

Lady Panthers' backcourt leads the way in two Union victories

Union County surrenders fourth-quarter lead in Saturday's loss to Habersham

By Todd Forrest Sports Editor sports@nganews.com

The Lady Panthers (2-2) won two of three during the week of Thanksgiving, with their lone blemish coming Saturday at the hands of Class 6A Habersham Central at East Forsyth's Adrian Penland Clas-

During its Tuesday, Nov. 22 contest in Blairsville, Union County survived a scrappy, upset-minded Towns County squad to record its fourth straight victory over the Lady Indians. Later in the week, Union County used an early 12-0 run to race ahead during Friday's 48-35 win over Class 5A Chattahoochee (Alpharetta) on day one of the Adrian Penland Classic.

Lady Panthers 45, Towns County 37 - Head Coach Brad Cochran picked up his first varsity coaching win courtesy of 20 combined points from the backcourt duo of Ariel McCarter and Kamryn Mull during Union County's momentum-changing third frame.

"At halftime, we were struggling on offense so I told the girls we need to let our defense create our offense," Cochran said. "We weren't applying enough pressure against Towns. Our press wasn't coming as hard as we wanted it to, so I told them to use our defense to create some points, and that's what we did in the third quarter."

Trailing 15-13 at the intermission, the Lady Panthers snapped out of their first-half offensive doldrums with a 20point third that saw McCarter lead the charge with a dozen while Mull provided eight.

Union County outscored Towns County 20-10 during the period, turning a two-point deficit into a 33-25 advantage. McCarter opened the second half with a 3-pointer less than 15 seconds in, awarding Union its first lead since 16-15.

Towns County regained the lead at 20-16 at the halfway point of the period, answering McCarter's triple with a 5-0 spurt. But the Lady Panthers fired back with six straight points in 33 seconds, beginning with a Mull basket at the 3:26 mark. McCarter followed with



County's win over Chattahoochee on Friday. Photo/Todd Forrest

visits to the charity stripe, but McCarter kept the lead at seven with a dribble-drive. However, the Lady Indians made one last push, beginning with a putback at the 4:26 mark. And with a chance to make it a two-point game 22 seconds later, Towns failed to convert a traditional 3-point play, missing from the line in a 38-35 contest.

McCarter and Corinne Hill each split two free throws to push the margin to five at 40-35 near the 2-minute mark. Morgan Warren provided her team some breathing room, scoring inside to build a 42-35 advantage with 1:12 to play, but Towns refused to go down without a fight, hitting a pair of free throws at the 1:03 mark.

Union County eventually put the game away, quickly breaking the Lady Indians press, allowing Turner to knock down on a short jumper from the block with 52 seconds left. On Union's next possession, Warren split two free throws to close out the scoring at 45-37 with 26 seconds to go.

22 points, eight rebounds and County closed the first quarter five steals. Mull had 8 points and five boards; Turner chipped the first basket of the second to in 7 points and four assists. mount a 12-4 advantage Warren ended with 3 points and four boards; Brown had 2 points and six rebounds. Freshmen Mady Adams and Paula Robertson added 2 points apiece Following a low-scoring first frame that saw Towns outscore the home team 5-3, Robertson's basket came via a second-quarter putback to move Union within two at 11-9. Towns answered with consecutive baskets to build its largest margin at 15-9 until McCarter, aided by a turnover, scored twice in the final 15 seconds to slice the deficit to 15-13 at the break. Senior Sarah Shook led Towns County with 14 points while grabbing eight boards. Sophomore Megan Beaver finished with a double-double, scoring 12 points and pulling down 11 rebounds to go with two steals and a pair of blocks. Junior Brelan Sieveking added 10 points and a team-high four

Towns County went for Union. The Lady Panthers 2-of-6 during three consecutive made 5 of 23 (22%) from deep, while the visitors made 1 of 8 (13%)

At the line, Union went 4 for 11 (36%) and the Lady Indians finished 8 for 18 (44%). Towns County outscored Union 24-20 in the paint but Union owned a 9-4 advantage on second-chance points. The Lady Panthers held a 40-39 rebounding edge and won the turnover battle 25-21.

