



Towns County Herald's Sporting News



YHC has National Junior College Player of the Year

JIM BRYANT

Sports Writer

You knew when you watched him on and off the field that you had a player. He was fun to watch on the field, at the plate and in the dugout. He had a great smile, curly red hair and when he sent the ball for a ride over the fence or gloved a shot in the infield he came to the dugout with a twinkle in his eye and a smile from ear to ear. Bryson Smith exuded an aura for the game of baseball. The Watkinsville, GA native helped the Young Harris College Mountain Lions to a successful 44-12 season. Along the way Smith tallied a basketful of accolades that eventually propelled him to become the American Baseball Coaches Association selection as National Junior College Player of the Year.

Prior to this prodigious selection, Smith was honored by the conference as well when

he was selected along with seven other YHC Mountain Lions to the GJCAA All-Conference Teams. Smith was one of four selected to the All-Con-



Bryson Smith broke the YHC single season batting average (.467) and was drafted #30 by the Cleveland Indians..

ference 1st Team. Smith earned this selection after breaking the YHC single season batting average (.467), tied the record for homers (21) and finished second on the YHC team with 99 hits and 90 RBIs.

Smith's contribution helped the Cats to break records for batting average (.381), runs scored (642),



Bryson Smith named National Junior College Player of the Year. Photos by Jim/Lisa Bryant

doubles (146), Homeruns (85), RBIs (610), slugging % (.598), fewest strikeouts (257) and on base % (.473).

After his stint at Young Harris College Smith received offers to continue to play for the University of Florida or go into the pros after being drafted in round #30 by the Cleveland Indians.



Bryson Smith selected to GJCAA 1st team All-Conference.

Local Racing Action

by Carl Vanzura



Standing room only crowd watch Cooke take \$4000 SASE event

There were no empty seats Saturday night at Tri-County Race Track when the Southern All Star East Series made their first ever visit to the third mile oval in the beautiful mountains in Brasstown, North Carolina.

On a hot sunny day, 26 cars signed in and after qualifying was over, Spartanburg, South Carolina driver Jeff Cooke set fast time and would start on the pole of the Circuit World Firecracker 40. At the drop of the green, 24 cars blasted into turn one four cars wide and Cooke showed the way pulling a car length ahead, and the race was on.

SASE points leader Casey Roberts from Toccoa worked his way through the pack to move into second place and he and Peachtree's Jamie Oliver battled Cooke in every turn and straight-away. Several times Roberts would be on the inside of Cooke but would just fall inches short of taking the lead.

On lap six, Dusty Chitwood from Hirman, Georgia and Joey McCoy tangled right at the flag stand with Chitwood flipping on his roof, bring out the red flag. As emergency personnel rushed to his aid, Chitwood emerged from the car to the applause of the crowd.

"This little track really is a fun place to race on", said Cooke in Victory Lane. "I knew Roberts was there and I had to work through the lapped traffic and hold both him and Oliver off to the finish." The finishing order: 1 - 99 Jeff Cooke - Spartanburg, SC, 2 - 101 Casey Roberts - Toccoa, GA, 3 - 38 Jamie Oliver - Murphy, NC, 4 - 101 Ethan Hunter - Tiger, GA, 5 - 4 Danny Ledford - Warne, NC, 6 - 16 Colby Cannon - Greenwood, SC, 7 - 57 Russell Thomas - Morgantown, GA, 8 - 441 Tony Knowles - Tyrone, GA, 9 - 8 David Payne - Murphy, NC, 10 - 03 Randy Nichols - Clayton, GA, 11 - 2 Kip Cochran - Franklin, NC, 12 - R12 Rodney Weeks - Blue Ridge, GA, 13 - 12 Zach Cox - Lumberton, NC, 14 - 104 Monk Gullledge - Batesburg, SC, 15 - 32 Larry Blakenship - Mooresville, NC, 16 - 57 David McCoy - Franklin, NC, 17 - x15 Shawn Chastain - Murphy, NC, 18 - K70 Roger Lankford - Millers Creek, NC, 19 - 8 Bruce Taylor - Toccoa, GA, 20 - 22 Ronald Blakenship - Mooresville, NC, 21 - 15 Dusty C hitwood - Hiram, GA, 22 - 75 Joey McCoy - Franklin, NC, 23 - 34 Glenn Barrett - Murphy, NC, 24 - 12w Gabe Wilson - Andrews, NC

