

# UCMS Lady Panthers repeat as League Champs

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Union County Middle School has won back-to-back League Softball Championships.

After knocking off Rabun County 7-2 on Tuesday, Union demolished White County 14-0 in the title game on Thursday at Meeks Park.

In the title game, Union pounded out seven doubles and a home run as they made quick work of White County in four innings.

Union got revenge for its only loss in two years after White County edged Union 2-1 last month.

"Everybody hit the ball for us," Union County Coach David Tucker said. "When you only have one walk and score 14 runs, everybody must be hitting hit pretty well and White County is a pretty good defensive team."

On Monday, Towns County fell to Rabun County 1-0 in 8 innings, which gave Rabun the opportunity to take the first crack at the Lady Panthers on Tuesday.

The Lady Panthers proved they are still the team to beat and jumped out to a 3-0 lead and never looked back thanks to 14 strikeouts from Laken Chambers.

Union scored three in the second inning thanks to four singles and a Lady Wildcat error.

Rabun got one run in the fourth thanks to a walk and two Lady Panther errors.

Union stretched it's lead to 4-1 in the fifth following an error and a single.

Union put things away when they opened the sixth with five straight hits for a 7-1 advantage.

Kendra Tanner had three hits, Madison Horinek singled, Chambers walked and singled, Holly Stroman singled and scored, Lydia Arrowood went 2-for-4, Jillian Lawn singled and scored, Bailey Daniels also singled and scored, while Allison Horinek reached base three times - scoring once.

In the title game, Chambers homered in the first inning and allowed only one hit from



Front row - Channa Carroll, Logan Seabolt, Megan Lockaby, Gracen Henderson, Braden Poteete, Ally Horinek, Anna Owenby, Reagan Davis. Back row - Jillian Lawn, Laken Chambers, Holly Stroman, Kendra Tanner, Coach Tucker, Lydia Arrowood, Maddie Horinek, Maci Everett, Maggie Stubblefield, Bailey Daniel.



The Union County Middle School softball team has now won back-to-back League Championships under Coach David Tucker. Union County has a record of 19-1 over that span.



Coach Tucker and his team celebrate after a brutal 14-0 beat down of White County in the title game.

the circle. "Her home run broke the ice," Coach Tucker said. "It was foul after foul, after foul. It was just her and the pitcher then the pitcher got the ball up in the zone and she line drove it out of here.

"We've always got a chance with her pitching. She's going to be a great pitcher in high school."

Tanner had a double for Union, Madison Horinek went 2-for-3, Chambers finished 2-for-2, Stroman had two dou-

bles, Arrowood reached on an error and scored, Logan Seabolt walked and doubled, Lawn went 2-for-3, Daniel went 1-for-2, and Allison Horinek 2-for-2.

Tucker credits his team's success to the perfect recipe of youth and experience.

"They are softball players and they love the game. It was a good day for Union County," he said.

"I felt like there was some pressure on the seventh graders that were coming in, we had shortstop, third base, left field, right field but those four came in, played well, and hit the ball. There was pressure because we were undefeated the year before, but I felt like with the eighth graders we had coming back, that they would stabilize us. If you've got a good pitcher and catcher then you can be really good in girls softball."

Joe Collins

**Tips from the Range**

J.R. from Blairsville asks: How do I improve my accuracy off the tee with my driver? It is inconsistent and I will hit it to the right on one hole and to the left on the next. HELP!

First of all remain calm. We can fix this. You are basically asking me how to improve your accuracy and I can tell you what the one main flaw of most golfers is when they are experiencing problems finding the fairway off the tee. This will help with all your shots so take notes.

I would like to use an example of a door. If a door is solid and the hinges are stable and secure then the door will close properly and the plunger will hit perfectly every time and the door will close and lock. If the hinges become loose, then the door will not close properly and might even drag when you try to close it.

If we look at the problem of the loose door hinge, it becomes evident that the inconsistency with its operation has to do with the fact that the spine is being allowed to change its predetermined position. This is the same theory that we will be looking at in your golf swing.

