

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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## Diamond Indians split a pair of Region 8-A games

By James Reese  
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The Tallulah Falls Indians traveled to Hiawassee on Saturday to play on a field that could be illuminated by electricity once the sun went down.

They didn't seem happy about the availability of lights, which of course, their stadium doesn't have.

However, the game didn't last until darkness this time, giving umpires a reason to call the game like they did on Feb. 24 with Towns County leading 6-1.

This time, the Indians knocked the lights out of the Tallulah Falls pitching staff as they claimed their second Region 8-A win of the young season by a score of 15-5.

Nevertheless, the game was called early; most likely because of the mercy rule evoked by the Indians' 10-run lead after six innings.

Billy Meier drove in six runs and the Indians dominated from the first pitch.

The Indians began their assault on the scoreboard following a scoreless top of the first, behind the stellar pitching of senior Taylor Denton.

Senior Paydon Shook started things off drawing a walk. Next batter up, Kyle McConnell lined a two-run shot that accounted for the Indians' first home run of the year. The opposite field blast opened the scoring giving the Towns Indians a 2-0 lead.

Denton led off the Indians' second inning with a solid single to the gap in left-center field. Denton would score on an error gifting the Indians a run to up the score to 3-0. Wesley Bloodworth later scored on a passed ball giving Towns a 4-0 lead to close the second inning.

In the bottom of the third, Shook worked the count and drew another walk. Shook made his way around to third and came home on a sacrifice fly by senior Brett Bradshaw to lift the Indians' led to 5-0.

After a solid base hit to lead off the Tallulah Falls top of the fourth, the Tallulah Indians version cracked into their side of the scoring column and managed crossing the plate before Indians' Head Baseball Coach Chris Vardo rescued Denton. Shook came in from right field to relieve the Indians' starter. Shook held Tallulah Falls to 2 runs as they pulled close making the score 5-4.

From that point on, it was all Towns County Indians.

The home team came to life and batted around.

Jimmy Pearce got things started with a lead-off single. Moments later, Pearce was caught in an unfortunate rundown.

Senior Devin Henderson stepped up and delivered a single. Back to the top of the order, Meier connected for a two run blast giving the Indians a three-run margin of comfort at 7-4.

Tallulah Falls managed one more run for the rest of the evening and the Towns County Indians pulled away to take the region matchup 15-5 in six innings.

Earlier in the week, the Indians traveled to Athens Academy to take on the Spartans. It wasn't a happy trip home as the Indians lost their first Region 8-A game of the season 10-3.

The Indians traveled to Cashiers, NC on Tuesday to take on the Blue Ridge Bobcats. The results of the game were unavailable at press time.



Paydon Shook races into third base against Tallulah Falls Photo by James Reese.



Coach Vardo waves Jimmy Pearce home for another Indians' run Photo by James Reese.



Billy Meier cracks a two-run shot against Tallulah Falls Photo by James Reese.



Kyle McConnell gets the glad hand from Coach Vardo following his two-run blast against Tallulah Falls Photo by James Reese.



Taylor Denton got the win over Tallulah Falls Photo by James Reese.

On Thursday, the Indians are at home to take on the Athens Christian Eagles with the game scheduled to start at 5 p.m.

On Friday, Coach Vardo and the Tribe travel to Commerce to take on the Tigers in Jackson County. Game time: 5 p.m.

## Fusion Dance Company to hold spring recital

The Fuzion Dance Company of Brasstown Dance Academy will be presenting their Annual Spring Concert on Saturday, March 19, 2011 at 7 p.m. in the Towns County School Auditorium. The Fuzion Dance Company has just completed an award-winning third season. The Spring Concert will feature a variety of dance styles including Modern, Jazz, Tap, Hip-Hop, Ballet, Pointe, Lyrical & Contemporary. They have been working hard for months to be able to present an exciting performance

to our communities. We hope that you will be able to join for this exciting program! Cost of admission is \$10 for Adults and \$5 for students. Tickets are available for advance purchase at the BDA Studio and Head 2 Toe Dance Supply located across the street from the Blue Ridge Mountain EMC in Young Harris. Tickets will also be available at the door.

Call or visit the studio for more information. Office hours are Monday-Thursday 2:00 - 7:00pm and the phone number is (706) 379-2651.



NT(Mar16,C)ac

## 1st annual Fishing For a Cause

Calling all Anglers in the Tri-State Area! Come on out to the First Annual Relay For Life Fishing For a Cause bass tournament. Join us on March 26 at the Ledford Chapel Boat Ramp for a day of good fishing, food and fun. Breakfast and sign-in will begin at 5:30 a.m. and blast off will be drawn at 6:50 a.m. - boats will launch at 7 a.m. There is a \$50 per boat entry fee, and anyone who registers early will receive 5 door prize tickets for themselves and their partner. There

will be trophies awarded and there will be a 50% payback among the winners. Don't like to fish? Well, we've got you covered ... There will be silent auction items, door prizes, a 50/50 raffle, food and games. All items have been donated from local businesses.

