

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Hiawassee's Turner rides coast-to-coast on bicycle

By Joe Collins  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Towns County's own Pat Turner recently completed what many biking enthusiasts believe would be a trip of a lifetime. He pedaled his way from San Diego, Calif., to St. Augustine, Fla. finishing the 3,000-mile journey in less than two months, beginning on March 8, and completing his trip on April 29. He had planned to do this after his retirement and he didn't let any moss grow on his bike seat before he began as he retired in February of this year.

The 64-year-old Turner started bicycling in 1991 and is a veteran of rides of 400 miles or more, but was always left wanting more when the trips ended.

"I had participated in the Ride Across Georgia and a few week long rides and at the end of those rides I wanted to keep going. That is one of the reasons I attempted this long distance ride. I knew at the end of the day, that for at least two months, I would be riding on and that appealed to me," said Turner. "I just didn't have the time until I retired in February."

There were 24 brave souls that started the ride in California and the same number ended the ride on the beach of St. Augustine. The average age of the group was 60 years old with the oldest being 71 and the youngest at the ripe old age of 48. It was a grueling trip that had it's many ups and downs as they traveled from state to state along the Southern Tier Route that comes very close to the Mexican border.

"It was cold when we started and we had to dress in



Hiawassee's Pat Turner road his bicycle from California to Florida in less than two months.

layers to keep warm. The first morning we faced temperatures in the mid thirties with a steady wind and that was cold on a bike. It seems each state had it's own assault as we faced cold, wind, heat, sand and of course traffic. The winds of West Texas were probably the worse because of all the sand you had to endure. It would blow in your face and down your shirt and it hurt. I was glad to leave that part of the trip in the rear although it took 19 days to cross the state," stated Turner.

"We camped near the border one night and we all ventured into Mexico for dinner. We traveled along the Mexican border while in New Mexico, Arizona and Southern California and we saw the fence and of course the border

agents. They would drag these huge tires along the fence in the evenings so they could see the tracks of people who were coming into the country. It was just one of the many interesting and unusual things we saw along the way," described Turner.

The group averaged about 70 miles a day and had 6 days of rest during the entire trip. This was a predetermined route and there was a support team to help with setting up camp, bicycle repairs and preparing meals.

"We contracted our trip through Bubba's Pampered Peddlers and they really took care of us. They set up camp every night and prepared all our food, washed all our clothes and even provided a massage therapist at each stop. It makes

it a lot easier when you don't have to carry all your gear and make your own bike repairs along the way," said Turner.

Turner had the time of his life and was able to see the country at a pace that allowed you to actually see what many miss in a car. He met many people as he pedaled from state to state and documented his trip with photos and a daily journal.

"The best part of the trip was meeting all the different people along the route. The friendliest people we met were in Louisiana and that was probably my favorite part of the trip. It was not uncommon to find yourself on someone's porch during a rest just sitting and talking," proclaimed Turner.

Biking on major roadways and side roads can be a dangerous hobby and Turner offers a few words of advice he follows while riding. "I would advise riders to be visible and wear something fluorescent, always act like a car by signaling and following the rules of the road and most importantly you need to be predictable. If you are in a group, try and ride single file. These habits can keep you from harm and may save your life," said Turner.

When asked what it takes to make a trip like this Turner replied,

"It mostly takes time. You have to have plenty of time to make this trip and being fully retired made it possible for me. You must be in shape because the trip is grueling and one needs an adventurous spirit. I had a great time and would certainly recommend this trip to anyone who is fit enough to make it.

"It was the trip of a lifetime for me and I would do it again in a minute, but I think I will wait a while for now."

## Trystin Miller does it again



On a cold April morning, Trystin Miller fought this 12-pound, 4 oz Hybrid to the boat while fishing on Lake Nottely with his father. After a photo, the fish was released safely back into the lake. His father commented, "this lake is full of really great fish and the Crappie are spawning to boot so take a kid fishing, they will never forget."

## Trout stocking sites week of May 6-10, 2013

Fannin: Big Creek, Hemptown Creek, Hothouse Creek, Rock Creek, Toccoa River, and Toccoa River Tailwaters (below Lake Blue Ridge).  
Lumpkin: Etowah River and Nimbellewill Creek.  
Union: Canada Creek, Cooper Creek, Suches Creek, and Winfield Scott Lake.  
Note: Information is subject to change. Please call the hatchery at 706-838-4723 for questions. The hatchery also provides trout for the state. Please contact Georgia DNR for information on sites stocked by the state.

