

# Towns County Sports

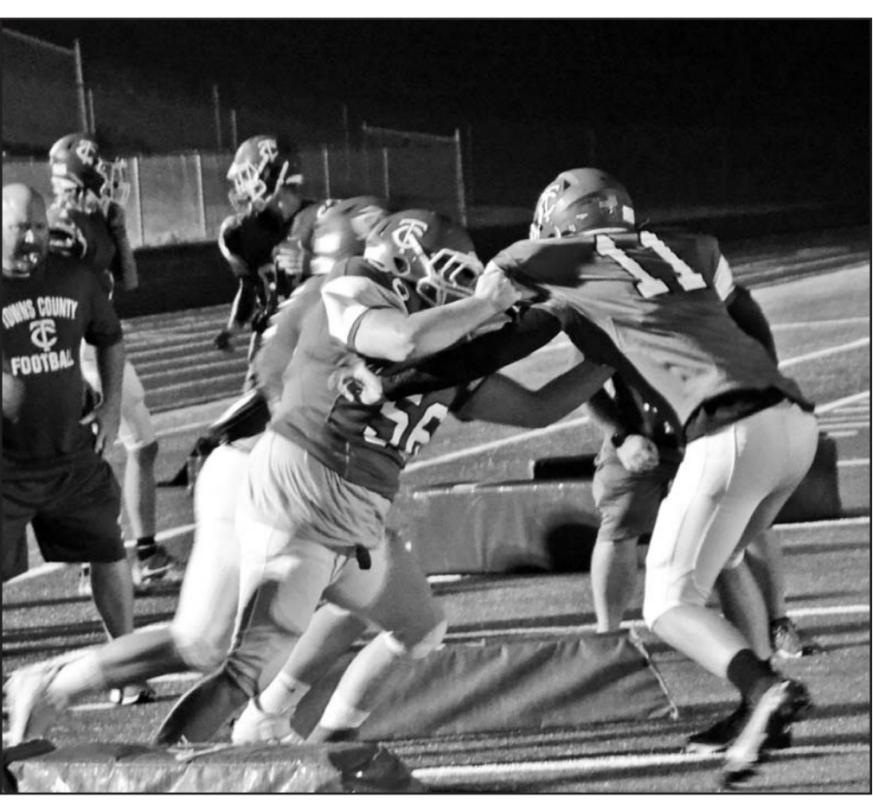
Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Football: Indians host Midnight Madness; season still slated for Sept. 4 start



The Towns County Indians hosted their first official practice of 2020 at midnight on Aug. 7. Despite scrimmage games getting the axe, the season is still tentatively scheduled to open Sept. 4. Photos/Lowell Nicholson



## NASCAR 2020

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Elliott Gets Daytona Road Course Win

DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Chase Elliott held off Denny Hamlin for his third road course win in a row. It was his eighth career Cup Series victory and the second of this season. He led 3 times for 34 of the 65 lap Inaugural Daytona Road Course, and crossed the finish line .202-seconds in front of Hamlin.

Elliott, who also won Stage 1, had a lead of 9 or more seconds for much of the final 18 laps. A late race caution caused by Kyle Busch set up the three lap shootout.

"I don't think I did anything special today," Elliott said. "I had a phenomenal car. I have to thank my crew and all the fans. Really fortunate from that standpoint. Had a good week of preparation and came out and really executed on the race."

"Any win at Daytona is special. (Crew chief) Alan (Gustafson) and I were joking that we had to change it to a road course to win at Daytona. ... Just a great day."

While the finish might have looked close, Hamlin never reached a point where he could attempt a pass on Elliott in the last three laps.

"I kept him honest there," Hamlin said. "He had such good drive off the corners, I couldn't do anything with him."

Martin Truex Jr. finished third, while Jimmie Johnson was fourth and Chris Buescher fifth. Clint Bowyer, Kaz Grala, William Byron, Joey Logano, and Michael McDowell rounded out the top 10.

Austin Dillon had tested positive for the coronavirus and was replaced in the No. 3 Richard Childress Chevrolet by Kaz Grala, who finished seventh.

Points leader and pole-sitter Kevin Harvick had two spin outs. The first one came during lap 37 and several other cars were involved. The second one was on lap 44. He lost one lap, but was able to get a 17th place finish.

Kyle Busch had a rough day. A brake issue sent his No. 18 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota behind the wall for lengthy repairs on lap 2. He then spun in Turn 6, and the brief off-course excursion knocked him back to 13th on Lap 25. When his brakes gave out with 17 laps to go, Busch steered the No. 18 to the Cup Series garage, where he lost six laps to the front-runners while his crew worked. He returned to the track, but both rear tires blew out with six laps remaining. He finished 37th, his fifth finish outside the top 30 this year.

Top 10 points leaders: 1. Harvick-939, 2. Hamlin-821, 3. Keselowski-803, 4. Elliott-775, 5. Blaney-755, 6. Logano-754, 7. Truex-753, 8. Almirola-682, 9. Kurt Busch-673, 10. Kyle Busch-652.

