

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

www.townscountyherald.net • E-mail: tcherald@windstream.net

14&U Baseball places third at District Tourney

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Jefferson - The Towns County Dizzy Dean Youth League Boys 14&U baseball team finished third in the District 6 Tournament last Wednesday at the Jefferson Recreation Complex.

The team faced Jefferson in the Semi Finals to earn a chance to play undefeated Union County for the championship. A sixth inning rally saw Jefferson score six runs and take a 9-6 lead into the bottom of the inning. Towns scored one run in the sixth but couldn't muster the hits in the seventh and had to settle for third place overall in District 6.

The first inning found the team trailing in the bottom of the inning 0-1. Towns played as the home team this game and Kobe Denton got things started as he led off the teams' first at bat with a single to center. Major Moss hit a solid shot at the second baseman as Denton was in the act of stealing second and he moved to third on the throw to first to get Moss. A throwing error on the very next batter got Denton home and the score was tied 1-1 as the inning ended.

Moss got the start and was on the mound for the team as the second inning got underway. Cole Ledford had a great defensive play for the first out of the inning while Moss took a sharp ground ball back at the mound for a lob to first and the second out. A base on balls, a run down on some faulty Jefferson base running and the threat was over in the second. A solid RBI single for Peyton Smith in the bottom of the inning, he went 3-for-3 on the night, gave Towns the lead, 2-1 going into the third.



Towns County 14&U baseball at Jefferson. Photos/Joe Collins

Jefferson was able to tie the game 2-2 as they collected on two of the four hits they were able to get against Moss. The inning also saw Denton throw a bullet from center to Zack Davenport, his cut off man, on a single up the middle. Davenport turned and fired a strike to catcher Jackson Taylor for the sliding out at home. It was a perfectly played defensive effort by the team. A ground ball to third and the top of the inning was over still tied at 2-2.

Towns scored the bulk of their runs on the night in the bottom of the third inning. Denton reached again on the second of his two singles in the game to start the inning and a sacrifice fly by Moss got Denton to second base. A balk by the pitcher

put him on third and a RBI double for Cole Ledford got him home for the first of four runs in the inning. An RBI single by Taylor following a walk made it 4-2 Towns and a two out double for Isaiah Shook gave the team two more runs and the lead as the inning ended 6-2.

The fourth inning saw Moss shut down Jefferson with the assistance of some solid defense by the team. Ledford had another great catch and Taylor showed his arm from behind the plate as he threw out a walked runner trying to steal second. Denton then caught a routine fly ball and the top of the fourth was in the books.

Towns got runners into scoring position in the bottom of the inning but couldn't

capitalize, stranding two of the nine runners they left on base all night. Smith got his third hit in as many tries in the contest but no runs scored.

The fifth saw Coach Taylor relieve Moss with Davenport and a motivated Jefferson team welcomed him with some solid hitting. Davenport struck out the first batter of the inning but gave up three of the seven hits he allowed on the next three hitters and the bases were loaded with only one out. A hard grounder to Denton at shortstop and the out count moved to two but a run scored to close the gap for Jefferson at 6-3. A quick throw to third from Taylor caught a Jefferson base runner napping and the inning ended with little bloodshed.

The top of the sixth inning was the undoing of some good work by the 14&U team. They entered the inning leading 6-3 and exited the inning trailing 9-6. Some sloppy play by the defense and some hanging curve balls gave Jefferson the edge they needed to take the lead and build the momentum to play tough in the bottom of the sixth, and seventh to hold Towns to one run and win 9-7. The team made too many errors in the sixth and paid the price. It was tough getting to the semi-finals and they made a good run for most of the game.

The team scored six runs on 12 hits with two of those hits being for extra bases. They left nine stranded and stole six bases. They had 10 errors, which included throwing and fielding problems and gained first base eight times by walks. The team hit well but had trouble hitting with runners in scoring position. It was a solid effort to end a good season against some tough competition. The Towns 14&U can hold their heads high with a District 6 third place finish.

Joe Collins

Tips from the Range

There is a split second of action that determines how your shot will turn out and that action is at the very top of the swing when the arms start their initial move down. This is the primary area that will allow the club to start on the proper path back to the ball, and if it isn't smooth and solid, the club head will be wrong at impact. It is vital that you allow the club to "fall" out of the top. Don't influence the initial drop with the hands in any way or you will create a bad path for the arms to follow. This is the most consistent flaw I see in amateurs and many don't even realize they are doing it. The top has to be correct to produce good shots consistently.

