

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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

TCMS baseball goes out on high note with 14-1 win; finish at 11-3

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The middle school Indians finished their season with a 14-1 victory against Lakeview at home on Wednesday, April 1.

Their overall season record stands at 11-3, and their dynamite year was capped off with three wins at home, all back to back ending Wednesday.

On Monday, March 30, the Indians defeated Rabun Gap 18-0 in three innings, and on Tuesday, March 31, they defeated Tallulah Falls 15-0.

Trent Bradshaw supplied some excellent pitching against Lakeview on Wednesday, striking out four batters in just over four innings, with Seth Fullerton coming in to strike out three more for the rest of the five-inning game.

"Trent Bradshaw was dominant once again," said Indians' Head Coach Shea Taylor. "I wanted Seth to throw a few batters, so I let Seth come in and relieve him there. But Trent did an excellent job. We made a couple of mistakes fielding-wise, but I can live with a couple. Everything else was pretty clean."

Every single player on the team reached base, and the Indians collected 14 hits.

"We could have beat them early, but I wanted all my kids to play, I wanted them all to get an at-bat," said Coach Taylor.



The Towns County Middle School baseball team wrapped up its 2015 season with a 14-1 rout of Lakeview Academy, in front of the home crowd. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

"That's the thing about it – this is their last middle school game, so I wanted everybody to get one at-bat. And in this game, everybody reaching base is huge."

The team consists of 14 eighth-graders with one returning player for next year, sixth-grader Hayden McClure.

The middle school Indians are: No. 2 Trent Bradshaw, No. 3 Hayden McClure, No. 4 Seth Fullerton, No. 5 Brett Den-

ton, No. 7 Nathan Edwards, No. 9 Devin Burrell, No. 10 Cooper Moss, No. 11 Andrew Griffin, No. 17 Hunter Moss, No. 20 Jake Parker, No. 23 Corbin Nelson, No. 25 Walker Winn, No. 27 Corbin Townsend, No. 31 Kendall Floyd and No. 34 James Norton.

"It's going to be a rebuilding process, but I'm looking forward to it, I really am," said Coach Taylor.

Coach Taylor and his In-

dians will be celebrating the end of the season in true baseball fashion on Friday, April 17.

"Their reward for the fundraiser they did and their hard work, we're taking all the boys down to the Georgia/LSU game – it's a Friday night game," said Coach Taylor. "We're taking all the kids out to dinner at The Varsity. We're buying their food, and got their tickets – that's going to be our celebration gig."

"That's for their hard work, the season and the fundraiser. It's going to be good, and it's going to be the first time we've actually taken them to a night game, Friday night, and LSU is ranked No. 2 in the nation, so I think that's a good reward for them."

Just as the game ended, the middle school team surprised Coach Taylor by dumping a cooler of ice water on him – but he didn't mind too much.

"I'm just very proud of all the kids, and a lot of them have made huge improvements," said Coach Taylor. "I think it's going to be a great group moving up to JV next year. We've got great kids, great coaches, I believe, and great parents that have supported the baseball program. I'm very pleased with everybody. It was a great year, needless to say. We had a great season."

Towns County shows improvement in loss to Athens Christian

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Indians played some good baseball on Friday, April 3, despite a loss to Athens Christian School.

It was a great day for baseball, with a nice breeze to complement the good feelings of the crowd on Good Friday, an occasion honored by an invocation from Indian Cason Shook.

At the top of the first inning, the varsity team sent the top of the Golden Eagle order back to the bench, three up and three down.

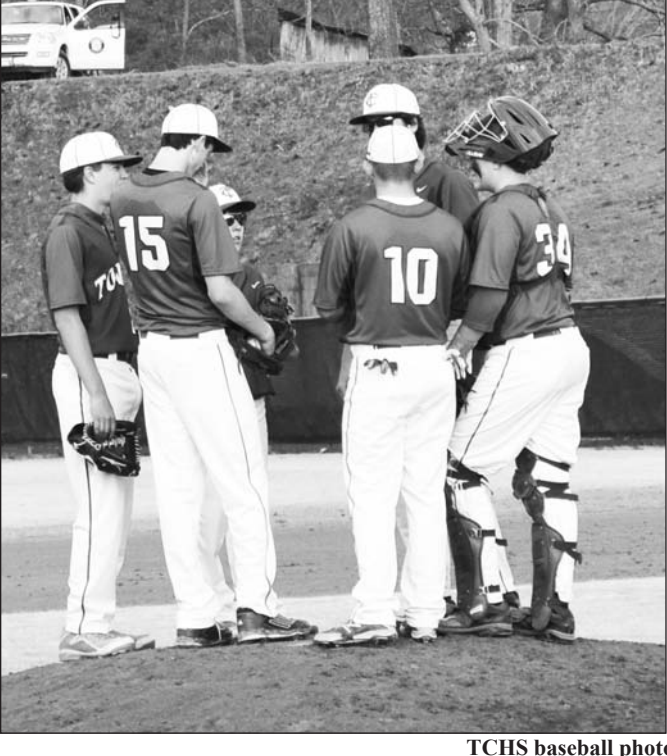
Zachary Davenport beautifully fielded a grounder at second base, throwing his man out at first to provide the first out in the game.

