

All Stars...from Page 1A

Kickoff is at 7 p.m. at the Columbus Civic Center in Columbus.

"We'll practice Feb. 5-7 and we'll play on Feb. 8," Noblet said. "It'll be quite an experience for Jaryd and myself."

All-in-all, 39 players from Alabama and Georgia will square off in the indoor stadium of the Columbus Lions Professional Indoor League football team.

"It's arena football," Noblet said. "It'll be an exciting game I can tell you that. It's a once in a lifetime experience for Jaryd and myself."

The 6-foot-2, 295-pound Gurley is looking forward to the experience as well.

"It's a heck of an opportunity," he said. "I'm excited and I'm happy to be a part of this experience with Jackson."

Gurley said it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for a couple of smalltown football players.

"It's a big thrill, especially coming from a smalltown like this," he said.

Noblet agreed. "We'll be playing in front of 12,000 people," Noblet said. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime deal for us."

When the duo first found out that they indeed would play in the Indoor Classic, everything began to run through their heads.

"The first thought was 'how are we going to prepare for this game?' This is arena league football, it's football, but, it's a game like none we've ever played," Noblet said. "You think about game speed, how fast will the game be, are we ready for this. All sorts of thoughts go through your head."

"We'll just go with the flow and prepare like everyone else," he said. "We'll have three

days to practice. I think we'll be ready when the horn blows."

Noblet and Gurley say the opportunity to play in a high school all star game is a big payback for four years of hard work at the high school level.

"Yeah, it's a big payback for a lot of hard work," Noblet said.

Gurley agreed. "Yeah, Jackson said it best, it's a big payback for a lot of hard work," Gurley said. "It'll be a good opportunity for both of us."

Noblet and Gurley both say the experience has them fired up and ready to play.

"When the lights come on, we'll be ready to play," Noblet said.

Coach Harrison is familiar with the Indoor Classic. He coached in the first one.

"It's a good ending for a good season," Harrison said. "It's always an honor to be represented at a game like this."

"They could have had so many players from around that area, I'm happy they chose these two fine young men," Coach Harrison said. "I'm proud Jackson and Jaryd will get to experience that atmosphere."

"It's always good for your program to have some of your players go on to compete in an all star game," Coach Harrison said.

"I've been a part of some big games, and I want them to feel what I've experienced along the way," he said. "That's why I push for my kids to be out there and get the opportunity."

"It's a classy organization and I know that they'll make some memories they'll never forget."

The game is Feb. 8, in Columbus at the Columbus Civic Center. Game time: 7 p.m.

Library...from Page 1A

to vote in Towns County.

It also takes further dedication by the members of this community when it comes time to vote because the state capital outlay grant allocated by the Georgia Legislature and administered by the Georgia Public Library Service is a grant that, in a very basic way, matches the funds already in place.

According to Commissioner Kendall, "we owe a great debt of gratitude to the voters in this community for approving the Towns County Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds to be allotted to this library project. Ninety percent of those of you who voted approved of this funding allocation."

This is not to overlook the \$900,000 state grant the county received to add to the SPLOST funding, and as Commissioner Kendall pointed out, "this grant was largely made possible by two of the projects most instrumental supporters: District 8 State Rep. Stephen Allison and District 50 State Sen. John Wilkinson, both represent Towns County."

Sen. Wilkinson's wife Debbie was sick with the flu and he was unable to attend.

State Rep. Allison followed the commissioner as the



Saturday was a happy one for the Towns County Public Library as they broke ground for renovation and expansion at the public library in Hiawassee. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

next speaker.

"this project has had struggles for the past couple of years," Rep. Allison said. "The main trouble being that there are many in the State Capitol that do not see the true value of our public libraries."

"We got lucky because we found Chairman Jack Hill,

(Republican Sen. Jack Hill represents House District 4), "and he knows and understands the impact public libraries have on the value of a community, especially in rural communities such as ours."

Rep. Allison concluded by praising the community of Towns County for their support

of the library because it would not have been possible without community support, "and it is communities such as these, ones that realize advocacy is the most important part of any community project, who "are showing the rest of Georgia how to do it."

Qualifying for elections is March 3-March 7

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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Qualifying for local, state and federal offices will be March 3-7 after the Georgia General Assembly swept the legislation to Gov. Nathan Deal who is expected to sign it this week.

Likewise, Georgia's primary elections will be held May 20.

HB 310, which passed both chambers with God's speed, makes state and local candidate elections coincide with federal candidate election dates to avoid holding two separate elections in all of Georgia's 159 counties.

District 51 State Sen. Steve Gooch, R-Dahlonega, said the vote to merge election dates was critical.

"Georgia is now required to have at least 45 days of absentee balloting before the date of a runoff or primary election where a federal candidate is on the ballot," he said. "This means qualifying for public office will begin on March 3 and run through March 7."

"That said, there is pressure to reach Day 40 earlier than previous years because of a shift in election qualifying dates," Sen. Gooch said. "A shorter legislative session saves Georgia taxpayers a substantial amount of money in per diem and temporary workers salary costs."

HB 310 was the first piece of legislation to hit the Senate floor in 2014, Sen. Gooch said.

"House Bill 310 will revise the schedule of state and local candidate elections to correspond with federal candidate election dates," he said. "Maintaining two separate election calendars places a heavy burden on state resources and would likely require a costly update to technology infrastructure. By combining

the two calendars into one streamlined schedule, the state will be able conserve both state resources and taxpayer dollars."

The move was necessary after U.S. District Judge Steve Jones changed the scope of Georgia elections, with his July 2013 ruling that the state's election calendar, which has traditionally scheduled the primary elections for state and federal offices on the third Tuesday in July, violated the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986. That law requires the state to send absentee ballots to military and overseas voters 45 days before any federal election.

