

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Barnhart: 'summer is over, the preseason is now here'

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Last Thursday, July 30, was the last day of summer practice before the Towns County Indians headed off to camp for the weekend, a final summer football hoorah before school starts and the season begins.

"It's upon us – summer is over," said Indians Football Head Coach Billy Barnhart.

And if practice has been any indication of the upcoming season, the boys are soon to be off to a running start.

"We've had a great July," said Coach Barnhart. "They've busted their tails in the weight room, they've busted their tails out here on the field. We've demanded a lot out of them, mentally and physically, and they've stepped up and answered the bell, and it's been great. I'm real, real proud of them, and real pleased with where we're at right now."

The Indians' first game of the season will be a scrimmage against Hayesville, NC, at home on Friday, Aug. 21, at 7:30 p.m., which is still a few weeks away.

"Right now, we've just been working on ourselves," said Coach Barnhart. "Just working on getting better at



Coach Barnhart and his Indians are hard at work preparing for the upcoming season that kicks off in two weeks with a scrimmage vs Hayesville. Photos/Shawn Jarrard

what we do offensively and defensively, and that's really what we need to do. We'll treat that week like a regular game week for us, and that's when we'll start prepping.

"Coaching wise, we've talked about them and we've looked at them, and we know what they're doing. But as far as prepping for Hayesville, right now we're just con-

centrating on ourselves."

The Indians spent the last weekend before the first week of school at Fort Bluff Camp in Dayton, Tenn.

"We're going to get a lot of good, hard football work in, and that is a big part of why we go to camp," said Coach Barnhart the day before their departure. "But the main reason I want us to get to camp is I want us as a team to get away,



to get with each other, just get by ourselves and just spend time together.

"We're going to be living together for 48 hours – we're going to be sleeping with each other, we're going to be bathing with each other, we're going to be eating with each other, practicing with each other. My main goal is to get us closer together as a team, to build that family atmosphere, build that

team mentality that we're all in this together.

"Get to know each other better and be able to know that when they line up on that field Friday night – because they're the ones out there playing – that they can look to the right and left, and they can depend on that guy that's beside them."

And that's what camp is really all about – the bonding a team must go through

to become a fluid unit on the field, one which can rely on its constituent parts and trust what's going on in a chaotic game-time environment.

"We'll have some fun time, but most of it is going to be work, and just growing together as a team and growing as men," said Coach Barnhart. "So, that's what I'm looking forward to."

Towns County's youth football teams gearing up for Jamboree

By Shawn Jarrard
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Practices for the Towns County Youth Football League are well under way, and the boys, ages 5 through 12, have been taking to the field with competitive zeal.

Numbers are up this year for the most part, and Youth Football Director Jimmy Smith hit Towns County Schools Open House this year with forms in hand, hoping to recruit even more young men for his teams, especially for the Pee Wees.

The young men who start Towns County football in the youth league have the distinct honor of playing for years, on through high school, as Indians alongside their friends and brothers – a unique tradition of football in the North Georgia Mountains.

"Everybody is excited," said Director Smith. "We've got the Jamboree Game next Saturday (Aug. 8). We're going



to be in Murphy at 1 p.m., and we'll play at 1:30."

The Jamboree Game is a scrimmage matchup, featuring other teams in the Smoky Mountain Conference, and all four Towns County teams will get a chance to warm up against Murphy before the

season opener on Saturday, Aug. 15, against Franklin at home, which starts at 11 a.m. in Frank McClure Memorial Stadium.

"We're getting better every day," said Midgets Head Coach Damon Crowder. "They're learning. We've got a few new players, and they are getting better. We're going over our plays right now."

The 11 and 12-year-old Midgets are looking forward to a good season, and the Mites are practicing hard, too.

"We have an even mix of talent," said Mites Head Coach Joseph Goble, who coached the Termites last season. "We have a lot of 10-year-olds and 9-year-olds. Last year I didn't have that – last year, I had straight 7-year-olds and a few 8s. This year it's a lot different, I have a good mix this year of ages.

"There's a lot of talent. My biggest challenge right now is taking the talent and putting them in the right positions, because these kids, they're talented in so many different areas, it's hard to find the right position for them. Really, that's



Towns County youth football practice photos by Shawn Jarrard

the struggle I'm having right now."

Both Coaches Crowder and Goble are coaching their own sons this year, Collin and Jensen respectively, as is 2015-2016 Termites Head Coach Shane Haney his son, Lane.

"We've got a good mixture of speed and size, so it's looking like we're going to have a really good season," said Coach Haney, who coached the Pee Wee team last year. "The kids seem like they're very attentive. This is a big jump up from Pee Wees – Pee Wees, it's hard to get their attention. Seven and 8s are a little bit more focused and a little bit more hungry, and you can see it in them that they are really wanting to compete."

All of the coaches volunteer their time to help mold these boys into star athletes and young men, as does Director Smith, whose own son, Daw-

son, plays with the Mites.

It's that level of commitment, the commitment of fathers and men who can proudly serve as role models, that keeps the youth football program alive and well.

New to coaching his own team is Pee Wee Head Coach Matthew Goodwin, whose son Jaykob is a Pee Wee this year.

"It's going pretty good," said Coach Goodwin. "We're lacking players right now, but it's going good for what we've got."

The Pee Wee team is in sore need of 5 and 6-year-old football players, and the recruiting process is still ongoing.

Signups will continue through Monday, Aug. 10, which will be the last day that kids can sign up to be on one of the teams. Practice that Monday begins and 6 p.m. and runs until 7:45 p.m. at the Towns

County practice football field behind the schools, so parents should make sure to bring their child to this practice if they want to play youth football this season.

