

Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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Hiawassee, Georgia

Lady Indians head to region tourney as No. 2 seed

By Charles Duncan
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The Towns County Lady Indians' tennis team is in prime position to head to the state playoffs.



Towns County Lady Indians' Ginny Rhoades smashes back a service from her White County Lady Warriors' opponent during Monday's tennis action. Rhoades won the match 6-0, 6-3. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

They wouldn't have to go very far, the Lady Indians would host the first round of the state playoffs should they finish second in the region tournament, Head Coach Shannon Floyd said.

"Like I told the girls, we've beaten the 2, 3 and 4 seeds on the other side of the bracket," Coach Floyd said. "We know we can win and that's good for confidence, but we've got to back it up."

The No. 2 seed heading into region tournament play, the Lady Indians finished off the regular season on Monday in Cleveland with a 3-2 victory over the Class AAA Lady Warriors. The win gave Towns County a 12-4 regular season final record as they head to Lakeview Academy on Wednesday to play either Prince Avenue Christian or Hebron Christian in the first round of the Region 8-A tournament.

"If we win the first match on Wednesday, no matter what happens, we're in the state playoffs," Coach Floyd said. "If we win the first match, then you play for the top four seeds on Thursday."

"We can't win it, Athens Academy, that's another league," he said. "But if we can

finish second in the entire region, we'll host the first round of the state playoffs. That's what we're shooting for."

"We want to win that first one," he said. "For us to go to state in tennis, that's a big deal because we've got to play all these private schools. We're playing against kids that have been playing for a lot longer than any of our kids."

"Most of our kids pick up a racket their freshman year and I've got them for four years," he said. "That's what makes this girls team so strong. I've got four juniors that have been with me for three years. They're strong and they're consistent."

Last week, the Lady Indians overmatched Commerce, winning 5-0.

"We handled Commerce pretty good last week," Coach Floyd said.

Monday was a day to remember as the Lady Indians continued their winning ways over White County. Alexa Arencibia prevailed in her match 6-1, 6-0. Ginny Rhoades won 6-0, 6-3. Kristin Fuhs lost a close match 6-7 and the tiebreaker 5-7 and the second set 4-6.

In Doubles action, Kerri Abernathy and Jordan Moats took their match 6-3, 6-2. Kristie McConnell and Courtney Farmer lost 4-6, 3-6 in their doubles match.

"We had some good competitive matches, but we were just a little bit stronger than White County today," Coach Floyd said.

Indians diamond hopes remain alive

By Charles Duncan
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The Towns County Indians' baseball season hangs in the balance this week.

On Tuesday, the Indians were scheduled to play Prince Avenue Christian in Bogart followed by Commerce at home on Thursday and Social Circle at Social Circle on Saturday.

The three games mark a chance for the sixth-place Indians to get back into the thick of things in Region 8-A. The team ahead of them, Athens Christian, must face the two toughest teams in the region, Hebron Christian and a make up date with Lakeview.

Chances are that at week's end the Indians could be in a tie with the Eagles for the fifth spot in the region or possibly one game better.

The Indians have already defeated both Prince Avenue and Social Circle and have a chance to sweep the season series against both. The youth-oriented Indians have struggled against Commerce this season and took one on the chin against the Tigers earlier this season.

"I think if we can get wins against Prince Avenue and Social Circle and hope for the best against Commerce, we can get back on track," Indians Head Coach Shannon Moss said.

With a chance at the region playoffs hanging in the balance, Coach Moss hopes his team is ready for the biggest challenge of their young baseball careers.

"This team will gut it out, they won't quit," Coach Moss said. "They've been that way all year. I guess it's something that you really can't coach, but they don't give up."

Seniors Matt Beni and



Towns County Indians' Matt Beni gets ready to slap a single on Friday during play against Athens Christian at Indians Field in Hiawassee. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Towns County Indians' designated hitter Brett Bradshaw breaks for home following a passed ball during the Indians' region match up with Athens Christian at Indians Field. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

John Bleckley have been mainstays for the Indians in 2010. Junior Billy Meier leads the team in hitting and is the sparkplug behind the Tribe's offense.

