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the free throw, tying the score at 39-all with 1:09 left.

On the ensuing Lady Cats' possession, Union was whistled for a foul and Rabun converted 1-of-2 from the line, setting the stage for Arnold.

With her team leading 41-40, Rabun County Head Coach Dee Dee Dillard expected Tucker to turn to his bread and butter and find an open shooter for the game winner. With the Rabun defense swarming Zollinger and the 3-point line, Arnold went back to what she does best, putting her body on the line for her team, penetrating, and challenging the opposing teams' bigs in the paint.

"I felt we played a good defensive game and certainly thought we had a chance at the end to either force a turnover or, at the very least, create a hurried shot," Rabun's Coach Dillard said.

After beating the first line of defense, Arnold was fouled on her game winning attempt, only postponing Union's triumph for a few seconds as she connected on a pair of free throws.

"Hats off to Jeanelle for not only finding a seam and drawing contact, but also for knocking down two huge free throws," said a classy Coach Dillard after the game.



Shawna Brown launches a three. The senior said that so far, Rabun and Towns are the two signature wins of 2012-13. Photo/Todd Forrest

After losing gut wrenching games to White County and Greene County, and even dropping a pre-season scrimmage to Chestatee in the final seconds, Coach Tucker was proud of the way his team responded in a signature Region 8-AA win.

"Our girls kept believing and never quit," Coach Tucker said. "I told them to just keep battling and we'll find a way to win. This team never gives up and that's been the story all year."

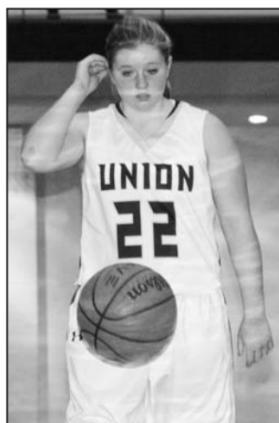
When it comes to determination and no quit attitude, Arnold epitomizes what the Lady Panthers have been all year. Union began the season

with many expecting this to be a rebuilding year, now Union is squarely in the mix for the 8-AA Region Title.

"I've always been the underdog, but I just did what I've been taught to do," Arnold said.

The Lady Panther senior guard finished with 8 points and grabbed 3 steals.

Zollinger led the way with 13 points, 4 steals, and 3 assists. Maddox scored 8 points, Adams went for 7 points, 7 rebounds, and blocked a shot, Hughes added 3 points and 3 steals, while Brown scored 2 points while grabbing 8 boards.



Hannah Hughes



Brooke Maddox

# M.L.K. Day of Service



Members of the Union County High School Beta Club participated in the MLK Community Service Day.

Over 30 Union County High School Students, teachers, and administrators gathered to turn a school holiday into a community service day.

The Union County High School Beta Club members volunteered to climb out of their warm beds on a very cold Martin Luther King Day and met others early in the morning to start the day of service.

The Bi-Lo grocery store served as the early morning meeting place to kick off the day. Bi-Lo provided hot chocolate and fresh doughnuts to the volunteers.

T Bentley, president of the Beta Club and the initiator of this day of service, outlined the activities and grouped the volunteers. Working with the Blairsville - Union County Chamber of Commerce, T and Cindy Williams identified community groups that needed volunteers for specific projects. Eight projects came forth from the call for help. "Unfortunately, three projects had to be turned down because they were outside of the scope of work that we could accomplish," said T Bentley.

"We certainly appreciate Cindy Williams and the Chamber of Commerce being willing to work with the Beta Club to formulate ideas and needs of the community."

With the grouping of the volunteers, they set out to five project destinations. Community

nity volunteers were already at the specific locations to accept the school volunteers and start them working. The tasks ranged from landscaping to painting to cleaning out storage sheds to folding and stuffing envelopes. Locations spread from Habitat for Humanity's location on one side of the county to the House of Prayer on the other side of the county, but basically all close to the city of Blairsville.

After a morning of serving others, everyone gathered to talk about what they did to serve others. Downtown Pizza provided the volunteers with the pizza buffet for lunch.

"I truly hope that this day of service will continue for years to come", said T Bentley. "There is no better activity than to have the school and community come together on MLK Day and to serve others." The day brought together community projects and students for a better tomorrow. Hopefully next year, the event can double in the number of students and the number of projects. Union County High School Beta Club has grown in size and in the spirit of serving so it should be possible with just a little more planning. Hopefully this year was just the first annual "Not just a day OFF from school, but a day ON for community service. If you have community service ideas for the Beta Club, please contact T Bentley at 706-745-2662.

# Union County Wrestling honors its seniors

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

Union County wrestled Pickens County on Senior Night last Tuesday, losing a close match 36-39.

