

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Blue-White Scrimmage provides a sneak peek

By Joe Collins
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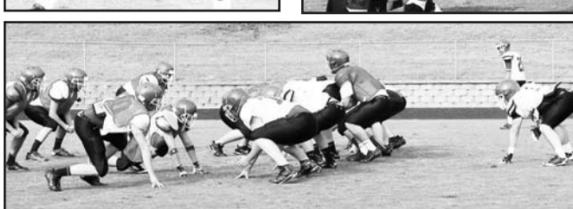
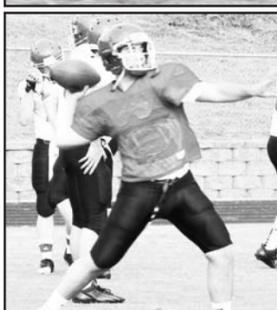
The Towns County High School football team just completed two weeks of Spring Practice that culminated in the annual Blue and White scrimmage game at Frank McClure Stadium last Friday.

More than 150 gathered to check out next year's prospects and to enjoy some delicious barbecue being sold by the Quarterback Booster Club. These fans were not disappointed.

Gone were the familiar seniors of last year's team and in their place a solid group of young men to try and fill their shoes.

Rising senior Jackson Noblet wore the protective red vest, which would indicate that at this time he was being called on to lead the team at quarterback. The 5-foot, 10-inch, 210-pound signal caller will hope to have another solid season as he did last year rushing for more than a 1,000 yards with 900-plus yards in receptions. Jaryd Gurley, Harrison Hobbs, Vonya Baldwin, Slade Davenport, John Davis, Cesar Bustamante, Brett Barrett, Cody Canterbury, Evan Keyes, J.R. Bennett, Dustin Brackett and Garrett Bradshaw will have to meet the challenge as rising seniors to try and take Towns County football to the winning level in 2013.

There is an outstanding group of rising sophomores and another good group of rising freshman highlighted by the evolution of sophomore Kevin McConnell who has lost some of last year's weight and replaced it with muscle and some better speed. Sophomore Cruz Shook looked like he had gained some muscle and



Towns County High School Spring Football Photos/Joe Collins

looked sharp running his patterns. Sophomore center Kyle Davis has been hitting the weights and has benefited from it in size and speed. Sophomores Zach Sewell and Tyler Davis will need to have another good season along with Cory Ellis. Sophomore Joey Mitchell looked sharp on offense, as did sophomore Shea Underwood who hit

a 46-yard field goal under game conditions.

The rising freshman class has some good-looking athletes in Kobe Denton and Ian Thompson who were impressive in the scrimmage. Russell Cox shared the quarterback role with Noblet who was constantly showing Cox the ropes and what to expect when

running the team. Luke Ledford has put on some size and showed some grit in the mix up front and in the middle. The rising eighth graders have been playing together for several years and will contribute to this year's effort.

Noblet said of next year's team, "We've got a lot of potential. I think folks will be surprised by how much talent we really have. It is going to be an exciting season."

Outgoing Head Coach Kyle Langford was not on the field for Spring Practice as he is changing schools in the fall. Interim Head Coach Darryl McClure stepped in and brought this team together in the two weeks he was at the helm.

"This team has some potential for sure," McClure said. "If they work hard and dedicate themselves to the game over the summer then I believe they can do well. There are a couple of rising freshman who will contribute this season and I think people will see some good football out of his squad."

The team will have many seniors back that have quite a bit of experience. They may lack in size at some positions but they will have speed and that can be a big asset if used correctly.

Fans were glad to see Slade Davenport back in the mix as more than 40 athletes suited up for this year's final day of Spring Practice. It will be a short summer for the boys of fall, as they will suit up again this August for the real deal.

Depending on how they work and develop this summer, will determine if fans see some exciting games this fall as the Towns County Indians hit the gridiron on Friday nights.

Golf: Patton second; Lady Indians third overall at State

Royston - Sophomore Stephanie Patton just missed bringing Towns County High School its second State title of the 2012-13 school year.

Patton came in second at the State Class A Public Area Golf Championships on the Highland Walk Golf Course at Victoria Bryant in Royston on Monday afternoon.

Her score of 97 was good enough to lead the Lady Indians to a third place overall finish.

Patton fired a 47 on the front-nine and a 50 on the back-

nine. She finished six strokes back of State Champion Jordan Booker of Schley County.

The team won the privilege of playing at State by winning the Area 4 Public Area Championship on the tough Battlefield Golf Course located in Fort Oglethorpe on April 23rd.

Be sure to pick up a copy of next week's edition of the Towns County Herald for Joe Collins' full report on the Lady Indians strong showing in Royston.



The Towns County Lady Indians after the Area 4 Golf Tournament in Fort Oglethorpe last month. Photo/Joe Collins



Tips from the Range

I want to address one of the issues that basically affect everyone who swings a club and attempts to hit a golf shot.