The real issue facing the Indians is pitching, hitting spots and getting ahead in the strike count. Pitching dominates in high school baseball.

"That's certainly been an issue," Coach Moss said, referring to the team's 2010 pitching

performance. "I think a lot of it has to do with experience."

Towns' lone home action this week is against Commerce at 5 p.m. on Thursday. The team travels to Social Circle on Saturday for a 1 p.m. matchup.

"We've got a big opportunity this week," Coach Moss said. "I just hope we have enough to take advantage of the moment."

Indians braced for a tough region tourney

By Charles Duncan
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Prior to Monday's tennis matchup with White County, the Towns County Indians were coming off one of their strongest performances of the tennis season.

They defeated Commerce last week 5-0 and were looking sharp as the Class A regional tournaments neared.

On Monday, the Indians fought hard but came up on the short end as the Warriors defeated Towns County 5-0.

In Singles action, Douglas Haigler lost his match 0-6, 1-6, Alex Spiegel lost a hard fought match 5-7, 5-7, and Walker Gus lost 2-6, 5-7.

In Doubles action, Mat Hogsed and Ethan Burch lost a tough match 6-7, 6-7 and Corbin Gilfilian and Eli Barrett lost their doubles match as well.

The Indians finished their regular tennis season with a mark of 5 wins, 11 losses. They figure to play Hebron Christian on Wednesday in what is likely to be their toughest match of the season in the region tournament at Lakeview Academy in Gainesville.

The Indians, who lost two key players to graduation from last year's team, lost 4-1



Towns County's Corbin Gilfilian slams the ball back during action against White County on Monday. Gilfilian and his doubles' partner Eli Barrett were on the losing end in this matchup. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

earlier this season in a regional matchup with Hebron Christian.

"We lost some key talent from last season's team and these young guys are thrust into the spotlight," Coach Shannon Floyd said. "We've got a lot of talent on this team; it's just that we've been up against some real tough competition on the boys' side."

Coach Floyd said the boys' team would have to play the best tennis of their lives to advance in the region tournament against Hebron Christian.

"We've got to play better than we've played all year and we've got to hope that somebody on the other team slips," Coach Floyd said. "And that's possible, you never know, that's why you play them."

"I'm really proud of our boys this season," Coach Floyd said. "We just didn't get to bring back as much experience as we did with the girls' team. It's tough when you lose that experience."

The Indians are expected to play at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Coach Floyd said.

Eagles top Indians in region play 14-3

By Charles Duncan
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Athens Christian sophomore right-hander Zach Resop was more than the Towns County Indians could handle on Friday at Indians Field.

Resop was on top of his game as he shutdown the Indians' offense. The Eagles got timely hitting and some help from Towns County's defense as well as some stellar pitching from Resop to top the Indians 14-3 in the Region 8-A matchup.

Indians' starter Alan Turpin didn't get the kind of defensive support that Head Coach Shannon Moss had hoped for.

"I thought Alan gave us the best opportunity to get on track against Athens Christian," Coach Moss said. "He made some good pitches. We made a couple of costly errors and Athens Christian is a good hitting team that puts the ball in play. They make you play ball and we just didn't perform as well as we should have."

The Indians fell behind 6-0 early and found themselves in an unenviable position before their first at bat.

Billy Meier, Matt Beni and John Bleckley helped Towns County narrow the gap in the bottom of the first as the Tribe plated two runs. First baseman Kyle McConnell almost made the score even tighter with a blast to centerfield that was snared at the fence by Athens Christian. The catch ended the Indians' inning.

The Eagles manufactured a run in the top of the second playing small ball.

Towns County countered in the bottom half with a run as Brett Bradshaw scored from third on a wild pitch by Resop.

The Eagles literally blew the game wide open in the top of the third adding four more runs with some timely hitting with runners in scoring position.

The Eagles added two runs in the top of the fifth, including a home run blast by Cameron Fields to seal the deal. The Indians didn't pose a threat in the bottom of the fifth and the game was called due to the 10-run rule.

Afterwards, Coach Moss remained patient with his young baseball team.

