

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Local Rugby Club seeks players



The Blue Ridge Mountains Rugby Club is looking for players for the summer season. Practice is held in Blairsville with players from Towns, Union, and Hayesville, NC. More info is available on Facebook under Blue Ridge Mountains Rugby Club.

Summer Rugby Season for the Blue Ridge Mountains Rugby Club is just beginning.

The club was founded in 2012 and competes regionally against other men's clubs and occasionally college teams. Recently, the club has begun practicing in Blairsville to better serve its players from Union County, Towns County, and Hayesville, NC.

Club President, Brad Laney says "This is an exciting time for the Club. We are about to start our third season and have seen improvement with every tournament. In our 2013 season, our last tournament saw us beating Emory University, who just a few weeks later qualified for the Collegiate National Championship Tournament". This is no small accomplishment for a club that started with only 3 players not long ago. "Most clubs have been around much longer than us" he explains. "To have success like this with mostly inexperienced players is pretty neat."

The club competes in

Rugby 7's, a leaner, faster version of the traditional 15 player game with intentions of growing the club to compete in the traditional 15's as well. In Rugby 7's, seven players compete in two 7 minute halves on a traditional size field. According to Laney "it moves very fast and you need to be thinking at all times".

The club is actively seeking new player of all skill levels. Rugby is the grandfather of American football and is a full contact sport. It shares many similarities to the American Football. The club hopes to recruit players of all backgrounds who want the challenge of a physical game. Many of the team's players had never played rugby prior to joining the team.

Existing players range in age from 17-50 and come from surrounding communities. The club is affiliated with USA Rugby. Because of this National affiliation, players are eligible to try out for regional all star teams. From these teams the National Team

is selected whose players get to compete around the world and will be in the next Olympic Games.

Laney explains that this makes the team a great opportunity for local players to compete for simple recreation or to test their abilities with other elite athletes if so desired.

According to Laney, "Some of our guys just enjoy the workout of practicing with us once a week; others are actively working towards making the rosters of some of the most select rugby teams in the country. It is a team that has a spot for everyone."

The 2014 season is just getting started with practices held in Union and Fannin counties. With several new players just joining, Laney says "now is the best time to join, no experience is needed, just a willingness to try something new and play rugby." Contact the club via email [brmrugbyclub@gmail.com](mailto:brmrugbyclub@gmail.com), or look us up on Facebook (Blue Ridge Mountains Rugby Club) for the latest information.

## Rick Robinson resigns as baseball coach for Young Harris College

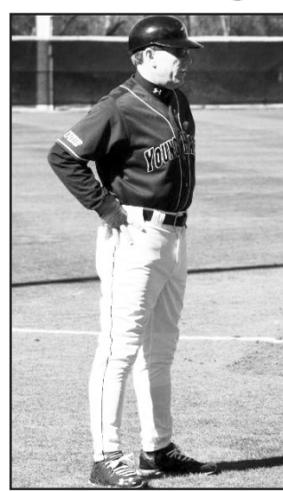
**Young Harris** – Young Harris College Director of Athletics Randy Dunn announced Tuesday (June 3) that baseball head coach Rick Robinson has resigned his position to become the head coach at the University of Tennessee at Martin.

Robinson led Young Harris to eight conference championships, five NJCAA Region XVII championships and one NJCAA World Series appearance over his 16 seasons with the Mountain Lions. Robinson has a 699-281 (.713) career won-loss overall record in 17 seasons, including a 666-259 (.720) mark in the Enchanted Valley.

Forty-one of Robinson's players at Young Harris have signed professional contracts, with five – pitcher Jimmy Goble (Kansas City Royals, Chicago White Sox), outfielder Nick Markakis (Baltimore Orioles), pitcher Billy Butler (Kansas City Royals, Arizona Diamondbacks, Los Angeles Angels, San Diego Padres), pitcher Cory Garrin (Atlanta Braves) and outfielder Charlie Blackmon (Colorado Rockies) - making it to the major leagues.

Robinson, who has never had a losing record as a head coach, averaged 49 wins a year from 2002-08 in the junior college ranks before Young Harris transitioned into a four-year school competing in Division-II in 2011. Over the last four seasons, Robinson has won 114 games.

Robinson began his head coaching career at Brevard College in North Carolina, where he started the first baseball program in school history in 1992. In its inaugural season, Robinson posted a 33-22 overall record and a third place NJCAA Region X finish. A total of eight



Rick Robinson Photo/YHC Athletics

players from that Brevard team signed professional contracts.

