

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Barnhart takes the reigns of TCHS tennis

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer



Coach Billy Barnhart

This year marks Coach Billy Barnhart's first time coaching tennis, and so far, things are going pretty well. Bad weather has forced this team to miss practices and a couple of matches, but they remain optimistic moving forward with the season. "It's a good group of young women I've got, and they're excited and having fun at it," said Coach Barnhart. "I've got 12 girls on the team, and only one of them has any real significant playing time at tennis - that's the only senior I have, Carly Gilfilian. She's our number one in singles. The rest of them are young. They have either one year experience or no experience playing tennis." The team is comprised of Gilfilian, Courtney Giles, Amanda Donnelly, Emma Kate Ledford, Bailey Crawford, Brianna Shook, Ashley Smith, Hannah Green, Cieraah Donnelly, Jessica Knapp, Emily Davis and Cara Galoway. "All I have is a girls team," said Coach Barnhart. "We didn't have any boys come out for boys tennis, so we don't have a boys tennis team this year." Only seven players can play in any given match: three singles and two doubles matches. "When we went over to White County, they had extra just like I do," said Coach Barnhart. "We kind of played like two JV type doubles matches. They didn't count towards the outcome of the match, but they got playing time and they got experience playing in a real type tennis match. I felt that was good for our younger girls to be able to do." Towns County ended

played her four years in high school, so she's been involved in it for five years. She really knows the ropes and knows what's going on, so I've leaned on her a lot. She's been great, she really has been." And while Coach Barnhart may not have the most coaching experience when it comes to tennis, he stepped up to the line and accepted the challenge when the end result could have been no tennis at all for these girls to play. "To me, it's only fair to them," said Coach Barnhart. "They want to play, and I really feel they deserve the opportunity to play. That's one of the reasons I decided to do it." One new experience that came with coaching tennis was the fact of too many people wanting to play. "We actually had 20 girls come out, and unfortunately I couldn't keep them all," said Coach Barnhart. "I felt bad about that, because I've never had to do that with football. I hated to have to do that, but it was unfortunately necessary. "The interest is here in this school, especially girls wise, and hopefully in the future they can get the boys team back going and generate some interest in boys tennis again, and get that program up and running." Coach Barnhart has his team busy working on the fundamentals of the game: the forehand, backhand and serve. They've been running a lot, too. "You've got to be able to move in this sport, be agile, move around the court," said Coach Barnhart. "Those are the things we've worked on, and they've done a good job so far, they really have. We're just looking for improvement each and every day, every time they go out and play."

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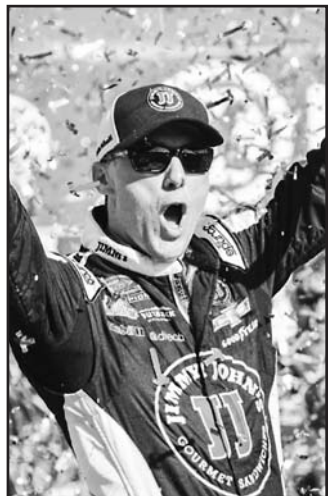
## NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Happy Harvick wins big in Vegas

LAS VEGAS, Nev.—A smiling and happy Kevin Harvick won Sunday's 267-lap Sprint Cup race for his third top-two finish of the season. Las Vegas odds makers had posted him as a 9/2 favorite to win, but it didn't come without some anxious moments for the reigning Sprint Cup champion. "Man, it's cool to win in front of these Las Vegas fans," said Harvick. "The last 20-laps weren't good. Something wasn't right with the car. I'm glad we had the lead that we did." Runner-up, Martin Truex ran a strong race, even leading once, but had nothing for Harvick at the end. "I just drove hard today," said Truex. "The car was good, and we had a good run all day. All we've got to do is keep working hard, and I think we'll get a win." Ryan Newman was third, followed by Dale Earnhardt Jr., Denny Hamlin, A. J. Allmendinger, Brad Keselowski, Kyle Larson, Matt Kenseth, and Joey Logano. Logano was the leader during the early laps, but in addition to handling problems his team received a pit road penalty and he had to start at the rear of the field on a restart. Polesitter Jeff Gordon wound up 18th. Jimmie Johnson led 65 laps, but slapped the wall during lap 177, and had a DNF. He had been having brake problems, but I don't know if that's what caused it," said Johnson. "It just took off to the right and into the wall." During lap 182, Kasey Kahne and Carl Edwards got into a pushing and shoving match with their cars. It appeared Kahne, who was running on the outside came down into Edwards' car. Edwards retaliated by pushing Kahne up into the wall. A couple hundred yards further, Kahne came down on Edwards' No.19, sending him into a spin. Both cars had extensive damage. "It was definitely my fault," said Edwards. "I had gotten into him earlier, and I guess he thought I did it intentionally." Top-16 Chase Contenders after 3 of 26: 1. Harvick-134, 2. Earnhardt-125, 3. Logano-123, 4. Truex-118, 5. Allmendinger-100, 6. Kahne-92, 7. Johnson-91, 8. Hamlin-87, 9. Mears-87, 10. Kenseth-85, 11. Biffle-84, 12. Newman-82, 13. Menard-82, 14. Bowyer-81, 15. Almirola-80, 16. Keselowski-77.

