

Sports

See the Sports Section at ngenews.com

Panthers on the mend as scrimmage approaches

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

The injuries are starting to mount for Head Football Coach Brian Allison and his Union County Panthers with the season opener less than 10 days away.

Next up for the Panthers, a trip to Cleveland and a scrimmage with the White County Warriors on Thursday. Although, a rash of shoulder injuries have depleted the Panthers' depth chart at key positions, Allison's top priority is returning home from Cleveland injury-free.

"The main thing is to keep everyone healthy," Allison said. "Right now we've got to get healthy."

As of Friday, Union County is still without junior lineman **Luther Jones** who suffered a fractured collar bone last month and his status remains uncertain for the season opener at Towns County.

"We're treating it as a fracture and we don't know if he'll be back for Towns," Allison said. "He's out right now and we won't know for another week if he'll get to play."

Junior **Lane Everett** also is down with a dislocated



Union assistant football coach Robby Roxbury gives a high five to Panthers' senior wide receiver Josh Kim during practice. Photo/Todd Forrest

shoulder and unfortunately, is out for the year.

Junior defensive end/wide receiver **Mekiah Martin** will miss the opener with Towns with a shoulder injury. Sophomore receiver/defensive back **Dalton Moose** will miss some time because of his shoulder, as will sophomore lineman **Kyle Jones**.

Finally, senior wide-out/linebacker **Jared Crosky** isn't expected to see any action until late September.

"We've got some bumps and bruises but everyone except Everett should be back before Week Three," Allison said.

With Union already deep at receiver, the injuries biggest impact will be felt in the trenches.

"The line is still a big concern," Allison said. "Anytime you're looking at sophomores and freshman filling in at certain spots, it's going to be a concern."

"You look up and see two seniors and three freshman starting on our front line. That's not something you like to see, but it is what it is and there is absolutely nothing we can do to control that."

To the delight of the coaching staff, these freshman haven't showed any signs of fear and are developing faster than Allison imagined.

"Those freshmen are doing a really good job of stepping up," Allison said. "Dylan Byers and Chris Drost have done a great job. I've been pleased and the future looks really bright for that group, and for this team. I'm excited about the effort they've given."

After three grueling weeks of practice, Allison is beginning to learn who is committed and who he can and can't depend on.

"It's been a long three weeks that we've beaten and banged on each other but we're seeing the end of training camp approaching," Allison said.

As for the scrimmage, Allison will be looking at some key positions and hopes that White County will better prepare his team for down the road.

"We've got to make

See Football, page

The golf swing is an athletic motion.

It depends on balanced force to properly move the club head away and back through the hitting area. It is impossible to achieve maximum speed through impact without moving the center of balance to the back foot and then returning it to the front foot.

We call this motion the "weight transfer."

When watching a major league baseball pitcher, you notice that the force of the action is from the back leg to the front leg during the pitch. The baseball is then released toward home plate at an amazing speed. If the pitcher stood flat footed and tried to release a pitch then his career would be short-lived because the ball would have no speed.

This force from the back leg to the front leg is the same theory we use in golf to accelerate the club at a really fast speed.

The proper weight transfer is totally dependent on having a solid stance and good posture because the balance of the motion must remain centered.

If you lose your balance anywhere throughout the swing then the weight transfer will be blocked. You will end up hitting the ball with your hands and arms instead of allowing the club to follow the rotation of the body.

You must be very careful in trying to execute the proper weight transfer. It requires a rotation of the torso and not a sliding of the hips to move the weight to the back foot. This is where you will experience difficulty in your efforts to "load" the back foot.

The start of the backswing is primarily done with the chest and shoulders. Notice that when you have successfully addressed the ball there will be a triangle in front of the chest formed by the connection of the arms to the shoulders with the grip at the bottom and the shoulders at the top. The triangle is in the center of the chest and should stay in front of the chest as the weight is transferred to the back foot.

Maintain the triangle by keeping the forward arm straight. Do not

Joe Collins
Tips from the Range

let the turning of the upper body pull your balance to the front of your feet or the proper weight transfer will not happen.

Once the weight is on the back foot, simply let the arms relax to the top while trying to keep the forward arm straight from set-up to the finish of the backswing. The straight forward arm will guide the club head back to the original position you had when the backswing started.

Notice that the movement from address to the top of your arc is called the "backswing" because that is just what it is. Simply turn the chest and let the club swing to the top. Shoulders will lead the hips on the backswing and then the hips will lead the shoulders on the downswing. You really need to follow this order or your downswing path will be outside the backswing path and across the ball through impact.

Now that the backswing is completed and your center of balance, or your weight, is on the back foot, give a good push from the back foot and let the hips start to reverse their turn back to the ball. This is the start of the downswing and the beginning of the weight shift to the front foot. Simply follow this transfer of weight from back to front and let the club fall slightly inside the takeaway path. Keep your head behind the ball well in to impact and let the arms release naturally.

The weight transfer is an important key in helping you find accuracy and distance because, when done properly, it allows you to maintain balance throughout the entire swing. Without the proper transfer, the correct swing is almost impossible and consistency is virtually nonexistent.

The great Lee Trevino said it best, "the more I practice, the luckier I get," so practice this package of fundamentals and you too will become "luckier."

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

Lady Panthers roll in Region 8-AA opener

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

UNION COUNTY 10 WASHINGTON-WILKES 1

The Ninth-ranked Union County Fast Pitch Lady Panthers were powered by four RBIs, a fifth-inning homer and two triples from **Hannah Hughes** in a 10-1 victory at Washington Wilkes.

Union used six runs in the fourth inning to blow things open in the first Region 8-AA game of the season.