Robinson then took over at Young Harris in 1999 and immediately turned the program into one of the top junior college programs in the nation. His teams went 155-29 over a three-year span (2003-05) that saw the team set school records with 52 victories in both 2003 and 2004. He also led Young Harris to the 2007 NJCAA World Series in Grand Junction, Colo. and posted another 50-win campaign in 2008.

Prior to his time at Young Harris, Robinson spent four years as an assistant coach at Old Dominion University, a Division-I school located in Norfolk, Va. During his time at the baseball-rich school, he served as third base coach, camp director and recruiting coordinator.

At Old Dominion, Robinson helped the Monarchs to a pair of conference championships and back-to-back appearances in the NCAA Regionals

(1995-96). In four recruiting classes, he helped produce 22 players who signed professional contracts, including Tim Hummel (second round pick, 52nd overall by the Chicago White Sox in the 2000 MLB Draft). Robinson also worked with current major leaguers David Wright (New York Mets), Michael Cuddyer (Colorado Rockies), Justin Upton (Atlanta Braves) and BJ Upton (Atlanta Braves) in Old Dominion's camps.

Before his appointment at Brevard College, Robinson posted a .672 winning percentage at the high school level in North Carolina. He led West Henderson High School in Hendersonville to its first-ever winning season and first berth in the state playoffs and also had a successful stint at Pisgah High School in Canton.

A Brevard, NC native, Robinson played collegiate baseball at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC. He earned his degree from Appalachian State and later earned a Master's degree from Furman University.

Robinson is married to the former Luann DeGroat of Hawley, Pa. The couple has been married for over 20 years and has three children: Faithe (17), Rhett (14) and Ryan (11).

Young Harris will immediately conduct a national search for a new head coach.

The Rock Sports summer baseball camps on June 23-27 and July 14-18 are still a go. Coach Huffman, Robinson's assistant director for 4 years will direct the camps. The location will be changing to the Union County High School Baseball complex in Blairsville.

## Summer Day Camp at Rec Center

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 3 sessions of day camp. Each session is two weeks, running Monday thru Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You may bring your child between 7:30 and 9 a.m. and pick your child up between 4 and 4:30 p.m.

Session dates are as follows: Session II June 16th thru June 27th; Session III July 7th thru July 18th. Our Day Camp offers children sport game activities, social game activities,

field trips, nature hikes and much more. Give your child a lot to do this summer by signing 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 drinks for the campers.

No pre-registration required, just show up at the new Recreation Center for camp located off of Mining Gap Trail at 150 Foster Park Rd.

For more information please call us at 706-896-2600.

## Aunspaugh to paddle 110 miles on the Chattahoochee

Young Harris resident Richard Aunspaugh is gearing up to paddle 110 miles this summer on the Chattahoochee river as part of Georgia River Network's (GRN) Paddle Georgia 2014, the country's largest week-long canoe/kayak camping adventure. Taking place June 21-27 on the Chattahoochee River from Cumming to Franklin, this annual canoe and kayak adventure brings together more than 400 people each year from across the Southeast, the U.S. and world introducing citizens to Georgia's rivers and raising money to protect those waterways.

An annual educational adventure and fundraiser for GRN, a statewide river advocacy group, Paddle Georgia is celebrating its tenth year. The trips have generated more than \$180,000 for river protection in Georgia.

"Last year, the event sold out in less than 24 hours," said April Ingle, Executive Director of GRN. "The response has been overwhelming. After ten years, it has become a trip that people mark on their calendars and look forward to all year."

Paddle Georgia 2014 will introduce paddlers to the Chattahoochee River as it

courses through metro Atlanta—from its northern suburbs in Forsyth, Cobb, and Fulton Counties and the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area - to the river's rural haunts in south Fulton, Douglas, Coweta, Carroll and Heard counties.

Daily paddle trips will average about 16 miles, and each night participants will camp at nearby facilities such as schools and parks. In addition to spending each day on the river, paddlers will have the opportunity to explore everything from historic sites to water treatment facilities.

In addition to supporting GRN's efforts to protect Georgia's rivers, proceeds from this year's event will also benefit the Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, a non-profit organization working to protect the Chattahoochee from its headwaters in the North Georgia mountains to the Florida state line.

For more information, contact Joe Cook at 706-409-0128 or via e-mail at [joecookpg@gmail.com](mailto:joecookpg@gmail.com), or contact April Ingle at 706-549-4508 or via e-mail at [ingle@garivers.org](mailto:ingle@garivers.org), or visit [www.garivers.org](http://www.garivers.org) and click on the Paddle Georgia link.