Dalton Key took the second out three pitches later as the Athens Christian batter popped the ball to Key's position at shortstop.

Rounding out the great defensive play of the first inning, pitcher Will De Vries struck out the third man at bat, ending the inning having thrown only 11 pitches.

Much of the game went just as quickly thanks to Indian pitching and fielding, and Athens Christian seemed almost unlucky at the bat a couple of times.

Towns County struck first offensively, as De Vries singled in the bottom of the



TCHS baseball photos by Lowell Nicholson

first inning. Athens Christian hit the scoreboard in the second inning with an RBI single from the Golden Eagle's first baseman.

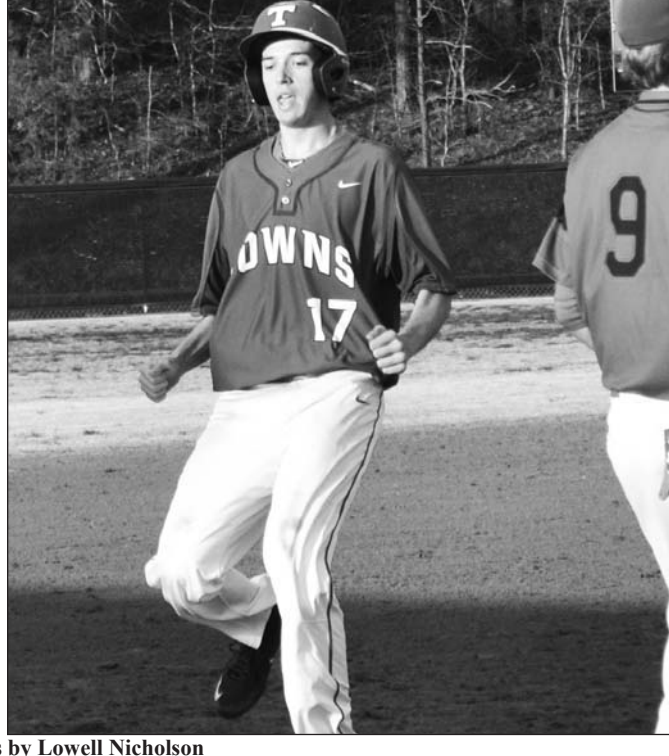
Centerfielder Major Moss had another Indian hit in the bottom of the second, but the Eagles were able to hit a pair of back-to-back RBI doubles in the third, followed by a runner advancing home on a sacrifice play.

Indian third baseman Cruz Shook singled in the fourth

inning, followed by a huge standup double hit by Key deep left, straight to the warning track.

De Vries finished his pitching in the sixth inning with nine pitches, backed up by two great catches by centerfielder Moss and leftfielder Zach Sewell, rounded out by a long throw from shortstop Key to first base for the final out of the inning.

The Indians scored in the seventh inning when Shook



smashed a leadoff double on the first pitch, hard to center. Sewell hit a perfectly placed single to right field, allowing Shook to reach third base.

In a particularly neat piece of base running, Shook took home on a wild pitch, beating out the pitcher at home plate for the score.

"We gave up five runs in that last inning, and it made it look worse than it really was," said Indian Head Coach Shannon Floyd. "We're in the teeth

of our schedule this year. We played George Walton, Mount Vernon, Athens Christian – we've got Providence Christian over spring break, and those are some of the top teams in the state.

"And some of the scores don't look right, but the kids are playing better than the score indicates, and tonight was just proof of it," continued Coach Floyd. "It was a 5-0 game, and it jumped into a 10, ends up 10-1. We just couldn't get anybody

out there in that last inning. I was proud of how they played up to that point."

That game against Athens Christian Friday night saw five sophomores and two freshmen starters – they're young, but they're also playing well and getting the experience they're going to need to become even better.

"There are no pushovers in this region, and we don't want to be that, either," said Coach Floyd. "We made a goal at the beginning of the season not to be run-ruled, and it's only happened to us twice this year, and both times in the sixth inning, not the fifth inning. We're there, we've just got to close it out and hit the ball better. And that's what our meeting was after the game, we talked about hitting."

Coach Floyd has the ut-

most confidence in his Indians, and enjoys watching his team develop confidence both on and off the field.

"I love these boys," said Coach Floyd. "It's more than baseball – it's about life. Some of these kids may go on from here, and we want them to go on and play baseball. I know what it did in my life, and that's the goal. But more importantly, when adversity comes, what are we going to do in life? Because it's going to hit you square in the face, and if they can use their experiences here to get better – that's where we're at."

Floyd: '(Towns is) going to continue to get better varsity-wise

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County JV baseball team has had a good year so far.

Their record stands right at .500 on the season, and the boys have been getting a lot of experience in practice and in games.

