

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians' two game win streak snapped in 30-3 loss at St. Francis

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Alpharetta - The Indians and Indian fans braved the cold on Friday to travel to St. Francis, trying for their third win in a row.

Though neither team initially had a clear edge, the St. Francis Knights eventually emerged with a 30-3 victory.

The first quarter was indecisive. It might have gone another way had not the Indians suffered a couple of penalties early on, including one call for a facemask. Cruz Shook and Harrison Hobbs were at the fore of the offense, whereas Garrett Bradshaw stood out on defense with several nice, hard-hitting tackles.

The Knights fought their way to the goal line, but it took them several tense plays to break through the Indian defense for the necessary two yards to score. They finally ran in the touchdown with 5:20 left in the first quarter, but were unable to get past Shook, Jackson Noblet, and Bradshaw to score again. That quarter ended 7-0.

The second quarter started off well. Shea Underwood kicked a 35-yd field goal for three points. At 10:11, Vonya Baldwin caught an interception. Evan Keyes took over defense this quarter, focusing less on merely stopping the Knights and more on hurling them to the ground.

Still, St. Francis was able to get through as the quarter drew to a close. With 67 seconds left, the Knights scored another touchdown, bringing the score to 14-3 at halftime.

With 11:39 to go in the third, the Knights scored another touchdown, bringing the score to 21-3. The penalties continued against Towns County. For a helmet-to-helmet penalty, the Indians lost 15 yards. For an offside penalty, they lost five. Still, they fought. With about five minutes to go in the third, they backed St. Francis up to the 5-yard line. It seemed they would score as the clock wound down.

But the penalties ultimately went against them, and the Indians were unable to score.

The Knights scored within the first five seconds of the fourth quarter, bringing the score to 27-3. They were later able to add a field goal as the game drew to a close, finishing with a score of 30-3.

While Head Coach Blair Harrison acknowledges that the loss was unfortunate, he's focused on the broader picture: creating a winning, consistent football team.

"You've got to play games like that before you can win games like that," he said. "It's all a process."

Harrison noted that the team has made steady but important improvements since the



Senior Vonya Baldwin (12) leads the Indians onto the field at St. Francis. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Senior Brett Barrett looks for a block. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Shea Underwood and the kickoff team. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Jaryd Gurley (77), Kyle Davis (60), and Garrett Bradshaw (80) anchor the front line. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



The Towns County Band made the trip. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Indians' Coach Blair Harrison instructs the Indians during the second half. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

beginning of the season—a fact which is already obvious to the spectators that regularly turn out on Friday nights.

"I think we're playing better fundamental football," he said. He mentioned that starting quarterback Russell Cox, only a freshman, has risen admirably to the pressures of playing high school football. "I don't care who you are, that's hard," he said. It's hard to go from a middle school season to a high school season, but he's doing a great job." He also added that some "unsung heroes" of the team were his two offensive

guards, Keyes and Kyle Davis. The end of the season is only a few weeks away, but Harrison is already planning summer workouts.

"We'll do four days a week all summer long," he said. "And we don't stop lifting. That's another reason we're getting better, because we're getting stronger."

"I'm trying to build a program," Harrison said. "Not just one season. But what we went through tonight's going to help us in the future. I wish we had twenty more games, just so we can keep getting better."

6&U one win away from Super Bowl

By Mason Mitcham
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Saturday held unexpected turns for Towns County youth football.

This first round of the playoffs saw the 9-10 year olds take a hard loss to Jackson County.

However, the 5-6 year-old team forged ahead, beating Dawson County 26-0 and securing a place for themselves in the next round of Super Bowl Playoffs.

The 9-10 year-olds played with their usual abandon. Peyton Ivester and Hayden McClure both scored touchdowns in the first half. Colin Crowder ran for an extra point. Opponents Jackson County remained tough. By halftime the score was tied 13-13.

In the second half, however, Jackson took the lead and held it until the end of the game, defeating Towns County 19-13.

Though disappointed, Director Jimmy Smith stayed positive. "They ended up 7-2," he said. "They had a wonderful season."

On the other hand, the 5-6 year-olds will be advancing to the next round of playoffs.

Brett Young rushed for 200 yards and three touch-



The season draws to a close for youth football across North Georgia, but Towns County still has teams alive. Photo/Mason Mitcham

downs. Also scoring for the Indians was Dawson Devane.

"He moved the ball great all day," said Smith. Defensively, Copper Floed and Robert Burns did incredibly well. They only allowed Dawson three 1st downs the entire game. "Everybody had great tackles," said Smith.

