

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Middle School Wrestling practice underway

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The 2012-13 Towns County Middle School wrestling season is now officially underway with 26 middle school athletes involved from grades 6-8.

Several veterans have returned to anchor this year's team and Head Coach Jeff Stowers is very excited about the potential this team has.

"Because of our experience I think we have a legitimate chance to compete for the league championship this season," said Stowers.

Towns County is known for its solid wrestling program and this season promises more of the same. Conditioning and fundamentals are the order of the day for the team. Wrestling is a very grueling sport and requires its participants to be in top physical condition.

"We are working hard to get the kids in wrestling shape and also working on proper fundamentals. We need to catch the younger kids up and refresh the older ones," said Stowers.



Coach Stowers addresses his team at TCMS wrestling practice. Photo/Lowell Nicholson.

The athletes are spending 45 minutes per practice conditioning for strength and cardiovascular endurance to help with the strain of an actual match. Wrestling demands good physical endurance.

The veterans coming back this season really make the outlook for 2012 very promising. Key wrestlers such as Russell Cox, Dawson Hogsted, Nick Shook, Owen Bouchard, Logan

Quinton and Trent Whidden bring some solid talent to the team as other promising young stars are waiting in the wings to get their shot at making a statement for TCMS.

"We have six or seven kids that should compete for the league championship this season that have been in the wrestling program for several years. They started in the USA program and now are working

through the TCMS program and that will definitely help us this year," declared Stowers when describing the make up of the team.

Wrestling is an individual sport as well as a team sport and opportunity to excel is always there in wrestling. Speed and strength are vital and that can form at anytime for any young wrestler as they work hard to find their way to the top. Wrestling provides that chance as much or more than many sports and this is one of the exciting aspects you will see if you come out and support the team this year.

This season has the makings of a championship season and the guys are excited. The middle school team is working hard to get ready for their first meet on Oct. 30 at home against Dawson and Riverview Middle. The meet starts at 5 p.m. and everyone is invited to come out and support the team. Both of these opponents are solid and will give the Indians a challenging opening meet.

Make plans now to come out and watch some good wrestling this year at the middle school.



Joe Collins
Tips from the Range

I'm getting a lot of questions about why it is so hard to hit the ball straight, so I thought I would cover some of the things you should look for if you are having trouble hitting greens or par threes or finding the fairway off the tee. Unfortunately, there is never the one fix that will work for everybody when accuracy is the problem, but there are some things that are very common among every golfer who struggles with accuracy.

The first thing a golfer should consider when working on hitting the ball straighter is alignment. Good golfers will first make sure that their alignment is good when trouble starts sneaking into their game. Have a friend or even a playing partner stand behind you and see if you are "pointed" to the correct area on the course or practice facility. If you aren't aimed correctly your sub-conscious will know it and force your swing to compensate for the poor alignment. The fix some of you need could be this simple.

If alignment is not your issue then we next need to focus on the club path. If the club path is incorrect it will cause the ball to start off either left or right of where you are aimed. The path of the club must start off straight away from the intended target and then continue on an uninterrupted path all the way to the end of the back swing. From there it must travel slightly inside the takeaway path to impact and beyond. The follow-through path should mimic the takeaway path. Never lean into the ball on the downswing because if you do you will cause the downswing path to travel on the outside of the takeaway path ("over-the-top") and that is bad. That path can cause all sorts of weird looking shots so stay away from bad balance on the downswing.

Now let's look at the shoulder turn because it will be the actual problem many of you will struggle with.

The shoulder turn is crucial to making a good golf swing, but the problem with a lot of us is, we can't turn enough to get the shoulders in the correct position. We try to compensate by using

the arms more and that is where the problem lies. The arms have to stay "connected" to the body and must stay in front of the chest on the downswing. The distance the arms travel in a proper backswing is determined by how far the shoulders can turn. When the shoulder turn is complete, let the momentum the arms have built up set the top position. Focus on keeping the top of the spine, or your head, behind the ball as you make the downswing. Don't force the arms to travel farther than the shoulders can turn them in the backswing before you start down.

This may shorten your swing a little but you will probably pick up some yardage because you will be hitting the ball more solid. The last thing to look at when facing accuracy issues is the weight transfer.