Hughes hit a bases clearing triple in the inning that saw Union open up a 9-1 lead.

Winning pitcher **Bailey Byers** (4-1) helped her own cause with two doubles and three RBIs, while **Shawna Brown**, who came in hitting .600, drove in three and **Amber Seeba** knocked in two.

The first region win always feels good," said Coach Jessica Stewart. "Our goal is to win another Region Championship and we are taking it



Courtney Busbee

one game at a time to get there. It was a long 3-hour bus ride to Washington-Wilkes, but the girls did not let that determine how they played."

The Lady Panthers scored one in the second but Washington-Wilkes responded with a run in the bottom half of the inning. Union quickly snatched their lead back by posting two in the third.

Crystal Busbee and **Carly Adams** each stole a base for Union.

Byers pitched a complete



Amber Seeba

game for Union and struck out two batters and allowed one unearned run.

"Byers did a great job pitching," Coach Stewart said. "She only gave up one run and it was unearned and had no walks. The girls are playing well top to bottom through the first six games."

More importantly, Union's defense had a solid game behind their senior pitcher, only committing one error on the day.

"The defense did do

a much better job," Coach Stewart said. They put the ball in play and our girls did what they were supposed to do. We definitely talked about playing better defense and keeping our bats hot in practice."

Now Coach Stewart turns her attention to this week with four games on the schedule. Union traveled to Gilmer on Monday and hosts Oglethorpe County on Tuesday night in another Region 8-AA contest. Lumpkin County will travel to Blairsville on Wednesday, before the Lady Panthers head back on the road for a meeting with Rabun County on Thursday.

Despite having a full slate of games, Coach Stewart is glad to finally get a few home games.

"I'm looking forward to getting a couple home games in," Coach Stewart said. "We will focus more on Oglethorpe and Rabun because they are both region games, but we will work hard, just like we do every practice."

UCMS Lady Panthers out of the gates strong

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

Last week the Union County Middle School softball picked up where they left off in 2011.

The Lady Panthers cruised to a pair of easy home victories over Rabun County (14-5) and White County (10-4) to open the 2012 campaign.

Union is the defending league champions and have already sent a statement to the league that the Lady Panthers are still the team to beat.

Union lost five players from 2011 but reloaded with players from Union's 12U State Championship team.

"We got some girls who can hit and our pitcher is one of the best around," Coach David Tucker said. "And we have two seventh graders who are already good pitchers."

Tucker's squad will be on the road this week when they

travel to Towns and Lumpkin counties. And for the most part, Tucker is satisfied with where his team is at after two games.

"We know where we are at right now but we've still got some fine tuning to do," Coach Tucker said.

Tucker believes firmly in teaching the fundamentals early and focuses on defense and pitching and holds firm to the mantra that pitching and defense win championships.

"A lot of teams, all they do is hit at practice. I believe in focusing on defense early on."

As for the offense, which has had no problems thus far, Tucker says that he'll fine tune his lineup throughout the season.

"Right now, we're going to find out who can pinch hit and who can pinch run without making a mistake. We've made a few mistakes on defense but we'll get that all straightened out."



Middle School Softball game pictures by Todd Forrest

UCHS Football Schedule

- Aug 23 @ White County (Scrimmage)
- Aug 31 @ Towns County
- Sept 7 vs Fannin County (Recognizing the 1957 Panthers)
- Sept 14 vs Andrews, NC (Recognizing Middle School Team)
- Sept 21 - Bye Week
- Sept 28 vs Washington Wilkes (Recognizing Rec Dept Teams)
- Oct 5 @ Oglethorpe County
- Oct 12 vs Riverside Military Academy (Homecoming)
- Oct 19 @ Greene County
- Oct 26 @ Rabun County
- Nov 2 vs Social Circle (Senior Night)
- Nov 9 @ Jefferson

UCHS upcoming Softball games

- Aug. 21 vs Oglethorpe County
- Aug. 22 vs Lumpkin County
- Aug. 23 @ Rabun County
- Aug. 28 vs Jefferson
- Aug. 30 @ Greene County
- Sept. 4 vs Dawson County
- Sept. 6 vs Rabun County
- Sept. 7-8 Veterans Tournament

UCMS Football Schedule

- Aug. 23 vs Rabun County
- Aug. 30 vs White County
- Sept. 6 @ West Hall
- Sept. 13 @ Towns County
- Sept. 20 vs Copper Basin
- Sept. 27 @ Lumpkin County
- Oct. 4 Playoffs

Quarterback Club Report

Janet Hartman of the Blairsville's Downtown Development Authority visited the Quarterback Club meeting on Aug. 14.

Hartman made a special presentation to the football players who volunteered their time in helping with the Green Bean Festival.

Hartman spoke very highly of the boys and their character. "These guys were awesome," Hartman said. "We had numerous compliments on how respectful and helpful they were."

"The football team can be proud to send these guys out to represent the program," she said.

Hartman presented each player with their very own Green Bean Festival T-shirt.

The club also is excited that Coosa Creek Embroidery will be the Official Panther Spirit Wear seller in Panther Alley this fall.

Exclusively for the five home games, Coosa Creek Embroidery will be set up to meet your Panther Spirit Wear needs when entering the game.

This is the second year for Panther Alley and we look forward to Coosa Creek Embroidery being a partner in promoting School Spirit at the games.

The Quarterback Club and Coosa Creek Embroidery have endless possibilities in working together.

Thanks to Greg Owenby, Julie Wolff, and Nicomas Bradburn for their efforts, ideas and willingness to partner in this important endeavor.



Pictured (left to right): Sean Dobbins, Brett Dobbins, Janet Hartman, Matthew Stewart, and T Bentley.