

# Sports

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## No. 5 Fannin lands early knockout in 42-7 win over Panthers

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The 5th-ranked Rebels jumped out 35-0 after two quarters and eventually cruised to a 42-7 victory, handing the Panthers their worst home-opening loss since 2004 (49-0 to No. 1 Buford).

Fannin County's offense scored at will, finding the endzone on each of its first six possessions before letting off the gas late in the third quarter. The Rebels amassed 429 yards of total offense with 271 on the ground, marking Union's second-straight game allowing 260+ yards rushing.

"We have a ways to go on defense," Union County head coach Michael Perry said. "Hopefully we get a few guys back this week that should help us."

The Rebels needed only three plays to move 70 yards and grab a 7-0 lead during the early going. They extended the margin to 14-0 via a seven-play, 50-yard drive capped by a 4-yard run on fourth-and-3.

A four-play, 54-yard scoring drive made it 21-0, and then a 91-yard quarterback keeper grew the Fannin lead to 28-0 in the second frame. On the Rebels' final possession of the half, a 61-yard completion and a 16-yard run made it 35-0 in favor of the visitors.

Fannin's final touchdown of the night put Union in a 42-0 hole following a 7-play, 66-yard third-quarter drive.

The Panthers' offense showed significant growth from week one, but couldn't extend drives or capitalize on its red zone trips.

Freshman quarterback Kamden Kendrick finished 18 for 29 with 203 yards, but more importantly, he didn't turn the ball over. However, he left late in the third quarter with a foot



Senior wide receiver Maddox Young had 10 catches for 127 yards and scored a rushing touchdown when he replaced the injured Kamden Kendrick at quarterback. Photo/Todd Forrest

injury but isn't expected to miss Friday's meeting with Murray County.

"We moved the ball," Perry said. "I thought our receivers played much better than the previous week. I thought Kamden did a really good job and our linemen did a good job getting out on the screens. We just have to work on our running game to give us a more balanced offense."

Senior wideout Maddox Young turned in an impressive performance, catching 10 passes for 127 yards, along with a rushing touchdown after taking over QB duties when Kendrick was shaken up.

"I was really proud of Maddox Young," Perry said.

"It's a pleasure to coach a guy like that. He's a complete team player and does whatever he can to help the team."

Young replaced Kendrick and led Union's only scoring drive of the night, finishing it off with a 4-yard scamper. With Young at the helm, the Panthers offense took over at the 41 following a fourth-down defensive stop and went 51 yards on four plays.

Young's score was set up by a 48-yard catch and run by freshman Haze Burnette two plays earlier.

Freshman Mikey Davis earned a starting nod at receiver for the injured Tyler Parker and caught two passes for 21 yards; sophomore Chetley Cox had 4 receptions for 46 yards.

"Chetley made some really big-time catches for us and he continues to get better," Perry said.

Senior running back Connor Schuknecht reeled in two passes for 6 yards while rushing 16 times for 44 yards.

Junior Dominic Tarbert added one grab for 5 yards.

Sophomore Bentley Rich rushed twice for 13 yards; Young had 4 yards and a score on five carries and was 2 for

6 with 50 yards and a pick through the air.

The Panthers were missing several key pieces on Friday. Along with the previously-injured Dusty Aaron and Cade Dockrey, who are out for the year, the Panthers were without three additional starters: Senior linebacker Ethan Lester, senior defensive back Darin Patterson and Parker.

Lester, Parker and Patterson are expected to return for the Sept. 6 meeting vs. Murray County.

**Up next:** The Panthers host Murray County on Friday at 7:30 p.m.

The Indians enter with a 1-2 record following a 34-14 victory over winless Southeast Whitfield. Murray County opened the year with a 42-14 loss to Towns County, then fell 48-7 to Ringgold.

Murray is coached by Kurt Napier - brother of University of Florida head coach Billy Napier.

"[Murray has] some big guys and they play really hard," Perry said. "They're going to bring everything they have and they're coming off their first victory of the season. They're going to want to keep



Freshman Kamden Kendrick topped 200 yards passing in just his second game despite exiting in the third quarter. Photo/Todd Forrest



Freshman wide receiver Mikey Davis slips a tackle during the first quarter vs. Fannin County. Photo/Todd Forrest



The Panthers take the field ahead of Friday night's game vs. Fannin County. Photo/Todd Forrest

that positive momentum going, but we're glad we have another home game and we have an opportunity to redeem ourselves from last week. We will continue getting better and taking it one practice at a time. If we do that, I think the results will begin trending in the right direction."

## Legatt presented with state championship ring at halftime



Union County senior Payton Legatt is surrounded by his UCHS wrestling teammates after being awarded his 2023-24 Class AA State Championship ring during halftime of Friday night's football game. Legatt won UCHS' first wrestling state title without surrendering a point during the 157-lb state tournament in February. Photo/Todd Forrest



# Volleyball: Panthers find ways to win despite injury to key player

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Less than a month into the 2024 season, Union County (9-5) has already matched last year's win total on the heels of victories over Hiwassee Dam, North Carolina and Banks County during a busy stretch of four games in four days last week.