down and blocked him. As Blaney was getting ready to try for the second time, his car bobbed in turn-4. This caused him to lose momentum and Dillon took the checkered by .664-seconds. Following Blaney across the stripe were: Regan Smith, Denny Hamlin, Chase Elliott, Brendan Gaughan, Darrell Wallace, Ty Dillon, Brennan Poole, and Daniel Suarez. Top-10 leaders after 3 of 32: 1. T. Dillon-119, 2. C. Buescher-113, 3. Reed-104, 4. Wallace-103, 5. Elliott-95, 6. Smith-86, 7. Gaughan-86, 8. Starr-83, 9. Sadler-82, 10. Chastain-81. WHAT'S IN STORE FOR KURT BUSCH By now most racing fans know that NASCAR and Kurt Busch have reached an agreement that will eventually allow him to return to NASCAR. Busch was suspended by NASCAR on Feb. 20 after a civil judge found him guilty of domestic violence. A week and a half later, NASCAR announced that Busch had agreed to NASCAR terms of counseling. Upon the recommendation of his counselor, Busch will be allowed back into NASCAR's fold. Since prosecutors have announced they won't file criminal charges against Busch, I'm not sure that his actions warranted expulsion from the sport. But that's all in the past. NASCAR said his "actions were detrimental to the sport", and threw the black flag. After serving his penalty, will his old job at Stewart Haas Racing be available? The situation is like a two-sided sword. What will Stewart Haas gain from their support of Busch? Will his return as driver of the No. 41 be in their best interest? Remember, Busch did not have a real sponsor. Car owner Gene Haas displays his company name on the side of the car. Haas hired Busch because he thought he was one of the better drivers in the sport. The No. 41 team was formed expressly for Busch to drive. Haas has said more than one time that his goal is to win NASCAR's biggest prize; the Sprint Cup championship. Busch might cause a little pain for the team, but no more than teammate Tony Stewart. There is now a social stigma associated with each one of them, but when it comes to winning, unrelated racing incidents are quickly forgotten. My prediction is Kurt Busch will return as driver of the No. 41 in a few weeks. My reasoning is that while NASCAR wants to present a squeaky clean image, they can't afford to penalize individual teams too hard. Meanwhile, just because of the growing number of empty seats at tracks, fans shouldn't jump to the conclusion that either NA-



"Happy" Kevin Harvick wins at Vegas Furnished by Team Chevy SCAR or the individual race tracks are in danger of going under. While ticket sales are down at most NASCAR tracks, all are still turning handsome profits. According to the New York Times, tracks posted a profit of over \$100-million last year. If the number of tickets sold is dwindling, then where does their revenue come from? The answer is television, and it will only get better with the new TV package that went into effect in February, 2015 with NBC. The tracks reported \$239 million in ticket sales, while they raked in \$388 million from television. The bottom line is that television is the cash cow, and if no one but the drivers and teams showed up on race day, NASCAR and the tracks would still turn a profit. Oh yes, don't forget, the tracks pay NASCAR a percentage of their take. NASCAR's Jim France is among the richest people in the world, according to an annual ranking released by Forbes magazine. The magazine placed France's estimated net worth at \$2.1 billion. **Weekend Racing:** The Cup and Xfinity teams will be at the 1-mile Phoenix International Raceway. The Trucks do not race again until March 28 at Martinsville, Virginia. Sat., Mar 14; Xfinity Series race 4 of 32; starting time: 4 pm ET; TV: Fox. Sun., Mar 15; Sprint Cup Series race 4 of 36; Starting time: 3:30 pm ET; TV: Fox. **Racing Trivia Question:** What year did Jimmie Johnson win his first Cup championship? **Last Week's Question:** What year did Dale Earnhardt Jr. move up the NASCAR Sprint Cup ranks? **Answer:** He ran his first Cup race, an exhibition event in 1998 in Japan, finishing ahead of his father. He ran five regular 1999 Sprint Cup races behind the wheel of the No. 8. His first full Cup season didn't come until 2000. You may contact the Racing Reporter at: www.hodges@race500.com

