

# Sports

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## Lady Panthers rally into finals at Lanier Point

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**GAINESVILLE** - The 10th-ranked Union County Lady Panthers proved that they only reload, and that 2012 will not be a rebuilding season.

Union finished second in the Lanier Point Invitational in Gainesville over the weekend, defeating White County, East Hall, West Hall in pool play and Jefferson, and Flowery Branch before falling to Dawson County in the Gold Division Finals.

The Lady Panthers showed what they were made of by clawing their way out of a deficit in their final at-bat in three of their wins.

Union scored three runs in the sixth to knock off East Hall 6-4, they posted three in their final at-bat to slay the Jefferson Dragons 9-7, and blew things wide open with seven in the final at-bat in a win over Flowery Branch.

Unfortunately the Lady Panthers ran out of rallies in the Finals against former region-rival Dawson.

"I was proud of the team," Coach Jessica Stewart said. "We scored 50 runs in five games and that's something to be proud of. By the time we played Dawson we were just mentally exhausted from having to come from behind in all the earlier games."

### Dawson Co. 7, Union Co. 3

A first-inning two-run homer by University of Auburn commit Jenna Abbott put Union in an early hole that they



The Lady Panthers' softball team reached its fourth consecutive Lanier Point Tournament Finale.

were unable to climb out of. "They took the momentum and we never got it back," said Coach Stewart.

Playing from behind all game, senior Hannah Hughes did her best to keep the Lady Panthers close by driving in two runs, but it wasn't enough to keep pace with the Lady Tigers.

Sophomore Courtney Busbee added an RBI single in the fifth to make it a one-run ball game but Dawson scored three in the sixth to put the Lady Panthers away.

Junior Madison Rich and senior Shawna Brown each singled and scored, as did sophomore Crystal Busbee. Senior Carly Adams also doubled in the game.

Senior Bailey Byers threw six innings but couldn't overcome three Union fielding errors.

"We had 14 errors during the tournament," Coach Stewart said. "That's way to

many to try and come back from."

### Union Co. 11, The Branch 5

In dramatic fashion, Union scored seven runs in its final at bat to knock the Flowery Branch Lady Falcons out of contention for the Gold Division Championship.



Senior pitcher Bailey Byers pitched in three Union County wins at Lanier Point. Photo/Leslie Hughes

The Falcons were flying high following a victory over 6th-ranked Wesleyan until Union's sticks brought them back down to earth.

"There wasn't a true out in our lineup all weekend," Coach Stewart said. "As a team we batted .393."

Coach Stewart gave the ball to Chelsey Cook and the junior pitcher threw three innings before turning it over to Byers.

Byers picked up the win thanks to Union's late-inning heroics.

"I wanted to pitch Cook the whole game but I felt like they were starting to figure her out," Coach Stewart said.

Trailing 5-4 with three outs remaining, Courtney Busbee's lead off double was followed by three consecutive

singles from Brown, Adams, and senior Amber Seeba's game-tying hit. Junior Allie Stroman drew a walk and Crystal Busbee gave Union the lead with a single, Rich's fielder's choice added another run before Hughes cleared the bases with a two-run double. After scoring the first run of the frame, Courtney Busbee

knocked in Hughes for Union's seventh and final run of the inning.

Adams went 3-for-3 with a run, Brown and Seeba each had two hits and Stroman walked three times.

Hughes picked up two doubles and two RBIs. Courtney Payne also scored a run.

### Union Co. 9, Jefferson 7

In what could be a preview of the 8-AA Championship Game in October, Union County survived a dog fight with Jefferson.

The Lady Panthers used five runs in the second to take a 6-0 lead before Jefferson added three in the second and four in the fourth to mount a

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## Grip, Alignment and Ball Position

Now that we have established the proper stance, we need to look at the bodies' attachment to the swing. We are going to look at the way we hold the club, aim and position the ball in relation to the club we have chosen for the shot at hand. These are the swing mechanics that prepare you to make a solid back swing.

The most difficult of these three aspects is the grip. I know that sounds strange but the grip is the main connection we have with the club. In other words, what the hands do affects what the face of the club does. The back of the forward hand is a direct representation of how square the club is at impact, so if the grip is wrong, impact will be out of square.

To establish the correct grip for your swing, observe the actual grip on the club and notice that there is a slight rise at the very end of the club. Do not grip the club past the start of that rise. It is there too prevent the club from slipping further into your hand.

Open the forward hand and lay the clubs' grip at the base of the little finger with the end extending about an inch past the base of the hand. Now close the hand over the club shaft until you can see at least two of the knuckles on the back of the forward hand. The shaft should run through the middle of the index finger and the connection of the hand and the thumb should form a line as the hand tightens around the club. This line should point toward the back shoulder. Work with it and you will find your happy place on the club just remember to never change your hold on the club during the swing.

Aiming is really simple. Imagine a set of railroad tracks. The rail away from you will be the target line and the inside rail will represent the tips of your toes. Now, take your club and lay it across the tops of your knees, then in front of your hips and finally across the front of the shoulders. All four of these lines should be parallel to the outside rail and all four lines should be pointed at the target. There you go; alignment set.

Ball position is even simpler. While you are in your stance, look down at the distance between your feet. Remember to keep your feet a little less than shoulder width apart. Find the center point between your feet and always play normal shots from that point, or a little forward of that point, with the ball position moving toward the front foot as the shaft gets longer. Knockdown shots or low shots will be played behind this point in order to keep the ball low. Drivers should be just inside the front foot.

These swing mechanics are the general rule for basic golf swings. The more you practice the better it will feel but be careful to not reinvent the wheel. Stick to these simple thoughts and the process will become easy.

