

Lady Panthers forced to reload

By Todd Forrest
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Union County Lady Panthers' basketball has reached State three years running and look to continue that trend of finishing in the final four of a seven-team Region.

However, it's going to be a lot tougher than it sounds.

Reigning Region 8-AA Player of the Year Lauren Zollinger is out until at least January, after suffering a severe knee injury in June. She was earlier ruled out for the season but the determined senior refuses to give up on her final year and has set her own timetable with mid-January marked as her return date on the calendar.

"She says she will be back in January but it's easier said than done," Union County Head Coach David Tucker said. "She is very determined and I wouldn't put anything past her."

The Panthers must also replace Jeanelle Arnold who is now at Toccoa Falls College. Carly Adams, Hannah Hughes, and Shawna Brown also graduated. With Zollinger out, the Lady Panthers sent a brand new starting five on the floor in the scrimmage against a tough squad from Hiwassee Dam, NC.

Union fell 49-46 but overcame deficit after deficit, showing the never-say-die mentality of the new-look Lady Panthers.

Trailing 19-12, Union went on a 11-0 run led by juniors Brooke Maddox and Kaitlyn Day. That duo will be called upon to replace the guard-heavy lineup from last season.

The Lady Panthers took a 23-21 lead into the break but the Lady Eagles held a 33-30 advantage entering the third. Union overcame a 7-point deficit to make it a game but were unable to get off a potential game-tying trey.

"We have whole new personnel this season," Coach Tucker said. "We have a lot of people that will be tough to replace. But everybody will be working hard and doing well."

Others that Coach Tucker will turn to are juniors Lisa Nalashi and Arielle Maurer in the post. Seniors Madison Rich and Allie Stroman will also be relied



With Lauren Zollinger out indefinitely, junior Brooke Maddox (12) will take on a larger role in 2013-14. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior sharp-shooter Kaitlyn Day at the free throw line. She will also be relied upon for scoring. Photo/Todd Forrest



As is the case with David Tucker coached teams, they aren't afraid to hit the floor for loose balls. Photo/Todd Forrest

upon heavily at the guard spots. Nalashi came on strong at the end of last season before a shoulder injury knocked her out of the postseason.

Off the bench, Maurer turned out to be one of the top shot blockers in Region 8-AA and will anchor the paint on the defensive end. Just knowing that she's patrolling the paint will make life easier for Union's guards on the defensive end.

"Those girls are having to do a whole lot more, moving into a starting role this year," Coach Tucker said. "But we've got Madison and Allie. Those are our two seniors and they are doing a good job leading and

everything will be okay and we're looking forward to the challenge."

The Lady Panthers won the regular season Region Championship and can expect some stiff competition from defending 8-AA Tournament Champion Rabun County and runner up Greene County.

Both Union teams will be back in Towns County's Battle of the States Christmas Tournament this season but before that, the Glenda Gooch Foundation Tip Off Tournament opens on Monday with Union facing Lumpkin County at 6 p.m. and Andrews, NC on Tuesday at 6 p.m.

New faces abound for Panthers

By Todd Forrest
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Union County's new Head Boys Basketball Coach Casey Jones is ready for the challenge.

Union County basketball will replace four senior starters who provided more than 50 points per game last season.

The dynamic backcourt duo of Rhett McCombs and Zach Odom have graduated. The do-everything swingman James Rowe is playing golf at Young Harris College.

The dependable big man C.J. Byers won't be suiting up for the Panthers either after accepting his diploma as well.

However that doesn't faze Coach Jones one bit. Jones is a disciple of the late Union County Head Coach Alan Ross. Jones was there when Union struggled to win games during Ross' first two years at the helm. In year three, Jones was a sophomore guard when Union turned the corner and won 21 games and the regular season Sub Region title.

Ross passed away after the 1996-97 school year and a familiar face, Coach Terry Rogers filled in as the interim coach.

During his junior season under Rogers, Jones played back-up to senior guards Jack Lance Jr. and current assistant coach, Kevin Hughes. The Panthers won 20 straight games to start the season, finished 24-2 and set the tone for the future of Union County basketball for more than a decade.

Coach Ben Corley took over in 1998, losing four starters, and Jones was thrust into a starting role as the floor general - leading Union to a tie for first place in the Sub Region.

So Jones has seen the ups and downs and is no stranger to rebuilding.

Ironically, Union County and Jones are into a similar boat when compared to what they faced when Jones took over as the starting point guard in 1998-99.

Four starters and one of the most prolific scorers in school history all graduated.

Luckily, Jones has plenty of young talent at his disposal this year, starting with a loaded backcourt led by senior Eliyah Ryals and juniors Hunter Hughes, Kyle Hamby, and Tyler Odom.

