

Sports

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Union County 12U softball reaches finals of Dizzy Dean World Series

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nghanews.com

Southaven, Miss. - Following a dominating performance at the state tournament, the Union County 12U softball all stars took the next step and proved they were more than capable of competing at the highest levels.

At the end of the day, a second place finish was the result of their trip to Southaven, Mississippi for the Dizzy Dean World Series, where the Lady Panthers fell to the Saltillo (Miss.) Wildcats.

Excluding the champs, Saltillo, Union outscored the competition 29-9, but the Wildcats' overpowering pitching (24 strikeouts in two games vs UC) was the difference as they held the Lady Panthers scoreless in their two meetings (4-0 and 6-0).

In the opener, Union got off to a slow start after drawing the host team, Southaven, but they eventually pulled away with three runs in the fifth and one in the sixth to take round one, 6-0.

Adaley Burnette went the distance for the Lady Panthers, striking out nine during a one-hit shutout to start her team off on the right foot.

Offensively, Union County scattered 10 singles with leadoff hitter Kaylee Helton turning in a two-hit performance while scoring a run.

Alexandria Sisum benefited from batting behind Helton in the No. 2 spot and drove in a pair of runs in the fifth to blow things open at 5-0.

The Lady Panthers got on the board in the second inning when Aubrie Banton singled and scored to spot her team an early run.

Still leading 1-0 in the top half of the fourth, three Southaven errors led to another Union run when Allie Brey reached on an error and scored thanks to consecutive Southaven fielding miscues and a base hit by Jessica Lara-Noyola.

Union began to pull away in the fifth when one-out singles by Sierra Burnette and Jaycee Seabolt made it a 3-0 game. Following a two-out hit by Helton, Sisum singled to center for a 5-0 advantage.

In the sixth, Brey drew a leadoff walk, advanced to second on a Banton ground out before stealing third and scoring



The Union County Lady Panthers 12U softball team with their runner up trophy immediately following the Dizzy Dean World Series last Sunday in Southaven, Mississippi.

on an errant throw.

Game two saw the Houston All Stars use a five-run second to open up a 6-1 advantage, only to watch the Lady Panthers storm back with three in the fourth, one in the fifth, and five of their own in the sixth.

Brey got the nod in the circle and struck out five in four innings before giving way to Adaley Burnette in the fifth.

At the plate, four hitters accounted for nine of Union's 13 hits with Caroline Karnes's three-hit, three-RBI performance leading the way. Meanwhile, Rebekah Chambers scored and drove in a run during a 2-for-3 performance, Caley Davis went 2-for-3 with an RBI, and Helton finished 2-for-4 with 1 RBI.

The first run of the day came off the bat of Chambers when her RBI single scored Davis to knot the score at 1-1 in the second.

Houston's six run third came via four walks, a single, and an error - putting Union in a 6-1 hole.

Following a 1-2-3 inning in the top half of the third, Brey kept her team in the game by striking out the side in Houston's half of the third - setting the stage for a Lady Panthers' rally.

With the bases loaded and nobody out, Davis lined a base hit to left - scoring Sisum. After back-to-back strikeouts, Karnes delivered a clutch, two-out bases loaded single to pull her team within two at 6-4.

Brey escaped the fourth, despite yielding a two-out double, to keep Union within two. Then the offense took advantage of another Southaven mistake to tack on a run in the fifth when Helton scored off a costly two-out error by the Houston infield.

The Lady Panthers dodged a bullet in the bottom half of the inning when a hit batter, an error, and a walk loaded the bases with nobody out. Adaley Burnette took over in the circle and following a passed ball that allowed one run to cross, she silenced the Houston bats to stay within striking distance at 7-5 heading into the sixth inning.

With one down in Union's final at bat, Lara-Noyola drew a walk and Chambers singled to center to put the tying run aboard. Karnes continued to swing a hot bat and her third hit of the day drove in Lara-Noyola and pulled the Lady Panthers within a run.

Sierra Burnette tied the game with a base hit up the middle and Adaley Burnette gave her team the lead with a single to right.

An RBI groundout by Tori Tracy extended the lead to 9-7 before Helton capped off the five-run inning with an run scoring single.

Leading 10-7, Adaley Burnette induced two pop outs and caught another hitter looking at strike three to retire the side and send her team into the weekend undefeated.