## Fish for Food Fishing Tournament

Matthew 25 Food Ministries presents "Fish for Food Fishing Tournament". 50% of tournament money goes to feed needy families in our area. The remaining 50% will go to tournament prize money. Prize money will be awarded for 1st Place, 2nd Place and 3rd Place and biggest fish. Actual prize amount will depend on number of entries.

the tournaments began in March and will end in October, occurring on Saturdays and rotating between Lake Chatuge, Woods Grove Boat Ramp and Lake Nottely, Deaver Road Boat Ramp, from 7 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Tournament schedule: June 14 - Nottely; July 12 - Chatuge; August 16 - Nottely; September 13 - Chatuge; and October 11 - Nottely.

## M.U.S.A. says 'thank you'



Mountain United Soccer Association (M.U.S.A.) would like thank the following Sponsors for helping make this Fall and Spring Soccer seasons a huge success: High Mountain Health Care, Mike's Seafood Market & Grill, United Community Bank, Corrugated Replacements, Inc., Scott Carter Insurance & Investments, Brasstown Pharmacy, Dan's Grill, North Georgia Beverage, Mountain Lakes Mortgage, The Sawmill Place, Alexander's Store, Pro Therapy, Jay's Medical Equipment, Armadillo Grill, and Aspen Health & Home.

## VFW Golf League news

Tuesday, June 3rd we played Innsbruck Golf Course in Helen. We had a good turn out of 20 golfers. The winning team was Danny Barrett, Glen Greenwalt, Bill Long and Larry Hayner. We at the VFW would like to extend our thanks for the hospitality shown us by the folks at the Innsbruck course. Thursday it was back to Chatuge Shores for our regular golf day, where the competition was turned up a notch. Two teams tied for 1st place. Danny Barrett's team of Ward, Musanitte and Jerry tied Mel Halfon, Vince Cooper and Gary Nichols.

Stay tuned in for our next travel date.

## Summer baseball camps

Young Harris College Assistant Baseball Coach Travis Huffman will coordinate all instruction to ensure a professional experience for your player(s)! This is a camp that will help the motivated player to get better in a positive atmosphere.

Two camp weeks at the Union County High School Baseball Complex: June 23-27 & July 14-18. Three camps are offered each week to accommodate players of all ages and levels of play.

Visit us on the web for more details @ [www.TheRockSports.com](http://www.TheRockSports.com)

## NASCAR 2014

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Junior gets second cup win

Luck is two-sided. A piece of trash that became lodged on the grill of Brad Keselowski's race car late in Sunday's Pocono 400 brought him misfortune.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. was in a position to capitalize on Keselowski's miscue. "He (Keselowski) didn't want to let me by, but there at the end, I knew I had to go," said Earnhardt. "My team did a heck of a job today. I had a winning car. If we hadn't won the race today, I would have let them down."

Keselowski appeared to have the fastest car. He led 95 laps of the 180-lap race, but a large piece of plastic became lodged on the front of his grill blocking the air flow to his engine. This caused the engine water temperature to rise sharply.

"Well, I knew I had to try something, because if I didn't we weren't going to make it the rest of the way," said Keselowski.

With five laps remaining Keselowski tried to duck behind Danica Patrick's lapped car, hoping the piece of debris might become dislodged.

"We were real hot," continued Keselowski. "We were real fast. I just got a big piece of debris on the grille and had to do something or it would have blown up. I tried to make a move to get behind the 10 (Patrick) and use the air to pull the debris off and when she went into the corner she got loose and I just chased her up the track and lost too much momentum."

"I should have just passed her but I had to do some kind of move. The car wasn't going to make it; it was already starting to blow up. I guess I shouldn't have tried it."

Kurt Busch was third.

"We might not have had the fastest car today, but we are an improved team," said Busch. "Everyone is working real hard. We've taken a turn for the better. I think today's results show that."

Polesitter Denny Hamlin was fourth, while rookie Kyle Larson finished fifth.

Jimmie Johnson, who had a mental letdown during a two-tire pit stop on Lap 74, was sixth. As soon as his team had put on two fresh tires, Johnson shot out of his pit stall right into the side of Marcos Ambrose's No. 9 car.

The force of the collision knocked Johnson into Ambrose's pit area. Johnson then had to back up and return to his pit area; where his crew inspected for damage, before sending him back out.

When he returned to the track, he was in the 32nd spot.

