

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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Indians pull off upset of Hebron; end season with a 29-27 win

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Dacula – Let the season continue; if only we could. The Towns County Indians discovered themselves on Friday night in Gwinnett County, closing out a football season with a win for the first time since 1978.

The Indians upset Hebron Christian Academy's Lions 29-27, giving Head Coach Kyle Langford and his staff something to dream about until Spring Practice begins in 2012.

It didn't look like things would be going the Indians' way early on as the Lions' senior running back Xavier Railey raced 54 yards to the end zone to give Hebron a 7-0 first quarter lead.

Indians' senior Noah Calhoun wasn't ready to fold the tent on the 2011 season. He capped a 9-play drive with a 22-yard scoring run and added the extra point. The game was tied 7-7.

The Indians then took momentum and control of the game as junior running back Wesley Bloodworth brought closure to a five-play drive with a 6-yard touchdown run. The scoring drive was highlighted by a nice 66-yard run up the middle by Calhoun.

With the Indians ready to attempt the extra point, the Lions were flagged for a crucial encroachment penalty. Thus, Coach Langford had options to consider. Langford opted to go for the two points. The risk versus reward paid off when sophomore quarterback Jackson Noblet completed the conversion putting the Indians up 15-7.

The Lions' junior quarterback Lew Stephens was unable to connect with his receivers, so he took matters into his own hands scrambling 55 yards for the second Hebron touchdown. The Lions attempted to tie the game on an errant Stephens pass attempt; the Indians' lead was preserved at 15-13.

The Indians responded with a clock-eating drive that widened the scoring gap as senior running back Cody Smedley



The Indians defense holds Hebron on fourth down to seal a win. Photo by James Reese.

concluded the scoring drive with a 6-yard touchdown run to give Towns County a 22-13 lead.

Following miscues from each side, the Lions' Railey returned the scoring favor, as he took off on a 79-yard scoring run. He finished the evening with 240 rushing yards on the ground. His scoring run pulled Hebron within two points as halftime approached. The two teams hit the locker room with the Indians on top 22-20.

The momentum stayed on the side of the Indians as they recovered a Lions' fumble following the second half kickoff. They recovered the ball their own 34-yard line.

The Indians drove inside the Lions' 10-yard line, but were pushed back due to penalties and a stingy Lion defense.

However, on a fourth and long from the 13-yard line Noblet found Calhoun in the end zone to push the Towns County lead to 29-20 with just under 9 minutes remaining in the third quarter.

The ensuing kickoff mirrored the prior as the Indians recovered another Lion fumble but were unable to capitalize due to a drive killing fumble of their own.

The Lions led by their ground game, finished off a gritty drive capped by a 4 yard Railey score, pulling them to within two points at 29-27 with just over 9 minutes remaining



Senior Noah Calhoun dives for the first down. Photo by James Reese.



Towns County Cheerleaders cheer on Indians in Dacula. Photo by Lowell Nicholson.

in the contest. As the Lions relied on their run game primarily led by Railey, the clock became a factor. The Indians defense stepped up and forced a fourth down and long situation.

The Lions' quarterback Stephens was forced out of the pocket and scrambled close to a first down. Vonya Baldwin was the first to make contact until

help arrived stopping Stephens and the Lion's first down pursuit just inches short.

Taking over on downs, the Indians managed to run the clock out, preserving the 29-27 victory and closing out the football season with a win for the first time since 1978.

Congratulations Indians for proving that it's not over until it's over.



Senior Cody Smedley prepares for the handoff from quarterback Jackson Noblet. Photo by James Reese.



Senior Zach Stroud rounds the corner for a big gainer. Photo by James Reese.



Junior Wesley Bloodworth gives the stiff arm en route to the end zone. Photo by James Reese.



The Towns County Marching Raider Band breaks out the music as the Indians put points on the board. Photo by Lowell Nicholson.

Lady Indians finish 18th in Cross Country Championships

By James Reese
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Carrollton – The Towns County Lady Indians competed in the state Cross Country Championships for the sixth year in a row under Coach Jeanne Ledford on Saturday.

The Lady Indians battled illnesses and injury to finish 18th overall out of a field of 30 competing schools in the Class A State Cross Country Championships at Carrollton High School on Saturday.

Ansley Vardeman, definitely under the weather, finished 61st among 200 Class A Lady runners. The Lady Indians' No. 2 runner, Caitlin Sheffield, was unable to compete on this day due to a pulled hamstring.

