

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Lady Indians soccer builds 2-0 lead over Providence but fall 6-2

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Lady Indians and Indians soccer teams played against Providence Christian Academy at home on Thursday, April 2.

The first half of the girls game kicked off nicely, as freshman Brooke Barrett scored the first goal of the game less than 2 minutes from the start, dribbling the ball in from about halfway down the field.

Barrett struck again three minutes later to bring the score 2-0 against Providence.

Halfway through the first half, the Lady Storm had evened up the score, and Barrett was taken down in a group of girls and got up limping. She left the game shortly after that to ice her ankle and came back in in the second half, but only for a brief time.

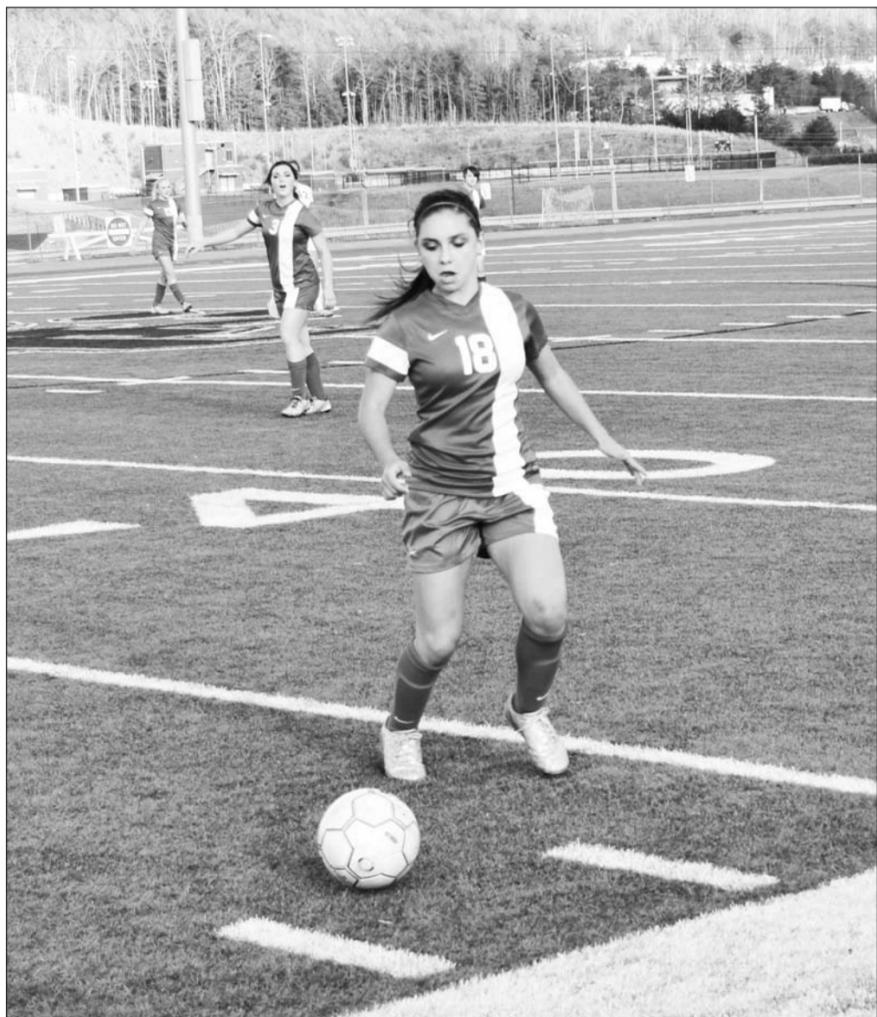
The Lady Indians ended up losing 6-2, but not before some remarkable defense from players Taylor Underwood, Alyssa Pyle, Alyssa Hunter, Madison Stroud and Lydia Moss.

"We've got to tighten up our little mistakes," said Head Coach Tucker Blackmon. "You know, you play well 90 percent of the time, you make a couple of mistakes, and it burns you. You don't get credit for that 90 percent of the time you play well. We're just learning the system. The same with the guys. I'm proud of the guys and the girls today, but we're just learning the system."

Just as the boys game was getting underway, the rain began. Heading into the halftime, the Indians were down 2-0 to the Storm, but the rain proved to



Towns County Lady Indians Soccer photos by Lowell Nicholson



be too much, and the game was called because of the weather.

The Indians played extremely well, gelling smoothly on the field as a cohesive unit that oftentimes frustrated Providence Christian players and held them to 2 points.

