

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians Basketball splits at Banks County ahead of Battle of the States

By Jeremy Foster
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Homer - On Tuesday, Dec. 21, the Towns County Indians and Lady Indians traveled away to play Banks County High School in the lead-up to the highly anticipated Battle of the States Christmas Tournament taking place Dec. 28-30 at Towns County High.

The Lady Indians were up first against Banks to hopefully gain some last-minute momentum before the big tournament, and while it was a very close game throughout with an improved offensive and defensive outing from the ladies, they ultimately lost 70-41.

"We did some good things throughout the game, but turnovers hurt us down the stretch," Girls Head Coach Shea Taylor said.

Junior Sarah Shook led in scoring with 21 points and 5 assists. Freshman Kaleigh Beaver had 8 points and 8 rebounds for the night. Sophomore Laura Mauldin had 6 points and 10 rebounds and continues to be a strong rebounder for the team.

"We are going to keep



Junior Tabitha Barnes (L) and senior Kyle Oakes (R) lead Towns County basketball into this week's Battle of the States. Photos/Todd Forrest

working going into Battle of the States and hope to surprise some people in January," Coach Taylor said.

Next up at Banks, the boys were in action to get some final power and confidence before the Christmas tournament this week.

The first quarter saw 6 points and 1 free throw made

by senior Collin Crowder, 2 points from sophomore Connor Chastain, and 2 points from sophomore Zane Floyd, and the score was tied at the end of the first.

Coming out more aggressive in the second quarter, senior Kyle Oakes scored on a successful free throw, Crowder gained 6 more points, and Floyd netted



3 points along with three free throws to leave the Indians ahead by 4 points at halftime.

More determination and focus shone through in the third quarter, as sophomore Tanner Cunningham gained his first 2 points of the game, Crowder attained 6 more points plus four free throws, and Floyd again connected with the basket for 2

points and a 3-pointer.

"Towns County exploded in the third quarter and stretched out the lead to hold a nearly 20-point lead for the remainder of the game," Boys Head Coach Brian Hunnicutt said.

The fourth quarter saw more dominance and control from the Indians. Junior Grant Ingram earned his first points

with a free throw, Cunningham had four free throws and 4 points, Oakes scored 2, Crowder made 8 points, and Floyd hit for 2 points and two free throws, leading to a 64-49 victory at the conclusion of the game.

"I am very proud of the boys' effort tonight," Hunnicutt said. "They played great defensively, and we really clamped down on a good offensive team."

"Our offense was patient against their zone, and Kyle picked it apart with his uncanny court vision. Zane and Collin stepped up again offensively, while Tanner and Connor hit the boards extremely well. Connor drew a couple of charges again. All around a great effort."

"We are going to enjoy a few days off to celebrate Christmas, and then go and try to win Battle of the States next week."

The Battle of the States Tournament is coming back to Towns County High School Dec. 28-30, starting at 10 a.m. each day, with Towns scheduled to begin their first games of the tourney at 7 p.m. opening night.

Visit www.townscountyathletics.com for a complete season schedule and Battle of the States brackets.

NASCAR 2021

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Ty Dillon getting another chance

Ty Dillon will drive the No. 42 Chevrolet for Petty GMS Racing in the 2022 NASCAR Cup season. It's a new team, new car, and new teammate, Erik Jones. After four seasons driving in the Cup Series for Germain Racing, Dillon entered 2021 sitting on the sidelines after the organization closed its doors. He ended up putting together a 16-race schedule of Cup, Xfinity and Truck races.

Dillon, 29, said the time away provided an opportunity to reevaluate his motivation for racing and in turn renewed his passion to compete.

"I grew up in this sport and for a long time I always knew what I was going to do the next year until this year I had nothing, and on my own, I had to kind of figure it out," he said. "I would get a couple races here and couple races there. There were a lot of weekends I wasn't at the race track and sitting at home."

"I realized what my motivation for racing was - it's not the same as what it was when I was younger. I put my worth into the results on the scoreboard every week, week-in and week-out and emotionally that's really hard to do at the top level (of NASCAR). There are so many factors that go into it. I also put my worth into what everyone thought of me."

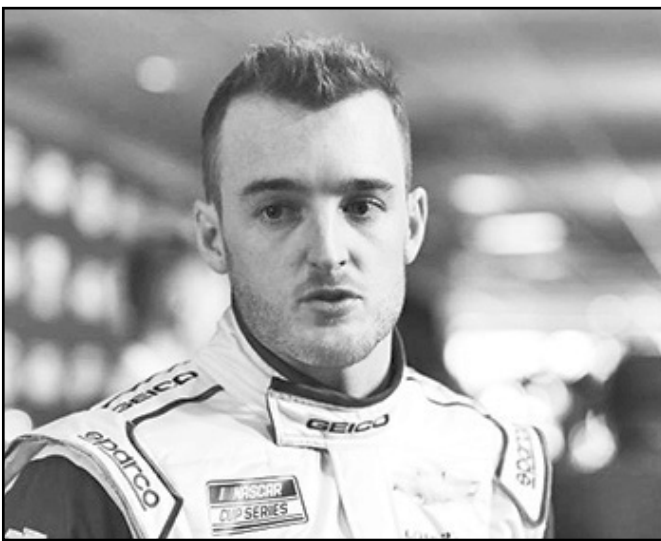
"When you sit back and you don't have it, you realize what you really miss about it and for me it was the opportunity to go to work every day to hone in on a craft. The work, the effort, the process of being a top-level NASCAR driver - that's my real motivation. Results will come and go. So, I'm just hungry in a different way and motivated in a deeper and truer way."

