

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians take Rabun to the wire

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County High School boy's soccer team hosted the Rabun County Wildcats last Monday at the Frank McClure Memorial Stadium and played a solid game holding the lead until late in the second period thanks to some really solid goal protection from sophomore Dallas Manus who had 16 stops on the night.

The Wildcats scored an unanswered goal late that accidentally bounced into the goal off a corner kick as both teams struggled for the ball and that ended up making the difference as Rabun pulled it out 4-3.

The Indians came to play and it was a shock to the Wildcats who defeated the tribe 10-1 in their first meeting. The Indians played hard with a lot of good solid soccer and a tremendous amount of hustle all over the field. The defense was covering the ball well and the offense was producing shot chances but unfortunately none of the attempts made it in until senior midfielder Blake Burnette made an unassisted hard line drive shot into the upper corner of the goal that blew by the Wildcat keep like the wind.

Manus had his hands full all night as the Wildcats pounded



Towns County vs Rabun County

the goal at several different points during both halves. Manus made a very impressive stop at the 18:48 mark on a penalty kick by Rabun that was a rocket. The keeper and the defense held the Cats at bay for the rest of the first period allowing only one goal to tie the game at 1-1 as the first half ended.

The second half found the Indians controlling the ball well and the Wildcats breaking the rules which gave the tribe a penalty kick at the 47:02 mark which hit the top of the crossbar and missed. Manus made some solid stops at the 48:58 mark and at the 54:32 mark that kept the scored tied a 1-1. Freshman Dalton Bradley put the Indians in the lead at the 56:21 mark with a

30-yard kick that caught the Cats keeper to far out and cleared his head by several feet and into the right side of the goal. The game stayed that way until Rabun scored at the 71:08 mark and then the fatal accidental goal at the 76:45 mark. Sophomore Efrén Figueroa showed some amazing footwork and ball handling skill as he ended up scoring on a set play at the 78:01 mark but it was a goal shy and the Cats won 4-3.

"We played a much better game this time than we did the last time we faced these guys," declared Head Coach Tim Rosser. "Having Shea (Underwood) back allowed me to change the lineup a little bit and it proved positive tonight. We got a good boost from Blake early as he scored with a hard shot in the upper corner of the goal and our defense played the offside trap effectively. We played a lot better with a lot of emotion. The hustle was there and although we didn't come away with the win, it definitely gives us something to work on next week," said Coach Rosser when comparing the two Rabun games.

The Indians face rival Union County at Frank McClure Memorial stadium on the grounds of TCHS on Mar. 19 starting at 6 p.m. Make plans now to come out and support the team as they continue to improve.

Middle School baseball off to 2-0 start

By Joe Collins
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Staff Writer

The Towns County Middle School Indians baseball team opened their 2013 season with a come from behind victory against Lakeview at the TCHS baseball field. It was a very exciting game that found the Indians trailing 8-1 going into the bottom of the fifth inning but pulling out a last inning win with two outs in the bottom of the seventh thanks to two solid extra base hits from Will DeVries. One in the sixth and another in the seventh that scored 3 of the final four runs for the victory.

The bases were loaded in the bottom of the first inning when Major Moss had a solid eye at the plate and drew a walk to score the first run of the night for the Indians. It was all Lakeview from then on with the Indians stranding 5 runners through the fifth inning when a pitcher change for Lakeview gave the Indians the break they needed to get a rally going that held for the rest of the game.

The fifth was a sloppy inning for Lakeview as they walked several of the TCMS batters and allowed them to score on 4 passed balls at the plate. It was some heads up base running directed by Head Coach Kyle Langford who guided his team through the final three innings despite the severe cold. "If we are going to play in this cold we might as well play to win," declared Langford. His team responded with some solid hitting and some good pitching from closer Brody Graper who finished with three strikeouts for the game, two of those strikeouts closing out the sixth and seventh innings. The Indians scored 3



TCMS vs Union County.

runs in the bottom of the fifth to close the Lakeview lead 8-4 on some good base running by the Indians.

The top of the sixth found the Indians in trouble with two men on and momentum edging in favor of Lakeview until center-fielder Moss made a great catch which surprised the Lakeview runners. A good throw from Moss caught their lead runner between second and third for the second out of the inning. Graper then struck out the final hitter of the inning and the Indians took charge in the bottom of the sixth.

Taylor Jackson opened the inning with a base on balls followed by DeVries who launched a long double to right center to score Jackson. Adam Barrett then drew a walk and he and DeVries advanced on a passed ball at the plate. Moss followed with a sacrifice fly that scored DeVries and moved Barrett to third, which brought Graper to the plate. He delivered a single, which scored Barrett, and the Indians trailed 8-7 as the inning ended.

