.

Mattison Ruff picked up the assist on Yost's first goal while Ruff and Isabella Nottage were credited with the assist on her second goal.

Ruff recorded her third assist during the 51st minute when she set up Patterson, putting the Lady Blue Devils away for good.

Up next - Union County hosts Towns County on Tuesday with the girls getting underway at 5 p.m. The Lady Panthers are looking to halt a losing streak in the series that dates back to 2015. The Union men, however, haven't lost to the Indians since 2014.

Region play resumes 5:30 p.m. Thursday at Social Circle before UCHS takes the following week off for Spring Break. Upon return, Union will visit Gilmer on April 9 and host Pickens on April 10.

The Monticello game scheduled for April 12, which is also the final region game, will play host to the Senior Night festivities.



Freshman Kyler Robbins played a part in both of Union County's goals at Oglethorpe County on Friday. Photo/Todd Forrest

Track and Field at Habersham Central

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MT. AIRY - Union County turned in another strong performance at Habersham Central on Friday, March 22.

Courtney Moose took home first in the Discus (95-11) and Shot Put (32-0); Evelyn McBride was first in the High Jump at 4-8; Molly Kay West placed first in the Triple Jump at 30-4 while Carson Walker placed first in the Long Jump at 19-1.5 and second in the 200M with a time of 24.49.

Luke Gambrell and Zoe Sanchez continued their dominance in the 3200M as both placed first in their respective races. Gambrell also picked up a third place finish in the 1600M.

Brendan Bowman paced the field in the 400M event with a time of 52:02 while both the boys and girls 4x400 relay team finished in first place. Meanwhile, the boys and girls 4x100 teams each came in third.

Kyle Morlock and Allie



Carson Walker was first in the Long Jump. Photo/Todd Forrest

Brey each placed second in the High Jump, Brey also recorded a second place finish in the 300 Hurdles and a third place finish in the 400M. Additionally, Morlock was third in the discus at 92-8.

Hunter Hartzog was second in the 1600M and third in

the 800M. Guage Shumaker took home second in the 3200M and Noah Underwood was second in the Triple Jump.

Mia McCombs was third in the 200M; Nolan Bachman and Megan Bright each placed third in the 300 Hurdles.