"We got runners on and in scoring position, but we just couldn't come up with the timely hit," he said.

Coach Moss praised the relief effort by Bleckley.



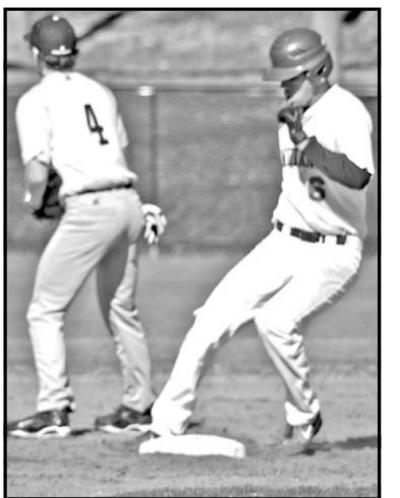
Towns County Indians' third baseman Billy Meier edges in on the grass expecting a bunt during Friday's action against Athens Christian at Indians Field. The Indians took one on the chin 14-3 in region play. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Towns County Indians' right-hander John Bleckley attempts a pick-off move as Athens Christian's Zach Gretsch dives head-first back into the bag at first base during Friday's high school Region 8-A baseball action. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

"He has not been in a pitching situation in a while, but I thought pitching-wise, he stood out," Coach Moss said. "He did a good job; he fanned a few and did what we asked of him in a tough situation."

The Indians were scheduled to face Prince Avenue Christian, Commerce and Social Circle in Region 8-A action this week. The Commerce game is at 5 p.m. at Indians Field on Thursday.



Towns County Indians' John Bleckley cruises in safely at second during first inning action against Athens Christian at Indians Field in Hiawassee on Friday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Local Racing Action

By: Carl Vanzura



Jonathan Davenport set fast time and went on to win the Southern All Star race at Toccoa Speedway.

Davenport does it again

Jonathan Davenport just keeps on doing it time after time on the dirt tracks all over the country. Saturday at Toccoa Speedway he won not only once but two times in two different classes. First he won the \$5,000 Southern All Stars 40 lap event for his second series win and increased his points lead and then took the \$1,000 to win Fastrack Crate race. Since Davenport started driving for famed chassis builder Barry Wright he has been almost unbeatable. Young Harris driver Randy Nichols finished sixth in the S.A.S. race.

Blairsville's Jacob Grizzle, with his third place finish Saturday night at Tennessee's Thunderhill Speedway in the Southern Regional Racing Series show, took over the points lead in the highly competitive series. Anthony Borrowers won with Ray Cook taking second. Grizzle will travel to Green

Valley Speedway on April 16 and 17 to defend his lead.

Cleveland Speedway held twin features Saturday night with Randy Weaver taking one of the races and Skip Arp the other. Derek Ellis was the big winner at North Georgia Speedway as he held off the challenge of Coach David Payne and Ronnie Johnson. Scott Sexton and Rex Ritchey were winners at Boyd's Speedway. Both drivers have returned back to racing after some great years in the past. At Hartwell Speedway, Randy McCoy's Southern Sportsman Series held the opening of that series and Parker Herring was the winner.

Tri-County Race Track and Dixie Speedway both held their first practice of the 2010 season Saturday and will open on April 24. Lanier Speedway, an asphalt track, in Braselton runs on Saturday nights. Rumor is going around that it may go back to dirt.

Mountain Lions score a softball split with ABAC

The Young Harris College Mountain Lions scored six runs in the first inning and went on to defeat Abraham Baldwin 8-5 in the nightcap of a GJCAA doubleheader on Sunday.

The win earned the Mountain Lions a split in the weekend doubleheader.

Young Harris' Sam Woolf highlighted the decisive inning with a bases-clearing double, and Victoria Sink went on to earn her 10th victory of the season.

The Mountain Lions improved to 15-16 overall and 6-6 in league play.

Abraham Baldwin defeated Young Harris 2-1 in the opening game of the Sunday doubleheader in Tifton.

Rikki Powers pitched for the Mountain Lions.

The Mountain Lions were scheduled to return to action on Tuesday at Hiwassee College in Madisonville, Tenn.

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