I have found that this is a common denominator of many swing faults that I have worked with even in good players. You will hear people describe this flaw as feeling loose or buried on the downswing. The swing is to fast in places or just too fast as a whole.

The arms are out of position and your small muscles are controlling everything. This moves you into the hitter's category instead of the swinger's category. It is more enjoyable to swing the club and strike the ball than it is to hit the ball with your hands and wrist. You must avoid as much hand action as possible, which means you need the big muscles working throughout the swing.

The only way to keep the big muscles in control is to "stay connected" from start to finish.

The question you must be asking yourself is: How in the world do you stay connected and hit the ball? Well, one must first understand the definition of staying connected as it relates to golf and the golf swing.

The golf swing is actually a controlled motion. The key is to limit the motion to a controlled action. Meaning, that you can control the club throughout the swing smoothly, not allowing it to go off line during impact. You can only do this through the big muscles so to me "staying connected" is the act of keeping the club in tune to what the big muscles are doing as the swing works its way to the top and back on the downswing.

Only allowing the small muscles in the trailing hand to work just before and right after impact.

The great Ben Hogan said, "I can hit it as hard as I want with my right hand as long as it is in the proper position on the downswing." It is impossible to hit the ball and not use your hands. They do serve a function. You just don't want them to be the dominant force at impact. Limit your hand movement and feel your arms moving more.

You have to use your body's core to turn the big muscles and thereby stay connected. The chest will move the arms into the backswing ahead of the hips and then the hips will lead the arms on the downswing. The first part of your job is to make sure the club stays in front of the chest for as long as it will on the backswing. Make sure when you do this that

you don't allow the center of gravity to move to the front of your feet. Always stay in the position you establish at address. In other words, don't lean into the ball on the take away when trying to keep the club in front of your chest in the backswing.

The second part of your job is to get your arms back in front of the power source that becomes established in your trailing side during the take away. If the arms fail to get back in front of the chest on the downswing then the club will be behind and you will either push the ball or throw the hands at impact and hook it.

This is why the lower body must lead the upper body on the downswing. The starting of the weight transfer through the feet and into the hips allows the arms the time they need to drop into the slot on the way down to impact. This transfer of weight allows the arms to get moving before the shoulders start to unwind. Much power is built here.

To learn this takes a very simple drill. Get your favorite club from the bag and hold grip it in your forward hand. Stand erect with your legs straight, your back straight and your feet just inside shoulder width. Hold your arms straight out to your side with the club pointed at your target at shoulder level. You should look like a T with your arms pointed out to your sides.

While keeping your feet planted where they are, bring your arms to the front of your stance and grip the club while keeping your arms at shoulder height. Notice there is now a triangle in front of your chest, formed from your shoulders through the arms to the grip. Turn ninety degrees away from the target so that the triangle is pointing dead away from the target.

See how the chest turns the triangle? This is how you stay connected. Simply keeping that triangle in front of your chest during the whole swing.

The difficulty lies in trying to get the arms back in front of the chest as the downswing starts. There are many ways to think of this but the idea is to keep your back to the target for just a split second as the downswing starts. This allows time for the arms to start to move. Remember, all this happens behind the weight transfer.

When you are swinging in a connected manner, you will feel as though you are hitting the ball with your chest on the downswing and your arms will seem to be moving faster. Your shots should fly a little farther when the big muscles are doing their job.

Practice makes it happen so get too it. Good luck and I will see you on the course!

Special Olympics exemplify class and sportsmanship

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns and Union County Special Olympic organizations held their spring sporting competition at the Frank McClure Memorial Stadium on the grounds of Towns County High School on Thursday, May 9 with more than 75 athletes from the local area competing.

The weather was perfect which made the event a special time for the athletes and for the Towns County school students who volunteered.

The participants competed in ten different sporting events to the cheers of family and friends as they gave it their all competing in what was for them a life changing experience. Their competitiveness was apparent at the awards ceremony as the directors handed out nearly 50 gold and silver medals and over 100 bronze medals as every participant wins in the end. For many, just the act of being there was a major victory.

Sonny Goodman and Kendra Rodriguez were recognized as graduating seniors of TCHS and for the fact that they have participated in the event throughout their school career. Goodman spoke for all the athletes when he said, "This is fun, thanks."

Erin Schutte and Becky Tracy coordinated the event



You can never go wrong by spending the day at the Towns/Union Special Olympics and the May 2013 edition was no different.

along with a lot of help from several volunteers. The Olympic participants were given lunch in the shade of the donated tents and ice-cold water to keep them cool as the temperature pushed 80 degrees.

The Kiwanis Club donated the food and cooked the hotdogs while the Union County Recreation department donated the drinks. Everyone had a proper sporting event meal just like one you would find at the ballpark on Saturday afternoon. The competitors were provided a very nice arena in which to compete.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the Special Olympics in 1968 for the express purpose of providing people with intellec-

tual disabilities the opportunity to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship. All of these aspects were honored this day as these brave souls pushed themselves to do well.