The proper weight transfer is very important to the club path and must occur at the right time in the swing. To early and you will push the shot and to late will make you pull the shot, so make sure your weight transfer is correct from back to front on the downswing. Your weight must be on the front foot at impact with your shoulders slightly open. The weight transfer starts with the hips and finishes through shoulders so make sure you push off the back foot and hold your back to the target to start the downswing. Always remember to keep your head behind the ball at impact. Accuracy is difficult because to hit the ball correctly you must not really feel your hands.

Shots need to be controlled by the big muscles and not the smaller muscles like is in your hands and wrist. This feels awkward when trying to hit a designated target but it is the proper way to swing. The back hand and arm can provide a lot of power but must be used at the correct time in the downswing. If you release the back wrist too soon it makes it really difficult to hit a straight shot with any club, so swing the club with the big muscles and stay in balance to improve your accuracy.

Hope this helps! Remember to send your questions to jcollins.tcherald@windstream.net and hopefully a little insight can help make your game more enjoyable. Don't forget that practice makes golf better so get out there and work on your game. Good luck and I will see you on the course!

Indian Tiny Mites win first playoff game 21-13

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

It was a chilly morning Saturday when the Towns County Tiny Mite Indians from the North Georgia Youth Football Association hit the field against a strong Johnson Knights team.

Head Coach Patrick Oakes had his team fired up and ready and when they hit the field and they took care of business. Johnson had more size than Towns but those little guys hit them like a swarm of yellow jackets and never let up.

From the opening kickoff when A.J. Miles received a solid hit to the chest from the ball and was able to fall on it to maintain possession, to the final touchdown by Kyle Oakes, the Indians played hard and it was fun to watch.

Austin Taylor took the opening handoff and rushed around the right side for four yards and then Caleb Bradley busted a hole up the middle for another four yards. Kyle Oakes found some room off the left side guard and picked up the first down. He then had an amazing run and scored on the very next play to give the Indians the first points of the game. The extra points attempt failed and the Indians led 6-0.

The rest of the game was just like that. Jesse Allen, Clay Rogers and Grant Ingram opened up holes and the backs found



Towns County takes the field during the playoff win at Fannin County. Photo/Joe Collins

them. It was hard fought for turf as the Indians clawed their way to 21 points. Their running game wore the Knights down and some forced turnovers gave the Indians the edge they needed as they earned the win.

"We knew that Johnson was a good team and we worked hard all week to prepare. They are big and physical but we just got in there and played hard and came out on top," stated a proud Coach Oakes. "This win feels great and I am proud of our team."

The defense was a key to winning the first playoff game. They caused a fumble on the first kickoff to the Knights and the offense was able to score after the turnover to increase their lead 12-0 late in the first quarter. The extra points were good by Logan Daniel and the lead was now 14-0. The defense held again and that was all the offense needed and with some great front line blocking and some fancy footwork from Kyle

Oakes, who scored all the TDs on Saturday, the Indians scored their final TD of the game just before half. The extra point was good by Daniel and the Indians led 21-7 at halftime.

The second half saw the Indians come out in a blaze. The Knights' first possession was backwards and they had to punt. Kyle Oakes, Beck, Daniel, and Taylor all went to work and moved the ball to the 12-yard line of the Knights when Coach Oakes called for a pass play. The throw was a perfect spiral and almost worked out but unfortunately the Knights played it well and intercepted it in the end zone.

Johnson managed to put together a good drive late in the third quarter and scored on an 80-yard run early in the fourth, but that was all they could muster in this game. The Indians got the ball back with 3:50 left in the game and ran the clock out to win 21-13. "Words can't

express how proud I am of our YFL teams and to see the Tiny Mites move on is wonderful. I'm just really happy for the team and the coaches cause they have worked hard to get where they are," said and elated Director Jimmy Smith when asked about the win.

The Knights were big and had some size and speed in the backfield but the Indians tackled well as a team by wrapping up the runner and then holding on until help arrived. The Indians gang tackling was very affective and they were able to stop the big backs from Johnson. Devon Beck had a big day on defense, as did Braxton Barrett, Brack Burrell and Daniel who had 13 solo tackles to help hold the Knights to 13 points.

The overall team effort is what won the game and they look good for another victory as they travel to Dawson on Nov. 3 to take on Flowery Branch at noon. They are just one win away from the semi-finals so come out and support the Tiny Mite Indians in Dawson on Saturday.

The Termites will travel to Rabun on Nov. 3 to play Dawson at 9 a.m. and the Pee-Wee team, who finished first in their division, will have home field advantage against Dawson at 1:30 p.m. on the same day. Pick a game and come out and watch some good football. These little guys really pack a punch and have a real shot at being in the YFL Super Bowl on Nov. 17.

