

# Sports

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## Hamby continues to shine at Piedmont

By Todd Forrest  
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Former Union County Lady Panther and Piedmont College outfielder, Kristin Hamby was named to the 2012 All-Freshman Team of the Great South Athletic Conference.

And 15-year Head Coach Terry Martin agrees with the selection.

"Kristin plays hard, has a good bat, and a passion for the game. I watched her in high school and travel ball and I



Former Lady Panther star, Kristin Hamby beats the throw and slides safely into third base.

me to better myself and have the confidence as a freshman to be in the starting lineup."

She drove in 17 runs and finished with an impressive .414 slugging percentage in 35 games. Even more impressive was her perfect fielding percentage. The rookie outfielder played all three positions and never made an error.

Hamby didn't pad her stats against a cupcake schedule either. On April 24, Hamby and her Lion teammates faced the second-ranked team in the nation, Emory University and their ace pitcher Bridget Holloway. Holloway finished the season with an 18-2 record and a 1.64 E.R.A.

Apparently, nobody told Hamby.

The freshman represented Union County as well as you could ask, going 3-for-3 with an RBI. She also scored a run and stole a base.

That wasn't her only three-hit game, just two days prior to the Emory game, on April 22, Hamby went 3-for-3 with four RBIs and a triple in an 8-0 win over Agnes Scott College.



Kristin Hamby

could see her intensity."

Hamby hit .287 for the Lady Lions, scored 16 runs, recorded four doubles, two triples, and went deep once. Her homer was the first of the season for a Piedmont freshman and that's one of moments she will always cherish from her freshman season.

"The highlight of my freshman year was being the second person on the team, and first freshman to hit a home run as well as receiving the privilege to making the All-Freshman Team for our conference," Hamby said. "I also couldn't ask for better coaches. I had two outstanding supporting coaches that pushed



Piedmont College outfielder Kristin Hamby connects with a pitch during a recent game.

April was an excellent month for the Blairsville native, as she drove in four runs and scored five times in Piedmont's two game sweep of Wesleyan College.

On April 10, Hamby was a combined 4-for-6 with four RBIs and three runs during a sweep at Spelman College.

It should come as no surprise that she had such a strong April, considering that on March 31, her birthday, Hamby went 2-for-3 in a 7-6 win at Berry College.

It's obvious that she wasn't intimidated by the level of competition. In her first game as a Lion, she went 1-for-2, scored a run, and stole a base in an 11-4 win over Truett McConnell.

The second hit of her career was a double.

"There really wasn't a major adjustment I had to deal with being thrown into the fire as a starter," said Hamby. "The three to four hour practices reminded me of the practices we had in travel and high school ball, just a little more strenuous."

Her ability to adapt to the college level is attributed to playing against the best softball players in Georgia during high school, said Coach Martin.

"When I first started coaching, you had to go to Atlanta to see the best players," he said. "Now we have traveling-teams all over North Georgia, some are winning tournaments in Texas. It's nice to have so much local talent and not have to travel as much."

Just like her other former Lady Panther teammates, Hamby credited the top-notch

competition that she faced in high school as a reason she adjusted quickly to the collegiate level.

"I think the tough teams we faced in high school tournaments as well as the stacked travel teams made us better players as a whole," Hamby said. "We were able to play against the best of the best in Georgia, and the fact that we played on their level or better, gave us all a little boost in our confidence."

Coach Martin also praised Hamby's work ethic, her family, and coaching for making her the player she is today. "It was her parents, her coaching and her love of the game. Nowadays you've gotta play year round. The players and coaches work hard, which is a must if you want to succeed at this level. She puts her education first and still works out on her own during the off-season. That gives testament to everyone around her and their love of the game. I don't see anyway that a player like her couldn't be a great asset to Piedmont."

Hamby added that her coaches in Union County taught her the importance of hard work.

"The Union County softball team and coaches taught me that no one else is going to make you better or do the work for you," she said. "You have to have the love for the game and the motivation to work extra in order to go somewhere in softball and in life itself. I've gotten to where I am now because of my dedication, work ethics, and support from back home and I wouldn't trade that for the world."

So where does the freshman go from here?

"Now that I have my first year under my belt I plan on keeping that momentum to better myself in next year's season," Hamby said. "I won't really need to start preparing because I don't plan on stopping my workouts or practices. I'm playing travel ball throughout the summer which will lead right up to our fall season in college which will then run into spring season, therefore it's going to be softball overload for the next year. But I would not have it any other way, it all keeps me busy and disciplined."

## UCHS Basketball Camp Info

Union County High School  
David Tucker  
106 Sherwood Ave.  
Calhoun, TN 37309  
(423)-336-3045

### Tucker's Basketball Skills Camp

K-12  
May 28-30, 2012  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
\$40 per camper

Bring in this form and the \$60 on June 25, or you may mail this form, along with a check, to David Tucker at the address above.

Activities will include: Ball handling drills, dribbling drills, shooting instruction, offense and defense instruction, contests, 5 on 5 play, 3 on 3 play, and 1 on 1 play.

### Tucker's Basketball Skills Camp

K-12  
June 25-28, 2012  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
\$60 per camper

Bring in this form and the \$60 on June 25th, or you may mail this form, along with a check, to David Tucker at the address above.

