

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians sending three wrestlers to State Championships in Macon

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Three Towns County wrestlers are headed to the 2015 GHSA Class A State Championships at the Macon Centreplex on Friday, Feb. 13, and Saturday, Feb. 14.

Kaine Hoffman at 106 pounds pinned his first two opponents to guarantee a spot in the championship round of the West Sectional tournament.

Hoffman lost his final match by decision against a wrestler from Commerce, but cemented a second place victory in his weight class and a spot at the State Championships.

Thomas Mitchell (pictured) at 113 pounds won his first match by fall on Saturday, but lost to his Trion counterpart in his second match. In order to advance to State competition, he needed to win his third match – which he did, pinning his North Cobb Christian opponent.

Mitchell was able to clench third place in his weight class after pinning his fourth and final op-

ponent.

Rounding out the three State advancers, Daulton Rogers at 170 pounds lost his first match, but battled back to win the next two matches, securing his seat at the State tournament. He won his final match by forfeit, giving him a third place victory for the 170-pound weight class.

Aaron Collier, Kyle Davis and Daniel Crowder wrestled hard, finishing out their seasons with victories leading to the Sectional tournament. Russell Cox was unable to compete at Sectionals due to a prior injury.

"I've got mixed emotions," said Head Coach Jeff Stowers. "I'm incredibly happy for Kaine and Daulton and Thomas. They have worked so hard to get to where they're at. Daulton overcame some health issues this morning and was able to come back and get third in a really, really tough weight class.

"Kaine wrestled out of his mind all day today, and did a great job, finished second, and really pushed the Commerce kid," said



Coach Stowers. "Thomas wrestled great all day. He got beat by a defending state champion in the semis and was able to come back and get third and position himself for a run next weekend. I'm really, really happy for those guys."

But Coach Stowers hates that his two seniors didn't advance with their teammates.

"Aaron has battled injury all year, and just couldn't get healthy," said Coach Stowers. "He kept fighting and kept fighting, and it

just didn't happen for him. I hate it – I wish I could fix it for him, but I can't."

"Kyle's in a tough weight class and wrestled well this morning," said Coach Stowers. "He got to the semis and got beat by a kid that was a defending state placer from last year in the semis, and then dropped down to the console semis and caught another one. It just happens like that sometimes."

Collier and Davis have had illustrious wrestling careers, and got

to grow up together in a different kind of family.

"They've been part of the wrestling family since they were in sixth grade, so for the last seven years, I've spent more time with them during this time of the year than their parents have, and it's hard to see them go," said Coach Stowers. "They've become like family, their families have become like family, and it's just hard sometimes to see them go."

But that's all a part of it, said Coach Stowers – some people move on, and some people go home. Regardless of the end result of a single tournament, these wrestlers have spent countless hours working to perfect their craft.

"That's the one thing I think that you can say about our kids – they're going to give you everything they've got every time they step on the mat," said Coach Stowers. "And sometimes, it's just not good enough. I think that's one of the things I like the most about wrestling, is that it's a very humbling sport, because sometimes, you're just not good enough.

"There are times like that in life – sometimes you're just not good enough, and things don't go like you want them to go," said Coach Stowers. "You can either lay there and whine about it, or you can get up and dust yourself off and go on. That's just how life is sometimes."

And both Collier and Davis seem the type to do just that, to get up, dust off, and carry on into the futures they will soon be embracing come graduation this spring.

"I hope that those two guys look back on their wrestling careers with fond memories," said Coach Stowers. "They've done a lot of great things. Kyle was the first finalist in Towns County history, and Aaron has won a ton of matches, placed in state last year. They've done some great, great things."

"And I hope their lasting memory of wrestling is not today. The life lessons that they've learned are far more valuable than any medal they'll ever get, and it's been a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to coach them."

Indians' JV complete season with win over Tallulah

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Indian JV's Basketball Team completed their season on a positive note last Friday with a 42-39 home court victory over another band of Indians from Tallulah Falls.

