

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

www.townscountyherald.net • E-mail: tcherald@windstream.net

## Lady Indians' golf team ready for State

By Joe Collins  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County High School Lady Indians golf team is getting ready to compete in the 1A Public State Championship and they are very excited about the prospects of doing well.

"Our girls are very excited and chomping at the bit to get going. We've played practice rounds at the Victoria Bryant State Park's Highland Walk course, which is the venue for the championship, and it is challenging. It will be difficult to walk because of the hills but we've seen the course now and we know what to expect," said Towns County Head Coach Brett Keller.

The team won the privilege of playing in the Class A Public School State Championship on May 20th by winning the Area 4 Public Area Championship on the tough Battlefield Golf Course located in Fort Oglethorpe on April 23.

They played really well with sophomore Stephanie Patton winning the overall Low Medalist title to anchor the team's win.

It was an impressive win and their overall score of 198 was the second lowest in the Class A Public Area Champi-



Towns County Lady Indians' Low Medalist Stephanie Patton preps for the upcoming State Meet and hopes to lead Towns County to another State Championship in 2012-13. Photo/Joe Collins

onships behind Area 1 Schley County who shot 184 as a team. Patton's Low Medalist score of 93 was also second in the overall Class A Public Area Championships just behind Schley's Jordan Booker who shot an impressive 87.

The girls will have to battle terrain and fast greens to

win the State 1A Public Title next Monday at the Highland Walk course but Keller feels the teams chances are good.

"We got a real good shot at winning this thing," stated Keller. "The girls are ready and if we go out there and play the way we are capable of playing then we will win

and I have no doubts about that. These girls have played well all year winning all their matches and all we need to do is stay focused and play solid."

Keller's only concern is the length of the course and its set up for the championship.

"They moved the tees back to about 5500 yards and we are going to have to manage a longer course than the one we played for Area. I don't think it will be a problem for this team but it is long."

Patton has a strong game off the tee and should be able to handle the longer distance as the team's number one player. She actually had some trouble driving the ball at the Area Championship but managed her game well out of trouble and around the greens to win the low scoring title.

The team as a whole played well all season and stepped up to the challenges of a long Brasstown Valley course so this should be no different for them.

Sophomore Danielle Diehl played well at Area shooting a 105 along with sophomore Mia Manto who shot a 109.

Junior Amber Williams had a 114 at the Area event and will look to do better in  
**See Golf, Page 9A**



### Tips from the Range

I have heard it said that there is only one swing for every club and I agree with this statement, for the most part. Every swing has consistent fundamentals and is dependent upon certain repeatable motions but every swing is not the same. Each club is unique in its design and function, therefore; the swing involved with each club will be unique.

When striking most iron shots, you will make a divot. A wedge will typically make a longer and deeper divot than a 5-iron. These divot patterns are in direct relation to the length of the club you're using, so the longer the shaft then the shallower the divot. Since this is true, then it stands to reason that there should be little evidence of impact when using a fairway wood. In other words, a fairway wood should simply sweep the ball off of the turf and this is one of the most difficult actions to perform with a golf club. This fact alone is why fairway wood shots demand precision and the swing must be nearly perfect to consistently hit good fairway wood shots.

Proper impact with a fairway wood is totally dependent on solid fundamentals. It is extremely important to have the correct ball position and to maintain your balance throughout the swing. The bottom of the swing arc must coincide with the position of the ball almost perfectly. If the ball is too far forward in the stance then you will hit it thin and end up with what many golfers call a "worm burner". If the ball is too far back in the stance then you will top the shot and the ball won't go very far. So, how do we determine the correct ball position to use when playing a fairway wood shot? I am so glad you asked.

First, take your normal stance and push a short tee into the ground aligned just inside your front foot and in line with the swing path so that the top of said tee is the same height as the turf grass and located at the proper distance away to play a 3-wood shot. Next, place another tee about 8 inches back

from the front tee, at the same height, but still in line with your take away path. Now, place another tee 12 inches behind the middle tee again at the same height and on the same line as the other two. Place the head of your 3-wood behind the middle tee and start taking some practice swings being careful to not hit the tee but simply swing over the top of it to make sure you can maintain your balance. If you can barely brush the top of the tee then your balance is close to being proper. Now comes the more difficult part of finding the exact location to place the ball in your stance.

To find the best ball position, place the head of your 3-wood behind the middle tee and make your normal take away. Make sure you swing the club down the same way as you always do and try to make contact with the forward tee. The spot where the club hits the ground is the exact position your ball needs to be in order to make good contact with a fairway wood on a normal shot or in other words, the spot where the club head impacted the ground is the ball position spot you should use when playing fairway woods.

As I stated earlier, your fundamentals need to be solid to make consistent impact with fairway woods. Do not let your head move and make sure you keep your eye on the ball. Impact has to be precise to hit a good shot off the fairway so swing smooth and keep your grip light. Stay away from the ball and always let your arms straighten through impact. Practice is crucial when learning to hit this shot.

Okay, we have now covered the basic swing development aspects and I hope it has been helpful. I would like to start having some fun by helping you with your swing problems. I will need to know if the ball is starting off on the target line and moving one way or another or if the ball is starting off left or right of where you are aiming. Please email me at jcollins.tcherald@windstream.net with any questions you have. You will be surprised by how common your flaws are among most golfers. I will analyze your issue and discuss it here in "Tips". Go ahead and give it a shot. I bet I can help. Good luck and I will see you on the course!

