

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

www.townscountyherald.net • E-mail: tcherald@windstream.net

Indians continue to practice hard ahead of 2019-2020 basketball season

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE - Each year, Indians Basketball Head Coach Rob Benson holds several offseason workouts during the summer to further develop returning players and work with incoming freshmen.

And the Indians have been able to take their hard work to the court against other schools, as they traveled to Union County in mid-June to compete in eight games over two days at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes basketball camp.

"I was able to assess a couple of players I expect to contribute this year," said Benson. "I felt that Kyle Oakes and Luis Quijada played very well, and I saw improvement from True Youngblood."

This summer, the Indians are working on how to absorb dribbles, help away from the ball and rebounding, Benson said.

"I felt we competed well, especially the first day, where we beat Murphy and Pickens and lost to Rabun and Lumpkin in close games," Benson said.

The Indians will bring back three returning starters from last year for the 2019-2020 season: sophomore Collin Crowder and juniors Aidan Berrong and Kolby Moss.

They were not at full strength for the tournament, however, as sophomores Peyton Barrett and Collin Crowder, along with senior Jacob Kinsey, were away on summer trips, but this allowed for other kids to get some meaningful playing time.

Crowder and Barrett, who saw a lot of action on the court coming off the bench last year, will be expected to perform as starters and take on more prominent roles on the court.



The Towns County guys were in action during the afternoon session of last month's FCA basketball camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

"Aidan Berrong, Collin Crowder, and Peyton Barrett are expected to be equal components of both our offense and defense, not just complement Kolby Moss," Benson said. "My expectations for this year are to compete and improve each day."

"We will need to play hard due to our size, but I feel we will shoot the basketball better this year. I am looking for this group to exceed expectations. They have a grit about them that makes them very enjoyable to coach."

Moss finished his second season with arguably one of the greatest student-athlete performances in Towns County Basketball history, having scored over 1,500 combined points during his freshman and sophomore years.

"I love the game of basketball, I am excited for this season coming up," said Moss. "I expect this year for us to be quick, fundamental and fun to watch."

"I've been working on strength and agility with the help of Coach Livingston, as well as my jumper and ball handling

with Coach Benson. Benson has been working with us to improve the teams off the ball movement and putting a huge emphasis on playing great defense.

"This group I've played with before, and we know each other pretty well, and we have developed a great chemistry so far."

The Indians will need to give 100% effort on the defensive side of the ball this year, as they are going to be a pretty small team, though they have several players who can score and handle the ball from all over the court, and they are looking to play fast.

"They are a great group of young men," said Benson. "They are very fast, and they will compete hard every game."

The new Head Football Coach Jason Roquemore and Benson are working together this summer to allow for student-athletes playing both sports to have the opportunity to put in work for both teams ahead of the upcoming seasons.

Local Racing Report: Tri-County; Blue Ridge

Tri-County Racetrack hosted a race Friday night with the 602 Thunder Series and the KSMA Pony Series.

There was some great racing. Here are the top five from each class.

Street Stock - Coming in first was No.99 Jim Twiggs, and coming in second was No.5 Carson Shields, coming in third was No.K3 James Klauke. Finishing in fourth was No.67 Sam Jones and coming home fifth was No.01 Jacob Lynch.

Limited/Crate - Coming in first was No.9 Brian Kinnersley, finishing in second was No.4 Danny Ledford and coming in third was No.7 Jason Deal. Placing fourth was No.200 Jacob Anderson and coming in fifth was No.22 Jamison Earley.

Beginner 602 - Coming in first was No.87 Dante Curtis with his first career victory. Coming in second was No.56 Colton Berrong. Coming in third was No.149 Seth Speed. Coming in fourth was No.32 Franklin Burk.

FWD - Coming in first was No.32 Justin queen, coming in second was No.18 Isaac Hicks, coming in third was No.21 Stephen Godfrey, finishing in fourth was No.29r Sean Rice and No.k3 Sandy Klauke and coming in fifth was No.01 Matt Murphy.

Red Clay Series - Coming in first was No.5 Booger Brooks, placing second was No.J4 Colton Jackson and taking third was No.2 Seth Wimpey. Coming in fourth was No.4 Jacob Paris and coming in fifth was No.88 Ricky Smith.

Young Guns - Coming in first was No.32jr Franklin Burk Jr and in second was No.28 Caylee Payne.

KMSA - Coming in first was No.9 John Smart, behind him was No.47 JJ Garrett and rounding out the top three was No.74 Tim Bristol. Coming in fourth was No.B7 Brandon Philips and finishing in fifth was No.281 Jeremy Griffin.

Blue Ridge Motorsports Park hosted a race last Saturday Night with the 602 Thunder Series. Here are the top five from each class

Street Stock - Coming in first was No.99 Jim Twiggs, finishing in second was No.21 Troy Turner and coming in third was No.j69 Jim Weller.

