

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Redzone troubles haunt Indians during home opener

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Indians played hard against Mount Vernon Presbyterian School, but fell 31-7 against the Mustangs at home on Friday, Sept. 4.

In a game rife with seeming red zone anxiety, the Indians proved that they could drive the ball down the field, only to struggle when it came time to hammer points home.

Momentum swung immediately toward Mount Vernon, as the Mustangs completed an 80-yard touchdown pass in the first 15 seconds of the game.

With a minute left in the first half, the Indians took possession on Mount Vernon's 19-yard line after a textbook punt block from Indian sophomore Harold Cox on a fourth-and-punt for the Mustangs.

Six plays later on a fourth-and-goal from 12 yards out, junior quarterback Russell Cox rifled in a halftime buzzer-beater to senior Daulton Rogers for the Indians only score of the game.

And of course, senior kicker Shea Underwood made the point after, sending the Indians to the locker room trailing Mount Vernon 19-7 at the half.

Throughout the game, the Indians made several drives with plays in the double digits but ending in no scores, and one spectacular play from Rogers with the potential to turn momentum toward Towns County arrived with 3:20 left on the clock in the third quarter.

The situation was first-and-goal on the Indians' 4-yard line, and it looked as if Mount Vernon was primed to score again. The defensive line stepped up big for Towns County, stop-



Quarterback Russell Cox looking for a hole. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

ping a drive with a big pile-on that popped the football loose from the haystack.

Rogers deftly scooped up the fumble inside his own 5-yard line and ran the recovery for 32 yards up the field. What followed was a massive effort in a 19-play series that ended up on the Mount Vernon 14-yard line, where the ball turned over on downs.

"We've got to learn from this one and try to go forward from here, and keep our heads up and keep fighting and keep working hard," said Indians Head Coach Billy Barnhart.

Quarterback Cox, senior Dylan Roberts and junior Kobe Denton each had carry totals in the double digits.

Harold Cox, junior Nick Shook, Underwood and sophomore Cole Ledford were the defensive leaders for the team, with junior Blake Silvers capturing the only other turnover against the Mustangs Friday night.

"Offensively, they were

giving us the fullback a lot," said Coach Barnhart. "I think after last year, they were down and determined that we weren't going to run sweep on them, which was Kobe Denton. They just weren't going to give up our outside game to us, and that's what they were determined to do early.

"That opened up the fullback play for us early on with Dylan Roberts, and we had some success there. Once again, kind of our M.O. right now is we can move it up and down the field, but we just can't seem to put it in the end zone when we get inside the red zone, so we've got to fix that somehow, some way. We've got to find a way to put points on the board."

One thing Coach Barnhart says he and his Indians need to work on is consistency — making every drive count toward eating up the field and the clock, then finishing with touchdowns.

"I take full responsibility — that's me," said Coach Barnhart.



The Towns County Indians take the field in their home opener with Mt. Vernon. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

"I've got to figure something out, and we've got to figure out how to get our guys to score in the red zone, so I'll take the full blame for that. I've got to figure out what we've got to do different and what we've got to do better down there to finish off drives."

Practice went well the week before, and Coach Barnhart had his heart and mind set on a successful game plan to take on the Region 5-A Mustangs.

"Defensively, we talked all week. They have two guys, No. 2 and No. 34 — that's their whole team, and we knew that coming in," said Coach Barnhart. "We just weren't able to hem them up quite like we would have hoped to and needed to to keep them in check. That's what you've got to do against them, because those are their two guys, and that's who they're going to go to, and we weren't able to keep them hemmed up like we needed to."

From an offensive standpoint in light of the matchup against Mount Vernon, the Indians will be working on execution

in the red zone, while defensively, Coach Barnhart intends to tighten up and play "assignment football" better.

"It's a tough loss. I really felt this was a game that we probably should have won, and it's tough to lose a game like that. There's no way that they're 24 points better than us, but that's just the way it is; they were tonight," Coach Barnhart said.

The day before, on Thursday, Sept. 3, the Towns County Freshman Team pulled out a come-from-behind victory against Region 8-AAAAA Discovery High School.

Over and over again, eighth-grader Dakota Edge and freshman Blaine Rogers found holes in the second half, and alternated carrying the ball up the left and right sides of the field. With zero points heading into halftime, the Indians Freshman Team dug deep and continued to play with intensity and the will to win.