Interested young athletes and their parents should bring a copy of their child's birth certificate at signup, as it will be provided to the Smoky Mountain Conference as proof of age.

A one-time payment of \$90 will be required at the time of signup in order to cover costs of playing during the season, including insurance, a game jersey that kids will get to keep at the end of the season, and a trophy at the end-of-year banquet.

Again, in order to be accepted on one of the teams, parents will need to provide a copy of their child's birth certificate at the time of signup, along with the \$90.

Kids who played last year will not need to provide copies of their birth certificates at signup.

Teams are broken down into categories according to age: Pee Wees are 5 and 6-year-olds; Termites are 7 and 8-year-olds; Mites are 9 and 10-year-olds; and Midgets are 11 and 12-year-olds.

VFW Golf League news

The Hiwassee VFW Golf League plays each Thursday at Chatuge Shores Golf Course. This week's event was won by Ray Ide, Mel White and Clair Hartman. Congratulations on showing us some good play-

Low Country Boil for Special Olympics August 16th

Low Country Boil in support of Union/Towns County and Fannin County Special Olympics on Sunday, August 16, 2015 at Copperhead Lodge.

Founder Michael A. Bozzuto started the "Dream Ride" in 2001 "to help people with intellectual disabilities living in our communities." The ride begins August 15th in West Palm Beach, FL and spans 12 states, arriving in Farmington, CT on August 21st. The event has grown to include thousands of participants from multiple countries and culminates with a weekend of activities in Farmington. 100% of the proceeds benefit Special Olympics.

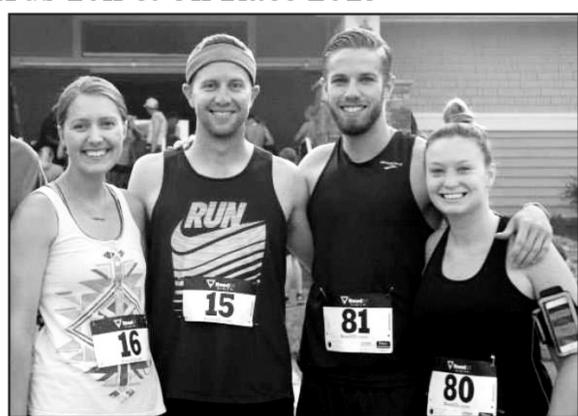
Find out more information at www.dreamride.org.

Copperhead Lodge is partnering with Union/Towns County and Fannin County Special Olympics to host afternoon games for Special Olympians followed by a Low Country Boil. Tickets are \$25 per person and are available at Copperhead Lodge and through both organizations. Call Becky Tracy (Union/Towns) 706-851-7634 or Holly Sloan (Fannin) 706-400-2751. Ticket price includes Low Country Boil and two (2) drinks per person, and must be purchased in advance. No tickets available day of event. Live music by Danny Rhea. NT(Aug5,Z19)CA

Dash to the Vineyards 10k & 5k Race 2015

Join us for a race through the rolling hills of Young Harris! The Second Annual Dash to the Vineyards 10K & 5K Race presented by Towns County Chamber of Commerce & Crane Creek Vineyards will be held Saturday, August 22, 2015.

The 10K race will begin at the Brasstown Valley Resort Riding Stables at 8 a.m. and finish at Crane Creek Vineyards. The 5K will also begin at 8 a.m. but these racers will start and end at the vineyards. Competitors will experience both downhill and uphill climbs to the finish at Crane Creek Vineyards. It's the best time to dash to the vineyards because Crane Creek in August has the most breath-taking views of the year! Trophies will be awarded to 10K and 5K runners male/female in a variety of age groups. Shuttles will be available after the race to take 10K runners back to the Stables. T-shirts will be guaranteed to all who pre-register.



Previous race participants

Registration is now open at the Towns County Chamber of Commerce located at 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris, or online at www.active.com. Forms are also available on the Chamber's website - www.mountaintopga.com. (On the home page click the link for "Things To Do".) Entry Fee is \$25 before 8/07/15 and \$30 after. The cost is the same for

both the 10K and 5K race. There is a \$10 off discount for all students (elementary - college). A portion of the proceeds will benefit scholarships for graduating student athletes.

For more information, call the Towns County Chamber of Commerce at (706) 896-4966, or you can email Candace Lee at candacelee@brmcmc.net. NT(Aug5,Z28)CA

Good Shepherd invites golfers to tournament benefit

What could be better than 18 holes of golf and dinner afterwards on a beautiful September day?

All area golfers are cordially invited to join the golfers of Good Shepherd Episcopal Church Hayesville in our 2nd Annual Benefit Outing, at 12:30 on September 26 at the Ridges Golf Club. Chairman Jim Redmond says that golfers of all levels, both men and women, are welcome for fun, fellowship, food, and fund-raising.

Redmond describes the tournament as an 18-hole best ball scramble, with a shotgun start at 12:30. After the tourna-

ment, golfers and their guests will enjoy dinner and a cash bar at the Ridges.

The price for the occasion is \$100 per golfer, which includes 18 holes of golf with cart and dinner. Sponsorships are also available for \$100. Those who don't play golf but want to enjoy the fun may purchase a dinner only ticket.

For more information about participating in the tournament, call Jim Redmond at 248-425-0307. To learn more about Good Shepherd's many activities, see the website at www.goodshepherdhayesville.org. NT(Aug5,Z13)CA