

Jones breaks UCHS squat record

By Todd Forrest
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With 615 pounds resting on his shoulders, Luther Jones squatted to the ground, and as he rose back up, the school record went down.

Jones broke Garrett Dietz's Union County High School squat record when he hit 615 pounds last month.

Jones, who plays third base for the Panther baseball team and is a lineman on the Panthers' football team, is a sophomore.

Justin Byers, Union County's strength and conditioning coach as well as the running back and linebacker coach, has been amazed at Jones' work ethic, as well as his athleticism.

"As a freshman, Jones squatted 500 pounds," said Byers. "Being a freshman, that's special in itself. We knew the school record was 610, set by Dietz last year, so Jones came to me and said that would be his goal."

Jones reached 600 pounds right after Christmas. So at the end of the last training cycle in late April, Jones did 600 fairly easily, according to Byers.

"We went to 605 and he hit it, so we tried 610 and he actually missed 610 on his first attempt," said Byers.

On the next attempt, Jones wanted to go for the record of 615 pounds, despite missing his attempt to tie the record. While Byers spotted, and his teammates encouraged him, Jones went for it. Moments later, Union County High School had a new record holder.

"It is a really great accomplishment," said Byers. "You don't see many kids at this level squatting that much. He is an extremely strong young man."

Not only did Jones squat 615 pounds, more than the weight of a Harley Davidson Sportster, but he also bench presses 350 pounds and runs the 40-yard dash in five seconds flat.



Coach Justin Byers and Luther Jones at the UCHS Weight Room where Jones broke the school squat record. Photo/Todd Forrest

Despite being a multi-sport athlete at Union County, Jones is an extremely humble young man. When asked about his record, all he wanted to do was brag about his teammates.

"This year we've had a good offseason," Jones said. "Not only me, but my teammates. Chase Barnett is squatting 520 pounds and that's three times his body weight. Jonathan Hughes is squatting 515 pounds and Clay Burnette squatted 505 pounds. The whole team has done really great."

With two more years ahead of him at Union County High, Byers sees nothing but success in Jones' future.

"I project that before he's out of here, we will see more impressive things from him," said Byers. "I can see him hitting the mid-600's. To put this in perspective, there are not many kids in the nation that could accomplish this at his age. I've been around a lot of competitions and 615 pounds is an impressive number."

"He was super excited and I expect a lot of good things out of him," Byers said.

In return, Jones had nothing but praises when asked about Coach Byers.

"He has been a great strength and conditioning coach," Jones said. "He pushes us, but has great chemistry with the team. He cuts up with us, but at the same time, he knows when it's time to work and when it's time to play."

The entire Union County Panthers' team has worked hard during the off-season and just because spring practices are over, don't expect to see the Panthers taking it easy over the summer.

"Even though it's spring practice nothing has changed in the weight room," said Byers. "It's still just like a post-season workout. We're still lifting hard and we won't back off. Then when June gets here we will begin preseason workouts, which are geared more towards conditioning with some strength training but mostly conditioning to get ourselves ready to play games." Jones is expecting that he and his teammates' hard work will pay dividends this fall and hopes the community will rally around this Panther football team.

"We work really hard in the weight room and we would like for everyone to come out and support us on Friday nights because we're going to have a great year," Jones said.

Union Co. Recreation Department News

Summer Day Camp Registration

The Union County Recreation Department Summer Day Camp Registration begins May 1st, 2012. Registration forms will be available on the website www.unioncountyrecreation.com or can be picked up at the Union County Recreation Department Central Office at 310 Wellborn Street. The fee for the camp is \$70 per week, a discount will be given for multiple children and includes breakfast, lunch, and most all activities. Camp will be held at the Union County Kidz Corner - formerly known as Mountain Learning and Childcare Center. Spots fill fast so get your registration in now.

Pool Information 2012

The swimming pool at Meeks Park will be opening on May 26, 2012. The operating hours will be noon to 6:00 p.m. Fees

will be \$4.00 for a single day, \$60 for a single summer pass, and \$100 for a family season pass.

Adult water aerobics will begin on May 28th, 2012 and will take place on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The fees start at \$5.00 per day, \$30 per month, and \$80 for the season. The water aerobics are open to everyone who is at least 18 years old.

Youth swimming lessons for ages 5-12 years will be broken into two sessions. The first session will take place from June 11th until June 15th. The second session will be from June 26th through June 29th. The times will be 9:00 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 6:00 p.m., and 6:45 p.m. The fee will be \$45 per session.

