

Towns County Sports

Town's County's Leader In Sports



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Indians football practice begins; first game Aug. 27 versus Union



Quarterback Jackson Noblet gets loose

By Charles Duncan
Towns County Herald
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The Towns County Indians are in deep preparation for their 2010 home opener versus arch rival Union County.

The 43-man squad currently is going through four-a-day practices at The Refuge off Plott Town Road. Practices will become more routine when school starts Thursday.

Coach Kyle Langford and his staff are being patient with the squad and making sure each player keeps hydrated with plenty of fluids and plenty of food.

"As hot as it's been, you have to stay on top of the fluids," he said. "We've actually caught some good cloud cover and managed to practice in less than intense heat. And that's always a good thing."

On Aug. 27, the Indians kickoff the 2010 high school football campaign against the Union County Panthers. The Indians haven't played the Panthers during the regular season since 2007.

"We're really excited about the home opener," Coach Langford said. "Union County has a solid Class AA football program and they'll be a good measuring stick for us early in the season."

The Union-Towns matchup is the renewal of an historic border rivalry between the two traditional rival schools following a two-year hiatus.

"Historically, Union and Towns has always been a big event for both schools," Coach Langford said. "We look forward to these two teams getting together to jump-start the 2010 football season."



Quarterback Zach Stroud plays catch with Noblet



Running drills never gets tiresome

The clash between the Panthers and the Indians also expects to attract a crowd to see the two non-region opponents go head-to-head.

"A big crowd on a Friday night is always exciting," Coach Langford said.

The players are excited too.

"This is big," said Indi-

ans receiver Jimmy Pierce. "It makes the hard work worth it all." Photos by Lowell Nicholson



Indians get ready for a long day of practice



Coach Thomas Boyd is working hard too



The morning routine remains the same

Gridiron camp...continued from page 1A

turnout, especially with a numbers heavy senior class," Coach Langford said, referring to this year's 16 seniors. "The junior class is strong too; we're sitting at about 13 or 14.

"Experience-wise and veteran-wise, we're as experienced as we've been in two years," he said. "The effort has been an A-minus.

"I think we can play a little faster this year," he said. "I think we can certainly play with better effort. When people are sitting in the stands, they know if a team is playing hard.

"Our immediate goal is to get to that level where

we're playing fast," he said. "If we can do what we're coached to do, it's going to be a good year for us."

After 12 practices, Langford is getting a pretty good idea where his team stands in terms of being ready to take on the Panthers in the season opener.

Defensively, the Indians return nine starters and from the looks of this season's crop of youngsters, they have something they haven't had in two years - depth. The defensive strengths include a solid core group of linebackers, led by sophomore Joseph Foster.

Foster led the Indians in

tackles in 2009 as a freshman and looks like a senior already, Coach Langford said.

"The linebackers are very good," he said. "They're flying around and that's something we haven't had since I've been here. We've had linebackers, but we haven't had that good solid depth at the position."

Offensively, the Indians are a little rusty, their coach said.

"Technique-wise, right now, we're not very good," he said. "But we've still got a good ways to go. But I feel good about the kids that we've got out here right now."

Blue Ridges Brad Thomas and Murphy's Sammy Berrong. Josh Roberts from Andrews is leading the Stock Street points over Hiwassee's Ricky Smith and Robbinsville driver Charles Toomey. The Mini Stock leaders are Blairsville's Shannon Jones, Andrews Marty Clark and Murphy's Joshua Cordin.

Blairsville racers Shannon Bearden in Randy Shope's car and Jamie Lunsford place second and fourth in the Limited feature Saturday night at North Georgia Speedway. Coach David Payne from Murphy won the Super Late Model main event. David McCoy won at Toccoa Speedway. Young Harris driver Randy Nichols took a strong fourth place. Rick Rogers won at Cleveland Speedway over Shawn Chastain and Johnny Chastain. Dixie Speedway saw Jody Knowles in the winner's circle. Brandon Kinser won the Southern Regional Racing Series race at Green Valley Speedway as Blairsville's Jacob Grizzle finished 10th which moved him into a tie with Tony Morris for the points lead in that series. Ray Cook made the three race New York Lucas Oil Series tour and came back with two eighth and a second place finishes. NT(Aug4,C2)

NASCAR 2010

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Biffle brings Ford to victory lane

Greg Biffle, who hadn't won a Cup race since 2008 took Sunday's Pennsylvania 500 to give Ford its first win of the season.