It was the Indians' second win over Tallulah and just their second overall but with valuable experience gained by a mixture of promising players seeing limited action down from the varsity and others seeing just JV action this year.

The Indians sprang out to a 7-0 lead in less than two minutes at the start of the game with freshman Cole Ledford providing four of the points but Tallulah rallied for a 12-11 lead after one quarter.

Jake Pyrlik, a junior in just his second year of basketball at the high school level, scored six points in the second quarter and sophomore Colton Shook gave the Indians a 21-20 lead at intermission with a drive to the basket for a field



play with Davenport scoring eight points on three deuces and two free throws and Pyrlik including a trey among seven points as the Indians rallied for a 42-39 victory.

Highlights included a field goal by Davenport at 1:20 giving the Indians a 38-37 lead and a long deuce by Pyrlik giving them a 40-39 lead at thirty seconds with Davenport clinching the win with two free throws at 3.6 seconds.

Eight of 11 players seeing action entered the scoring column for the Indians with Pyrlik leading with an excellent shooting percentage for 13 points and followed by Davenport with 8, Barrett with 6, Berrong and Ledford with 4 each, freshman Cason Shook with 3, and sophomore Kobe Denton and Colton Shook with 2 each. Seven different Indians contributed at least one assist with leaders being Ledford with 4, Colton Shook with 3, and Cason Shook with 2.

Other Indians seeing action but not mentioned above were junior Kevin Reardon, sophomore Andrew Rogers, and freshman Chase Williams.

Region 8-A Tournament play opens on Wednesday

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Scheduling for this year's Region 8-A Tournament has made it possible to inform many readers of the Towns County Herald of the Lady Indians' and Indians' first appearances in the tournament.

The Lady Indians, the third place team from Sub-Region 8-A North, will face George Walton Academy, the second place team from Sub-Region 8-A South, at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, February 11 at Prince Avenue Christian School in Oconee County, west of Athens on US Highway 78.

The Indians, who also finished third in the sub-region, will follow the Lady Indians game against Providence Christian, the second place team from the south sub-region at 8:30 p.m..

Winners of these games will qualify for the Region 8-A Semi-Finals, also at Prince Avenue Christian on Friday, with the girls game starting at 4 p.m. and the boys at 5:30 p.m.

If victorious over George Walton on Wednesday, the Lady Indians will face the winner of a Tuesday game between Lakeview Academy, the top seed from Sub-Region 8-A North, and the winner of a play in game on Monday between Athens Academy and Tallulah Falls.

If the Indians win on Wednesday, they will face the winner of a Tuesday game between Hebron Christian, the top seed from Sub-Region 8A North and the winner of a Monday play in game between Prince Avenue Christian and Tallulah Falls.

Winners of the semi-final games on Friday will play at 7:00 and 8:30 on Saturday for the Region 8A Championship. There will be no third place games this year on Saturday.

NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Let's get ready to go racing

It's been a long winter, but the 2015 racing season is right around the corner. The first race of the season, the Sprint Unlimited will be held Sat., Feb. 14 at 8:15 pm on FOX. Qualifying for the top-two spots of the Daytona 500 will be held on Sun., Feb. 15, and can also be viewed on FOX, beginning at 1:00.

NASCAR announced that the season-opening 75-lap Sprint Unlimited, will be split into two segments. A competition caution at lap 25 will separate the segments in the non-points event. New this year, select fans will be paired with each crew chief for a random drawing to determine starting and pit road positions. The drawings will take place on Friday, Feb. 13 beginning at 3:30 pm.

The field of 25 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series drivers will include 2014 pole winners, former Sprint Unlimited race winners and Daytona 500 pole winners who completed full time in 2014, and all 16 Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup drivers from 2014. If an eligible driver does not enter the race, the open position will be filled based on 2014 Championship driver points.

The first five provisional drivers, respectively, are Clint Bowyer, Paul Menard, Marcos Ambrose, Casey Mears, and Ricky Stenhouse Jr.

