

Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



E-mail: tcherald@brmemc.net

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Hiawassee, Georgia

Huge wrestling weekend on tap



The Indians Jackson Noblet wastes little time sending this Riverview wrestler packing. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Charles Duncan

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

It's King of the Mountain Junior time in Towns County.

The grapplers have hit the mats and the 2009-2010 wrestling season is underway.

The middle school Indians have lost some tough matches already to Lumpkin and White counties. They've also trounced a decent Riverview squad.

Next up: the tournament that separates the men from the boys.

First match is scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday in the Middle School Gym at Towns County Schools.

On Friday, Indian high school grapplers host an ambitious Andrews, NC squad at 5 p.m., Head Coach Jeff Stowers said.

"We're real excited

about getting everyone on the mats," he said. "We're looking forward to a new season and looking forward to getting after some folks."

At the middle school level, Jackson Noblet, Vonya Baldwin and Matt Johnson return to lead an impressive squad of wrestlers, Stowers said.

"The middle school is going to be really good, but we just don't have the numbers," Stowers said. "We've got a great eighth grade class, but we don't have many sixth and seventh graders. We've got three or four sixth graders and three or four seventh graders."

"We're going to have about 20 wrestlers and that's about five fewer than we usually have," he said. "We're going to have a pretty good tournament team. I'm real excited about

the middle school season." Gilmer County, Creekview, Lumpkin County and White County offer the stiffest tests for the middle school wrestlers.

At the high school level, Stowers figures to have one of his strongest groups ever.

"We've got one of the strongest freshmen classes ever with Tyler Hoffman and Joseph Foster leading that group. We lost a solid group of seniors led by Ben Hogsed and Josh Stroud.

"We've lost some leadership, but from a physical standpoint, we've got a strong group back on the mats. We've got Timmy Collier back and he finished fourth in the state. Max Updike and Mat Hogsed are back. Heavyweight Josh Barnes is back.

"We've got real high hopes for the high school team and the middle school team is going to be real good," Stowers said. "We're going to be in the mix regardless of who we're wrestling."

Stowers also expects his eighth grade group to spend some time on the Junior Varsity wrestling mats.

"A lot of our eighth grade kids are going to be wrestling on the JV team," he said. "We're going to hold them out of some middle school matches so we can make sure we've got them available for some JV matches late in the season."

TCHS cross country seniors honored Indians to lose four cross country seniors

Jim Bryant

sports.tcherald@brmemc.net

It has been a couple of weeks since the TCHS seniors were honored on Senior Night at the football game but with twenty-two seniors graduating, it takes a lot of space in the newspaper. Last week the six football players were recognized and this week, the four cross country seniors get to shine.

Amy Vardeman plans to attend Valdosta State and continue her dancing career while pursuing a degree in the medical field. Ethan Burch plans to major in sports journalism and hopes for a career in sports broadcasting. Tommy Black already attends YHC but is currently undecided on his major. Missy Conrad is



(L-R) Amy Vardeman, Ethan Burch, Coach Jeannie Ledford-Stephens, Tommy Black and Missy Conrad.

at present undecided about a college career. One of the joys of being the sports writers is the opportunity to work at the

high school level and follow the college careers of these students each year. We wish the best of luck in their career pursuits.

Lady Indians hold onto 33-30 win

By Charles Duncan

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

The Towns County Middle School Lady Indians got off to a fast start against the much taller Fannin County Lady Rebels.

The speed, quickness and agility of the Lady Indians kept their larger, taller opponents off balance.

Towns led by a whopping double-digit margin and somehow managed to let the Lady Rebels slip back in the game. In the end, defense and speed led the Lady Indians to a 33-30 victory over Fannin.

Head Coach Jamesa Nelson was sidelined with a medical ailment and wasn't along for the rollercoaster event.

"The best I can tell, we just didn't know how to slow the game down once we got out into that big of a lead," she said. "We're still learning and coming together as a team. We're still getting to know each other.

"It was a pretty decent

win for our first ballgame of the season," Coach Nelson said. "I think we're over the first game jitters."

Coach Nelson was caught off guard by the size of the Lady Rebels.

"They had four girls that were at least 6-footers," she said. "That's a sizeable crew for high school, much less middle school. They also had a couple of guards that were pretty quick."

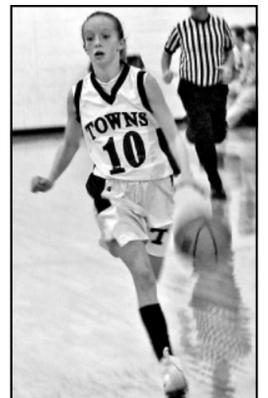
But the Lady Indians prevailed.

