

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Memory Lane... continued from Page 2B

which pulled a major upset of Buford in the region semifinals in becoming the Indians' third team to qualify for the state tournament.

And Dr. Ketron Moss was a dominant rebounder and productive scorer on that 1981 state tournament team and he is the father of Major Moss, a vital all around performer on the Indians 2017 state tournament team.

Towns County School Superintendent Darren Berrong was the head coach of the Indians' fourth state tournament team in 2005 and he is a son of Dwight Berrong of the above described 1966 team and the father of Aidan of this year's State Championship Indians team and Evan who was a substitute as a junior on the 2017 state tournament team and productive member of the 2018 team.

And the previously mentioned Holly Cunningham of the 1973 Lady Indians team is the mother of Cody Shelton, a prominent member as the third leading scorer on the 2005 Indians state tournament team.

While this article is understandably focused on basketball, mention should be made that the first state championship team at Towns County High School was the 1988 Indians



baseball team and there are connections among the Indians' first sweet sixteen team in 1966, the Lady Indians' first region championship team of 1977, and this year's state championship basketball team which should be of interest.

Jackie Kelley, a nephew of Martha Moss Hufstetter of the 1977 Lady Indians region championship team was a vital member as a junior of the state championship baseball team known for his timely hitting and acrobatic catches in right field. He went on to play two years of baseball at Truett McConnell

College. Shannon Moss, an uncle of Kolby and himself a nephew of Kyle Moss of the 1966 Indians basketball team, often served as a designated hitter as a freshman for the 1988 state championship baseball team and then stepped in and did great

as the regular third baseman throughout the state playoffs when starting senior third baseman Jeff Lockaby was sidelined by an appendectomy. He later served for a long time as head coach of the Indians baseball team and now serves as principal of the Towns

County Elementary School. And Shannon Floyd is a half brother of the previously mentioned Sherri Garrett Hodnett of the 1977 Lady Indians region championship team and the father of freshman Indian Zane Floyd and senior Lady Indian Vanessa Floyd.

He was a vital senior member of the Indians 1988 state championship baseball team as both a top pitcher and hitter.

He went on to a successful four year career as a pitcher at Piedmont College and currently serves as the head coach of the Indians baseball team.

There can be little doubt that some individuals intended to be included or possibly not thought of during the time frames have been forgotten as the article was composed and apologies are extended for such omissions that would have fit with the information presented.

Your reporter has vast information about past TCHS teams and Individuals and it would be great if someone far more adept at computer actions than I would consider creating a website of some type to make a vast amount of sports information available for those who would enjoy seeing it.

Baseball photos: Union at Towns Co.

Photos by Lowell Nicholson



NASCAR 2021

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

The Great Bristol Dirt Race

NASCAR brought back a weekend of dirt track racing in an effort to return to the glory days, but that was not the case at Bristol this past weekend. Two races were scheduled. Both had to be postponed until Monday due to heavy rain. The Cup Series race winner was Joey Logano, while Martin Truex Jr. won the Truck Series race.

Logano led 61 of the 253 lap race, and finished .554-seconds ahead of Ricky Stenhouse Jr. It was his first win of the season and third at Bristol.

Logano took the lead from Daniel Suarez on Lap 193 of a scheduled 250 laps and held it the rest of the way through a caution for the second stage break and a late yellow that sent the race into overtime.

"I'm not a dirt expert by no means," said Logano. "This is my fourth race, so... But I do think that racing at night is the key to this. I think that brings some of the moisture up from the dirt. I think that would help. Plus you don't have the sun glaring through the dust. That's what made it really hard through turns one and two. You couldn't see. You're talking to someone that ran in third or fourth place, so I didn't really get the real worst of it."

"Look at what NASCAR did on the track, to be able to prepare for this event, they did a great job. Obviously having a truck race before this is not easy to do to turn the track back around for us to go out there and run 250 laps. I think Harvick said this is the longest dirt race in mankind. I think it was (laughter)."

In order to alleviate some of the dust on restarts, NASCAR switched back to a single-file restart. "Obviously all the rain didn't help," said runner-up Ricky Stenhouse Jr. "They reacted, did stuff as best they could. Came out here last night just to check out the track. Kind of talked to them about what they were going to do between the stages and the competition cautions. I think they did a great job."

Top-10 finishers: 1. Logano, 2. Ricky Stenhouse Jr., 3. Denny Hamlin, 4. Daniel Suarez, 5. Ryan Newman, 6. William Byron, 7. Tyler Reddick, 8. Ryan Blaney, 9. Erik Jones, 10. Chase Elliott.

Top-10 leaders: 1. Hamlin-327, 2. Logano-269, 3. Truex Jr.-247, 4. Larson-242, 5. Keselowski-232, 6. Byron-228, 7. Blaney-226, 8. Harvick-225, 9. Elliott-211, 10. Bell-186.