The bottom of the seventh found the Indians with two men on and two outs as DeVries came to the plate. A called strike, a swing and a miss along with two

balls had the count at 2-2 with 2 out when a fastball found the middle of the plate and that was the one he had been waiting on. A long fly ball to right center found the hole and Langford looked like a windmill as he waved the runners home. The triple by DeVries scored the 2 men on base and the game ended with the Indians ahead 9-8. It was a heart stopper as Kobe Denton made his way home from second and the throw from the cut-off man was just a half second late on the last hit of the game.

Coach Langford knows football but he also knows baseball and he was on his team and never let up until the end. "This team has a tremendous amount of poise and confidence. They never look at the scoreboard and just play the game. It would have been easy for them to doubt what we were doing but they didn't and kept doing what they were coached to do. We had a lot of discipline at the plate but we needed to be more aggressive in the hitting counts," declared Langford.

The team hosted rival Union County on Mar. 7 and took it to the Panthers on the backs of some solid pitching and aggressive hitting. The Indians led 1-0 after the first two innings and took a 3-0 lead into the fifth. They closed the Panthers out in the top of the seventh and carded their second victory of the season 5-1. This boosted their season record to 2-0.

It is a solid start to what promises to be an exciting season from some good middle school athletes. The next game is Mar. 15 against Lumpkin County at home. Game time is 4:30 p.m. Make plans now to come out and support the TCMS Indians baseball team and be prepared to see some exciting baseball.

Tennis teams split with Woody Gap

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County High School tennis teams hosted Woody Gap last Thursday at the tennis complex on the grounds of TCHS and came away with a split, the varsity girls winning 4-1 and the varsity boys losing 3-2.

For the Lady Indians, senior Kayla Olin got the first victory of the match by beating her opponent 8-2 in the singles. Senior Mackenzie Mirandi kept things going in the right direction by also winning 8-2 in her singles match. Both players showed good hustle and controlled the matches.

Junior Courtney Marshall and junior Lesleigh Irvin played hard and came out on top in the first doubles match 8-4 followed by sophomore Carly Gilfilian and junior Eryn Cochran who dominated their doubles match 8-0. It was a great team effort as they came away with the victory 4-1.



Towns County vs Woody Gap

The boys had a tough time with the Falcons and lost all three of their matches in the singles and doubles divisions. Junior Garrett Bradshaw lost 2-8 while seniors Wesley Bloodworth and Bradley Smith lost a close one 6-8. Juniors Jaryd Gurly and Dustin Bracket lost the second doubles match 1-8 and that gave Woody Gap the win they needed and the Indians lost 3-2 as the Falcons were forced to take two forfeits.

The Indians tennis star of the week is Lady Indian Mackenzie Mirandi. She played

a solid match and had a strong win in the third singles match. "Mackenzie works hard and has a very positive attitude. She has a strong serve matched by some really solid ground strokes which has made her our player of the week," stated Head Coach Heather Moss about the senior's solid play.

"We have a lot of work to do between now and the Area Tournament on Apr. 22. The weather has affected our momentum at practice and we have had to reschedule many of our matches, which hurts our progress. We will focus on ball placement and volleys next week in practice as well as getting more first serves in," declared Moss. Their next match is Mar 12 at Gilmer County. First serve is at 4 p.m.

The tennis team is working hard and they need your help. Their main fundraiser, the 100 Game Match is set for Friday, Mar. 22 at 3 p.m. at the TCHS tennis complex. Make plans now to support the teams during this exciting time.

Recap...continued from page 8

losing a heart breaker and a trip to the state tournament by an 86-83 score. The Rabun County Boys got in the state tournament by winning their region opener 71-51 over Riverside Military Academy before losing a tough 60-56 decision to eventual region champion Jefferson in the semi-finals. The Wildcats took the third place game by a 67-53 score over Washington-Wilkes but had to travel to Spencer in Columbus for their opening round game in the state tournament and fell by a 70-58 score to the Greenwave.

NORTH CAROLINA OPPONENTS—The Lady Indians won five games without a loss this year against four opponents from North Carolina—Hiwassee Dam, Hayesville, Murphy, and Highlands. Two wins over Hiwassee Dam and one at Hayesville proved to be the most significant as those

two teams went on to win 21 and 15 games respectively with admirable performances against prominent opponents included.