Tiny Tot swimming lessons will also be available for ages 3 to 4 years old. Times and fees will be the same as the youth swimming lessons and

will take place during the week of June 18th. A parent must enter the pool with the participant.

Lap swimming is available on Tuesdays beginning May 29th for ages 16 and up and will cost \$2.00 per day or free with a pool membership. Lap swimming will only be available between 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Pool parties may also be booked. If you would like to book a party, a \$25 deposit must be made in advance before any dates will be held in reserve. Parties can be booked during the evening from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. - depending on pool availability. A fee of \$50 will be charged for two hours, plus an additional \$8.50 an hour, per lifeguard, that must be paid by the renter. A minimum of two lifeguards are mandatory at any party. If your party consists of 30 or more people - an additional lifeguard is required.

Mountain Gymnastics Summer Sessions

Summer sessions dates:
Session 1 June 4th - June 29th
Session 2 July 9th - August 3rd

DayCamp: Child must be at least 5 years old. \$90 per child.

\$15 Deposit required at sign up.

June 18-22 9am til noon
July 23-27 9am til noon

Summer Special

Cheer Classes:
Elementary 1st - 5th \$ Includes: jumps, stunts, tumbling, dance, conditioning
Monday and Wednesday 9-11am 100 per session
Competition Gymnastics Team:
Students wishing to join the gymnastic team will begin on Monday April 30th with Mon-

day and Friday practice 4:00 til 6:30pm. No required skills, just a desire to compete and work hard. Fee is \$130 per month.

All Star Cheer Team:
Student wishing to join the All Star Competition Cheer Team will begin immediately - must be in the 5th grade presently. Practice Tues. and Thurs. 7:00 - 9:00 pm \$100 per month.

Summer Christian Day Camp at Meeks Park June 4-8

Mountain of Life Lutheran Church, in association with Lutheridge Camping Ministries, announces the opening of registration for the 2012 Day Camp at Meeks Park June 4 - 8, 2012. This community outreach program is designed for children in Grades 1 through 6 and all children are welcome. The camp will run from 9 AM to 4 PM daily at Shelter #3 in Meeks Park Monday through Friday.

Christian camp counselors will teach how God's Spirit gathers us into a community through worship, bible study, recreation, crafts and singing. Campers are asked to bring a sack lunch and a non-perishable food item for the food pantry. While the camp is free, campers are encouraged to bring a donation for the camping ministry. The camp is limited to the first 25 campers and registration must be completed by May 26, 2012.

Registration and health



Day Campers from the 2011 Summer Camp

forms are online at www.mountainoflife.org or you may call Pastor Darrell and Mary Golnitz at 706 897 6920 for more information.

Lutheridge Camping Ministries are affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and provide faith-based programs for children and youth of all denominations during the summer. Family and adult program opportunities are growing in the summer and are offered year-round. Youth groups, fam-

ily groups, public and private schools, college groups and more are customizing high-adventure and group-building retreats called LEAPS.

Mountain of Life Lutheran Church is a mission outreach of the ELCA and meets on the 1st Sunday of each month at 9:45 AM in the Young Harris College Chapel. For more information contact Pastor Darrell or Mary Golnitz at mountainoflife@gmail.com or 706 897 6920. (N_{May16,21})CA

Mountain Gymnastics State Champions

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Union County has two more state champions.

Ten-year-old, Evelyn McBride and 8-year-old Addicyn Dockery came in first place at recent AAU State Championship Meets in Carrollton, on April 14th and 15th and in Buford on April 21st and 22nd.

McBride brought home first place in Level Four on the Balance Beam and in the Floor Exercises at the Carrollton meet. McBride scored a 9.0 on the beam and a 9.05 on the floor. Her all-around score of 34.0 was good enough for fourth place overall.

Dockery took first place in the Level Three Floor Exercises at the Buford Meet. Dockery's score of 9.625 was the top score in the event and her all-around score of 37.575 placed her second overall, only 0.05 points behind the first place gymnast. Dockery placed second in the Vault and second on the Beam, and sixth on the bars.

Also placing at the Buford meet was 7-year-old Laura McGaha, who finished second in the Vault and in the Bars, as well as tying for fourth in the Floor Exercises. McGaha finished third overall with a score of 35.825.

Eight-year-old Olivia Blocker cracked the Top 3 with a 9.175 on the bars.

During the Carrollton meet, 8-year-old Mia McCombs finished third overall with an all-around score of 34.435. McCombs placed fifth on the Vault, fourth on the bars, and second on the beam. Eight-year-old, Kaylie Kendall came in fourth on the vault and second in the Floor Exercises. Seven-year-old, Jaylen Hogsed finished tied for fifth in Floor Exercises.

