

Sports

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Lady Panthers at Towns ends in 2-2 stalemate; Union blasts Greene 10-0

UC men's soccer suffer first ever loss to Towns; respond with win at Greene

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The Union County Lady Panthers remain unbeaten after a 2-2 tie at Towns County and a 10-0 blowout at Greene County.

Union avoided dropping the second consecutive contest to the Lady Indians but were unable to get the win.

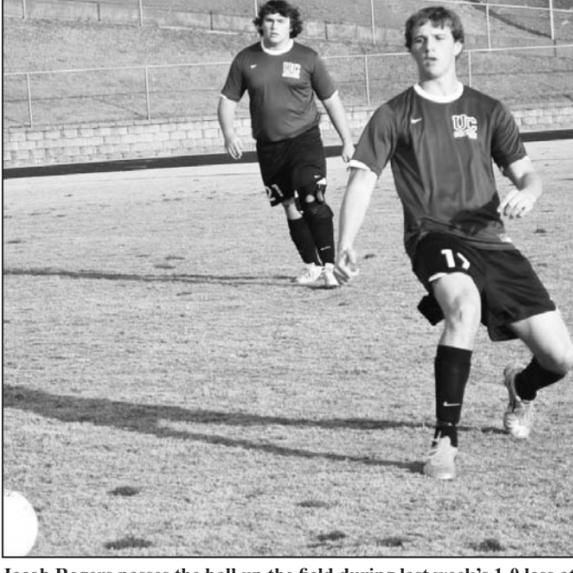
Towns County got on the board early and the 1-0 score held for the remainder of the half.

"One of our defenders trapped the ball right in front of the goal giving them the easy shot," Union Head Coach Tim Hunter said. "We played back and forth for the rest of the half with Towns generally having the advantage."

In the second half, Maddy Morlock changed the complexion of the game with her aggressive play.

She carried the Lady Panthers into the lead at 2-1 until Towns County star player, and Liberty University commit, Faith Robinson evened things up at 2-2, late in the game.

"Maddy (Morlock) stepped up and stole the opening kickoff and went through the entire Towns defense to level the game at 1-1," Coach Hunter



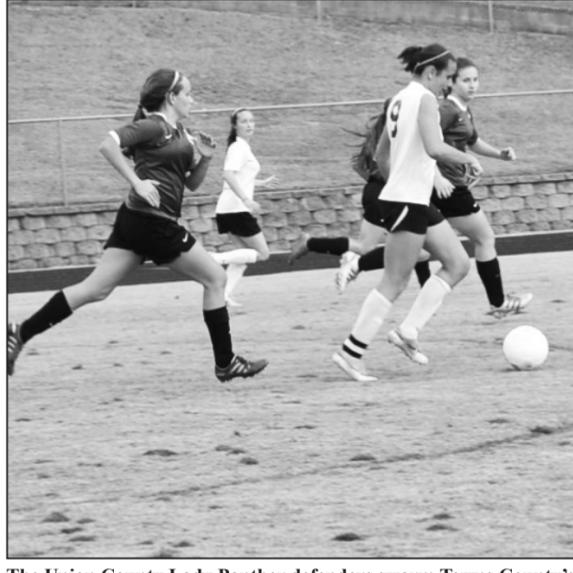
Jacob Rogers passes the ball up the field during last week's 1-0 loss at Towns County.

said. "She scored the next goal giving us the lead until Faith Robinson hit a long range free kick in the very late minutes of the second half.

"Overall our girls played really well. I was very proud of Erin's (Innis) play and her leadership. She honestly played about as well as I could have asked. Our defense, especially Ansley Garrison and Emma Smith did a great job containing

Robinson, and Joanna Van Pelt played very well in the goal for us. Rachel Vester played a very good game up front and despite not scoring a goal herself, she created several opportunities for us and harassed the Towns defense with her speed all game long."

On Friday, the Lady Panthers traveled more than 3 hours for a game that was much shorter than the trip. Union County



The Union County Lady Panther defenders swarm Towns County's Faith Robinson during the final moments of the tied game.

dominated from start to finish in a 10-0 victory and improved to 2-0 in Region play.

The mercy rule came in to play with 19:00 remaining when Mary Murphy's goal ended the game.

Camryn Carter scored two goals in the first half, including the first one of the contest at the 28:43 mark.

Rachel Vester and Morlock scored first half goals, as

did Ansley Garrison - the first of her varsity career.

Morlock added two more goals in the second half, Vester and Innis added one each before Murphy's goal ended things.

Vester added 2 assists, while Innis, Murphy, Carter, and Morlock had one each.

The Towns County Indians soccer team got their first win of the season against Union County by a 1-0 score

last week.

It was also their first win ever over the Union County men's soccer team, since the inception of Union County soccer in 1996.

"We lost 1-0 (to Towns) for the first time ever, and that pretty much says it all," Coach Hunter said. "Our guys came out and played flat and faced a Towns team that wanted the game more than we did. I think we just thought we would win if we showed up, and as a result, we forgot what gives us a chance at being successful, and that is playing hard and playing together the entire time."

