

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Joe Collins
Tips from the Woods



It was a crisp late Nov. day, when my dad and I started up the east side of Big Cedar Mountain.

It would take a good two-hour climb up steep, rocky ground before we reached the area we wanted to hunt.

My brother had already left us to go up the west side of the mountain and we planned on meeting on top later in the day. The sign was hot on the flats just off the top and we were headed right to it.

The climb was brutal, and even though Big Earl Odom had made sure that I was in shape, my legs burned like fire when I reached the first level spot on the ridge. I had climbed the shortest route to the top and it was straight up like a mule's face.

I eased around to the west side of the ridge and found a good place to sit and hunt for a while. It was a dry time and the leaves were crunchy so you could hear things moving in the woods.

I saw my first Bald Eagle on the climb up and I felt good about my chances. The shakes stopped and I had just caught my breath when the all to familiar "crunch-crunch" of leaves being stepped on sounded above and a little behind me.

I knew that sound and I knew it was a deer.

It was moving from the side of the ridge that I had climbed and it had slipped in to within 20-yards of where I was sitting. Fortunately, I was leaned back against a small white oak tree and it was fairly easy to turn and look behind me and when I did I froze. It was a huge 9-point rack and it was real close. The only thing I could see was the ears and the antlers and they were both big.

Somehow I got twisted around before the deer could see over the ridge and was ready to shoot when he got in the clear. BOOM! The sound echoed off the valley floor and back up the mountain. I remember hearing the echo for the longest as I watched my big buck run away and I could tell he wasn't going to fall. The bullet had hit a small white pine tree and made a perfect little circle in the center of it. No telling where my bullet went but it didn't hit that deer. So goes hunting; it's a great sport.

Whitetail Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) hunting is a sport and it is vital to the biological and economical aspects of Georgia. Nearly 325,000 hunters will hunt the more than one million public hunting acres in Georgia during the 2012 / 2013 season and will harvest over 400,000 deer. The sport itself stimulates over \$800 million in sales in the state each year, through not only licenses from the state, but with hunter cost such as equipment and clothing, land leases, food, camping and meat processing.

This is a major economic foundation that a good, well-managed deer population can maintain.

The deer population in Georgia was basically gone at the turn of the 20th century. Stocking programs were established in Georgia but

were struggling until the Federal Government voted to assist with the financial burdens in 1938.

The Lacy Act promoted deer re-population and Georgia was on the list to receive help with re-stocking which included the mountains as well.

By the end of the 20th century, the deer population had grown to 1.4 million throughout the state and deer nuisance was on the rise.

The number of car accidents had increased and it became an art to drive at night and miss deer crossing the road. Gardens in rural areas had little chance of not being attacked by hungry deer and the herd was growing even more.

Hunters were the main predator of the whitetail deer and anti-hunting programs had hurt new hunter interest. The hunter to deer ratio got out of balance and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources became more involved in better deer management techniques.

They first increased the length of the season and then they started telling hunters that it was good to harvest does because they were more of a determining factor to population than bucks.

After this idea had caught on, the DNR allowed more deer to be taken, and the herd became much better by 2001 with just over one million deer in the state.

The deer herd in Georgia must be managed to make sure the deer stay healthy and beneficial.

If the herds become large then they can fall prey to disease like "black tongue" which hit the mountains a few years back when hunting numbers had decreased and the deer population had increased. If we don't control the population then it will get to big for the area. Look at what is happening to South Georgia and the pig problem they are having now or at the black bear increase we see in our own area.

Hunters and hunting are necessary for game management and the sport is important to our State and Local economies. Georgia needs deer hunters. A yearly harvest of 30% is necessary to maintain a healthy deer herd.

Many of our youth would love the chance to get out and experience the woods through hunting.

The sport has never been easier to access and hunting programs are available for kids who want to hunt but don't get a chance to go. You can find these programs online with some simple exploring.

Find a kid and sign him/her up for a hunter safety class and then take them to the woods and watch the magic. You will be helping that child and opening up a new world for them.

Hunting is a sport and the meat it provides, venison, is a delicacy in many countries around the world.

Get out and go hunting folks, or better yet, get out and take a kid hunting. The rifle season starts this Saturday so go to the Georgia DNR website and get your license. Now, turn the TV off. Go sight in that old deer rifle you haven't used in years. Go scout out a good place to hunt and when the season opens, get in the woods.

Good luck and keep your nose in the wind.