"It feels great to get that first win, of course it would have been nice to get it against North Hall, but it's still great," said Cochran when asked about his first victory as a varsity head coach. "But to be honest, a win is a win and I know there's a lot more to come. These girls are working hard and I know they're going to win many more games."

The JV team rallied from eight down for a 42-36 win. Freshman Lola Hunter had 16 and Robertson scored 10. Aubrie Akins added 7 points and Hope Taylor had six.

Lady Panthers 48, Chattahoochee 35 - Behind McCarter finished with 4-0 in the early going, Union with a 10-0 run, then scored



Kamryn Mull (20) scores in the third quarter vs. Towns as Ariel McCarter looks on. The duo combined for 20 in the period. Photo/Todd Forrest with 2:35 remaining until consecutive baskets by Hill put the

game out of reach. "We weren't expecting

a zone [defense from Chattahoochee], so that slowed us down some on offense, but that's why we applied that pressure so we could try to play at

our speed," Cochran said. McCarter poured in a game-high 17 points to go with six boards and five steals. Hill finished with 12 points on 5-of-10 shooting, hauling in eight rebounds and collecting three steals.

"One thing I've talked about this year with [Hill] is getting more offensive production from her," Cochran said. "We're trying to get her to attack more and go to the basket more. If we're getting 8-12 points a night from her that is beautiful, and she is filling that role very well. It's all very new to her and she told me she's not used to scoring that much, so I told her she needs to get used to it because we need her."

Turner had 9 points and six rebounds, while Brown added 4 points and six rebounds. Robertson scored 2 points and handed out a teamhigh five assists. Mady Adams Chapman pulled down five re-

fourth-quarter advantage.

"Just like you said, I think we ran out of gas," Cochran replied when asked about the late collapse. "[Habersham] killed us on the offensive boards, but we knew they were going to be a challenge. They are a very good team with a really good player, but they had some girls come off the bench and have career nights against us. That's the one thing we didn't expect. But even if you have a good gameplan, it's not going to work if you're giving their offense second and third chances.'

Down 20-15 at the half and 28-20 late in the third, the Lady Panthers stormed ahead with an 11-0 outburst that included the final seven points of the third and four straight to begin the fourth.

Union's 11-0 run began after a Raiders' basket just shy of the third-quarter's 2-minute mark built a 28-20 advantage. McCarter's defense forced a steal that led to a Mull layup on the other end, then Hill connected from long distance off an inbounds pass with 30 time running down, McCarter

and went 90 feet for a layup. Habersham kept the lead at five with 4:12 left in the half, but a minute later, Turner put back an offensive board to keep Union with three.

The Raiders converted a turnover into an easy deuce and Mady Adams followed by going back up after securing an offensive board. Another Lady Panthers turnover led to a Habersham layup off an inbounds play, but Turner returned the favor by feeding Hill for two after coming up with a steal in the backcourt.

On its ensuing possession, Habersham stretched its lead to 20-15 at the break with a bucket near the 50-second mark of the second.

Both teams struggled to begin the third until a jumper from Hill at the 6:10 mark. The Raiders responded with a 6-0 spurt, building a 26-17 margin with 2:55 left in the period until a McCarter triple kept the Lady Panthers within a half dozen at 26-20.

The only Lady Panther in double-digits, McCarter finished with a 15-point, 11-rebound double-double. The sophomore guard also dished out four assists and picked up two steals.

Hill finished with 7 points and five rebounds; Mull had 6 points, four boards and two steals. Turner's day ended with 5 points, three rebounds and a blocked shot. Mady Adams had 2 points, two rebounds and a steal. Akins added a free throw and a rebound.

Team stats: Habersham hit on 33% (22 of 66) of its shot attempts, compared to 25% (13 of 52) for Union County. Both teams struggled at the line, where Union made 6 of 14 (43%) and the Raiders hit 2 of 7 (29%).