The JV Indians roster includes Dylan Roberts, Andy Chambers, Trey Chastain, Braden McFalls, Brody Graper, Isaiah Shook, Dalton Key, Zach Davenport, Tristin Dyer, Cole Ledford, Curtis Swanson, Scott Cupit, Colten Shook and Cason Shook.

"Those kids have worked hard," said Head Coach Shannon Floyd. "A lot of our kids, we've got 23 players who came out this year, and many of those, I know they want to play, but they're just not at that level, a varsity level yet."

"They have worked real hard with JV, and JV has been real competitive, I think, in every game but one this year."

"They split with Union, and those kids are getting at-bats in, having fun, and

they're getting better," Coach Floyd continued. "Whether it's next year or the year after, they're going to have their time in varsity and get to wear the big uniforms."

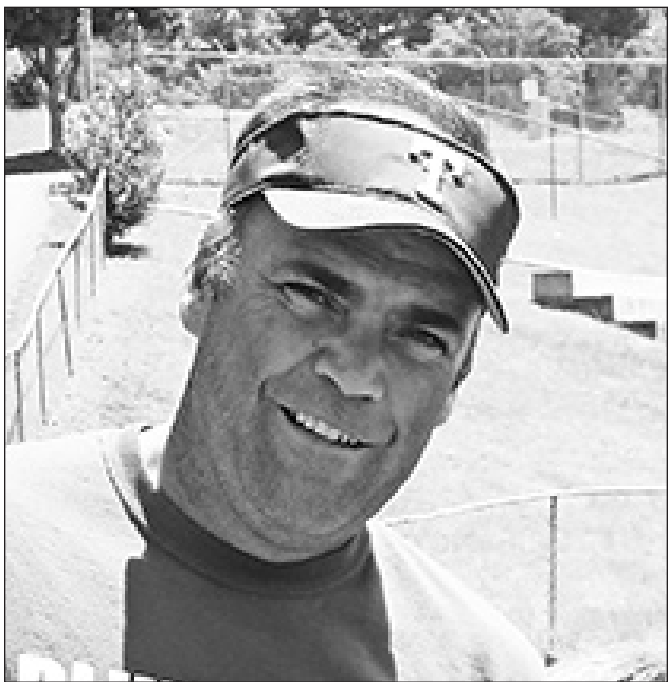
Recently, the JV Indians played two games at Tallulah Falls.

"We've played pretty well," said Coach Josh Rider. "We split last Saturday at Tallulah Falls. We played Riverside Military and beat them 13-7. And then, we lost to Tallulah 11-1. We didn't play very well the second game."

"We had a delay between the ballgames, so we played first, then the other two teams played second, and then we played again third. I think that break, we just kind of lost focus a little bit and didn't really bring our A-game the second game."

Overall, the strongest feature of the JV team has been its pitching, which features four Indians who have had really great starts this year.

"Dalton Key has thrown a lot of innings for us, Brody Graper, Isaiah Shook and Curtis Swanson," said Coach Rider. "Those have been the four that have pitched the majority of our innings, been



Towns County Baseball Junior Varsity Coach Shannon Floyd

the workhorses for the JV. And we've been sketchy with our defense a little bit, and a little bit sketchy with our hitting, but I would say the pitching has been the most solid part of the game."

Part of the teams' successes has come from the delicate balancing act between who plays varsity and who plays JV.

"We've had kind of a different mixture of guys that

which players will be where, which can vary from game to game.

"Coach Floyd's doing a great job balancing varsity and JV, and getting everybody as much experience as he can," said Coach Rider. "I think he's done a fantastic job. It's always difficult with numbers here at Towns County to get enough kids to have two full teams to keep it completely separate."

So, he's done a great job of balancing those swing players and figuring out who's going to go where today based on who's pitching. "A lot of times, it matters who's playing the varsity," Coach Rider continued. "For example, if our shortstop's pitching, then we need an extra middle infielder to go with the varsity, so we may not have that kid that we normally have on the JV."

The JV team has progressed well throughout the season, developing a higher aptitude for the game, despite many cancellations.

"I feel like we've had limited time on the field due to rain and snow and all that kind of stuff, so what time we've had has been very useful, and I feel like the

guys have gotten better," said Coach Rider. "We have solid practices. I think the kids are learning a lot of those fundamental skills that they didn't necessarily have when they got here, so there's a lot of teaching that's having to go on."

Towns County Middle School baseball just wrapped its season, and the team consists of 13 eighth-graders that will be moving up next year, which bodes well for the future of baseball at TCHS.

"I think with this freshman class and eighth-grade class and sophomore class that we have that's getting a lot of experience now, we're going to continue to get better varsity-wise," said Coach Rider. "We're going to be young again next year."

"We don't have a lot of seniors. We do have four or five that we're going to lose this year that will be tough to replace, but there's a big group of kids coming up, so that speaks well to our future, hoping that a lot of those younger kids, sixth and seventh-graders, come out again next year and we'll have another big class in the middle school."

Coach Floyd must decide before each game