"It was the engine," said Biffle, who finished nearly 4-seconds ahead of runner-up Tony Stewart. "The engine was so strong. The car wasn't too good early on, but the team never gave up.

"It's been tough getting this win."

A wreck involving the No. 2 driven by Kurt Busch and the No. 19 of Elliott Sadler brought out a red flag with 35 laps remaining in the 200-lap race.

It apparently was triggered by Jimmie Johnson who was attempting to bump draft off the rear of Kurt Busch.

"He (Johnson) just drove straight into the rear of my car," said Busch.

Both cars were completely totaled. The motor of Sadler's No. 19 was knocked completely out and came to rest about one hundred feet from where his car stopped.

"It knocked the breath out of me," said Sadler, after being released from the infield care center. "That's the hardest hit I've ever experienced."

NASCAR stopped the race for over 20 minutes for cleanup crews to remove the debris and dirt from the track.

All the cars pitted for fresh tires and fuel. Biffle's team elected to put on only two fresh ones, while several others took four. Biffle returned to the track in the second spot.

There were 22-laps left when green flag racing resumed. Sam Hornish was the leader, followed by Biffle, Mark Martin, and Carl Edwards.

Biffle quickly got by Hornish and began to distance himself from the rest of the field.

"The team did an awesome job getting us out of the pits on the last stop as the first car with four tires," said Stewart. "No way we could catch Biffle. Maybe in another 15 or 20 laps. He was just too strong."

Carl Edwards finished a strong second in another Ford. "It's been a long day," said Edwards. "We picked up some points today, and hopefully we can make a good run for the Chase."

Kevin Harvick, Denny Hamlin, Jeff Gordon, Mark Martin, Jeff Burton, Martin Truex, and Jimmie Johnson were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. finished 23rd.

Top-15 Chase drivers. Only 12 will be eligible for the 10-race Chase which begins in four more races. 1. Harvick-3080, 2. J. Gordon-2891, 3. Hamlin-2820, 4. Johnson-2803, 5. Burton-2757, 6. Kyle Busch-2724, 7. Kurt Busch-2722, 8. Stewart-2719, 9. Kenseth-2682, 10. Ed-

KYLE BUSCH GETS NINTH NATIONWIDE WIN

Kyle Busch won his ninth Nationwide race of 2010, his sixth in his last seven starts and 39th of his career by dominating the U.S. Cellular 250 in front of a packed grandstand at Iowa Speedway.

The remaining top-10 finishers were: Kevin Harvick, Jason Leffler, Brad Keselowski, Trevor Bayne, Steven Wallace, Michael Annett, Justin Allgaier, Matt Dibenedetto, and Carl Edwards.

Top-10 points leaders after 21 of 35: 1. Keselowski-3349, 2. Edwards-3118, 3. Kyle Busch-2876, 4. Allgaier-2833, 5. Menard-2620, 6. Harvick-2609, 7. S. Wallace-2488, 8. Bayne-2365, 9. Gaughan-2347, 10. Leffler-2326

SADLER WINS POCONO TRUCK RACE

Top-10 Truck points leaders after 13 of 25: 1. Bodine-1993, 2. Almirola-1844, 3. Sauter-1800, 4. Peters-1791, 5. Crafton-1748, 6. Dillon-1730, 7. Hornaday-1725, 8. Skinner-1724, 9. Starr-1652, 10. White-1627

NASCAR CREDIBILITY IS SLIPPING

NASCAR racing has been experiencing shrinking television ratings, and more and more empty stadium seats.

While the economy has hurt many fans by taking money out of their pockets, CEO Brian France and the other NASCAR bosses appear to be dangerously out of touch with the fans.

Their words and action may be hurting the sport as much as the economy. They have repeatedly told drivers to "voice their opinions," but it was learned last week, they had fined two drivers for making statements that "damaged" the NASCAR brand name.

Ryan Newman and Denny Hamlin were the drivers.

"I was not happy about it," Newman said. "I was frustrated about it, mostly because I didn't understand what it was and why it was."

