

# Sports

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## Soccer season opens with sweep of Fannin, Wilkes

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Following a one-sided win for the Union County Lady Panthers, the Panthers completed the sweep of rival Fannin County in the evening thanks to some last-minute heroics from senior Keaton Dyer.

Later in the week, Union opened Region 8-AA play at Washington Wilkes where senior Maddie Morlock scored six goals in a 10-0 mercy-rule shortened victory.

The guys surrendered an early goal to the Tigers but responded with seven unanswered to take the 7-1 win.

Two week's ago, snow canceled the Region 8-AA contest at Rabun County so Union County soccer opened its 2015 season with a non-region foe.

The Lady Panthers picked up their fifth straight win over Fannin County by a score of 5-0, with Morlock leading the way. The senior scored two first half goals before adding her third, five minutes into the second half as Union took control.

Junior Ansley Garrison added another goal with 17:59 remaining, then the Lady Panthers' lead stretched to 5-0 on a Camryn Carter corner kick with 10:51 left.

Play would never resume after the fifth goal due to a Fannin County player losing consciousness on the sideline, resulting in a stoppage of play while paramedics tended to the fallen Lady Rebel.

The player was released from the hospital the next day.

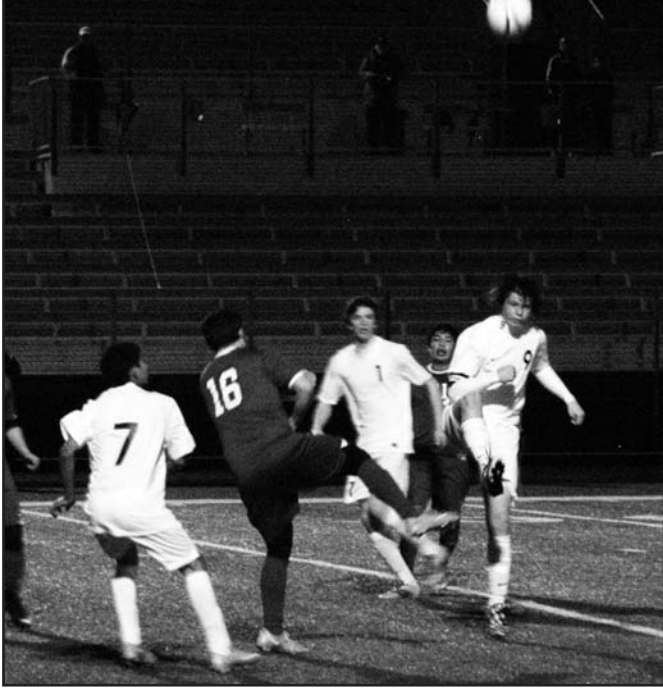
In the early going, Union got on the board in the fifth minute of action when Morlock attacked the keeper head on for the first goal of the game.

Still leading 1-0 in the 20th minute, Morlock and sophomore Joanna Irvin were denied by a pair of remarkable plays by the Fannin keeper that included a one-handed deflection on Irvin's second chance attempt after Morlock's shot was stopped.

In the 32nd minute, the Lady Rebels went on the offensive but Garrison and freshman goalie Emmi Schakat made plays of their own to keep



Senior Maddie Morlock with a header during the first half of Union's shutout win over Fannin. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Keaton Dyer (9) with a header vs Fannin. Photo/Todd Forrest

Fannin off the board. But the Lady Panthers had another shot denied by Fannin's goalie at the 7:50 mark before misfiring at the 5:00 and 3:45 mark of the half.

In the 38th minute, Morlock made it 2-0 when she added another goal from the left flank despite colliding with two Lady Rebels.

As the second half opened, Coach Hunter's squad were looking to put the visitors away as quickly as possible and Fannin was unable to stem the Lady Panthers onslaught and Morlock made it 3-0 in the game's 48th minute.

In the second game of the day, Union's guys were able edge the Rebels 3-2 after

Dyer scored the game-winner with 37 seconds left in the contest.

