

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians' defense solid in 24-0 loss to George Walton Academy

By Shawn Jarrard
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Coach Barnhart during a timeout vs George Walton Photo/Lowell Nicholson



The Indians' defense lines up vs George Walton on a damp night in Hiawassee. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

The Towns County Indians struggled to move the ball for the second week in a row, falling to George Walton Academy 24-0 at home on Friday, Sept. 25.

For most of the day and into the game, the weather fluctuated between light drizzling rain and a barely there mist, and though the field was saturated, the conditions offered a level playing field for both teams.

"I can't fault the effort of our young men," said Indians Head Coach Billy Barnhart, still visibly proud of his boys in the face of the loss they all shared. "They play hard, they're playing their best. Like I told them, I felt we played defensively good enough to win the football game."

And that is a statement with merit, given that Towns County stopped all three 2-point conversion attempts made by the Bulldogs, and held George Walton scoreless for the first and fourth quarters of the game.

"This group scored more points in the first quarter against us last year than they did the whole game this year, and we've just got to be able to generate something offensively positive," said Coach Barnhart.

Looking at last year's matchup, it's easy to see how much the Indians have grown as a team.

During that Sept. 26, 2014, game at George Walton Academy, Towns County went into the halftime down 35-0. But in the second half, the Indians held the Bulldogs to two touchdowns while putting up four of their own to finish that second half 28-13 in points over George Walton.

In just a year's time,

Towns County beefed up defensively enough to cut its loss over last year by 24 points. And the overall story may have had a vastly different outcome had the Indians been able to score some critical early points.

"We felt coming in that 21 points would win this ballgame, and I feel if we do score early, then they don't get 24," said Coach Barnhart. "But it didn't happen, and we've got to keep working, we've got to figure something out offensively. I'm proud of our guys, still proud of them, still proud of their effort and proud of the way they play."

During the game against Hebron two Fridays ago, the Indians faced a tougher than usual officiating crew – not so against George Walton at home, though Towns County still received some disappointing penalties.

"We've got to eliminate the negative plays," said Coach Barnhart. "We had two huge runs, and we got them both called back on penalties. It wasn't a bad officiating crew tonight, but those just kill you,

when you get two positive plays – big plays – and they were just both taken away from you due to penalties and you're backed up.

"The negative plays are just killing us offensively. That's another thing that's really hurting us on offense. It's like we take one step forward and two steps back. We've just got to continue to eliminate that."

One aspect of the game that Coach Barnhart repeatedly praised was the defense, which forced George Walton into multiple fourth-and-punt situations, and the Indians defense also got the ball turned over on downs several times.

"Defense makes stops and makes stops early, and when you don't get anything going offensively, it just kind of takes some of your energy out, I know it does," said Coach Barnhart. "I'm not saying they're not playing hard – our defense is still playing hard, but it just takes some of that energy out."

"If we could just generate something offensively early

and put something in the end zone and get some scores, and maybe give them a little bit more energy, I think it would help us. Offensively, we've got to get that fixed. That's going to be our main focus this next week. We're going to continue to work defensively, but I'm proud of our defense, and I'm proud of the way they played defensively."

Towns County's next matchup is this Friday, Oct. 2, when the Indians head to Athens Academy to play at 7:30 p.m.

Going into that game, Coach Barnhart will utilize the first part of the week during practice to focus on his Indians and what they can do to bring their offense back into the light.

"Lord willing, the sun's going to come up tomorrow, and we'll wake up to a new

day and a new week next week, have a new beginning next week," said Coach Barnhart. "I talked to them about new beginnings yesterday, and each week for us is a new beginning.

"Whether you win or lose on Friday, the great thing about it is, each week you've got to look at as a new beginning. We'll just have to look at this as a new beginning this week and come back ready for work, and get after it and get ready for Athens Academy.

"I believe in our kids. They're great young men that work hard, and I'm proud of them. We're going to continue to coach them hard, and they're going to continue to work hard. It's just what we do and what we're going to do."

Sometimes the biggest successes are measured not by the number in the wins column, but by the measures

of improvement and growth – measures Coach Barnhart gladly applies to his team, even in one of the toughest regions in the state.

