

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Towns County youth football teams split four games with Franklin

By Shawn Jarrard
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Towns County Youth Football went 2-2 at Frank McClure Memorial Stadium in season opening games against Franklin County of the Smoky Mountain Conference on Saturday, Aug. 15. "It was an awesome day, and I want to thank everybody for coming out and showing support for us," said TCYFL Director Jimmy Smith. "It was packed. From 11 a.m. until the end, there were as many people there as there are at a varsity high school football game. Franklin brought the people, and we had a lot of people. You had red on one whole side and blue on the other."

Perhaps the biggest story of the game came from the Midgets, a team that lost every game last year and scored two touchdowns the entire season. The 2014 team was a hard-playing group of youngsters with loads of heart, but the 2015 seemed ready to make a new statement on Saturday.

The Midget team beat Franklin 40-0, allowing Franklin only three first downs the entirety of the game.

"They beat us last year 40-0, and this year we beat them 40-0," said Director Smith. "That's a big deal."

Collin Crowder, son of



The young Indians take a water break. Photos/Lowell Nicholson
Head Coach Damon Crowder, and he just came out, grabbed it out of his arms and took off running for about a 40-yard touchdown."

On defense, Cody Young forced a fumble then recovered it, and Cole Wade led the defense on tackles.

Unfortunately, the Towns Pee Wees lost their first game of the season 36-6, with Aiden Reynolds scoring the only touchdown of the game, an impressive 50-yard carry.

The young team of 5- and 6-year-olds took on five new players the week before the big game, and Head Coach Matthew Goodwin looks forward to building on the basics as his team of 13 progresses through the season.

Hayden McClure put up some killer numbers as well, rushing for 150 yards and receiving for 70, with a touchdown of his own to bump up the Midgets' already high score.

Kyle Oakes barreled in two more touchdown passes, and his brother, Garrett Oakes, had a 40-yard carry to score.

"Garrett took the ball away from a running back," said Director Smith. "We had him tackled,



The Indians hit the field with determination. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Termites, however, beat their Franklin counterparts 22-0 to cement an early undefeated record.

Termite Brett Young proved an offensive powerhouse, carrying the ball 92 yards for 2 touchdowns and a 2-point conversion. Brody Burke had four carries of his own for 45 yards and a 2-point conversion, while Dawson Devane carried for 11 yards and had the team's third touchdown.

Defensively, Cooper Floyd ruled the day with five tackles, two sacks and two forced fumbles.

Right on his tail, Lane Haney had a sack and forced fumble, and Logan Byrd was able to force a fumble and get the recovery.

"I was really impressed with the boys, how they came out and hit," said Termites Head Coach Shane Haney. "They finished really strong and played hard all day. Franklin was very surprised just how we came out and hit them."

The 9-and-10-year-old Mites fell to Franklin 32-6, but Head Coach Joseph Goble took full credit for the loss.

"We had a rough start in the

first half," said Coach Goble. "We were not prepared, and there is no one to blame but me. We did get to see the strengths and weaknesses in both our quarterbacks, Grant Ingram and Griffin Young. However, blocking was the issue. The second half, our boys got in the groove. We made some adjustments in the backfield and it showed with a touchdown pass completed by Jensen Goble."

Coach Goble commended his team's second half defense, and went on to say that overall both the offense and defense were great in the second half.

"But like I said, this loss is on me, and I know we will be ready for Hayesville in two weeks," said Coach Goble.

Director Smith would like to thank the cheerleaders for all of their hard work in keeping up team morale, and Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall for conducting the coin toss at the beginning of the games.

As usual, Shep Calhoun came out and said the prayer to open the day, and Director Smith is also thankful to his coaching staff and for the commitment of Towns County High School Athletic Director Jim Melton.

Towns County Youth Football has a bye week this weekend, but will come back ready to play at Hayesville High School in North Carolina on Saturday, Aug. 29, the first game starting at 11 a.m.

Football: Indians gearing up for Yellow Jackets

By Shawn Jarrard
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Where will you be on Friday night when the lights go up at Frank McClure Memorial Stadium and the Towns County Indians play their first matchup of the year against the Hayesville Yellow Jackets?

As an answer, Indians Head Coach Billy Barnhart hopes to see everyone in the community at the game, which kicks off at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 21.

"I want to encourage the community to come out and support the young men of this football program," said Coach Barnhart. "They deserve it. They've put the time in, they've put the work in, they've put the effort in, and they deserve people to come out and watch them and support them."

"It ain't about me, it's not about any of my coaches – it's about those young men that step on that field Friday

night, and I want people to come out and see them, and see the work that they've put in, and see the improvement in them as a football team."