In the loss 4-0 to Saltillo, base hits by Sisum and Brey was all the offense Union could muster as the Wildcats jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the first and never looked back. Adaley Burnette also held Saltillo in check - limiting its high powered offense to just four singles - but the Lady Panthers lineup was unable to help out its pitcher.

However, Union didn't show any signs of a letdown following its first loss of the summer. In the loser's bracket for the first time, the Lady Panthers thumped Houston 13-2 in a rematch from game two.

By the time Houston got on the board with two runs in the fourth, Union had already built a 12-0 advantage.

Karnes continued to punish opposing pitching - going 2-for-2 with 3 RBIs, a homer, and a walk.

Brey also turned in a two-hit performance while scoring twice and driving home one. She also fanned two hitters in one inning of work from the circle.

Adaley Burnette got the start and tossed three no-hit innings with a pair of Ks.

It also helped that the offense spotted her two runs before she stepped foot into the circle.

Helton led off the game with a double to left and scored on single from Brey.

Union tacked on another run when Brey swiped second to move into scoring position for Banton, who brought her



Union County's Jessica Lara-Noyola attempts to lay down a bunt at last weekend's Dizzy Dean World Series.

home with a base hit.

A two-run, inside-the-park homerun by Karnes made it 4-0 after Chambers reached with a one-out single.

With the bases cleared by Karnes, Sierra Burnette reached on an error and Tracy knocked her in with a base hit to center.

Already up 5-0, Union added five more in a third inning outburst that began with a bases loaded hit-by-pitch.

Two singles and an error had the bags full for Chambers, who was plunked with a 3-0 count - making it 6-0.

Karnes picked up her third RBI with a bases loaded walk before Sierra Burnette's two-run single made it 9-0.

Later in the inning, Seabolt drew a walk to load the bases once again and Tracy followed suit with a base on balls to give her team a 10-0 advantage.

An inning later, Helton reached second on an error and Sisum moved her to third with a fly ball to center.

Adaley Burnette made it 11-0 with a base hit that scored Helton. Up next was Brey, who was hit by a pitch, putting two aboard. A double steal moved both runners into scoring position and a ground ball off the bat of Banton allowed Adaley Burnette to score from third.

Houston's two runs came in the fourth off a walk and an infield single but Union got one back in the fifth on a Seabolt sacrifice fly.

When Sunday morning

rolled around, just two teams were left standing.

And at 10 a.m. they met on the field.

However, it was Saltillo that came out swinging with three in the first, one in the second, and two in the third for a 6-0 advantage that held up.

The Lady Panthers were limited to just three singles -- one each from Banton, Davis and Sierra Burnette -- along with a walk by Tracy.

Adaley Burnette struck out six batters and scattered seven hits in the contest.

Despite coming in second in Mississippi, the Union County 12U softball teams are champions here at home.

The memories provided by this group of young ladies will outlast any trophy they could have received.

We are blessed to have them in our community and look forward to what the future has in store. A team this talented doesn't come around very often. Especially in a small town.

These are some of the hardest working athletes in Union County. Anytime you see a few girls gathered together to practice softball, at either the high school field or Meeks Park, it's a safe bet that some (or all) of them are members of this team.

But one thing you can be sure of: Union County's softball future is as bright as ever.

Union County's world series box scores can be found on the next page.

Jones nominated for Good Works Team

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nghanews.com

Northbrook, Ill - Luther Jones found a silver lining last week.

After being forced to cancel his second annual Brannon Jones Football Camp due to NCAA rules, Jones learned that his efforts weren't in vain.

Last week, Allstate and the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) announced the nominees for the 2017 Good Works Team.

And Luther Jones was among the nominees.

"It is very humbling," he said. "Tim Tebow is on the (selection) board and it's extremely humbling to even be mentioned in the same sentence as someone that has given back so much."

According to a press release sent to the North Georgia News, the Brannon Jones Football Camp was one of the reasons he was chosen.

"(Luther) Jones gives back in many ways, including: Creating the Brannon Jones Memorial Football Camp for Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome research in memory of his father, who he lost to the disease after arriving at KSU. The camp drew 75 young athletes out of the local community and raised \$800 for EDS research," the press release reads.

"(Jones works) with Team Impact to make a local kid with a life-threatening disease, named Rylen, an honorary KSU team member. Rylen now attends football practices to cheer on the team and stands on the sidelines during games.