"The strength of this team is our quickness," she said.

"We're very quick, we transition well. Our motto this season is little things equal big things. We're working on the little things."

Eryn Cochran stood out for the Lady Indians as well as Allison Page and Destiny Blythe.

"We had a couple of players that got into some foul trouble who had to sit for a little



Eryn Cochran stood out for the Lady Indians in last week's matchup with Fannin. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

while," she said. "We worked around that and we were able to pull out a win. That's what we shoot for."

Lady Cats continue 9-0 tennis run to end season



Hillary Teasley helped the purple Cats take their second straight easy win in the season finale.

Mickey Seward, YHC Sports Information Director
mwseward@yhc.edu

Kinsley Black, Hillary Teasley and Holly Smith each won their singles matches without giving up a single game, and Young Harris College collected straight-sets wins in all of its matches as it defeated Spartanburg Methodist College 9-0 in a non-conference women's tennis match at Towns County High School in Hiawassee, Ga., Saturday.

The Mountain Lions took a 3-0 lead with a trio of quick double victories. Brianna Brinkley and Sarah Deese shut out SMC's Revelyn Venegas and Kristen Coan 8-0 in the third position, while Black and Smith teamed up to defeat Anna Diggins and Shericka Wilson 8-2 in the top position. The tandem of JoAnna Davis and Michelle Allen handed Melissa

Williams and Brittany James 8-3 in the No. 2 position.

The singles matches were also dominated by Young Harris, as Black, Teasley and Smith all won by identical 6-0, 6-0 scores in the first, third and sixth positions, respectively. Brinkley and Allen each gave up only two games, with Brinkley defeating Wilson 6-1, 6-1 in the second position and Allen beating Venegas 6-0, 6-2 in the fifth slot. Sarah Deese closed out the Mountain Lions' victories with a 6-4, 6-1 win over James in the fourth position.

The match closes out Young Harris' fall season. The Mountain Lions are scheduled to return to action in late January, when they open the spring season in Jacksonville, Fla.

Doubles:
1. Black/Smith (YHC) def.

PHOTOS BY JIM & LISA BRYANT



Brianna Brinkley helped the Lady M'Lions had an easy 9-0 win over Spartanburg Methodist.

Diggins/Wilson 8-2
2. Davis/Allen (YHC) def. Williams/James 8-3
3. Brinkley/Deese (YHC) def. Venegas/Coan 8-0

Singles:
1. Kinsley Black (YHC) def. Anna Diggins 6-0, 6-0
2. Brianna Brinkley (YHC) def. Shericka Wilson 6-1, 6-1
3. Hillary Teasley (YHC) def. Melissa Williams 6-0, 6-0
4. Sarah Deese (YHC) def. Brittany James 6-4, 6-1
5. Michelle Allen (YHC) def. Revelyn Venegas 6-0, 6-2
6. Holly Smith (YHC) def. Kristen Coan 6-0, 6-0

Indians dealt defeat by Fannin

By Charles Duncan

TOWNS COUNTY HERALD

The Towns County Indians stood up and fought their opponents from Fannin County tooth and nail.

They out rebounded the Rebels; they put up more shots and made more steals. However, where it counted, the Indians couldn't buy a bucket.

Coach Tim Rosser's squad shot 15 percent from the field and came up on the wrong side of a 28-23 decision against the Rebels from Fannin County.

"They were a lot bigger than us, but we still out-rebounded them," Coach Rosser said. "We shot 15 percent from the floor and you can't win if you can't score. That's just the facts of this game."

Coach Rosser said the loss wasn't for the lack of hustle. He said he hasn't seen an Indians' squad work this hard in a while.

"Dallas Manus, we go as Dallas goes," Coach Rosser said. "We worked really hard, Brett Barrett had a great game on the boards, well, just about everyone with the name Indians on their jersey did a great job rebounding."

"Everyone hustled, there was absolutely no question about the effort," he said. "It was just one of those games where they scored more than us and we had to take the loss."

Next up is Lumpkin County and it's the first time the coach and his players have seen the Indians from Dahlonega.

"They're big, of course everyone we play is going to be bigger than us," he said. "We have to rely on our speed and quickness to offset any height advantage we'll face."

The Lady Indians tip off against the Lumpkin ladies at 4 p.m. on Thursday at TCMS followed by Rosser's Indians against potentially a new rival in the Lumpkin County squad.