"We're getting better, we are," said Coach Barnhart. "Like I said, George Walton last year, it was 28 points in the first quarter. They put 21 on us in about two minutes. That just shows you the improvements we're making as a football team. We're not near where we need to be yet, but to say we can't compete in this region is to me ridiculous.

"We've just got to continue to work hard in the weight room, work hard in the practice field, but it's going to come. We've just got to continue to be patient, continue to work hard, continue to believe in each other – everything's going to be all right. Like I said, I'm proud of our guys."

Termites victorious over Swain

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Youth Football League games that were scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 26, against Murphy, NC, were canceled due to rain.

In home games against Swain County on Saturday, Sept. 19, the TCYFL Indians played hard, though only the Towns County Termites emerged victorious.

Termites Head Coach Shane Haney appropriately labeled the game a big win – final score 14-6 – for his 7- and 8-year olds.

"We needed this one to start a push for a playoff spot," said Coach Haney. "Brett Young got us on the board with a 5-yard touchdown to the left set up by a big run by Brody Burke. Young scored the other on a blast up the gut you could drive a truck through. Dawson Devane directed the defense very well in holding the Devils to just one score."

Pee Wee Indians got a bye on account of Swain County's lack of a Pee Wee team.

On the Midgets front, the Indians lost to their Macon Devil counterparts with a tough 40-6 final score.

Still, several Indians put

up good numbers, including Collin Crowder, who had the game's only touchdown and rushed for 60 yards, received for 160 yards.

Kyle Oakes, the Midgets quarterback, rushed for 40 yards and passed for 180 yards, and both Crowder and Caleb Bradley nabbed an interception apiece.

Leading the Midgets defense were Reece Hampton and Crowder.

Midgets Head Coach Damon Crowder acknowledged that the game was a tough loss, saying that the Swain County players were a lot bigger and quicker. Also, several Towns County youths were out sick, including key starter Hayden McClure.

Towns County's Mites also suffered a loss that Saturday to an undefeated Swain County team, 52-8.

"Swain County's got it going on with the Midgets and the Mites – they both looked good," said TCYFL Director Jimmy Smith, adding that Swain County was likely to send teams to the Cracker Bowl this year.

Many of the Swain Mites turned 11 after the season sign-up deadline, which is usually an age reserved for Midget teams but can happen when kids are on the cusp of

the age limit each year.

The Mites Player of the Game was Christian Wade, said Mites Head Coach Joseph Goble.

Crowd favorite Shep Calhoun returned that Saturday to deliver the invocation before the games, after having been out of town for the previous home game, and Angel Moss pleased the ears of those gathered with her always reliable rendition of the national anthem.

Director Smith would also like to recognize the cheerleaders who cheered all that day in the hot sun.

Despite two tough losses, Director Smith said the referees were the best he'd seen all year, and he and his coaches are proud of their young Indians' collective effort.

"They didn't quit – for the whole games, everybody played hard," said Director Smith.

Towns County Youth Football plays at home in Frank McClure Memorial Stadium against Cherokee, NC, on Saturday, Oct. 3, with a kickoff time of 11 a.m. – Director Smith hopes to see a big Towns County turnout for the kids' last home game of the year.

NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Kenseth gets fifth cup win

LOUDON, N.H.—Matt Kenseth won his fifth Sprint Cup race of the season this past Sunday at New Hampshire. Kenseth was running second behind Kevin Harvick, with four laps to go in the 300-lap race. Kenseth had been chasing Harvick's blue No. 4 for over 20 laps, and didn't appear to have any chance of catching him before the race ended.

But on lap 297, Harvick slowed and headed for pit road. He was out of gas.

Kenseth then coasted the remaining three laps to victory lane, smiling all the way.

"There at the end we could actually run faster than I thought," said Kenseth. "We had a great car. We've got the momentum and we're going to enjoy this one, because it could change at anytime."

Teammate Denny Hamlin ran second, followed by Joey Logano, Greg Biffle, Carl Edwards, Jimmie Johnson, Jeff Gordon, Martin Truex, Kasey Kahne, and Ryan Newman.