Union County notched the two wins last week despite playing without junior Reese Jones, who ranked among the Panthers' top three in nearly every statistical category. Jones left with a back injury during the first set of Union County's loss to Rabun Gap on Monday, Aug. 26.

According to UCHS head coach Megan Brown, Jones could resume practice as early as this week.

Later in the week, Union suffered a 2-0 loss to Habersham Central in Homer.

**Panthers 2, Banks County 0 (25-16, 25-18)** - Union County went on the road and took down an old region rival in straight sets on Tuesday, Aug. 27.

Seniors Lily Brookshire, Charlie Robinson and Mallory Rouse led Union County with 3 kills apiece; senior Katelyn Brown and sophomore Sofia Foster added two each. Junior Mady Adams picked up one kill.

Brown, Robinson and freshman Emry Sosensky all chipped in two aces.

Brown notched a team-high 7 digs; Robinson had six; Brookshire had five; Sosensky, Rouse and sophomore Payton Murphy had three digs apiece.

Brookshire led the way with 4 assists; Brown and Rouse added three each; Robinson had two.

Senior Mallory Rouse



Reese Jones (center) and the Panthers celebrate their come-from-behind home victory over Hiwassee Dam, NC on Aug. 29. Photo/Todd Forrest

had a block.

**Panthers 3, Hiwassee Dam 2 (23-25, 25-13, 15-25, 25-12, 15-11)** - Union County rallied from a 2-1 deficit to take the final two sets at home on Thursday, Aug. 29.

**Set one (23-25):** Rouse and Foster helped Union County mount an early 7-3 lead, then Brown and Robinson maintained the four-point margin at 11-7, 13-9, 14-10 and 15-11.

However, the Eagles scored the next six points to race ahead 17-15, eventually building leads of 20-16, 21-17 and 22-18. Adams and Foster's play at the net moved the Panthers within 24-23 but that's as close as Union would get.

**Set two (25-13):** The

second stanza was all Union County after pulling away from a 4-2 lead and taking control 14-7 just past the midway point.

Hiwassee Dam climbed within 17-12 but was outscored 8-1 down the stretch.

Brown, Brookshire, Rouse and Combs contributed points for Union County during the set.

**Set three (15-25):** The Eagles raced ahead 16-7 and Union could only get within seven the rest of the way after consecutive blocks from Adams and Foster trimmed the margin to 19-12.

**Set four (25-15):** The Panthers came alive in the fourth, pulling away from an 8-8 tie via five straight points

from Brookshire and Rouse -- turning an 11-8 contest into a 16-8 runaway.

**Set five (15-11):** In the tiebreaker set, Brookshire and Combs spotted Union a 3-2 edge before the Eagles pushed ahead at 5-4 and 6-5.

Rouse knotted the score at 6-6 then a pair of aces by Brookshire moved Union ahead 8-6. Robinson's block in an 8-8 tie, followed by her ace, sparked Union County to three straight when Brown's kill built an 11-8 advantage.

Moments later, with her team up 13-11, Foster's block put Hiwassee Dam on the ropes allowing Union to finish the match on the next point.

No stat totals were avail-

able for the win.

**Panthers 0, Rabun Gap 3 (25-27, 24-26, 24-26)** - Union County took a very talented Rabun Gap squad to the wire in all three sets but couldn't secure a victory.

**Set one (25-27):** The Panthers led 20-11 in the opener when Robinson's ace built the 9-point lead before Rabun Gap's late surge.

An Eagles' service error maintained a comfortable 21-13 margin until six straight by Rabun Gap tightened things up at 21-19. Rouse's kill stopped the bleeding and sparked a 3-0 Union spurt, but the Eagles answered with five straight to even the match at 24-24.

The Panthers briefly held

a 25-24 edge but couldn't secure the set point and Rabun Gap rattled off three-in-a-row to snatch the win.

**Set two (24-26):** Union led much of the set until a 5-0 spurt granted the Eagles a 19-16 cushion. Later, consecutive aces by Brown handed her team a 20-19 lead, but Rabun Gap stormed ahead 24-19. An Eagles' service error and a Robinson kill helped Union knot things up at 24-24 but Rabun Gap took the next 2 points.

**Set three (24-26):** Union seized early leads of 5-1, 10-5 and 12-6, but the Eagles chipped away, eventually evening the score at 17-17.

Foster and Rouse kept Union up one as the two teams exchanged points until the 24-24 mark, where two Rabun Gap points put the match away.

Rouse recorded 7 kills in the loss; Brown had four and Robinson added three.