The Lady Panthers were 4 of 19 (21%) from deep and Habersham finished 2 for 11 (18%). The Raiders controlled the paint, out-rebounding Union County 49-35 and outscoring them 38-16.

Up next: On Tuesday, Union County hosts Class AAA's seventh-ranked White County, a team that already seconds on the clock. With owns a 59-50 win over Habersham in Cleveland. White grabbed a rebound and went also defeated Class AA's No. 7 had 2 points and seven boards; coast-to-coast, beating the horn team and Region 8-AA favorite with a runner between two defenders. Banks County in a 51-29 rout. Tuesday's tip-off vs. White County is scheduled for 6 p.m. following the JV girls. "White is a very good and very disciplined team with a few college signees," Cochran said. "They have a high basketball IQ and are very well coached. It's going to be a very fun, fast paced game because they do a lot of the same things we do, so we need to make sure we have all that turkey and dressing out of our system.' On Friday, the Lady Panthers pay a visit to Class AA's fifth-ranked Fannin County at "White is going to be tough, but then we have to turn around and play Fannin at their house," Cochran said. "This is going to be my first taste of this rivalry and I've already heard all the chit chat going on. I hear this is a big mountain rivalry, but I know that it's in games and environments like this that real players thrive. They step up to the challenge and I believe we're going to have a few girls that show what they're made of and show their pride."

consecutive buckets, scoring in the paint to even the score at 20-20, then turning a steal into 2 points and a 22-20 lead with 2:53 remaining in the quarter.

Mull made it a 25-22 game with a 3-point basket coming on the heels of two Lady Indians free throws, then a McCarter trey broke a 25-25 tie at the 1:21 mark of the third, sparking an 8-0 run. A Lady Panthers steal on the ensuing Towns possession led to a McCarter layup and a 30-25 advantage, then Mull closed the frame with a triple to spot Union a 33-25 margin entering the fourth.

"We picked up some energy on the defensive end and really took it to them,' Cochran said. "Then we started feeding off that energy and it became contagious, everybody started getting into it, even the bench.

The Lady Indians quickly cut the deficit in half with baskets on its first two fourthquarter possessions, but Lara Turner split two free throws and Katelyn Brown drove to the basket for a 36-29 advantage at the 6:20 mark.

Team stats: Both squads found a lid on the hoop for most of the game with Towns connecting on 30% (14 for 46) of its shots to 28% (17 for 60) narrowed the gap to 44-34

With Union ahead 14-5, a Chattahoochee trey narrowed the margin to 14-8 until a 5-0 spurt handed the Lady Panthers a 19-8 lead at the midway point of the second frame. Chattahoochee never threatened again as Union County cruised to a 48-35 victory at East Forsyth's Adrian Penland Classic.

"We wanted to apply defensive pressure and keep [Chattahoochee] playing fast,' Cochran said. "We knew they were athletic but they only had one guard [that concerned us], so we wanted to get the ball out of her hands and into the hands of girls that didn't want [the ball].'

The Cougars continued hanging around late in the first half when a Turner free throw and a McCarter trey built a 26-13 halftime edge.

A bucket by senior Ivie Chapman saw Union build its largest lead at 35-18 with 2:20 left in the third. A Brown dribble drive kept the margin at 37-20 until a Chattahoochee trey sliced the deficit to 37-23 after three.

A late Cougars' 3-pointer

bounds while scoring 2 points. Warren ended with five boards; freshmen Hensley Adams and Hunter had two rebounds and one rebound, respectively.

Team stats: The Lady Panthers shot 33% (21 for 66) from the field and limited Chattahoochee to a 23% (13 for 56) clip. Union went 1-of-8 (13%) from downtown and 5 of 9 (56%) at the line. Meanwhile, the Cougars shot 3 of 20 (15%) from deep and 6 of 17 (35%) at the charity stripe.

Union controlled the boards by a 55-38 margin and outscored Chattahoochee 26-20 in the paint.

"That was our plan going in, to control the boards and limit their second chances," Coachran said. "We are able to get them to take quick shots and they were being taken by players that don't want to be taking shots."

Turnovers were almost even with Union committing 15 and forcing 16.

