

Sports

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Union overcomes; reward Allison with wins record

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It wasn't pretty, but Union County withstood 175 yards in penalties and improved to 3-0, as Coach Brian Allison passed retired coach Terry Rogers as Union County football's all-time winningest coach.

Despite the visiting Andrews Wildcats getting flagged for only 30 yards, Allison picked up his 57th win at Union County during a 40-14 rout of Andrews on "Pink Out" night.

"Coach Rogers is who I played for and it's just a tremendous honor," Coach Allison said after the win. "We've got a good group of kids and we're 3-0 which is a bonus for us. I'm more happy with the team getting the win than with me breaking the record."

As for the game itself, the Panthers scored 26 unanswered points in the final 18:41 to blow open a 14-14 tie.

Early on, it looked as if Union would cruise to its first 3-0 start since 2008, when the Panthers took a 14-0 lead midway through the second quarter.

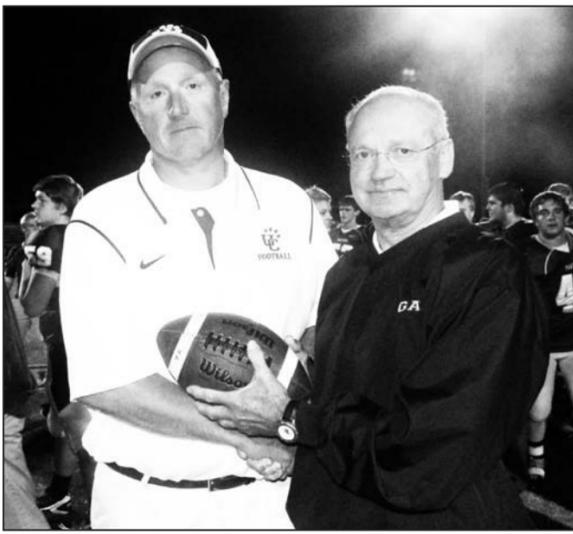
With Coach Rogers flipping the coin before the game, Union County won the toss and elected to receive. Senior Lalo Rivera didn't disappoint and got the party started by electrifying a packed Mike Colwell Memorial Stadium, taking the opening kick 85 yards for a Panther touchdown.

"I just found a hole," Rivera said. "Coach Allison has been telling me to look for the hole, and the blockers opened up a crease for me and I found it."

Union's defense forced a quick three-and-out and the offense advanced inside the Wildcat 10-yard line before a yellow flag brought the Panthers back to the 35.

Senior Eric Hougrand's attempt at a 52-yard field goal fell just short and handed the ball back to Andrews.

Following another Andrews punt, Union suffered a drive-killing penalty when they were called for a false start on 4th-and-2, forcing the Panthers to punt.



Coach Brian Allison is presented with the game ball from retired coach and previous record holder Terry Rogers. Photo/Todd Forrest

The visitors were again forced into a punting situation. Desperately needing an offensive spark, Andrews tried a fake punt but the pass fell incomplete and gave Union's offense a short field to work with.

That's when senior running back Jonathan Hughes broke loose and scored on a 33-yard touchdown run with 7:18 to play in the first half.

On the ensuing possession, a roughing the passer flag negated a Josh Kim interception, giving Andrews a fresh set of downs. However, senior Jonah Whitmer picked off a fourth down pass deep in Panther territory and returned it to their own 20. That's when another flag backed Union up inside the 5-yard line. The offense would bog down and be forced to punt with 1:20 left in the half.

The Panthers would get one more crack before the break, but another flag backed Union up to its own 18-yard line with 23 seconds to go.

Hughes would again break off a big run, deep into Wildcat territory but an unsportsmanlike conduct flag dropped Union County back to their side of the 50 and destroyed Union's chances of getting off a field goal before the half.

"We were aggravated at halftime," Coach Allison said. "We felt like we played good but we had 70 or 80 yards in



Captains Luther Jones, Clay Burnete, and Craig Jones are escorted to midfield by honorary captain, Coach Terry Rogers before last Friday's game. Photo/Todd Forrest



Terry Rogers flips the coin before the game. UC won the toss, received the kick and took it to the house for a TD. Photo/Todd Forrest



Lalo Rivera scored two touchdowns for Union. Photo/Todd Forrest

penalties in the first half that stopped some scoring drives."

Andrews took the opening possession of the second half in for a score when the Wildcats' prayers were answered on a 3rd-and-20, and they connected on an 85-yard touchdown pass.

"Andrews came out and threw the ball up, we misplayed it, and they scored on it," Coach Allison said.

Two plays into Union's next drive, the Wildcats picked off a Bentley pass to set up a fourth down touchdown strike to knot the score at 14-14



Panther fans show their school spirit. The UCHS student section remained vocal supporters throughout the game. Photo/Todd Forrest



Union County's Recreation Department football teams and cheerleaders were recognized before the game. Photo/Todd Forrest

with 6:41 to play in the third quarter.

The Panthers could have buckled under the pressure when another flag forced them from a fourth-and-one into a fourth-and-six but Bentley hit Rivera over the middle for a first down. Bentley would finish the drive himself when he raced down the far sideline on an 11-yard scoring run.

The quarter came to an end with Union forcing another three-and-out, then Rivera hauled in a Bentley pass to get

Union to the Wildcat 26-yard line.

Union's first play of the final quarter was Hougrand's 42-yard field goal to give the Panthers a 24-14 advantage.

