

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Lady Indians softball team hard at work as season approaches

By Shawn Jarrard
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Practice continues for Towns County Lady Indians Varsity softball, as the team gets ready for the start of the season.

"We've been working a lot of pitching," said Head Coach Brandon Rowland. "I've actually got five girls now that are trying to pitch for me."

Coach Rowland has even brought in last year's ace starting pitcher, graduate Emily Ledford, to help the girls, and has enlisted Barry Churchill as assistant coach to help with the offense.

Churchill is the father of Lady Indian Zandra Churchill.

"Our batting, it's a lot better now than it was last year at this point," said Coach Rowland. "They're hungry for it. They're coming in - we just went with Tuesday and Thursday practices, and they actually asked if this year we could bump it up to four days a week."

"We're going in the evenings to get a little bit of hitting practice in. They're getting really excited about things, which in turn excites me. That makes my job a lot easier."

With a roster that now includes five potential pitchers, the upcoming season holds lots of promise for the Lady Indians.

"I'm trying to work on these pitchers and get some people in here to help out a little bit more than what I can do as far as pitching wise goes," said Coach Rowland. "Now, if it was baseball pitching, because I pitched all the way through, I could do that."

"But just getting some people who have done it competitively to come in here and give them pointers that help them out. And that's what I'm trying to do now. I've got a couple of ladies coming in to



With the start of the 2015 season right around the corner, the young Lady Indians are continuing to show improvement. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

help me out with that." The difference between pitching in baseball and pitching in softball comes down to the mechanics of the throw, and

many argue that the windmill style of fastpitch is much harder to perfect than the overhand throwing style of baseball. "There's a lot more that



goes into it," said Coach Rowland. "Obviously, with a baseball pitch, you're pretty much coming from back behind you and up over your head. There's

some things to do with the elbow as far as placement, and then obviously your landing. "But with softball pitching, you're winding your arm a

full 360 degrees, and knowing the exact release point to let it go. And then you have the flicks of your wrist and stuff like that - there's so many more mechanics that go into softball pitching than into baseball. I'm not saying that one is harder than the other, because both of them, it's an art form to get down. But it seems like there's a lot more going into a softball pitch than there is a baseball pitch."

The team's roster will be finalized soon, but Coach Rowland is hoping to garner a few more walk-on players after school starts, during tryouts.

"I've got 14 girls right now, and I'm waiting until the first week of school, and we're going to have tryouts on Thursday and Friday, just in case there are five or six girls that were planning on playing softball but may have been doing other things in the summer," said Coach Rowland.

"If we get five or six girls that come out, that opens up where we could maybe get a JV team going, which would be awesome. We just don't have the numbers right now to do it. If I got about five or six other girls that were willing to come in and play, I can pull up a couple of eighth graders and schedule some JV type games for them."

The first varsity games of the season will be a doubleheader played at George Walton Academy on Saturday, Aug. 8.

VFW Golf League news

The Hiawassee VFW Post 7807 golf league plays each Thursday at Chatuge Shores Golf Course. This week's event was won by Mel Halfon, J.C. Berrong, Joy Miller and Dean Swanson. They shot a 62 which is 10 strokes under par. Congratulations on an outstanding round.

NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

"Rowdy" Kyle sweeps the Indy bricks

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind.— Kyle Busch won both weekend races at the famed Brickyard. He has now won four of the last five Sprint Cup races, and is without a doubt the hottest driver on the Sprint Cup circuit.

"It took a lot to win this one," said Busch. "I can't believe we've come this far in such a short time. It's really a treat to win here at Indy. I want to thank all my fans for sticking with me."

"Sweeping Indy has got to be the biggest weekend of my life." After breaking a foot and leg prior to the Daytona 500, Busch was out for eleven weeks. NASCAR said he would have to win at least one race, and finish in the top-30 in order to make this year's Chase. He is currently 32nd in points, and only needs to pick up 23 more points over the next six races.

Busch grabbed the lead from Kevin Harvick on a restart with eight laps to go in Sunday's 164-lap race. There were two more restarts, and the race ended under a green-white-checked finish.