On Friday, Greene County got on the board first before Union scored four unanswered to put the Tigers away 4-1.

Parker McCombs scored the first goal of his career, the first one tied the game in the 9th minute and the second goal was Union's fourth and final point of the game.

Keyle Hamby scored the second goal and Jesus Mancillas got goal number three with a penalty kick.

Sophomore Dylan Byers notched his second win at keeper.

Union's varsity is off until Friday when Riverside comes to town for a boys only contest at 6:30. JV is at 5 p.m.

Panthers take out Indians twice; offense at a premium in loss to Rabun

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The month of March has been a roller coaster ride for Union County baseball, and the crucible of region play just around the corner for the Panthers and Head Coach Brandon Bradburn.

The Panthers (7-3, 1-2) were flying high following senior Lane Everett's flawless victory over Oglethorpe and the momentum carried over into last Monday's contest with Towns County.

The Panthers hosted the arrival Indians and sent them home after four innings in a 16-1 shellacking. Towns got on the board in the top half of the first but wouldn't score again, and it was all Union from then on. The Panthers built an 8-1 lead after one, added two in the second, three in the third, and three more in the fourth to wrap it up via mercy rule.

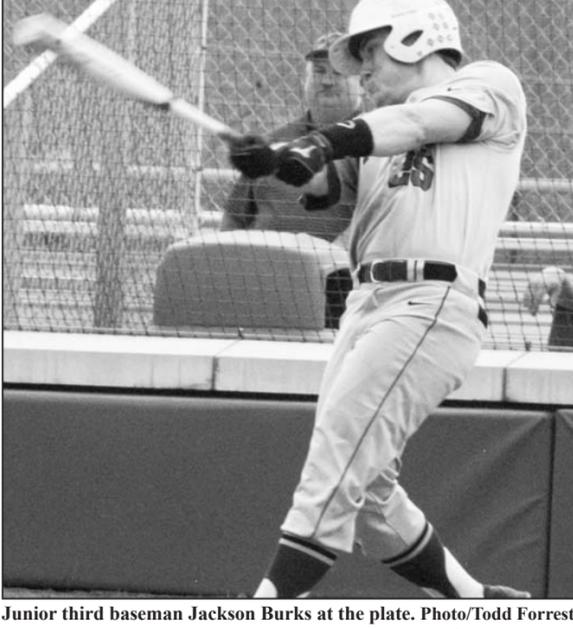
Despite the postseason approximately six weeks out, playoff implications were already on the line when Rabun County rolled into town on Tuesday and took a 4-2 win over the surging Panthers.

However, the Wildcats made a statement right out of the gates by getting a run off Everett in the first inning and two more in the second. Meanwhile, Rabun junior second Scott baffled the Union lineup, taking a one-hit shutout into the seventh inning before the Panthers stacked on two.

On Wednesday, Union paid a visit to Hiwassee to take on the Indians for the second time in three days and this time, Towns County threw everything but the kitchen sink at the Panthers.

Leading 5-0, Union surrendered three runs in the fifth, and one in the sixth but were able to hold off their archrival for a 6-4 win and remain unbeaten on the road.

"We hit the ball decent in all



Junior third baseman Jackson Burks at the plate. Photo/Todd Forrest

three games, pitched really well, but defensively we aren't making things easy on the pitcher," Coach Bradburn said. "Our whole team is banged up, so we really just need to get healthy and make sure that when we come out on the field next week, we are 100 percent.

On Wednesday, the Panthers will host No. 4 Jefferson at 5 p.m. before making the trek south to Greene County on Friday for a doubleheader, also starting at 5 p.m.

"Our schedule doesn't get any better and we don't have time to feel sorry for ourselves about the Rabun loss because we have Jefferson coming to town on Tuesday," Coach Bradburn said.

**Panthers 16
Towns County 1**

Sophomore Joseph Mancuso recorded his first win of the

year and sent an 0-1 pitch over the centerfield fence for a 2-run bomb in the third, as Union met little resistance from its next-door neighbor Towns County (1-4).

The Union right-hander needed 80 pitches to get through four innings, while walking three, fanning five, and allowing two hits.

The Indians managed to push one run across in the first when a lead off double staked Towns to its only lead of the season over Union. The lead lasted one pitch.

Sophomore Josh Daniel took the first Indian offering out of the yard for his second blast of the season. Three doubles, four walks, and an Indian fielding blunder allowed the Panthers to put the game away with an 8-run first inning.

Everett finished 1-for-3 at the dish with 3 RBI. Junior Robert Prunier went 1-for-2, also with 3



Junior Robert Prunier with a shot to deep right. Photo/Todd Forrest

RBI's. Garrett Nix, Jake Sisum, and Jackson Burks each added doubles for the Panthers.

**Panthers 2
Rabun County 4**

With Rabun accounting for six of the games' 10 errors, Union was unable to muster any offense until the seventh inning, after spotting the Wildcats four runs.

