



Towns County Herald's Sporting News



Towns County High School 2009 post season basketball wrap-up

JERRY KENDALL

Sports Writer

The 2009 high school basketball season is now complete for the Towns County Lady Indians and Indians and all of the opponents they faced during the year. There were many interesting results in both regular and post season play involving both opponents of the Towns County teams, those participating in the Battle of the States, and "opponents of opponents" of our teams. We will look at just a few of these results and how they emphasize in many cases the competitiveness of the TCHS schedules.

Wesleyan/Bishop McGuinness - For the second year in a row, it required the eventual Georgia Class A State Champion to eliminate the Towns County Ladies-Calvary Day in the semi-finals last year and Wesleyan in the Elite Eight Round this year. Following their 92-36 win over the Lady Indians, the Wesleyan Girls went on to defeat Randolph-Clay 84-59 and Savannah Country Day 71-31 to win the Class A State Championship, giving them their sixth state championship in eight years with four of them coming the previous five years in Class AA. The most recent USA Today Girls' Hoops Super 25 Poll shows Brea Olinda (California) debuting at No. 3 in the rankings with a 32-2 record. One of those losses was by a 49-41 score to Wesleyan in a December tournament in Phoenix, Arizona.

Bishop McGuinness is a

private school in Kernersville, North Carolina, and the "Vilains" have won four straight Class A State Championships in North Carolina after being admitted to the North Carolina high school association. Bishop won their last seventeen games of the season following a loss at Class AAAAA Parkview in Gwinnett County with the last twelve all being by at least twenty four points, including a 64-33 win over East Bladen, who wound up with a 26-3 record, in the state championship game. Like Wesleyan, Bishop McGuinness is a metro team not limited to strict geographical boundaries as are public schools, said to accept students in this case from Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Kernersville, and perhaps beyond.

Hiwassee Dam/Robbinsville - These two schools are listed next because of their direct and indirect connection to both the Lady Indians and Bishop McGuinness. Hiwassee Dam and Robbinsville both made it to the Elite Eight in Class A in North Carolina. One of the Lady Indians' six losses was a three point decision to Hiwassee Dam in the Towns Tip-Off Classic back in November while Robbinsville's only two losses prior to the Elite Eight were to Lady Indian opponents. One Robbinsville loss was by one point to Class AA Fannin County, a 64-56 loser to the Lady Indians in the Battle of the States Tournament, and a three point loss to Hiwassee Dam.

The Hiwassee Dam girls

finished their season with a 28-7 Record but struggled at the end of their elite eight game as East Surry finished the game on an 18-4 run, pulling away from just a two point lead the final five minutes of the game for a 52-36 win. East Surry wound up with a 26-6 record with four of the losses being to Bishop McGuinness. Meanwhile, Robbinsville lost a 54-29 elite eight decision to Bishop McGuinness with Bishop then defeating East Surry 63-38 in their state semi-final game.

Four different neighboring North Carolina schools—Hayesville, Murphy, Hiwassee Dam, and Andrews—combined for ten Class A state championships in thirty years prior to the arrival of Bishop on the scene. The presence of Bishop McGuinness in North Carolina is strikingly similar to the position of small schools in Georgia having to face Wesleyan and other programs of similar magnitude.

Polk County Girls and Pendleton Boys - Surprisingly, the two teams which were so dominant in the Battle of the States—the Polk County (Tennessee) Girls and the Pendleton (South Carolina) Boys—didn't make it past the sweet sixteen round in their states, due to stiff competition or perhaps below par performances or both. The Polk County Girls compete as one of the smallest schools in the very tough Class AA in Tennessee where just three classifications exist. They finished with a 26 -7 record, including four losses to powerful District foe McMinn Centrall, and actually lost in what is

called "Sub-State" with just eight teams being considered state tournament teams. Similarly, the Pendleton Boys lost in the second round of a thirty two team tournament as is done in Georgia and finished their season with a 17-8 record.

Pendleton Girls - On the other hand, one of the last teams from the Battle of the States one might have expected to excel in post season rose to near perfection in this venue. The Pendleton Girls fell by scores of 58-44 to Union County and 78-60 to Gordon Lee before drilling Hayesville 75-35 for seventh place in the Battle of the States. They battled all the way through a thirty two team field in the South Carolina state tournament, however, for four wins in reaching the Class AA State Finals in their state where they lost by just a 58-54 score in the state championship game to Marion.