"I'm telling you right now, I'm really proud of our freshman team and the way they played,"

said Coach Barnhart. "They got down early, but they didn't panic. We came out in the second half and scored 22 points, and ended up putting the game away when we needed to. So, I'm really proud of them and their effort."

"The way they're getting better is they're running our scout team every day," Coach Barnhart added. "They're running our scout team offense, they're running our scout team defense. Are they getting hit pretty good and getting punished pretty good? Yes. But there's no doubt for me, that's what I contribute their toughness to and their resiliency. They're getting better and getting tougher by working with our varsity guys and working against our varsity guys. They're doing a great job for us at practice, and they're doing a great job in the freshman game."

The Towns County Varsity Indians play their first region game this Friday, Sept. 11, at Lakeview Academy, kickoff at 7:30 p.m.

Lady Indians take down Commerce 6-5 in Region action

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Lady Indians defeated Commerce High School 6-5 at Lowell Nicholson Field on Wednesday, Sept. 2.

Originally scheduled for home on Tuesday, Aug. 11, the game was rescheduled due to Commerce transportation issues.

The game was close for most of the afternoon, and Commerce led Towns County 4-2 when Jordyn Gurley hit her first career homerun — a 2-run homer — to tie the game.

Commerce scored on a few errors, giving them a lead of 5-4 going into the bottom of the

seventh inning. Gurley and LeAnn Dean both singled in the seventh, and senior Alyson Nelson drove them in with a 2-run walk-off double, ending the game with a Lady Indians region victory.

"It is my understanding that Towns County hasn't beaten Commerce in at least seven years," said Lady Indians Head Coach Brandon Rowland. "We finally got our first win of the season and hope to take the momentum from this win and let it carry us forward. This was a very big win for the girls, and we are very proud of them."

The Lady Indians will face Commerce again on Tuesday, Sept. 8, on Lady Tigers home turf at 4:45 p.m.



The Lady Indians celebrate Gurley's homer (top) and a play at the plate at Rabun County (bottom). Photos/Lowell Nicholson

VFW Golf League news



The winning team! L to r: Steve Sutherland, "Mo" Rodgers, Mel Halfon, Frontz Goring.

Chatuge Shores Golf Course recently hosted the Hjawassee VFW end of season championship tournament. The team of Mel Halfon, "Mo" Rodgers, Frontz Goring and Steve Sutherland emerged as the 2015 season champions. It was a hard fought round of golf but

they managed to squeak by with a score of 67. Closest to the pin contests were won by Bill Long and Susanna White. Closest to the center fairway line was Darryl Boltz. The league banquet will be at Daniel's Steak House this Thursday at 5:30 p.m. T(Sep9,G2)SH

TCYFL splits four games at Robbinsville

By Shawn Jarrard
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Staff Writer

Towns County Youth Indians won two games out of four against the Robbinsville Black Knights of the Smoky Mountain Conference in Frank McClure Memorial Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 5.

The Pee Wee Indians improved their season record to 2-1 in a 32-22 victory against the previously undefeated Black Knight Pee Wees.

"We had two sick boys that played the entire game, and they cried but never once wanted to quit," said Pee Wee Head Coach Matthew Goodwin, praising the effort of his entire time. "We have a few things to work on, but nothing major."

Several players stood out for the young 5- and 6-year-old team: Braydon Hedden with three tackles for losses; Aiden Reynolds with a 2-point conversion, eight tackles and 27 rushing yards; Jaykob Goodwin with three tackles; Bryce Rogers with a tackle; and a tremendous offensive and defensive showing from Tucker Engert, who had five touchdowns, nine tackles and 275 rushing yards.

"Hedden made his first tackles of the season and that really boosted him up, and when Reynolds wants something bad enough he's going to get it," said Coach Goodwin. "Young Goodwin did good even though he had a bellyache, and though Rogers is little you can never underestimate him."

"Our Superman, Engert, was super-fast today — we had a few bad snaps but he managed to pick the ball up and run for a touchdown every time. But always remember our offensive line. They did great, and without them the score wouldn't be what it was."

The Indians Termites lost their game 36-16, bringing their record down to 1-2 for the season.