Wesley English traveled from Tiger, GA to dominate the Sportsman feature with a win over Galen Robinson, Jason Payne, Doug Sneed and Preston Crisp. The top five in the Nesmith Crate Late Model feature saw Blairsville's Jacob Grizzle holding off Jacob Anderson, Kevin Sutton, Hiawassee's Kevin Bradshaw and Blairsville's Brian Kinnersley



Southern All Star points leader Casey Roberts #101 moves under Zax Cox to take second place. Photo by Jack Appleget

Surviving the economic crunch: Go to the mountains for the 4th of July

by Jim Bryant

I sometimes hear from unlearned persons (despite their college degrees) including my two sons, Scott (GT) and Chuck (UGA) that life in our sleepy little mountain town is "dull". May be and that's the way we like it but calling it dull, I doubt it. So, to prove my point I have included in this 4th of July newspaper article to illustrate just a tip of the recreational iceberg in Towns County. In advance I offer my apologies to the dozens of other "happenings" in the county that I overlooked.

I shall start slowly with walking. Try the trail around the lake at the recreation facility which I accidentally stumbled upon while shooting the beach photo for this article. Or, the longer walking/jogging cross country trail on the YHC campus. If you like a more challenging trip, try the Miller Trek Trail on the property of Brasstown Valley Resort. You can also walk from the YHC campus on the Brasstown Bald Trail all the way to the summit, the highest elevation in Georgia. Finally, the granddaddy of them all, the section of the Appalachian Trail for day hikers up to Blood Mountain and avid backpackers over to Dick's Creek and beyond or up the highest point in Georgia, the tower on Brasstown Bald. Mull's Motel in town seems to be the gathering place of AT hikers as they re-supply at the local merchants.

Towns County is a Mecca for campers with campgrounds dotted all around the county. To name a few, Bald Mountain Park, Hickory Nut Cove, Mountain View, River Bend and the biggie, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds. Numerous other smaller campgrounds surround the county. Of course the hardy backpackers rough it in the Blood Mountain and Dick's Creek areas.

Add mountain bikes or road racing bikes from Spin Lite Cycling, the sixth stage of Tour de Georgia, motorcycles and rallies, sports cars and hot rod shows, ATVs and a potpourri of water craft and the county is like an ant hill of movement. The only stationary objects seem to be the campers at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, Bald Mountain Park or the numerous other smaller campgrounds dotted around the county. At least those that are not on the lake skiing, tubing, riding personal watercraft, drifting around on their pontoon boat or at the local recreation beach. With the Ridges Marina, Boundary Waters Marina and personal watercraft rental available at Young Harris Water Sports, you don't even have to own a boat. Each 4th of July sports a huge boat parade around the lake.

Strap on swim suits because the TC recreation beach has seen the largest number of two-legged creatures in its history with free admission, an adjacent children's play-

ground and swings along the lake edge for those who select the quieter lifestyle. If you don't like sand between your toes, try the pools at any of the local motels (do then even build motels now without pools?) Try a visit to the local art galleries or arts and crafts events around town. If you just want a quiet place to take the kids, visit Mayor's Park in Young Harris. For those that prefer a louder lifestyle, there is the Chatauge Gun Club firing range.

If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen or go to Fun World for indoor games or one of the multiple theaters at Fun World Theaters. You can even get ice cream or pizza and never have to get in the sun. A night at the YHC planetarium or stage productions at Clegg Hall on the YHC campus is a good quiet alternative. The Festival on the Square in the middle of Hiawassee always provides excitement in the evenings.