Also playing well were Aiden Burrell, Kaylee Rader, and Evan Woodall. Smith said his coaching staff were very proud of the young kids, "because they played like champions."

"I want to say 'great

job' to my coaching staff," Smith said. "They just do a wonderful job." His coaching staff for the 5-6 year-olds consists of coaches Randy Crisp, Shane Haney, Paul Hunter, Brandon Burns, and Head Coach Joey Floed. "I just can't say enough," Smith said.

Next week's round of playoffs will be held at Fan-nin County.

The 5-6 year-olds will face off against Flowery Branch. If they win, they will play at home the following Saturday.

Register your child now for Upward Indoor Soccer



Online registration is now open through January 6th for Upward Indoor Soccer for boys and girls in grades Kindergarten through 6th at www.hopb.org or at www.fumcunioncounty.org. The early registration price to participate is \$60 and includes one jersey among other Upward sports related resources. After December 18th, the price will be \$70. Payment plans are available if needed. Convenient once per week practices will begin the week of January 6, 2014, while games will be held on

consecutive Saturdays from January 25 through March 1, 2014.

Only one evaluation will be held on Tuesday, December 17th from 5:30 to 7:30 PM at the House of Prayer Family Life Center and everyone is encouraged to attend.

Form and registration fees may also be dropped off, Monday through Friday, at House of Prayer Family Life Center or First United Methodist Church's business office between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. For more information, contact either church office at HOP (706) 745-5925 or FUMC (706) 745-2073.

Research indicates that children's moral foundations are generally in place by the time they reach age nine (Barna, 2003). Using the universal language

of sports, Upward Sports Coaches and Volunteers connect with families during the formative years in a child's life to develop values, athletic skills and a life-long love of the game.

Founded in 1995 by Caz McCaslin, Upward Sports is the world's largest Christian-based kid's sports league. The first-class sports program—which includes basketball, flag football, soccer and cheerleading—provides a fun sports experience based on healthy competition for kids, teaching skills for the sports arena and values for life.

Today, nearly 550,000 children in 48 U.S. states and Canada participate in Upward Sports Leagues and Camps hosted by 2,400 churches. (NOV30.A3)SH

New youth basketball program at Rec Department

The Towns County Recreation Department is currently taking youth basketball registration through Saturday the 16th of November 2013.

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

for the program will be \$45 for 8 & under and \$25 for 6 & under.

Age divisions will be 6 & Under Co-Ed divisions (5 & 6 year olds), 8 & Under divisions (7 & 8) year olds. This is for both male and female.

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

BMTA annual meeting

Benton MacKaye Trail Association Annual Meeting weekend, Nov. 1 - 3. Group Hikes, Friday - Sunday. Meeting on Saturday, in Ellijay, includes reports on the trail, election of new Board and lasagna dinner. See www.bmta.org for details and to pre-register. Contact Darcy Douglas with questions - bmtadarcy@yahoo.com or 404-497-0818.

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Towns Cross Country's road to a repeat begins this week

By Mason Mitcham
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Staff Writer

With the Area Meet fast approaching, Towns County Cross-Country Coach Jeannie Ledford knows she's done all she can to prepare her team.

It's been a year of ups and downs; though a crop of new runners have shown incredible improvements from the beginning of the season, some more experienced runners have suffered injuries.

Now, however, all her runners are healed up, healthy, and ready to compete in the area tournament on Halloween.

To say that Ledford expects the competition to be stiff would be an understatement.

"We're focused on Trion, Commerce, and Gordon Lee," she said. "All these teams are separated by seconds."

She went on to add that the area in which Towns will compete is the toughest area in the state. So after area, the cross-country team will most likely be running against the same competitors at state. Towns County has already beaten Commerce once this year, but both teams had a runner out for injuries.

"This will be the first race of the season where everybody's athletes are back," Ledford said.

The pressures of performance at area and state are daunting. But she has ways of



Both of Towns' Cross Country squads have come a long way under Coach Ledford since the season began in August. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

handling it. "How I handle it is, I look at those three runners and Lindy," she said. The "three runners" are Caitlin Sheffield and Ansley and Taylor Varde-man, all in the top seven Ledford will depend on to score in Area and State.

Lindy Hollingshead had a special place in Ledford's heart. Ledford calls Lindy "Brain" because Lindy is the brains of the team. She's the manager, who deals with scoring and paperwork so Ledford can focus on coaching.

"The person that I literally do not know everyday how that I could function without, is my Brain," Ledford

said. "There is not enough that could ever be said about what she does." Ledford's known "Brain" since she was very small, but Lindy's never run. "She does more for this team than if she ran a step," Ledford said.

