

Union hosts District Tourneys; 14U Panthers and others still in action

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

The Union County Recreation Department hosted two Dizzy Dean District 6 Tournaments last weekend at Meeks Park.

The 9&U baseball team came in second place to District Champ Jefferson, while the 10&U girls softball picked up another runner-up finish to Towns County.

The 9&U Panthers opened play on Friday with a 16-5 thumping of the Hall County Titans, while Jefferson defeated the Hall County Edge.

Union and Jefferson squared off on Saturday afternoon with the Dragons pulling away late for an insurmountable 16-5 lead after five innings.

The Panthers posted three runs in the bottom half of the sixth but it was too little, too late.

The loss knocked Union into the losers bracket where they dismantled the Edge 21-7, forcing a rematch with Jefferson.

The second meeting was much closer than the first but Union County again, came up on the short end of the stick 17-16.

Meanwhile, the 10&U Lady Panthers suffered a tough 10-1 loss to Towns County in the opening round, but battled their way out of the losers bracket to force a rematch with the Lady Indians.

Union kept things close and trailed 2-1 after three, missing several opportunities by leaving two runners in scoring position in the third and the fourth innings. The Lady Indians would put up two in the fourth to open up a 4-1 lead and never looked back.

After falling in the first game, Union bounced back with a 10-2 beating of Banks County before holding off a late rally from Jackson County in a 7-4



victory.

In Jefferson, Union's 14&U baseball team is on the verge of claiming a District Title and going to State.

The Panthers faced the winner of Towns County and Jefferson on Monday night, and would have to suffer two losses to not reach the next level.

Union defeated Towns in the opening round on Friday, the Hall County Cobras on Saturday, and Jefferson on Sunday. Towns County won three straight in the losers bracket, while Monday's game was Jefferson's first on the bottom half of the brackets.

In other action, the Lady Panther 12U girls softball team, was in Dahlonega and looking to defend their District and State title. Union played Fannin on Monday night, with the winner facing Banks. In order for Union to win District, they needed to beat Fannin then defeat Banks twice.

Banks knocked Union into

9&U baseball and 10&U softball. Photos by Todd Forrest

the losers bracket on Saturday after the Lady Panthers beat host Lumpkin County.

The 11&U baseball team went to Jackson County where they fell to North Hall and Jackson.

Free Seniors Rodeo and Family Fishing Festival held at Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery



Gracie Rogers holding her stringer of trout caught at the Family Fishing Festival, with her sister Summer Rogers and father Grady Rogers



Long time friends (L-R) Clarence Leatherwood and George Andrin enjoying a day of fishing at the Seniors Fishing Rodeo.

The Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery located on Rock Creek Road just off Hwy 60 held the annual Seniors Fishing Rodeo and Family Fishing Festival back-to-back on June 7th and 8th. Nearly 200 participants ages 55 and older from all over Georgia attended the Seniors Rodeo on Friday. On Saturday, more than 1,000 people from across the Southeast attended the Family Fishing Festival for youth 16 and under. More than 5,000 beautiful Rainbow and Brook Trout were stocked in Rock Creek over the course of the two days, some weighing more than three pounds and measuring over 24 inches in length.

A free hotdog lunch was provided courtesy of Trout Unlimited #692 of Blairsville and Friends of the Hatchery. Most of the hotdogs were donated by

Save-A-Lot Food Store in Blue Ridge. Drawings for free prizes from registration forms were held for the Seniors thanks to Friends of the Hatchery. Seniors prizes included fishing rods and reels, gardening supplies, and a grill. Friends of the Hatchery also gave away prizes, including toys and fishing gear, during their Duck Pick Up at the Family Fishing Festival to raise funds for next year's events. In addition to fishing, Family Fishing Festival youth participated in a "scavenger hunt," visiting educational/environmental exhibit booths sponsored by Trout Unlimited of Blairsville #692, Georgia Forestry Commission, Friends of the Hatchery, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Georgia Department of Natural Resources (Laser Shoot, BB Gun Shoot, Fishing Simulator), ORCA, Muzzy Archery, North

Georgia Taxidermy, Woodmen of the World, and Avon. Drawings for free fishing rods and reels from registration forms were held throughout the morning. Participants also received free Rainbow Trout tattoos and face paintings. In addition, Fannin/Union County EMS First Responders were present in case of an emergency. These events would not be possible without the generosity of local businesses and agencies, nor without the more than 30 loyal and dedicated volunteers who assisted each day. In addition, Friends of the Hatchery play a vital role in providing funds and volunteer hours.

