

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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

Soccer: Towns sweeps GWA

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
sports@nganews.com

Last week's soccer match with Union County was postponed due to weather, leaving George Walton Academy as the only game on the schedule, and both Towns County soccer squads dominated for 80 minutes in the 8-A sweep.

The Lady Indians never challenged after taking a 3-1 advantage into the intermission.

Brook Barrett scored three of her four goals in the second half as the trio of Barrett, Tara Lee Arrowood (2 goals), and Taylor Cornett (1 goal) were too much for George Walton.

With Towns leading 4-1 in the game's 53rd minute, Barrett connected on her second goal from 15 yards out.

In the 69th minute, Barrett converted a penalty kick to extend the lead to 6-1. Her final goal came inside the box as she attacked the right side of the GWA defense for her team's seventh goal, and her fourth individually.

Jordan Hyatt recorded 10 saves - including a penalty kick save in the second half.

The guys scored one goal early in the first half off the foot of Shea Underwood and another in the second by Dalton Bradley, but that was more than enough as the Indians shutout GWA 2-0.

This week Towns will host Union on Friday in a makeup game after visiting Fannin County on Monday and Lakeview on Tuesday.



Towns County soccer vs George Walton. Photos by Todd Forrest

Towns County tennis hosts Commerce



The Towns County Tennis teams were in action last Tuesday vs Commerce. The girls lost a close one to the Tigers 3-2. Cierrah Donnelly and Amanda Donnelly both won their matches. The boys lost 0-5, but were close in their respective matches. On Monday of this week, Towns County traveled to Rabun County but will return home on Thursday. Towns County is under the leadership of first year coach Rob Benson. The final match of the regular season will be on March 31 at Fannin County. The Area Tournament begins on April 15th in Lincoln County. State Tournament action gets underway on April 23rd. Towns County tennis photos by Todd Forrest.



T-ball and Coaches Pitch registration

The Towns County Recreation Dept. is having registration for T-ball and coaches pitch for boys and girls ages 4 thru 8 beginning March 14, 2016 thru March 26, 2016. Late registration will be held the week of March 28, 2016 through April 2, 2016. The fee for registration is \$45. Sign-ups are held at the new Towns County Recreation Center. Our hours of operation are Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. till 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. If you have any questions please call the Recreation Department at 706-896-2600. (T/Mar9.FISH)

Towns knocks off Tallulah, fall to Hebron



In a display of sportsmanship, the Towns County Indians and Tallulah Falls gather following Towns win on Tuesday. The Indians fell later in the week to Class AAAA's Pickens County and dropped two to Hebron Christian Academy on Friday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Warm Spring weather means Trout stocking time

Make sure you put a trout fishing trip on your list of things to do this spring, especially since it is the time of year when trout raised in Georgia hatcheries start hitting the water. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service plan to stock more than 80,000 trout during the last full week of March, with more than one million trout scheduled for stocking by the end of this year.

"All trout waters in Georgia are now open to fishing year round, and to sweeten that news, stocking efforts are ready to begin to make your trip even more rewarding," says John Lee Thomson, trout stocking coordinator for the Wildlife Resources Division. "One of the best opportunities for fishing success will be this

spring when stream flows are high and the water is cool."

Some popular stocked streams include Cooper Creek in Union County, Wildcat Creek in Rabun County, Dicks Creek in Lumpkin County and Johns Creek in Floyd County.

The daily limit is eight trout on general regulation trout waters. Anglers are reminded to respect private property rights along streams flowing through private lands and to obtain permission before fishing on private property.

Anglers must possess a current Georgia fishing license and a trout license to fish in designated trout waters and to fish for or possess trout. Anglers must also possess a wildlife management area license or Georgia Outdoor Recreation Pass (GORP) in order to fish on certain WMAs. Find a list

of designated areas at www.georgiawildlife.com/Georgia-Outdoor-Recreational-Pass.

How can you get a license? It's easy! Buy it online, find a list of retail license vendors at www.georgiawildlife.com/licenses-permits-passes or buy it by phone at 1-800-366-2661.

Purchasing a Trout Unlimited license plate supports Georgia's trout conservation and management programs. These efforts impact trout production, stocking and stream restoration throughout north Georgia. Purchase or find out more at your county tag office.

For the list of stocked trout streams, online versions of the Georgia trout stream map, and other trout fishing tips, visit www.georgiawildlife.com/Fishing/Trout or call (770) 535-5498. (NT/Mar23.Z20)gg

Statewide turkey hunting season opens March 26

Hunters are eager for opening day of the statewide turkey hunting season in Georgia. The highly anticipated day is Saturday, March 26 and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division expects that the 2016 season should be a fair one.