If you like to sweat, go to the TC recreation department for a plethora of sweaty activities that include basketball, workout facilities and an assortment of aerobic challenges or go on a quiet mountain trail ride at Brasstown Stables.

Try on one of the multiple tennis courts for size. The county hosts courts at the TC recreation department, Towns County High School, YHC courts (now being relocated), Brasstown Valley, The Ridges and still more at the Georgia Mountain

Fairground. Brasstown Valley Resort also hosts one of the top golf courses in the state of Georgia. The recreation department even has a full day of sports activities on the fourth that include horseshoes, relay races and the selection of "Little Miss Recreation."

To finalize our "dull" week in the mountains, the grand finale is the free fireworks displays from Brasstown Valley Resort, the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds and looking left across the lake at the dam in Hayesville, NC (wait, that's not in Towns County so don't look). There is even a bowling alley just over the UC line but we don't cotton much to boundary line jumpers. Did I mention hunting and fishing, the givens for mountain state recreation?

Can't promise recreating in the mountains will cure the economy but the mountain air will sure give you a new prospective about going to work on July 5th. So if you want to beat the economic crunch, get out of the concrete jungle and visit north Georgia and try our "dull" little mountain town. With roads like Bug Scuffle, Possum Hollow, Bearmeat, Frog Pond, Coon Cove, Tater Ridge, Shake Rag and Saw Brier Cove, you know darn well you are going to have a great time in the mountains. "Ya'll come back, ye hear."

NASCAR 2009 By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Stewart Survives Dramatic Daytona Finish

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.—Tony Stewart and Kyle Busch really set off the fireworks, Saturday night at Daytona as Stewart took the checkered flag in the Coke Zero 400 after Kyle Busch slammed into the outside wall, just a few hundred feet from the finish line.

"I don't know what else I could have done," said Stewart. "I went where I had to go and he went where he had to go. I don't like winning them

like that, but winning is what racing's all about.

"I made my second move on the outside and got up by his right tire. He went to block me, and I was already there. That's not the way you want to win these things, and I'm sorry for what happened."

Stewart had dominated the first 158 laps of the 160 lap race, and was leading going into lap 159. With drafting help from Denny Hamlin, Busch was able to overtake Stewart on the outside as the pair came off turn four. After taking the white

flag, Busch led until the two came off the final turn, and headed towards the finish line.

Busch hugged the yellow line and blocked Stewart's first attempt at a pass with the checkered flag just yards away. Stewart then moved high, and as Busch slid back up to block, contact with Stewart's car turned Busch into the wall and ignited a dramatic multi-car wreck near the finish line.

Busch experienced two more hard hits, first by Kasey Kahne, and then by his teammate Joey Logano. He was unhurt and finished 14th, but left the track after refusing comments.

"We went for it right there at the end," said Busch's crew chief Steve Addington. "This is a product of restrictor-plate racing with these racecars. What are you going to say? I'm not pointing any fingers at Tony. He was trying to win the race, Kyle was trying to block him for the win and we got turned around."

Jimmie Johnson, Denny Hamlin, Carl Edwards, Kurt Busch, Marcos Ambrose, Brian Vickers, Matt Kenseth, Juan Montoya, and Elliott Sadler were the remaining top-10 finishing drivers.

Jeff Gordon was a victim of a wreck on lap 77 but was able to continue. Though his car was damaged too severely to contend for the win, he stayed on the lead lap and finished 28th.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. was also involved in the same wreck as Gordon and finished 39th.