602 Thunder Series - Coming in first was No.4 Jacob Paris, coming in second was No.5 David Rodgers, coming in third was No.17 Brad Thomas, coming in fourth was No.14 Luke Nesemeier and coming in fifth was No.2 Seth Wimpey.

Limited/Crate - Coming in first was No.7 (The Real Deal) Jason Deal. In second was No.1 Junior Whitener; third went to No.30 Devin Dilbeck, fourth place was No.51 Drew

5-Star Basketball Camp

5-Star Basketball Camp with Director: Ray Porredon and Asst. Coach: Lowell Hamilton. Date: July 22nd, 23rd, & 24th. Time: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Ages: 8-17. Location: Towns County Recreation Department. Cost: \$75. Call: (706) 304-8402 to register.

Deaver and fifth belonged to No.07 Austin Aldridge.

Pony - Coming in first was No.32 Franklin Burk, coming in second was No.69k Keith Hackney, coming in third was No.28 Troy Payne and coming in fourth was No.76 Kevin Mulkey

FWD - Coming in first was No.29r Sean Rice, coming in second was No.J3 Josh Deese, coming in third was No.21 Stephen Godfrey, coming in fourth was No.18 Isaac Hicks and coming in fifth was No.11 Nathan Peardon.

Beginner 602 - Coming in first was No.56 Colton Berrong, in second was No.22 Matt Sadefur and in third was No.8 Colby Paris. Coming in fourth was No.149 Seth Speed and placing fifth was No.29 Chris Thomas.

Register now for Fall Soccer



Towns County Recreation Fall Soccer signups have started!

UFA Mountains Recreation Soccer Families, regular registration for Fall Rec Soccer will continue through July 20th. Beginning July 21st, a late fee will be added to each registration. Register at www.mountains.unitedfa.org. Sign up now to reserve your spot!

Chatuge Shores Ladies Golf Open House July 9



Play day on Tuesday, June 25th was a Team Stableford. Point system: Bogey 1 pt., Par 2 pt., Birdie 3 pt. and Eagle 4 pt. The weather was just perfect for golf. The winners were: 1st Place Gail Cole, Terie McComb, Kathy Stewart, Sandy Snyder. 2nd place Barbara Boswell, Vicky Healy, Bonnie Healy, Karen Whittaker. Congrats, ladies, on some fine playing! Don't forget Open House July 9th, 9 Hole \$10, Lunch \$10, Prize \$5. Come on out and have a great day at our beautiful golf course. L-r: Lorene Avery, Martha Barker, Mary Reece, Sandy Snyder. NTJul3,G2/SH



Indian defenders swarm a Union Co. player in the post on day two of the camp. Photo/Todd Forrest

NASCAR 2019

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Bowman Gets First Cup Win

JOLIET, IL - Alex Bowman fought off a hard challenge from Kyle Larson to win his first career Cup Series race. The race was under a rain delay for over three hours, but the wait didn't bother the driver of the No. 88 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet.

He had a fast car and ran near the front for most of the early going in the 267-lap race. He took over the lead on lap 226 after Kevin Harvick brushed the wall and had to pit for repairs to his car. Bowman stayed out front until there were less than 10-to-go. Kyle Larson was able to get by him for one lap, but Bowman regained the lead on lap 262, and crossed the finish line nearly a second ahead of Larson.

"This is what I've looked forward to all my life," said Bowman. "The first thought that comes to mind is my dad, who worked so hard to help get me here today."

"When Kyle got by me I knew I was going to have to find some more speed, or drive a different line. I don't know where it came from, but we had just enough of what we needed to win."

This was the second year in a row that Larson had come up a little short at Chicagoland.

"I don't know what I could have done better," said Larson. "He got a run on me and what might have helped was running a different groove. Maybe we needed a different line. You just do what you think is right at the time."

Joey Logano was third, followed by Jimmie Johnson, Brad Keselowski, Ryan Blaney, Eric Jones, William Byron, Martin Truex Jr., and polesitter Austin Dillon.

The four Hendrick cars had their best showing of the year. Bowman won, Jimmie Johnson was fourth, William Byron came in eighth, while Chase Elliott was 11th.

Kyle Busch, who finished 22nd had tire problems for much of the race. He brushed the wall twice, causing a tire to go down. A third tire went flat after he and Logano tangled.

Top-10 leaders after 17 of 36: 1. Logano-677, 2. Kyle Busch-659, 3. Keselowski-610, 4. Harvick-610, 5. Truex-581, 6. Hamlin-574, 7. Elliott-570, 8. Kurt Busch-537, 9. Bowman-509, 10. Blaney-499.

CUSTER OUTLASTS LOGANO FOR XFINITY WIN

Cole Custer led 151 laps of Saturday's 200-lap Xfinity Series race, including the last 20 with Cup Series regular Joey Logano on his tail.

Logano finished second, followed by Michael Annett, Brandon Jones, Austin Cindric, Noah Gragson, Justin Haley, Ross Chastain, Tyler Reddick, and Riley Herbst.

