

Spring Towns/Union Special Olympics



Union County Athletes

On May 9th, athletes from Towns and Union Counties participated in the Spring Towns/Union Special Olympic games held at Towns County High School. Opening ceremonies began at 9:30 with an athletes procession around the track, the Special Olympics Oath "Let Me Win, But If I Cannot Win, Let Me Be Brave In The Attempt." Special Olympics Committee recognizing parents remembering 2 athletes from Towns County who have passed on, and recognizing Rebecca Dyer who has been the long time treasure of Towns/Union Special Olympics.

The games began with the track events with Pastor Jerry Helton emceeding events. Other events were soccer skills, softball throw, and standing long jump.

For the first time adults 21 and over from Avita community partners, and Day Retreat participated in our fall and spring games. They have been so much fun and a wonderful addition to the Games.

After the events the athletes and their families enjoyed lunch provided by the Blairsville Kiwanis, Blairsville Bi-Lo, and Ingles. Drinks were provided by the Union County Recreation department.

The mission of Special Olympics Georgia is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for all children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Our goal is to help bring persons with intellectual disabilities into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected, and given the chance to become useful and productive citizens. When we achieve this goal through our sports program, we demonstrate that Special Olympics has a unique value: to show the world that every person counts and that every person can be something good when we work together.

Special Olympics Georgia invests in people with intellectual disabilities, helping



Nikki Mandi wins Gold



Katie Dyer wins Silver



Jimmy Mason

them to develop athletic skills, while also promoting the abilities of the athletes off the field. When our athletes succeed, attitudes change, communities develop, health and self-esteem are built, and the eyes of the world are focused on all that is good and hopeful and positive. Athletes gain skills for employment, learn independent living skills, form relationships and help others understand their extraordinary capabilities despite health issues they experience



Trevor Tracy

daily. For more information on Towns Union Special Olympics you may contact Becky Tracy at btracy@ucschools.org or 706-781-6965.

Donations can be made by sending a check, money order, to: Towns/Union Special Olympics c/o Becky Tracy, 165 Elementary Way, Blairsville, GA 30512.

Please make checks payable to: Towns/ Union Special Olympics.



Masters Adult Athletes

UCHS Softball Summer Schedule

June 10th - Practice 10 a.m. - noon.
June 11th - Summer League Games vs. Towns 5:30/7:00 p.m. (@Union).
June 17th -Practice 10 a.m. - noon.
June 18th - Summer League Games vs. TBA - doubleheader.
June 20th - Summer League Games vs. TBA - doubleheader.
June 24th - Summer League Games vs. Towns 5:30/7 p.m. (@Union).
June 25th - Summer League Games vs. Lumpkin at 5 p.m. vs. Dawson at 6:30 p.m. (@Lumpkin County).
July 1st -5th - GHSA Softball Dead Week. No games or practices allowed. 8-11-

Panther Pride Team Camp (TBA)
July 9th- Summer League Games vs. Fannin. Towns vs Fannin, Union vs. Towns (@ Union).
July 15th -Summer League Games vs. Fannin, Towns vs Fannin, and Union vs. Towns (@Union).
July 16th - Summer League Games vs. Gilmer and Fannin at Union.
July 18th - Practice 10 a.m.-12 p.m.
July 22 - North Georgia Summer Classic - TBA (@ North Georgia College)
July 23 - North Georgia Summer Classic- TBA (@ North Georgia).
July 29th - hitting at 4 p.m. and conditioning at 5

p.m.
July 30 - Fielding at 4 p.m. and conditioning at 5 p.m.
July 31 - Hitting/fielding at 4 p.m. and conditioning at 5 p.m. (timed mile and hills).
Aug. 1st - practice 4-6 p.m.
Aug. 2- workout 3:30-4:30 p.m.
Aug. 3 - 100 Inning Game at 10 a.m. followed by team cookout at 5 p.m.
 Game schedule will be released over the summer. You must have a physical to participate in the summer workouts.
 Please call Coach Stewart (706-897-7372) or Coach Cagle (706-492-3039) if you have any questions.