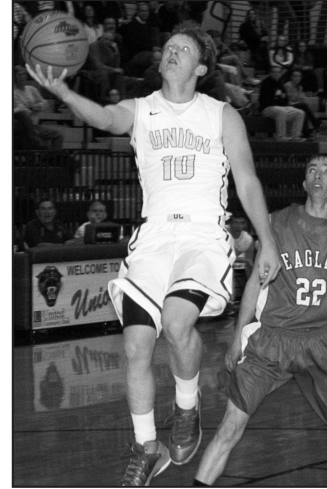
The lone returning starter will be senior forward Dylan Coyne who has become a rebounding machine and is a dou-



Lake Arnick (15) and Grant Schuette (24) will join senior Eliyah Ryals (3) on the Panthers' varsity this season. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior Kyle Hamby will be one of Coach Jones' many options at guard. In the scrimmage he scored 16 off the bench. Photo/Todd Forrest



Junior Hunter Hughes led Union with 17 points in the scrimmage. Union will try to replace the duo of McCombs and Zach Odom. Photo/Todd Forrest

ble-double waiting to happen every time he hits the court. Junior Thomas Danek, the 6-6 center will take a starting gig after serving as a backup for his first two years on campus.

Junior forward Ralston Drake will leave the gridiron for the hardwood and is expected to make an instant impact. As will guards Lake Arnick and Andrew Brown, forward Matthew Wasko, and posts Logan Baker, Grant Schuette, and Chase Shook. Giving Coach Jones what he hopes is at least a 10-man rotation.

"We don't have the experience but we've definitely got the height in the post and that's something we've not had in a while," Jones said.

After defeating Hiwassee Dam, NC 71-41 in the scrimmage, Coach Jones now has something

to build on as he implements his new philosophy.

"Our biggest issue will be taking care of the basketball," Jones said. "We will be looking to play fast and press. I think this year we are better suited for the 1-3-1 (press) and we'll put the 2-2-1 in at times. Everything that we will do is what Coach Ross did."

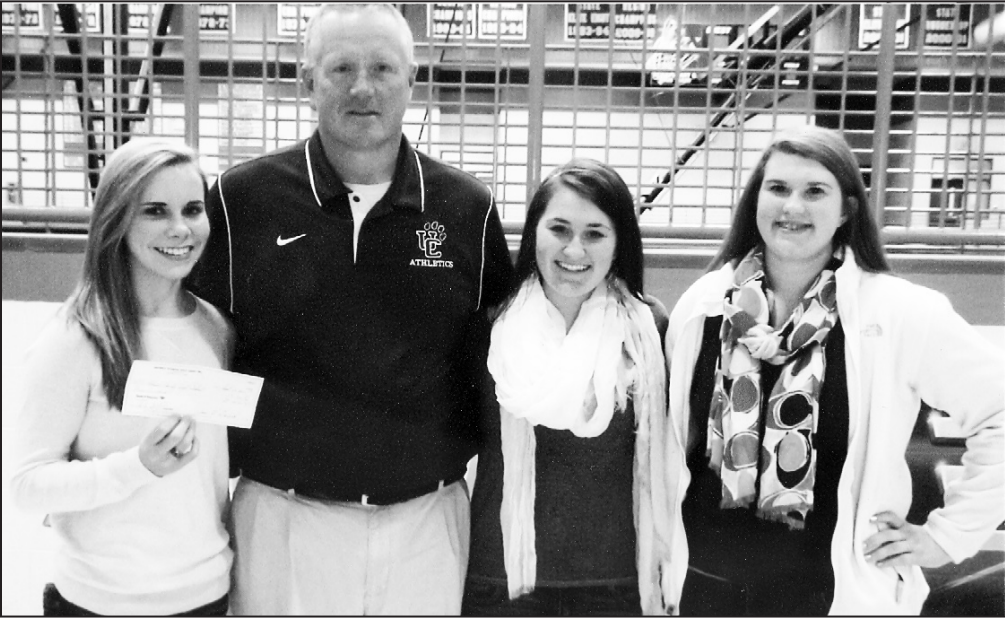
As for the Region shake-

down, Jones hopes to be in the mix for the coveted four playoff spots at seasons' end.

"Jefferson and Greene will be tough, so will Rabun and Washington-Wilkes, but it's hard to tell. I want us to be in the top half of our Region entering the Region playoffs."

The season opens Monday in the Glenda Gooch Foundation Tip-Off Tournament. Union faces Lumpkin at 7:30 p.m.

Union Girls Golf team receives grant



Girls Golf Coach Brian Allison and his Lady Panthers golfers received a \$500 grant. Photo/Pam Gray

The Union County High School Girls Golf team was recently awarded a \$500 grant from the Georgia Women's Golf Association. The grant money will be used for a clinic, golf balls, and golf shirts for the girls.

The purpose of this grant is to help an organization with

funds to develop, promote, maintain, and protect the best interests of the game of golf throughout Georgia.

Mrs. Marilyn Nolan-Johnson from the G.W.G.A. traveled to Blairsville on Friday, Oct. 25th and presented a check to junior golfer Lydia Gray. She then presented the

check to Coach Brian Allison and fellow team members.

While here, Mrs. Nolan-Johnson talked with Lydia about the team and shared some golf tips. The girls on the team are thankful to the Georgia Women's Golf Association for choosing their school.