"Perspective is important because Georgia is still in the top six states in terms of eastern wild turkey harvest and population, even while we have had some declines in reproduction and the overall turkey population," says Kevin Lowrey, Wildlife Resources Division wild turkey project coordinator. "Hunters heading to the woods need to remember that there is a new requirement this year to have a harvest record and that they will need to report their harvest through Georgia Game Check."

With a generous bag limit of three gobblers per season, hunters have from March 26 through May 15 - one of the most liberal turkey sea-

sons in the nation - to harvest their bird(s). With many pursuing wild turkeys on private land, hunters are reminded to always obtain landowner permission before hunting.

What should hunters expect this spring? The Lower Coastal Plain and Ridge and Valley will have an above average season this year and next year, due to better reproduction levels than other parts of the state. While other regions saw some reproduction improvement in 2015, the lower cycle in 2014 may mean fewer 2-year old gobblers, so hunters likely will be pursuing older birds, which may raise the challenge level.

New this year: all turkey hunters, including those under 16 years of age, landowners, honorary, lifetime, and sportsman license holders, must obtain a free harvest record each season. Before moving a harvested turkey, hunters are required to immediately enter the date and county on the

harvest record, and within 72 hours, must complete the reporting process through Georgia Game Check. More information about this requirement at www.georgiawildlife.com/HarvestRecordGeorgiaGameCheck.

A WMA license is required for any person 16 years or older who does not possess a valid honorary, sportsman or lifetime license when hunting wild turkey on a WMA or public fishing area. In addition, a valid hunting license and a big game license are required. Legal firearms and archery equipment for hunting wild turkey are shotguns (loaded with No. 2 or smaller shot), any muzzleloading firearm, longbow, crossbow or compound bow.

Where can you get a license? Buy it online, find a list of retail license vendors at www.georgiawildlife.com/licenses-permits-passes or buy it by phone at 1-800-366-2661.

NASCAR 2016

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Johnson Outduels Harvick in California

Fontana, CA. - Jimmie Johnson saved his best for last. The fastest lap he ran all day was the last one as he outduelled Kevin Harvick for his second Sprint Cup win of the season.

Kyle Busch had a right front tire blow out on lap 198 of the 200-lap race, causing an overtime, green-white-checked finish. At that point Harvick was the leader and Johnson was running fourth. All the leaders pitted for tires.

Denny Hamlin was the new leader on the restart, followed by Harvick, Johnson, and Joey Logano.

Johnson gave Harvick a push, helping him clear Hamlin, and then tucked in behind him. Harvick was driving the high side of the race track. As the leaders took the white flag, signifying the last lap, Johnson moved down to the low side of the track. The momentum propelled him past Harvick, and that was all she wrote. Harvick was unable to recover before Johnson had taken the checkered flag.

"This is cool," said Johnson. "I knew we had a great car, but it really took off on that last lap. Once I cleared him (Harvick), I knew that was it."

Harvick, who led the most laps (142) was in no mood to talk, but did say, "That was a bad restart. We just didn't have what we needed on that last lap. You want to stay in control of the race, and we lost it there at the end."

After dominating the race I'm sure Harvick wonders how they let it get away.

Hamlin, had a fast car and ran up front for most of the early stages of the race.

"Disappointed, that's all I can say," Hamlin said. "I can tell you there were a lot of mistakes on my part. You can only come back so many times, and we ran out of opportunities today."

Joey Logano, driver of the No. 22 Penske Ford was fourth.

"We had an up and down day," Logano said. "We were able to run up front and lead, but at other times the car just didn't seem to do what I wanted it to. It wasn't our greatest day, but we'll figure it out, and be in position for a win next time."

Ricky Stenhouse Jr was fifth, his highest finish of the season.

Chase Elliott finished sixth and is currently the highest rookie in points.

"We were able to improve the car all day," said Elliott. "First off, my guys have been bringing such fast race cars to the race-track every week since Daytona, and I haven't been doing a very good job of getting the finishes that they deserve. I'm just happy today that we could finally finish one of these things and get a solid top-10 finish. I felt like we made gains throughout the day. The guys did a great job on pit road. Alan (Gustafson) made good adjustments, and I'm proud of the effort and hopefully we can take it and try to get a little better."

Carl Edwards, A. J. Allmendinger, Brad Keselowski, and Jamie McMurray, rounded out the top-10 finishers.

Danica Patrick was involved in an incident during lap 120 and was unable to finish the race. She was scored with a 38th place finish.

