

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Baseball: Indians see mixed results in opening week of region play

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Towns County split its four 8-A games last week to double its win total to four while sitting at 2-2 in region play on the year.

While the week didn't get off to a positive start, the Indians responded with back-to-back wins over Tallulah Falls and Commerce before dropping the finale to Athens Academy on Saturday afternoon in Commerce.

Following a 13-0 loss at the hands of George Walton Academy, Towns returned to the diamond 24 hours later where they handed Tallulah Falls a 13-2 beat down behind a seven-run third inning that blew open a 3-0 contest.

Towns 13, TFS 2

Junior Zach Davenport tossed a complete game, allowing three hits, two earned runs, while striking out eight and walking two. He also helped his own cause with an RBI double and a run.

Offensively, Jackson Taylor went deep to begin a streak of three consecutive games with a home run - his two-run bomb with one on and nobody out in the third made it a 5-0 game and kickstarted the Indians' offensive explosion in the inning.

Brody Graper doubled twice and drove in a pair during a 2-for-4 day at the plate. Major Moss also turned in a 2-for-4 performance to go along with four runs and three stolen bases.

Meanwhile, Kobe Denton finished 3-for-4 with a run, an RBI, and a steal. Andrew Griffin doubled while going 2-for-4 and driving in one.

After Denton was stranded at third following a leadoff single in the first, Towns broke through with three in the second when Griffin singled to left to open the inning. Following an RBI groundout that should have ended the inning instead of giving the Indians a 1-0 advantage - due to a dropped third strike negating a strikeout - Trent Bradshaw brought in another run when his ground ball to first resulted in a Tal-



Towns County baseball will return home this Friday to face Commerce in a Region 8-A doubleheader. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

lulah error and a 2-0 lead.

A Denton single put two aboard for Davenport, who doubled to right field making it a 3-0 game after Bradshaw scored but Denton was cut down at the plate.

The third opened with a Will DeVries single - setting the table for Taylor, who launched a 1-0 pitch over the right field fence for a 5-0 advantage.

But Towns wasn't finished as the wheels completely fell off defensively for Tallulah.

Moss reached on an error with two down, Graper doubled, and another error off the bat of Bradshaw allowed two runners to cross.

After swiping second, Bradshaw scored on a Denton base hit that made it 9-0. Later in the inning, Davenport scored on a passed ball to make it a 10-0 game midway through the third.

Davenport would retire Tallulah in order in the bottom half of the inning and Towns County tacked on another run in the fourth when Moss scored on an error off the bat of Graper.

Tallulah Falls made it an 11-2 game in the fifth with a

pair of doubles and a walk but the Indians got both runs back in the top half of the sixth.

A Griffin RBI double scored Taylor before a double-play awarded Tallulah two quick outs. However, Towns County went back to work when Moss singled and Graper doubled him home to return an 11-run advantage to Davenport, who pitched around a two out walk and an error to keep the 13-2 lead intact and ending the game via the "mercy rule."

Towns 10, Comm. 4

On Saturday the Indians traveled to Commerce take on the Tigers in game one and Athens Academy in the second game of a Region 8-A doubleheader.

In the opener vs Commerce, Towns overcame deficits of 2-1 and 4-3 before pulling away with three in the fourth and three in the sixth to take a 10-4 victory over the Tigers.

Taylor continued to rake - going 3-for-3 with his second homer in as many games, a double and 4 RBIs.

Denton also went deep while Barrett, Griffin and DeVries added doubles to the cause.

DeVries went the dis-



tance on the mound, giving up two earned while scattering eight hits and fanning five.

The Indians continued to have their way on the base paths with seven steals - two each coming from DeVries and Denton.

Towns got on the board in the first when a dropped third strike brought Taylor to the plate and the Cleveland State signee lifted an RBI opposite field double to left.

The Tigers immediately evened the score when an Indians error to open the inning led to a two-out RBI single.

A Barrett lead off double in the second went to waste when the senior was left stranded at third base.