UCRD Summer Registrations

Football (tackle): registration is May 1 - June 15, ages 7 - 12; fee \$90 (after June 15 \$100); teams assigned by age.
Football (flag): registration is May 1 - June 15, ages 5-6; fee \$35 (after June 15 \$45).
Wrestling: registration is May 1 - 15, ages 4 - 14; fee \$30.
Cheerleading: registra-

tion is May 1 - June 15, ages 5 - 12; fee \$95. At registration child must be present to be fitted for uniform.
Summer Day Camp: location is Union County Kidz Korner, 683 Ledford Road; registration is Now; ages 4 - 13; fee \$80 per week (includes breakfast, lunch and most activities; May 20 thru Aug 2nd.)

UCHS Banquets

Last Thursday the Union County soccer and baseball teams held their banquets. Both soccer squads and the baseball team reached the Sweet 16. It was a historic spring for Union County High School athletics. For more details and pictures, pick up a copy of next week's *North Georgia News*.

Sunbelt Senior Tour: Sanchez leads wire-to-wire at "The Nut"

By Joe Collins
 North Georgia News
 Staff Writer

The Sunbelt Senior Professional Golf Tour was in town last Thursday, Friday and Saturday to sponsor the Blairsville Senior Open Championship at the beautiful Butternut Creek Golf Course.

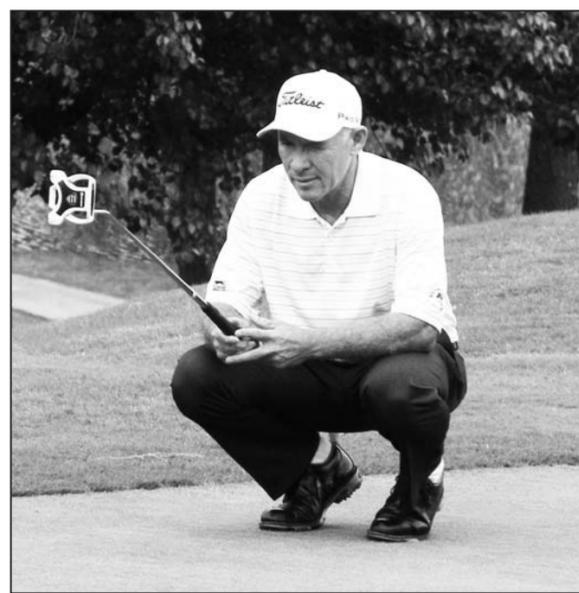
The course was playing 6536 yards from the gold tee and it was in great shape. The golf was competitive as several big names from the regional golfing area accepted the challenge of "The Nut."

A well-known and successful pro from Fayetteville, Javier Sanchez took home the first place prize of \$2,000 as he controlled his game on a venue that was providing her own challenge for the players. His total score of (-12) 207 for the 3-day tournament was good enough by 3 shots over second place finisher Al Jernigan who shot 210 and Bob Niger in third with 212. Niger gave chase early in the final round but spent his powder as Sanchez kept his ball out of trouble by splitting fairways and hitting greens and making some putts. The course was demanding ball control and Sanchez gave it exactly what it asked for.

Georgia's own Tim Conley, who has won many professional titles and played competitive golf all over the world, was tied for the lead after the first day but couldn't get the putts to fall on Friday or Saturday. "I really enjoy coming here to play. The guys on the tour enjoy coming here. It's a great place and the folks are friendly. It's nice to see Larry (Garrett BCGC Pro) and all the guys I've gotten to know over the years. I enjoy the layout. It is a tough golf course that you really have to control your shots on. It requires you to hit different shots and that is always fun if you playing well and making some putts. The greens are a little tough this year but it has been wet and that is just the way it is. Guys are still going to make putts. I made some putts this week just not enough (chuckles)."