Ryan Newman, Jeff Gordon, Martin Truex, and Jamie McMurray were the remaining top-10 finishers.

In another racing incident during lap 160, Kasey Kahne

made contact with Kyle Busch coming out of turn-3 and hit the wall two different times. Carl Edwards was behind Kahne and had no place to go.

"There was a bunch of oil on the track," said Edwards, who finished 41st. "Kasey really smacked the wall. I've never seen anyone hit it as hard as he did. I was just in the wrong place when it all started."

Top-10 Chase leaders after 14 of 36: 1. Gordon-498, 2. Kenseth-482, 3. Earnhardt-477, 4. Johnson-475, 5. Keselowski-448, 6. Kyle Busch-443, 7. Edwards-441, 8. Hamlin-420, 9. Logano-418, 10. Larson-417.

### CRAFTON CRUISES AT TEXAS

Matt Crafton won Friday night's Truck series race at Texas Motor Speedway on speed and by stretching his fuel mileage.

Crafton and his team gambled on fuel, running the final 61 laps of the 167-lap race without stopping for fuel. It was his fifth truck series victory in 322 career starts.

"They told me I could make it all the way on fuel," said Crafton. "That helped because I could slow down so much. They'd let me run for five laps and then slow down for five laps. That is the hardest thing to do for a driver. But we had the fastest truck."

Crafton finished a whopping 13.302-seconds ahead of runner-up and pole-sitter Justin Lofton. His margin of victory set a new series record at TMS, beating the previous mark of 11.817 seconds by Dennis Setzer in this event in 2004.

Lofton finished second, followed by Joe Nemechek, Ryan Blaney, John Wes Townley, Ron Hornaday, Johnny Sauter, Bryan Silas, Joey Coulter, and Darrell Wallace.

Top-10 leaders after 6 of 22: 1. Crafton-232, 2. Sauter-221, 3. Hornaday-209, 4. Blaney-207, 5. Peters-205, 6. Quiroga-200, 7. Kennedy-199, 8. Townley-196, 9. Burton-185, 10. Coulter-177.

### KASEY KAHNE IS STRUGGLING

While Kasey Kahne's three Hendrick Racing teammates, Jimmie Johnson, Jeff Gordon, and Dale Earnhardt Jr. are having a good season, Kahne and his No. 5 team have not displayed a lot of championship potential.

Kahne's last win came in 2013 at Pocono, and he has only one top-five finish which came last month at Kansas.

"We've been really good in practice; great at times during the race, but we haven't put together the full race. And when we have, it's been one and then we forget how for the next three, and then come back for the fourth one and run pretty well," Kahne told Jim Utter of the Charlotte Observer.



Dale Earnhardt Jr. gets second Cup win of season at Pocono. Furnished by NASCAR

This is his third season at Hendrick, and in each of the previous year's he has rallied to secure a spot in the Chase.

"I think there has been a touch of bad luck and then we just haven't put together full races. We've had great practices over the last month, maybe a little more than that. We've been really good in practice; great at times during the race, but we haven't put together the full race," Kahne said at Pocono.

Kahne's best stretch of previous races is yet to come. He has wins at Pocono and Michigan, even the road course in Sonoma. With NASCAR's new Chase guidelines, all Kahne needs to do is win one race to get into this year's Chase.

"I look at it as we need to score as many points as we can each week," Kahne said. "Our stretch of tracks that we run really well at started about three weeks ago. It goes for another month, so hopefully we can hit on something over this upcoming span of races that we have. We haven't yet, but we are in a good group of tracks for myself and our team."

Kahne finished 42nd in the Pocono race.

**Weekend Racing:** The Cup and Nationwide teams are at the 2.0-mile Brooklyn, Michigan track, while the Trucks are at Gateway Raceway, just across the Mississippi River from St. Louis.

Sat., June 14, Nationwide Series race 13 of 33; Starting time: 1:30 pm ET; TV: ESPN.

Sat., June 14, Truck Series race 7 of 22; Starting time: 8 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sun, June 15, Sprint Cup race 15 of 36; Starting time: 12 noon ET; TV: TNT.

**Racing TV Question:** Which Cup team does Martin Truex drive for?

**Last Week's Question:** Kasey Kahne was considered one of the best open-wheel drivers before switching to NASCAR. What year did he move to the NASCAR Nationwide Series? **Answer:** He made his Nationwide Series debut in 2002 with Robert Yates Racing.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at [hodges@race500.com](mailto:hodges@race500.com).