

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Commerce's Homecoming doesn't bode well for Indians in 58-0 loss

By Shawn Jarrard
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Commerce—The Towns County Indians lost to Commerce in the Tigers' Homecoming Game Friday night, 58-0, at Ray Lamb Stadium.

"I'm glad this one's behind us — we're just going to move on from this one," said Head Coach Billy Barnhart.

The Tigers have a long tradition of winning football, with two state championships under their belts and many more region championships.

But time and time again, the Indians were penalized by the referees. In one instance, Towns County was given a flag for unsportsmanlike conduct — for hollering after stopping a fake 2-point conversion with the scoreboard reading 58-0.

"I'm not taking anything away from a team like this, they're a great team," said Coach Barnhart of his opinion of Commerce. "We knew that coming in. It's just, you come to a place like this, you're not going to get help from anybody — they're going to get all of the calls most of the time. They've got the history behind them and the tradition behind them, and the refs know that."

Coach Barnhart concedes that it wasn't the referees that defeated his Indians Friday.

"We gave them at least 28 points in the first half — three turnovers, two fumbles



Left: Towns County takes the field at Commerce. They will take the field one more time in 2014. Right: Coach Barnhart during a timeout on the field. Photos/Lowell Nicholson



returned for touchdowns," said Barnhart. "We let them return a punt for a touchdown. Really, in the first quarter, I thought we played pretty good. Second quarter was not a good quarter for us, and it just seemed like if it could go wrong it went wrong for us in the second quarter, so that's what beat us."

Going into the second half, the Indians were down 45-0, and for Towns County, momentum was nowhere in sight.

"It's hard to recover against a team like that," said Coach Barnhart. "And you can't make mistakes against

a team like that, because if you do, they're going to make you pay for it like they did tonight. That's the nature of the beast."

Looking forward, Coach Barnhart is preparing his team for the last game of the season.

"We've got four practices left, we've got one game left, and we've just got to put these last six weeks out of our mind and put them behind us," said Coach Barnhart. "They're done, over with — it's a one-week season for us now, and we're going to focus on winning a football game and sending these seniors out with

a win and springboarding us into next season. So, we're just going to continue to work like we do every day, and focus on blocking, tackling, playing four quarters."

Providence Christian Academy has a 0-7 record for the year, and the Indians, sitting at 1-8, have a good chance of coming out on top.

"They've struggled, Providence, just like we've struggled all year long," said Coach Barnhart. "We can't take anybody for granted, and I'm sure they're looking at us the same way we're looking at them — it's an opportunity for a win. So, we've got to come

out prepared, and I feel if we go out prepared this week and go out and play the way we're capable of playing Friday, I think we'll win the game. And I don't expect anything less from our guys this week."

One thing that never changes, despite the majority losses this season, is the pride Coach Barnhart feels for his Indians.

"I'm always proud of our guys," said Coach Barnhart after the game Friday. "I don't ever feel there's a lack of effort there. We made some mistakes, and if it could go wrong it went wrong, but in my mind, it's never a lack of

effort with our guys.

"I'm thankful to be here at Towns County. I'm thankful to be head football coach of these guys. And they make me proud week in and week out, regardless of the score on the board, because I know how hard they work, and I know the effort they're putting in. We've just got to stick with it and things are going to turn around for us in the future."

The Towns County Indians will play their final game of the year at Providence Christian Academy, in Lilburn, on Friday, Oct. 31, at 7:30 p.m.



The Indians bring down a Commerce ball carrier during the second half. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Towns County's cheerleaders went on their road to support the team. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Postseason arrives for Cross Country

By Shawn Jarrard
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Towns County High School Cross Country teams are headed to the Area Championship Meet at Athens Academy this Thursday, Oct. 30.

The teams have been hard at work practicing all season for the Area Championships, which will determine whether or not the Towns County teams make it to the State Championship Meet.

The Indians raced Thursday, Oct. 16, in Union County.

The top five finishers for the boys' team were Marshall Ledford, who finished in 11th

place; Thomas Mitchell, finishing 15th; Gavin Langelier, 17th; Tyler Grimsley, 19th; and Kolby Starner, who finished in 26th place.

"As a team, we finished third out of the five teams attending," said Cross Country Manager Kyra Tallent.

Lady Indians finished at Union County with Hannah Whitehead in second place; Tara-lee Arrowood, 12th place; Lydia Moss, 14th; Hayley Stowers, 15th; and Alana Calhoun took 17th place.

"As a team, we finished in second out of the four teams attending," said Tallent. "All four teams were extremely close in scores. This race was Amanda Garrett's first race of the season,

due to an injury. Amanda did exceptionally well, finishing 10th for the Lady Indians. We are extremely proud of both teams."

Tallulah Falls was Towns County's next stop, and the teams raced in the Harrier Harvest on Tuesday, Oct. 21.