Overall, it was a bad day for Harvick and the Stewart-Haas Racing teams. Tony Stewart's 11th place finish was the highest of the four drivers. Kurt Busch never led a lap and ran out of fuel. He finished 19th. Harvick wound up 21st after leading 216 laps. Danica Patrick hit the wall and finished 40th. After bouncing off the wall she was tagged by David Ragan. Both drivers were done for the day and could not continue.

Brad Keselowski led four different times, but jumped the restart during a late race caution and had to serve a pass through penalty. He finished 12th.

Here are the 16 Chase leaders after two races into the 10-race Chase. 1. Kenseth-2099, 2. Ham-

lin-2093, 3. Edwards-2089, 4. Logano-2089, 5. Johnson-2083, 6. Newman-2074, 7. Kurt Busch-2073, 8. Keselowski-2072, 9. Truex-2071, 10. Gordon-2068, 11. McMurray-2058, 12. Earnhardt-2057, 13. Kyle Busch-2056, 14. Menard-2056, 15. Harvick-2034, 16. Bowyer-2018.

The points will be reset after Sunday's Dover race, and the field reduced to 12 drivers. Drivers that need to have a good finish include Kyle Busch, Paul Menard, Kevin Harvick, and Clint Bowyer.

The top three leaders are Joe Gibbs drivers.

BLANEY GETS XFINITY WIN

Ryan Blaney won Saturday's Kentucky Xfinity race over Ty Dillon on a green-white checkered finish.

Blaney, who had ran behind Dillon for most of the race was able to stay under Dillon's No. 3 car through Turn 1 on the restart, and keep his momentum through the backstretch to win by less than half a second ahead of Dillon.

"We were lucky to get a good push and just get a little position on (Dillon) and use up the race track. I knew once we were clear, we had a really good shot at it," said Blaney.

During the race Brian Scott and Darrell Wallace Jr. got together on the track. The pair exchanged cuss words with each other after the race which carried over to Twitter.

Wallace said he was blindsided by Scott, his wife, and truck driver.

Scott accused Wallace of being classless and cursing out his wife.

The remaining top-10: 3. Regan Smith, 4. Chase Elliott, 5. Brandon Jones, 6. Brendan Gaughan, 7. Chris Buescher, 8. Erik Jones, 9. Darrell Wallace, 10. Matt Tift.

Top-10 leaders after 27 of 33: 1. C. Buescher-982, 2. T. Dillon-963, 3. Elliott-957, 4. Smith-935, 5. Wallace-874, 6. Sadler-872, 7. Scott-857, 8. Suarez-852, 9. Gaughan-836, 10. Reed-735.

AUSTIN DILLON IS TRUCK WINNER

Austin Dillon won Saturday's Truck race at New Hampshire.

Matt Crafton finished second followed by Johnny Sauter, Timothy Peters, John Nemechek, Daniel Hemric, Erik Jones, Austin Theriault, Dalton Sergeant, and Gary Gaulding.

Top-10 leaders after 17 of 23: 1. E. Jones-666, 2. Crafton-659, 3. Reddick-647, 4. Sauter-617, 5. Hemric-558, 6. Peters-552, 7. Hayley-549, 8. Townley-518, 9. Gallagher-509, 10. Kennedy-504.

TRUEX AND TEAM MOVING TO TOYOTA

The No. 78 Furniture Row Racing team has re-signed Martin Truex Jr. for 2016, and beyond.

"It's not just the place, it's the people - especially this year," Truex said. "Last year almost made me want to retire. It's funny what a year and a couple of different people can bring to the table."

Furniture Row Racing will switch to Toyotas in 2016, forming a technical alliance with Joe Gibbs Racing from which it will receive chassis and engines. FRR will be-



Matt Kenseth Gets His Fifth Cup Win

come just one of two factory-backed Toyota teams in the Sprint Cup Series next season. It will remain a single-car team next season.

The 35-year-old Truex said he is ready and anxious to drive the No. 78 car in 2016 and rejoin Toyota. He drove a Toyota Camry for four seasons as a member of the Michael Waltrip Racing team from 2010 through 2013.

"I am happy to continue in my role with Furniture Row Racing and feel that we've just begun a growth spurt that will take us to a new level," continued Truex. "It's a great organization and Barney (Visser, team owner) gives us whatever we need to be successful."