HB 310 resets the local and state calendar to coincide with the federal elections calendar. While qualifying for all elections will be set as March 3, through March 7, the joint primary date will be changed from the third Tuesday in July to May 20.

Georgia Secretary of State Brian Kemp said the bill now goes to Gov. Nathan Deal for his signature.

"I want to thank House and Senate leaders for passing this important piece of legislation the first week of the legislative session," Kemp said. "Gov. Deal and members of the General Assembly showed tremendous leadership in ensuring that Georgia voters will continue to have a uniform voting calendar rather than two separate calendars for federal and state elections."

"This would have been a tremendous fiscal cost to the counties and incredibly confusing for Georgia voters (without the legislative correction)," Kemp said. "As Georgia's Chief Elections Officer, I will continue to work each day to make sure Georgia has a secure, accessible and fair elections process."

PSA...from Page 1A

Executive Director Frank Riley said. "This FAC Public Service Announcement captures what our Fire Adapted program really does here in Towns County which is to help make our Communities Firewise and safer from the dangers of an uncontrolled wildfire."

For more details on Fire Adapted, Firewise or the FAC PSA contact Frank Riley, Executive Director, Chestate/Chattahoochee RC&D Council at: frank.crcd@gmail.com



The filming of a Fire Adaptive Community Public Service Announcement in Towns County.

Homecoming...from Page 1A

with a tradition that's almost as old as the school itself, the decision was made to continue crowning a Homecoming Court during Basketball Season, at the half time of a boys' basketball game.

Even when football came to Towns County and a Homecoming Court was named during football season, the desire to continue with tradition bestows two Homecomings' during the school year.

This year during the varsity boys' game against Riverside, which begins at 6 p.m. on Saturday, the 28 Towns County High School students forming this year's Basketball Homecoming Court will anxiously await the announcement of the royals.

These 28 students are made up of four freshmen, six sophomores, eight juniors, and 10 Seniors.

They are freshman Adam Barrett, Esther Batye, Kobe Denton, and Mary Ivey; sophomores Chaiz Davenport, Savannah Dyer, Sterling Hedden, Emily Kogod, Daulton Rogers, and Taylor Underwood; juniors Grayson Carver, Karlie Albach, Cory Ellis, Morgan Bradley, Efen



Figuroa, Kayla Davis, Gabe Gilleland, and Carly Gilfilian; seniors Cesar Bustamante, Eryn Cochran, DylN Clark, Kellsie Cowart, Jaryd Gurley, Jasmine Forrester, Stetson Hedden, Bailey Sutton, Jarrett Milam, and Taylor Vardeman.

Of these 28 members of the court, one senior boy and one senior girl will be crowned King and Queen, in addition to one of the senior girls being named as the runner-up.

The winners for this year's King and Queen were voted on by the entire student body.

Additionally, from the

underclassman, from each of the grades 9-11, a Prince and Princess will be named to complete the Basketball Homecoming Court.

The designations of Prince and Princess are voted on by each corresponding grade, while everyone gets a vote for the King and Queen.

Another tradition that has continued, as long as the school's history of Basketball Homecoming, is the way members of the Basketball Homecoming Court are escorted during this special event.

For freshmen, sophomores and juniors, each of the

boy nominees escorts one of the girl nominees.

However, for the senior nominees on the Basketball Homecoming Court they have special escorts. The senior boy nominees are escorted by their mothers, whereas, the senior girl nominees are escorted by their fathers.

Mark your calendars for this Saturday, Jan. 25, to attend the Varsity Boys Basketball game against Riverside Military Academy starting at 6 p.m. because you don't want to miss the half time special event when the 2014 Basketball Homecoming Royalty will be named.

Dragons & Tiaras to compete at World Congress Center in Atlanta

By Azure Welch
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Electrical problems in Athens on Saturday kept the Dragons & Tiaras Robotics team from competing in two key rounds.

The end result, they won't be making a trip to state, Head Coach Jo Ray Van Vliet said.

The team had a great day and is looking forward to being one of the FTC showcase teams at the FRC FTC Invitational robotics event at the World Congress Center in Atlanta on March 29.

Meanwhile, Coach Van Vliet was pleased with the performance of her team players.

"It was a fun day, and we met lots of fun people who also enjoy robotics," Coach Van Vliet said. "However, we had electrical system problems - one of our DC motor controllers died and so did a servo motor. Changing them out took time and there were only seven minutes between one of our rounds and the next."

"So we missed running our robot in two of our five rounds. That gave us a low



The Dragons & Tiaras fell short of their state aspirations in Athens on Saturday. Still, they had a very good year. They will compete in a robotics invitational at the World Congress Center in March.

total-points score so we won't go to state," she said. "Fortunately for us, one of the four Finalist Alliance teams (top four scoring teams) had seen our robot working on the practice field and when they found out we had the robot fixed and up

and running, they invited our team to be their alliance partner so we were in the eight teams that competed in the Semi-Final

rounds. That was an honor we certainly didn't expect."

Coach Van Vliet and her team were at the Board of Education meeting last week, and entertained the BOE.

Overall, Coach Van Vliet is helping the Dragons & Tiaras find their way through their rookie year competing in the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC). Not to mention the fact

that this year's team is also the first team from Towns County High School to compete at this level.

What's more is that Coach Van Vliet is helping to lead the Dragons & Tiaras in this first FTC, but Coach Van Vliet also coached the first, FIRST Lego League (FLL) team at TCMS.

Good luck at the World Congress Center in March.