

# Sports

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## Football: Panthers split 7-on7 contests, host youth camp

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Union County finished with a record of 1-1 while hosting the summer's first 7-on-7 session. The Panthers took a one-sided loss to Lumpkin County but bounced back with a victory over Gordon Central on Thursday, June 12.

The Panthers' win over Gordon Central left all three teams with a 1-1 record after Gordon Central defeated Lumpkin in the day's second matchup.

Each contest included two 10-minute sessions for each offense, during which, both teams executed every play starting from their opponent's 40-yard line. Afterward, the junior varsity (JV) squads took the field for two 5-minute sessions, also running plays from the 40-yard line.

After the JV action, both varsity teams returned to the field for a 15-minute, full-scale 7-on-7 contest where scores were recorded.

Rising sophomore quarterback Kamden Kendrick took all the snaps for the varsity squad due to a broken hand suffered by rising senior QB Cade Dockrey the previous week at a Shorter football camp.

Dockrey had surgery last week and is expected to resume throwing in 2-3 weeks, but it could be at least six weeks before he can participate in full



Union County's annual youth football brought in more than 70 future gridiron stars to Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium last week. Photo/Todd Forrest

In the meeting with Lumpkin County, the Panthers couldn't find the endzone in a 29-5 defeat. At the conclusion, the Indians remained on the field and suffered a loss at the hands of Calhoun's Gordon Central.

During the finale, Union County jumped out to a 16-2 lead over Gordon Central behind a pair of Kendrick touchdown strikes to rising sophomore Mikey Davis and rising senior Tyler Parker. Rising junior Chetley Cox hauled in a

PAT reception.

With the Panthers holding a late 22-14 lead, the defense stopped Gordon Central twice inside the 10-yard line to secure the victory. On the game's final play, rising-senior cornerback Daniel McPhee swatted away a jump ball in the endzone.

Union County also hosted a three-day youth camp beginning Wednesday, June 11 for rising 2nd-6th graders. The camp attracted more than 70 youngsters to last week's event at Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium.

Union County Football would like to thank North Georgia Sign & Apparel for supplying the camp tee shirts, Papa's Pizza for helping feed the young campers as well as Thursday's 7-on-7 participants.

This week, the Panthers will work out four days and then attend an Organized Team Activity (OTA) at Habersham Central on Tuesday, June 24. They will close the month with a 7-on-7 event and a lineman camp at Reinhardt University on Thursday, June 26.



Rising sophomore QB Kamden Kendrick fires downfield during Union County's 7-on-7 victory over Gordon Central last Thursday morning. Photo/Todd Forrest



Rising sophomore DB Sean Rosa (14) breaks up a Gordon Central pass during the late stages of last week's 7-on-7. Photo/Todd Forrest



Rising senior wide receiver Tyler Parker hauls in a touchdown catch during Union County's 7-on-7 victory over Gordon Central on June 12. Photo/Todd Forrest



First-year head coach Rob Stowe looks on during last week's 7-on-7 contests vs. Lumpkin County and Gordon Central. Photo/Todd Forrest

### Lady Panthers basketball camp features All-Star cast of instructors

The Union County Lady Panthers and head coach Thomas Nelson will host a girls' basketball skills camp from June 17-19, welcoming rising 6th through 12th grade girls to participate in three days of focused training with experienced college coaches and former players.

The camp will run daily from 9 a.m. to noon at Union County High School. Registration is \$60 per athlete.

A strong lineup of collegiate coaches will lead the instruction, offering athletes a chance to sharpen their skills and learn from some of the region's top basketball minds.

The instructors include: Ronnie Carr, drafted by the Atlanta Hawks out of Western Carolina University. He made the first 3-point field goal in college basketball history (Nov. 29, 1980). Carr was a two-time All-Southern Conference and an All-Freshman team selection who averaged 18 points per game as a three-year starter. He led the conference in scoring in 1982 and scored 20 or more points in almost half of his games.

Allie Craig Cruce, Assistant Coach at Young Harris



Union County head basketball coach Thomas Nelson and the Lady Panthers during last summer's team camp at the University of North Georgia. Photo/Todd Forrest

College, will be present for all three days.

Christian Buckmire, Assistant Coach at Piedmont University, will lead sessions on June 17.

Marcus Hunt Jr., Assis-

tant Coach at Shorter University, will instruct on June 18.

Tiek Fields, Head Coach at Truett McConnell University, will coach on June 19.

This camp offers a valuable opportunity for young

athletes to receive personalized instruction and build foundational skills heading into the upcoming basketball season.

To register or for more information, contact [tnelson@ucschools.org](mailto:tnelson@ucschools.org).

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# Lady Panthers go 2-2 at LakePoint, host three-day kids camp

By Todd Forrest  
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The Union County Lady Panthers hosted a three-day youth basketball camp beginning Monday, June 9, and then finished the week by going 2-2 at the Georgia Basketball Coaches Association (GBCA) camp.

Hosted by Emerson's LakePoint Sports, the GBGA event opened with Union County blasting Sumter County 54-9.

The Lady Panthers were on the wrong end of a 49-26 loss to White County in the second game and lost 58-52 to South Gwinnett in the third game. Union County closed the weekend with a 43-33 win over Washington County.

Head coach Thomas Nelson acknowledged that the camp was an opportunity to get everyone playing time, even if it cost him at least one loss.

"It was good for us to see good competition," Nelson said. "I played everyone, otherwise we would have been 3-1, and that one loss (White County) would have gone either way. We were up by 10 against South Gwinnett and lost. Letting everyone play hurt us in that game. In our last game against Washington County, we could have won by



The Union County Lady Panthers hosted a youth camp last week for kids entering grades 2-8. Photo/Todd Forrest

20 or 30.