"It's a big rivalry game Friday night against Hayesville, so come out and support us and let's have a great crowd here and really get behind our young men to get us started off on the right foot for the 2015 football season."

The Yellow Jackets defeated the Indians 29-7 last year in a scrimmage match to start the 2014 season – but the Indians have the home advantage this time around, and Coach Barnhart is happy with how his team has progressed throughout the summer.

"I was just watching film of our game last year against Hayesville, and just the difference in this time last year and where we're at today, we are just – now, don't get me wrong, we're not where we need to be, but we are a lot further ahead at this time this year than what we were at

this time last year," said Coach Barnhart.

Overall, the Indians have grown stronger, both individually and as a team.

"We've made some gains in the weight room this summer, and the intensity has picked up, especially since we've come back in July after Dead period," said Coach Barnhart. "We've really picked up the intensity, and I credit a lot of that intensity to Coach Lee Bohannon. He's an intense coach, and he's really brought a new intensity to our practices and to the weight room, and I want to credit him with that."

Coach Bohannon is the team's new defensive coordinator, and Coach Barnhart is impressed with the direction of the defense, as well as with how his the Indians have taken to his carefully prepared offense.

"Since we're still in preseason and we've had no games, we've continued in a preseason mode where we've

been getting after it pretty good," said Coach Barnhart.

"These last two weeks since we've been in school, we've worked hard, we've continued to work hard. We haven't got into a game week practice schedule yet – we'll start that next week – but these last seven days we've practiced since we've been in school, it's still been like a camp-like atmosphere. We've been working hard and working long and getting a lot in in those practices."

Friday night's scrimmage game is the one scrimmage allotted to the Indians for the season, and Coach Barnhart, entering his second year as head coach, is looking forward to taking home a victory with his team.

"It would be a great way to start the season and to go into the season on a winning note," said Coach Barnhart. "That's what we're going to try to get done Friday night, right here on our field."

TCHS Cheer Squad hard at work for Friday

By Shawn Jarrard
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Staff Writer

Lady Indians Cheerleading Head Coach Rachel Pietz has been hard at work preparing her girls for the start of the football season, and everyone is excited for Friday night's game against Hayesville High School.

"We hope that we add to the excitement, and that we can all cheer our football boys on to greater victories," said Coach Pietz.

Coach Pietz has a long history of coaching cheerleaders at Towns County, having coached middle school for three years, then moving on to high school for the past four years.

"Some of the girls that I started out with in sixth grade were my graduating class last year," said Coach Pietz. "That was hard. I cried all night long Senior Night."

She has been with the school system for 10 years now, and Coach Pietz teaches English and co-teaches mathematics in the high school's special education department on top of coaching young girls into young adulthood during football and basketball seasons.

Preseason for her cheer-

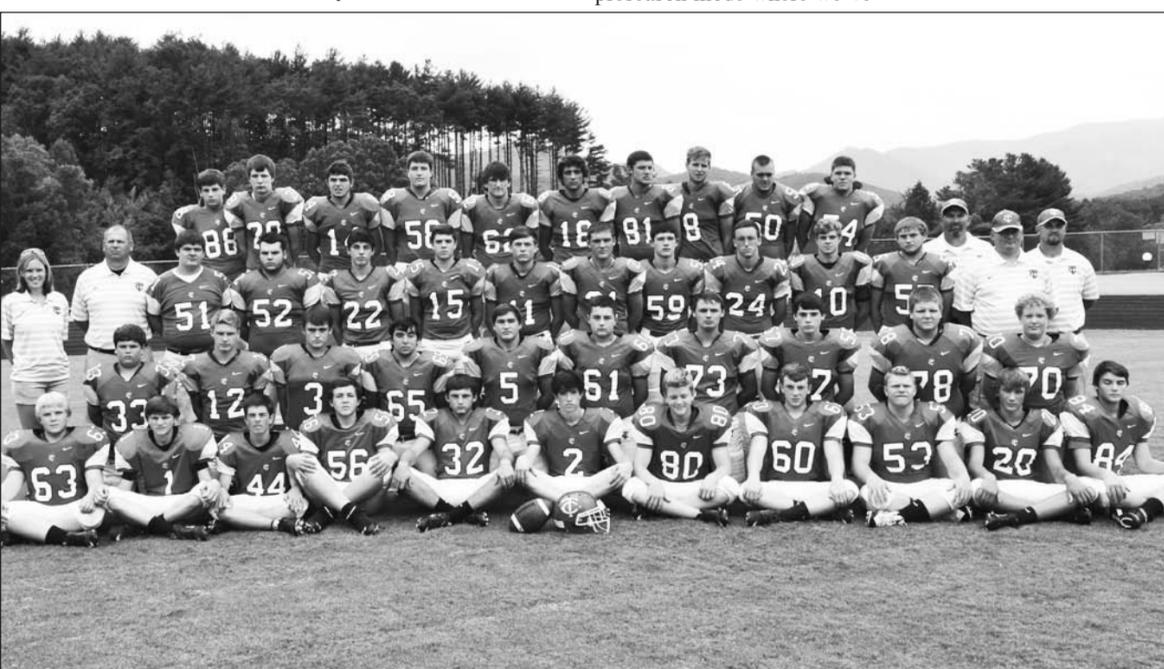
leaders started in the third week of July, and the girls have been hard at work, having attended Stunt Camp and hours-long practices leading up to the first days of school.