Union County had pins from Will King at 170 pounds, Chase Barnett at 182 pounds, Nick Bertuna at 152 pounds, Dylan Byers at 160 pounds, Noah Bierce at 132 pounds, and Justin Eigel.

Union picked up wins from Jon Floyd at 195 pounds, Eddie Kemp at 113 pounds, and Keith Brewer pinned at 285 pounds.

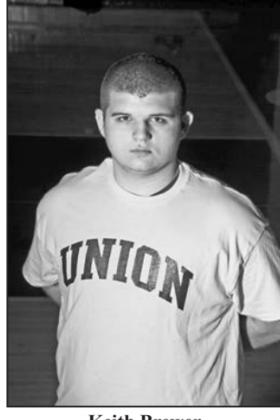
Union County Wrestling also honored and thanked its two varsity seniors, Alyssa Sinkler



Alyssa Sinkler

kler in the 126-pound weight class and Keith Brewer in the at 285-pound weight class.

Both are first year wrestlers for Union County.



Keith Brewer

Union will now begin preparing for the Individual Area Tournament this weekend at Greater Atlanta Christian in Norcross. Weigh-in begins at

2 p.m. on Friday and following an action packed day, the wrestling will resume at 9 a.m. on Saturday.

"Union Wrestling had a great Senior night," Coach Michael Smith-Foot said.

"I'm proud of the boys and women that represent our town and school."

Union County Middle School Wrestling completed its season last week with wins against Murphy, NC and Hiwassee Dam, NC.

"I couldn't be prouder of all the wrestlers as well as the job Coach (Arthur) McCann has done this season," Coach Bob Williams said. "We have come a long way in two seasons. I am extremely excited about the future of Union County wrestling."

# NASCAR 2013

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

## Can NASCAR return to its roots

"I really believe we're going to see some of the most competitive, intense and exciting racing we've seen in quite some time," Robin Pemberton, NASCAR's vice president of operations told reporters during last week's Charlotte Media Tour.

We've heard that almost every year prior to the start of racing.

Based on driver and team comments, this year could be different.

No previous new car design has received as much praise among drivers, manufacturers, or race teams as the new Gen-6 car.

That is a leap forward from the Car of Tomorrow. The COT was despised by drivers and fans from the first day to the last. It was ugly, boxy-looking and hard to race on certain tracks.

The new car is closer to the look of a real car than any other since the 1980s.

NASCAR chairman Brian France admitted it was a mistake to get away from individual looking cars.

"We certainly didn't intend to do that," said France. "We were looking to cut costs and increase safety, and we significantly improved that. But it would be fair to say that in doing those things, we weren't as in step with the manufacturers as we are today. Obviously, we got away from some things that historically had worked well for us.

"The collaborative effort between NASCAR, its teams and the auto manufacturers was unprecedented in designing this car. The entries for the three manufacturers are dramatically different from each other, just like the good old days."

For the first time in a long time, the Cup cars look like a car you could drive around town. More importantly, they look like a car you would want to drive.

It's a simple concept, but one that NASCAR misplaced along the way.

"We had a car (Gen-4) that looked really similar to the manufacturer vehicle that was in the showroom," Jeff Gordon said. "We went completely away from that in every which way, from having a splitter, we had the wing, and we just had



The new Gen-6 Chevrolets of Hendrick Motorsports.

this blocky looking car that wasn't a sexy looking car.

"We made the COT car a really good race car. It took a while, but we did. Now I look at this (Gen-6) race car and see where we're starting out with this car -- and it feels good. It drives good, it's forgiving, and it's got a great aerodynamic balance. So far, I'm a big fan. I love it. I like what's happening underneath the car. I like the body style."

That doesn't mean, however, that the transition to the new car will be easy.

"Any time you start to get used to something and there's a change, it's a learning curve," Gordon continued. "In my opinion, the older you get in this sport, and the more you've been around, the harder it is to switch to new things.

"There's going to be times, I think, that we're going to be challenged. But it seems like this car is going to be an improvement for everyone in the sport."

There were also a lot of mixed signals during last week's Media Tour. In addition to all the positives about the new car, Hendrick Motorsports announced the No. 88 driven by Dale Earnhardt Jr. will enter the 2013 season with 13 unsponsored races.

Rick Hendrick said there has been plenty of interest from sponsors and that he is more concerned with finding a match that will work beyond 2013.

"We've got a lot of good opportunities," Hendrick said. "The way we're positioned, the car is covered until the end of the summer. I don't have a deadline [for a deal]. I'm not



Dale Earnhardt Jr. talks to media on Jan. 23

looking at a timeline. I'm looking at the right deal.

"We are working on two or three deals, but we haven't put any line in the sand."

Hendrick said his other three Cup cars are fully sponsored. He doesn't believe that the open inventory on Earnhardt's car is an indicator that the economy hasn't turned around. He noted that more Fortune 500 companies entered the sport over the past year than in 2008.

