

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Towns County takes first at Sectionals; advance to State on May 18

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Indians are Sectional Champs and heading to State after placing first in the Class A Public School State Sectional golf tournament held on Monday, May 4, at Brasstown Valley Resort.

"The boys wanted to hold their home course, so they took pride in that, and they practiced very hard – they always do – but they knew strategically, when you're on your home course, how to play the course," said Indians Head Coach Brett Keller. "And that came in handy for the kids when it came to scoring."

Towns County hosted nine teams and one individual that advanced from Area tournaments from around the state.

The Top 4 teams from Sectionals have advanced to the State tournament, which for the boys will be held on Monday, May 18, in Commerce.

This occasion marks the first time in school history that the boys golf team has advanced to state-level competition.

The Indians team is composed of junior Sterling Hedden, sophomore Nick McConnell, sophomore Johnathan Watson, freshman Chase Williams and freshman Ben



Edwards.

Teams joining Towns County from this tournament are Lincoln County, Schley County and Lanier County.

"I want to thank Brasstown Valley Resort and the golf course management, maintenance, the groundskeepers for getting everything ready for us," said Coach Keller. "For Steve Phelps, for all the ladies that are working the Pro Shop, all the Rangers and everything that helped us get kids around

and helped us with the course. It was a great experience for the kids.

"But I want to thank them for allowing us to practice out there, and putting on this event for the state of Georgia. We had teams come up as far as Charlton County, which is 40 miles from Jacksonville, Fla. We had a team from Lanier, which is a long haul. They came a long way to hit a golf ball, and Brasstown just welcomed them in, and it was a great, beautiful

day, and great for all the kids."

The Lady Indians previously won first place in Area competition, guaranteeing them a spot in the state tournament without the need to compete in a sectional competition.

The girls will compete in the state tournament at Victoria Bryant State Park in Royston, at the Highland Walk Golf Course, on the morning of Monday, May 18.

"It's a tough walking course for anybody," said Coach

Keller. "It's more mountainous than here. Even though we're in the Appalachians, the course is set up very hilly and tough walking, and it's going to be mid-80s to maybe 90 degrees, and they're going to feel it, all the kids.

"Walking this course, you better be in shape to get around. I know that sounds funny, but lugging a bag around and walking when it's really hot, it can affect your swing by the end of the round if you're not in shape.

You can get tired, so you better be ready for that mentally."

And mentally, everyone seems ready to go, boys and girls, for the state tournament.

"Each kid is different, but they're getting ready in their own way," said Coach Keller. "We're still practicing and making sure that we're going over there knowing the course, and club-selecting the right club on each shot, making sure we're taking our notes and getting ready for that."

TCRD spring sports hit midseason

By Shawn Jarrard
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Towns County Spring Recreational Sports are in full swing.

"We're in the middle of baseball and softball season," said Alan Rogers, assistant director of the Towns County Rec Department. "We've got two 10 and under boys teams, two 12 and under boys teams, one 14 and under boys team. We've got one 10 and under girls softball team, we've got four tee ball teams, and we've got three farm league teams. We've also got soccer that uses the fields up there."

Fields are currently under construction at the year-and-a-half old Towns County Recreation and Conference Center, according to Rec Director Wes Hooper, but for now, these boys and girls are playing where they have for years – on the fields at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