## Baseball Camps at YHC

Summer Baseball Camps at Young Harris College online registration now open! TheRockSports.com.  
Two camp weeks: June 3rd and July 16th, three camps each week.  
Quality instruction for every level of player. 706-897-2363.

## VFW Golf League news

Last Thursday, 5/9/13 we had a great showing of 20 players. Must be the great weather. Anyway the winning team had a pretty good day. Came in with a score of 66, 6 under par. Three birdies on each side. Team members were Danny Barrett; George Darden; Bob Lehoullier; and Frontz Goring. Good shooting fellas Hoping to be able to join ya'll soon.

## NASCAR 2013

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Gibbs' teams finish 1-2 at Darlington

Kyle Busch appeared headed to victory lane in Saturday's Sprint Cup race at Darlington, but with 11 laps left in the 367-lap race, Busch had a right rear tire go down. This allowed Matt Kenseth to take the win, while Busch had to settle for sixth.

"It's awful sweet to win here," said Kenseth. "The car was really, really fast. We had a lot of speed in it. We just kind of got off. The racetrack changed, we got much looser than we anticipated. We really could never get it. The second to last pit stop we made we had it closer, but then it took off and wasn't going to be near good enough. I don't know what they changed the last pit stop.

"I told them about four laps into the run, if we were going green to the end, we were going to be pretty good. Thankfully we saved the best for last."

The win was the third for Kenseth this season, and the 27th of his career.

Denny Hamlin, Kenseth's teammate was runner-up.

"For me, we just kept grinding away," said Hamlin. "It was one of those days when we got our car better, pit crew picked us up positions, and took us to the second spot."

Jeff Gordon ran a steady race, and as the laps wound down, moved up to third.

"Our team is ready," said Gordon. "We had good track position, but we just couldn't get it right until there at the end. I thought we were really good. Each week I see the team getting better and better."

Jimmie Johnson was fourth and Kevin Harvick came in fifth.

For Kyle Busch, it was another frustrating night. He had the dominant car throughout the entire race, leading 265 of the 367 laps, but the apparent victory slipped away as the race neared its end.

Busch left the track without commenting. His frustration is understandable; he was fixing to win, and a misfortune smacked him, again. However, it could've been a lot worse. He could've hit the wall. He could've spun. The good news is he jumped two spots in points, and he still storms off.

However, an incident between him and Kasey Kahne, has Kahne expecting an apology from Busch. It occurred on lap 333, after Kahne had managed to edge by Busch in Turn 3 for the lead. Busch moved ahead off Turn 4, then headed to turn 1 side by side. It appeared Kahne went into the turn a little too fast. Busch went low into the turn, but slipped a little.

Kahne slid up and brushed the wall.

"My car moved and then just spun out," said Kahne. "I don't know if he actually touched me or not. If he would have just entered normal like he entered the whole race there would have been no issues and I would have been leading off turn 2.

"He just didn't want that to happen, so he blew turn 1. Whether he hit me or not, he still caused that whole deal with screwing up and just mind fade. He's had a few of them this year when I've been around him."

Carl Edwards, Juan Montoya, Dale Earnhardt Jr., and Ryan Newman rounded out the top-10.

Top-12 points leaders after 11 of 33: 1. Johnson-423, 2. Edwards-379, 3. Kenseth-364, 4. Earnhardt 359, 5. Bowyer-349, 6. Kahne-326, 7. Keselowski-326, 8. Kyle Busch-325, 9. Almirola-317, 10. Harvick-315, 11. Menard-315, 12. Gordon-311.

### "ROWDY" GETS 56th NATIONWIDE WIN

Kyle Busch completely dominated Friday night's Nationwide Series race at Darlington. In addition to winning the pole, he led 107 laps of the 147-lap race, on the way to his 56th career Nationwide win.

"We definitely had a fast car, but sometimes fastness isn't always best here (Darlington), said Busch. "You want to be good at both ends here. There's a lot of speed in 1 and 2, so you're going to have to take advantage of that as best you can. Three and 4 is an end where—I'm not going to say slower is faster—but maintaining a minimum speed is better down there."

Elliott Sadler learned about turn 4 in a very practical way, he spun out. Despite the spin, he came back to finish second.



Matt Kenseth, winner of Darlington race, furnished by Toyota Motorsports

ing to keep up with the 54 car (Kyle Busch)," Sadler said. "I was trying to get up there and lead some laps, just went in there too hard and got loose and had to make a decision whether to spin out or try to correct it. I overcorrected and spun out."

