

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Barrett, Lady Indians wreck Union's perfect season

By Shawn Jarrard
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Blairsville - The Towns County Lady Indians soccer kicked into high gear on Monday, March 23, when the girls defeated Union County 1-0.

Their rival Lady Panthers were 6-0 heading into the game, and had scored 43 unanswered points for the season.

But that would come to an end early in the first half, as freshman Brooke Barrett dribbled the ball in, racing around opponents to score what would become the game-winning goal.

"Monday's game was awesome," said Head Coach Tucker Blackmon. "I think it was our most complete game of the year.

We stayed in our system, we kept our defensive shape, and I felt like they legitimately threatened us one time, and that's a testament to how well they communicated. We've been big on not stabbing, and when we get beat, rotating in our zones and stepping and shrinking their zone to operate in. And we pretty much executed that on Monday."

Defensively, the Lady Indians (3-4, 1-4) shut the Panthers down.

"We looked awake and alive," said Coach Blackmon. "It was a fun game to be a part of. I think they out possessed us, and they have a great team, but we definitely frustrated them with our defensive shape and just being very disciplined in our gaps and controlling the gaps and identifying runners when they were trying to send long balls.

"That's what they do, they possess it and then they take a couple fast girls and they just send it through, and we did an excellent job of forcing them into things they didn't want to do, and forcing them into situations where they had to run and the space was limited."

The Lady Indians are seniors Alana Calhoun, Alyssa Pyle, Karlie Albach, Taylor McCarter, Jessie Poole; juniors Taylor Underwood, Ally Settles, Michelle Miller; sophomore Madison Stroud; and freshmen Brooke Barrett, Jordan Hyatt, Alyssa Hunter, Taralee Arrowood, Sara Beth Hobbs, Hannah Whitehead, Jasmine Miranda and Lydia Moss.

Overall, Coach Blackmon was very proud of his Lady Indians, who stuck with the program and stayed focus nearly the entire game.

"One undisciplined play by one player can break down the whole system, and we didn't do that," said Coach Blackmon. "And that's just a testament to how hard they worked and how focused they were. I was super



The Lady Indians celebrate their 1-0 triumph at Union County, where Towns not only scored the first and only goal on the Lady Panthers, but handed them their first loss of the 2015 season. It had been more than two years since Union County had been shutout in a regular season game. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Lady Indians' freshman Brooke Barrett battles with Union County senior Camryn Carter during the first half of Towns County's 1-0 victory in Blairsville, last week. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



The Towns County Lady Indians in action during their 1-0 win at Union County last week. Lady Indians soccer photos by Lowell Nicholson

happy."

The girls' first home game of the year, however, did not go as well. They lost to the Highlands Islanders of North Carolina, 2-1.

"We'd have a burst of good, and then we'd have a burst of really bad," said Coach Blackmon. "And it was like we'd fall back into habits that we know better. And they know better, they're

smart girls, they really are. And we have a lot of great players. But it's just a game - you have games where you come out and the focus is not there, and it's just kind of infectious, and then it falls into everybody."

To Coach Blackmon, the game versus Highlands was an unfocused effort by the players.

"A couple of times we

got the ball in space, and we just kicked it," said Coach Blackmon. "And I can tell you, that is the opposite of what we try to do. You hear me yelling the whole game, find feet, find feet. We work off checking to the ball and passing to feet and sharing the ball - we're a team. And it just looked like a lot of individual play and not a lot of team play. It just happens. It's to

be expected. It's growth, so I'm not down on them or anything like that. There's no need to yell and go crazy, it's just, it is what it is. You learn and get better."

The girls lost 9-3 against Lakeview on Friday, March 27, but Coach Blackmon felt the game had more focus than when the Lady Indians faced off against Highlands. Girls Assistant Coach

Michael Huwe agreed.

"They played well tonight, it's just that the other team - I mean, two or three shots that you just don't see in high school games that went in, great headers and crosses and stuff," said Coach Huwe. "Out of the five goals in the first half, three of them nobody had a chance to stop the way they were playing."

TCMS sweeps doubleheader with Commerce; improve to 8-3

By Shawn Jarrard
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On Saturday, March 28, the Towns County Middle School Indians defeated Commerce in a doubleheader at home that took their record to 8-3 for the season.

The first game featured solid pitching from Trent Bradshaw, who pitched the entire five innings of the game and struck six Tigers out.

Hits were supplied by Bradshaw, Cooper Moss, Hunter Moss and Seth Fullerton, and the innings won the game 1-0.

The second game saw another great round of pitching, as Fullerton struck five tigers out and pitched all five innings of the game.

Many Indians supplied hits, leading to an 8-2 victory of Commerce, and the entire doubleheader took three hours to complete.

"When you play good defense - we might have made one error all day, maybe one or two errors all day, and that's the difference of it," said Coach Taylor. "When you make the plays you're supposed to, it helps speed the game up, and it helps the pitchers, too."

The previous weekend, Towns County played away at Commerce, winning the first game 3-2, but losing the second 6-3.

"Today, we looked a little better," said Indians Head Coach Shea Taylor. "We looked good. The first one was pretty much a pitchers' duel. We hit the ball better in the second game, so I was pleased with that. They did make a couple



The Towns County Middle School baseball team in action last weekend. The Indians swept Commerce in a doubleheader in Hiawassee. TCMS baseball photos by Lowell Nicholson

of mistakes, and that helped us out, too, but we capitalized on them."

Defensively, Coach Taylor was pleased with his Indians and the performances of both pitchers, though admittedly, Coach Taylor would like to see a little more action in the batter's box.

"Offensively, we still need to get our bats in check," said Coach Taylor. "Several kids are still having trouble hitting the curve ball and breaking pitch, but once they figure that out, we'll really be looking good. We still have a few that have to hit the off-speed pitches."

The Indians play their final games of the season this

week at home: Monday, March 30, against Rabun Gap; Tuesday, March 31, against Tallulah Falls; and Wednesday, April 1, against Lakeview, all at 4:30.

"We're looking for double digits," said Coach Taylor of the Indians record. "The first two games of the season we lost, and after that we've only lost one, and that was Commerce that stole one from us. I'm enjoying playing our last few games at home. It helps playing at your own field - that's a good way to go out."

Those looking for a little excitement should certainly attend Wednesday's game, as the Indians take on Lakeview in what will surely be a pitchers' duel.

"Wednesday, we play Lakeview, and Kevin Millwood that used to pitch for the Braves, he's helping coach pitchers, and his son plays on that team," said Coach Taylor. "That should be a pretty good one, I think. I plan on beating them, but Lakeview's not a bad team. That'll be a good team to go out on. We need to come prepared to play Wednesday."

The community should come out to cheer on these Indian youths, and while they're at it, they can enjoy the newly expanded parking area above the field, which at least doubles the amount of parking previously available, as well as provides a nice view of the field.