Piedmont Boys - The Piedmont (Alabama) Boys, who took a decisive win over the Indians in the Battle of the States, made it to the Elite Eight in Class AAA in Alabama before losing by a 67-41 score to Leeds and finishing with a 23-11 record. Leeds went on to win the Class AAA State Championship with nine and twelve point wins in the semi-finals and finals.

Athens Christian Boys - The Athens Christian Boys used their metro Athens and international lineup to hand a pair of one sided defeats to the Indians during the season and they made it to the Class A State Final Four in Georgia before losing 71-50 to Turner

County. They finished the season with a 28-3 record after trailing Turner County by just a 47-44 margin near the mid point of the fourth quarter.

Rabun County/Union County Girls - Our two neighboring Class AA schools to the east and west fell victim in much the same manner as the Lady Indians—to high powered basketball programs from Gwinnett County. Rabun fell to eventual Class AA State Champion Buford 70-38 in the Elite Eight round while Union lost a 66-56 home decision to Greater Atlanta Christian in the Sweet Sixteen round. The thirty two point loss by Rabun didn't look quite so bad when considering that Buford defeated Laney 68-42 in the semi-finals and top ranked Model 66-35 in the state championship game.

Social Circle Girls - The Region 8A runner up Social Circle Lady Redskins, like the Lady Indians, represented our region well by also making it to the State Elite Eight where they fell by a 66-55 margin to Southwest Atlanta Christian. The Lady Redskins were severely handicapped for more than five minutes at the end of the game by the loss to an injury of first team All Region 8A post player Maritza Heard.

Nantahala Boys - Of all the teams faced by the Lady Indians and Indians this year, perhaps the most amazing was the Nantahala Boys who took a very competitive opening night victory over the Indians in the Towns Tip-Off Classic. Nantahala High School has just forty six students in grades nine

through twelve but the Hawks made it to the Sweet Sixteen in Class A in North Carolina before falling in 99-90 in overtime to Cherryville. Included in a miracle season for Nantahala was a late season victory over previously undefeated Murphy, one of the largest Class A schools in the state and the top ranked Class A team in the state at the time.

Statewide rankings - After having briefly entered statewide top ten rankings on a few occasions during the recently completed season but not at the end of regular season play, the Lady Indians were ranked seventh in the state in Class A in both the Associated Press Sports Writers and the GeorgiaPrepCountry.com Coaches final polls. Among Lady Indian Georgia opponents, Wesleyan of course was ranked first in both Class A polls and Social Circle was ranked eighth in both polls. The Rabun County Girls were ranked seventh in Class AA in the coaches poll and eighth in the sports writers poll while Union County received votes in the writers poll. The Athens Christian Boys were ranked third in the coaches poll and fourth in the sports writers poll.

This article concludes coverage of the 2009 high school basketball season for the Towns County teams and their opponents. Thanks for the memories and best wishes to the Lady Indians and Indians for next season and in all of their sports and other activities.



NASCAR 2009 By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

JOHNSON MUSCLES TO MARTINSVILLE WIN

MARTINSVILLE, Vir.— Jimmie Johnson won the Goody's 500 Sunday at Martinsville on the 25th Anniversary of team owner, Rick Hendrick's first Cup victory. It was also Johnson's fifth Martinsville win in the last six races.

"We didn't have the best car at the start, but we opted to lose track position to work on the car," said Johnson. "We tried several things that didn't work. As the day went on Chad (crew chief Chad Knaus) kept adjusting tire pressure until he got it right."

Fans were treated to beating, banging, fender-rubbing, pushing and shoving. All together, the action on the track produced one of the year's best and most exciting races.

Johnson stayed in the top-5, but had not led a lap until a caution came out on lap 429. Johnson's team gave him a super fast pit stop under a caution, and he was out of the pits ahead of the leader, Denny Hamlin.

Hamlin, who led the most laps (296), regained the lead from Johnson on a restart on lap 456.

Johnson remained on Hamlin's tail and dogged him for 23 more laps. Finally, Johnson was able to set Hamlin up in order to make a pass. Going into turn-4 on lap 479, Johnson gave Hamlin's rear bumper, ever so slight of a tap, causing him to push up. Johnson was then able to drive his No. 48 under Hamlin's No. 11.