Always remember that your balance has to be proper and that you need to find a good balanced starting point in your set-up. We will work on the assumption that your balance is good. Okay, now understand that when we make a stance, we are predetermining the foundation of the club path and that all the fundamentals we use are in direct relation to this foundation.

In other words, your spine is your foundation and your spine has to remain stable and in the original position it is in at set-up. If the hinge of the door moves, then the door will not work right. The same rule applies to the spine so that if the spine moves, then the path of the club head will be affected and you will not hit the ball straight.

The spine is a very important part of the golf swing that you don't hear much about. It's the center of our core and the core of our body controls the club path. This is why balance is so important. The concept

we need to consider is how the shoulders rotate around the spine during the swing.

Ideally, the shoulder rotation will determine the club path. If the club path is correct and the downswing path is inside the take away path, then you should hit the ball fairly straight. Most often we find ourselves in the rough off of the tee because our shoulders have rotated in such a way as to change the club head path to a path that is outside our take away path and this can cause left and right shots. The shoulder rotation is totally dependent on the spine staying in the original set-up position, same as our hypothetical door and its hinge. This is why the head should be behind impact so the spine does not move forward and change the shoulder rotation.

Be mostly concerned about the upper 18" of the spine staying still when working on this. Always move the club away with the center of the chest with the shaft of the club staying in front of the chest as long as possible. This will ensure a clean move away from the ball with the arms and keep the core of the body in control. Never move the arms without the shoulders moving. This will almost certainly change the spine position on the down swing. Keep in mind that the lower part of the body starts the down swing and the shoulders follow the hips all the way through the swing as it is with the proper weight transfer.

Notice that the solution to your problem is in the path of the club and the fundamentals that control the path of the club. I have found that if you work on hitting the ball from the inside on the down swing it will help keep the spine in place. Just simply picture the ball as a cube when it is on the tee and try to visualize hitting the inside corner. This seems to give people a visual to help with accuracy. Remember to let your arms follow the lower body and never try to throw the hands at the ball through impact because this will affect the squaring of the club face.

Great question J.R. I hope this helps you and anybody else who is experiencing your problems. Remember, practice is the key to scoring better so keep practicing.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

# MS Panthers fall at Lumpkin County; rematch on Thursday

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**DAHLONEGA** - It's playoff time for Union County Middle School football.

Despite falling 32-24 at Lumpkin County, the Panthers get another crack at the Indians on Thursday in the opening round of the League Playoffs.

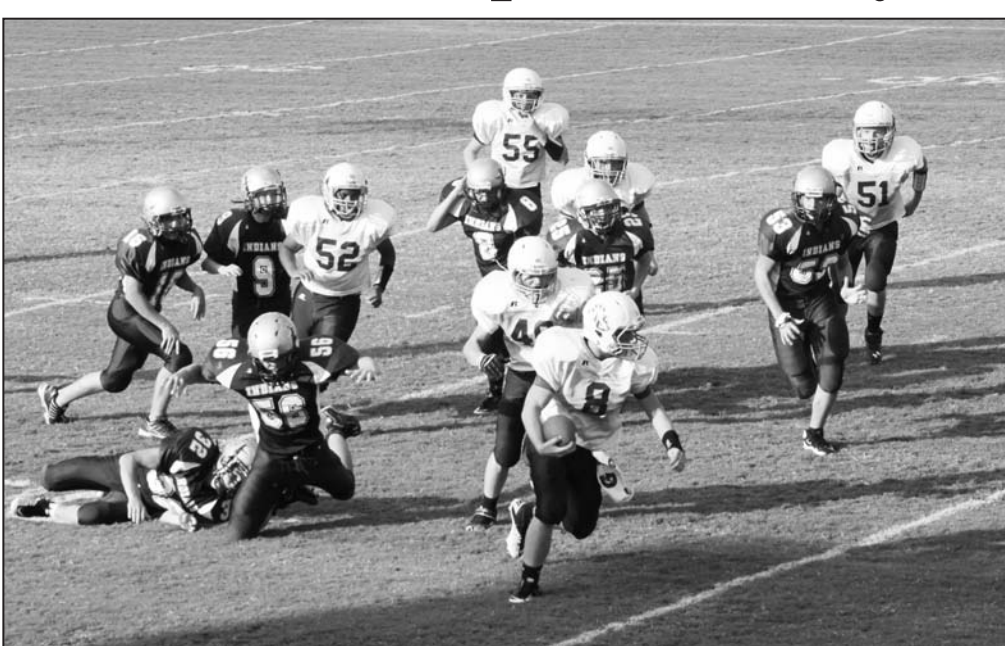
Union had plenty of chances to take a two-score advantage but were unable to put the Indians away and it came back to bite the Panthers late.