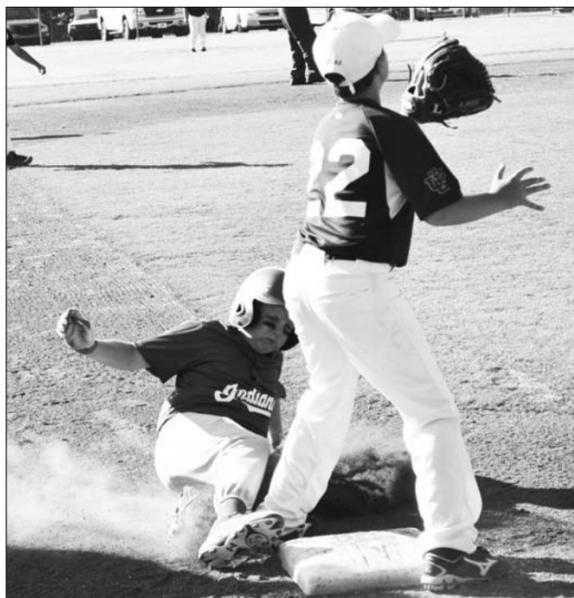
All of the coaches for rec sports in Towns County are volunteers, many of them parents, and teams in the rec ball circuit include Union, Fannin, and White counties, as well as Hayesville and Copper Basin.

"All our coaches are all volunteer, every one of them," said Rogers. "And without them, we don't have a program. They do so much for us, and without our coaches, we'd be dead in the water."

Kids involved in rec ball started practicing about mid-March, and the end of regular season play will be May 26. Then, the teams play All Star games toward mid-June, and depending how those district-level games go, there's a chance Towns County could go to a few state tournaments around the 4th of July holiday.

And community involvement is better than ever.

"We're up this year from last year," said Rogers. "Number wise, we had more kids



this year than we had last year. The teams still were the same, but like in 10U, we were three kids away from having a third team."

Other teams ran just shy of the numbers necessary to create an extra team, and Rogers thinks the numbers may be up due to past performance, as Towns County has done well in rec ball the past few years.

Rogers, a native of Towns County, has been with the rec department for 10 years. He played rec ball when he was a kid, under Hooper, and said that his years playing rec ball were some of his best memories ever.

"It teaches work ethic, activity outside of electronics," said Rogers. "I think it's great for social avenues for kids, and I think it's great for preparing them for the workforce later on. Most jobs you work at, you have to work as a team and you accomplish goals. It's the same thing with sports – you work with your teammates to try to achieve a goal, and there are a lot of things that I use in my everyday life that I learned from playing sports."

"Work ethic, working together, reaching goals, all that stuff is valuable lessons that can be taught to kids at a young age that will help them down the road through life. Respect, discipline, all those things work together with sports, and I think that's something that every kid needs in their life."

Those interested in helping children further their lives through sports should check out the fairgrounds this week and into next, as Towns County will be playing many ball games in the days ahead.

Red Towns will be facing Blue Towns in 10U and 12U face-offs, pitting Indians against Indians in a hometown showdown throw-down on Friday, May 15, one game at 5:30 p.m., another at 7 p.m.

Other home games this week will feature Towns versus Union on Thursday, May 14, at 5:30 p.m., and another Towns/Union matchup at 7 the same night.

Towns' 10U youths travel to Union County on Monday, May 18, playing one game at 5:30, the next at 7, in Meeks Park.

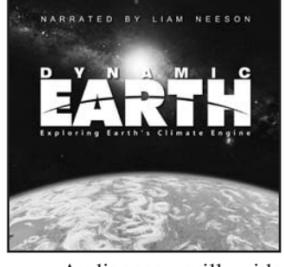
Rollins Planetarium presents Dynamic Earth show

Young Harris College's O. Wayne Rollins Planetarium will present the award-winning show Dynamic Earth on the following Friday evenings at 8:30 p.m.: May 22, May 29, June 19, July 24 and July 31. Planetarium admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for students and free with YHC ID.

Narrated by Liam

Neeson, Dynamic Earth explores the inner workings of the global climate, Earth's great life support system.

With amazing visualizations based on satellite monitoring data and advanced super-computer simulations, this state-of-the-art production follows a trail of energy that flows from the Sun into the interlocking systems that shape our climate: the atmosphere, oceans and biosphere.



Audiences will ride along on swirling ocean and wind currents, dive into the heart of a monster hurricane, come face-to-face with sharks and gigantic whales, and fly into fiery volcanoes!