Though this is the penultimate moment of the season, Ledford's focus is on staying calm, collected, and present. She isn't thinking about another state championship, but rather about having her team run the best they can at area.

"I stay one objective at a time. We're focused on not getting ahead of ourselves, staying ever present, and our battle is Halloween," she said. And her



Both of Towns' Cross Country squads have come a long way under Coach Ledford since the season began in August. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

team's mental state will be incredibly important in the meat grinder that will be the area tournament. They've trained hard and worked on perfecting their technique, but so have the athletes in Trion, Commerce, and Gordon Lee.

"It's not always the most gifted or the most trained," Ledford said. "It comes down to who wants it more. You just show up and you battle."

"Because on any given day it could be anybody's race. It's that close."

It may be close, but Ledford is confident in the athletes she's known, taught, and trained with for 11 years.

"I feel hopeful," she said,

"and I feel confident in my kids that they're going to fight, and that they're going to try with their heart and with their feet and with their minds, and that's all you can do."

The closing of the season is decidedly bittersweet. Ledford's seniors have been in her life since they were kindergartners.

"They are a phenomenal blessing and no matter where they go, they will always be my kids," she said.

Ledford sees it as her job to bring her team as close together as they possibly can be, until they are no longer "just" a team but are instead a family. She admitted that other teams

don't compare in terms of how close the athletes are.

"You don't find stuff like this," she said of the relationships the runners have with one another.

Of course, such closeness doesn't always come without a little urging. There's a reason Ledford sometimes substitutes the word "family" for "team."

"I make them," she said. "Every bit of it. Because I want people to feel like no matter if you were the kid who came in and couldn't run three miles, we're here on your best day, and we're here on your worst day. When somebody's hurt, I've got other legs that can run for you."

The end of the season is always emotional, exciting, and stressful, but this year, those factors are increased because at the end of the year, Ledford will be losing members of her family.

But she's staying focused. After all, she has had another great coach to model herself after.

"I keep trying to remember how Coach Carney handled us and handled me and how he handled that pressure," she said. "It's something I don't take lightly. If my position in this world right now is to coach, then I'm going to coach the best I can. I'm going to try to make a difference like somebody made a difference in my life. I owe him that."

NASCAR 2013

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Gordon bounces back at Martinsville

Jeff Gordon was in victory lane for the first time this season as he won Sunday's Sprint Cup race at Martinsville Speedway.

Gordon, who led four times during the 500-lap race, took the lead from Matt Kenseth on lap 479 and stayed out front for the remaining laps.

"Man, it's hard to top a win like this," said Gordon. "This was a huge win, but I gave it all I had. I couldn't have driven any harder."

"A couple times I thought I might have given it away, but we had the car, team, and everything we needed to win."

It was Gordon's 88th victory in 722 Sprint Cup starts.

Matt Kenseth, who led the most laps (202) finished second and is back as the Chase leader.

"The car was good and the team did a great job in the pits, but we had a couple issues," said Kenseth. "We had a bad rear tire there at the end and it didn't handle like it did earlier."

Clint Bowyer tried several times to get around Kenseth, but had to settle for third place.

"I dunno' what happened," said Bowyer. "We had a good car, but a lot of things happened during the race. Some of it was our fault, and some wasn't. That's just the way some races go."

Brad Keselowski was fourth, while Jimmie Johnson came in fifth.

Johnson led three different times, but near the end his car lost handling and a fourth-place finish was the best he could manage.

"It's been a great battle with the 20 (Matt Kenseth)," said Johnson. "Jeff drove a great race, and we'll keep going until we get to Homestead."

Kevin Harvick was sixth, followed by Denny Hamlin, and Dale Earnhardt.

Greg Biffle, who finished ninth, approached Johnson after the race ended with some angry words concerning Johnson's driving habits.

"We got a rear bumper torn off by the 48-car," said Biffle. "It takes a whole lot to tear off an entire bumper. We had a good car, and would have finished much higher if

not for the 48."

Jamie McMurray rounded out the top-10.

Top-10 Chase leaders after 33 of 36: 1. Kenseth-2294, 2. Johnson-2294 (Kenseth is considered the leader, because he has more wins than Johnson), 3. Gordon-2267, 4. Harvick-2266, 5. Kyle Busch-2258, 6. Bowyer-2239, 7. Earnhardt-2238, 8. Biffle-2236, 9. Kurt Busch-2219, 10. Edwards-2218.