"(He also works) with the local Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter, leading KSU's on-campus ministry on visits to Children's Healthcare



Former Union County Panther and current Kennesaw State Owl lineman Luther Jones works with local youth football players during the 2016 Brannon Jones Football Camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

of Atlanta."

"I don't do it for the awards but this comes at a good time with the way things kind of backfired with my dad's camp," Jones said. "This is very uplifting for me because of the timing.

"I feel like I've let some people down (by canceling the camp) but I'll make it up to them. We'll get the NCAA stuff worked out and get back on track so we can do bigger and better things next year."

From the 146 nominees, a final roster of 22 award recipients - comprised of 11 players from the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision and 11 players from the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision, Divisions II, III and the NAIA - will be unveiled in

September.

"I want to thank Allstate and the AFCA for nominating me," Jones added. "The recent hiccup with the football camp is just a bump in the road and nothing that we can't get through."

College football fans are encouraged to follow along and join in on the conversation by searching and using #GoodWorksTeam.

Since 1992, the Allstate AFCA Good Works Team has been one of the most coveted community service awards in college football, bringing together select student-athletes from all divisions of play to honor their dedication to volunteerism and enriching the lives of others.

North Georgia Rapids Swim Team update



The North Georgia Rapids Swim Team finished the summer season with a strong showing in the League Championship meet on July 7-8. The team sent 20 swimmers to the two-day meet and made their presence known against several, much larger teams. A few of the team's most successful members were Andrew Nushtayev - second place (8-and-under); Luke Gambrell - third place (14U); and two fourth place finishes by Nicholas Nushtayev (10U) and Bethany Anderson (18U). The team practices at the Union General Wellness Center in Blairsville. Front row (L-R): Caroline Cole, Brooke Yancey, Andrew Nushtayev, Liam Smith, Bethany Anderson, Hunter White. Back (L-R): Nicholas Nushtayev, Hunter Yancey, Wyatt Nichols, Courtney Foster, Luke Gambrell, Steven Williams and Brian Williams.

Local Charity Golf event to benefit Enotah CASA

The 2nd annual Battle of the Sexes golf tournament, organized and hosted by the Butternut Creek Ladies Golf Association, will be held Thursday, August 3, 2017 at Butternut Creek Golf Course. Registration and breakfast are from 8 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. Shotgun start at 9 a.m. sharp! Cost is \$45 per golfer and includes golf, breakfast and lunch.

The format is Net Better Ball for your twosome and works this way: Two players, either two Lads or two Lassies, on the team each play their own golf ball throughout the round. On each hole, the two team members compare scores, and the lower of their two net scores (the better ball counts as the team's score.) While you may be playing with your spouse in the foursome, scoring of the Battle will consist of taking the net better scores of all Lasse pairings, against the net better scores of all Lads pair-

ings. Lads or Lassies will be announced as the winner during lunch. The top three winning teams from both the Lads and Lassies will each receive a free round of golf at Butternut. No partner? No worries! We will assign a partner for you!

Checks and registration form must be received by July 27, 2017. Forms are available at Butternut or by contacting Karen or Jane. Make checks payable to: BCLGA amount \$45 per golfer. Mail to Karen Mussoline, 179 Scout Trace, Blairsville, GA 30512 or leave at the Pro Shop desk. Deadline to enter is July 27, 2017. Contact Karen Mussoline @ (352) 638-3649 (msmoose2@gmail.com) or Jane Childers @ (706) 838-5599 for questions or additional information.

The "Lads & Lassies" will be battling for bragging rights, but the real winners are children from Union & Towns counties whose lives have been

changed by the CASA organization. Enotah CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) plays a vital role in the lives of the abused and neglected children in our community and is the local affiliate of Georgia and National CASA. The effectiveness and quality of our advocacy has been recognized locally, statewide and nationally. We gratefully appreciate your support to help us continue to advocate for our community's neglected and abused children by donating proceeds of your golf tournament which will be used to recruit, screen, train and supervise CASA volunteers and meet the needs of these deprived children. All proceeds will be donated to Enotah CASA after golf & lunch costs.

In 2016 thanks to the wonderful participation of local golfers, the Battle of the Sexes donated \$500 to a local charity. Let's make it bigger and better in 2017! NJ0419Z3CA