The Panthers came out strong on their second play from scrimmage, quarterback Bo Lynch got loose on a 70-yard touchdown run to give Union a 6-0 lead.

Union's defense stopped Lumpkin on its opening possession, handing the ball back to the Panthers, but Union was unable to take advantage and was forced into a punting situation.

Lumpkin used that opportunity to knot the score at 6-6.

Lynch responded for the Panthers with another scoring run. Union's two-point attempt



Bo Lynch breaks free during Union County Middle School's game at Lumpkin County last week. The Panthers face a return trip to Dahlonega on Thursday. Photo/courtesy of Byron McCombs

failed and the Panthers held a 12-6 advantage.

The Panther defense again forced Lumpkin into a punting situation and took over at the 50-yard line but fell victim to a fumble, handing the pigskin back to the Indians.

Lumpkin took advantage of the Union turnover and tied the score up at 12-12.

Union continued to answer each Lumpkin score with its own score when Lynch hit Zac Stone on a 50-yard touchdown strike to give the Panthers an 18-12 lead at halftime.

Lumpkin County came out during the second half and scored 20-unanswered points to take a 32-18 lead.

Lynch added a late touchdown to get the Panthers within

eight points but it was too little, too late and Lumpkin held on for the victory.

The loss drops Union to the No. 3 seed in the upcoming playoffs and also rewards Union with a chance for some quick revenge.

"Lumpkin is a good team," Union County Coach Casey Jones said. "They've got size, they've got a good quar-



Zac Stone after catching a pass and racing down the sideline for a Panther touchdown. Photo/courtesy of Byron McCombs.

terback, so we knew that they were solid all the way across.

"We obviously didn't play very good defense giving up 32 points, so we've got to work on some things defensively in practice and if we can get our issues worked out, then we should be okay."

As Union travels to Lumpkin on Thursday at 5:30 p.m. for the opening round,

Towns County also makes a return trip to top-seeded Rabun County. Rabun defeated Towns County 44-6 last week and the winner of that rematch will await the winner of the Union County / Lumpkin County rematch the following week.

"We know that our team can score," Coach Jones said. "We've just got to be able to stop people defensively."

# UCMS Cross Country boys are North Georgia Mountain League Champs

By Todd Forrest  
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Union County Middle School's boys Cross Country team has won the league championship.

Union County finished with 30 points to edge out second place Lumpkin County, third place Towns County, and fourth place White County.

Six of the nine Union County team members finished in the top 10 and won medals. All finished better than 50 percent of the total runners.

They are very proud of their hard work, especially since Union's top runner (Noah Bierce) was injured and couldn't run.

Out of 60 runners competing, Joshua Nachtrieb finished third overall, Jeremy Herum was fourth overall, coming in sixth was Lance Underwood, eighth place went to Timothy Murphy, ninth place to Jakob

Brown, coming in 10th was Chris Hodges, 13th was Evan Browning, 21st place went to Dylan Dockery, and 27th was Devan Anderson.