Hamlin tried to come down and close the door, but it was too late. By the time he gathered up his car, Johnson was way out front.

"I had a little bit better car than Denny on the long runs," said Johnson. "I was patient. I set him up, set him up, and then got inside him. He tried to put the squeeze on me, but I was up on the curb sliding, and we got together. He did a heck of a job of saving it."

"I thought I was going around too, but fortunately, we had enough distance between us that we both could save it."

Johnson moved from ninth to fourth in points. Hamlin was the defending Martinsville winner, but all he could do for the last 17 laps was look at Johnson's rear bumper grow smaller with each lap.

"It was a great battle," said Hamlin. "I'm honored to be on the same racetrack with guys like Jimmie," said Hamlin. "That was just short track racing. I would have done the same to him, and if it comes back around I will do the same."

"That's the way it is at Martinsville. I was trying to protect the spot and he was try-

ing to get it. That's the way it goes."

Third-place finisher, Tony Stewart had his best finish of the season with his new team, Stewart Haas Racing.

"We were right there when Denny and Jimmie were having their problems," said Stewart. "We were ready. I'm just proud of this team, they all did a great job today."

Stewart's teammate, Ryan Newman finished sixth.

Points leader, Jeff Gordon finished fourth, followed by Clint Bowyer, Ryan Newman, Mark Martin, Dale Earnhardt Jr., A. J. Allmendinger, and Jamie McMurray.

The four Hendrick teams finished first, fourth, seventh and eighth.

Jamie McMurray's 10th-place was the best of any Roush Fenway team.

Top-12 Chase leaders after 6 of 36: 1. J. Gordon-959, 2. Bowyer-870, 3. Ku. Busch-827, 4. Johnson-817, 5. Hamlin-811, 6. Ky. Busch-800, 7. Stewart-798, 8. Edwards-750, 9. Kahne-745, 10. Harvick-714, 11. Reutimann-710, 12. Kenseth-704

IS NASCAR GOING TO THE DUCKS

I'm surprised that all 43 Cup drivers are able to show up on Sunday to race.

It's the way they work. They are so busy. I don't see how they get to the track on time.

Almost every time I try to talk with one, he has to make a commercial and is running late.

It seems like every big name driver is more and more into the business of television.

As their driver status increases, so does their television time. I don't mean as in racing on TV, but as in acting and in commercials.

Look at Dale Earnhardt Jr. He's NASCAR's chief commercial maker. In addition to owning a production company, he can be seen on TV peddling everything from jeans to car insurance.

Maybe his racing would improve if he spent more time in the shop and less in front of TV cameras.

Michael Waltrip isn't far behind Junior. In addition to all his Domino's, Aaron's and NAPA commercials, I just received a press release that he will be appearing on the "My Name is Earl" show.

Drivers are busy doing commercials, because they choose to be. A driver does have certain responsibilities to make appearances for their sponsors, but most are constantly trying to create new opportunities that will bring them in more money. Most even have agents with contacts to Hollywood producers.

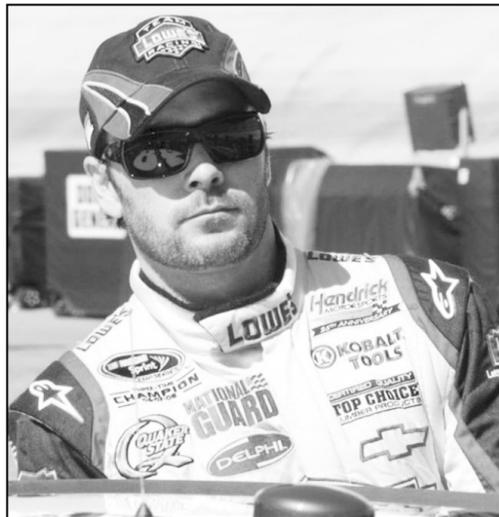
I know of one driver that spends an hour each weekday morning on the phone with his stockbroker. He gets free phone time from one of his sponsors.

Just a few days ago, my wife was watching her favorite soap opera, "General Hospital." She called my attention to the TV. One of the actors on the program was Jeff Burton. He was strutting his stuff, right along with the other soap characters.

Maybe Jeff needed the money. He only made about \$5-million in 2008. That puts him way below Jeff Gordon and Earnhardt who each brought in over \$20-million.