While Dillon's four seasons with Germain Racing in Cup netted only a pair of top-five and six top-10 finishes, including a career-best finish of third at Talladega in 2020, he has no regrets over his tenure.

"With respect to Germain Racing, we put together the best effort we could every single week with a great group of guys that worked really hard," Dillon continued.

In just two days of testing at Charlotte this week, his first at a track as part of a two-car team - Dillon can already see a much different landscape when it comes to on-track competition.

"The first couple of tests we were just figuring out the components on the car and kind of working through some quality



control issues there. Now we're focused on speed and racing," he continued. "Having this second opportunity in my career, I'm absolutely full of gratitude to have it because not many people get it. I've seen the other side of not racing."

\$1-MILLION TO TURN L.A. COLISEUM INTO A RACE TRACK

NASCAR'S first race of 2022 (non-points) will be held on a temporary asphalt track being built on top of the football field at the L.A. Memorial Coliseum. The price to pull it off has been estimated at over \$1 million.

NASCAR Vice President of Marketing Services Patrick Rogers confirmed the figure ahead of the start of construction this week.

The pavement will cover the entire infield of the historic stadium and provide a quarter-mile track that will host practice and races, during the Busch Light Clash at the Coliseum over the weekend of Feb 6-7.

While the price may sound high for a disposable track, Bristol Motor Speedway CEO Marcus Smith told the Associated Press that his venue spent \$2 million to convert it to a dirt surface for the spring race held there this year.

It's also not the first time a paved track has been built at the Coliseum. The Stadium Super Trucks series laid down asphalt on part of the infield for an event in 2013.

PROGRESS AT NASHVILLE

Speedway Motorsports, owner of Bristol Motor Speedway have reached an agreement in principle with Nashville Mayor John Cooper on a deal to renovate and operate the historic

Nashville Fairgrounds Speedway.

But there are many other pieces that must fit together before NASCAR Cup Series racing returns to the historic 0.56-mile track.

It has taken four years to get to this point, and it likely will take until 2024 or later for a Cup race at a facility where NASCAR Cup drivers last raced in 1984.

The announcement appeared designed to boost public support for the Speedway Motorsports plan, in which the idea is not to use dollars from the general fund but instead have 30-year revenue bonds finance the renovation, paid off by rent payments, user fees/taxes on tickets, sponsorship agreements and event revenue.

Costs could be \$100 million or more the track has been in operation since 1904 and is in need of extensive work to bring it to NASCAR national series standards with the exact financials likely to be released soon.

The financial agreement is being vetted by a consultant, and pending the consultant's approval, The Nashville Board of Fair Commissioners must approve the deal. Even before then, the Metro Council must fill the two current openings on the five-member board.

Any proposal won't go to the fair board until early in 2022.

If the deal passes, it could take another 18 months for the renovations, which include resurfacing the entire track and rebuilding the grandstands to seat 30,000.

Finally, where would a Cup date come from? Speedway Motorsports agreed last month to

pay \$135.5 million to buy Dover Motorsports, which owns Dover Speedway as well as Nashville Superspeedway, a 1.33-mile concrete oval about 35 miles from the city.

Neither Nashville facility would have more than 40,000 seats, and the fact they are two very different tracks gives credence to the idea that there could be two Cup races in Nashville.

NASCAR has a four-year deal through 2024 to race Cup at Nashville Superspeedway, though as the track operator, Speedway Motorsports likely could end that deal early if it wanted.

Speedway Motorsports controls 15 Cup dates. It owns Atlanta (two Cup dates), Bristol (two), Charlotte (two), Dover (one), Las Vegas (two), Nashville (one), New Hampshire (one), Sonoma (one), Texas (two, including all-star) and the lease to have a Cup race at Circuit of the Americas. The company, owned by Bruton Smith and his family, also is looking into revitalizing North Wilkesboro (North Carolina) Speedway, which it owns.

Can Speedway Motorsports take a race from Atlanta, where it is trying to get approval for an entertainment complex and casino, or one of its Texas events, where certain tax incentives make having three races financially beneficial?

Those are questions that still need to be answered, though not immediately. A lot of work remains before the green flag waves again for NASCAR major series at the historic facility.

Racing Joke: Jeff was in the middle of a deep sleep, when his wife nudged him and said, "I can't sleep. I keep thinking there is a mouse under the bed."

Jeff thought for a moment, and said, "Start thinking there is a cat under the bed and get back to sleep."

Racing Trivia Question: Alan Kulwicki died on April 1, 1993, as a result of a plane crash while traveling to a race at Bristol. What year did he win his only Cup Series championship?

Last Week's Question: How many NASCAR Cup Series championships did Lee Petty win? Answer: He was NASCAR's first three-time champion, winning the title in 1954, 1958, and 1958.

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