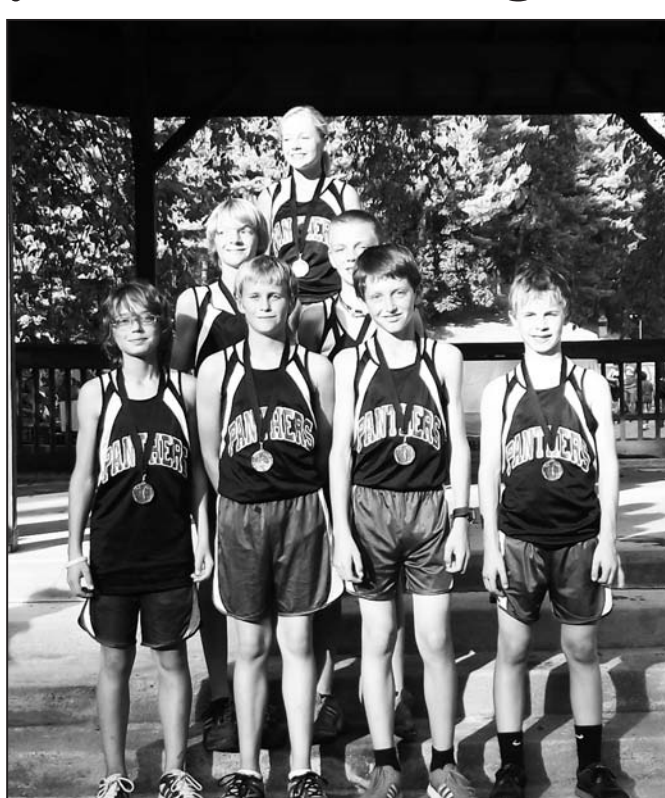
Hanna Ledford and Cora Bauman also won medals for the Union County Middle School's Lady Panthers.

They finished 5th and 10th respectively.

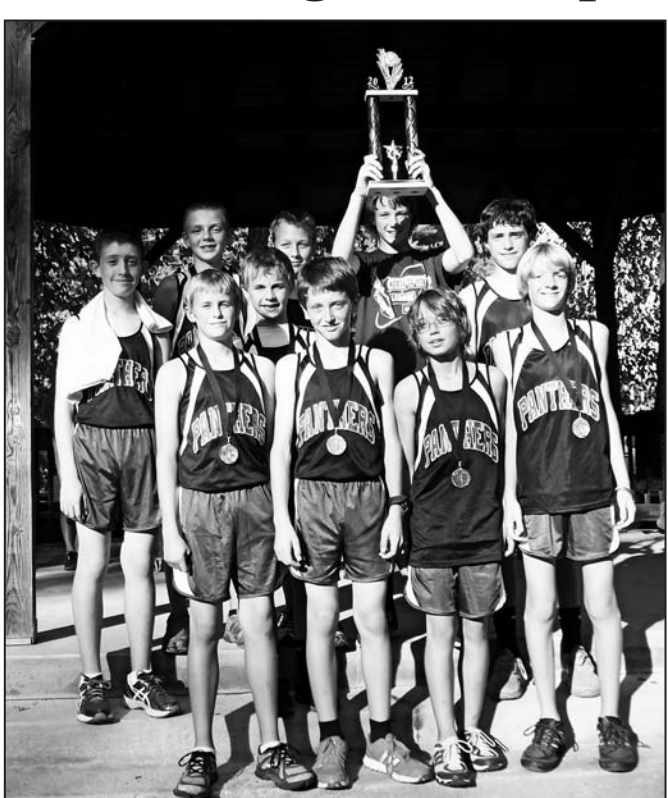
Rachel Wills finished 13th narrowly missing a medal and a trip to the podium.

The Union County girls had a 4th place team finish.

On Sept. 19th, the Panther Cross Country team traveled to Murphy, NC to take on the 11 Smoky Mountain Conference teams. The boys finished 4th with only nine points separating them from a third place finish. The team had to run without one of their Top 5 runners, but still finished strong. The girls had a fifth place finish with their times improving as much as four minutes since the beginning of the season.



Boys and girls medal winners from Union County's League Championship meet.



The UCMS boys Cross Country teams took first place at the North Georgia Mountain League Championship meet.