"You have to apply to attend this camp and it's the first time we were ever selected. We're extremely thankful for the opportunity to go down there and represent Union County."

The Lady Panthers held a basketball camp for young-

sters entering grades 2-8 earlier in the week. The campers learned fundamental skills and the importance of teamwork while still enjoying the game.

"We broke everyone up into age groups, but of course the focus was on fundamentals and teaching them what they need to do to play at their

level," Nelson said. "We talked about being a good teammate and not being jealous and doing things that cause grief and drama when they get older. We stressed that learning how to work together is the main goal."

"We had some really good kids in all age groups. Several of them have been

through the rec department and you could tell they've worked really hard and had some good coaches working with them."

The camp averaged around 11 girls, which Nelson chalked up to other summer activities.

"We understand, we just wish more kids had come out,"

he said. "We had some great prizes for them."

Nelson added he was proud of his high school girls for showing up, participating in the camp and taking an interest in the future of Union County basketball.

"We like it when they get involved and mingle with the kids in the rec sports," he said. "We have days where we go over and work with them. We think it's very important to get involved in the community."

This week, Union County hosts a camp for 6-12 graders featuring college coaches from Young Harris, Piedmont, Shorter and others.

"The goal is to eventually let this grow into a recruiting tool for the kids in this area," Nelson said. "This is open to girls from any school. We're hoping for a good turnout so those college coaches will be interested in coming back to this area to recruit our kids."

Beginning next Monday, June 24, the Lady Panthers will host a two-day team camp at UCHS.

In closing, Nelson thanked Chick-fil-A, Matt Queen and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Ingles, and Alexander's for their sponsorship and assistance with the summer basketball camps.



Girls basketball youth camp award winners: (L-R) Amelia Carlton, Poppy Gibb, Hayden Abercrombie, Hope Wright and Cambie Cox. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Tradition & Tenacity: Mason Harmon of Young Harris College Men's Tennis Reflects Ahead of Senior Season

By Nicole Klucharich  
Young Harris College  
Athletic Communications

Young Harris Athletics' next student-athlete spotlight of the summer is Mason Harmon, a rising senior on the men's tennis team. Harmon is from Alpharetta, Georgia, a graduate from Cambridge High School, who has made a significant impact in the Enchanted Valley over the last three years. Get to know Mason Harmon on and off the court below!

In his junior season, Harmon posted a 12-10 singles record, going 5-2 in tiebreaker matches. On the doubles side, he finished 10-13 with a combination of partners (Samuel Guzon, Gregor Gottein and Noah Pawirodirjo). In late February, Harmon was named Conference Carolinas' Men's Tennis Player of the Week, dominating with four straight wins against Mars Hill University and Lander University.

Away from his own training, Harmon is a sport and recreation major who is heavily involved with tennis in the community. He is a coach and hitting partner for promising junior and/or professional players. As graduation is approaching quickly, Harmon plans on coaching tennis either at the college or high-level junior circuit. The passion for the sport runs in his entire family, as they all currently play and were taught by his father at a very



Mason Harmon on the court

early age.

YHC tennis head coach, Marcy O'Connor, speaks very highly of the third-year athlete: "Mason is the energy and grit our team thrives on. He shows up every day ready to compete, push others, and lead with intensity. As an upcoming senior, he has so much to share and give to this team, not just on the court, but in how he carries

himself. His impact will be felt far beyond his time here, and I'm excited to see what he will do this year leading our program."

Representing Young Harris is something special to Harmon: "Coach Marcy has done a great job building up a strong fan base of community members who support our program unconditionally. They are at every match and community night, always checking in on our personal lives. It means everything to play in front of fans and a community like that."

Harmon had a junior year to remember, with the men's tennis program making it to the Conference Carolinas' quarterfinals after advancing over rival Emmanuel in the opening round. His favorite memory from this past season was clinching the match point against North Greenville to win 4-3, after losing the first set.

Looking ahead to the 2025-2026 season, Harmon is excited to bounce back and watch some of the younger guys grow into better players and teammates, as the squad is returning eight of 10 athletes: "It's exciting to be the longest tenured player in the program and to keep traditions alive, on top of building new ones for future teams."

Harmon has his sights set on being nationally ranked and making another deep run in the conference tournament again as a senior. NTJm18Z17JCA

## Blairsville's 11-year-old golfer Sawyer Jones making waves across the southeast

Eleven-year-old Sawyer is a passionate junior golfer from Blairsville, and he's been working really hard on his game.

Sawyer has already earned several medals in the Chattanooga U.S. Kids tournament circuit and even took home the top-five overall trophy twice.

He also placed third in the Mountain Conference Championship for middle school golf this year.

Most notably, Sawyer is currently ranked 16th among 11-year-old boys in Georgia, according to JuniorGolfHub.com. He also qualified to play in the Georgia State International at the end of May and the Canadian Invitational for U.S. Kids Golf this year and will be competing there in July.

The North Georgia News would like to congratulate Sawyer on his progress and look forward to watching him for many years to come.



Local golfer Sawyer Jones' star is rising fast.

## UCRD 12U softball wins MAC title



The Union County Recreation Department's 12U softball team recently took home the Mountain Athletic Conference championship. The team is coached by Kevin Stalcup. The players are Hadleigh Allen, Georgia Bragg, Jaelyn Campbell, Haylen Davis, Aria Gordon, Taylor Jamison, Aubre King, Kourtney Kraft, Grace Laberge, Celsie Lentz and Jayden Meeker.

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