

Sports

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UC High School Soccer teams hold Banquets

By Todd Forrest
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The Union County Girls and Boys Soccer teams held their Awards Banquet last week at the Union County Community Center for a 2012 season that Coach Howard McCombs called a success.

The girls' squad finished 11-3 and was one goal away from winning Sub-Region 8A-AA and clinching a berth in the state playoffs.

The boys' squad finished the season at 7-7.

"This has been a season like none I have had before," Coach McCombs said. "We have always lost some players to graduation but last year was crazy."

The boys' team was dismantled by graduation. Coach McCombs lost 11 seniors in 2011, nine were starters.

Despite the ups-and-downs of the 2012 season, Coach McCombs says he couldn't have made it through the season without some help

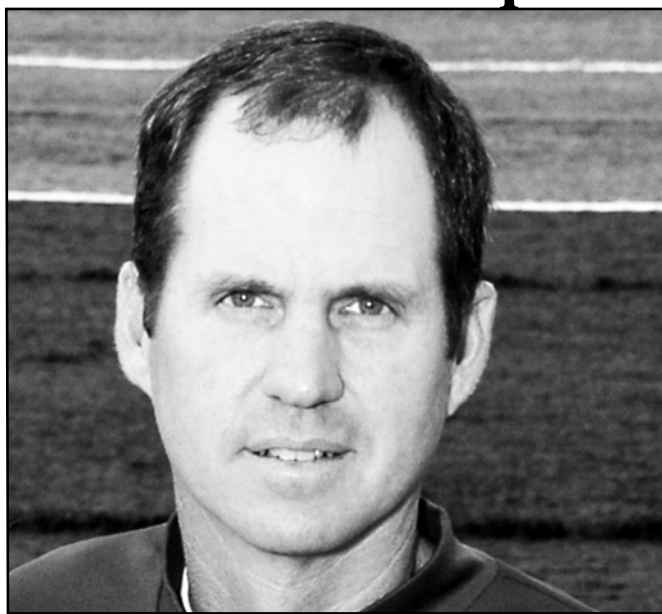
and had plenty of compliments to go around.

Coach McCombs thanked Angie Burns, the game manager and Athletic Director Jim Hughes. He also thanked Richard Smith at Mountain United Soccer Association for "feeding the soccer program with experienced players," Deputy Bob Hutchinson for escorting the teams to all away games, Coach Carson Turlington for driving the teams to away games and instinctively finding the Chick-Fil-A's along the way, and the North Georgia News for their outstanding coverage.

McCombs thanked the Goalkeepers Club and how the season would not have been possible without them.

"I can't begin to thank them enough," Coach McCombs said.

A few things they helped with were raising funds for uniforms, coolers, equipment, and the banquet. They provided snacks for bus rides and Coach McCombs gave a special thanks to Dinah Carter for



Panther and Lady Panther Soccer Coach, Howard McCombs.

that, they also ran the concessions, kept stats, and organized the awards banquets.

Helping out Coach McCombs were Assistant Coaches Rhonda Payne and Coach Will Schakat.

"Coach Payne was my translator," Coach McCombs said. "I have coached boys

forever but this is my first time with the girls. She was a huge help with the many needs we have with both teams."

"Coach Schakat knows the game so well and is willing to do anything to help. The season would not be possible without these people"

Union County Panther summer wrestling camp

The 2012 Union County Panther Wrestling Camp will begin on Monday, June 18 and last through Wednesday, June 20 at the Union County Middle School Gym.

The camp will be open to all upcoming 4th through 12th graders. For more info contact Bob Williams at (706)781-9204 or bwilliams@ucschools.org

There will be two separate camp times. 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. for high school and experienced middle school wrestlers. Then from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. a camp for 4th through 8th grade and all inexperienced wrestlers will be held.

Cost is \$40 and make checks payable to Union County Takedown Club. The fee includes beginning and advanced instruction plus a camp t-shirt. Concessions will be available.

However, lodging and meals are not provided. Required equipment is a t-shirt and shorts with no buttons or zippers. Headgear, wrestling shoes, and kneepads are optional.

Please provide the following info with the camp fee.

Name _____

Grade _____

Parent _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Shirt Size _____

Mail to: Bob Williams, 46 Jones Rd., Blairsville Ga. 30512

Union County Recreation Department News

UCRD: (706) 439-6074

Summer Day Camp Registration

The Union County Recreation Department Summer Day Camp Registration begins May 1st, 2012. Registration forms will be available on the web site at www.unioncountyrecreation.com or they 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.

Football Info

Football (Tackle)
Ages 7-12
Registration takes place the entire month of June. The fee is \$80, that includes a jersey. All teams will be individual age groups.
Flag Football - Ages 5 & 6
Registration will last the entire month of June. Fee is \$35.

Cheerleading

Ages 5-12
Registration takes place during the entire month of June. The fee is \$85 and that includes a uniform. The child must be present at registration to be fitted for a uniform. Ages 7-12 will cheer for individual age groups.

Poteete Creek Campground

Tent and RV sites are available. Pavilion rental available for parties, reunions, etc. There is a beach area for swimming. There will be NO LIFEGUARD. For more info call: (706) 439-6103

Parkside Batting Cage



The Parkside Batting Cages near Hwy. 515 and Meeks Park (entrance on Old Blue Ridge Hwy. across from Blue Ridge Street) are open Monday through Friday from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (Phone: 706-439-6074). It is owned and operated by the Union County Recreation Department.