## Baseball: YHC splits Peach Belt Conference doubleheader with GRU

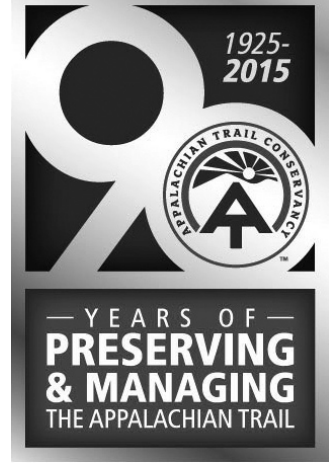
**Young Harris** - Young Harris College and Georgia Regents University Augusta split a Peach Belt Conference baseball doubleheader Sunday (March 8) afternoon at Zell B. Miller Field. The Mountain Lions hit three homers in the opener as they took game one 8-2. The Jaguars collected 16 hits as they won the nightcap 13-7. Young Harris, which took the weekend series with GRU Augusta, improved to 8-12 overall and to 5-7 in the conference while the Jaguars went to 6-10 and 2-4. The Mountain Lions travel to St. Augustine, Florida, for a 1 p.m. doubleheader Saturday (March 14) against No. 16 Flagler College. YHC took a 4-0 lead in the third inning as the Moun-

tain Lions took advantage of wildness by GRU starter Clint Hardy (0-1) as he hit two batters and walked another before Zach Wall cleared the bases with a grand slam to right-center field. It was Wall's team-leading sixth homer. The Mountain Lions added single runs in the fifth and sixth inning and two more in the seventh to push their advantage to 8-0. Nick Sexton contributed a RBI single in the sixth while Brett Westmoreland led off the seventh with his fifth homer of the year. Donald Frew (1-3) picked up his first win of 2015 with eight strong innings. He scattered four hits and struck out six as he allowed two unearned runs. Blake Suggs and West-

moreland led the Mountain Lions with two hits each. After Young Harris closed to within a run (6-5) on Westmoreland's run-scoring double in the sixth, the Jaguars broke the game open with seven runs over the eighth and ninth innings. Young Harris collected 11 hits, including three from Westmoreland. Sexton, and Spencer Thomas added two hits apiece while Westmoreland and Troy Kizer each drove in two runs. Kizer connected on a two-run homer to left-center field - his second of 2015 - in the ninth. GRU Augusta reliever Adam Grice (2-0) earned the win while William Leatherwood (1-2) took the loss for the Mountain Lions.

## Appalachian Trail Conservancy celebrates 90 years

**Harpers Ferry, WV (March 3, 2015)** - Today the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) celebrates 90 years of protecting the Appalachian Trail (A.T.). A long-standing partnership with the federal government, Trail maintaining clubs and thousands of volunteers has enabled the organization to preserve and manage the longest hiking-only footprint in the world. The ATC was founded in 1925 by volunteers and federal officials working to build a continuous footprint along the Appalachian Mountains. A unit of the National Park Service, the A.T. ranges from Maine to Georgia and is approximately 2,185 miles in length. The Trail goes through fourteen states along the crests and valleys of the Appalachian mountain range from the southern terminus at Springer Mountain, GA, to the Trail's northern terminus at Katahdin, ME. The A.T. has over 2-3 million people visit the Trail every year and about 2,500 people attempt to "thru-hike" the Trail. People from across the globe are drawn to the A.T. for a variety of reasons: to reconnect with nature, to escape the stress of city life, to meet new people or deepen old friendships, or to experience a simpler life. The A.T. was completed in 1937 and is a unit of the National Park System. The A.T. is managed under a unique partnership between the public and private sectors that includes, among others, the National Park Service, the USDA Forest Service, an array of state agencies, the ATC, and 31 local Trail-maintaining clubs. "This year marks a milestone for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy," said Ron Tipton, the ATC's executive director/CEO. "The Conservancy is widely respected and recognized for its historic role in managing



and protecting the Appalachian Trail, and we are committed to preserving this wonderful hiking experience for future generations to enjoy." With central offices in Harpers Ferry, WV, a quarter-mile from the Trail since 1972, the ATC currently includes more than 43,000 members, 6,000 volunteers, a full & part time staff of about 50 in six locations and an annual budget of \$7.9 million and total assets of about \$15 million. The ATC celebrates its 90th anniversary in the midst of its implementation of a new 5-year Strategic Plan. The plan, launched in early 2015, identifies five key goals: Proactive Protection, Engaged Partners, Effective Stewardship, Broader Relevance, and Strengthened Capacity and Operational Excellence. Together, these goals not only reinforce the idea that the Trail can be enjoyed by a variety of users in multiple ways, but also that the A.T. should be readily accessible to all who wish to be a part of the experience. For more information about the ATC's 90th anniversary, including ways to give back, visit www.appalachian-trail.org/90th. NT(Mar11,20)CA