For more information about annual fishing events or Friends of the Hatchery please call 706-838-4723. NJum19.X5/CA

Rodeo at Union County Saddle Club June 21 and 22



Get ready, get set, the rodeo is almost here. Mountain Valley Motors - Dodge Truck will be our main sponsor for this year's rodeo. The International Professional Rodeo Association (IRPA) rodeo will be presented by Circle N Rodeo Production and benefit the Union County Saddle Club and the Glenda Gooch House. The event will be held this Friday and Saturday, June 21 and 22, 2013 under our beautiful covered arena. Gates will open each night at 6 p.m. and the action starts at 8 p.m. with a presentation by the Union County Saddle Club. They will also perform an additional routine at intermission followed by a trick riding team. There will be plenty of action going on during the rodeo to include Bareback Bronc Riding, Saddleback Bronc Riding, Steer Wrestling, Team Roping, Tie-Down Roping, Ladies Break-away Roping, Barrel Racing, and of course everyone's favorite, Bull Riding. Top quality livestock

will be used to assure some thrills and spills!

There will also be plenty of things to do for our little Cowboys and Cowgirls like the calf scramble, pony rides, euro-bungee jump, and mechanical bull. Also come out and see Mr. Jason Farley, our rodeo clown this year. Jason resides in Arkansas and he was twice named ARA Funny Man of the Year, IFR 43 Showcase Barrel-man Champion, and IFR 43 Showcase Comedy Act Champion. He is very funny so don't miss him.

We will have plenty of great food so help spread the word and come on out and enjoy a night of excitement. Brand new stadium style bleachers have been installed so there will be enough seating for everyone. Advance tickets are on sale now until Friday at 4 p.m. You can save 2 dollars off the gate price of \$12 for adults. Advance prices are: Adults - \$10, Children 6-12 - \$5 and children under 5 enter free. Advance ticket sales locations are United Community Banks, Anderson's Cowboy Store, and Nelson Tractor.



We would like to thank our chute sponsors. They are: Kevin Panter Insurance, United Community Banks, Xaxby's, Blue Ridge Mountain E.M.C., Jimmy's Metal Roofing, Blairsville Jaycees, Alexander's Store, Gooch Trucking, and The Jacky Jones Family. The arena and show grounds are located on

The "BIF" wins at Michigan

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Greg Biffle took the lead near the end of Sunday's 200-lap Sprint Cup race, then coasted to victory after his pursuer, Jimmie Johnson slapped the outside wall on lap 197.

"I was really worried about him (Johnson)," said Biffle. "I knew that he had been gaining on me and that it would be close. But I felt like we had the advantage of the cleaner air by being out front. But if he had been able to keep coming, I don't know."

Biffle had a good car throughout the race, but not a dominant one until the last pit stop on lap 167. After his crew made adjustments, he went to the front, and was never challenged.

"We had a great race car," said Johnson, who finished 28th. "And we had great strategy throughout the race. The little problem I had there at the end cost us a great day."

Kevin Harvick finished second, but was never a threat to the winner.

"I think everyone on the team did a great job and are satisfied with today," said Harvick. "We made adjustments on our first pit stop and the car just kept getting better and better. We just couldn't get it to the front in time."

Martin Truex ran a good race and came home third.

"The car ran funny all day," said Truex. "Our old tires were as good as the new ones. We tried a lot of different things, but whatever changes we made, the car stayed the same."

Kyle Busch, Tony Stewart, Matt Kenseth, Clint Bowyer, Carl Edwards, Joey Logano, and Jeff Burton were the remaining top-10.

Biffle's teammate and polesitter Carl Edwards saw his chances for a win slip away after his team called for a green flag pit stop during lap 162. A caution came out as soon as he returned to the track, which meant he had to go to the rear of the field when green flag racing resumed.

The engine in Dale Earnhardt Jr.'s car went sour, and he wound up with a DNF, finishing 37th.

Kurt Busch was one of the early leaders, but brushed the wall during lap 29, and finished 39th.

Earnhardt's teammate Jeff Gordon was involved in an early wreck, and was out after only 52 laps.

Top-10 leaders after 15 of 36: 1. Johnson-538, 2. Edwards-507, 3. Bowyer-489, 4. Harvick-476, 5. Kenseth-456, 6. Kyle Busch-452, 7. Earnhardt-447, 8. Biffle-443, 9. Keselowski-430, 10. Stewart-417.

SMITH GETS NATIONWIDE WIN
Regan Smith held off Kyle Larson and the rain to win Saturday's Nationwide Series race at Michigan.

He outlasted Larson in the final 14 laps to take the checkered flag just minutes before rain began to fall on the track.

Parker Kligerman gambled rain would end the race short of the scheduled 125 laps but lost the lead when he had to pit with 13 to go. That opened the door for Smith, who kept his No. 7 Chevy ahead of the hard charging Larson in the final 10 laps.

Paul Menard finished third, followed by Kyle Busch, Trevor Bayne, Brad Sweet, Chris Buescher, Elliott Sadler, Nelson Piquet, and Brian Scott.

Top-10 leaders after 13 of 33: 1. Smith-495, 2. Hornish-437, 3. Allgaier-436, 4. A. Dillon-428, 5. Sadler-424, 6. Scott-415, 7. Bayne-407, 8. Kligerman-407, 9. Larson-403, 10. Vickers-395.