So come on out for a day of great fun - in the name of a good cause. All proceeds from the event will go to the Towns County Relay For Life which will be held this year on August 19th on the Square

in downtown Hiawassee. Last year, the Towns County RFL raised \$20,000 in the fight against cancer. With your help, we can do it again this year!

If you are interested in participating in the First Annual "Fishing for a Cause" or if you would like to volunteer at the event or Relay, please contact Erin Smith-Cross at 706-897-3228 or you can email her at crossfam27@gmail.com. Remember, a world with less cancer is a world with more birthdays! NT(Mar16,F4)SH

## NASCAR 2011

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Kahne cruises to truck win

Kasey Kahne cruised to victory in Saturday's Truck race at Darlington Raceway.

The victory made Kahne the first driver in the truck series to win three of his first four starts.

"I enjoy winning," said Kahne. "I don't win enough, so to come here and win this weekend feels great. It's exciting to win, whether it's a truck race or Cup race. I don't care which it is."

Second alongside Elliott Sadler on a restart with 53 laps to go, Kahne immediately dispatched of Sadler—who had taken two tires under the previous caution—and held on through a final restart with three laps left to score the win.

Four-time truck champion Ron Hornaday Jr. finished second, followed by defending series champion and 2010 Darlington winner Todd Bodine. Matt Crafton, James Buescher, Timothy Peters, Elliott Sadler, Cole Whitt, Johnny Sauter, and David Starr completed the top-ten.

The victory was Kahne's second at Darlington. Kahne, who has been full time in the Cup series since 2004, also has a victory at Homestead-Miami Speedway. Both came in 2004. He finished second last year at Pocono Raceway.

It was Kahne's second appearance in the Kyle Busch Motorsports No. 18 Toyota normally driven by team owner Kyle Busch, who was vacationing in Cancun, after getting married last week.

The race was slowed by 10 cautions, including one for a three-truck wreck involving Johanna Long, Ricky Carmichael and Nelson Piquet Jr. that brought out the red flag for 7 minutes, 37 seconds.

Top-10 leaders after 3 of 25: 1. Crafton-111, 2. Whitt-105, 3. Peters-104, 4. Rogers-103, 5. Sauter-102, 6. Hornaday-99, 7. Bodine-92, 8. Dillon-92, 9. Papis-87, 10. Earnhardt-86

Commentary: Has NASCAR bottomed out? Brian France, CEO of NASCAR thinks it has. At a press conference last week, he told reporters that the Cup Series ended the year on a positive note, and 2011 is looking good.

"We went out in a strong way, as you know, in 2010 down to the last laps," said France. "We hadn't had that in a few years. You want to go out strong. It's really important to have a good playoff, a good finale. You see where that's helped the Super Bowls of late, which have been very competitive. So have some other series, other sports. You want to go out on a real high. We have a very short window to launch. If you're going out a little bit down, it's a little

harder to ramp up.

"We had a very dynamic Daytona 500, having a really young star born, having the iconic 21 Wood Brothers team in Victory Lane, with 74 lead changes, very interesting way the competition played out during the Daytona 500. We started there and then on to Phoenix, getting Jeff Gordon back in Victory Lane, record lead changes again there, attendance up across the board.

"Obviously, the competition has never been better. That's been brewing in terms of going in the right direction for a number of months, dating back well into last year."

When asked about the level of increasingly rough driving, he replied: "It's made the racing better. They've got to figure that out. They're doing that largely. I would say, too, with the wild card situation, where the last two spots are going to be decided by wins, if you don't happen to have the perfect top-10 performance in the first 26 events, I think you saw the disappointment with Tony not winning when he thought he should have won last weekend, he now counts that because he doesn't start fast.

"I think you're going to see an escalation of that. That's what great competition is. I'm actually happy to hear people complaining about that. It means it's working."

He even touched on Danica Patrick running in the Nationwide Series.

"I think that (fourth-place run at Phoenix) elevated her," he continued. "There was some discussion, did she have the right stuff to compete in the Nationwide Series. You know, I think she dispelled a lot of that. There's always circumstances in the start of a new career. But sometimes things are out of your control, people can crash in front of you, a hundred other things.

"I think she elevated herself quite nicely. That's nice to see. She's a very competitive person. She's always said she's here to compete, not just happy to be here. That fits my criteria."

France said fans should not expect to see many schedule changes in 2012.

"Do we see any major changes in the schedule?" he said. "We don't release that for another month or so. We did have a fair amount of changes last year and even some in the last couple years.