Martin Truex Jr. led 105 of the 150 laps on the half-mile dirt oval in an effort to gain more dirt experience for the Cup Series race. Truex also earned both stage victories, taking the lead away from defending champion Sheldon Creed on the final lap of Stage 1 and cruising to the win in Stage 2.

Top-10 finishers of the NASCAR Truck Series race held Mon., Mar. 29. 1. Martin Truex Jr., 2. Ben Rhodes, 3. Raphael Lessard, 4. Todd Gilliland, 5. Chase Briscoe, 6. Grant Enfinger, 7. Zane Smith, 8. Parker Kligerman, 9. Austin Hill, 10. Austin Self.

Top-10 leaders: 1. Nemechek-211, 2. Rhodes-205, 3. Creed-190, 4. Crafton-171, 5. Friesen-158, 6. Hill-156, 7. Smith-137, 8. Enfinger-131, 9. Gilliland-127, 10. Self-111.



Logano wins Bristol Dirt Race

SCAR added to, and made some changes in the race's format.

The problems started in practice on Friday, when high levels of tire wear forced NASCAR to make adjustments by dividing the event into five smaller, 50-lap segments rather than the scheduled three segments. On Saturday, early rains led to a wet track and four hours of track preparation proved to be too little when disastrous conditions led to mud coating windscreens to the point of blinding drivers after just one lap.

Did the race match the hype?

One of the biggest problems this past weekend was that a dirt race was going to be staged by an organization that got out of dirt racing years ago, and shouldn't be back in it. This was evidenced on Saturday when NASCAR attempted to conduct the heat races for the Truck Series and the Cup Series well before the track was ready to be raced on.

NASCAR feverishly tried to save its much-publicized first Cup Series dirt race since 1970 from turning into a total disaster, the likes not seen since the 2008 tire debacle at Indianapolis made for one of the worst events in the sport's history.

But the dirt, the 28-degree Bristol banking reduced to 19 degrees after the dirt was applied, and the heavy 3,400-pound cars were a terrible fit.

Yes, drivers had a blast playing in the dirt, some for the first time since they were kids. But four Friday practice sessions ultimately showed the tires couldn't sustain the heavy wear. The three layers of dirt acted as a cheese-grater and the tires in turn dug deep divots into the surface.

It certainly added up to a true wild card race.

Saturday and Sunday's rain proved disastrous. After one qualifying lap for a NASCAR truck race to be staged that evening, drivers' windshields were so coated in mud they couldn't see. Both qualifying and the truck race were called off.

Typically, cars that race on dirt do not employ windshields for the very reason that was demonstrated. Of course, the immediate argument would be, "But we never do it that way" when the question of removing the glass from the cars is posed. Well, this whole thing is something that is never done so it will require that everything be conducted differently.

Instead of a windscreen, dirt crews put metal bars in front of the driver to protect them from flying debris. At the same time, drivers wore helmets equipped with tear-offs attached to the visor so the driver can rip one off and essentially clean his own visor. A windshield can't be so easily cleared.

NASCAR also pulled the plug on the four short qualifying heats for Cup cars, drawn in groups of 10 cars, that were supposed to determine the starting order for Sunday's race.

Bristol awoke Sunday to flood warnings. Parking lots outside the track had turned to lakes overnight, with ducks paddling past motor homes. So, shortly after noon, Bristol announced that the Cup race, scheduled for 3:30 p.m., would be held instead at 4 p.m. Monday. It was preceded by the NASCAR Truck race at noon.

NASCAR's Steve O'donnell issued a statement.

"Certainly a wild few days here at Bristol. I think the industry had everything thrown at it. When you think of the challenge of coming into this weekend just to race on dirt, how much went into that. But then you add on the fact that we experienced flooding, hail, a day race with unbelievable sunshine, more laps with a Truck and a Cup race than you'd ever put on a racetrack normally if you were conducting a dirt event."

While there were problems galore, and a muddy mess, many of the fans who watched on television liked what they saw. Enough positive comments came from the race, that NASCAR announced the Great Bristol Dirt Race will return in 2022.

Racing Joke: An old time racer had been to his doctor several times. Each time the doctor told him he needed to get his house in order. Finally, he asked the doctor to tell him how long he had left.

"Six weeks is about all you've got," the doctor told him. "I can't believe it," the old racer said. "Isn't there anything I can do?"

"Well, you could try taking a mud bath every day," the doctor said.

"Why, will that cure me," asked the old racer hopefully?

"No, but it will help you get used to the dirt," replied the doctor.

Weekend Racing: After the off week due to Easter, it's on to Martinsville for two night races.

Fri., Apr. 9; Xfinity Series race 7 of 33; Starting time: 8:00 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sat., Apr. 10; Cup Series race 8 of 36; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Racing Trivia Question: What year did Martinsville Speedway open?

Last Week's Question: How many times did Michael Waltrip win the Daytona 500? Answer: Two, in 2001 and 2003.

Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter is a syndicated NASCAR writer and author. You may e-mail him at: hodges@race500.com. NTA(Apr7,G1)SH