TOP-25 AND THEIR WINNINGS

NASCAR is about winning and money. It's hard to tell sometimes which is the most important, but here are the total winnings of the top-25 Sprint Cup drivers after the Chicago race. This is the amount won by the car. Each driver receives between 40 and 60 per cent of this total, depending on their contract.

1. Matt Kenseth-\$4,921,697, 2. Denny Hamlin-5,307,887, 3. Carl Edwards-3,584,573, 4. Kyle Busch-3,229,421, 5. Kurt Busch-3,607,841, 6. Joey Logano-6,439,716, 7. Jimmie Johnson-5,614,748, 8. Ryan Newman-4,153,058, 9. Brad Keselowski-4,863,087, 10. Dale Earnhardt Jr.-4 851,635, 11. Martin Truex-4,221,111, 12. Jeff Gordon-4,225,668, 13. Jamie McMurray-3,963,227, 14. Paul Menard-3,237,015, 15. Clint Bowyer-4,188,431, 16. Kevin Harvick-7,104,268, 17. Aric Almirola-3,982,527, 18. Kasey Kahne-5,428,379, 19. Kyle Larson-3,608,288, 20. Greg Biffle-4,047,520, 21. Austin Dillon-3,385,903, 22. Casey Mears-3,494,392, 23. Danica Patrick-3,101,174, 24. A. J. Allmendinger-3,627,520, 25. David Ragan-3,568,409.

Weekend Racing: The Truck teams race at the 1.5-mile Las Vegas Speedway, while the Sprint Cup and Xfinity teams are at the Dover Mile.

Sat., Oct. 3; Xfinity Series race 28 of 33; Starting time: 3:30 pm ET; TV: NBCS.

Sat., Oct. 3; Truck Series race 18 of 23; Starting time 10 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sun., Oct. 4; Sprint Cup race 29 of 36; Starting time: 2:30 pm ET; TV: NBCS.

Racing Trivia Question: What year was the Sprint Cup Chase instituted?

Last Week's Question: What year did Kurt Busch win his only Sprint Cup championship? **Answer:** It was 2004.

You may contact the Racing Reporter by e-mail at: hodges@race500.com.

The First Annual GA Mountain Pickleball Classic

Double Elimination Tournament 9/18/15
Winners

3.0 (8 teams: play to 15, win by 1)
Champion: Melissa and Avie Ownby
2nd Place: Randy Heyob and Robert Richardson
3rd Place: Judi Rhodes and Marcia Dones

3.5 (16 teams)
Flight #1 (8 teams) (play to 15, win by 1)
1st Place: Jackie DiChiara and Don Raaen
2nd Place: Carrie Palmer and Tammy Lentini
3rd Place: Bob Levy and Dave Seddon

Flight #2 (8 teams) (play to 15, win by 1)
1st Place: Wendy Evans and Bill King (Seneca, South Carolina)
2nd Place: Neil Pascal and Bert Templeton
3rd Place: Kathi Patrick and Gerry Smith

Medal Round:
Grand Champion: Wendy Evans and Bill King
2nd: Jackie DiChiara and Don Raaen
3rd: Neal Pascal and Bert Templeton

4.0 (6 teams: play to 15, win by 1)
Champion: Carl Bynbee and Rob Thomson (Hayesville, NC)
2nd: Walter Straus (Athens) and Lori Vancza (Terre Haute, Indiana)
3rd: Dee and Rick Ezrol (Ashville, NC)

The 1st Georgia Mountain Pickleball Classic

RESULTS OF THE ROUND ROBIN

3.0
1st Place: Jim Burd and Don Raaen
2nd Place: Avie Ownby and Melissa Ownby
3rd Place: Randy Heyob and Robert Richardson

3.5
1st Place: Dean Essex and John May
2nd Place: Doug Klaucke and Marty McRoberts
3rd Place: Jackie DiChiara and Eddie Palmer

4.0
1st Place: Rob Thomson and Carl Bynbee
2nd Place: Keith Rhodes and Danny Cornett
3rd Place: Walter Straus and Lori Vancza