"I don't know a whole lot about Lumpkin," he said. "We'll have to wait and see what we're up against on Thursday."



The Indians fought tooth and nail but couldn't buy a basket against Fannin. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

N. Georgia Rapids Swim Team update



Starting the Winter swim season at a high level, the North Georgia Rapids traveled to Gainesville, Georgia and competed against one of the southeast's premier swim teams. Teams from several states participated in the swim meet, including Swim Atlanta, a highly rated team.

In past years, Swim Atlanta has trained several Olympic swimmers. Our swimmers "hung tough" against these elite swimmers and performed surprisingly well.

The younger age group swam in the morning with Shane and Holly Smith, swimming personal best times in all of their events. Megan Foster in the girls 9-10 age group earned three personal best times in a field of over 50 competitors.

The afternoon events saw seven team members competing, all earning personal best times. Ryan McCann

and Tanner Gay combined for six ribbons with Tanner's 4th place finish in the 100 yd. breast stroke as the highest.

The girls 13-14 age group had over 40 swimmers and the Rapids' four entries did well. Courtney Marshall, Lindsey McCann, Jennifer Chinnici and Anna Knight all achieved personal bests with both Jennifer and Courtney earning 3 out of 4 in their events.

Lilly Smith, age 11, the sister of Holly and Shane who swam in the morning, had two personal best times and had a terrific afternoon considering the level of competition at that extremely popular age group.

The team swims year round at the Blue Ridge Mountain Fitness Club in Blairsville and welcomes new swimmers to join the team. For more information, contact team coach Barry Gay (706)835-1662.

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NASCAR 2009

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

One More Race For Johnson

Sunday's Sprint Cup race was supposed to be a Duel in The Sun, but no one told Jimmie Johnson, who led four times for 238 of the 312 laps, and at the end, Johnson's margin of victory was nearly two seconds over Jeff Burton.

"We could have been down after losing all the points last week, but we came in here to qualify well, race well, and have great pits stops. That's what we did, and that's all we needed from our guys," said Johnson.

"We saw at Texas that anything can happen, and we're going out next week to do the same thing we did today. We won't be racing conservatively, because when you're in the middle of the pack, that's the worst place to be."

Johnson came to Phoenix with a 73-point lead over his teammate Mark Martin.

He left town with a 108-point lead. All Johnson has to do is finish 25th or better next week at Homestead, and he will become the first driver to win four consecutive Sprint Cup championships.

Much of the credit for Johnson's success goes to Chad Knaus, the crew chief on John-

son's No. 48 Chevrolet.

"We try to do what we did today every race," said Knaus. "But we knew we had to come to Phoenix and have a solid run. I know Mark had us in his sights, but we were able to stay just ahead of him, and that's what we needed to do."

If Johnson gets his fourth Cup championship, it will be the ninth one for Rick Hendrick.

"It's kind of tough to watch teammates race each other, but winning the championship is what we start out to do at the beginning of the year," said Hendrick. "All the guys have shared information all year. We go to Texas, Jimmie gets wrecked and all the guys from the other teams helped get his car back together. That's what got us here."

Mark Martin ran up front most of the race and finished fourth.

"It was a great effort by this race team today," said Martin. "We gave it everything we had. The car was a little vulnerable on the restarts, and we lost some spots. The car was very good on the long runs."

"I thought we could get to Jimmie with 35-to-go, then it

just got tight and fizzled out."

Jeff Gordon finished ninth and is now 169 points behind Johnson.

"I know at the start, Mark and I were able to drive right to the front. I thought we were going to be great, but the cars just got away from us," said Gordon.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. had another rough weekend. During the middle of the race, he lost control of his car and slipped down onto the Turn 4 apron, collecting Tony Stewart, Matt Kenseth, Ryan Newman and seven other drivers. He finished 35th.

Top-10 finishers: 1. Johnson, 2. Jeff Burton, 3. Denny Hamlin, 4. Mark Martin, 5. Martin Truex Jr., 6. Kurt Busch, 7. Clint Bowyer, 8. Juan Montoya, 9. Jeff Gordon, 10. David Reutimann

Top-15 Chase contenders after 35 of 36: 1. Johnson-6492, 2. Martin-6384, 3. J. Gordon-6323, 4. Kurt Busch-6281, 5. Stewart-6207, 6. Montoya-6203, 7. Biffle-6171, 8. Hamlin-6140, 9. Newman-6081, 10. Kahne-6016, 11. Edwards-5972, 12. Vickers-5826