

# Sports

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## Lady Panthers softball: seven starters return to make the jump to AAA



Union County softball will be led by three seniors in 2016: (left to right) infielder/catcher Lydia Arrowood, pitcher Laken Chambers, and infielder Kendra Tanner. Photos by Todd Forrest

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When the regular season opens in a little more than two weeks for the Union County Lady Panthers softball team, Head Coach Jessica Stewart will field one of the most experienced squads during her 11 seasons at the helm.

Two seniors graduated from last year's group leaving seven starters to return off a 25-win team that reached the Class AAA Elite 8 in Columbus for the first time in five years.

Although if Union returns to Columbus this fall, it will be in Class AAA as members of Region 7-AAA.

Following 16 years as members of Region 8-AA, Union County makes the jump to Class AAA and softball will be the first Union County sport to get a taste of competition at the AAA level when they open the Region schedule on Aug. 9th with Lumpkin County in Blairsville.

Luckily, Coach Stewart and Union County will be led by three seniors who have been around the block a few times and have plenty of postseason experience - dating back to their freshman seasons.

The most experienced of the three is pitcher **Laken Chambers**, who has served as the ace of the Lady Panthers pitching staff since she arrived on campus as a freshman back in 2013.

Chambers is currently second in the Lady Panthers record books with 366 innings pitched and 54 wins in her career. She is third with 385 career strikeouts, 70 shy of

passing April Harper and moving into second place.

Angie Hughes is currently in first place, and out-of-reach, in all three categories with 79 wins, 1,082 strikeouts, and 689 innings. Although, Chambers could make a run at the wins record if the Lady Panthers advance deep into the State Tournament. She won 23 games in 2014 and would tie the record with 25 wins in 2016.

Last year Chambers won 18 games while striking out 145 batters and compiling an ERA of 1.33 in 158 innings.

Offensively, Chambers is prepared to leave her mark on the record books, as well.

The four-year starter is currently fourth with 12 career homers - just three away from matching Whitney Kelley's program-best 15 dingers.

However, the first record that Chambers should break will be the RBIs mark, currently held by Callie Dyer with 106. Entering 2016, Chambers is tied for second (Kelley) with 98 RBIs.

Chambers already holds the top two single season marks for RBIs with 38 in 2015 and 36 in 2014.

Chambers is also seventh in hits with 115 and tied for fifth with 27 doubles, although first place is unlikely attainable.

She does have a shot to reach second place in hits if she can accumulate 41 hits in 2016. She finished with 44 hits in 2015.

Kaitlyn Seabolt is first with 177 hits and Dyer is second with 155.

Chambers can also move into third place on the career doubles list if she can match

her 2015 total of nine two-baggers.

Dyer is first with 46, Hannah Hughes is second at 44, Seabolt and Tori Dyer are tied for third with 35 doubles.

Last season, Chambers led team in batting average (.444), homers (5), RBIs (38), doubles (9), on base percentage (.500), slugging percentage (.707), and OPS (1.207). Meanwhile, her ratio of one strikeout per every 12.4 plate appearances was best on the team.

One Union County senior has already etched her place atop the record books and that is shortstop **Kendra Tanner**, who owns the career and single-season triples record.

Tanner's 15 career triples is six more than the next closest Lady Panther and her 8 triples in 2015 broke her own single-season record from 2014.

Last season she was fourth on team with a .340 batting average and a .426 on base percentage while leading all Lady Panthers in runs (33) and triples (8). Her five doubles, 15 walks, .538 slugging percentage, and nine stolen bases were all in the team's top three.

Another three-year starter for Coach Stewart is infielder/catcher **Lydia Arrowood**.

In 2015 she was third on the team with a .356 batting average and fifth with 21 runs and a .406 on base percentage. Her eight walks were tied for fourth while finishing the year with 13 RBIs, 11 stolen bases and three doubles.