Your 2012 Towns County Homecoming Court

By Libby Shook
 Towns County Herald
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Towns County High School proudly announced their 2012 Homecoming Court on Wednesday, Oct. 10th.

The court is made up of 10 beautiful Senior ladies and 10 very handsome Senior gentlemen nominated by their Senior classmates.

Serving on the girls' court is Christina Hamill, Davilyn Blythe, Erin Westberry, Alex Fagin, Dadrian Blythe, Brittany Boyer, Kayla Olin, Meagan Ellis, Brittany Ledford, and Claire Wilson.

Serving on the boys' court is Ryan Tallent, Luke Parker, Dillon Thompson, Bradley Smith, Austin Wood, Johnny Arrowood, Wesley Bloodworth, Dillon Diehl, Tyler Hoffman, and Sonny Goodman.

The theme for this year's homecoming is 'Black and Blue, Through and Through'.

Senior Sponsor Sarah Morrison said, "During Homecoming Week, the entire student body will be able to vote for this year's Homecoming King and Queen."

"This has been an enthusiastic group of students to work with. All of the students on this year's court seem to be honored at their nomination. It is an excellent representation of this year's Senior Class," said Morrison.

Towns County will hold their 1st Annual Homecoming Parade on Thursday, Oct. 18th, at 5 p.m. beginning at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds, traveling east through Hiawassee, and ending up at in front



of the school where they will have a county-wide bonfire and pep rally. The 2012 Homecoming King will be announced at this time. You will have to be patient, however, as the 2012 Homecoming Queen will not be announced until half-time on Friday, Oct. 19th, as the Towns County Indians square off against North Cobb Christian High School.

School Superintendent Melissa Williams said, "Con-

gratulations to all the young women and me who were chosen to represent the student body on our Homecoming Court. We would like to see a large crowd come out and support these students along with our football team at our first ever homecoming parade and community pep rally Thursday."

Williams also encourages everyone to come out Friday night and support the

football team and watch the 2012 Homecoming Queen being crowned.

"It is really an exciting time for all of us. We hope to see everyone there," said Williams.

The theme for this year's homecoming is 'Black and Blue, Through and Through'.

All businesses along the parade route are encouraged to show their support by decorating for this exciting event.

Sweep again: All three Towns YFL teams playoff bound

By Joe Collins
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

For the first time in Towns County Youth Football history, the Termites (5&6 year olds), the Tiny-Mites (7&8 year olds) and the Pee-Wee (9 year old) teams all have made it to the playoffs.

The honor came on the heels of the fifth weekend sweep by the YFL teams last Saturday at Frank McClure Memorial stadium.

The Termites defeated Pickens 39-0 to move their record to 5-2 on the season and the Tiny-Mites got by on some extra effort to beat Pickens 25-12 and move to 5-2. The Pee-Wee tribe increased its record to 6-1 and moved to the head of the class by winning a hard one to Union 22-12.

The win put them in first place in the North Georgia YFL Conference. The Termites football team put on a show last Saturday. Not only did they not let Pickens County get one first down and hold them scoreless, but also, the offense moved the ball at will.

The offensive line was at their best and it seems they just get better every game. They performed almost perfectly as

they actually carried out their blocking assignments and gave the running backs the room they needed to operate, and operate they did. Braylan Rader scored four touchdowns to move to within one of tying the Towns County league record holder, Kyle Oakes' who ran for 29 TD's as a termite.

The biggest story of the game was the first pass completion in the history of the Towns County Termites. Dawson Smith took the ball from center and faked a hand-off to Braylan Rader, then dropped back. He found Jensen Goble on a short post pattern for a completion of 12 yards. Goble then put Pickens County defenders in the wind as he ran for 53 yards and one of his two TD's on the day. Head Coach and YFL Director Jimmy Smith said, "we actually worked on that pass play in practice this week, so we gave it a shot and it worked out well." The 39-0 win gave the Termites a spot in the playoffs.

The Termites are at home for their last regular season game Saturday, Oct. 20 against Rabun. Game time is 9:00 a.m.

The Tiny-Mites were on fire again and beat a tough Pickens County team with a genuine team effort. The Pickens defense was tough to

counter but the Indians blocking held up again this Saturday and the backs were able to move the ball. The offense and defense played real well against Pickens. Kyle Oakes had a strong day on defense as he made 12 solo tackles while rushing for three TD's. Austin Taylor had a good day on the ground and scored one TD at a crucial time to help put the lights out for Pickens.