"In the first half of the boys game, they connected like 12 passes," said Coach Blackmon. "But nobody was running away. Everybody's hips were open. The ball was moving in triangles, here to here to here. That's how it looked, and that's because we're not running away. That was us doing what was right. And so, more instances of that are going to lead to better play. That's a simple thing."

This is Coach Blackmon's first year coaching at Towns County, and part of the soccer system he is implementing teaches players to battle against their natural instincts.

"Offensively, when we have the ball, it's everybody's inclination just to take off running," said Coach Blackmon. "Somebody's dribbling the ball up field. If you were out there, you'd probably think, I should just run towards the goal - that's not what you should do, because when you run towards the goal, you turn your body away from the ball."

"And even if they play that ball, how are you going to settle it? You're thinking, well, I'll send it through. That doesn't work all the time. Your through balls should be diagonal, and not just kickball over the top. What

you're supposed to do is, when somebody's dribbling, you open your hips to them and show to the ball. And that's what I keep yelling: Show to the ball, show to ball! Don't run away!"

And even though both teams lost, they lost due to mistakes - and weather - but not overall performance.

"These kids, they are awesome," said Coach Blackmon. "They are trying, and there's progress. To me, I've seen progress. It took me four years to build the system at Bradley, and we went 8-4-3, and our worst loss was 2-1. That was us getting hammered. And

we were playing teams that are going to state 6A. This was a team I took over that were 1-15 the year before.

"And it was because I had had those seniors all four years, I had those juniors all three years, so I was able to implement that this is what we do - and it became natural, they just did it. They didn't think about it, so our mistakes were fewer. We made fewer mistakes, fewer mental errors. And they're getting there, so I don't knock them, I don't have any negative thing to say at all. I was proud of them. We'll get there."



Forest OHV trails reopen for 2015



OHV enthusiasts start on a designated trail on the Chattahoochee Oconee National Forests

As a sure sign of spring, all off highway vehicle (OHV) trails across the national forest have reopened, many with new improvements. Within the national forest, OHV trails are specifically designated and signed to increase public safety and minimize potential forest damage.

"We want our OHV trails to be sustainable ride after ride, year after year," said Forest Supervisor Betty Jewett. "Improvements such as trail reroutes and size limiting gates help make that possible."

To protect trails and riders, OHV areas are subject to closure after prolonged or heavy rainfall when usage would result in forest damage. Before every ride, OHV users are encouraged to 'call before you haul' and check the recreation conditions report online at go.usa.gov/3jlxkQ.

"By treading lightly you can ride hard and still keep the trail beautiful, healthy, and open for future generations," added Jewett.

For forest information, maps, and alerts visit: OHV maps: go.usa.gov/3gp3R; Text message: text 'follow chattahoochee' to 40404; Smart phone/tablet app: go.usa.gov/Jwgh.

OHV trail riding areas and winter work included Beasley Knob OHV Trails, routine maintenance and approximately 4.5 miles of trail reroutes and Davenport Mountain OHV Trails.

The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests provide the finest outdoor recreation opportunities and natural resources in Georgia. Featuring nearly 867,000 acres across 26 counties, thousands of miles of clear-running streams and rivers, approximately 850 miles of recreation trails, and dozens of campgrounds, picnic areas, and other recreation activity opportunities, these lands are rich in natural scenery, history and culture. The mission of the USDA Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests is part of the Southern Region, with the Forest Supervisor's office in Gainesville, Georgia, managing four District units in Blairsville (Blue Ridge District), Lakemont (Chattooga River District), Chatsworth (Conasauga District), and Eatonton (Oconee District).

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She finished eighth in that race, but could only manage a 27th-place final point standing. In 2014, she slipped to 28th in points.

At the beginning of this season, Daniel Knost became her new crew chief.

"I think Daniel and I have a very good working relationship, and I don't want that to sound cold," Danica continued. "We get along great and we have a lot of fun. I think that the balance in the front of the hauler is with all the engineers, I think it's really good, and I think we have a lot of fun, but we also do good work."

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Is Danica really improving

During each weekly press conference, Danica Patrick talks about how improved her No. 10 Stewart-Haas racing team is. If you compare her seventh-place Martinsville finish against the previous 2015 finishes of 25th, 16th, 27th, 26th, 19th, there was a great improvement, but only for that one race.

"I'm proud of everyone for not giving up and for keeping their head in the game, and the pit crew did a good job," said Danica. "They were frustrated last weekend after making a mistake on the last stop, and it's a team effort, you know. I'm going to make mistakes at the very end, too."