O. Wayne Rollins Planetarium features a state-of-the-art GOTO Chronos Space Simulator star projector with a full-dome digital projection system, the Sky-Skan Definiti, in a 40-foot dome theater with 5.1 surround

sound. With comfortable seating for 104, Rollins Planetarium offers public shows and educational opportunities for school groups throughout the year. Rollins Planetarium is located in the Maxwell Center on the YHC campus.

If skies are clear, the YHC Observatory is open immediately after planetarium shows. The observatory features a Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope and is located around 1.5 miles from campus at Brasstown Valley Resort. Maps are available at the planetarium. Observing sessions last up to one hour and include a guided tour of the constellations.

For more information about planetarium and observatory events, call (706) 379-5195 or visit yhc.edu/planetarium.

NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Johnson wins at Kansas

Jimmie Johnson and his team used confidence and luck to win the rain-delayed Kansas Sprint Cup race, his third victory of the season.

"It just dawned on me: We've won two races, we're locked in the Chase, points don't matter. We're going for the win," Johnson said. "It was just sort of a gut feeling, a split-second thing."

Johnson, didn't appear to have the fastest car, but managed to hold off Kevin Harvick over the final six laps to win by half-a-second.

Harvick appeared to be headed toward his third victory of the season as the laps wound down after he took the lead on a restart lap with 54 laps remaining in the 267-lap race. He had a lead of over one second with 14 laps to go and nobody appeared fast enough to run him down.

But then, the race's last caution came out with 13 laps to go, after Ricky Stenhouse hit the outside wall.

Harvick pitted for two tires and a splash of fuel, while Johnson, Earnhardt, Kurt Busch and Jeff Gordon remained on the track.

On the restart, Harvick was lined up in the sixth spot. Within two laps, he had moved up to third, and from that point on, it was a three-car battle between Johnson, Earnhardt and Harvick.

"A few more laps I think the No. 4 (Harvick) would have had me," continued Johnson. "He was awfully strong. Obviously being on right side tires would have been an advantage for him. We had just enough time to get to victory lane."

Harvick said he wasn't upset with the decision to pit late in the race.

"I've been on the other side of this deal where the cars aren't running good and you don't have a chance to win," he said. "We won a championship on pit calls and tires and everything fell our way. We've had a lot of things go our way and we've had a lot of things work."

The remaining top-10 finishers: 3. Dale Earnhardt, 4. Jeff Gordon, 5. Joey Logano, 6. Matt Kenseth, 7. Brad Keselowski, 8. Kurt Busch, 9. Martin

VFW Golf League news

The Hiwassee VFW Post golf league plays each Thursday at Chatuge Shores golf course. Last week's outing was won by Danny Barrett, Glen Greenwald and Myron Grizzio. Not only did they shoot 11 strokes under par, but they had a "Double Eagle" on the fourth hole and an "Eagle" on the 18th hole.

On another note, Bill Kiser and Glen Greenwald won the Red Workman Memorial golf tournament, also at Chatuge Shores with a net score of 70. Congratulations to all.

Truex, 10. Ryan Newman.

The biggest loser was Martin Truex Jr. He was clearly the fastest on the track for most of the race, leading 95 laps.

His team felt they needed to bring him in for fuel during the final caution. On the restart, it became obvious they had made the wrong call, because he finished ninth.

"We should have either stayed out or took new tires," Truex said. "We probably did the worst thing you could have done there with just staying out and getting gas only because we ended up being the last guy with no tires. Everybody else behind us had two and they ate us up on the restart."

The race which started Saturday at 7:46 pm ET, had a two hour and fifteen minute rain delay and did not end until 12:20 am ET on Sunday morning.