## Stearnsman named YHC women's basketball coach

**Young Harris** - Young Harris College Director of Athletics Randy Dunn announced that Matt Stearnsman has been named the next head coach for the Mountain Lions women's basketball program. Stearnsman had served as interim head coach since mid-December. Stearnsman led the Mountain Lions (10-16 overall, 7-12 Peach Belt Conference) to seven of their 10 wins this season. Under Stearnsman's guidance, Young Harris is currently ranked 11th in the latest NCAA Division II statistics in scoring defense (allowing opponents 56.5 points per game) and 20th in three-point field goal percentage defense (.273). "I am proud to announce that Matt Stearnsman will be our new head women's basketball coach," said Dunn. "Matt is an excellent individual who is very knowledgeable about the game of basketball. He is an incredibly enthusiastic and passionate coach who I believe will build a program that the entire YHC community will be very proud of." "I want to thank President Cathy Cox and Director of Ath-



Matt Stearnsman Photo/YHC Athletics

letics around in the country as St. Catharine posted a 21-11 record. Five of those victories came against top 25 teams. The 21 overall wins came one year after the program won only five games in 2008-09. Patriot players earned all-conference honors five times during his two seasons on the staff. Prior to his stint at St. Catharine, Stearnsman was a men's assistant coach for one season (2007-08) at Georgia Southwestern State University and two seasons (2005-07) at Oklahoma City University. He helped Oklahoma City produce a 64-10 record during that two-year span. The Stars advanced to back-to-back NAIA national championship games, winning the national title at 2007. The program finished No. 1 in the final 2007 national rankings and No. 7 in the final 2006 poll. At Oklahoma City, he was able to tutor NAIA All-America third-team members Nick Covington (2007) and Dawud Drew (2006). Stearnsman began his collegiate coaching career as a student assistant at NCAA Division II men's power Kentucky Wesleyan College from 2002-05. In 2003, the Panthers finished as the NCAA Division II national runner-up. Before coaching at Kentucky Wesleyan, Stearnsman was an assistant at Hopkins County Central High School. Stearnsman was a two-sport student-athlete at Hopkins County Central, being a three-year starter at first base in baseball and lettering once in basketball. A Mortons Gap, Kentucky, native, Stearnsman is a 2001 graduate of Hopkins County Central and a 2006 graduate of Oklahoma City with a bachelor's degree in English.

## T-Ball and Farm League registration

The Towns County Recreation Department will be holding registration for T-Ball and Farm League the week of March 9th thru March 20th. Co-Ed T-Ball is for boys and girls ages 4 and 5. Co-Ed Farm League is for boys & girls ages 6, 7 and 8. The age control date will be prior to May 1st for boys and girls. Boys and girls ages 6 may play in either the T-Ball or the Farm

League programs. Cost for these programs will be \$35 per participant. All registration will be held at the new Recreation Department. Our hours of operation are: Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. til 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. til 4 p.m. For more information please call the Recreation Department at 706-896-2600. T(Mar11,F)SH

## Special youth turkey season for private land hunters opens before statewide season

For the second year in Georgia, youth and mobility-impaired hunters will have a chance to turkey hunt the weekend before the statewide turkey season opens. This special opportunity season is March 14-15, 2015. "This sneak preview opportunity gives youth a chance to get in the woods before the season opens to everyone the following weekend," said John Bowers, chief of the Game Management Section. "But, we want hunters to be sure to note that this special opportunity hunt is only available on

private lands." This weekend hunt opportunity is available only for youth 16 years of age and younger or hunters that are mobility impaired (i.e. confined to a wheelchair, hemiplegia, monoplegia, paraplegia, or single-leg amputation above the knee). Youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult (18 years or older) who may call for turkey, but may not take or attempt to take a turkey. Resident youth hunters under age 16 will not need a license. Hunters age 16 years or

older (including those accompanying youth or others) will need a hunting license and a big game license unless hunting on their own private land. Where can you get a license? Buy it online or find a list of retail license vendors at www.georgiawildlife.com/licenses-permits-passes or buy it by phone at 1-800-366-2661. The 2015 Georgia statewide turkey season opens Saturday, March 21. For more hunting information, visit www.georgiawildlife.com/hunting/regulations. NT(Mar11,F)SH