"So by definition I don't think you're going to see a lot of changes. We'll see how some of the new dates, their new time on the calendar works out. But I don't think there will be as much as there was, say, in 2010.



Kasey Kahne cruised to victory in Saturday's Truck race at Darlington Raceway.

"We don't want there to be. We prefer to have a good continuity. That's our preference."

France appears to be on the right track. After three races into the 2011 season, the television rating and track attendance hasn't equaled that of 2009, but it has certainly improved.

Fans appear to be regaining interest. TV ratings have increased for all three of this year's Cup races, including 13 percent for the Daytona 500, 9 percent at Phoenix, and 29 percent for last week's race at Las Vegas.

Attendance also seems to be up with near sell-out crowds at both Phoenix and Las Vegas.

There had been rumors in the past few months that Volkswagen might be entering NASCAR, but they ended that speculation.

"Nothing for us. There is certainly the one or the other person out there in the world that would wish for that, but we don't have that on the programme," said Ulrich Hackenberg, head of technical development at Volkswagen.

There has been speculation for months over whether VW would enter NASCAR with a factory team to bolster its appeal in the U.S. market, where it lags Japanese carmakers.

**Weekend Racing:** It's on to Bristol, Tennessee for the Cup and Nationwide teams. The Trucks are off.

Sat., Mar. 19, Nationwide Series Scott's EZ Seed 300, 4 of 34; Starting time: 2 pm; TV: ESPN.

Sun. Mar. 20, Sprint Cup Jeff Byrd 500, 4 of 36; Starting time: 1 pm; TV: Fox.

All times are Eastern.

**Racing Trivia Question:** In addition to his NASCAR racing teams, Joe Gibbs has also coached two NFL teams. Who are these two teams?

**Last Week's Question:** Which state is Kasey Kane from? **Answer:** He is from Enumclaw, Washington.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: hodges@race500.com. NT(Mar16,C)ac

## Our Trails: the AT, Benton MacKaye, Duncan Ridge, and Fires Creek Trails

Did you know that thousands of people come to North Georgia every year from all over the world just to hike? The Community Council of the Georgia Mountain Research & Education Center invites you to a free seminar to learn more about our famous trails. Find out why so many come and why they love the Appalachian Trail (AT). Learn why the AT is here, who built it, and where it goes. Who was Benton MacKaye and why is a trail named for him? Learn the strange but true reason why the Duncan Ridge Trail was built and who designed it to be such a rugged and difficult trail. Discover the unique beauty of the Fires Creek Trail and how to access

it. Understand the value of these special trails to our local economy and culture. Learn who maintains these trails, why they do so, and how you can help! Hear about the history and future of these trails and how you can help protect them for future generations.

Hiking experts George Owen, Ron Hamlin and Richard Sullivan, representing the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, the Benton MacKaye Trail Association and the Mountain High Hikers, will team up to answer these questions and more, as they share with you unique information about these special places.

This seminar will take place on Friday, March 25, at

10 a.m., in the auditorium of the GMRE Center. The Center is located three miles south of Blairsville, on Hwy 19/129. This seminar is free and no pre-registration is necessary. However, seating is limited to the first 100 in attendance.

This seminar is sponsored by the Community Council. Since the first class in 2004, more than 5,900 adults have benefited from these seminars. The operating budget of the Community Council is funded by gifts from friends through an annual campaign. Please visit our website at www.gmrec.uga.edu, or call 706-745-2655 for questions or to be put on our seminar email list. NT(Mar16,Z6)CA

## Bass Tourney ... continued from page 1A

Cross and Hogan were honored to be a part of the fund-raiser designed to help put new equipment on the Towns County Indians' football players.

"We love to fish and it was an honor to be a part of this tournament," Cross said.

Towns County Indians' Head Football Coach Kyle Langford said the Indians' football team netted about \$1,100 last year.

"That was a good day for us," Coach Langford said. "The turnout was good and, it was about as good a day weather-wise as you

could ask for. One of the guys came in and said they thought the weather was too pretty for bass fishing."

Nineteen teams of anglers turned out to try their luck at the first place prize in the inaugural event.

On Saturday, the fun begins again 7 a.m., at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. The entry fee is \$75 per boat, with no more than two persons per boat. Only Black Bass Family may be weighed in and all fish must be 12 inches or more. Tournament contestants must stay at least 50

feet apart during the event. If three or more dead fish are present at time of weigh in, the contestant is disqualified. If a tie occurs for total weight, big fish will determine the winner. If there is still a tie, a coin flip will determine the winner. First place prize is \$1,000, second place is \$400, third place is \$300, fourth place is \$100 and the Big Fish prize is \$100. All entry fees are final, no refunds will be issued. One person from each boat must be present to receive the launch number. For details, call (706) 896-7543.