On the last restart, Joey Logano remained in Busch's rear-view mirror, but did not have the speed to get around for the lead.

"It's all about winning," said Logano, who finished second. "The last restart was a good one for us, but I just couldn't get under him. It was close, but it wasn't a win."

Kevin Harvick, who led the most laps (75) finished third. He had a strong car, and looked like the one to beat earlier in the race, but fizzled at the end.

"The restarts killed us," said Harvick. "We had the same problem last week. We've got to get better. One time someone got into the back of me, and I couldn't get going, but we've got to show improvement."

Martin Truex, Denny Hamlin, Clint Bowyer, Matt Kenseth, Kurt Busch, Kyle Larson, and Brad Keselowski were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Polesitter Carl Edwards finished 13th after leading 20 laps.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. spun out on lap 159, but managed to stay on the lead lap and finished 22nd.

Jeff Gordon, who has five Indy wins got caught up in a Clint Bowyer spinout on lap 50, and finished 42nd.

"I don't know what happened to him (Clint Bowyer)," said Gordon. "It got sideways on me and I had no place to go. I really hate it, but we're not giving up. There's a lot of racing left in this season."

Top-10 leaders after 20 of 36: 1. Harvick-777, 2. Logano-708, 3. Earnhardt-677, 4. Johnson-675, 5. Truex-668, 6. Keselowski-638, 7. Kenseth-615, 8. Kurt Busch-612, 9. McMurray-602, 10. Hamlin-591.

KYLE BUSCH BEATS BLANEY IN XFINITY
Kyle Busch made a last lap pass on Ryan Blaney to win Saturday's Xfinity race at Indianapolis. Busch, who led 53 laps of the 100-lap race was trailing Blaney as the field took the white flag, signifying one more lap.

Busch caught Blaney as the two drivers came out of turn-2, and was able to make the pass for the lead as the cars headed down the backstretch.

"I was able to get up some momentum coming out of the corner," said Busch. "He was running higher than I was, and it allowed me to get under him."

As Busch passed, the draft from Busch's car caused Blaney's No. 22 Ford to wiggle a little, and he was not able to retake the lead.

"I am very disappointed," said Blaney. "I don't know what happened on that last lap. Maybe I drifted up. Maybe I got a little loose. I know we should have won the race."

Daniel Suarez, who started second, finished third.

"Man, we really had a super car today," he said. "I mean, it was really fast. We kept trying to find a little more speed, but it was still a good finish."

Paul Menard was fourth, followed by Elliott Sadler, Kevin Harvick, Kyle Larson, Regan Smith, Ty Dillon, and Chase Elliott.

Top-10 leaders after 18 of 33: 1. C. Buescher-651, 2. Elliott-626, 3. T. Dillon-621, 4. Smith-600, 5. Townley-360, 6. Wallace-568, 7. Suarez-558, 8. Gaughan-537, 9. Scott-527, 10. Reed-526.

BELL CLAIMS ELDORA TRUCK RACE

Christopher Bell won Wednesday's Truck Series race at Eldora Speedway.

Top-10 finishers: 1. Christopher Bell, 2. Bobby Pierce, 3. Tyler Reddick, 4. Eric Jones, 5. Daniel Hemric, 6. Austin Dillon, 7. John Nemechek, 8. Cameron Hayley, 9. Matt Crafton, 10. Ty Dillon.

Top-10 leaders after 11 of 23: 1. Crafton-452, 2. Reddick-438, 3. E. Jones-428, 4. Sauter-381, 5. Townley-360, 6. Hayley-351, 7. Hemric-347, 8. Peters-343, 9. Gallagher-335, 10. Kennedy-329.

GORDON HONORED IN HOMETOWN

Jeff Gordon, who will



Kyle Busch, winner of both NASCAR races. Furnished by NASCAR.

retire at the end of this season made a visit to his hometown of Pittsboro Indiana, to be guest of honor in a parade, and receive recognition from the residents and officials.

"The coolest thing is driving down the main street and seeing all those people, that blew my mind," said Gordon. "To be able to share with some high school friends of mine, made my day, made their day."

"It does mean a lot to me. When I am surrounded by people who supported me so much, I start thinking, what got me here and how it all happened, I get emotional at things like that."