Commerce quickly snatched the lead with a bit of small-ball in the bottom half of the inning when they opened with consecutive base hits followed by a sacrifice bunt and an RBI ground out.

Towns returned the favor with back-to-back singles of its own in the third - allowing Griffin to tie the score with grounder to second.

Barrett singled back up the box to make it a 3-2 game but a pop-up and ground out ended the inning with the Indi-

ans only leading by a run.

With two-on and two-out in the bottom of the third, the Tigers were gift wrapped a run on a passed ball that knotted the score at 3-3. On the next pitch, Commerce lined a single to right to regain the lead at 4-3.

That would be the last run of the game for the home team.

Denton tied things back up when the senior sent a 2-2 pitch out of the yard with one down in the fourth. Following a ground out, DeVries doubled, Taylor was issued a free pass, and Griffin made Commerce pay with a double to center - scoring both runners and giving the Indians a 6-4 advantage.

Still leading by two in the sixth, Taylor sent a 3-run homer high and deep into the Jackson County sky to open up a 9-4 lead.

Towns added an insurance run in the seventh when Bradshaw was plunked by a 1-1 pitch and later scored on a Davenport ground out.

Towns 1, AA 6

Later in the day the Indians fell 6-1 to Athens Academy despite a 2-for-3 performance from Taylor that included his third consecutive game with a homer - his fifth on the year.

Trailing 2-0 in the fourth, Taylor's solo shot cut the Spartans lead in half but Athens Academy answered with three in the fourth and one in the sixth to pull away despite only out-hitting the Indians 9-to-6.

Barrett and Fullerton combined to go the distance on the hill with Barrett lasting 3 1/3 innings before giving way to Fullerton.

Denton, Davenport, Griffin, and Barrett each recorded singles for Towns.

The Indians were able to put runners aboard in each of the first two innings but neither were able to reach scoring position.

In the third, Denton singled to left and Davenport bunted him to second before an error allowed him to advance to third. But a ground out ended the inning with the game locked in a scoreless tie.

The Spartans broke through with a pair in the bottom half of the inning when a two-out walk extended the inning. With runners at the corners, an Indians error resulted in a 2-0 deficit when Taylor led off the fourth with a solo homer to centerfield.

Four singles and two walks in Athens Academy's half of the inning led to three runs and a 5-1 score.

Towns best scoring opportunity came in the sixth when two singles put two on until a would-be base stealer was thrown out at third for the second out then a runner was picked off first to end the inning.

Back-to-back doubles allowed the Spartans to extend their lead to 6-1 in the sixth.

Towns 0, GWA 13

The week didn't get off to a promising start when the Indians dropped a five inning affair to George Walton by a score of 13-0.

GWA got two runs in the first, five in the second, and the third, and one in the fourth.

Graper was responsible for two of Towns' five hits when he finished 2-for-2. Denton, Griffin, and Taylor each went 1-for-2 for the Indians.

Four pitchers saw action for Towns County with Barrett, Bradshaw, Moss, and Graper each working an inning.

Cox makes it official: signs with Point

By Todd Forrest
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The Towns County Herald interviewed Russell Cox back in January when he first announced his commitment to Point.

Earlier this month he signed his National Letter of Intent.

The January interview and article about Cox's decision is included in the following story.

Towns County senior running back/safety Russell Cox was the only Indian football player to participate in the Second Annual Fellowship of Christian Athletes Football All Star Classic presented by United Community Bank and Chick-Fil-A of Blairsville back in December, and he sure is glad that he didn't sit it out.