"This is a good course for Javier (Sanchez) cause that's the way he plays; fairways and greens. He keeps his game in control," declared Conley when discussing the tour stop in Blairsville and his friend Sanchez.

Sanchez began the final day at (-9), 137, five shots ahead of Roger Rowland who was at (-4), 142 and six shots ahead of third place Niger at (-3), 143. He drove the ball off the par 5 first tee into the left side of the fairway but blocked from the green by the Thompson Mound. He played aggressive with a 5-iron on the second shot and took the ball between two evergreens and over the mound with authority. He found himself on the right side of the fairway and 40 yards from the pin. His wedge shot rolled to within 3 feet and he made his putt



Javier Sanchez reads the green before his putt. The 54-year old Fayetteville native took home first place at Butternut. Photo/Joe Collins

for birdie to increase his lead to 6 shots as Rowland and Niger each made par.

There was a two shot swing at the dog-leg par 4 third hole as Sanchez failed to get up and down making bogey while Rowland and Niger each made birdie. Sanchez hit his next tee shot on the very difficult uphill par three fourth to within 10 feet, nearly holing out from the tee, just to let everyone know that a bogey was not going to sidetrack him. The birdie putt failed to find the hole but the tee shot was proof positive that Sanchez was still solid.

Niger and Sanchez both shot -2 on the front nine holes and -1 on the back nine, which ended up placing Niger third overall as Al Jernigan shot the low round of the day (-7), 66 to move to within 3 shots of Sanchez but too little too late as Sanchez closed the deal with a final round (-3) 70 to take the win. It was an amazing day at BCGC.

BCGC Head Professional Larry Garrett was on hand for the entire event and stated this about the tournament and what it means to Blairsville and local golf, "This event is great for our area and the golf course. It brings in some big names to play and that helps get the word out about the quality of our course here in the mountains. We are honored to have the players come here and are delighted that the tour thinks enough of our course to stage a tournament right here in Blairsville. The players enjoy coming here and we welcome their stay. It's a win-win for everybody and folks are welcome to come out and watch the golf. There are good players in the field every year for this tournament and we are spectator friendly. Our facility here provides the perfect setting to watch golf off the second floor balcony."

Tournament Champion Sanchez was born in the mountains of Mexico and had a tough time of it growing up. It wasn't until he was 21 years old that he

tried golf and got hooked. He has been playing competitive golf for over twenty years and has had the privilege of playing in five United States Open Championships and three U.S. Senior Open Championships with his best finish coming in 2010. He was in the hunt until the final day at Sahalee Country Club in Sammamish, Wash., but the nerves got to him.

"I actually had a chance to do well in that tournament but seeing my name on the leaderboard got the old nerves going and I got a little uncomfortable. I still finished well eventually in thirty-second overall. That was a lot of fun and good experience," said Sanchez of the finish.

He is a quite golfer who says a lot with his clubs. He was humble in his acceptance of victory and took time to visit with anyone who wished to speak with him. His golf swing is simple and very affective as he proved this week. He has a legitimate chance of qualifying for the Senior Open this year as evidenced by his playing and Garrett and the staff at BCGC wished him well.

"Winning this event will help my confidence for the rest of the year. I have had one second place finish in seven starts but I played very bad last week on the greens. I switched to the "claw" putting grip this week and it worked. Maybe I have found something there that will help me at the Senior Open qualifying. Who knows?" said an inspired Sanchez.

The Sunbelt Pro Golfers tour is a developmental tour that gives players a chance to compete under tournament conditions while preparing to qualify for bigger events such as the Champions Tour many see on TV week in and week out. Some of these guys have what it takes to qualify for that tour and that makes the Blairsville Senior Open a good golf tournament at a good venue.

UCES Field Day Tug-of-War Champions



Union County Elementary Field Day Tug of War Tournament Champions. 3rd Grade - Sherri Jones' Class, 4th Grade - Gina Young/ Alicia Franklin's Class, 5th Grade- Kim Hood/ Karen Dyer's Class.