

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Harrison means business; players energized

By Joe Collins  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Towns County Indians Head Football Coach Blair Harrison has wasted no time in beginning preparation for the 2013 fall football schedule as the team started their summer workout series last Monday.

It was back to the basics and fundamentals of proper football technique for the guys as Harrison introduced his style of playing football.

The opening of this summer's workouts means getting the bugs out of a new way of doing things because of the coaching change this season. It will involve getting a handle on equipment and inventory for quality and quantity, working with the coaching staff and providing a time for the coaches and players to bond.

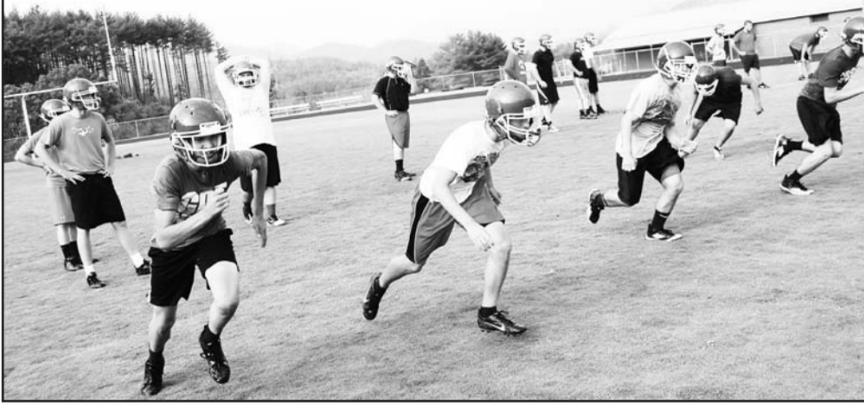
"We are all new to this program as of now and this is a time for me to learn the coaches as well as for the coaches to learn the way I expect things to be done. It will take some time for everyone to learn a new offense and defense and that is what we are trying to do with the early workouts. Just get to know how things will be this season. Right now I have no idea who the coaches will be or what their duties will consist of. We just have to get to work and see who fits where," declared Harrison.

Harrison is new to the team and he is learning the guys and they are learning him. The team as a whole is pleased with things so far and was not afraid to express their excitement, "He is a good coach and I like him. He makes us work hard and we need that," said junior center Kyle Davis.

"We are working on the things we should be working on and I am excited about the upcoming season," declared sophomore kicker Shea Underwood as he prepared for punting practice.

"I like Coach Harrison and I like the way things are shaping up. It's all good and the team is benefiting from the things we are doing. It is different than last season and that seems like a good thing," stated senior running back and team leader Jackson Noblet.

Noblet can play quar-



New Towns County Head Football Coach Blair Harrison is already getting his Indian squad in shape for the 2013 season that opens in late August. Photos by Lowell Nicholson

terback or running back very effectively and rushed for over 1,000 yards last season. He also is a valuable receiver out of the backfield as he had over 900 yards in receptions while averaging 1.4 touchdowns per game on the ground and through the air.

Many fans were concerned about the conditioning of the team last season and Harrison responded, "We are going to be in shape for the season I can guarantee that. We will be blocking and hitting in every practice as well as working on conditioning. Being ready to play four quarters of football means we've got to be in good condition. Players are going to be playing both sides of the line and you have to be in shape to play a whole game. Players in weak shape succumb to injury and we don't need that."

When asked about the team goals as of now, Harrison replied, "We are getting started and trying to get everybody on the same page. It is a time to cover the basics and work on the things we will be doing as a team this season. I have

no idea who will be playing where exactly, as of now. It's a time when I get to see what each athlete has and what their mind set and experience is. We are getting there, but it will take time. We've got some good athletes and we are going to work hard and do our best to win games," proclaimed Harrison referring to how the team is progressing as they came to the close of their first four-day workout series of the summer last Thursday morning.

Athletic Director and new High School Principal Jonathan Gibson summed it up clearly when he visited the field house on Thursday.

"I am honored to be able to get Coach Harrison here to take over where Kyle (Langford) left off. He is a fabulous coach and the team will benefit from his experience and work ethic. I got excited when I found out he had applied for the head coaching position, but I never thought he would end up here. It was just a door that opened and he was in a position to come here and he chose too. I am so glad for our program that

he did. He is a serious coach and he takes his responsibility to the team very seriously."

The team has two more four-day morning workouts scheduled for June and then will take a vacation break until July 8 when they will return to start five-day-a-week morning workouts.

Full pad practice will not start until the first of August when the team will only be three weeks away from the August 16 scrimmage with Dawson County. The game time is 7:30 p.m. and will be played in the Frank McClure Stadium on the grounds of Towns County High School.

The opening game of the 2013 season will be on August 23rd at home against rival Hayesville, N.C. with kickoff at 7:30 p.m. The Indians will hope to take the sting out of the Yellow Jackets and revenge a hard fought 2012 opening season loss.