DARRELL WALLACE JR WINS TRUCK RACE

Darrell Wallace Jr. won Saturday's Truck Series race at Martinsville to become the third black driver in nearly 50 years to win a major NASCAR event.

Wallace beat Jeb Burton into Turn-1 on a restart with five laps to go, and then held on for the win.

His victory was the first by a black driver since Wendell Scott's Dec. 1, 1963 win in a Grand National (Sprint Cup) race at Jacksonville, Fla.

"This (win) means everything," said Wallace. "This is an emotional win for me, especially doing it in Wendell Scott's backyard. I love coming here to Martinsville, it's always good to me. It finally paid off. I think it's my third trip here. I love coming here, the fans are great here and we always put on great races here. I had to do some muscling there at the end and get around Ty (Dillon) and keep away from (Kevin) Harvick, so we dodged a few bullets in the race and this is awesome."

Brendan Gaughan, Jeb Burton, Ben Kennedy, Ryan Blaney, Denny Hamlin, German Quiroga, Johnny Sauter, Scott Riggs, and James Buescher were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Tempers flared near the end of the race between Kevin Harvick and Ty Dillon. A bump from Dillon in Turn-2, during lap 189 of the 200-lap race sent Harvick's truck spinning.

Both drivers pitted. Harvick stopped in Dillon's pit stall to voice his displeasure, and ask for a crying towel.

Crew members for Ty Dillon's team fired back with some choice verbal words. While one



Jeff Gordon is all smiles after winning Sunday's Martinsville Cup race.

crewmember was yanking on Harvick's driver-side window net, another aimed a sledge hammer at his truck.

Harvick exited the area, because he realized he was in the wrong pit for sympathy.

"I don't care what they throw at me," said Harvick. "That's exactly the reason I'm leaving RCR (Richard Childress Racing) is because you've got those punk-ass kids coming up. They've got no respect for what they do in this sport and they've had everything fed to them with a spoon. So, I cut him slack all day and, you know, he just dive-bombs me in there, dumps me. It's a shame you've got to get taken out by some rich kid like that."

Following a 22nd place finish, Dillon quietly explained, "He got sideways and then he hit the brakes and tried to brake-check me. So, I can't believe that happened. I'm pretty disappointed in the things that just went down."

"I used to look up to that guy but I guess he doesn't understand the circumstances of what's going on. I understand its tough racing down there in (turns) one and two at Martinsville. I know we wrecked, but to tear up a truck after the race and act like a punk on the track and stop on pit road in my pit stall, was pretty ridiculous."

Harvick, who will move to Stewart-Haas Racing in 2014, is in his final season with RCR. Ty Dillon is team owner Richard Childress' grandson. Another grandson, Austin Dillon races for Childress in the Nationwide and Cup series.

Top-10 leaders after 19 of 22: 1. Crafton-707, 2. Buescher-656, 3. T. Dillon-646, 4. Burton-639, 5. Sauter-625, 6. Blaney-615, 7. Paludo-615, 8. D. Wallace-614, 9. Gaughan-595, 10. Peters-592.

QUALIFYING CHANG-

ES COMING IN 2014

NASCAR is considering changing its qualifying procedure in 2014, which would allow multiple cars on the track at the same time.

The proposed qualifying format would have cars in groups of five or six, with each car released from pit road in intervals of a few seconds, similar to road course qualifying.

Each group of drivers would then have a certain amount of time to complete qualifying laps, with the best lap speed used to determine the starting order for the race. On restrictor-plate tracks (Daytona and Talladega), NASCAR is considering using a drafting session, likely 45-60 minutes, to determine the starting order.

The Daytona 500 field would still be set primarily through qualifying races but whether the new format would be used to determine the Daytona 500 pole and the lineup for the qualifying races is still to be decided.

"Nothing is set in stone yet," NASCAR spokesman, Kerry Tharp said. "We haven't determined how all that (throughout the season) would be administered. We're still working through that but with the goal of providing a more enhanced qualifying experience for the fans that come there and watch it on television and, quite frankly, for the competitors."

Weekend Racing:

Texas Motor Speedway will be the center of NASCAR racing this weekend, as all three major series' will be at the 1.5-mile track.

Fri., Nov. 1, Truck Series race 20 of 22; Starting time: 8:30 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sat., Nov. 2, Nationwide Series race 31 of 33; Starting time: 3:30 pm ET; TV: ESPN2.

Sun., Nov. 3, sprint Cup race 34 of 36; Starting time: 3 pm ET; TV: ESPN.

Racing Trivia Question: Who won the pole for the first NASCAR race at Martinsville in 1949?

