

Tucker looks forward to new faces on Lady Panthers

By Todd Forrest
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The Union County Lady Panthers basketball team will be looking for its fifth trip to the state playoffs in six years when the season rolls around later this fall.

But before the season begins on Nov. 19 the Lady Panthers will have plenty of basketball to play this summer.

Coach David Tucker's Lady Panthers attended the Tennessee Wesleyan Basketball Camp last week looking to hone its skills and refurbish its roster after one of its most successful classes ever graduated last month.

Becka Merritt, Angie Hughes, Catie Tanner, and Callie Payne may never be replaced but Coach Tucker still returns enough talent to



Jeanelle Arnold will be one of many talented guards on the 2012-13 Lady Panther squad. Photo/Todd Forrest.

compete in a remodeled Region 8-AA.

The top two girls teams in 8-AA from 2011-12, East Hall and North Oconee, have moved up to Class AAA and with Riverside Military Academy, an all-boys school, join-

ing the region, Union will only need to finish in one of the top-four spots, of a seven-team region to reach its third consecutive state playoffs.

Rising senior, Hannah Hughes says her teammates will need to produce offen-

sively and believes some opponents might misjudge Union's lack of size as a weakness.

"We need to step up in the amount of points we score," Hannah Hughes said. "We will not have the height that we had last year but we definitely will have more strength down low so I don't think it will be much of a difference."

Union's lone returning starter, Lauren Zollinger is a good one. The rising junior started all 29 games at point guard for Union County in 2011-12 and scored a career-high 16 points in a 56-41 victory over Dawson County on January 20th. Coach Tucker's squad will also have Jeanelle Arnold and Carly Adams returning at guard, giving Union one of the deepest back courts in the region.

Other returning players who saw action last season were rising seniors, Hannah



David Tucker

Hughes and Shawna Brown. Although Coach Tucker says all he wants the girls to do is simply play basketball.

"We're just seeing who can play," said Coach Tucker. "We're seeing who can beat defenders off the dribble and who can play man-to-man defense."

After heavy losses to

graduation, at this point, Tucker isn't thinking about setting his lineup or rotations, he's looking for a complete effort and judging the capabilities of each of his players.

"It's my job to figure out what we're going to do (strategically and lineup) but they've just got to gain their confidence and play some basketball," Coach Tucker said. "We played awfully good competition up there. The effort is there and everything is fine."

Hannah Hughes agreed with her coach.

"We need to become more confident in ourselves and in each other. I feel that is what will help us the most," she said.

Joining Union County at the Tennessee Wesleyan camp is rival Fannin County, who will also take part in the Union's own camp from June 18-20.

16&U Panthers victorious again



Pictured from left to right (bottom): Tyler Odom, Calvin Duckworth, Lake Arnick, Hunter Hughes, Chase Barnett, Robert Prunier, (top) Lane Everett, Jake Sisum, Bryce McCarter, Head Coach Jeff McCarter, Jesse Bates, Cooper Patton, Coach Joe Arnick, Chris Reinhardt, not pictured: Davis Carter, Coach Mark Carter, & Coach Jeff Odom

The 16-and-Under Union County Panthers take home 1st Place in the Second Annual Pre-District Baseball Tournament hosted by the Union County Quarterback Club in Blairsville this past weekend. The Panthers started

off strong on their home turf defeating Lumpkin County 9 to 1 in a "run rule" shortened game. In Game 2 Union defeated the Adairsville Sox 8 to 0. Union faced the Sox again in the championship game coming out on top 7 to

1. To take home the 1st Place trophy the team batted .423 for the tournament. Defensively, Union County committed only 2 errors for the tournament and their pitchers combined for 43 strikeouts

U. S. Forest Service Kid's Fishing Rodeo successful

On Saturday, June 2, over 200 young fishermen and women came out for the U. S. Forest Service's annual Kid's Fishing Rodeo at Lake Winfield Scott. The young anglers caught many of the 3500 trout stocked for the event along with an assortment of catfish, perch, bream, and bass. Many children caught their first fish, and several even caught their limit.

Special thanks go to all the sponsors who helped make the rodeo a success. Prizes and food were donated by Ingles, Foodland Grocery, Bi-Lo, Nelson Tractor Company, Nelson's Ace Farm and Garden, Robert F. Jackson Insurance Agency, Blairsville Restaurant, Melwood Springs, Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, Wolf Pen Gap Country Store, C & W Hardware, Rick's Rental, Scott Carter Insurance, Jean and Larry Harkins, Roger Loftis, Southern Polyurethanes, State Farm Insurance, Jock's Sporting Goods, Happy Dayz Restaurant, Sears, Walmart of Blairsville, Home Depot, Flowers Bakery, Coca-Cola, Stanley Jigs, Plastilite Corporation, and Bullet Weights. United Community Bank and Coosa Creek Embroidery Company provided T-shirts to the participants. The Walmart store in Dahlonega provided a number of prizes, refreshments, and even bait for the eager fishermen and women. Grand door prizes included tickets to the Tennessee Aquarium and Ripley's Aquarium of the Smokies, and outdoor cookers and grills donated by Amerigas, Budget Propane, and Heritage Propane. We again thank all of the sponsors for their generous contributions that helped make the rodeo a success.