The Hiwassee Dam Girls won both the regular season and post season tournament championships in their Little Smoky Mountain Conference and went on to win their first two games in the Class A State Playoffs before falling to Cherokee 67-55. The Hayesville Girls, who finished third in regular season and reached the semi-finals of their Big Smoky Mountain Conference got a win over highly regarded Smoky Mountain regular season and tournament runner-up Robbinsville in the opening round of the state playoffs before falling to North Wilkes, who lost to Cherokee two rounds later.

A couple of highlights for the Hayesville Girls were just a 46-42 loss at Class AAA Tuscola



Towns County Senior Night 2013

in Waynesville and a 58-52 home court win over Pisgah of Canton. Tuscola fell last Saturday by just a 51-50 score in their Class AAA state semi-finals to Harding "University" of Charlotte while Pisgah got a 63-57 win over Thomasville on Saturday and will face Kinston in the Class AA State Championship game this Saturday.

The Hayesville Boys won the regular season Big Smoky Mountain Conference Championship but fell to Swain of Bryson-City 51-46 in the conference championship game. They then got wins over Murphy and West Wilkes before falling in the third round of the Class A State Playoffs by a 59-56 score to East Surry. East Surry went on to defeat Hendersonville in the fourth round but fell to Winston-Salem Prep 59-43 in the state semi-finals last week.

Meagan Corbin, and LeAnn De an.

The Fuzion Dance Company, a project of Brasstown Dance Academy, was created in August, 2007 for the serious dancer ready to spend more hours at the studio training in a variety of dance styles. Fuzion is a non-profit organization which promotes the performing arts and expands the opportunity for dancers to perform. Membership is by audition only and member are required to attend Royal Academy of Dance examinations annually. Company co-directors are Madge Smith and Amy McIntyre.

2013 Co-Ed T-Ball and Farm League

The Towns County Recreation Department will be holding registration for T-Ball and Farm League the week of March 11th thru March 23rd.

Co-Ed T-Ball is for boys and girls ages 4 and 5. Co-Ed Farm League is for boys & girls ages 6, 7 and 8. The age control date will be prior to May 1st for boys and girls. Boys and girls ages 6 may play

in either the T-Ball or the Farm League programs.

Cost for these programs will be \$35 per participant. All registration will be held at the Recreation Department. Our hours of operation are: Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. til 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. til 4 p.m. For more information please call the Recreation Department at 706-896-2600.

Fuzion Dance and Notariety featured in benefit concert March 23

Benefit Concert featuring Notariety and Fuzion Dance Company on Saturday, March 23 at 7 p.m. Towns County School Auditorium. Tickets: \$10 adult, \$5 student.

Proceeds to benefit the non-profit organizations of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church Peru Mission Trip, Fuzion Dance Company and Towns County School Music Program.

MMBC PERU MISSION TRIP: McConnell Memorial Baptist Church works with Runa Simi, a Peru based Mission, to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Quechua Indians by pro-

viding healthcare, building assistance, trade skills, & veterinary medicine. Each year our team consists of many from our local community churches, not just McConnell. Please prayerfully consider your involvement. For more information contact the church office at 706-896-2281.

Notariety is an audition acapella group at Towns County High School directed by Chris Adams. The 12 members are Brittany Boyer, Celeena Corbin, Christa Hamill, Kayla Olin, Natalie Freely, Megan O'Donald, Bonnie Bennett, Alana Calhoun, Sierra Nichols, Jessie Poole,

NASCAR 2013

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Matt Kenseth gets Vegas win

Matt Kenseth celebrated his 41st birthday by winning Sunday's Sprint Cup Kobalt 400. He gained the lead during a restart on lap 240 of the 267-lap race and held off a hard charging Kasey Kahne, who led the most laps.

It was Kenseth's first win in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing after spending 15 years behind the wheel of a Ford for Roush Racing.

"It's always good to be a winner," said Kenseth. "I was nervous during those last laps because Kasey had a great car. Not taking on tires there at the end allowed us to be at the right spot at the right time."

Kahne dominated most of the race, but came up short at the end and finished 0.6-seconds behind Kenseth.

"I drove so hard every single lap. I didn't leave anything behind," said Kahne. "I thought we had the best car, but my tires began slipping there at the end."

Brad Keselowski didn't lead a lot of laps, but he passed Kyle Busch for third late in the race.

"We needed a little more speed," said Keselowski. "When I lost spots on the track, the guys in the pits helped me out. We didn't have the fastest car in practice, or during the race, but it turned out pretty good."

Kyle Busch raced back from a pit road speeding penalty to finish fourth.

"All in all, it was a great race," said Busch. "Our short speed was good, but we just needed to pick up more speed on the longer runs."

Carl Edwards finished fifth, followed by Jimmie Johnson, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Martin Truex, Kevin Harvick, and Paul Menard.

Danica Patrick finished 33rd, six laps down.