The wheels started to fall off for Andrews when Brett Dietz recovered a Wildcat fumble at the 31-yard line and just over a minute later, Hughes found himself in the endzone for the second time - this time on a 10-yard run.

See *Football*, page 11A

Lady Panthers ranked 2nd in state; clinch top spot in 8-AA

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Second-ranked Union County (15-5) has won the Region 8-AA regular season crown and have earned the opportunity to host every post season game from the Region Tournament until the State Elite-8.

The Lady Panthers were given a bump in the polls following a 5-2 win at Class AAA's 4th ranked Dawson County on Monday. Union prevailed thanks to the offense of seniors Bailey Byers and Hannah Hughes and sophomore Crystal Busbee's right arm.

Tuesday, Union secured the top-spot and home field advantage thanks to a complete game shutout from Byers in a 4-0 win over Social Circle. Tuesday was also Senior Night and the "Pink Out" game for Breast Cancer Awareness. The Lady Panther softball team honored those who are still battling or have lost the battle to cancer by wearing pink jerseys.

UCHS also paid tribute to its seniors as Byers, Hughes, Amber Seeba, Shawna Brown, and Carly Adams all played their final regular season home game at Union County High School.

Union County's Senior Class already has two Region 8-AA Titles on its resume and will be looking to add a third next month. Union has averaged 26 wins a season during their first three years on campus.

"All five seniors have stepped up all year and senior night was no different," Coach Jessica Stewart said.

The 8-AA Region Tournament will begin on Sept. 25th, although Union won't see any action until they open the second round at home on Saturday, Sept. 29th.

On Thursday Union traveled to Jefferson for a region



UC seniors with Coach Jennifer Cagle and Head Coach Jessica Stewart. Photos by Todd Forrest



Bailey Byers



Hannah Hughes



Amber Seeba



Carly Adams



Shawna Brown

game that would have no impact on the standings. The Lady Panthers would lose 3-2 in eight innings.

However, the game would mark Union's final region contest of the 2012 season before Tournament play opens later this month.

During the game Hughes tied Kaitlyn Sebolt's team record with her eighth home run of the season. Hughes is also one RBI short of Callie Dyer's team record of 35 RBIs in a single season.

Lady Panthers 5 Dawson County 2

DAWSONVILLE-The Lady Panthers got some sweet revenge last Monday as Byers hit a two-run homer and Crystal Busbee (3-0) threw a

complete-game, six-hitter to defeat Dawson County.

Hughes finished the night by driving in Union's other three runs, going 2-for-3, while Crystal Busbee scored twice and doubled.

Union took an early lead when Crystal Busbee walked and later scored during the first inning. They would stretch the lead to 3-0 in the fourth when Courtney Busbee's double was followed by Byers' homer.

Dawson would post two in the bottom half of the inning thanks to three singles, a walk, and a fielding error. However, the Lady Panthers would respond with two of their own in the fifth.

Crystal Busbee would lead off with an opposite-field double, Rich bunted and reached, Hughes singled in

Crystal Busbee and Rich scored on an error.

Dawson left the bases loaded in the fifth, and left two on in the seventh as the Panthers escaped with the victory.

Brown finished 1-for-4, Courtney Busbee went 1-for-4, and Seeba added a double.

Lady Panthers 4 Social Circle 0

Byers (9-4) tossed the first complete game shutout of her four-year career last Tuesday and it couldn't have come at a better time.

All Union needed was one win on Senior Night to clinch the 8-AA regular season title and get home field advantage throughout the Region Tournament. Union's senior duo of Byers and Hughes made

certain that Union got the job done on that night.

Despite coming off an uplifting win over an untalented Dawson squad, Coach Stewart had confidence in her team and knew they would get the job done.

"They were not over confident and they knew Tuesday was out last region game and senior night and they did exactly what they needed to do," Coach Stewart said.

Hughes would hit a solo homer and double on a 2-for-3 night and that was all the offense Byers needed as the rightly stifled the visitor's bats to the tune of only three hits.

Following a 1-2-3 top of the first, Union took an early lead when Crystal Busbee and Shawna Brown both reached on an error for a 1-0 advantage.

Hughes smacked a one-out homer over the center field fence in the third for a 2-0 Union lead.

The Lady Panthers added two insurance runs in the fifth after Crystal Busbee singled, Rich reached on a fielder's choice, Hughes doubled, before Rich scored on a passed ball and Hughes scored on a throwing error.

Byers, who threw 86 pitches, was able to work around a lead off walk in the bottom of the seventh to preserve her shutout and Union County's spot atop of the region.

Seeba picked up two hits and Allie Stroman added a walk for Union.

Lady Panthers 2 Jefferson 3 (8 innings)

JEFFERSON-The Lady Dragons scored one in the sixth and one in the eighth to propel them past the Lady Panthers in extra innings.

Junior Chelsey Cook (3-1) gave Union an excellent shot to win, going 5 1/3 innings and allowing just two earned runs. Byers would enter in the sixth and allowed four hits in the final 1 2/3 innings.

Hughes finished 1-for-1 with a solo homer and two RBIs.

Jefferson struck first with a run in the bottom of the first thanks to four singles.

Union got the run back in the third, thanks to some small ball. Stroman singled and advanced on a Crystal Busbee bunt and a fielder's choice by Rich before a sacrifice fly by Hughes scored Stroman.

In the fifth Hughes would go yard with two outs in the inning to give Union the 2-1 lead.

Jefferson tied things up in the sixth with a double, single, and a suicide squeeze.

In the eighth, the Inter-

See *Softball*, page 11A