The underclassmen expected to make an impact this season are headlined by junior infielder/pitcher **Jillian Lawn**.

In 2015, Lawn was second on team with 31 RBIs, tied for second with 2 homers, fifth with a .330 batting average, .457 slugging percentage, 7 walks, and 6 doubles. She was second best on the team with one strikeout per every 8 plate appearances.

From the circle she won six games, fanned 26 and posted a 3.80 ERA - second best on the team among pitchers with more than 20 innings pitched.

Sophomore outfielder **Aladriel Arnold** started the entire season as a freshman for Coach Stewart and finished with solid numbers across the board.

Arnold hit .247 with 5 doubles, 16 RBIs, 8 walks, 18 runs, and 4 stolen bases despite being just one year removed from middle school.

In August of last season she went 3-for-3 in a win against Class AAAAA's Habersham Central. Arnold also had 2-hit games vs Dawson County, Johns Creek, Washington-Wilkes, and Milton.

Junior outfielder **Braden Poteete** was second on the team with 12 stolen bases in 12 attempts and third with 23 runs scored last season. Poteete also tallied three multi-hit games.

Sophomore **Ellie Garrison** and **Courtney Moose** both saw action in the outfield in 2015 combining for 12

RBIs, six extra base hits, and 22 runs.

In 2015 Moose was the starting catcher on the junior varsity squad while Garrison was successful on all nine of her stolen base attempts as a freshman.

Sophomore **Maddie Sutton** was used primarily as a base runner in 2015 where she led the team with 14 steals on 14 attempts. She was also fourth on the team with 22 runs scored.

Other members of the 2016 Lady Panthers that saw action last season are junior **Megan Lockaby** (5 hits and 2 RBIs in 2015), sophomore **Skylar Ludlum** (4 hits and 3 RBIs in 2015), and sophomore **Madeline Tanner** (11 innings pitched with 9 strikeouts in 2015).

Rounding out the sophomore class on this year's roster are: **Bailey Rayfield** and **Brittany Spivey**.

Representing the freshman class is **Kallie Brown**, **Kristen Poteete**, **Mary Wischmeyer**, **Miranda Lockaby**, and **Megan Bright**.

The Lady Panthers will scrimmage at Gilmer County on Aug. 4th before opening the season with region foe Lumpkin County on Aug. 9th.

Following a JV doubleheader with Pickens County on Aug. 10, Union County will visit North Hall on Aug. 11 in what could be the Lady Panthers' toughest test of the Region 7-AAA schedule.

The Lady Panthers will host Dawson County on Aug. 16 before visiting East Hall on Aug. 18.

A trip to Fannin County awaits on Aug. 26 and the first half of the region schedule concludes on Aug. 30 when Union hosts Greater Atlanta Christian.

Coach Stewart enters 2016 just nine wins shy of 250 for her career. In her 10 seasons at Union County High School she has compiled a record of 241 wins, 115 losses, and 2 ties.



Junior Braden Poteete



Sophomore outfielder Aladriel Arnold. Photo/Todd Forrest

## Attention ladies... August 13th is Sadie Hawkins Tournament Day

This is the 31st year that our Sadie Hawkins Golf Tournament will be played. Let's make it a 'special day' for our heritage golf tournament. Now is the time to 'Pick a Partner' and sign up to play on Saturday, August 13 to be played at Butternut Creek Golf Course, Blairsville, GA.

Format is Select Shot between you and your partner. Cost is \$45 per person. Prizes will be given for 'Closest to the Pin' along with Flight Winners!

Registration along with a delicious breakfast, prepared by our ladies, will begin at 7:30 AM. Tee-Time will begin at 8:30 AM so be there by 7:30 and have a great breakfast before entering the field. Lunch will be provided after play in the Banquet Room.