"We have got the majority of the season with the Guard and then Diet Mountain Dew is going to back off a little bit, and that makes it a bit of a challenge to fill that small of a gap," said Earnhardt.

"If it were a bit larger gap, it would be easier to fill."

### NASCAR HAS ITS OWN DATING GAME

Danica Patrick revealed to the Associated Press that she and Ricky Stenhouse Jr. are a couple, ending widespread speculation about the nature of their relationship.

"I have a boyfriend, his name is Richard," she said dur-

ing a telephone interview with AP. The couple waited until the end of Charlotte Motor Speedway's week-long annual media tour to go public with their relationship, which started as a friendship as they raced each other the last two seasons in the Nationwide Series.

Stenhouse became a mentor of sorts to the 30-year-old Patrick, who left IndyCar after the 2011 season to make the full-time switch to NASCAR. Stenhouse, 25, confirmed the relationship.

"Yes we are dating," he said. "I don't normally say too much about my private life, always been focused on the track. I didn't want to confirm at media day so that we could keep the focus on the season, the Gen-6 car, my sponsors and team. That's what it's all about for me."

Patrick announced in November she and husband Paul Hopenhentel were divorcing after seven years, and said in the Jan. 3 filing that her marriage was "irretrievably broken."

Meanwhile Patrick, driver of the No. 10 in this year's Sprint Cup series will not be using Tony Stewart's owner points to start the year.

Stewart said, "I worked hard for my points. I believe Patrick will be fine."

The No. 10 team finished the 2012 season 33rd in owner points but has been told those owners points will be used for Tommy Baldwin's No. 7 team with driver Dave Blaney.

Baldwin will use the No. 36 owners points for his 2nd team, even though no driver has been announced.

So Patrick goes into the season with no owners points and will have to make the races via speed. There is no top-35 or guaranteed spots in 2013, but owners points will be used for 6 cars each race for provisional starting spots 37th thru 42nd and possibly the 43rd spot, if no past champion is entered.

Patrick has not finalized a deal to run any Nationwide Series races in 2013 but is hoping to do a 10-race deal with Turner Scott Motorsports.

**Racing Trivia Question:** Kevin Harvick said next year will be his last season at Richard Childress Racing. Who will he be with in 2014?  
**Last Week's Question:**

## Spring MUSA Registration

The Mountain United Soccer Association is ready for Spring Soccer. Registrations are now being accepted. Registration forms will be mailed to past registered players. You can also get forms at www.mountainsoccer.org.

The Fall 2012 season was a big success. Younger teams played in Blairsville, Hiwassee, and Blue Ridge. The older age groups competed throughout Georgia.

In Blairsville, Cott Beverage is our community host for the soccer fields. In Hiwassee, the fairgrounds through the recreation department have been the host. The league is grateful for their commitment and support for the youth in our

communities.

The Spring season will begin in April. Anyone who is interested in playing needs to get a registration form in as soon as possible, in some cases space is limited.

The league is a volunteer run organization and is also a 501C3 non profit. Any and all donations are directed to the youth player to make it possible. Field Sponsors, Sign Sponsors, and Team Sponsors are always needed. If you are interested in being a sponsor, please contact the Association.

For more information contact the league at 706-835-1077 or www.mountainsoccer.org

## Union County Recreation Department 2013 upcoming events

The Union County Recreation Department announces 2013 upcoming events, for more information contact 706-439-6074.

The Baseball/Softball/Coast Pitch/T Ball/Start Smart registration for ages 3 - 14 began on January 14th and will end on February 15th. \$50 fee, anyone not registered by

February 15 will be charged an additional \$10 late registration fee and will be placed on a waiting list.

Ditch the workout and join the party! Zumba/Abx & More/Toning schedule is available at www.unioncountyrecreation.com. \$5 per class or \$35 monthly unlimited classes.

## AHT Hoops Basketball Camp

AHT Hoops basketball camp will be in Union County on Feb. 9th and 10th.

Coach A.J. Gwyn and Union County's Michael Ross will be hosting a boys session and girls session each day (2 hours per session).

Registration ends Feb. 6th or when 25 slots have been filled for each group. This camp will be for 6th-8th grade athletes.

Registration has already begun and will be \$50 per athlete and will be held at the Union County Recreation Department gymnasium (rubber floor gym).

Contact Coach A.J. Gwyn at aht hoops@aol.com for additional information.

You can also visit AHT Hoops' Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/AhtHoops.

## Youth Bowling League thanks Blairsville Huddle House



The Blairsville Bowling Youth League would like to express their gratitude towards the Huddle House of Blairsville for their donation towards the league. This will go towards competitions throughout Georgia. The Youth League meets every Saturday at 11 a.m. All ages are welcome to join us. Please contact Galaxy Bowling for information.