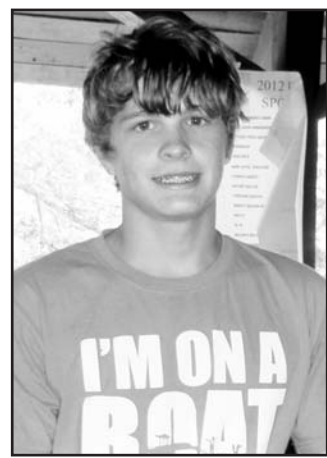
The fish for the rodeo were provided by the Chatta-

hoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Fred Ruppel and Sherman Head of the Goldrush Chapter of Trout Unlimited from Dahlonega were on hand to provide assistance with the casting contest and other duties. Tony and Gail Fox of the Cradle of Forestry also provided valuable assistance throughout the rodeo. Special thanks go to the Owens Family, Nancy Wood,

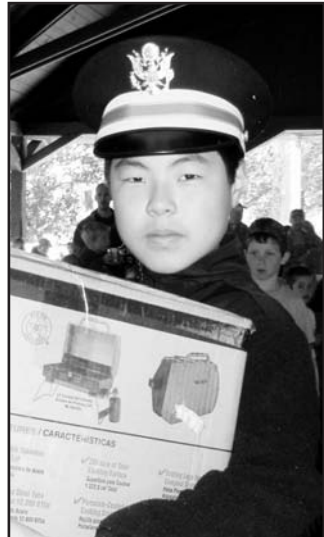
and Gail Lynn. The Owens Family and other members of the lake Winfield Scott Cabin Owners did a great job with the refreshments. Ms. Nancy Wood ably handled the registration duties again this year. As always, Ms. Gail Lynn came through for us by securing donations of prizes and food for the rodeo. The efforts of all these sponsors and volunteers made the rodeo a success. N0un13.24CA



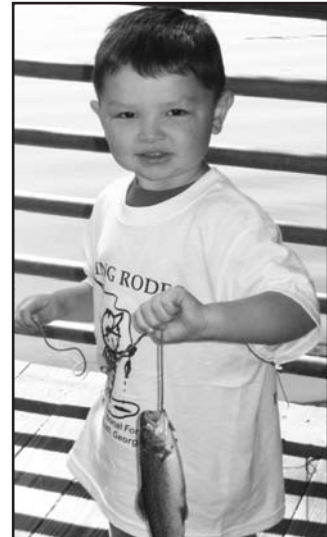
Anna Head, winner of the Turkey Fryer from Amerigas



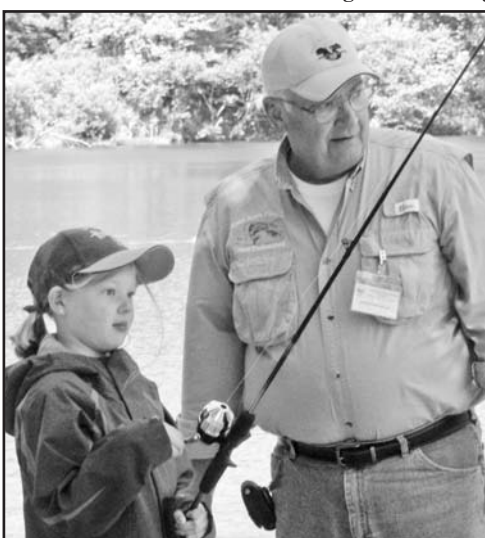
Logan Wood, winner of the outdoor cooker from Heritage Propane



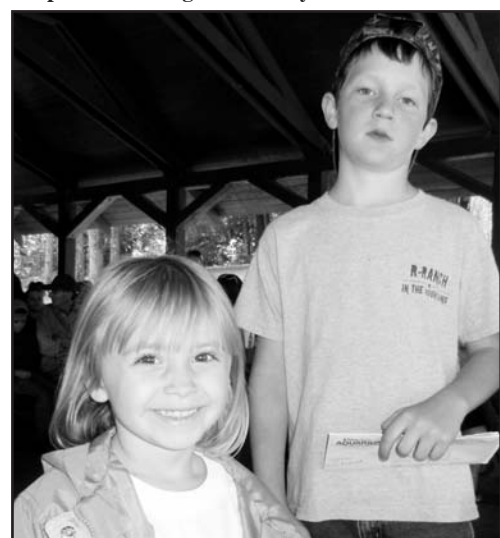
Luke Mott, winner of the outdoor grill from Budget Propane



One of the many successful anglers at this year's rodeo



Sherman Head of Trout Unlimited assists with the Casting Contest



Garrett Duffey and Mylie Pirkle - Aquarium ticket winners