However, it was Fannin who drew first blood with a goal in the game's seventh minute. But senior Brett Dietz responded with a pair of goals in the first half to give the Panthers a 2-1 advantage at the break.

The score would remain unchanged until the game's 78th minute when the Rebels knotted things up at 2-2. Less than 90 seconds later, Dyer put Union back on top for good.

Dietz's first goal came in the 11th minute when he attacked from the right flank.

In the 16th minute, ju-



Junior Jesus Mancillas looks for space to take a shot or pass during the first half vs Fannin County. Photo/Todd Forrest



Senior Rachel Vester advances upfield during the first half of the Fannin County game. Photo/Todd Forrest

nior keeper Justin Eigel denied Fannin on a free kick and in the 24th minute, Dietz gave the Panthers the lead with a header off an assist from sophomore Sam Seiler.

"Dietz has become a force for us and attracts two or three defenders due to his aggressiveness, Union Head Coach Tim Hunter said. "He didn't start playing until his sophomore year but credits his improvement to playing FIFA (video game) at home and on his phone. Eigel came through again with another save in the 27th minute when he was able to deflect the Rebel shot.

On Friday, Union made the long trek south to Wash-

ington Wilkes to open Region play.

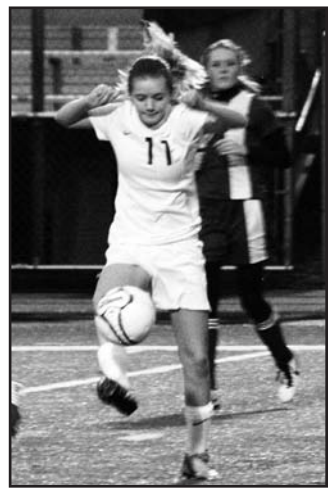
The Lady Panthers took a 5-0 lead into the intermission then kept their foot on the accelerator during the second half in a 10-0 rout.

"We could have mercy ruled them in the first half," Coach Hunter said. "We shot so many times right at the keeper. (Freshman) Brenna Innis played the best I've ever seen her play. She set up three goals right in front of the keeper that we either missed or hit the keeper in the chest."

Morlock scored the first of her six goals in the game's fifth minute off a feed from Carter. Morlock struck again



Parker McCombs



Layne Baenninger

in the eighth minute, then in the 20th minute, sophomore Joanna Irvin scored on an assist from freshman Layne Baenninger.

Senior Katie Miller set up Garrison for the fourth goal in the 28th minute and Morlock tacked on another unassisted goal with 65 seconds left in the half.

Morlock struck again, less than four minutes into the second half with Rachel Vester recording the assist.

Less than three minutes later, Garrison found Morlock for Union's seventh goal. Then 10 minutes into the half, Morlock scored her sixth goal of the game - one shy of a team record.

The final two goals were unassisted with Garrison scoring the ninth with just under 24 minutes to play and Carter ending the game with the tenth goal with 15:27 left.

In the guys' game, Wilkes struck in the second minute but senior Kyle Hamby quickly tied things up.

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## Panthers put up 29 runs in doubleheader sweep at Washington Wilkes

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**Washington** - The Union County baseball season is finally underway.

After an 18-day hold-up and five cancellations - including one scrimmage game, the Panthers were forced to dive right into Region play but didn't resemble a team that hadn't played a single inning.

Washington Wilkes entered the contest at 2-0 in Region play after sweeping a doubleheader from Riverside Military Academy almost two weeks back.

However, Union proved to be the toughest adversary thus far for the Tigers, who dropped to 2-5 overall after the Panthers blasted them for a combined score of 29-1 in two games.

**Panthers 17  
Washington Wilkes 0**

In the first contest - a high noon meeting at Wilkes, it was the visitors from Blairsville that were lighting things up.

A four-run first inning and a nine-run fifth combined with junior Joseph Mancuso's five-inning no-hitter, equaled a 17-0 trouncing that was ended by the mercy rule after five innings.

Union (2-0, 2-0) pounded Wilkes with 15 hits and seven doubles to go along with four walks and a pair of stolen bases in the game. The Panthers were also aided by five Tiger errors.