Everett didn't have his best stuff this time out, but went the distance, remaining effective all the way. The Panther ace allowed just two earned runs, six hits, one walk, and struck out five to keep his team in the game.

Unfortunately, an infield single by junior Chase Barnett in the bottom of the third was Union's only hit until the Panthers were one-out away from being shutout.

When the defenses didn't get in the way, the contest was a

intriguing pitchers duel between Everett, reigning 8-AA First Team All-Region selection, and Scott, a Second Team All-Region Selection. The Rabun right-hander also worked a complete game, giving up four hits, two walks, one earned run and striking out four.

"Anytime we lose to Rabun it is disappointing, but I didn't feel like it was a huge let down," Coach Bradburn said. "Their guy (Scott) pitched a very efficient ball game and we couldn't get into many positive counts at the plate. We actually hit the ball very well, but the harder we hit it, the more it was going right at them."

The Wildcats used a two-out rally to strike for a run in the first inning, and two more in the second. The fourth run came in the sixth on a leadoff triple and a sacrifice fly.

Sophomore Lance Rich's two-out single in the seventh kept

the Panthers alive. With Andrew Brown running for Rich, Barnett singled back up the middle, and Prunier doubled them both home. Following the two-bagger, Daniel walked and Hughes reached on an error to put the tying run in scoring position but the rally was derailed when a mishap on the base paths ended the game.

**Panthers 6
Towns County 4**

Hiwassee - Nix (1-1) got his first win of the season in four innings of work as the Panthers responded to the loss to Rabun with a too-close-for-comfort win over Towns County. In the victory, he struck out four, walked six, and gave up two hits and one earned run.

At the plate the Panthers went without an extra-base hit but pounded out 11 singles and were aided by two Indian errors to hold on for the win.

"Towns came out and played much better in game two," Coach Bradburn said. "I believe they pitched their ace and he threw a pretty good ball game. The wind chill was in the 20's, so nobody could get in the zone offensively or defensively. We were very happy about coming out of there with a win."

Union got one run in the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth innings, and posted two in the third. Towns put up three in the fifth to get back in the game but Tyler Odom settled down and worked the final three innings, picking up a save.

Odom allowed three earned on four hits and two walks, while striking out five.

Daniel had a 4-for-5 outing at the plate with a run, an RBI, and stole a base. Everett was 2-for-4 with a steal, Burks finished 2-for-2 and an RBI, and Mancuso 1-for-5 with an RBI.

Falcons' visit to Towns County a success

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Hiwassee - Woody Gap tennis squared off with Towns County last Thursday afternoon in Hiwassee, and the Falcons took all three of their matches in convincing fashion.

Meanwhile, the Lady Falcons were playing short-handed but still managed to take two of their five matches against the Lady Indians.

No. 1 Eli Gooch was victorious over Towns County's Garrett Bradshaw 8-3 and No. 2 Dakotia Etheridge won his match by forfeit.

The No. 1 doubles team of Casey McKim and Connor Sosebee took care of Jaryd Gurley and Cody Canterbury by an 8-1 score.

Logan Wood and Austin Clark dominated their match 8-0 at No. 2 doubles.

The Lady Falcons No. 1 April Turner dropped her match to Eryn Cochran but No. 2 Shelby Tumlin defeated Lesleigh Irvin 8-3.

Haley Grizzle and Nina Sattler battled back from a 7-3 hole to take their No. 3 doubles match from Ashley Smith and Emma Ledford, 9-7.



The Woody Gap tennis teams are continuing to prepare for the Area Tournament by challenging much larger schools from Class AAA and AAAA. The Falcons have found some success against the larger teams, and it paid off when they and a fellow Class A school, Towns County.

The No. 1 doubles team of Lauren Adams and Brooklyn Dockery fell to Towns County's Allison Page and Carly Giffillan.

Kianna Martin and Han-

nah Skipper were in action at No. 2 doubles but came up short against the Lady Indians' Courtney Marshall and Kellsie Cowart.

This week, Woody Gap

will host Commerce at Meeks Park in Blairsville beginning at 4 p.m. Woody Gap won't be this close to home until the Fannin match on Apr. 8th

Union Co. Swimming holds year end banquet



The Union County High School seniors were honored at the banquet. Left to right: Austin Norton, Stephanie Stanton, Amelia Turner, Lindsey McCann, and Anna Knight



Award winners: Anna Knight - Most Valuable Swimmer, Brennen Wilkes - Most Valuable Swimmer, Austin Norton - Coaches Award, Azaleigh Harkins - Most Improved Swimmer. The Panthers and their coaches, Carol Knight and Kathy Mancuso, thank Union General Wellness Center for its ongoing sponsorship. Trish Wilkes as the dedicated president of the UCHS Swim Team Booster Club deserves enumerable thanks also for all her many hours of work on behalf of the swimmers. Thank you also to the leadership and faculty of Union County High School.