When we talk about the action we have out of the top of our swing, the one word that should come to mind is smooth. If you look at the great Tom Watson's swing you will notice that he starts his downswing before the arms finish their arc to the top. In other words, his weight transfer is headed toward his left side before the completion of the backswing. This movement makes his downswing very smooth because it allows his lower body to start the move to impact. Remember, this move to the front foot leads the weight transfer on the downswing and that is the key to swinging smoothly.

There are two major reasons why the "move from the top" can get fouled up and the first is BALANCE! How many times have we talked about balance as a key to the proper swing? If the core of the swing tilts, then the club will follow a very negative path and you will not like the outcome. Typically it will be a pull. You need to feel as though you are leaning away and behind the ball at impact and that will guarantee your arms extend. This will also allow your lower body to begin the downswing.

You must not do anything with your hands as the club starts its path to impact. If you are out of balance at the top, then you will need to cast your hands first to help reestablish your center of gravity on the downswing. This early release of the hands will also make you open your shoulders to soon, so make sure you are in a good balanced position throughout the whole of your stance and swing.

There is an interesting point that I would like to emphasize while talking about

balance and the start of your downswing. Your arms weigh approximately ten pounds each. When you start your backswing, you will be swinging twenty pounds of active weight in motion to the top and then returning it to impact. That alone will pull you to your toes during the swing, and once you are on your toes, you will have to re-adjust your balance and WHAM, that rocking of the weight has made you swing bad out of the top and your shot is over, start cussing cause most likely, "it ain't gonna be pretty." You must stay in balance throughout the whole of the swing and not just at address. Most often times when you see a tour pro hit a shot offline, it was because his/her balance was bad. It is one of the biggest things they work on when looking at fundamental issues.

The second most popular error that affects the start of the downswing is the need to "hit" the ball instead of trusting the swing to do the work for us. This overwhelming desire to hit it hard is a good attribute but it has its place and time during the swing. It is natural for us to try and manipulate the speed of the club with our smaller muscles like those found in the hands and wrists because it feels better. But, it is the larger muscle group that we must engage to achieve the best results and greatest distance. I have always said that with proper accuracy will come proper distance. The two go hand in hand when swinging correctly. This is why the pros can hit those long drives into really narrow fairways.

To avoid this error, you must simply be in balance and let the body swing the club. Keep your grip pressure firm but don't squeeze the grip and allow the big muscles to control the action. Your hands and arms are along for the ride until just before impact when the lower hand can pour on the power. This will happen naturally if the weight transfer is correct and your head is behind impact. The great Ben Hogan said, "I hit the ball as hard as I can with my right hand but this action must wait until the club has left the top."

Focus on how the club leaves the top of the swing and you will begin to see that the club will work for you and not against you. Clubs are designed to swing hard, but do it in the correct sequence: Upper body first on the backswing and lower body first on the downswing. Let the hands play catch-up on the downswing and watch your shots improve.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

Rodeo for Gooch House draws record crowds

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Blairsville - Glenda Gooch was a native to Union County. She was as pure a native as one can get to be truthful. Her family roots extend from the turn of the nineteenth century and possibly even further as the exact date of many pilgrims coming to Union County remains a mystery.

She loved her home and cared deeply about the people who lived here. She lived her short life exactly as one would who respected that home and the people she shared it with. Her main concern in life was to be kind to others just the way the Lord she believed in taught her. It is ironic that her heart, that was so full of love for the other person, would be the cause of her leaving her beloved family and home behind.

To honor her memory, and to keep her wishes of helping folks alive, three beautiful local ladies decided that something was needed to actually help people in need. Their experiences with Glenda during her hospital life offered the perfect scenario for their living tribute to the girl they had grown to love so much. Their dream came to be The Glenda Gooch House located on the property at Union General Hospital. A home where hospital patients and their families can stay at no cost while they have the need to be near the Union County Nursing Home or UGH.

"We had a strong desire to keep Glenda's memory alive and to honor the girl who had done so much for others. She is in Heaven right now smiling down at us and is pleased with the home and the service it provides for those who need it," proclaimed Jeanne Tallent, one of the founders of the home.

It cost the directors approximately \$9000 annually to maintain the home, do any repairs that are needed and to pay the utilities. To cover this, the directors have a big fundraiser every two years to aid in covering the cost of operation. This year was the time to raise some money so the Hedrick Rodeo Company from Madisonville, TN came to town last Friday and Saturday night to help out.