Brown led the way with 7 aces and Robinson chipped in three. Brookshire had 14 digs; Robinson had 12; Brown added 9 digs and a team-best 6 assists.

**Panthers 0, Habersham Central 2 (19-25, 21-25)** - Brookshire and Robinson had 5 kills each as Union lost the second of its two matches in Homer last week.

Rouse added 4 kills in the loss, while Adams, Brown and Foster had two each.

Brown notched 4 aces and Sosensky had one. Foster registered 2 blocks; Brown had 15 digs and 9 assists.

**Up next:** Union County hosts Commerce and Dawson County on Thursday, Sept. 5 beginning at 5:30 p.m. The Panthers travel to Gordon Lee on Saturday, Sept. 7 to face Northwest Whitfield and Gordon Lee.

Region play begins Sept. 10 at home vs. Sonoraville and Rockmart.

# Softball: Lady Panthers stumble late vs. Sonoraville, rally past Ringgold

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Union County (6-8) split its two region matchups last week, giving up 8 runs in the seventh during a 10-1 loss to Sonoraville, followed by a 5-2 win at Ringgold courtesy of a 4-run seventh frame.

The Lady Panthers sit fourth in Region 7-AA at 2-2 behind third-place Coahulla Creek (4-2) and fifth-place North Cobb Christian (3-4) and will host Murray County (2-4) on Thursday, Sept. 5 in another region showdown.

**Lady Panthers 5, Ringgold 2** - Down 2-1 to start the frame, Union County scored four in the seventh on three hits, three walks and an error.

Junior Delaney Moses and freshman Lexi Davenport opened the inning with back-to-back singles followed by a Reese Kelley walk. With the bases loaded, an error off the bat of Jaslyn Roberts tied the game at 2-2, allowing freshman Addison Whitener to push Union ahead 4-2 via a one-out single. Consecutive two-out walks to Sloane Dyer and sophomore Stella Collins tacked on an insurance run.

Whitener worked a 1-2-3 seventh to pick up her third win of 2024. The freshman pitcher worked the last four innings, allowing one hit and an unearned run while punching out three.

Sophomore Izzy Anthros earned the starting nod, giving up three hits, an unearned run



Freshman Addison Whitener drove in two runs and picked up the win in the circle with 4 innings of relief at Ringgold on Aug. 29. Photo/Todd Forrest

and striking out four over 3 innings.

Anthros finished 0 for 3 at the plate with a run and an RBI. Whitener drove in two and walked during a 1-for-3 day. Moses went 2 for 4 with a run; Lily Helton finished 1 for 3 with a double; Kelley scored twice and doubled during a 1-for-2 game; Davenport finished 1 for 1; Collins and Roberts added one RBI each.

Union got on the board first when Kelley came around to score after leading off the second with a double. But Ringgold answered back in the fourth when two singles and an error dropped the Lady Panthers into a 2-1 deficit.

**Lady Panthers 1, Sonoraville 10** - With Union leading 1-0 and 10 of Sonoraville's first 12 outs coming via Anthros Ks, the Lady Panthers cruised

into the fourth inning.

However, Sonoraville took advantage of a Union error in the top half of the frame to manufacture the tying run. Then an infield single, an error and a wild pitch allowed the Phoenix to slide ahead for good in the fifth.

The Lady Panthers put two aboard in the sixth but couldn't generate any runs, allowing Sonoraville to put the



Senior Reese Kelley (left) breaks from first as Izzy Anthros' RBI double brings her all the way home for Union's only run during the Aug. 27 loss to Sonoraville. Photo/Todd Forrest

game away in the seventh.

A bases-loaded triple with one away put Union in a 5-1 hole, bringing sophomore Ayla Jamison to the circle. A walk, a hit batter and an error made it 7-1 before consecutive singles rounded out the 8-run inning.

Anthros went 2 for 4 at the dish and drove in Union's only run of the day -- an RBI double in the third. Jordane Mullanack, Mikala Souther and

Dyer each went 1 for 3; Kelley scored the Union run during her 1-for-3 day.

Anthros finished with 10 strikeouts over 6 1/3 in the circle, surrendering 5 hits, 6 runs (4 earned) and 4 walks. Jamison allowed 2 hits, 2 walks and 4 runs (1 earned) while tossing the final 2/3 of an inning.

**Up next:** Union County will host Murray County at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday at UCHS.

# XC: Union takes three gold medals at Meeks Park



Junior Lola Hunter set a blistering pace on a humid afternoon at Meeks Park on Thursday, Aug. 29. Hunter led the Union County ladies to a first-place finish over Gilmer and Towns County. Photo/Todd Forrest



Along with Hunter, both Union County teams placed first overall during the Meeks Park race. Gilmer took the boys' individual top spot. More info from the race will be available in next week's edition of the North Georgia News. Photos/Todd Forrest



Sophomore Jules Dyer vs. Sonoraville. Photo/Todd Forrest