Brian Vickers, Joey Logano, Matt Kenseth, Kyle Larson, Regan Smith, Sam Hornish, Kasey Kahne, and Justin Allgaier were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Top-10 points leaders after 9 of 33: 1. Smith-342, 2. Hornish-314, 3. Sadler-300, 4. Allgaier-299, 5. Vickers-293, 6. A. Dillon-290, 7. Kligerman-287, 8. Scott-284, 9. Bowman-258, Larson-248

### DID NASCAR SUFFER A SETBACK

NASCAR needs to rethink their penalties.

Last week, the penalties assessed by NASCAR against Penske Racing and Joe Gibbs Racing were reduced after the appeals process was completed.

Joe Gibbs' owner points penalty was reduced from 50 to 12, and his suspension was eliminated, while driver Matt Kenseth's points penalty was reduced from 50 to 12.

Kenseth's win at Kansas will now count for the Chase.

The manufacturer's point penalty against Toyota increased from 5 to 7 points;

Kenseth's crew chief Jason Ratcliff's suspension has been reduced from 6 races to 1, but his fine remains at \$200,000.

In the Penske case, crew suspensions were reduced from six point races to two on its final appeal. Chief appellate officer

John Middlebrook upheld the 25-point penalties to Penske drivers Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano, as well as fines and part of the suspensions. He created the perception that the violations were still major, but the team should get some benefit of the doubt, since they were working in a gray area in the rulebook, and not having raced the unapproved parts, shouldn't result in such hefty suspensions.

### PHOENIX RACING CALLING IT QUILTS

Unable to find a long-term sponsor for either of his No. 51 Sprint Cup team, or No. 1 Nationwide team, James Finch said he is going to call it quits.

"I'm contemplating the rest of this year, and I don't know if I want a sponsor," Finch said. "Sunday was my 776th start in NASCAR between the Nationwide and Sprint Cup. That's a lot of weekends. I'm considering pulling the plug later in the summer."

Finch, 62, said Phoenix Racing will not enter any races after the Brickyard 400 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

"I have not been able to get the right amount of funding, the economy is pretty bad, and a lot of people don't want to do it," Finch continued. "I'm getting kind of burned out. I think it is time for me to do something else."

Weekend Racing: It's the Trucks and Cup teams this weekend at the one and one-half mile Charlotte Motor Speedway. For the Cup teams, it's the annual all-star event, a non-points night of racing.

Fri., May 17, Camping World Trucks, race 5 of 22; Starting time: 8 pm ET; TV: SPEED.

Sat., May 18, Sprint Cup All-Star event; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: SPEED.

Racing Trivia Question: How many Cup championships did David Pearson win?

Last Week's Question: Who is Aric Almirola's teammate at Richard Petty Motorsports? Answer: It is Marcos Ambrose.

You may e-mail the Racing Reporter at: hodges@race500.com.

## Golf... continued from page 8A

the State competition. "Typically Amber scores lower than she did at Area. I look for her to play better at State and we will need her and the team to play well to win the title. Diehl was very good at Area as was Manto filling the second and third spots. Diehl's score counted as the second team score for our winning total of 198," said Keller.

The team will need two

solid scores to bring home the title because in Class A they only count the two lowest individual scores for the team total. All the girls are good golfers and aren't scared to go low and this may be the edge they need to win.

Good luck and play well girls. Win or loose we are all very proud of what the team has accomplished this season.

## Sonny... continued from page 8A

He is the sweetest and nicest boy that anyone could come across. He has been a blessing to my family and me.

"God knew what he was doing bringing him into our lives and I am so thankful."

Cross Country Head Coach Jeannie Ledford has known Sonny for years and she described her thoughts this way,

"He has a tremendous positive affect on our student body and everyone that meets him loves him. He is part of our school and the students treat him just like anyone else. He loves sports and he and Tyler (Hoffman) get in the gym and just have a ball. It is just amazing to see how the kids interact with him. He is named so perfectly because he is Sonny, just like a clear beautiful day. He is one of a

kind and I love him dearly."

The students at Towns County schools love Sonny and they look at him as an equal.

Students and teachers alike profess one after another that he is a gift from God and they could not imagine life without having met him. He has had an amazing affect on Hoffman who is interested in working with children like Sonny in his future and has inspired many to do better with what they are given.

"It is nice to see kids like the students a TCHS accept someone for who they are and treat them accordingly," declared Thomas.

To quote Sonny's favorite WWE wrestler John Cena, "Rise above the hate." Sonny really is one of the gang.



Sonny "The King" Goodman acknowledges his loyal subjects during Towns County High School's 2012-13 Homecoming festivities. Photo/Lowell Nicholson