The top place finishers for the boys' team were Grimsley, who finished eighth with a time of 20:32; Mitchell, finishing 11th with a time of 20:48; Marshall Ledford, 13th with a time of 21:10; Starner, 28th place with a time of 23:43; and Kaine Hoffman, who came in 31st with a time of 23:56.

"We finished closely behind Tallulah Falls and Stephens County," said Tallent. "Gavin

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Bryson City NC- Towns County Youth Indians lost their playoff game against Robbinsville, 36-12, in Swain County, NC, and will not be going to the Cracker Bowl this Saturday, Nov. 1.

"They're a really good ball team — I take nothing away from their coaching staff," said Youth Football Direct Jimmy Smith of Robbinsville's Black Knights. "They had them ready, and they looked good."

Cherokee defeated Andrews, so the bowl game will be Robbinsville vs Cherokee.

So far this season, Towns County is the only team that has beaten Cherokee, and had the teams been seeded more appropriately, the Indians would have played Andrews instead of Robbinsville, and the course of history could have been different.

"It was a tough one for us, but we're all proud of the kids and how they played," said Smith.

It's been a good season for the Pee Wees, as they left the record books standing 7-3 on the year.

"I'd like to thank each and everybody coming out to the games this year, home games and away games, and supporting the youth football," said Smith. "We had a wonderful year, and I appreciate my coaches and cheerleader coaches, and all the football players and cheerleaders. We're looking forward to another great season next year going into the Smoky Mountain Conference. I think we'll be better than we were this year."

Smith expressed appreciation for the kids and their parents, for "believing in me as the football director, allowing their kids to come play for me and my coaching staff."

The season may have ended on a disappointing note, but Smith knows his Indians went down fighting.

"It is what it is — we did what we could do," said Director Smith. "The kids played hard. They played four quarters, they didn't just lay down and quit."

Smith will be holding the annual end of the year banquet for his kids on Saturday, Nov. 8.

"I'm going to give a trophy to each kid," said Director Smith. "We're going to have a big dinner,



and the coaches, of course, they will talk about the kids, like who made the most tackles and the offense. We have a great time at the football banquet.

"We have the grandmothers, the grandpas, they come out, and the moms and dads and aunts and uncles — everybody comes out. And the president of the Smoky Mountain Conference, Dave McCoy, he said he'll be there."

Daniel's Steakhouse of Hiawassee will be catering the banquet.

"I'd like to thank them, also, because they gave me a deal for this youth football program to have a dinner to feed that many people — they gave me a real deal," said Director Smith.

Looking back on the season, several people stand out as star helpers for Smith.

"The biggest help is my wife, Robyn — if it wasn't for her, I couldn't do this crazy thing I do," said Smith of managing the entire youth football program. "She helps me big time."

Lisa and Chris Gibson organized the gate crew and ran the chains on the field, and helped to coordinate assistance for Robyn Smith in the concession stand.

Towns County Youth Football Cheerleaders will also receive trophies at the banquet, and Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall will be in attendance to celebrate with the youth.

"There are a lot of people who have helped me with this thing — I couldn't run it all by myself, if it weren't for these people," said Director Smith. "Danny and Angie Reagan, they did the cooking for me, and Wayne and Sherry Canterbury."

The Reagans and the Can-terburys would alternate cooking during home games, and demonstrated a true spirit of volunteerism for youth football, as neither of the couples has a kid who plays.

"I'd like to thank Mr. Jonathan Gibson again for his support of the youth football program," said Director Smith. "And Coach Jim Melton, who helped also getting the drinks and stuff for me — whatever I needed, they helped."

"I'd like to thank the United Community Bank — they put their sign out there on the bank, 'Go Pee Wees,'" said Smith. "And I appreciate the Towns County Herald for all they've done this year."

Smith remains happy with the Smoky Mountain Conference, and looks forward to next season.

"There's no way that I would change and go back to the old league we were in," said Director Smith. "Being in the Smoky Mountain Conference is just going to make our kids better once they get to the middle school and the high school — it's a tougher conference over here."

Towns County Youth Football starts each year in May, at least for Smith, and he's ready for a little break.

"I'm going to do a little deer hunting," said Director Smith. "I'm going to kick back and watch some football instead of doing football, but I'm going to miss it."

Smith has two children who will be playing basketball this season: a daughter who plays for the high school, and a son who will be playing recreation league basketball.

"I'll be busy in basketball," said Director Smith. "I've got a lot to be proud about."



Langelier was unable to race due to an injury."

The Lady Indians faired a little better, with Whitehead coming in second with a time of 22:09; Arrowood, 10th with a time of 25:18; Moss, 12th with a time of 26:19; Calhoun was right there with Moss, finishing 13th place with an identical time of 26:19; and Stowers rounded out the top five, finishing 15th with a time of 26:47.

"We finished second out of the three teams attending," said Tallent of the Lady Indians. "Amanda Garrett improved her place, finishing 7th for the Lady Indians. This was our last race before we race at Area on Thursday, Oct. 30."