AJ Allmendinger, driver of the No. 47 will not compete in the Sprint Unlimited because his team was unable to find sponsorship for the exhibition event. JTG Daugherty Racing co-owner Tad Geschickter told MotorsportsTalk that NASCAR's late decision to include all 16 Chase drivers in the Sprint Unlimited left his organization with little time to find a sponsor.

"It was nowhere on our radar until they changed the rules on it," Geschickter said. "If we had won a pole during the season and knew we were in it, I'm sure we would have been well prepared for it. We appreciate being grandfathered in, but, obviously, have to manage our resources to deliver the best year-end points finish we can for our sponsors."

Geschickter said he's not worried about missing additional track time at Daytona by skipping the race, because they are part of an alliance with Richard Childress Racing.

The following week there will be a full card of Camping World, Xfinity, and Sprint Cup races culminating with the Daytona 500 on Sunday, Feb. 22.

RAINBOW STEW FOR CHASE ELLIOTT

Chase Elliott's rise to the top of NASCAR's racing ladder has been phenomenal. He started off in the Truck series; after one year moved to the Xfinity series, and in 2016 will take over Jeff Gordon's vacated ride in the No. 24 Hendrick Chevrolet. His racing career is set.

How did he do it?

Was his rise to stardom really that spectacular, or was every stage planned?

Remember Chase, whose real name is William Clyde Elliott II, is the son of 1988 NASCAR Winston Cup champion and Hall of Famer Bill Elliott.

In January 2013, it was announced that Elliott would compete in five ARCA Racing Series and nine NASCAR Camping World Truck Series events for Hendrick Motorsports during the 2013 racing season, driving in the latter series using trucks prepared by Turner Scott Motorsports. On June 8, 2013, Elliott became the youngest winner in ARCA history following his Pocono Raceway victory. In qualifying for the UNOH 200 Truck race at Bristol Motor Speedway, Elliott won his first career NASCAR pole position with a lap speed of 125.183 miles per hour, and became the youngest pole-sitter in Truck Series history. Elliott would win his first race at Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, in the first road course truck race outside the US; he was at the time the youngest winner in Truck Series history, at the age of 17 years, 9 months, and 4 days.

In January 2014, it was announced that Elliott would be competing full-time in the Nationwide Series in 2014, driving the No. 9 Chevrolet for JR Motorsports, with sponsorship from NAPA Auto Parts. On April 4, 2014, Elliott won the O'Reilly Auto Parts 300 at Texas Motor Speedway, holding Kevin Harvick and Kyle Busch off after taking the lead with 16 laps to go. On April 11, 2014, Elliott won the VFW Sport Clips Help a Hero 200 at Darlington Raceway by passing Elliott Sadler on the last lap after restarting sixth with two laps to go. Elliott won the EnjoyIllinois.com 300 at Chicagoland Speedway after holding off Trevor Bayne. At Phoenix, Elliott clinched the Nationwide Series championship with a 53-point lead over teammate Regan Smith, becoming the first rookie and youngest driver to win a NASCAR national series title.

On January 29, 2015, Hendrick Motorsports announced Elliott will make his Sprint Cup Series debut in 2015, running in five races at Martinsville, Richmond, Charlotte, Indianapolis, and Darlington. The team also announced that he will take over Jeff Gordon's No. 24 starting in 2016.

Forbes Magazine list's the net worth of the 18-year-old at \$2-million.

Quite an accomplishment for anyone by any means.

But is this young man really such a heroic driver.



Chase Elliott at Charlotte's Fan Appreciation Day, Jan. 31, 2015.

Did he come by his talents through hard work and hands-on experience, or was much of what he acquired ready made for him?

To say he is not a good driver wouldn't be fair. He is a good driver. But I've seen and known dozens of drivers racing late models, Trucks, and Nationwide cars that have just as much talent as he does, but never made it out of their hometown because of money.