The one I worry about the most is Carl Edwards. This country boy from Missouri is also getting his share of air time. One commercial shows him using eye drops. I know his eyes are red and tired after a race, so that commercial makes sense.

But the commercial that really bothers me is the one about the duck. Carl said three different ducks were used in the making of one of his commercials. In one scene, the duck is driving the car around the track with a pretty girl.



Jimmie Johnson wins at Martinsville

2009 T-Ball and Farm League Baseball & Softball Registration

The Towns County Recreation Department will be holding registration for T-Ball and Farm League the week of March 14 thru March 21 also the week of March 23 thru March 28.

T-Ball is for boys and girls ages 4 and 5. Farm League baseball is for boys ages 6, 7 and 8. Farm League softball is for girls ages 6, 7 and 8. The age control date will

be prior to August 1 for boys and girls. Boys and girls ages 6 may play in either the T-Ball or the Farm League programs. Cost for these programs will be \$25 per participant. All registration will be held at the Recreation Department. Our hours of operation are: Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. til 9 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. til 7 p.m. For more info, please call the Rec. Dept. at 706-896-2600.

Have these ducks really learned to drive? The way the scientific and medical world is going, I wonder. Wouldn't it be something if these three ducks devised a plan to overpower Carl one Sunday and take over his driving duties?

It really scares me that NASCAR might allow ducks to drive.

Next Week: What is Truth

Weekend Racing: The Sprint Cup and Nationwide teams are at the 1.5-mile Texas Motor Speedway in Ft. Worth, TX. The Camping Series Trucks are off until April 25.

Sat., Apr. 4, Nationwide Series O'Reilly 300, race 5 of 35; Starting time: 3 p.m. (EDT); TV: ESPN2.

Sun., Apr. 5, Sprint Cup Samsung 500, race 7 of 36; Starting time: 2 p.m. (EDT); TV: FOX.

Racing Trivia Question: Where is the Sprint All-Star race held each year?

Last Week's Question: Which Cup team does Greg Biffle drive for? Answer: The No.16 Roush Fenway Ford.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: hodgesnews@earthlink.net.

YHC tennis falls 8-1 to powerful Shorter College

JIM BRYANT

Sports Writer

Richardson takes only win at #6 seed.

Rome was burning on the tennis courts of Shorter College but not for the Lady Mountain Lions. From the names of some of the Lady hawk players, several Italians escaped the burning. The Lady Hawks dominated through three doubles matches and the first five singles matches before Nicole Richardson took a win and avoided the "skunk." Guess some days you are the wind-

shield and some days you are the bug.

Doubles Results: SC Debracoudy/Montieth (W) YHC Rodgers/Dixom 8-4; SC Luconi/Brigneti (W) YHC Vaughters/Wheatley 8-1; SC Witmer/Mason (W) YHC Richardson/Mililli 8-5.

Singles Matches: SC Debracoudy (W) YHC Sara Rodgers 6-1, 6-0; SC Montieth (W) YHC Carrie Dixon 6-1, 6-0; SC Luconi (W) YHC Sara Vaughters 6-0, 6-0; SC Brigneti (W) YHC Megan Wheatley 6-3, 6-2; SC Mason (W) Victoria Mililli 6-1, 6-1; YHC Nicole Richardson (W) Witmer 6-1, 6-4.



Nicole Richardson salvaged the only win for the Mountain Lions in 8-1 loss to Shorter College. Photo by Jim & Lisa Bryant

WILD FACTS: Swallowtails at a glance

Eastern tiger swallowtails are taking flight this spring! Named Georgia's state butterfly in 1988, this common insect measures about 6 inches across, with "tails" as long as 1 inch. Most are bright yellow with black tiger-like stripes, although some females are dark brown. The purpose of this dark color phase may be to mimic the pipevine swallowtail, a butterfly similar in appearance that is distasteful to predators.



Aerobics at Recreation Department

Beginning Tuesday, March 10, Jeannie Ledford will bring her aerobic classes back to Towns County Recreation Department Gym.

Classes are a high energy mix of: step, weight training, cardio training, circuit training, kick boxing, yoga, pilates, and stretch. These classes are for all fitness and

experience levels.

Jeannie has a Bachelors Degree in Physical Education and over 13 years of aerobic and personal training experience. Classes will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30-6:30 pm. The cost for aerobics is \$5 per class or pay by the month and receive a class free.