NASCAR 2012

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Johnson gets seventh Martinsville win

Jimmie Johnson put on a strong late-race run that gave him his seventh Martinsville Cup win, and allowed him to take the Chase points lead from Brad Keselowski.

Johnson was leading the 500-lap race with eight-to-go, when Carl Edwards spun, and slipped up into Dale Earnhardt Jr., causing both cars to hit the outside wall, and bringing out the race's last caution.

There were just five laps left when the green flag was dropped. Kyle Busch was right on Johnson's rear bumper, but he was unable to pull even or make a pass for the lead, and Johnson took the checkered flag for his first Chase victory of the season.

"We have learned from the past that we needed good tires at the finish, and that's what helped us today," said Johnson. "It's not going to be a cakewalk, because Brad (Keselowski) is a very talented driver, but I think we've shown that we're ready to go all the way."

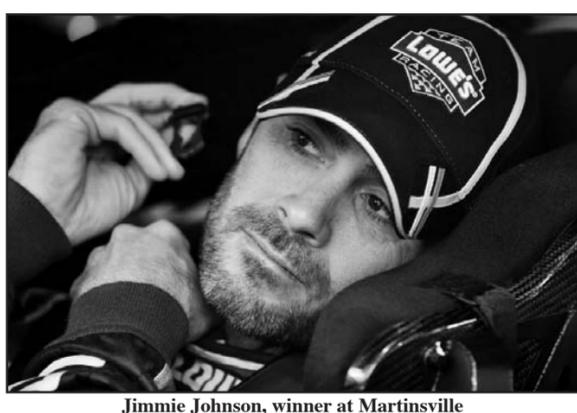
Kyle Busch, Kasey Kahne, Eric Almirola, and Clint Bowyer were the remaining top-5 finishers.

Brad Keselowski, who started 32nd, finished sixth and trails Johnson by two points.

"This team has a tremendous amount of heart," he said. "I know it's going to be a duel all the way to Homestead, and we're ready to fight those three remaining races."

Jeff Gordon, Brian Vickers, Bobby Labonte, and Greg Biffle rounded out the top-10.

One of the biggest losers was Denny Hamlin. First, he was hit with a pit road speeding penalty, which cost him a lap, and then his car developed electrical problems, and had to be pushed to the garage.



Jimmie Johnson, winner at Martinsville



Juan Montoya spins around after contact from Jimmie Johnson during Sunday's Martinsville Cup race. Furnished by NASCAR

He was able to return to the race, but was 33 laps down, and finished 33rd.

"This day certainly ended in disappointment," said Hamlin. "We had a great car, but when these things happen, you have to suck it up. One of these days it'll be our time and we will capitalize on it."

Hamlin dropped from third to fifth in Chase points, and is now 49 points behind the leader. Top-12 Chase leaders with three races remaining: 1. Johnson-2291, 2. Keselowski-2289, 3. Bowyer-2265, 4. Kahne-2262,

5. Hamlin-2242, 6. Gordon-2237, 7. Truex-2228, 8. Kenseth-2225, 9. Biffle-2222, 10. Stewart-2220, 11. Harvick-2203, 12. Earnhardt-2151.

With three races left, put your money on one of three drivers: Jimmie Johnson, Brad Keselowski, or Clint Bowyer. Kasey Kahne, Denny Hamlin, and Jeff Gordon are too far back.

HAMLIN WINS MARTINSVILLE TRUCK RACE

Denny Hamlin won Saturday's Martinsville truck race with a late pass around Matt Crafton.

To Crafton, it was a bulldozer tactic.

Regardless of the point of view, Hamlin's pass after a restart with eight laps left allowed him to claim his second victory at the .526-mile short track and his second win in 15 career truck starts.

Irate at Hamlin's use of the front bumper, Crafton had some choice words for the driver of the No. 51 Kyle Busch Motorsports Toyota after the race. With Hamlin parked on pit road, Crafton leaned into the driver's-side window to express his displeasure.

Hamlin's reaction was, "What did he expect? When you're the leader with a few laps to go, you've got to expect it. You can't wreck the guy — that's off-limits — but moving him off and out of the groove, that's standard protocol at this type of race track."