I hope that you have been able to establish a good comfortable stance and that these mechanics fit well with your set up. It is important to get things stable because the hard stuff is on the way.

Next week we will start learning how to take the club away and return it to impact so practice making your stance balanced and your swing attached.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!



Tips from the Range



Hannah Hughes records an out on Saturday. Photo/Leslie Hughes



Senior Shawna Brown makes a diving stop at short on Friday at Lanier Point. Photo/Todd Forrest

## UCHS Football Schedule

- Aug. 17 Meet the team
- Aug 23 @ White County (Scrimmage)
- Aug 31 @ Towns County
- Sept 7 vs Fannin County (Recognizing the 1957 Panthers)
- Sept 14 vs Andrews, NC (Recognizing Middle School Team)
- Sept 21 - Bye Week
- Sept 28 vs Washington Wilkes (Recognizing Rec Dept Teams)
- Oct 5 @ Oglethorpe County
- Oct 12 vs Riverside Military Academy (Homecoming)
- Oct 19 @ Greene County
- Oct 26 @ Rabun County
- Nov 2 vs Social Circle (Senior Night)
- Nov 9 @ Jefferson

## UCHS upcoming Softball games

- Aug. 14 @ Washington-Wilkes
- Aug. 20 @ Gilmer County
- Aug. 21 vs Oglethorpe County
- Aug. 22 vs Lumpkin County
- Aug. 23 @ Rabun County
- Aug. 28 vs Jefferson
- Aug. 30 @ Greene County
- Sept. 4 vs Dawson County
- Sept. 6 vs Rabun County

## UCMS Football Schedule

- Aug. 16 @ North Georgia Academy
- Aug. 23 vs Rabun County
- Aug. 30 vs White County
- Sept. 6 @ West Hall
- Sept. 13 @ Towns County
- Sept. 20 vs Copper Basin
- Sept. 27 @ Lumpkin County
- Oct. 4 Playoffs

## UCMS Softball schedule

- Aug. 14 Rabun County
- Aug. 16 White County
- Aug. 21 @ Towns County
- Aug. 28 @ Lumpkin County
- Sept. 4 Lumpkin County
- Sept. 6 @ Rabun County
- Sept. 11 @ White County
- Sept. 17 Towns County
- Sept. 24-27 Tournament @ Meeks Park

## Meet the 2012 UCHS football team and coaches

UCHS Football Field  
Friday, Aug. 17, 2012  
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

\* Autographs \* Games \* Wing-Eating Contest

\* Door Prizes \* Free Popcorn \*

Bring your camera for photos  
Celebrate with the team before the season begins.

Meet the 2012 Panther Football Players.

Take your picture with your favorite player.

## Panthers' Middle School football: are you ready?

By Todd Forrest  
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Casey Jones feels good about his team's chances.

"I don't know what anyone else has, but I know what we have. I feel really good about it," said Head UCMS Football Coach Casey Jones, with his team just days away from opening kickoff.

"We're excited and ready to get going. We've got a good shot at being the best team in the Region," he said.

In case you haven't noticed, Union's middle school football team has been hard at work, getting ready for a season that is just days away from kickoff and the coaching staff is gearing up for another successful season.

Despite the rain limiting the Panthers' practices, Coach Jones remains optimistic that this team can return to the league championship game.

"We've progressed pretty well despite the weather," he said. "We've only had three or four days in full pads because of all the storms."

Most of Union's 2011 squad moved up to join Coach Brian Allison's high school team but Coach Jones believes this group will be just fine.

"A lot of the players that played last year are going to be this year's starters," Coach



Coach Jones gets his team ready with less than a week before kickoff against North Georgia Academy. Photo/Todd Forrest

Jones said. "So they already know most of the stuff, so with them, we're just polishing up. We'll be ready. The younger guys are coming along pretty good."

The season opens at North Georgia Academy in Canton. NGA's team consists of a few players from several of the smaller private schools, including Mountain Area Christian Academy, to make up their squad.

"What they do is take a few kids from each of the smaller private schools and create what is similar to a traveling team," Coach Jones said.

The following week, Union will play host to defend-

ing league champion, Rabun County in the home opener.

"Its going to take us a week or two into the season before some of the younger players can catch up," Coach Jones said. "We'll get our feet wet at North Georgia Academy to see where we're at, then we have a big test at home against Rabun."

One spot that Coach Jones isn't nervous about is the skill positions.

"We have eighth grader Bo Lynch playing quarterback," Coach Jones said. "He's athletic and throws the ball really well so he'll fit right in. He'll be fine throwing and he's also an excellent runner. He gives us a dual threat quarter-

back, which is nice to have.

"I'm excited about eighth grader Nick Rodriguez at running back," Coach Jones said. "He's got great speed, he's really tough, and I'm excited and want to see him in a live game situation."

"In practice, he finds another gear whenever he gets the football in his hands and I like to see that," Coach Jones said.

Up front, Union's line has been working hard in the weight room during the summer. Coach Jones expects their hard work to pay dividends for the Panthers.

"We've got a few lineman who have gotten a lot bigger and stronger during the off season," he said. "Eighth graders Jered Herum and Chandler Day are two that jump out at me."

Defensively, Coach Jones says to watch out for Micah Gilbert, Zach Stone, and Chris Thompson.

"Gilbert and Stone played last year at safety," Coach Jones said. "Thompson has never played before but I'm excited about him. He's a big, strong kid and I think he's going to have a good year."

The Panthers' season opens Thursday when they travel to Canton. Union will return home to face Rabun County on Aug. 23.