2012 UC Girls Soccer, a year to remember

By Todd Forrest
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The Union County Lady Panthers soccer season finished the 2012 campaign with an 11-3 record. Those three losses all came to teams that reached the state quarterfinals in either Class AA or AAA.

The Lady Panthers outscored their opposition 54 to 21 over the entire season and went 22-6-1 over the past two seasons.

"We began the year with high expectations and while we did not completely reach our goals I still consider the season a big success," Coach McCombs said.

When it came time to hand out the 2012 individual awards, there was one name that came to mind when deciding who was the team's Most Valuable Player.

Ada Thomas was a cinch.

"Whenever an opponent has to make adjustments because of a single player you are a pretty special player," said McCombs. "This young lady was a weapon for us and a goal-scoring machine. In the last two seasons alone she has had 42 goals and 12 assists."

Coach McCombs was decisive when talking about his team's Most Improved Player.

Taylor Burton was a force.

"She played as a defender for the first time last season



The award winners from the 2012 Union Co. Lady Panther soccer season that finished 11-3.

and did a good job," Coach McCombs said. "This year she was a fantastic defender. I don't remember many, if any goals coming from her side of the field."

The player who gave it their all was an easy decision. The Most Hustle Award went to Erin Innis.

"Every day and in every way she is going wide open," Coach McCombs said. "She is a constant force in the middle of the field and part of our duo in the center mid positions that has made us so effective. She is crucial to our team's success and only a sophomore."

Senior Callie Payne took home the Coach's Award.

"She has been an outstanding outside mid for our team the last two years," Coach McCombs said. "She plays very fast and very aggressive. In addition to this, she was

asked on a few occasions to man mark the best player on the opposing team all game. She has done whatever is asked of her."

Thomas also was awarded the team's Outstanding Forward award. Thomas scored 19 goals with four assists in 2012.

"She has been an incredible forward her entire career and a goal scoring machine," Coach McCombs said.

Coach McCombs said Marissa Akin was very deserving of the Outstanding Midfielder Award. Akin scored six goals and dished out two assists in 2012.

Coach McCombs called her a constant force in the middle. She could defend, distribute, and score with ease.

"She was crucial to the success of this team," he added.

Senior Jessica Smith

was named the Lady Panthers' Outstanding Defender.

Coach McCombs praised her versatility, saying that she can play any of the defensive positions and has the skills to distribute the ball up field and even made some runs and scored some goals from her position.

Coach McCombs closed the banquet by stating that teams like this one are why he loves sports.

"It's not the competition and the sport itself, which I do enjoy, but the ability to watch these young individuals grow as people," he said. "Through some of the disappointments and trials of the season we had multiple examples of how these girls continued to mature and become better individuals. We learned to work together, put the team first, and overcame some hardships. It was a great season."

Coach McCombs honors boys' soccer achievements

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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The Union County Boys Soccer team held its annual Awards Banquet last week at the new Union County Community Center.

Head Coach Howard McCombs reflected on the achievements of the Class of 2012.

The seniors leave UCHS with a 60-11 record over the past four years.

"The seniors here have been part of an incredible four-year run, Coach McCombs said. "They have been a part of three region championships and three trips to the state playoffs. This season they have offered their leadership in rebuilding this team."

Rebuilding is a bit of an understatement. The Panthers lost nine starters from its 2011 squad.

"We were virtually re-

placing our team with a new one," Coach McCombs said. "I felt we were going to struggle and we started out that way. But all along we talked about putting the pieces together and the guys stuck with it and turned the corner about five games into the season."

"We had only won one game and they went on a great run and turned this into a season they could be proud of," Coach McCombs said. "A good example of the improvements they made could be seen by the two East Jackson games. We played them early in the season and lost 4-0, with East Jackson subbing a bunch of players so it could have been much, much worse."

"We ended the season in a game at East Jackson, which showed our capabilities," Coach McCombs said. "We started really flat and I am sure if any of you were at the game you could attest to that."

We woke from our Spring Break and out played the East Jackson team in the second half. The final score was 4-2 (East Jackson)."

Jair Gonzalez was the first of the 2012 award winners named by Coach McCombs. Gonzalez took home the Most Valuable Player Award.

"This year's MVP goes to the player that after the games, other coaches always remembered and would talk about him," Coach McCombs said. "He controlled the center of the field, distributed the ball wonderfully, had some huge goals for us, and continues to improve. He was the anchor for us in the middle and we counted on him a ton this season."

"He is a junior and has started for us every year," Coach McCombs said.

The Most Hustle Award was given to senior Tucker Belton.

"Belton has been with

us for four years," Coach McCombs said. "He had a great senior season at outside midfielder. He gave all he had every game. He is going to be missed."

Freshman Kyle Hamby received the award for the Most Improved.

"Kyle stood out a little at the beginning of the year," Coach McCombs said. "As he got more playing time he continued to get more confidence and it was obvious he had no problems at the varsity level. He was all over the field all the time and by the end of the year, I was uncomfortable when he was out of the game."

The Coach's Award was given to two players this year, Ivan Arteaga and Kyle Wade.

"Arteaga is a senior that has been with me for four years," Coach McCombs said. "He was asked to play a couple of positions this year and never complained. He did what was asked and was a big part of this season's turn around."

"He offered some good leadership for us and I am going to miss him," Coach McCombs said.

Coach McCombs called Wade the "poster-child" for the Coach's Award.

"First to practice, last to leave, completely unselfish, team first, practiced harder than anyone in the off season to get better, did anything the coach asked. He is a great kid and completely deserving of



Panthers Soccer Award Winners from the 2012 Season that saw Union win six straight games in March.