There are several ARCA Series drivers that barely make it from race to race. Unlike the Elliott family, their family and friends don't have the financial means to support them or provide them with decent racing equipment. They continue to struggle with what they are able to afford. For most it means their racing talents will never be allowed to develop.

But wait, in America everyone has the same opportunity. Right? No, wrong.

Chase Elliott is a great example of what happens when a young kid has everything he needs to develop his talent and skills. Elliott had the encouragement, training and money to pursue his dreams.

It reminds me of a song by country music singer, Merle Haggard, "Drinkin' Free Bubble Up and Eating Rainbow Stew." It goes like this:

"One of these days when the air clears up, And the sun comes shining through. We'll all be drinking free bubble-up, An eatin' that rainbow stew with a silver spoon."

For most young drivers the air will never clear up enough for them to follow their racing goals and dreams.

But for a lucky few like Chase Elliott who are born with a silver spoon, their sky will always remain blue.

That's just the hard facts of life and NASCAR racing.

Racing Trivia Question: Who won the 2014 Daytona 500?

Last Week's Question: How many Cup wins did Richard Petty have during his career? Answer: 200, the most of any driver.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: www.hodges@race500.com. NT(FEB11,C)AC

No Greater LOVE

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5K RACE & 1 Mile Walk February 14, 2015

Start this Valentine's Day giving the gift of love. Join "TEAM TRICIA"

Tricia Spear has been giving back to this community, day after day for over a dozen years. Now she is fighting a serious illness and she needs all of us to help with her recovery.

Join us and participate in the 5k Race or the 1 Mile Walk

Place : Meeks Park, Blairsville 9am/Registration 10am/Race-Walk

Registration Fees RUN \$25 WALK \$20

All registrants will get a free Race T-Shirt, while supply lasts. Pre-register by January 27th to be guaranteed a Race T-shirt

Registration Forms available online at Active.com or pick one up at Blairsville Chamber of Commerce, Seasons Inn, Mountain Shelter Thrift Store (Blairsville) or the Union General Wellness Center

Interested in being a sponsor and having your business listed on the T-Shirts? Call the Thrift Store at 706-745-0033 by Jan. 27th

The monies raised at this event will go to the Tricia Spear Recovery Fund.

Visit our event Page. No Greater Love 5K

Monday Night Men: Ernest Rice 207, Richard Tanner 254, Joe Teague 202, 201, Derick Rice 204, 246, DJ DeJoseph 204, 211, Brett Hogsed 254, 233, Michael Whitehead 210, Kirk Bass 212, Taz Matetzschk 210, 258, 222, 708 Series BJ Gilbert 212, Steve Brandt 207, Ray Everett 208, 205, Jeb Plott 217, 222, 236, Jason Swanson 234, Bill Cox 211, Jim McCreary 204, 205.

Monday Night Ladies: Inez Bergstrom 191, Peggy Kidder 204, Susanna White 200.

Hazel Farmer Senior League: Ernest Rice 202, Bart Rodgers 216, Mel White 212, Bruce Burnett

Bowling league scores

206, Del Neiffer 210, Ron Wingate 204, Dewey Allen 202, Ken Thigpen 205, Mike Newsome 234.

Thursday Night Fun League: Mike Davis 206, 245, 236, Larry Canaan 237, 200, Jim McCreary 248, 211, Jay Burrell 210, 202, 223, Bill Cox 203, Jason Swanson 203, 224, Taz Matetzschk 213, 214, Johnathan Everett 238,

Tony Lynch 213, 247, Ray Everett 201, DJ DeJoseph 204, 208, Doug Roberts 232, John Moore 214, 213, Zach Moore 222, 244, Tim Moore 226, 231, Daniel Brown 221, 263, Jerry Thomas 236, 214, Tim McVay 226, Kirk Bass 210, Bonnell thomas 212, 211, Bill Smith 205, Jordan Moore 225.

Baseball registration at Rec Center

The Towns County County Recreation Center. Our hours of operation are Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. till 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. If you have any questions please call the Recreation Department at 706-896-2600. TF(FEB11,F)SH

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