Lady Panthers 35, Habersham Central 48 -Union County ran out of gas down the stretch, surrendering a 20-4 run after holding a 31-28

McCarter put Union on top with two free throws to begin the fourth, then she extended the lead to 31-28 on a drive to the hoop with 6:50 to play. Habersham tied the game moments later with a dribble drive and kick-out for three, eventually regaining the lead at 33-31 following two missed Union County free throws near the 6-minute mark.

After the Lady Panthers failed to answer with a trey, Habersham scored in transition to mount a 35-31 advantage. Four consecutive Union turnovers helped the Raiders build a 41-31 margin, setting up the final dagger via a 3-point play with 2:19 remaining.

Two McCarter free throws to start the game provided the Lady Panthers a 2-0 lead, but Habersham raced ahead 7-2 prompting an early timeout by Cochran. McCarter drilled a trey out of the stoppage but both offenses went cold over the final 4:23 of the period and Union County trailed 9-7 after one.

Behind 12-7 in the second, Mull grabbed a rebound

Panthers drop two straight, should return to full strength this week

By Todd Forrest Sports Editor sports@nganews.com

The Union County men are hoping a full roster will ignite a lethargic offense that combined for only 63 points during last week's losses to Towns County and Rabun Gap.

The Panthers (1-2) return to action Tuesday with a home matchup vs. a 2-3 White County squad before traveling to Fannin County for a Friday night rivalry contest.

"We expect to have everyone back at practice this week," Union County head coach Corey Garrett said. "I don't know if they'll all be ready to go Tuesday, but hopefully by Friday we can start getting everyone back into the swing of things.

Panthers 29, Towns County 34 - Union County fell into a 10-3 hole after a quarter and continued struggling to find the basket for most of the night during an offensivelychallenged loss to the Indians on Tuesday, Nov. 22.

"[Towns] does some things defensively that give us problems," said Garrett, who returned Friday vs. Rabun Gap after completing his two-game suspension Tuesday. "They run this funky zone defense, it's like a match-up 1-3-1 that shakes up into a 2-3. And those natural gaps that you see in a zone defense, they do a good job of hiding them and they've done a good job defensively the last few years under [head coach Brian] Hunnicutt. He's really got things working over there.

With sophomore point guard Houston Henry attempting to give it a go following a week-long illness, the Panthers hosted their neighbors without the services of sophomore starter Maddox Young (illness). Even the returning football players didn't provide Union with the pick-me-up it expected.

The Panthers welcomed four key contributors back to the hardwood on Monday, however, illness delayed the return of projected-starter Braylen Rader. Still, with only one practice session under their belts, sophomores Kaden Combs, Braden Plott and freshman Cade Dockrey each delivered a boost to the Panthers' depth concerns.

During their third-straight home loss to Towns County, the Panthers faced early deficits of 10-3 and 12-5 after sophomore Jude Ellis spotted Union a 2-0 lead with a pull-up jumper from 15 feet

The Panthers finally start-



Union County senior Eli Underwood, listed at 6-foot-4, battles for position against one of Rabun Gap's skyscrapers. Photo/Todd Forrest

ed chipping away in the second County drained a back-backing quarter, beginning with a turn-Hayden Hughes trey that sliced the Indians' lead to 12-10.

Down 14-10 late in the period, senior Eli Underwood scored off a putback, then went 1-of-2 from the line to pull his team within 14-13 at the break.

A Towns County free throw opened the third but junior Van Marevka tied the game courtesy of the offensive glass. Later, sophomore Braylen Hogsed sparked Union off the bench, driving the baseline to nudge his team ahead 17-15. Hogsed delivered again 73 seconds later, knocking down a trey for a 20-19 Panthers' lead.

Dockrey went on the attack near the 3-minute mark of the frame, scoring off a dribble drive that built a 22-19 advantage. The Indians responded with a Zane Floyd triple, but Combs scored in the paint to put the Panthers back on top 24-22

Still up two with time winding down in the third, Union County missed from rey, Hughes and Underwood long-distance, leading to a Towns County run-out and a go-ahead trey by Floyd at the ouzzer.