Defensively, Union was flawless behind Mancuso, who struck out nine, walked three, and hit a batter as he picked his first win of the season on the mound. At the plate, he walked and doubled home a pair



Barnett, (44) Mancuso, (9) and the Panthers celebrate a walk off win last April. Photo/Todd Forrest

of runs.

Juniors Josh Daniel and Lance Rich each finished with a three-hit game with Rich scoring three times while driving in three runs, and Daniel drove in two and scored two, with each adding a double to their stat line.

Senior Robert Prunier doubled, scored, and knocked in two while sophomore Slade Thompson scored twice and brought in two runs with a double.

Senior cleanup hitter Jake Sisum drove in three, doubled, and scored during a 2-for-4 game at the plate.

Another senior, Hunter Hughes scored four times, singled twice, walked, and stole a bag from the No. 2 spot in the lineup.

Junior outfielder Andrew Brown scored twice,

singled twice, and swiped a bag while senior Jackson Burks scored twice, knocked in a run, and drew a base-on-balls. Junior Will King entered for senior catcher Chase Barnett and drew a walk.

**Panthers 12  
Washington Wilkes 1**

The second contest wound up going the full seven innings with Union holding a comfortable 7-1 advantage entering the seventh inning.

In the final inning, the Panthers churned out five runs for a 12-1 victory.

Sisum finished with a monster game at the plate with four hits, five RBIs, a two-run homer, and a double. He also picked up a stolen base.

Mancuso also went yard in game two - a three-run blast to go along with a double and four RBIs.

Senior Tyler Odom worked 3.2 innings on the mound to pick up the win. He yielded one earned run, four hits with six strikeouts and three walks.

Daniel went the final 3.1 innings with four strikeouts, while allowing one hit and no runs. From the leadoff spot in the lineup, Daniel tripled, singled and scored twice.

After going hitless in game one, Barnett's bat came to life during round two with two hits, an RBI, a run, and two stolen bases.

Hughes went 2-for-4 with a double, two runs, an RBI, and a steal. Burks picked up a pair of singles and scored once.

### Union at Washington Wilkes Game One

Union County	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO	LOB
J Daniel	4	2	3	2	0	0	0
P Baggett	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
H Hughes	2	4	2	0	1	0	0
J Mancuso	3	0	1	2	1	1	3
J Sisum	4	1	2	3	0	1	2
J Burks	2	2	0	1	1	0	2
L Rich	4	3	3	3	0	0	2
A Brown	3	2	2	0	0	0	1
D Groves	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
C Barnette	3	0	0	0	0	1	4
W King	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
R Prunier	3	1	1	2	0	1	1
S Thomps...	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>

**1B:** Daniel 2, Hughes 2, Sisum, Rich 2, Brown **2B:** Daniel, Mancuso, Sisum, Rich, Brown, Prunier, Thompson **TB:** Daniel 4, Hughes 2, Mancuso 2, Sisum 3, Rich 4, Brown 3, Prunier 2, Thompson 2 **SB:** Hughes, Brown **CS:** Daniel, Mancuso **Team LOB:** 5

### PITCHING

Union County	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
J Mancuso	5.0	0	0	0	3	9	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>

**WP:** Mancuso **P-S:** Mancuso 66-41

Game two box score on page 13A

Rich singled, scored, and walked twice. Brown walked and swiped a base. Thompson walked and scored and Prunier scored one and drove in one.

Union finished the game with 15 hits - six going for extra bases, while drawing seven walks. In the field, the Panthers committed one error - their only one of the doubleheader.

During the doubleheader sweep, Union finished with 30 hits, 13 extra-base hits, 11 walks, and seven stolen bases.

On Tuesday at 5 p.m., the Panthers will visit Riverside, who lost both games of a twin bill, 4-3 and 13-12 to Washington Wilkes on the last day of February. The Eagles are 0-3 overall with the most recent loss coming last week to Class A's St. Francis (4-3, 1-1) by an 8-4 score.

On Thursday, Union will host its home opener when Murphy, NC comes calling at 5 p.m. The Bulldogs have also been dealt a

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