Make checks payable to BCLGA Sadie Hawkins Golf



Tournament and send check to Betty Taylor, P. O. Box 295, Blairsville, GA 30514 or call Betty Taylor at 706-745-2248, cell phone 706-781-9910 by August 3, 2016; or you may sign up in the Pro Shop - 706-439-6076. NJUL20.Z18JCA

## Wounded Warriors Golf Tournament

Wounded Warriors Golf Tournament will be on the 26th of August at Old Union Golf Course. A shotgun start at 1300 hours will kick off the festivities. Four member teams will compete for trophies in various categories: Low score for first and second place, closest to the hole and longest drive on selected holes. There will also be trophies for first and second place for ladies teams as well as longest drive and closest to the hole on selected holes.

Slots for teams to enter are limited to 20 teams. If you wish to be in the contest, get your team together and call Skip Belton at 706-745-2273 or Charlie Sowers at 706-745-5123. Entry fee remains the same as in previous years, \$220 per team.

Those persons who sign up to play, and have served in the Armed Forces, please call Skip Belton at 706-745-2273 at your earliest convenience. There will be a special gift for you. NJUL20.Z14JCA



Junior Jillian Lawn returns to the middle of the Union lineup.

## UC Softball Alumni game

The Union County High School Softball team will host an alumni game on July 30th at the UCHS Softball Complex.

Beginning at 10 a.m., any UCHS softball alumni may register at the field. The alumni and current team will get their pictures taken for the newspaper and keepsakes at 10:30 a.m.

The first pitch will be thrown out at 11am. The alumni will play against the current team in a friendly, but competitive game at the UCHS Softball Complex.

Admission to the game is free and the game is open to the public. Following the

game, the UCHS softball team will host a tailgate party.

Alumni will pay \$30 to receive a t-shirt, team picture, and BBQ/Hamburger plate. Other food items will be for sale at the concession stand. There will be enough food for all alumni, parents, family, and friends.

The game will be an eight inning affair with four innings of fast-pitch and four innings of slow pitch.

Keeping our alumni involved in our program is a priority. See you July 30!

For more details you may contact Coach Jessica Stewart at jstewart@uc-schools.org

## UCHS 2016 Softball schedule

Date	Location	Opponent	JV	Varsity
AUG. 4	AWAY	GILMER (OFFICIAL SCRIMMAGE)	N/A	5:00
AUG.9	HOME	LUMPKIN	4:30	6:00
AUG.10	HOME	PICKENS(DOUBLEHEADER)	4:15/6:00	N/A
AUG. 11	AWAY	NORTH HALL	4:30	6:00
AUG. 16	HOME	DAWSON	4:30	6:00
AUG.18	AWAY	EAST HALL	N/A	5:00
AUG.20	YHC	APALACHEE/MONTICELLO	N/A	10:00/2:00
AUG. 24	HOME	WHITE	4:30	6:00
AUG. 25	AWAY	FANNIN	N/A	5:00
AUG. 27	HAB	CHESTATEE	N/A	11:30
AUG.27	HAB	HABERSHAM	N/A	1:00
AUG. 30	HOME	GAC	4:30	6:00
AUG.31	AWAY	PICKENS(DOUBLEHEADER)	4:15/6:00	N/A
SEPT. 1	AWAY	LUMPKIN	4:30	6:00
SEPT.6	AWAY	RABUN	4:30	6:00
SEPT. 8	HOME	NORTH HALL	4:30	6:00
SEPT. 10	AWAY	JV CHEROKEE TOURNAMENT	TBA	N/A
SEPT. 13	AWAY	DAWSON	4:30	6:00
SEPT. 15	HOME	EAST HALL(SENIOR NIGHT)	N/A	5:00
SEPT. 16/17	AWAY	MORGAN CO. TOURNAMENT	N/A	TBA
SEPT. 19	AWAY	WHITE	4:30	6:00
SEPT. 22	HOME	FANNIN	N/A	5:00
SEPT.27	AWAY	GAC	4:30	6:00
		7AAA REGION TOURNAMENT	N/A	TBA