The Indians began pulling away in the fourth via a 6-0 spurt to begin the period. Union finally slowed the bleeding with 4:26 remaining when Dockrey knocked down a short jumper, narrowing the gap to 31-26. Moments later, Towns

3 that built the game's largest around jumper by Ellis and a lead at 34-26. The Panthers held the Indians scoreless the rest of the way but couldn't generate enough offense to mount a challenge

> Underwood split two free throws inside one minute and Henry scored in the waning seconds to bring the final tally to 34-29

"Our offense is [better suited] for man defense, but now that we're getting the football players back, we've been working on some zone offenses. Especially now with a shot clock, we know we're going to see a lot more zones so it's something we're going to have to keep working on."

Henry and Hogsed led the Panthers with 5 points each. Henry finished with four boards and three steals; Hogsed added one steal. Dockrey, Ellis and Marevka scored 4 points each. Underwood had 3 points; Combs and Hughes had two apiece

Marevka's five rebounds led the Panthers, while Dockeach collected four boards. Ellis recorded a game-high five assists and Hughes dished out three dimes while picking up two steals.

Floyd poured in a gamehigh 16 points and blocked two shots in the win. Gage Rogers pulled down a game-high 10 rebounds to go with 9 points and a team-leading three assists.

Team stats: The Indians



Junior Van Marevka earned his first career start vs. Towns County and finished with a team-high five rebounds. Photo/Todd Forrest

shot 29% (14 of 49) from the straight from Underwood refield and Union County hit 12 of 48 for a 25% clip. The two squads combined for an abysmal 5 of 38 (13%) from 3-point range with Towns County going 3 for 20(15%) and the Panthers hitting 2 of 18 (11%). They didn't fare much better at the foul line, where Union made 3 of 8 (38%) and the Indians hit on 3 of 9 (33%).

Towns out-rebounded the home team 40-31 but turned it over 17 times compared to Union County's 14 miscues. The Indians outscored the Panthers 14-12 in the paint.

Panthers 34, Rabun Gap 57 - With Garrett back on the bench, the Panthers were rewarded with the toughest draw of the weekend, facing Rabun Gap on Friday at East Forsyth's Adrian Penland Classic.

"We wanted to use this game as a measuring stick to see if we had grown up and gotten any better," Garrett said. "We played them last year and they scored 80-something and beat us by 40. But we're not going to see another team like that the rest of the year. Even if we make the state championship, you're not going to see a team that goes 6-foot-9, 6-foot-10 and 7-foot. But we have some lofty goals this year, and if we want to win a region championship, we're going to have to at least learn to compete against teams like that."

Playing without Rader and Marevka, Union County fell into a 14-2 hole but four

sulted in a 14-6 deficit after one. Rabun Gap quickly widened the margin via a 13-0 run to begin the second before Hughes connected from downtown for a 27-9 score.

Young and Underwood each split a pair of free throws to remain within 18 until an Eagles trey sent the Panthers into the locker room facing a 32-11 halftime deficit.

"It blew my mind that even Rabun Gap came out against us in a zone," Garrett said. "We prepared for them to play us man and they came out in a 2-3, so that's something we need to work on. We're a big drive-and-kick team and our guys' skill sets are built for drive-and-kick.catch-and-shoot situations. And when teams play zone, we don't get those catchand-shoot situations and we become a bit stagnant."

An Underwood offensive board and two perfect trips to the line by Henry had Union County within 19 at 36-17 at the 3:52 mark of the third. Henry sank two more free throws 33 seconds later but a pair of Rabun Gap 3s all but put the game away at 42-19.

Underwood continued to battle down low, scoring with 1:25 left in the quarter despite battling a massive Eagles front line. Later in the third, with Union trailing 46-21, Ellis beat the buzzer with a fade-away jumper from the elbow.

"[Rabun Gap] is a matchup nightmare for someone like eryone on the same page."

us that doesn't have a lot of size," Garrett said. "I know that Rabun County played [Rabun Gap] the next day and lost by 33.