Among the many honors and accolades given him, was an official police badge from the chief of police.

"They better rethink this badge," Gordon said. "And the friends of mine that are here better rethink some things. How far back can I go on some citizen arrests? Of course, I'd be pulling myself into that as well."

Weekend Racing: The Sprint and Truck teams are at the 2.5-mile tri-oval in Pocono, Pennsylvania, while the Xfinity Series is at Iowa Speedway, a seven-eighths mile oval.

Sat., Aug. 1; Truck Series race 12 of 23; Starting time: 1 pm ET; TV: Foxsports1.

Sat., Aug. 1; Xfinity Series race 19 of 33; Starting time: 8 pm ET; TV: NBCS.

Sun., Aug. 2; Sprint Cup Series race 21 of 36; Starting time: 1:30 pm ET; TV: NBCS.

Note: Last week we reported that the NBCS Sports Channel was located at channel 60 on Time Warner cable. According to some readers in upstate New York, channel 50 is the right one.

Racing Trivia Question: Can a driver make the Sprint Cup Chase without winning a race?

Last Week's Question: At what track does the 10-race Chase for the Sprint Cup Championship begin? It begins Sept. 20 at Chicago.

You may contact the Racing Reporter by e-mail at: hodges@race500.com. NT(Jul29,C1)ac

Towns County football adds new assistant to Indians coaching staff

By Shawn Jarrard
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As the school year draws ever so near - officially beginning for students next week on Thursday, Aug. 6 - Towns County Indians are looking forward to another season of Blue and White on the football field.

The team's new assistant coach, Alan Morris, is also excited about the upcoming season.

Coach Morris started his tenure as an Indian at the first of July, and so far, he likes what he's seen.

"These kids are so good at picking up stuff, they're good at what they're doing," said Coach Morris. "The more they practice it, the more they rep it, the more they do it and the more they play it against other competition when Hayesville comes and different teams - the more they do it, the better they're going to get and the more confidence they're going to build. And it makes them a dangerous team."

For the past 43 years, Coach Morris has called Florida his home. He was born in Haines City, which is a small town between Orlando and Tampa. He grew up there, went to school there, played football there, and even coached there before moving to Orlando for a year, and finally to Towns County this year.

He has spent the majority of his career in education as a paraprofessional while helping coach little league teams, as well as at the middle and high school levels, and he worked as a teacher in Orlando last year before taking the job here in Towns County.

Coach Morris has a bachelor's degree in mathematics, and he will be teaching Math Intervention classes at the high school this year. In football, his assignment will be to help the team generally as assistant coach, but his specialty in the past has been on special teams.

"I'm really good at the



Coach Alan Morris (right) with Head Coach Billy Barnhart, joins the Indians football coaching staff after spending most of his life in Florida, including a coaching gig in his hometown of Haines City, Fla. He was a quarterback and kicker in high school and will coach special teams. Coach Morris has proven that he can get his players to the next level as he's coached kickers that went on to play D-1 football. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

special teams and kickers," said Coach Morris, who was a kicker himself in high school and played a little at quarterback. "I've had four kids in eight years go on to the next level somewhere - I had a couple that went to small colleges, I had a couple of Division I kickers."

"I know what needs to be done if they have any leg at all. We have a good kicker here, Shea Underwood. I'm sure he can pretty much go where he wants to, because he's good in the classroom as well, I hear."

Good in the classroom is certainly true, as Underwood is heading into his senior year with the Top GPA in his class.

But Underwood is not the only brainy kid on the team - according to Coach Morris, that's a quality that

can be said of pretty much the entire squad.

"It's all about IQ level," said Coach Morris. "These kids at this school that I've seen so far, the IQ level is off the charts. They pick up stuff really quick. They picked up their new defenses so quickly - we've only done the summer, and they scripted 40 plays today."

"Coach Barnhart said today in the meeting to them, he said we're light years ahead of last year at this school, because the kids are picking up stuff so quickly that you've got more time of teaching individually because they already know the plays. So, it's going to be easier to get into the season, and they're going to have pretty good success. It wouldn't surprise me how good they do."