And thanks to the school system bringing eighth-graders up as part of the high school's freshman team, there will be more young cheerleaders this year able to draw upon high school cheerleading experience.

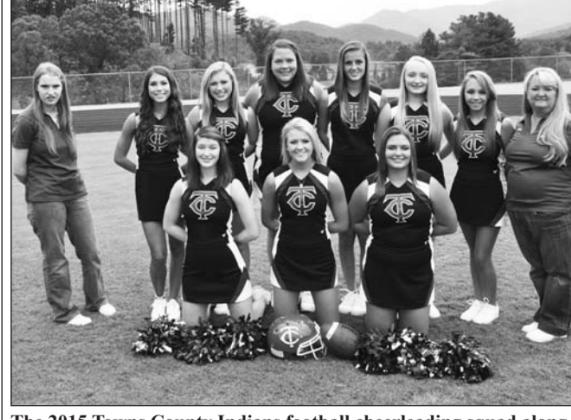
"This is the first year I've had a JV squad," said Coach Pietz. "There are actually 10 of them that are all eighth-graders. The interest is up, and the varsity team has some good prospects for next year."

Debuting during the game against Hayesville this Friday, the Lady Indians cheerleaders will showcase their wide variety of cheering skills developed over many years of hard work.

"Some of the stuff changes," said Coach Pietz. "We bring in new cheers, new dances, but a lot of the stuff has been carried over from year to year. The band dance hasn't changed for the touchdowns, because the band learns the same song every year, and we just carry that along, so that one is a long tradition."



Your 2015 Towns County High School Indians football team with coaching staff. Photo by Lowell Nicholson



The 2015 Towns County Indians football cheerleading squad along with coaches. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Lady Indians softball forced to reschedule home opener with Commerce

By Shawn Jarrard
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The Towns County High School softball team has had to reschedule its first home game of the year, which was meant to take place on Tuesday, Aug. 11, against Commerce.

Commerce was unable to make the date due to transportation issues, and the game has been rescheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 2, at the high school's Lowell Nicholson Field starting at 4:45 p.m.

"Practice has been going really, really good," said Head Coach Brandon Rowland. "Pitching is getting stronger, a lot of them working after practice or going somewhere for pitching lessons, stuff like that."

"Hitting, we've amped it up. We've brought in the pitching machines, throwing different balls. Not just your fastballs – we set it up for drop balls, rise balls, really pushing our offense."



The 2015 Towns County Lady Indians softball team with coaches. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

header against George Walton Academy, and while the girls lost both games, they played with heart and had a close matchup during the first of the two-game series, falling 7-4.

"When we went up to George Walton, we had a few hits, but there's room for improvement," said Coach Rowland, citing the late game rally of three runs in the seventh inning of game one.

"Defense was spot on the first game we played. We had the starters out, and Kristen Henson came in and did a great job pitching."

"The second game, we pitched our No. 2, and the umpires

– every other pitch was an illegal pitch. She was doing something with her foot, picking it up too far, so I had to take her out. We started unraveling after that, and they ended up putting 14 on us. But the

first game – we're talking, they're probably the third best team in our region, and we held them 7-4. We were probably an error or two away from beating them."

Win or lose – though preferably the former – the Lady Indians have a tremendous passion for the game, with attitudes likely to lead to a positive season for the team.

"They're lining up after practice, wanting me to stay, wanting an extra bucket of balls thrown to them and stuff like that," said Coach Rowland. "They're really working hard and are hungry for it – they want to be successful. We've got great attitudes on the team. I tell them to do something, and it's, how can I do it better? They work really, really hard for us."

"This is probably my sixth or seventh year coaching softball, second year as head coach for high school, and I've never worked with teams like this that are wanting to do that much more extra stuff to get better. The attitudes are just great."