Young scored five of Union's first seven points of the fourth quarter with a Dockrey drive accounting for the other two.

Underwood hit two free throws at the 1:10 mark to finish with a team-high 11 points and five rebounds. Junior Anderson Cruise scored on a putback with 32 seconds left as Garrett turned to his reserves over the final 70 seconds.

Henry's day ended with 6 points and three steals. Ellis had 4 points and two assists; Hughes added 3 points and two steals. Dockrey and Cruise chipped in 2 points each; Dockrey recorded a steal and a rebound.

Young finished with 6 points, four rebounds, one assist and one steal.

'Young is a very smart, competitive player and is someone I feel very comfortable with anytime he's on the floor," Garrett said.

Team stats: Rabun Gap shot a scorching 59% from the floor (24 for 41) while making 43% (6 for 14) from long distance and 3 for 6 (50%) at the line. The Panthers finished 10 for 41 (24%) from the field, 2 for 15 (13%) from deep and 12 for 21 (57%) at the charity stripe

Rabun Gap outscored Union 36-12 in the paint and out-rebounded the Panthers 33-17. The Eagles held a narrow 23-20 edge in the turnover

Up next: The Panthers host White County at 6 p.m. Tuesday where both squads will attempt to improve to .500 on the year. The Warriors enter with a 2-3 record following a 65-55 victory over winless East Hall. White County also owns a 60-53 win against a 1-5 Landmark Christian squad.

The Panthers visit Fannin County at 7 p.m. Friday looking for their first win in Blue Ridge under Garrett and the program's first road win vs. the Rebels since November 2018. The Rebels are currently 1-2 with a 66-36 win over Copper Basin, Tennessee.

Fannin's two defeats are by a combined 66 points after suffering an 84-53 loss to Pickens and a 79-44 loss to Gilmer.

"I think this week provides a good chance to get back on track," Garrett said. "Games are good, but with those new guys coming in, we need that practice time too so we can work out the kinks and get ev-

Wrestling: Union fourth overall **MEC's Drew Sofield signs with Auburn** By Todd Forrest

at North Hall's Trojan Invitational



Union's Anderson Clouse, Zander Rotko, and Payton Legatt were varsity champions in their respective weight classes. Brooke Kennedy took home the girls title. Jackson Arthur and Thomas Gary were crowned JV champs. David Heredia finished as varsity runner-up, Titus Conley was JV runner-up and Shelby Agacenski was girls runnerup. Varsity wrestlers Asa Smith-Foot and Strauss Miller placed third. Union Wrestling's Senior Night is planned for Friday, Dec. 9 at the UCHS gym. This year's evening is called Friday Night Fights. The Take Down Booster Club will be hosting a dinner prior to the event for all Union County alumni wrestlers at 5 pm for family style fellowship. Alumni as well as Seniors will be recognized for their hard work. Please make sure to attend. All alumni are encouraged to RSVP to Take Down Booster Club president, Cathy Agacinski at Cathy agacinski@gmail.com.













Jackson Arthur



Payton Legatt



Thomas Gary

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Towns County's Drew Sofield is trading the "Enchanted Valley" for "the Plains" after inking a baseball scholarship with Auburn University during his Nov. 9 ceremony at the Mountain Education Center's Blairsville campus.

Sofield arrived at Towns County High during the 2020-21 school year as a member of the Class of 2024, pitching for the Indians his freshman year. But since enrolling at MEC, he is on pace to graduate in May 2023 while playing baseball with the East Cobb Astros 18&U travel team based in Kennesaw.

He plans to arrive at Auburn during the summer of 2023 and begin his preparation for the Tigers' 2024 baseball season. Presently, he remains undecided on an area of study in college, though he's potentially looking to major in forestry or agriculture.

Sofield chose Auburn over Mississippi State and LSU, but he admits Auburn was always the front-runner.

"I considered Mississippi State because their pitching facilities are unreal, they are amazing," he said. "LSU is another school we considered, but I never even visited because I knew Auburn is where I wanted to be.