The 25-12 win earns the Tiny-Mites a place at the table for the playoffs. Their next game is at home on Oct. 20 against Gilmer. Game time is 10:30 a.m.

The Pee-Wee team won the first place position in the North Georgia Conference on Saturday by beating a strong Union County team.

This was the first time this bunch of guys has beaten Union since they were on Termites. Payton Ivester had a kickoff return for a TD and another rushing behind some excellent offensive blocking as did Hayden McClure who also rushed for a TD.

"Our defense was real solid today and the offensive line gave us another good game," said Head Coach Rodney Thomas.

The 22-12 victory was solid for the Pee-Wee squad.

Their next game is also at home on Oct. 20 against Gilmer. Game time is noon.

The YFL has had a fantastic year and the fact that all the teams are going to the playoffs is proof of that.

More evidence is the fact they have had weekend sweeps on opponents five times this year and have one more regular season weekend to go before they all go to playoffs.

"It's been a phenomenal year with all the teams. I had said before the year started that we had a chance for all three teams to make it and we did. It's just been a great year and I feel we will do well in the playoffs. All the coaches say they are ready and that's a positive sign," declared Smith when asked about the teams and the year they are having.

Director Smith would like everyone to know that there is a raffle going on at this time and will be drawn on Nov. 3 for a Remington .270 with scope. You can register at C&J Outfitters in downtown Hiawassee to help the YFL of Towns County. Also, Living Word Revival Church will be hosting a banquet for the athletes and their families after the games on Oct. 3 at 5:30 p.m. A bus will leave from the school at 4:45 p.m. if you would like to ride.

Shook continues to improve

By Joe Collins
 Towns County Herald
 Staff Writer

Sophomore Cruz Shook continues to heal after having to leave the field shortly after halftime of the Sept. 21 game against Rabun Gap.

Shook injured his spleen in an effort to score in the early minutes of the third quarter.

Following the play, Shook had to be taken by ambulance to the Chatuge Regional Hospital and later by ambulance to Erlanger in Chattanooga, TN where he was diagnosed with a lacerated spleen.

Fortunately, surgery was avoided because internal bleeding halted soon after his arrival at Erlanger.

The doctors have recently examined Shook and have said that healing is continuing as hoped but that he should remain off the field for at least six more weeks and probably more like eight weeks.

arrive after the 2012 football season has ended so any hopes of returning to play for Shook is doubtful.

"I really want to come back and play this year but right now it doesn't look like that will happen," Shook said.

"I'm just glad that everything is healing the way it should and I can look forward to basketball and then baseball.

"I miss being out there with my team right now though," stated Shook as he joined the team last Friday night at Copper Basin.

The coaching staff and all the players miss Shook too but are glad he is on the mend.

It was a scary night for Shook and his teammates and coaches were in prayer for him after the game and on into the rest of the weekend until his situation improved.

"I want to thank everyone for their prayers and concerns. It really meant a lot to me," said Shook.



5th annual Band Boosters Homecoming BBQ Dinner

Tickets are currently available for the 5th annual Homecoming BBQ Dinner to be held in the Towns County Schools Cafeteria on Friday, October 19 between 4 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Advance tickets are strongly encouraged and can be purchased from any Band Member or Band Booster, or at Michael's in Hiawassee. The dinner tickets are \$10 each and consist of 1/2 BBQ chicken, baked beans, potato salad, bread, dessert & drink. You can "eat in" or take your meal with you.

Also available are full racks of ribs, which will be wrapped in foil and ready to take home. Ribs are \$18 each and these MUST be ordered in advance. Food is prepared by the award winning Huckleberry's Catering, which is an official caterer for NASCAR events. Thank you for supporting the band program at Towns County!

For additional information, please contact Melanie Beighley at 770-633-3765 or by email at mhbeighley@aol.com. T10Oct17.F11SH



TCRD Youth Basketball Registration

The Towns County Recreation Department began youth basketball registration during the week of Monday the Oct. 8th and will run through Saturday Oct. 27th.

You may register your child at the Towns County Recreation Department. Our hours of operation are Monday thru Friday from 9 a.m. till 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Fee for the program will be \$45.00.

Age divisions will be 10 & Under divisions (8, 9, and 10 year olds), 12 and Under divisions (11 and 12 year old).

This is for both male and female.

For more details please contact the Towns County Recreation Department at (706)-896-2600.