Chase Grid Outlook after 11 of 26: 1. Johnson-389 (3 wins)-2. Harvick-437 (2), 3. Logano-375 (1), 4. Earnhardt-360 (1), 5. Keselowski-342 (1), 6. Kenseth-331 (1), 7. Hamlin-284 (1), 8. Truex-391, 9. McMurray-328, 10. Gordon-317, 11. Kahne-313, 12. Almirola-312, 13. Menard-306, 14. Newman-306, 15. Bowyer-272, 16. Patrick-270.

CRAFTON TAKES KANSAS TRUCK RACE

Matt Crafton won Friday night's Kansas Truck race after the two leaders, Erik Jones and Daniel Suarez ran out of fuel four laps from the finish of the 167-lap race.

Crafton had stopped on lap 137 for a splash of fuel and inherited the lead after Jones and Suarez came up short.

Sprint Cup driver Ryan Newman was third, followed by Johnny Sauter, Timothy Peters, Cameron Hayley, Daniel Suarez, Justin Boston, Scott Lagasse, Mason Mingus, and Daniel Hemric.

Top-10 leaders after 4 of 23: 1. Crafton-175, 2. Reddick-158, 3. E. Jones-157, 4. Sauter-153, 5. Hayley-123, 6. Townley-122, 7. Peters-121, 8. Boston-114, 9. Black-112, 10. Gallagher-111.

GIBBS RACING GOING WITH YOUTH

Joe Gibbs Racing recruited Carl Edwards away from Roush-Fenway Racing prior to the start of the 2015 season in an effort to bolster their overall performance. So far Edwards has not won a race, and has not lived up to expectations.

But there is definitely hope for JGR, and it comes in the form of youth.

They have two promising up and coming drivers: Erik Jones and Daniel Suarez. The 18-year-old Jones is a full-time driver in the Truck Series, who has been tabbed to drive three races in the No. 18 Toyota, while Kyle Busch remains out with injuries.

Jones continued to add to his racing qualifications by winning the pole for last



Jimmie Johnson applies a win sticker to his car after winning the Kansas Cup race. Furnished by NASCAR

week's Kansas truck race. He not only won the pole, but set a new track record.

During the race he led 151 laps of the 167-lap race, but ran out of fuel with four laps remaining, after his team miscalculated his truck's fuel mileage.

In addition to the Truck Series, he has made eight starts in the Xfinity Series, with one win, five top-5s, and one pole.

"I'm pretty excited and grateful for the opportunity to drive the No. 18 M&M's Toyota in the Sprint Cup Series," said Jones. "We are going to manage our expectations and if we can go out and get a top-15 run and gain some experience, that would be a great day for us."

If he can keep his momentum, it will mean added insurance for JGR's future racing program.

Meanwhile their other young driver, 22-year-old Daniel Suarez, from Monterey, Mexico currently competes in the NASCAR Xfinity Series full-time, while driving part-time in the Truck Series for Kyle Busch Motorsports. Previously he drove in the NASCAR Toyota Series in Mexico, and the K&N Pro Series East as a member of the Drive for Diversity program.

He is currently ninth in Xfinity points, with one top-5 and three top-10s.

Weekend Racing: The Sprint Cup and Trucks will be at the 1.5-mile Charlotte Motor Speedway, while the Xfinity Series travels to the seven-eighths-mile Newton, Iowa track. It will be regular points racing for the Xfinity and Trucks, while the two Cup races are non-points.

Fri., May 15; Sprint Showdown, a non-points Sprint Cup race; Starting time: 7 pm ET; TV: Foxsports1.

Fri., May 15; Truck Series race 5 of 23; Starting time: 8:30 pm ET; TV: Foxsports1.

Sat., May 16; Sprint All-Star non-points race; Starting time: 7 pm ET; TV: Foxsports1.

Sun., May 17; Xfinity Series race 10 of 33; Starting time: 2 pm ET; TV: Foxsports1.

Racing Trivia Question: How did the Darlington race, "Rebel 300", acquire its name?

Last Week's Question: Where is Martin Truex Jr.'s hometown? **Answer:** It is Mayetta, New Jersey.

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