Crafton disagreed. "If you want to call that a pass—that's just moving somebody," Crafton said. "Running in the back of somebody, that doesn't take anything. Anybody can do that. I didn't let the tires come up quite clean enough on the last restart. I do admit that. That's part of it. I didn't get my tires cleaned up, but I did not run into the back of him."

Nelson Piquet, Joey Coulter, Matt Crafton, Scott Riggs, James Buescher, Timothy Peters, Ryan Blaney, Parker Kligerman, and Brian Scott were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Ty Dillon's one-point championship lead evaporated after his No. 3 Chevrolet blew a tire and hit the outside wall on Lap 151. After repeated trips to pit road for repairs, Dillon dropped to 28th, six laps down, and now trails James Buescher by 21 points. Top-10 leaders after 19 of 22: 1. Buescher-716, 2. T. Dillon-695, 3. Peters-691, 4. Kligerman-680, 5. Coulter-670,

6. Crafton-664, 7. Piquet-626, 8. Lofton-618, 9. Sauter-573, 10. Paludo-568.

EARNHARDT EXPECTS A LIFE AFTER RACING

Two concussions, which he reported on Oct. 7, caused Dale Earnhardt Jr. to miss the Charlotte and Kansas races, and ended his chance at this year's Sprint Cup championship.

But he said his future well-being was more important to him than his love of racing.

"I can understand people's opinions that they would try to push through it or they would ignore it to stay in the car, because I did the same thing in the past," he said. "But you know, some concussions are kind of light and the symptoms are real light and if you don't have another incident, you feel like you can get through it."

"Some concussions are really bad. I don't care how tough you are, when your mind is not working the way it supposed to, it scares the (stuff) out of you. You're not going to think about trophies. You're not going to think about your job. You're going to think about, 'How can I get my brain to working the way it was before?'"

Earnhardt said he will be honest about another concussion if he feels symptoms again.

He realizes that if he continues to get concussions, it could mean an early end to his career.

"I don't really think about that too much," he continued. "One thing I can tell you is that

John Davis out for season

Towns County Head Football Coach Kyle Langford reported Saturday that junior linebacker John Davis suffered a season ending injury to his kidney in Friday night's game against St. Frances.

The injury occurred at the start of the game but Davis didn't realize he was injured until early Saturday morning. He was taken to Chatuge Regional Hospital and later transported to Erlanger.

"John lacerated his kidney and we didn't know anything was wrong until early Saturday morning. The doctors have said that they believe the bleeding is subsiding so as of now they won't operate. Right now we need to be in prayer for him and have faith he will be alright," stated a very concerned Langford.

Davis has become a big part of the Indians defense and has a lot to do with shutting down the run. When needed, he will take his place in the

backfield and can run the ball as well as block. He is tough and hard-nosed and plays a solid linebacker position.

"I can't tell you how much we will miss him. He plays an integral part in our defense and is an important weapon in our offense. He and Cruz Shook are both real solid football players and we miss them," said Langford.

It is strange to have two players in one season have the similar type of injuries. Sophomore Shook hurt his spleen a few weeks ago and is doing well. He was spotted on the sidelines in support of his team.

"I just thank everyone who prayed for me and let them know I'm doing well," said Shook.

We now need to turn our immediate attention to Davis who is in serious condition and needs everyone's prayers. The outlook is good and the doctors are optimistic but he is not out of the woods yet.

I'm going to be honest with myself and with the doctors and do whatever they tell me to do. I want to be able to live a full life and not have any issues down the road, but I feel pretty fortunate to have recovered from this concussion rather quickly. I feel lucky that I made the choices that I did to give myself that opportunity. I just hope that I don't have any more big hits for a while and race for another five to 10 years and have some fun."

Earnhardt said he plans to switch to a more protective type of driving helmet.

Weekend Racing: NASCAR's Cup, Nationwide, and Truck teams will be at the 1.5-mile Texas Motor Speedway, just outside Ft. Worth, TX.

Fri., Nov. 2, Camping World Trucks WinStar Casino 350, race 20 of 22; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: SPEED.

Sat., Nov. 3, Nationwide O'Reilly Auto Parts Challenge, race 31 of 33; Starting time: 7 pm ET; TV: ESPN.

Sun. Nov. 4, Sprint Cup AAA Texas 500, race 34 of 36; Starting time: 2 pm ET; TV: ESPN.

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

Last Week's Question: Where is Cup driver Jamie McMurray's hometown? **Answer:** Joplin, Missouri.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodges@race500.com. NT0CTBJ31AC