

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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10&U softball takes District Title; State bound

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Blairsville - The Towns County Lady Indians 10&U softball team ran roughshod over the competition at last week's Dizzy Dean District 6 Tournament at Meeks Park.

The Lady Indians made a statement in the opening round by routing the hosts before taking the Championship Game from Union County.

Towns County took down the Lady Panthers by a 10-1 score on Friday night and 7-1 in the finals.

The Lady Indians took advantage of a bye and faced Jackson County, who defeated Dawson County and Lumpkin County.

Towns jumped out to an early 1-0 lead in a contest that turned into pitchers duel. The Lady Indians used a leadoff triple to spark a two-run fourth inning that gave them the insurance runs they needed in their 3-0 victory.

The win allowed the Lady Indians to kick back and relax while the remainder of the teams went at it under the heat of the mid-day sun.

Union County battled their way back into contention with a three straight wins beginning at 9 a.m. Saturday morning.

The hosts knocked off Banks County 10-3 in the early game. Took care of Lumpkin County at 11 a.m. and holding off Jackson County at 1 p.m. to set up a 3 p.m. rematch with Towns.

The Lady Indians took an early 2-1 lead and worked around some fielding miscues to keep their lead intact.

Towns would strike with two runs in the fourth and three in fifth to pull away in the 7-1 win.

The Lady Indians will travel to Dalton for the Dizzy Dean State Championships beginning on Wednesday, June 26th. Times and opponents are yet to be determined.



Check back with the Towns County Herald next Tuesday for a tournament schedule, so you can make your travel plans to support the Lady Indians as they go for a State Championship.



Towns County Lady Indians 10&U Softball team in action at Meeks Park in Blairsville where they took home first place. Photos/Todd Forrest

Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
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Tips from the Range

Avid golfers know the thrill of anticipation. It is exciting to know that a round of golf is scheduled for Wednesday or that the gang is getting together on Saturday morning for a skins game. We know that our skills will be challenged in one of the most demanding arenas in sports, and we want to score well and not embarrass ourselves in front of our playing partners. The challenge of trying to control both desires can be overwhelming but the desire to play golf is stronger, so we get our backs up and get ready to go for it. Now what?

There is a phenomenon in golf, in that, we can control how high our score will be, but you can't always control how low it will be. Food for thought!

Preparation will guarantee you a good day on the course if you do it correctly. Keep in mind it is much easier to prepare a round in your mind if you know the course, but you can still be ready when it is time to tee it up, even if it is the first time you are playing a course. You simply take the round that you are going to play and break it up into segments. Know your strengths and weaknesses before you start your attack plans. Use those on the parts of the course you will play, to your advantage. Most courses have the holes drawn out somewhere so pay attention to the layout and how it fits your game, especially if it's your first time there.

When getting ready for that first tee adventure, think about the things you do well and not the things you are scared of. If you hit the 3-wood better than the driver, use that ability to your advantage at the right place on the course. If you play a 9-iron better than a wedge, then find the approach shots that you can play a 9-iron from. Play a club off the tee that will leave you with a 9-iron distance to the hole. Distance is not always the key to scoring lower but proper distance can be. Only plan on

hitting shots off the tee that leave you a comfortable yardage on the next shot. Many times I saw players hitting different clubs off the same tee when I played in competition. It was not uncommon to see one player with a driver and another with an iron on certain par fours. It all depended on how they were hitting the other clubs in their bags. You could rest assured they felt that was their best play and they weren't afraid to play what was better for them, on that hole, on that course, for that day.

A full round of 18-holes can be exhausting both mentally and physically so look at the round as a series of six 3-hole courses. It really helps you to play better if you lower the span of concentration to a shorter goal. Plan on being no more than one over after the first three holes and the same on all the rest of the "three hole" courses. This takes the pressure of expectation off your shoulders and allows you a little break every three holes to re-evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. It is acceptable to change the game plan as long as it is the way you're feeling about how you are swinging the club. You will need to really be in tune with your game to make a change in your attack plan so be careful.

Golf is played one shot at a time and each shot affects the next. A course has many twists and turns and can be played from several different angles so plan your round so that you play from the areas that fit your strengths. If your scared of a shot on a certain hole, plan a shot that you can be comfortable with and that will help you with the rest of the holes. If you start playing badly, shoot for the highest percentage areas and don't keep battling the same bad shot all day, plan your "bale-out" areas for just such an emergency. Take your time and think things through when planning your round. A round of golf should take around four hours and a half, so don't get in a hurry.

Plan your shots to play your best and the round will be enjoyable even if the score is not your lowest. Good luck and I will see you on the course!

Youth Football Registration

Towns County Youth Football Director Jimmy Smith announced that the registration for athletes will begin on June 29th from 2 p.m. - 4 p.m. at the Towns County High School practice field which is located on the hill behind the elementary school. A first time participants will need to bring a birth certificate. Everyone will be required to show proof of residence. Fee for the season is \$90. Mark your calendar now.

"We would like all the kids ages 5 - 11 years of age that have a desire to learn how to play football to come out and participate this year," Smith said. "We

had a good turnout last year and a great season and I am looking forward to this year. It is a good experience for the kids and teaching them to play football is what it is all about. We teach them something at this level and they will remember it as they get older. That helps the school teams and your seeing a lot of kids playing in middle and high school that are products of our league."

Registration will be every Saturday through July from 2-4 p.m. until the opening of practice on July 29. If you have any questions please contact Smith at (706) 835-6176.

Towns' athletes 'working it' this summer

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County High School athletes are putting in overtime this summer as coaching changes are now complete and the teams can get down to business.

The summer break is a time of rest and leisure for many students but for the dedicated athletes at TCHS, this summer is about getting better and trying to take the Indians' sports programs to a winning level across the board.