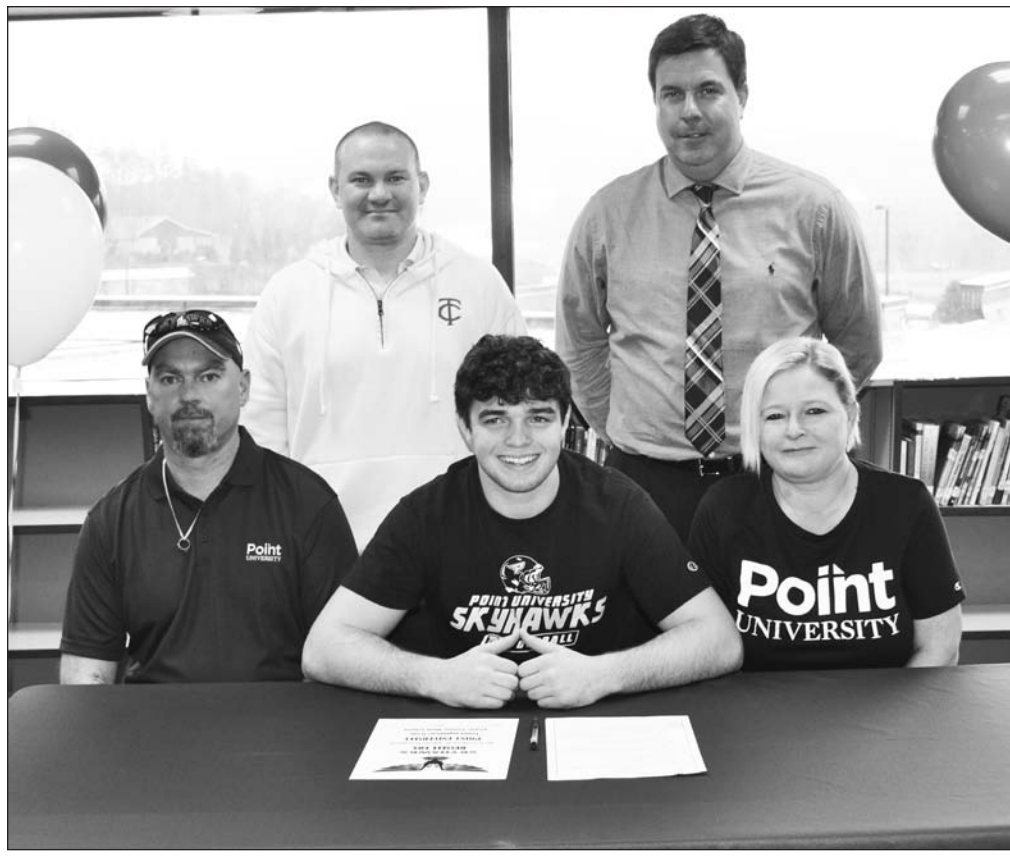
As a result of his superb showing in the FCA game, Cox was invited to Point University in West Point, Georgia and before the visit was over, Cox had agreed play college football for the Skyhawks.

The FCA All-Star Classic (played at Habersham Central High School in Clarksville and at Union County High School in 2015) provides local senior football players one last opportunity to strap on the pads and take part in the final game of their careers. For some, it's another opportunity to catch the eye of college scouts, and that's exactly how it played out for Cox.

"Playing in the game was a great experience," Cox said. "I enjoyed getting to play with other seniors, since that could be the last game for a lot of us."

Following a dazzling performance in the game, where he recorded 15 tackles and returned an interception for a touchdown while playing fullback and strong safety for the East team in a 56-28 victory, Cox caught the eye of Fannin County Head Football Coach Jim Pavao, who was one of the coaches for the opposing West team.

Pavao, who took the head coaching position at Fannin in



Russell Cox with family and coaches as he officially signs with Point University. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

2014 was a long-time defensive coordinator at Gainesville High School, where he won a State Championship in 2012 with Clemson's DeShaun Watson at quarterback.

Pavao remains well-respected by high school and collegiate coaches throughout the southeast, and he was so impressed with Cox following the FCA game, that he made a phone call to Point University to set up a visit for the Towns County senior.

"After the game (Coach Pavao) came up to me and told me that I have the potential to play at the next level," Cox said. "He called the coach from Point and a few weeks later, I got a scholarship offer."

When Cox arrived at Point for his official visit, receiving a scholarship offer on-the-spot was the last thing that he expected.

"They told me that I could (try out) for any position that I wanted to play, which made me happy," Cox said. "It's a nice,

small campus with great people, and I wanted remain in a smaller environment like I am now."