UCHS & UCMS combined wrestling schedule 2013-14

Oct. 14th Mon.
Oct. 28th Sat.
Nov. 2nd Sat.
Nov. 9th Sat.
Nov. 12th Tuesday
Nov. 16th Sat.
Nov. 19th Tues.
Nov. 21st Thursday

Nov. 23rd Sat.
Dec. 3rd Tues.
Dec. 6th and 7th Fri/Sat
Dec. 10th Tues
Dec. 13th Fri
Dec. 13th and 14th

Dec. 20th Fri

Dec. 28th Sat
Jan. 3rd and 4th Fri/Sat
Jan. 7th Tues
Jan 10th and 11th Fri/Sat
Jan. 14th Tues
Jan 18th Sat
Jan. 21st Tues
Jan. 25th Sat
Jan. 28th Sat
Jan. 31st & Feb. 1st Fri/Sat
Feb. 5th Wed
Feb. 7th and 8th Fri/Sat
Feb. 13th-15th Thur-Sat

Middle School wrestling starts
Wrestling Starts
Middle School @ Dawson
Middle School @ Mountaineer
Middle School @ Lumpkin w/ White
Middle School @ KOM Towns
Middle/High @ HOME Riverside/Fannin
Middle/High @ Home Hiwassee Dam (towns and Dawson middle)
UNION TOURNEY HOME High
Middle and High @ Fannin
High @ KOM Towns
Middle and High @ Gilmer
High @ Towns Co. Duals
Middle School Duals and tournament @ Dawson

UNION DUALS @ HOME high

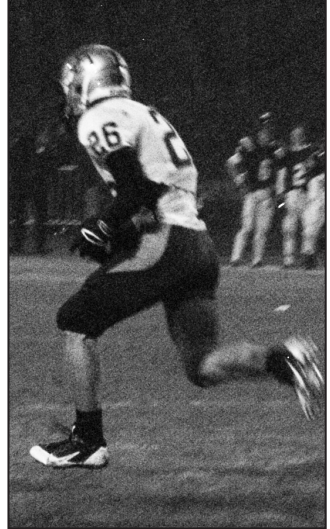
High @ Arrowhead Stephens Co.
HIGH SCHOOL DUALS @ Jefferson
Middle/High @ HOME w/ Stephens Rabun Gap
HIGH SCHOOL DUAL STATE @ MACON
Middle and High @ Rabun Co.
Middle and High @ Towns Co.
Middle and High @ HOME w/ Hayesville
High @ Stephens Co. Tourney
High @ White Co.
High School Duals @ GAC?
High School @ Rabun Gap w/ Asheville
High School Sectionals?????
HIGH SCHOOL STATE @ Gwinnett Arena

Union County offensive stats vs Lovett

Passing Stats										
#		CMP	ATT	%	YDS	YDS/ATT	LNG	TD	FUM	INT
9	Mancuso, Joseph	13	27	48.1%	120	4.4	23	2	-	1
	Total	13	27	48.1%	120	4.4	23	2	-	1

Rushing Stats						
#		ATT	YDS	AVG	LNG	TD
5	Lynch, Bo	2	1	0.5	4	0
9	Mancuso, Joseph	9	39	4.3	13	0
10	Rodriguez, Nick	1	0	0	0	0
40	Whittle, Nick	8	39	4.9	30	0
43	Prunier, Robert	1	-3	-3	0	0
	Total	21	76	3.6	30	0

Receiving Stats							
#		REC	YDS	AVG	LNG	TD	FUM
22	Rogers, Jacob	1	2	2	2	0	-
28	Dietz, Brett	0	0	0	0	0	-
43	Prunier, Robert	7	59	8.4	23	2	-
82	Gilbert, Sam	6	66	11	19	0	-
	Total	14	127	9.1	23	2	-

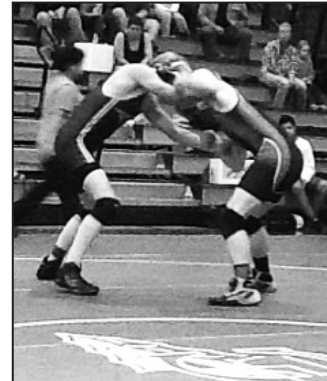
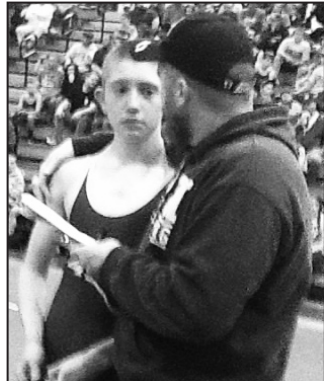


Sam Brown races to the endzone after a Lovett fumble.



Sophomore Lance Rich gets in the mix after Lovett's quarterback mishandled a snap in the first half. Photos/Todd Forrest.

UCMS hits the mat at Lumpkin County



The Union County Middle School wrestlers were in action at Lumpkin County two weeks ago and at Towns County last weekend. The Panthers will be at home this week with Middle School and High School matches on Tuesday and Thursday. The UC Panther Classic will be held at the Pit on Saturday.