Top-10 leaders after 3 of 36: 1. Johnson-129, 2. Keselowski-124, 3. Earnhardt-119, 4. Hamlin-102, 5. Edwards-98, 6. Martin-95, 7. Kenseth-93, 8. Biffle-93, 9. Bowyer-89, 10. Almirola-88.

HORNISH IS VEGAS NATIONWIDE WINNER

Sam Hornish Jr. drove an absolutely dominant car to victory Saturday afternoon, streaking away from Kyle Busch during a seven-lap dash to the finish in the Nationwide race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

The win was Hornish's second in NASCAR's Nationwide Series and his first since Nov. 12, 2011 at Phoenix. It was the first Las Vegas victory for Penske Racing in any NASCAR series.

The Penske organization also collected its first victory after switching from Dodge to Ford between seasons.

Busch rolled across the finish line in second, 1.1 seconds behind Hornish. Brian Vickers ran third, followed by Trevor Bayne and Elliott Sadler. Bayne recovered from an early brush with the wall to post the fourth-place result.



Matt Kenseth, winner of Sunday's race and crew chief Jason Ratcliff

Travis Pastrana were the remaining top-10.

Top-10 points leaders after 3 of 33; 1. Hornish-127, 2. Allgaier-108, 3. Sadler-108, 4. Scott-108, 5. Smith-103, 6. A. Dillon-100, 7. Vickers-96, 8. Bayne-95, 9. Piquet-93, 10. Bowman-90.

NASCAR IS WRONG

NASCAR has gone too far in attempting to manage its image.

The organization assessed Denny Hamlin \$25,000 for bashing the new Gen 6 car. But he only stated what fans saw in the first two races, that it's difficult to pass and teams need time to work on the new car, just like they did when the old model was rolled out.

Others drivers have said the same thing.

"The short of the long of it is I believe I was severely disrespected by NASCAR by getting fined," Hamlin said. "I believe that the simple fact of us not even having a conversation about this issue before I was hit with a fine has something to say about our relationship. What I said was one sentence taken completely out of context."

Hamlin said he will not pay the fine.

"Most drivers will tell you that we constantly have sponsors and NASCAR's best interest in mind when speaking," he continued. "On the other hand I am a person that worked very hard from the bottom to get where I am today and someone telling me that I cannot give my one hundred percent honest opinion really bothers me."

"I feel as if today NASCAR lost one of its biggest supporters. So in the end there are no winners. I said today I would not pay the fine. I stand by that and will go through the process of appealing. Trust me; this is not about the money. It's much deeper. I will now shift my focus on giving FedEx and my team what they deserve this weekend, a win."

The irony of this is that what Hamlin said about the new car and the racing last week at Phoenix wasn't all that harsh. But because Hamlin didn't choose his words correctly, or dared to compare the new car to the old one, he was called out and made the poster boy for free speech.

A few drivers like Dale Earnhardt Jr., a ten-time fan favor-

ite are wishy-washy, when it comes to voicing their true opinions about what is happening in NASCAR. Prior to Daytona practice, Earnhardt sang praises about the new car. After a crash during a practice session, he said, "I guess I still have a lot to learn about it. It's just not handling the way I thought."

Earnhardt believes he cannot voice his opinion but sometimes it needs to happen behind closed doors.

"I don't think they mind you coming up in the hauler and talking about what you think about the racing and how you think things could improve or what might improve things," he said.

"I think that they're open to listening to that kind of stuff."

Earnhardt then switched the conversation to how much he liked the new car, a move that likely made NASCAR officials smile.

Tony Stewart pretty much summed up the NASCAR organization back in 2002, when he said, "It's NASCAR's way or the highway."

Hamlin is determined to fight back, and fans and competitors are rallying behind him.

Fining Hamlin, or anyone for stating their opinion in a reasonable manner is going to come back and bite NASCAR.

This is a battle that NASCAR cannot win.

Its image is going to be tarnished even more.

Weekend Racing: It will be short track racing at Bristol's .54 mile bullring for the Nationwide and Sprint teams. The Trucks do not race again until April 6.

Sat., Mar. 16, Nationwide Series, race 4 of 33; Starting time: 2 pm ET; TV: ESPN2.

Sun., Mar. 17, Sprint Cup Series, race 4 of 36; Starting time: 1 pm ET; TV: FOX.

Racing Trivia Question: Camping World Truck Series champion Ron Hornaday Jr. heads five 2013 inductees into the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame next weekend. How many truck titles did he win?

Last Week's Question: Who owns the Las Vegas track? Bruton Smith and his Speedway Motorsports Inc.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodge@race500.com.