The Union County Arena was the host location of the Blairsville Rodeo to raise the needed funds to provide the home service. It was a packed house as the community turned out in record numbers to honor the "girl with the big heart" and to see some great rodeo action. The patrons were not disappointed.

"This is a packed house tonight. We got new bleachers and they hold about 1,500 people



There was plenty of fun to be had by all ages as the Union County Arena played host to the Blairsville Rodeo to benefit the Glenda Gooch House. Photos/Joe Collins

but with standing room only we'll probably have nearly two thousand here tonight. It's great to see folks turn out to support such a great cause and I want to thank the Union County Saddle Club for all their help in making this work. This is their home and they work hard to take care of it," declared County Supervisor Larry Garrett.

The Union County Saddle Club was on hand to provide the needed volunteer services and to direct the record crowds. The clubs own SAs and Saddles Precision Drill Team opened the show with their parade of the American Flag. It was a very impressive display as eight mounted young

ladies cut and turned around the arena while holding "Old Glory" high above their steed's head as the veterans in the crowd were honored for their service.

The rodeo served up the action too as cowboys and cowgirls flew across the arena and through the air. The bucking broncs got things started as the rodeo got underway, followed by the calf roping, barrel racing, trick riding, team calf roping and the crowd favorite, bull riding. South Carolina's own Wesley Buckner put on a bull riding display as his bull jumped straight up out of the gate and tossed Buckner for all he was worth but couldn't shake him as the eight-second buzzer

sounded. It was a thrilling ride for the world's fifteenth ranked rookie who won the event with a score of 79.

This was a sanctioned event, which qualifies riders in the International Professional Rodeo Circuit and the number one calf roping team and the number two calf roper in the world were in Blairsville to try and build points. The IPR only invites the top fifteen cowboys and cowgirls in the world to their IPR Championship held in Oklahoma City, OK the third week in January and the Hedrick circuit was an opportunity to work on their points tally.

The Glenda Gooch house reaped the benefits of the record crowds that turned out for the rodeo. It will ensure the safe and comfortable care of the families and patients that come to Union County for care and need a place to stay. It takes the worry off the backs of patrons who have plenty of worry already because of a sick or dying loved one.

Tallent shared a story that sums up how Glenda felt about others as she worked the rodeo on Saturday night.

"Glenda was always concerned about the care of others and one night she proved that love by ordering pizza. Glendon (her father) had returned to the hospital to sit with her for the night and she said to him, "Dad, I hope you don't mind but I ordered pizza. Of course he said that was okay with him but then Glenda said, "no dad you don't understand, I ordered pizza for everybody on the whole floor. I wanted them to have a good meal."

It took Glendon three months to pay off Dominos, but that is just the way she was. That is why this house is so fitting to help honor her memory.

She told me once that she didn't want people to forget her and this home keeps her beautiful memory alive for the town she loved."

Youth Football Registration

Towns County Youth Football Director Jimmy Smith announced that the registration for athletes will begin on June 29th from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. at the Towns County High School practice field which is located on the hill behind the elementary school.

A first time participants will need to bring a birth certificate. Everyone will be required to show proof of residence. Fee for the season is \$90. Mark your calendar now.

"We would like all the kids ages 5 - 11 years of age that have a desire to learn how to play football to come out and participate this year," Smith

said. "We had a good turnout last year and a great season and I am looking forward to this year. It is a good experience for the kids and teaching them to play football is what it is all about. We teach them something at this level and they will remember it as they get older. That helps the school teams and your seeing a lot of kids playing in middle and high school that are products of our league."

Registration will be every Saturday through July from 2-4 p.m. until the opening of practice on July 29. If you have any questions please contact Smith at (706) 835-6176.

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 Hwy. 76 west of Hiawassee. For more details please call us at 706-896-2600.

Fish for Food Fishing Tournament

Matthew 25 Food Ministries presents "Fish for Food Fishing Tournament". 60% of tournament money goes to feed needy families in our area. The remaining 40% 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.

Entry fee is \$50 per boat, the tournaments begin in March and end in October, oc-

curing the second Saturday of each month rotating between Lake Chatuge, Woods Grove Boat Ramp and Lake Nottely, Deaver Road Boat Ramp, from 7 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Tournament schedule: July 13 - Chatuge; August 10 - Nottely; September 14 - Chatuge; and October 12 - Nottely. For contact information call David Crisp at 706-897-5347.