"There's no point in repeating it because that's what got me in trouble in the first place."

The fine was for comments Newman made following a crash in the April race at Talladega. He said restrictor-plate races shouldn't be points races, that "this was something different besides racing" and the events are more marketing tools than competitions.

"We all need to be positive about the sport in every aspect of it," said Hamlin. "It's something we make our living on, it's something we enjoy. Let's sit back and think about something before we say it and NASCAR reminded us of that. "You can be opinionated



and they want you to be opinionated, you just can't question whether it's a fixed sport or not.

"I told them over and over, 'What if I don't agree with something? What do you want me to say? Do you want me to lie and tell something that I don't really truly believe in, because I've never been brought up to do that."

"They said, 'No, but there's different ways to do it.' ... if I am in the heat of the moment, I for sure will pull the reins back.

"They know how to make you pay one way or another."

I received this e-mail from Peggy M. of Ellsworth, ME: "The drivers are what makes NASCAR tick. Jeff Gordon is my favorite. If something were to happen on the track and he couldn't speak his mind, I'd be terribly disappointed. I get very emotional watching the races. If NASCAR tries to turn the drivers into their clones, my emotions will disappear, and so will fans like me."

NASCAR is constantly telling drivers and everyone involved to work for the good of the sport. When the tight lid of secrecy winds up putting them, and not the drivers in a poor light, the time is quarter past midnight.

E-mail us your take on NASCAR's recent actions towards Hamlin and Newman. If we use your comments, we'll send you an 8X10 of your favorite driver.

Weekend Racing: The Sprint Cup and Nationwide teams are at the 12-turn road course at Watkins Glen, NY, while the Camping World Trucks are at the 1.5-mile Nashville Superspeedway.

Sat., Aug. 7, Nationwide Series Zippo 200, race 22 of 35; Starting time: 1:30 pm ET; TV: ESPN2.

Sat., Aug. 7, Camping World Series Tennessee 200, race 14 of 25; Starting time: 8:00 pm ET; TV: Speed.

Sun., Aug. 8, Sprint Cup Heluva Good Sour Cream Dip, race 22 of 36; Starting time: 1 pm ET; TV: ESPN.

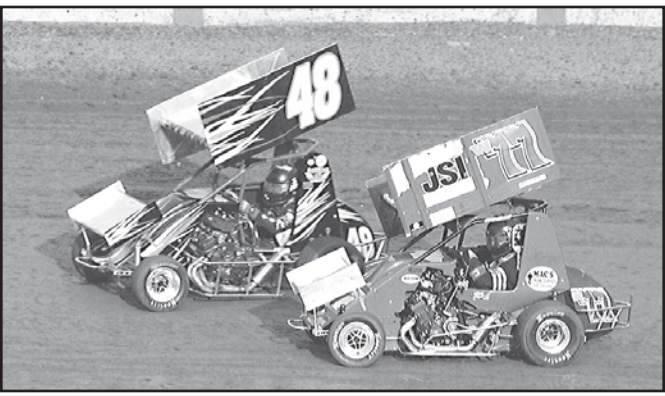
Racing Trivia Question: Where is Robby Gordon's home state?

Last Week's Question: Who was the 2005 Sprint Cup champion? **Answer:** It was Tony Stewart.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: hodgesnews@earthlink.net. NT(Aug4,C1)ac

Local Racing Action

By: Carl Vanzura



100 mph Georgia Mini Sprints return to Tri-County

Cullman, Alabama veteran Kevin Thomas will return to Tri-County Race Track this Saturday night with about 18 other Georgia Mini Sprint cars for their second visit to the super fast clay oval in Brasstown, North Carolina. Thomas took the win last month in the 18 car field that saw him blast around the track at speeds in the 100 mph range in the alcohol burning sprints.

Racing in all the regular classes will also be on the

program as the points races continue with action very close in all classes. The Late Model Sportsman classes has Morgan driver Bobby Panter ahead of Peachtree's Doug Sneed and Robbinsville's Preston Crisp. In the GM Performance Late Model points, Copperhill driver Jason Deal leads Hiwassee's Kevin Bradshaw and Young Harris's Tony Ledford. The Cornwell Tool's Modified Street points leader is Brasstown's Greg Sudderth over

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