Despite the setbacks, the Lady Indians managed to do what they do best – compete, no matter what, and finished the day as the third public school to complete the course.

Before the day started, Coach Ledford knew her team faced an uphill battle.

The Lady Indians made it to state again, after finishing third in Region 8 during the Region Meet in Athens.

"I thought we competed to the best of our abilities given the circumstances," Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren said. "They definitely gave it their all."

Ansley finished the course 61st overall, recording a time of 22:43.0. Meanwhile, her twin sister Taylor Vardeman finished 86th overall with a time of 23:31.88; Sierra Nichols finished 94th overall with a time of 23:52.69; Cassie Buck finished 126th overall with a time of 25:23.69; Karlie Albach finished 128th overall with a time of 25:25.01; and Courtney Stephens finished 143rd overall with a time of 26:16.46.

The Lady Indians competed at the state championships for the eighth time in nine years.



The Lady Indians are off and running in the Class A Cross Country Championships.

claimed the state title; followed by Wesleyan, First Presbyterian, and Darlington.

The Towns County Herald would like to extend heartfelt congratulations to Coach Ledford and the Lady Indians and Indians for another strong and competitive season on the Cross Country circuit.



Ansley Vardeman finishes first for Towns County and 61st overall. Photo by James Reese.



Taylor Vardeman finishes second for the Lady Indians and 86th overall. Photo by James Reese.



Sierra Nichols finishes third for the Lady Indians. Photo by James Reese.

First Putts for Paws a huge success



Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris and a group of Castaway Critters volunteers were on hand to make sure golfers got off to a good start for the tournament.

The first annual Putts for Paws Golf Scramble was a huge success. The tournament, which benefitted Castaway Critters Pet Rescue, was held at Butternut Creek Golf Course in Blairsville.

Teams from Union County competed as well as teams from Atlanta and North Carolina. Winning for low gross was the Sundowner team of Hayesville, NC; and second place net went to Dr. William Mitchell's team from Copper Basin & Vet Clinic, McCaysville.

Jim Derflinger of Blairsville won the straightest drive contest, Rod Burnette of Blairsville won the longest drive contest, and ten-year-old Beck Burnette of Blairsville won closest to the pin.

Castaway Critters thanks

the following sponsors for their support of this year's tournament: United Community Bank and Walmart (platinum sponsors); PGA Tour Superstore and Sunset Printing (gold sponsors); and Blairsville Animal Hospital, Brass-town Valley Resort, Old Union Golf Course, Rick's Rental, The Ridges Country Club, and Stephanie W. McConnell, P.C. (silver sponsors). Many other local businesses and individuals also supported the cause by donating items to the silent auction.

The scramble was followed by a prime rib dinner and silent auction for all participants and their guests at the Copperhead Lodge. Castaway Critters (www.castaway-critters.org) is a non-profit, no-kill dog and cat rescue shelter in Blairsville. NT(Nov9,A1)SH

Winning season for Manus

The season is coming to a close and Dallas Manus has had a great year, ending the year with just being able to race maybe half of the races. He came away with 10 wins, a bunch of 2nds and 3rds, with one 4th place finish being his worst finish of the year in his class. Although he missed over half of the point races he was able to get to 5th place in the points. He made a strong run trying to gain on points the last 3 races with 2 wins and a 2nd place finish getting close to 4th in the points but ran out of time.

Saturday night he made up his mind to try to run 2 classes. In his regular class (gold plate) he started out well with a win in the heat and winning the main. But on the new class (box stock jr) he was in a

new kart and had a new engine supplied by his uncle from Cash Racing Engines. Neither kart had been on the track and the engine hadn't been started since coming off the dyno. Dallas went out for a practice and heat race and he wasn't in the same zip code as the other karts. Engine had great power but it was so tight and pushing couldn't get through the turns meaning he would start last in the main. Dallas and crew started to work, changed tires and air pressures and prepped on the tires and found a better handle on the track and starting last in 10 kart was able pull off a 5th place finish with a new kart that most was put together that day and at the track.

All in all it was a good night, we learned a lot on the



Dallas Manus' #9 kart.

kart for next year or next race. Dallas would like to thank all his sponsors: Underwood Garage, and Doug Chambers Paint. John was there whenever we needed help, he also helped at the track when he was able to come and watch and Doug painted the best looking body on the track. Also would like

to thank all those that helped on the crew Uncle Ricky, John, Dad, and Jim (Pepav) and Bell Racing for the loan of an engine when I blew up my main engine and was able get a win with a loan of their engine. Thanks to all that helped me have a great season.