Mark your calendars now, as the opening game of the season will also be the first home game of the season.



Tips from the Range

I could literally talk about the mental aspect of the game for hours on end, and have actually done just that on cold winter days when the single malt was flowing and the course was closed. If you were to pick one topic that we would talk about that affects your score the most, in respect to the mental side of the game, it would be "Game Management". In layman's terms: You got to have a plan. No pro will attack any round without at least a simple strategy.

Look at it this way. Every pro on the P.G.A. tour can hit the ball, some better than others. Why is it then, that you only have one winner and the rest of the field is spread out over 30 to 40 shots? Why doesn't the best ball striker win the tournaments every time he/she plays? What made Tiger Woods so dominant in the late nineties and early two thousands and still makes him a great player today? Why is it that you hit the ball better than a lot of people you play against but just don't score as well? The answer to all of these questions is in how you prepare yourself for the round and in how well you know your own limitations. The better you play, the more enjoyment you will receive from your efforts, so you have to play your own game.

Golf swings and golf games are as different from golfer to golfer as night and day. You will never see identical golf swings, ever. You may find some that are similar but never the same. Just like our physiques are different, our swings have to be different. Therefore, everyone plays a different game with the same motives in mind. Many people play for sport or exercise but most play because it is a challenging, competitive sport. Not necessarily between you and your playing partner, but between you and the golf course. Your goal is to beat the course, and sometimes your playing partner; so first and foremost, you have to play your own game. Don't get caught up in trying to hit shots that are not in within your ability.

When designing a game plan for a particular course, pay attention to the limitations of your golf game. Don't try and hit it to places on the course that are risky. Play to the "fats" or to the widest landing areas. These areas are not always the closest to the green but are found on every hole to offer the golfer a good sporting chance of making par. Play away from trouble and stay clear of the dreaded two-stroke or stroke and distance penalties like Out of Bounds. If you are hitting your driver poorly on a given day and you step up to a long hole that requires

a good accurate and long drive, put the 3-wood in your hands and focus on accuracy. Your back is already against the wall because you're not hitting the long club well, so give up twenty yards and put the ball in the fairway. Now you're hitting a longer shot into the green but it is your second shot not you're third or fourth. The driver would have most likely been in the woods anyway because of the negative attitude about you're tee-shots.

Another interesting thing that will help you score well in relation to the mental game is the aspect of playing to your strengths. If you are an accurate player use your accuracy to attack the course and wait on the easier holes to try and make low scores. Be patient on the long holes and try not to make any score higher than a bogey. If distance is your strong suit, then aim to places where you have comfortable shots into the greens. Many pros would prefer to hit a full shot into a green instead of the dreaded half-shot so you might need to focus a little more from the green back to the tee when planning your game.

"I used to walk the course from the green to the tee to get Watson's approach shots calculated perfectly," said Tom Watson's long-time caddie the late Bruce Edwards. Many caddies learned that from Ben Hogan who was the ultimate example in how to prepare mentally for a tournament. It is the enjoyment of your time on the course that is our ultimate goal and if your mind is not focused on the game at hand then you will waste shots and not enjoy your day out.

Try and prepare for your next round of golf with an emphasis on the strong points of your game. Learn to judge how you play certain clubs in your bag and try and develop an arsenal of shots to choose from. Play away from your weaknesses and always focus on your own game and the way you feel it should be played. Nobody knows your ability the way you do so trust your own judgment and concentrate on how it feels to swing the club in relation to your position on the course. If you get in trouble, recover as quickly as possible by getting the ball back on the short grass and then go back to your overall game plan for the day. This will give you vision and will allow you to forget about the negative thoughts of a bad shot.

I hope that it is now obvious how important the mental game is. The Great Ben Hogan used to say, "If I can't see the shot in my mind, then I can't hit it." He never used a yardage book or distance markers, which is a testament to how your mind can control the outcome of your round. Work on your mental game the next time you tee it up and save those precious few strokes that separate a good round from a not so good round. Good luck and I will see you on the course!

## Accolades continue to pour in for Patton

By Joe Collins  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Towns County High School junior Stephanie Patton has reached another milestone in her golfing career as she was recently awarded a coveted nomination to the Class A All State Girls Golf team.

She was one of two girls chosen from the public school arena to fill the team of eight behind the Public State Low Medallist Jordan Booker of Schley. This honor is just another testament to the athleticism of this young lady.

Patton anchored the Lady Indians to a winning season this year in which the girls won every match they played including the 4A Public Area Golf Championship. The regional victory saw Patton win the Low Medallist title to help earn the team a spot in the state championship. Patton again played solid at state as the girls finished in a tie for third and she won the runner-up individual title in a four-hole playoff against her friend and fellow competitor Ashley McDonald of Gordon Lee. That playoff was brutal because of the heat and the humidity, but she gutted it out during the hottest part of the day to finish second individually.