Austin Dillon Wins California Xfinity Race

With one-lap remaining in Saturday's Xfinity Series race at Fontana, Kyle Busch blew a tire and lost the lead to Daniel Suarez, who ran out of fuel in turn-3, allowing Austin Dillon to get the win.

Dillon was initially upset at Busch for what he felt was an attempt to wreck him, but he toned down his statements during the post-race interview.

"It's just racing," Dillon said. "I probably would have done the same thing. He made the move to try to hold off, to win the race. Anybody in their right mind would have made the move. It just made the race more exciting."

While Busch and his team fought tire problems throughout the weekend, he may be in big trouble with NASCAR over comments he made on his car radio during the Xfinity Series race.

"Debris all over the race track and they don't throw a yellow. I'm just so pleased with you, NASCAR. Thanks. Y'all are awesome. Fixing races."

While his comment on the track debris might be acceptable, his alluding to NASCAR race fixing is a no-no, and might cause him to be fined. From my interpretation of the rulebook, he could be placed on probation and fined up to \$100,000.

The remaining top-10 finishers were: Kyle Busch, Darrell Wallace Jr., Daniel Suarez, Elliott Sadler, Kevin Harvick, Brendan Gaughan, Kyle Larson, Brandon Jones, and Justin Allgaier.

Top-10 leaders after 5 of 33: 1. Suarez-182, 2. Sadler-173, 3. Allgaier-163, 4. B. Jones-161, 5. T. Dillon-159, 6. Gaughan-154, 7. E. Jones-152, 8. Wallace Jr.-134, 9. Reed-133, 10. Poole-130.

Cup Drivers are Undermining Xfinity Series

Five races into the Xfinity Series and Sprint Cup driver Kyle Busch has won three, while Chase Elliott and Austin Dillon have won the other two.

My question is, should NASCAR allow Sprint Cup regulars to dominate the Xfinity Series?

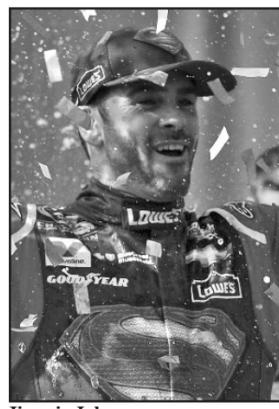
A lot of fans that communicate with me have a problem with Cup drivers like Kyle Busch running a full Xfinity Series. The Cup regulars are too overpowering for most of the regular Xfinity drivers.

Busch has every right to compete in the second-tier series. But with his advantages in manpower and sponsorship money, it would be a major upset if Busch failed to dominate every Xfinity race he enters.

After five races into the 33 race schedule, Busch has led 626 of 713 laps en route to three straight wins.

At Las Vegas, he controlled every lap but one.

Busch has won a record 79 Xfinity races and that figure will likely soar unless something is



Jimmie Johnson

done. NASCAR's argument that Xfinity regulars learn by racing with the likes of Busch is a slap in the face to teams and fans. No matter what drivers say under the spotlight of network TV interviews, the Xfinity gang never actually races with Busch or other drivers who are backed by other Sprint Cup owners. Mostly, they just move aside, and allow them to cruise away.

The tracks and television respond by saying they need Cup regulars like Busch, Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano to attract spectators, television viewers and new sponsors.

NASCAR instituted a Chase format for the Xfinity Series this year in hopes it would generate more excitement. There's just one problem with that idea. No Xfinity regulars have a chance to win and thus earn an automatic Chase berth as long as Busch and other Cup drivers are on the track.

Many longtime Xfinity car owners complained for years over the financial disparity. Nobody listened or seemed to care, so those owners either left the sport or turned to the Truck Series.

Several of the few remaining Xfinity independent teams have only a handful of workers in the race shop and must rely on volunteers to help in the pits during races. How are those teams supposed to compete with the likes of Busch, who is supported by a dozen engineers at Joe Gibbs Racing?

Increasingly, the Xfinity teams features kids who are supported by rich fathers. The veterans have long departed.

There are no easy answers to solve the domination of the big boys, but it's past time for some type of solution. NASCAR needs to come up with a better scenario.

Weekend Racing: NASCAR will hold no races this weekend. It is Easter and all teams have an off week. The Cup and Truck teams return April 2-3 at Martinsville.

Racing Trivia Question: How many Sprint Cup teams does Roger Penske operate?

Last Week's Question: Which Cup team does Ryan Blaney drive for? Answer: He drives the No. 21 Wood Bros. Ford.

You may contact the Racing Reporter by e-mail at: hodges@race500.com. (NT/Mar23.A4)CA