Coach Shelley Thomas has set up a 9.0 Club for gymnasts who score a 9.0 or higher in a single event. Those members are given a star on the wall, which includes their name and date. So far the club has 16 members: Laura McGaha, Erin Raper, Carolyne Stone, Megan Bright, Allison Fair, Madelyn Savage, Kaylie Kendall, Evelyn McBride, Olivia Blocker, Reagan Ledford, Megan Byrd, Jaylen



Evelyn McBride and Addicyn Dockery of Mountain Gymnastics placed first in state at last month's meets.



The 34 Club. Bottom, from left to right: Mia McCombs, Kaylie Kendall, Olivia Blocker. Top: Allison Fair, Madelyn Savage, Reagan Ledford, Evelyn McBride. Not Pictured: Megan Bright & Ali Byers.



Members of the 35 Club. Left to Right: Laura McGaha, Carolyne Stone, Erin Raper. Megan Byrd is not pictured.

Hogsed, Alexis Cox, Kaylee Brewer, Ali Byers, and Sierra Louima.

Currently the only member of the 9.5 Club is Addicyn Dockery.

The girls who have scored a 34 all-around score are: Olivia Blocker, Kaylie Kendall, Evelyn McBride, Reagan Ledford, Megan Byrd, Jaylen

Reagan Ledford, Megan Bright, Allison Fair, Madelyn Savage, Mia McCombs, and Ali Byers.

The 35 Club consists of Laura McGaha, Erin Raper, Megan Byrd, and Carolyne Stone.

Addicyn Dockery is the only member of the 37 Club.



Jeep? Come join the Blairsville Jeep owners group

Do you wish you could be more adventurous with your Jeep? Then here is the perfect group for you to hangout with. No officers, no dues, just good fun-loving people who all own some kind of a Jeep!

We meet monthly every 4th Thursday night at Antonietta's Restaurant. If you need more information, please send an email to blairvillejeepowners@yahoo.com to Jim, this group's creator. (N_{May16,21})CA

Easy Trek Hike May 23rd

Easy Trek Hike: May 23, 3.5 miles on Benton MacKaye Trail to Suspension Bridge. Bring lunch and we'll sit by the Toccoa River for fellowship. Contact Hike Leader, Sara Bland, for meeting location and time: 770-366-6053 or jsbland@yahoo.com www.bmta.org. (N_{May16,21})CA

Summer Baseball Camps at YHC

2 Camp Weeks: June 18-22 & July 23-27. Three different camps each week for ages ranging from 5-18. For more information visit us on the web: TheRockSports.com or call 706-897-2363. (N_{May16,21})CA

Bagpipe instruction

The Appalachian Saint Andrew's Pipes and Drums Bagpipe Band is offering free instruction to all who want to learn how to play the Great Highland Bagpipe or to learn Regimental Drumming.

The band meets each Saturday from 9:30 a.m. until 12 noon in the Parish Hall of Saint Clare's Episcopal Church for instruction and practice.

For further information, call 706-781-3382 or 1-828-557-3812. (N_{May16,21})CA

Premier Martial Arts Karate Team hosts Grand Master Bill "Superfoot" Wallace



Grand Master Bill "Superfoot" Wallace

Premier Martial Arts home of the Yama Bushi Karate Team hosted martial arts legend, world champion and movie personality Blairsville Ga. Grand Master Bill "Superfoot" Wallace visited the Premier Martial Arts studio and trained the Yama Bushi Karate team as a guest of Master Ron Wallace. The training was awesome as usual

with Superfoot. He blends his great personality with the science of martial arts. He has acted in movies with Chuck Norris, Jackie Chan and others. He also was the instructor for Elvis Presley, rock and roll legend. Superfoot was a pioneer of the martial arts in the United States including Karate and kickboxing.



Spar Wars group with Superfoot

Premier Martial Arts also had a series of in-house tournaments called "Spar Wars". Five teams of Six Competitors each competed for the series of tournaments. It was an awesome time and we have had many request to run this sparring season again. Grand Master Superfoot Wallace was on hand to enjoy the awards ceremony and to personally award each medal to the competitors. Premier Martial Arts takes great pride in

bringing world class Martial arts training to the community. This along with world renown guests like Superfoot takes our local martial artists to a higher level and is one of the reasons the Yama Bushi Karate team boasted 32 National Championships last year. Stay tuned in to Premier Martial Arts for information on the next world class seminar coming this summer with current World champion Ross Levine or call for details 706 897-6076. (N_{May16,21})CA