Patton took up the game of golf in 2009 under the direction and guidance of her father and PGA Member Steve Patton. He recognized her golf prowess and started working with her swing as she spent her first ever golf season competing in the Tri-County Junior Golf Association. "I never pushed my kids to take up golf even though I am a professional, but when she became interested in the game I was eager to get her going. I knew she had potential and she did okay her first year out," declared her father.

It was the 2010 TCJGA season where Patton showed her true ability. In just her second season on the tour she won four of the five events she competed in and repeated



Sophomore Stephanie Patton finished second in State last month earning her All-State honors. Photo/Joe Collins

the feat the following 2011 season. These multiple wins earned her the title of Grand Champion in her division for both years. Also in 2011, she traveled to Atlanta to compete in two events on the Atlanta Junior Golf Association Tour and won one event while finishing in the top five in the other. She has proved that she can win golf tournaments.

Patton is an excellent athlete and excels on the basketball court while playing her first love, basketball. She devotes most of her time training and working out as a basketball player and really only spends time with golf during the season.

Basketball happens to be Patton's first love, as far as sports are concerned, and she won an All-State nod in basketball this season as well. She broke the freshman and sophomore single season scoring records and has earned herself a reputation as one of the dominant lady basketball stars in the area. She is receiving a lot of attention from some great schools to play basketball, so golf is not at the forefront of

her attention, but she still plays a solid game and gives it her all during the season. She is just a solid athlete and will excel in any sport she plays.

"I had a blast on the golf team this season. The girls on the team are all good players and we encourage each other before and after a round. I can hardly wait until next season when we get to do it all over again with the same group of girls and maybe a few more," Stephanie Patton said regarding her year with the team.

Stephanie Patton started in the Towns County School System when she moved to Towns County from Oneonta, Ala. to start the second grade. She has been an Indian from day one and has decided to stay and graduate from TCHS.

This gives her two more years to play golf and basketball as her goal is to win a state championship in both sports for TCHS. Given her work ethics and her determination, she just might be a part of a state championship title in both golf and basketball. Congratulations Stephanie! Towns County is proud of you.

## University of Chattanooga wrestling tutors locals at Union County Camp

By Todd Forrest  
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Blairsville - Former NCAA All-American and current University of Chattanooga Wrestling Coach Jon Sioresdas, along with two of his Moc wrestlers were at The Pit in Blairsville last week for a 6th-12th grade wrestling camp.

Union County coach Michael Smith-Foot, in conjunction with Towns County Head Wrestling Coach Jeff Stowers, brought in the Division I wrestlers and coach to instruct young wrestlers from around the area.

Union County, Towns County, Fannin County, Murphy, NC, and Hayesville, NC each took part in the camp. Meanwhile the wrestling coach from Franklin County was also in attendance.

"This is a big deal for us," Coach Smith-Foot said. "We've got a major university that's hanging out with us and we hope to do this every year. Coach Stowers set everything up and did all the paperwork, we're just hosting."

For local programs like Union and Towns Counties, hosting a camp of this magnitude shows how serious the local coaches are when it comes to taking wrestling to the next level. For proof, look no further than the attention the camp garnered from around the area.

"We've got the coach from Franklin County here," Coach Smith-Foot said. "He doesn't have a kid in this camp but he's still here taking videos and to learn."

Towns and Union County were well represented, having the most wrestlers at the camp, followed by Fannin and Murphy. However the youngest camper was a rising sixth grader from Hayesville.

"That's really cool," Coach Smith-Foot said. It's pretty intense for a sixth grader to come to a college-level camp."

According to Coach



Towns County wrestlers at the University of Chattanooga Camp in Blairsville. Photos by Todd Forrest

Smith-Foot, the camp began as a fundamental camp, then evolved into a more of a skills camp.

"He (Sioresdas) showed them the fundamentals and the basics, then he showed two or three advanced moves you can do, and that's what I love about it," Coach Smith-Foot said.

Coach Sioresdas just recently came to Chattanooga via Old Dominion University, and is known for specializing in the Granby System of wrestling.

According to Sioresdas' website, www.jstrainingcamps.com, he has been a featured clinician and has conducted training camps across the country including The Martin's Granby School

of Wrestling, Terry Brands' Wrestle the World Training Camps, University of Missouri Wrestling Camps, Old Dominion University Wrestling Camps, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Wrestling Camps, and Workhorse Wrestling Camps.

He has also been featured at the NHSCA High School Nationals, United States Southeast Regional Training Center, Oklahoma Coaches Clinic, and Team Michigan Fargo Training Camp. He has held private training camps at several championship high school programs across the United States and continues to train some of the nation's best student-athletes.