Patrick is the most successful woman in the history of American open-wheel racing. Her win in the 2008 Indy Japan 300 is the only women's victory in an IndyCar Series race, and her third place in the 2009 Indianapolis 500, the highest finish there ever by a woman.

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"I think it shows because every weekend when we arrive, we're in the ballpark. We're not starting off and rolling off and being 36th on the board and trying

to figure it out. We roll off and generally our problem is not where we start but where we go. We've got to make it better, and that also is in the same thread of the race. We've got to make it better."

While Patrick has shown flashes of what it takes to make it in NASCAR, she has never been able to challenge for the lead very many times. In 2014 she led 15 total laps. After six races into the 2015 season, she has yet to lead a single lap.

The seventh-place finish at Martinsville looked good, but during most races, her No. 10 Chevrolet is in the middle or near the end of the pack. It appears she tries to ride and stay out of trouble, hoping the other guys will wreck or fade. That type driving isn't going to win many races.

I would love to see Danica move to the front and begin to mix it up with some of the leaders. Wouldn't it be something, if this little 100-pound female could put a whipping on some of the regular leaders.

While most drivers look for wins, Danica and her team hope to finish in the top-20 at Texas, where she has respective finishes of 27th, and 28th.

"The car has to be good or I can't go fast," she continued. "When the car is right you can go fast, but if the driver is making mistakes and not doing a good job and crashing or getting off line, that also won't help you have a good result. And then overall, we can't do well, I can't do well if the team doesn't provide the people and the equipment that I need to perform. And so a couple of years ago if you would have asked how everything was going on within the team, there probably wouldn't be a lot of positive things to say. But that's an example of an organization digging deep and finding ways, and by all means the last couple of years here, we've been much stronger, and it makes it much more fun out there."

Meanwhile Kyle Larson has been cleared to race

NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter



Danica Patrick, driver of the No. 10 Stewart-Haas Chevrolet

after his fainting spell at Martinsville and will return to the track this weekend at Texas Motor Speedway. Chip Ganassi Racing made the announcement Thursday, three days after Larson was released from a Charlotte hospital where he underwent extensive testing.

"I feel great right now, and I felt perfectly fine shortly after I fainted the other day," Larson said in a NASCAR teleconference Tuesday. "But yeah, I just had to get a lot of tests run on me to make sure nothing serious was wrong with me, and all the tests came back negative."

NASCAR CHANGES SUPERSPEEDWAY QUALIFYING

A friend of mine made the remark last week that NASCAR was just like the weather in Chicago, constantly changing.

That's right. If you don't like what NASCAR is doing right now, give them a couple days and they will announce some type of change.

Last week, they unveiled modifications to the qualifying formats that will take effect at Talladega for the Xfinity Series and Sprint Cup Series. Qualifying for May's Talladega races, as well as the July events at Daytona, will consist of the following:

Two rounds of qualifying, with the top-12 posted lap speeds advancing to the second round.

Race vehicles taking one, timed lap in each round of qualifying.

Each race vehicle will be released in a predetermined timed interval as determined by NASCAR, with

the sanctioning body reserving the right to have more than one vehicle engaging in qualifying runs at the same time.

Qualifying order for the first round will be determined by a random draw; final round qualifying order is determined by slowest to fastest speeds from the first round.

A 10-minute break will occur between the first qualifying round and the final round.

Upon completion of the first qualifying round, the field will be set with positions 13 and beyond determined from first round qualifying speed.

The 12 fastest vehicles from the first round will have their speeds reset for the final round with starting positions 1-12 determined by the fastest laps in the final round.

Vehicles advancing to the final round will be allowed to adjust tape and utilize a cool-down unit during the 10-minute break only.

The Truck Series will utilize the format for the first time when the series returns to Talladega with the Sprint Cup Series in October. Qualifying procedures for the 2016 Daytona 500 will be announced at a later date.

This is the fourth time adjustments have been made in the Superspeedway qualifying. Will it be a month or two months before another one is announced.

Weekend Racing: The Cup and Xfinity teams are at the 1.5-mile Texas Motor Speedway for two night races. The Trucks do not race again until May 8.

Fri., Apr 10; Xfinity race 6 of 32; Starting time: 8:30 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sat., Apr 11; Sprint Cup race 7 of 36; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: Fox.

Racing Trivia Question: How many children does Jeff Gordon have?

Last Week's Question: Where is Cup driver Paul Menard's hometown? **Answer:** It is Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: www.hodges@race500.com.