Cox, who plans on majoring in Sports Management would like to thank, "Coach (John) Cornett for always pushing me everyday. Without him, I wouldn't be where I am right now. I also want to thank my mom and dad for always being there for me every step of the way."

Cox, who was moved from quarterback to running back prior to his senior year, had a breakout performance in the 2016 season opener, rushing for 129 yards and two scores, including an 85-yard touchdown run in a 33-14 victory at arch-rival Hayesville, NC. He would finish the season with 14 touchdowns while totaling more than 1,000 yards on the ground.

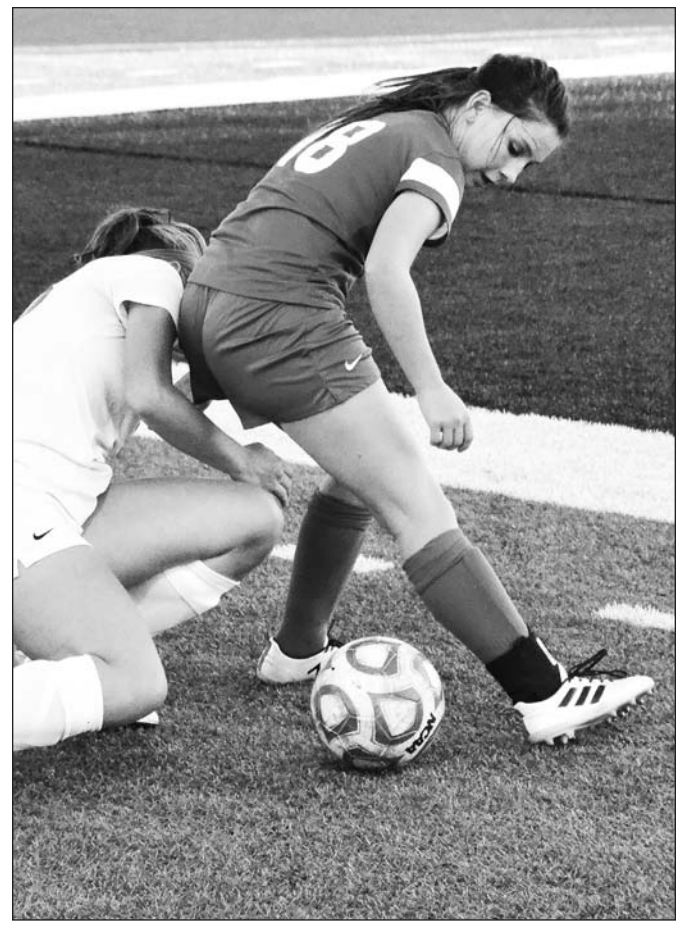
Cox also joins Shea Underwood (Georgia Tech) as the second Towns County representative that has competed in the FCA game before going on to play at the next level.

Cox will join the Skyhawks, who are moving to the Mid-South Conference this fall. The University is a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and also competes in Division I of the National Christian Collegiate Athletics Association (NCCAA).

The Skyhawks are coached by Julius Dixon, who will enter his second season at the helm in 2017. Dixon began his coaching career at Camden High School (South Carolina), leading the Bulldogs to a Class AAA State Championship. He also coached at his Alma Mater Furman University from 1994 to 2006 as defensive line coach and later as the defensive backs coach. His Paladins won three Southern Conference titles, appeared in six NCAA Playoffs and finished as the 2001 NCAA Division 1-AA national runner up.

He also coached at Presbyterian, Savannah State and Reinhardt.

Barrett propels Lady Indians to key Region win



The Towns County Lady Indians shut out Prince Avenue Christian 4-0 behind Brooke Barrett's hat trick - two coming on free kicks. Hannah Smith also added a goal for Towns off an assist from Leah Numeier. The shutout was the second of the year for goal keeper Jordan Hyatt and defensive standouts Callie Hogsed, Alyssa Hunter, Madison Stroud, and Tara Lee Underwood. Unfortunately the guys fell 3-0 to Prince Avenue to drop to 0-1 in region play. Photos/Todd Forrest