BIG MONEY TALKS IN NASCAR

For those race fans who believe money is not the major factor in NASCAR racing, they need to rethink their beliefs.

A glaring example of this came last week, while Brad Keselowski was visiting Ford Motor Company's headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan.

In a USA Today article, Keselowski accused Hendrick Motorsports and Joe Gibbs Racing of luring some of their employees away with big money contracts.

"Hendrick and Gibbs have this nasty little habit of going to other teams and outbidding other people and taking those employees and stealing our information, and, when that happens, that puts walls up between the camps because you are giving up more than one piece of information," said Keselowski. "You are giving up two companies' information and trying to protect yourself against that, it forces you to put up walls. It doesn't necessarily lend itself to working together."

Keselowski cited two incidents where he claimed Hendrick and Gibbs lured away Ford team employees with big offers.

"Gibbs stole the Roush aero director and took all the information," continued Keselowski. "And Hendricks took three employees from our Chase-winning team last year."

Rick Hendrick didn't agree, and issued a different version of Keselowski's story.

"The comments Brad reportedly made were misinformed. The truth is that we hired one tire changer, who was a backup for Penske and whose contract was up. We also brought over one mechanic from their Nationwide program and, when the Penske engine shop was closing, added a few of those people."

"What Brad left out was that his organization also hired one of our tire changers. All of this was above board and is part of doing business in a competitive environment. I take no issue with any of it, and I expect Roger [Penske] would say the same. Brad misrepresents the facts and spends a lot of time making insinuations and accusations about other teams when he should be focused on his own program and competing at a high level. I hope he figures that out and begins representing himself and the sport with more class."



Greg Biffle, winner at Michigan

It appears Keselowski may have stuck his foot in his mouth, but speed does cost money. Having the best workers guarantees better performance on the race track, which translates into more wins.

FORMER NASCAR DRIVER LEFFLER KILLED

NASCAR driver Jason Leffler died after an accident June 12, in a 410 Sprint Car race, at Bridgeport Speedway in Swedesboro, N.J.

Leffler, who was from Long Beach, California, made 423 starts in NASCAR's three national series.

The 37-year-old Leffler, a two-time winner in the NASCAR Nationwide Series came onto the racing scene after winning three consecutive USAC racing championships from 1997-1999.

He went into NASCAR with Chip Ganassi, after finishing 17th in the 2000 Indianapolis 500. But it was a short stay. Leffler failed to qualify five times in the 36 Cup races for Ganassi, and was released. Although he did return to the Cup level, he only had 11 starts over the last four years.

His last NASCAR race was June 9, at Pocono. A fund has been set up for his five-year-old son. Donations may be sent to: The Charlie Dean Leffler Discretionary Trust, c/o SunTrust Bank, 232 Williamson Road, Mooresville, NC 28117.

Weekend Racing: Two road course races are on tap for this weekend. The Nationwide Series is at Road America at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, while the Cup teams are at Sonoma, California.

Sat., June 22, Nationwide Series, race 14 of 33; Starting time: 5 pm ET; TV: ESPN.

Sun. June 23, Sprint Cup, race 16 of 36; Starting time: 3 pm ET; TV: TNT.

Racing Trivia Question: How old is Dale Earnhardt Jr.?

Last Week's Question: Where is Kevin Harvick's hometown? **Answer:** It is Barkersfield, California.

You may e-mail the Racing Reporter at: hodges@race500.com.

Tucker Basketball Camp

Union County High School will be hosting a basketball skills camp from June 24th-27th for boys and girls grades K-12th. The camp will begin daily at 8:30 a.m. and end at 11:30 a.m. Every camper will receive a camp t-shirt. There will be an awards ceremony on Thursday the 27th at 11 a.m. The cost for each camper will be \$60. You may bring this form and money on June 24th or mail this form and money to David Tucker at: 106 Sherwood Ave. Box 26, Calhoun, TN 37309. You may also contact Coach Tucker at (423) 336-3045

Assisting Coach Tucker at the camps will be: Tina Dockery - Union County Lady Panthers Assistant Coach, Mandy Hunter - Union County Middle School Girls Coach, Junior Tucker - Walker Valley High School, Mindy Cox - Niota Elementary School, and Jon Tucker - Tennessee Wesleyan College Assistant Coach.

Activities will include: ball handling drills, dribbling drills, shooting drills, offense and defense instruction contests, 5-on-5 play, 3-on-3 play, and 1-on-1 play.

Campers Name: _____

Do you have health insurance on this child? Yes ___ No ___

Emergency Contact: _____

Emergency Contact Phone #: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

GWRRA meetings

Chapter J of the Gold Wing Road Riders Association (GWRRA) meets on the third Saturday of each month (excluding December) at Daniels Steakhouse, Hiawassee, GA. Fellowship and food at 11 AM with the

meeting commencing at noon. We welcome riders of all brands of motorcycles and welcome participants of other GWRRA chapters. For further information, please contact Chapter Director Peg Jones 678-464-7340.