The Directors of the Special Olympics here follow the guidelines of Special Olympics Georgia by sponsoring the events that could qualify an individual to compete at the state and national level. However: that is not the priority of the local games in that it is more about getting the kids, and adults, out for a day of excitement and joy. Everyone who is qualified, and has the desire, can participate. "We modify our games a little bit in

that we add a few games of our own and we also invite all qualified adults to compete as well. We just want these kids to have a good day and something they will hopefully benefit from," explained Schutte.

Schutte and Tracy would like to thank everyone who participated and to all the volunteers that gave of their time and money, to the board for all their hard work and to the students of Towns County. Senior Meagan Ellis was able to fulfill her Senior Leadership Project in conjunction with the Olympics by helping coordinate the activities and obtaining T-shirts for the two seniors.

Board member Amy Rosser said of Ellis, "She has been very helpful with getting everything organized. It takes a lot of behind the scenes effort to do this and she was a lot of help. She even got the shirts for Sonny and Kendra donated."

It was another successful event for the Towns and Union Special Olympics and the participants had a ball. Katelynn Plemmons was all smiles as she displayed her medal saying, "I had fun today. Thank you to everybody."

This year's fall games will be held in Union County and the athletes will travel to Blairsville to carry on the tradition of the Special Olympics, whose oath is, "let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Youth football will miss Langford

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The director and staff of the Towns County Youth Football league were saddened by the news that Towns County Head Football Coach Kyle Langford is leaving.

Langford was very active in the organization and worked with them through the summer and fall, after high school practice and on weekends. He contributed a lot of time with the kids and coaches and they will miss him greatly.

Youth Football Director Jimmy Smith couldn't believe it when Langford told him his decision, "I was real sad to hear that my friend and Towns County head football coach was leaving. Of all the coaches I have worked with from TCHS, he is without a doubt the best coach the kids have ever had help. We have had some really good coaches working with the kids but Langford is the cream of the crop. I could ask him anything and he would be there for us," declared Smith.

"I remember one Friday night after a high school football game he asked me if we had enough drinks for the concession stand the next morning and I told him no. We loaded up at 12:30 a.m. and headed

out to Walmart to get drinks for the youth football game on Saturday morning. There just aren't many coaches that will do that much for a youth program and I for one appreciate everything he did," said Smith. "This is a big loss for our youth. I just hope the next coach they hire will work with us the way he did."

Langford has left a lasting impression on many kids through the youth football program. He was willing to work with the kids and taught them the basics of the game.

This not only helped the kids but also helped the high school and middle school football programs.

He knew this type of quality football program trained good football players, and that was good for all of the Towns County football teams.

VFW Golf League news

On 5/16/13 we had beautiful weather and a good showing of 17 players which made 2 foursomes and 3 threesomes. The threesome of Mel Halfon, Larry Jordan, and Jay Still were the winners with a score of 63, nine under par. I understand this was due to the great putting of Jay Still, an 87 year old vet of WW11. Great shooting fellas. - Chuck

Chatuge Shores Ladies Golf Association news



Mary Reece watches her partner Nancy Jensen.

Thanks to Nancy Steck, we have a photo-op this week of her playing partners, Mary Reece watching Nancy Jensen hit a long ball from the fairway on the 11th hole.

This week, the Chatuge Shores Ladies played just plain old regular golf, low gross and low net.

Judy Schmitt and Claudia Rinaldo took 1st and 2nd low gross respectively in the AB flight. In the same flight, Mary Reece won 1st low net and Debi Holland, 2nd low net.

The winners in the CD flight were Donna Workman, 1st low gross and Jeanne Odom, 2nd low gross. The low net winners were Kay McLeod (1st) and Sandy Jersey (2nd).

Congratulations, ladies and thanks to all for your participation. Next week we will play Strike 3... no, not baseball, but golf where we will throw out our worst 3 holes.

Submitted by Judy Wright,
Tournament Chair

2013 Summer Day Camp

Summer is just around the corner and that means hot weather and Summer Day Camp for boys and girls ages 6 thru 12. This summer the Recreation Department will offer day camp for 3 sessions, each session being two weeks, running Monday thru Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Sessions will be as follows: Session I June 3rd thru June 14th; Session II June 17th thru June 28th; Session III July 8th thru July 19th. Day Camp offers children sports game activities, social game activities, field trips, nature hikes and much more. Give your child a lot to do this summer and sign them up for Day Camp. You may send your child to any or all of the sessions. Children need to bring a swimsuit, towel, sprayable sunscreen

and sack lunch. The Recreation Department will furnish the drinks for the campers. No pre-registration is required, just show up at the Recreation Center for camp located on Highway 76, west of Hiawassee. For more details please call us at (706) 896-2600.

Baseball Camps at YHC

Summer baseball camps are right around the corner at Young Harris College. Two camp weeks: June 3rd and July 16.

Three different camps during each camp week. FUNDamental (ages 5-12), Junior Elite (Middle School) & Senior Elite (High School). TheRockSports.com or 706-897-2363