Activities will include: Ball handling drills, dribbling drills, shooting instruction, offense and defense instruction, contests, 5 on 5 play, 3 on 3 play, and 1 on 1 play.

### UCHS Shooting Camp

K-12  
July 12-14, 2012  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM  
\$40 per camper

Bring in this form and the \$40 on July 12, or you may mail this form, along with a check, to David Tucker at the address above.

Activities will include: Shooting drills and instruction for individuals and group, passing drills, dribbling drills, and contest

Campers Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Shoe Size \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have health insurance on this child? \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please circle which camp your child will be attending if you plan to mail this and check

## UC Panther 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 fourth through 12th graders. For more info contact Bob Williams at (706) 781-9204 or bwiliams@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. for fourth through eighth grade and all inexperienced wrestlers.

Cost is \$40 and make checks

out to Union County Take-down Club. The fee includes beginning and advanced instruction plus a camp t-shirt. Concessions will be available. 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 of camper, grade, parents' name, phone number, email address, and shirt size. Mail to: Bob Williams, 46 Jones Rd., Blairsville Ga. 30512

## Union County Baseball turns the page

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

Union County High School baseball said goodbye to one coach and welcomed another at its annual Baseball Awards Banquet.

At the same time that former Head Coach C.T. Hussion and his Panther team were reflecting on the 2012 season, the Union County School Board was approving Assistant Coach Brandon Bradburn as the school's new head baseball coach for the 2012-13 school year.

In the middle of the banquet Coach Hussion received a text message confirming Coach Bradburn's promotion and was able to make the announcement to the players and their families before the conclusion of the banquet. Seven awards were also handed out with three going to Union County's First Team All Sub-Region selections.

Coach Hussion chose Phillip Stubblefield for the Coach's Award and for what he overcame during the season.

"He was one of the toughest kids," said Coach Hussion.

Stubblefield battled multiple injuries and continued to perform on the field without missing a beat.

"It was a hair line and fracture that we didn't even know about," Coach Hussion said. "He had gall bladder surgery about a month before the season started and didn't miss a game."

Zach Odom took home the Workhorse Award for his hard work, his will to win, and desire to constantly improve



Brandon Bradburn takes over as Union Co baseball coach in 2012-13.

his game. Odom was named to the First Team All Sub-Region Team at shortstop. Yet the junior refused to settle for second best, and according to Coach Hussion, he constantly searched for ways to enhance his skills.

"He always stayed for extra batting practice, fielding ground balls, and would always call Coach Bradburn to meet him early, before practice," he said. Odom played with a knee injury that he suffered on the basketball court, but Coach Hussion was quick to point out that you couldn't tell that he had fractured his patella just three months earlier.

All of Odom's hard work paid off when the three-year starter hit a walk-off home run against Fannin County during Union's three-game sweep of it's rival.

Junior pitcher, Cody Davenport received the Clutch Player Award for taking the mound in some of Union's biggest games and rising to the occasion each time. In one week, Davenport picked up a key win at Fannin County then gave the Panthers some quality innings in another victory over



Former UC baseball coach, CT Hussion wants the focus on Bradburn and the future.

the Rebels. Despite not getting credit for the win, Davenport's right arm put the Panthers in position for Odom to end the game with his homer.

During the Region Playoffs, Davenport threw a complete game at fourth-ranked Elbert County and kept the Blue Devil bats in check for seven innings in a 3-0, Game One loss.

"He gave the team a lot of innings when we needed him to," said Coach Hussion.

Junior center fielder, Jared Croskey only committed one error for the season and was given the Defensive Award.

"He made a lot of big plays for us and was an all-around good player," Coach Hussion said.

First Team All Sub-Region Pitcher, Daniel Coyne was the unequivocal choice for the Pitching Award. The senior finished his career in style with an E.R.A. of 0.92, fanned 62 batters, while picking up the win in eight of Union's 12 victories. In his final performance in a Panther uniform, Coyne went the distance in Union's

6-1 triumph over a 16-win Jackson County squad.

The final award winner was an open-and-shut case according to Coach Hussion.

"Our Offense Award, without a doubt, went to Wes Aulet," he said. Considering the statistics that the junior posted in 2012, it's apparent why the junior was the hands down choice. The First Team All Sub-Region first baseman came up just short of hitting .400 for the year, had a 488 on-base percentage, and drove in 23 runs, all team highs. Aulet also tied for the team lead in homers and hits.

For the third time, the event was catered by "Jim's Smokin' Que" in Blairsville. Each senior was given a shadow box and a 2012 highlight video was shown.

"We were able to give out the awards and reflect on the season," said Coach Hussion. "The Union County Diamond Club puts on the banquet and they do a great job."

"What was really neat, was I got the text about Brandon (Bradburn) getting the job while I was up there speaking so I was able to make that announcement right then, while he was there with his wife and twins," he added.

Coach Hussion has given Coach Bradburn his full support and agreed with the hire and believes his former assistant is the right man for the Union County Baseball family.

"It will be a smooth transition," said Coach Hussion. "This banquet should be remembered for Bradburn getting hired. He's already coaching the summer league team and the focus should be on him right now."