Christopher Bell actually finished third, but was disqualified after his No. 20 Joe Gibbs Toyota failed the post race inspection. He was placed last in the 38 car field.

Top-10 leaders after 15 of 33: 1. Reddick-693, 2. Custer-622, 3. Bell-599, 4. Cindric-564, 5. Allgaier-541, 6. Briscoe-495, 7. Gragson-492, 8. Nemechek-489, 9. Annett-478, 10. Haley-458.



Bowman Gets First Cup Win
MOFFITT TAKES CHICAGO TRUCK RACE

Brett Moffitt led 72 laps on the way to victory in Friday night's Truck Series race at Chicagoland Speedway. The remaining order of finish: 2. Brandon Jones, 3. Stewart Friesen, 4. Harrison Burton, 5. Austin Hill, 6. Todd Gilliland, 7. Ross Chastain, 8. Matt Crafton, 9. Anthony Alfredo, 10. Dylon Lupton.

Top-10 leaders after 12 of 23: 1. Enfinger-520, 2. Friesen-468, 3. Moffitt-467, 4. Crafton-458, 5. Rhodes-422, 6. H. Burton-409, 7. Hill-406, 8. Gilliland-384, 9. Creed-359, 10. Sauter-345.

WHERE'S THE PARITY IN NASCAR

In both 2018 and 2019, the NASCAR Cup Series has had the fewest number of winners through the first 16 races since 1978, when there were five. This year, the Big Three has become the Big Two, as Team Penske and Joe Gibbs Racing have won 16 out of 17 Cup races.

The only drivers outside those two organization to win a race has been Chase Elliott and Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports.

The dominance comes despite NASCAR's push for parity in the form of a new, lower horsepower handling package created to keep the cars closer together. The hope was it would allow more teams to become competitive, creating more upsets and a diverse playoff field.

What's led to the dominance? Certainly, when it comes to Toyota they've placed all their eggs in the basket of JGR. At this point, virtually all resources go toward making not only their prized four-car team successful but a strong fleet of development drivers in the sport's lower series.

Penske, meanwhile has benefited from Ford's resurgence and the boost from four-car Stewart-Haas Racing joining their ranks. They also boast a trio of the sport's best drivers entering their prime in Brad Keselowski, Joey Logano, and Ryan Blaney.

Their winning surge has coincided with a precipitous decline of Chevrolet and their new Camaro. Hendrick Motorsports has won just once this year as the Bowtie Brigade continues to struggle. The manufacturer with the most full-time cars in the field has fallen to a clear third in the pecking order.

But the bottom line is this

lack of parity, long-term, is not good for the sport at the top of the ticket. NASCAR and the teams need to find a way to even out the competitive balance across the board.

Meanwhile, 2019 is now officially the longest Kevin Harvick has gone without a victory to start a year with Stewart-Haas Racing. The last time he had this bad a drought? His 2012 season at Richard Childress Racing, a year that ended with a November win at ISM Raceway. That happened as the story broke he would be leaving for SHR at the end of his contract.

"I am beyond all the frustration," said Harvick. "To me it is now a challenge just because I feel like this is very similar to 2014 and 2017. I can see the progression in the speed of the cars and the things we have done and honestly we just chose the wrong direction to start the year."

"Our cars weren't where they needed to be and everyone realizes that as a company. We had some situations where we were in position to win some races and had some things go wrong, whether it was my team or the 14 [Bowyer]. In the end, our cars just weren't fast enough."

"Not saying that our engineering guys did anything wrong, but it was just the direction wasn't right to be able to do the things we are doing on the racetrack in the cars in real-life scenarios that are being covered with what we are doing on the track. That is what really tells the tale."

"We are all pulling the rope in the right direction now and feel like we have made some good gains. This is part of that challenge that is a cycle. I have talked about this for years - you have to build, you have to rebuild, build and rebuild. You are on the good side of it and the bad side of it and it all has a funny way of cycling itself through."

Racing Joke: Joey went to his doctor one day complaining of shortness of breath. His doctor advised him to sleep near an open window and scheduled another visit in thirty days.

"Have you been sleeping by an open window, like I told you?" asks the doctor.

"Yes, just like you said, doc."

"And is the bronchitis gone now?"

"Not yet, so far the only things gone are my laptop and cellphone."

Weekend Racing: The Xfinity and Cup teams are at Daytona for two night races. The Trucks have an off week.

Fri, July 5; Xfinity Series race 16 of 33; Starting time: 7:30 PM ET; TV: NBCSN.

Sat, July 6; Cup Series race 18 of 36; Starting time: 7:30 PM ET; TV: NBC.

Racing Trivia Question: What year did Rusty Wallace win the Cup Series championship?

Last Week's Question: Darrell Waltrip has left the broadcast booth. Where is his hometown? Answer: He calls Owensboro, Kentucky his home.

Gerald Hodges is a syndicated NASCAR writer and author. His books may be viewed online and ordered at Amazon.com. You may contact him by e-mail at: hodges@race500.com.

NTJul3,Z21/SH