Register now for the Lake Chatuge Charity Classic Golf Tournament

The 2015 Lake Chatuge Charity Classic Golf Tournament is to be held Friday, September 18, 2015. The Towns County Chamber of Commerce is hosting this four-person scramble format tournament at the beautiful Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa. There will be a shotgun start at 9 a.m. and all golfers are welcome! This charity tournament will benefit athletic scholarships for Towns County graduates. There will be prizes awarded for closest to the pin, longest drive,



Towns County Youth football in action earlier this season. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Regardless of the loss, Termites Head Coach Shane Haney said that he was very proud of his boys.

"They forced the Black Knights to keep their starters through the fourth quarter — they never took their starters out," Coach Haney said.

Dawson Devane scored a touchdown for his team, set up beautifully by Cooper Floyd's big gain up the gut.

Brody Burke scored the Termites' other touchdown on an end-around from quarterback Brett Young, while Young scored two 2-point conversions to round out the Indians' final tally of 16.

The Towns County Mites fell 32-0 against Robbinsville, with Jensen Goble catching an interception and Griffin Young leading the team in tackles.

"Dawson Smith centered the ball and didn't have the first mistake all day. All snaps were perfect. On defense, he recovered the ball one time," said Mites Head Coach Joseph Goble.

Coach Goble noted that Seth Barnhart had a good defensive game, and commented that the team as a whole has been performing better, that the game should have been closer than it was.

"I know the score was

32-0," added TCYFL Director Jimmy Smith, "but we started putting our subs in at about 21-0 because it was about the fourth quarter going in, so the score looks more than what it should have been. We played a lot of our kids that don't get to play much, and we had a ref that I don't think has ever refereed before. At least three times he cost us the ball."

Indians Midgets reigned supreme against Robbinsville, trouncing the Black Knights 36-14 to boost their record to 2-1 for season.

"They came out and kicked butt," said Director Smith. "They beat a Robbinsville team that was huge. I mean, these guys are the biggest Midget team I've seen, and we beat them 36-14."

Hayden McClure scored three rushing touchdowns with 180 rushing yards on the day, and Collin Crowder received for 150 yards and a touchdown, with one rushing touchdown and seven receptions.

Kyle Oakes, the team's quarterback, completed for a whopping 170 yards passing, and he received one touchdown pass for a score, while Caleb Bradley fielded three receptions.

On defense, Collin Crowder made eight tackles and Reese Hampton made five tackles and two sacks, and Midgets Head Coach Damon Crowder couldn't be more proud of his Indians so far this season.

"We had a great crowd

again — a lot of people turned out, and I'm proud to see that, because it was a good home crowd supporting our young football players," Director Smith said, adding that he was also proud of his youth cheerleaders for all of their hard work all day long Saturday.

"Our pastor couldn't make it this week, Shep Calhoun, so he invited Cecil Hughes, a preacher from Young Harris," said Director Smith. "He came and opened prayer for us."

Towns County High School student Angel Moss sang the national anthem for the home games against Robbinsville, and Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall turned out to watch the future of the county play football.

"I appreciate everybody coming out, and I hope they make that trip to Jackson County because it's not that far," said Director Smith. "It's a pretty place down there, so maybe everybody will come and watch us play and we can bring some victory home."

Kevin Parker, Director Smith's winningest former coach, hasn't coached for a few years, but he's agreed to be the spotter for the Towns County Mites for the rest of the season.

This weekend, TCYFL plays in Jackson County, North Carolina, against the Smoky Mountain Mustangs on Saturday, Sept. 12, with a kickoff time of 11 a.m. to start the series of games.

McCay Lodge Bass Tournament

The McCay Lodge Bass Tournament will be held on Saturday, September 26th at Lake Chatuge, Ledford Chapel Ramp, beginning at 7 a.m. until 4 p.m. 100% guaranteed based on 40 boat fielded. Entry fee is \$80 per boat.

First Place - \$1,000; Second Place - \$700; Third Place - \$500; Fourth Place - \$300; and Fifth Place - \$100.

Big Fish - \$200 donated by Blue Ridge Insurance and Smallest Fish - Victory Custom Road donated by David Helton.

This is a fund raising project for the Masonic lodges and McCay Lodge. With the proceeds from this tournament, we help support the children's home and other projects. N(Sep9,Z13)CA