Top-20 Chase contenders after 18 of 26: 1. Stewart-2719, 2. J. Gordon-2539, 3. Johnson-

2525, 4. Kurt Busch-2414, 5. Edwards-2317, 6. Hamlin-2302, 7. Newman-2235, 8. Kyle Busch-2234, 9. Biffle-2215, 10. Kenseth-2201, 11. Montoya-2187, 12. Kahne-2166, 13. Martin-2101, 14. Reutimann-2092, 15. Burton-2061, 16. Bowyer-2031, 17. Vickers-1998, 18. Ambrose-1948, 19. McMurray-1863, 20. Logano-1847

BOWYER GETS DAYTONA NATIONWIDE VICTORY

Top-10 Nationwide leaders after 17 of 35: 1. Kyle Busch-2756, 2. Edwards-2584, 3. Keselowski-2488, 4. Leffler-2367, 5. Logano-2200, 6. Allgaier-2006, 7. Bliss-1986, 8. Gaughan-1956, 9. S. Wallace-1950, 10. Keller-1907

Weekend Racing: The Sprint Cup and Nationwide teams are at the 1.5-mile Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, Ill. The Truck series has the weekend off.

Fri., July 10, Nationwide Series Dollar General 300, race 18 of 35; Starting time: 7:30 p.m. (EDT); TV: ESPN2.

Sat., July 11, Sprint Cup Lifeflock.com 400, race 19 of 36; Starting time: 6:30 p.m. (EDT); TV: TNT.

Racing Trivia Question: When was the first NASCAR race held at Indianapolis Motor Speedway?

Last Week's Question: How many Cup championships does Tony Stewart have? Answer: He has two, 2002 and 2005.

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

Miss Ga Mtn Fair Beauty Pageant

The Georgia Mountain Fair is taking applications for girls ages 17-24 to represent the fair in community events during 2009-10.

The Miss GMF Pageant, to be held Monday, July 20, will consist of evening gown, one-piece swimsuit, personal interview, stage question and overall presentation. After judging of regular pageant, an optional talent contest will be held.

There is no entry fee. There will be cash & merchandise prizes.

To qualify, contestants must be residents or full-time high school/college students in the counties of Towns, Union, Rabun, White, Habersham, Lumpkin, Fannin, and Stephens in Georgia or Clay and Cherokee counties in North Carolina; they must be single, never married, nor have children, and all applications should be received in office by Sunday, July 12.

For more info & application: call 706-896-4191 or go to georgiamountainfairgrounds.com

Realtors Grand Slam a big hit!

The 2nd annual Northeast Georgia Board of REALTORS Grand Slam Get Down hosted by Clay County was a real barn burner this year. On June 20th, 8 softball teams took the field to compete for the trophy. Starting at 9 a.m. with Cynthia Lance singing the National Anthem, then board president Carmolita Haney and president elect Andrea Bowman throwing out the custom bejeweled first balls, then it was PLAY BALL!

Clay County fielded 2 team, Clay County Silver Bullets and Lowes Custom Exhaust, Macon County also had 2 teams, Vivid Image and The Carpenters, Graham County Bucs and Does, Towns County Mud Dogs, Cherokee County, and Fannin County also provided teams. The action was hot and so was the temperature.

This was a double elimination tournament with the

victors advancing to the winners bracket, and the defeated team going into the losers bracket until losing 2 games. The games went on throughout the day with teams enjoying a low country boil and jambalaya prepared by the Louisiana Swamp Griller at 6 p.m. The meal was sponsored by Bank of Hiawassee.

The dunk booth provided much needed cooling off for players during breaks in the action. Concessions were sold by Communities in Schools and shaved ice was sold by the Clay County Fireworks Committee.

The games ended at midnight with Franklins Vivid Image, (aka chip n dales) the overall victor. The Northeast Georgia Board of Realtors raised \$1,000. for Clay County Communities in Schools. The next tournament will be in Hiawassee on August 15.



The Towns County Mud Dogs Submitted photo

Herald's sports quote of the week

"I hope you have lost your good looks, for while they last any fool can adore you, and the adoration of fools is bad for the soul. No, give me a ruined complexion and a lost figure and sixteen chins on a farmyard of Crow's feet and an obvious wig. Then you shall see me coming out strong."

- George Bernard Shaw, playwright

Towns County Herald

Local sports covered by Carl Vanzura, Jim & Lisa Bryant, Jerry Kendall, Charles Duncan and Lowell Nicholson