While Sofield has attracted interest from colleges as both a first baseman and a pitcher, it's primarily his left arm that has scouts doting over the 16-yearold southpaw.

Currently, he is working with a three-pitch repertoire that features a four-seam fastball that tops out at 93 mph while consistently sitting between 89-92. And Sofield keeps hitters off balance with a changeup and a curve ball that average 10-mph less than his heater.

However, with the prospect of facing SEC hitters less than 16 months away, Sofield is attempting to add a cutter to his pitch arsenal.



Drew Sofield with MEC staff during his ceremony. Photo/Todd Forrest spiration for perfecting the cut really well with the coaches. The fastball comes from Yankees great Mariano Rivera.

"Growing up, he was one of my pitching idols," he said. "He was throwing cutters at 94 (mph), and he's just a legend."

Although, Sofield admits his world could look very different if not for a chance opportunity he received at 9 years old.

"That was the first time I ever stepped on the mound," he said. "The coach told me, 'Instead of standing in the outfield picking daisies, why don't you come in here and pitch?'

'After I got done, I told my mom that pitching is the coolest thing in the world. You're all alone out there, you have the and been through so much to ball, and you're the one in control. I have loved it ever since."

Four years later, Sofield knew he had found a home on the pitcher's mound.

"Everything started to click about the time I was 13," he said. "I started drawing interest online from colleges, and that's when I realized I might be able to make a living (playing baseball), which has been my dream since I was 4 years old."

It was also around that time he received his first phone call from Auburn.

'I was in eighth grade, and it was during COVID, so we just talked a lot at the beginning," Sofield said. "We finally got to go there for a visit, and it's such a great area with beautiful weather. It just seems like a great place.

'Everyone is very nice, I Sofield noted that his in- loved the school and got along

first time I was able to throw for them, everything gelled, and I knew that was where I wanted to be.

Another one of Sofield's heroes is former Atlanta Brave and current Los Angeles Dodgers first baseman Freddie Freeman

"I've been a Braves fan my entire life, so I watched him a long time, and he seems like such a humble guy," he said. "He's somebody that you can tell really loves the game."

In closing, Sofield took a moment to thank his family, coaches and friends.

"My family has sacrificed get me here," he said. "All my coaches, especially Chuck Martin. I met him almost two years ago, and he's been so helpful and has always been there for whatever I need.

"I also want to thank my friends for always holding me to such a high standard."

Mountain High Hiking weekly schedule

Mountain High Hikers offer three hikes each week: Tuesdays, a long hike from 8 to14 miles; a short hike from 5 to 8 miles; and a Thursday leisure hike from 3 to 5 miles. We also do trail maintenance on Thursday and some outside events. Check us out on our website: mountainhighhikers. org. NT(Nov30,Z2)CA



Basketball photos: Union County at East Forsyth's Adrian Penland Classic



ophomore Maddox Young returned Friday vs. Rabun Gap.





Sophomore Katelyn Brown drives to . Chattahoochee





Sophomore Houston Henry draws a foul vs. Rabun Gap.





Junior Lara Turner goes up in the paint vs. Chattahoochee.

Freshman Cade Dockrey during the second half vs. Rabun Gap

Senior Ivie Chapman knocks down a free throw vs. Chattahoochee



Head coach Corey Garrett (center) returned to the Union County bench on Friday vs. Rabun Gap



Three days removed from his first coaching win, Brad Cochran won his second game vs. Chattahoochee.



Freshman Paula Robertson vs. Chattahoochee

Union County Recreation Department Monthly Hikes for Adults



Register at the Union County Recreation Department for the adult hike adventure! Your guide will be Dustin Rogers, along with Mickey and Patrick. You will see 3 waterfalls, 2 old cemeteries, and an old mill on Tuesday, December 6th from 8:30 AM-5 PM. The hike is 2¹/₂ miles and moderate to difficult (steep).

Meet at the Union County Sports Center at 8am to carpool to site. Please wear appropriate clothing/shoes, bring sack lunch, and water.

Please register in person at the Union County Sports Center by Monday, December 5th. Fee is \$5.