#### CINDRIC IS HOT IN XFINITY SERIES

Austin Cindric led 21 of the 52 laps in Saturday's Xfinity Series race. He was 7.108 seconds ahead of runner-up Brandon Jones at the checkered flag. It marked his fifth win in the last six series races, and tied a mark set by Sam Ard in 1983.

Cindric led the first 15 laps from the pole position to take Stage 1. Chase Briscoe won Stage 2 by holding off Cindric in a heated final-lap battle. Cindric didn't like the way Briscoe blocked him and tossed a water bottle at Briscoe's car during the stage intermission.

Noah Gragson was third, followed by AJ Allmendinger, Andy Lally, Jeremy Clements, Riley Herbst, Harrison Burton, Justin Allgaier, and Myatt Snider.



Elliott Gets Daytona Road Course Win

Top 10 points leaders: 1. Cindric-830, 2. Briscoe-782, 3. Gragson-740, 4. Chastain-709, 5. H. Burton-645, 6. Haley-637, 7. Allgaier-633, 8. Annett-567, 9. B. Jones-561, 10. Herbst-462.

Here are the results of Sunday's Truck Series race at Daytona: 1. Sheldon Creed, 2. Brett Moffitt, 3. Raphael Lessard, 4. Matt Crafton, 5. Austin Hill, 6. Tyler Ankrum, 7. Grant Enfinger, 8. Parker Kligerman, 9. Scott Lagasse Jr. 10. Stewart Friesen.

Top 10 points leaders: 1. Hill-476, 2. Moffitt-422, 3. Smith-417, 4. Rhodes-413, 5. Eckes-412, 6. Creed-399, 7. Crafton-375, 8. Enfinger-366, 9. Ankrum-343, 10. Gilliland-340.

#### MCDOWELL IMPROVING HIS PERFORMANCE

Michael McDowell, driver of the No. 34 Front Row Motorsports Ford has shown a lot of improvement over the month of July.

"It's one thing to run up front, then kinda fall off the map again, and be kinda stuck in the mid-20s," said McDowell. "But I just feel like now we're consistently in the teens every race. So, it means a lot to me to see the whole program be elevated to the point where we're not just racing the cars that we typically race every weekend - we're racing the big teams and the big dollars. We're doing it consistently."

"I think the consistency part of it is so rewarding. It's not like we've made it, we don't feel like that, but when you're doing it every week, you start to feel like you belong and we can do this. And not every week is gonna be like that - we know that. But at the same time, consistently running well, being competitive, and being in contention for top 10s, and getting top 15s is a huge achievement for our team and our program."

"Drew Blickensderfer, my crew chief, is a huge asset to the program. Because he's been on race winning teams and in contention for championships, that's what's cool about having him. He's a good balance of being excited that we're getting the finishes and feeling good about it, but also being like, 'Hey. We belong here doing this and we need to keep going. We need to be able to move from 15th to 10th, 10th to 5th, and start challenging for wins.' So, he does a good job of keeping the, 'Alright, we're here, but let's keep going! We've got more to go!' So it's good to have that perspective."

While NASCAR forbids teams from doing any actual testing, they can still practice on simulated programs.

In preparation for the Daytona event, Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) driver, Cole Custer spent

multiple hours in the Ford simulator.

"I've probably been in the simulator five or six hours practicing the Daytona road course," Custer said. "We've obviously had to sort through some stuff to get it as realistic as we think we can. From there, it's trying to get me better and there's a lot of stuff to work through because we haven't been there in these Cup cars. We're trying to make sure we are close on the car, and making sure I'm driving it how I need to. There's a lot of stuff to be done since we are going to a brand new track layout and we need to make sure we've hit everything so we are 100 percent when we show up."

There are three races left in the regular season before the playoffs start Sept. 6 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway, and Custer's win at Kentucky earned him one of the coveted 16 playoff spots.

His teammate Kevin Harvick also owns a playoff spot after six wins this season.

**Racing Joke:** Alex was attending a cocktail party when a young lady came up to him. She introduced herself, then remarked, "You know... you look like my third husband."

"How many times have you been married?" asked Alex. "Twice," replied the lady.

**Weekend Racing:** There will be five events this weekend at the Dover Monster Mile. Unfortunately, fans will not be allowed to attend.

The postponed Indy 500 race will be held Sun., Aug. 23. Coverage begins on NBC at 1 PM ET, with the green flag at 2:30 pm. Like the Dover NASCAR race, the grandstands will be empty.

Fri., Aug. 21; Truck Series race; Starting time: 5 PM ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sat., Aug. 22; Xfinity Series race; Starting time: 12:30 PM ET; TV: NBCSN.

Sat., Aug. 22; Cup Series race; Starting time: 4 PM ET; TV: NBCSN.

Sun., Aug. 23; Xfinity Series race; Starting time: 1:30 PM ET; TV: NBCSN.

Sun., Aug. 23; Cup Series race; Starting time: 4 PM ET; TV: NBCSN.

**Racing Trivia Question:** Which Cup Series team does Martin Truex Jr. drive for?

**Last Week's Question:** How many NASCAR championships did Lee Petty win? Answer: He won the 1954, '58 and '59 titles.

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