Last Week's Question: Which year did Matt Kenseth win his only Cup championship? Answer: It was 2003, while driving a Jack Roush Ford.

You may e-mail any questions to the Racing Reporter at: hodges@race500.com.

Joe Collins



Tips from the Range

One of the places I see many players falter when score is concerned is on the putting surface itself. They stroke the putt poorly, which can be corrected through practicing the proper technique, make poor reads or develop inconsistent feel or they do the one thing that probably causes more added strokes to the scorecard than any one factor and that is: Lag Putting.

More often than not, a once a week golfer or a twice a month golfer will go out and play a decent round of golf, and when the final score is totaled, it's higher than said golfer thinks it ought to be. You hit the ball well, even hit several greens in regulation, but what happened to your score? The ride home provides the answer to this high score phantom as the round is replayed inside the golfer's head. All of a sudden, when everything is counted and all shots are analyzed, it is obvious that good ball striking alone is not going to produce low scores. Said golfer just counted 45 total putting strokes which included six three-putts and one four-putt. Unacceptable!

The average golfer thinks that the difficulty in golf is hitting the ball from point A to point B. Oh, if only this were true. The difficulty in golf is shooting your lowest score ever or being a consistent low scorer. Ball striking is important to having good scores but putting is the one thing that can affect your score the most and in relative terms, the easiest to control. Proper technique is required to a point but some simple logic will help you roll those long putts closer to the hole and in return have less putting strokes on the scorecard. Sound good?

Many of you have seen the old timers and the way they used their hands to putt by breaking their wrist in the follow through. Obviously this is a form of putting that requires a tremendous amount of feel but can be the most consistent way to putt for someone who has developed that feel. Charlie Jenkins was my mentor at Butternut Creek Golf Course when I was growing up and he taught me to roll the ball on the putting surface and to feel each putt before you ever struck the ball. He stood on the south side of the ball and he actually cut across the ball with his stroke, but made more putts than anyone. His stroke was through the shoulders but also with a whole lot of feel through the hands. He

never three-putted.

How do you develop great feel on long putts? I am glad you asked and I will explain. You don't. If you don't have it, you ain't gonna find it on the course unless you play a lot of golf. You gotta' use technique. It is impossible to develop consistent feel when greens change daily and you only play a couple times a month. Your technique must provide the base of your putting stroke. Feel is created inside good form through a lot of practice on technique. The first thing you must consider is the fact that it is very important to repeat your form every stroke so that your distances will be consistent. It is vital that you keep your head still and watch the putter head strike the ball to make a clean impact. Always keep the intended target line in your minds eye by using your peripheral vision. Don't move your head to do this. Keep the use of your hands to a minimum until you have struck the ball. Stay in balance.

Now, this is how you find your correct distances from course to course or from week to week on your home course. Find a flat place on the practice putting green and step off five paces (15') from the nearest flat hole. Drop three balls and make a good solid stance to prepare to roll the first practice putt. Draw the putter back to the outside of the back foot and make your normal, or as close to normal, putting stroke that you would use on the course during a round. DO NOT change your stance, merely place another ball exactly where the previous ball was rolled from and stroke the next two. Assuming you had all the elements in place to make a good stroke, determine how far past or how short the average of the three balls is and that is the distance you will roll the ball on the course when drawing the putter back to the outside of the back foot. Pretty simple huh?

This is a simple but very affective way to combat lag putting problems. Nothing is more irritating than putting for birdie and come away with bogey or double. Work on this the next time you go play and you will find the first putts getting a lot closer to the hole which should eliminate most of the three and four-putts.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

League bowling scores

Galaxy Bowling: Monday Night Men - Game: Gary Brown 278; Derrick Rice 275; and Jeb Plott 257. Series: Derrick Rice 763; Gary Brown 701; and BJ Gilbert 653. Monday Night Women - Game: Sarah Chumbley 206; and Nell Rice 195. Series: Shae Roberts 529; and Nell Rice 512. Young At Heart - Game: Ernest Rice 205; Don Ransom 204; and Ron Mack 192. Series: Al Squires 538; Ron Gaucher 537; and Paul Napolitano 534. Thursday Night Fun - Bob Landis 265; Russ Southcott 258; Jeb Plott 246; and Pam Bierce 212. Series: Jeb Plott 722. N00c30Z12CA

Family Bike-A-Thon

Bike to raise money for new playground equipment at Union County Primary School. Drop in Sunday, November 10, 2013 at Meeks Park between 1 - 5 p.m. All participants must wear a helmet. \$5 registration fee per biker. Face painting, hair art, tattoos, drinks and pizza will be available.