The TCHS' Lady Indians basketball team got things started early in June with their first of many summer camps in which Head Coach Jim Melton will get in as many games in as he can.

"I like to work hard during the summer and play as many games as we can. If the freshman can play as many games as they do during the year then they are no longer freshman on the court," Coach Melton said. "That experience is invaluable and it really helps them as team players. You can only do so much, so you need to take advantage of the summer break if you can. It's difficult because of vacations and other sports obligations."

Jessica Berrong has had a successful transition into the Lady Indians' softball organization as the new head coach. She is working the girls through voluntary workouts this summer and competing in the summer league locally. Their first two games of a 10-game season that sees the girls play five double-headers were last Tuesday night at Union County and the girls got a look at real time softball to start the summer right.

Emily Ledford was on the mound and she has picked up some speed since last season.

"I've been working on my speed and placement and it is getting better," said Ledford. The rising junior had control trouble



Carly Gilfilian (top) and Coach Floyd and the Towns County baseball team are in action this summer. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

early because of sore fingertips from working on her placement and speed.

The Lady Panthers beat the Lady Indians, but the games were not really about summer victory, but rather experience for this year's upcoming season.

"We wanted to get into this league last year when we had this last season's seniors, but it didn't work out. This year Coach Berrong was able to get us in, and although we are missing five of our starters, it's still good for the team to play these double-headers," said Assistant Coach Michael Anderson.

TCHS Head Baseball Coach Chris Vardo signed up the varsity baseball team for the summer league and they had their first game of the season at Union County last Wednesday. It was a loss for the Summer Indians, but it wasn't without its highlights. Vonya Baldwin went 2 for 4 with three RBIs on a double and a single, while Harrison Hobbs was 2 for 5 with two RBIs. Slade Davenport pitched four innings relieving Hobbs in the third and looked solid. Curtis Swanson finished the final three innings of the nine-inning game and threw a lot of strikes while Vardo guided him through pitch counts from the dugout.

We've just haven't had the numbers since this league got started to participate, but his season we do and this is perfect for the team. We don't have all our guys right now because of other commitments this summer, and this is voluntary anyway, but we got enough here to work and that is what we are doing, Coach Vardo said. "We want to get better and this is how you do it. You work hard and you put in the time and things work out. This is great for the players and it will help us improve."

Not to be out done, Indians' Head Football Coach Blair Harrison is hitting the gridiron this summer for voluntary workouts that are seeing most all of the team working to get ready for 2013.

The summer camps are tough, but the team is learning how the new coach wants things done.

"This is all new for the guys and I realize that," Coach Harrison said. "Learning a new offense is always tough even on veteran players and doing things the way I want them done will take some time, so this summer workout schedule is perfect for us."

"We don't have all that long until opening kickoff and that means we've got to work hard and often," Coach Harrison said.

The athletes at TCHS are working hard this summer as teams and on their own. The varsity girls and boys soccer teams will be busy in camps this summer as well as travel ball.

The Cross Country teams are training voluntarily and working to improve on the boy's side and prepare to defend the state title for the girls.

Tennis and golf team members are practicing on their own also so they can be more competitive as the athletic attitude around TCHS changes in a very positive way.

Thomas named Community Coach

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Head Football Coach Blair Harrison has named Rodney Thomas as a new assistant football coach for Towns County High School. Thomas, who has a background in football from his playing days at Banks County where he grew up.

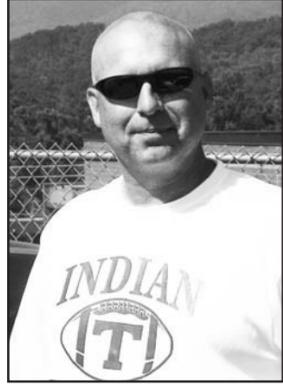
He has been working in the North Georgia Youth Football league as a head coach taking his teams to the playoffs three of the four years he has coached, and missing the Super Bowl by one game the last two years.

It's Thomas' limited coaching experience that many are concerned with since he hasn't worked at the high school level, but that doesn't worry Harrison.

"He is from the private sector and will be coaching on the Community Coach program, but he is going to fit really well into our program. He is a football man and he comes from a winning program as a player, so he knows how it feels to win and his goals and mine are the same and that is to win ball games. Director Gibson (TCHS Athletic Director Jonathan Gibson) has confidence in our decision to offer him the job," Coach Harrison said. "He doesn't have a lot to change in the way he does things because of his experience, which will make him more open minded about the way I want things done. He'll be great."

Thomas has no doubt about his ability to handle the pressures of coaching high school football. He is looking forward to the upcoming season.

"I'm excited about this year and the opportunity it brings to help coach this team," Coach Thomas said. "I've been around football most of my life and I really enjoy coaching. I've always wanted to coach at this level so I'm ready to get things going."



Rodney Thomas

"There seems to be a new attitude around the field house this year, especially among the players, and it feels good," declared Thomas.

Coach Harrison is making some changes in the way things are working around the TCHS gridiron for the upcoming season.

However, that is common for a new coach working on installing a new system.

Hiring a "rookie" like Thomas is just one of those changes that a coach has to trust to be right. As he has said many times, Harrison's priority is the players and the team, so naturally he will do what he thinks is the best for everyone involved. He believes Thomas is the man for the job. Many around the community feel Thomas is a good pick as well.

"I believe he'll be perfect for the job. I've worked with Rodney (Thomas) a lot in the Youth Football League and he is a good coach. He's tough now, so don't think the team will push him around. He knows football and he knows how to lead. He is a good man and has a strong character through his faith, but in the end it's all about the players anyway," said Youth League Director Jimmy Smith. "Thomas will have a very positive influence on them as young men. He will be a good mentor for them."