## Sonny Goodman: just one of the gang

By Joe Collins  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Sonny Goodman will graduate this year with the rest of the Towns County High School graduates from the class of 2013 and he will receive his diploma. This is a major achievement for the graduate because he was born a Downs syndrome child.

Downs syndrome, also called Trisomy 21, is a condition in which extra genetic material causes delays in the way a child develops both mentally and physically. Approximately 1 in every 800 children born in the United States today will be affected by this condition.

Sonny just happened to be that one and many have been, and many will be, blessed by knowing him.

Sonny was born on Aug. 7, 1992 to parents who lived in Florida. They chose to give him up instead of having him as part of their family and at 9 days old he was sent to live in a Downs syndrome facility. He lived there until he was three and a half years of age, when by chance, he was placed in the home of Betty Thomas after the children of the facility came to visit in Hayesville, NC. She took him in for what was supposed to be a weekend and Sonny has been there ever since.

"I brought Sonny home and put him in bed with my 15-year-old son Joseph and laughingly said to him that this is your new little brother. The next morning, when I entered the bedroom, I found Sonny all tucked in with Joseph. Sonny was aware of my coming into the room and looked up from his bed and said "good morning momma," and the rest has become history," declared Thomas. "He has been with us ever since."

Thomas, who holds a Master's degree in Special Education and taught at Towns County, simply wanted Sonny to be treated just like everybody else in the classroom and fortunately that is just what happened then and still happens today. Sonny is treated just like everyone else and the students reflect that attitude when dealing with him. This treatment from the student body has forever molded Sonny into the person he is now. He is a loving and caring person who has a smile for everyone he meets.

"When I dropped Sonny off at his room for first grade I asked his teacher, Janice Harvey, to treat him just like every other student in her class. I told her if he broke the rules then he needed to be punished just like the rest of the class. She was great and set a precedent by not excluding him in anything. His classmates considered him as an equal and one of their own and that attitude has remained



Sonny Goodman is ready for his Senior Prom.



Coach Jeannie Ledford and Sonny Goodman at last fall's Special Olympics. Photo/Todd Forrest

with the student body. Janice and her paraprofessional, Sue Chastain, were great. I remember a story Janice told me about how they were having reading day and the kids were supposed to come up to the front of the class and read a book.

"Well, Sonny couldn't read, but when his time came to come up and sit down and read she called him up just like the other kids in the class. He grabbed a book and sat down in the chair and began to point at the pictures and tell the story. It was a monumental day in the eyes of Sonny's classmates because they learned right then that Sonny was part of their class and they included him from then on.

"Janice could've separated him and kept him in his seat during reading time but instead she called on him to come up and read. To the rest of his first grade class, this meant he was being treated the same as they were so they in turn followed suit by treating him as an equal. That treatment by the students at Towns County persisted all through school and now Sonny is graduating

as an equal.

"The love the students showed him then and now has helped mold him into the person he has become. The Towns County Schools students are special and they need to be commended for how they have always included Sonny in their activities," said Thomas.

Sonny is a very active child and enjoys riding horses and participating in sports at school with his friends. He lettered in wrestling and has his letterman jacket to prove it. He works out with his best friend, senior wrestling star Tyler Hoffman, who Sonny refers to as "his boy," on a regular basis. He is a huge professional wrestling fan with John Cena being his favorite, but he knows all the rest of the wrestlers as well. He has a temper and can get mad just like anyone else, but, is quick to forgive with a hug and a smile.

As a senior this year, he was crowned football Homecoming king as well as the Prom King. Not because he is a special needs child but because the kids think that much of him. These are not trivial honors, but were voted

on by the student body. This, in and of itself, is an example of how special Sonny is to the students at TCHS.

Dadrian Blythe, who was crowned this year's Prom Queen with Sonny, is honored to know him. "Sonny has been with us since kindergarten and we treat him no differently than anyone else in the senior class. He is a blessing and joy to be around and he always puts a smile on my face. I believe he has had a positive affect on every member of our senior class. It was an honor having him crowned as my Prom King and I couldn't have asked for anyone better," declared Blythe.

Hoffman, who Sonny calls "his boy" said, "Sonny is my friend and always will be. We have been friends since before I can remember. He has taught me many life lessons and I am a better person for it. He will get mad at me everyday and tell me he hates me because I make him work out hard but he always gives me a hug at the end of our workouts and tells me he loves me and that I am "his boy". He is just a very special friend and I love him like a younger brother. He is constantly asking me "you happy Tyler?"

Katie Scott has had the privilege of being Sonny's date to the prom in both his junior and senior years described him this way, "There is not just one way to describe Sonny. He is funny, honest, happy and outgoing and those are just a few words I can think of.

"His innocence touches my heart. To him, everyone is a friend. No matter what kind of bad day I am having he can turn it around. Just being around him makes me feel better. He is part of our family and even went to Disney World with us last April. It didn't matter what I was doing, I just enjoyed watching him have a wonderful time. Since we are family, he will get mad at me for not letting him do this or not allowing him to eat that but he is always quick to apologize because he doesn't like to have anyone upset with him and he doesn't like to be upset with anyone else. He is such a loving friend.

"He is the best person anyone can know. I truly believe I am a better person for having him in my life. Everyone needs a friend like him."

Katie's mom Lisa Scott was Sonny's paraprofessional in the third grade and she made this observation even back then, "The kids in our class loved him dearly," she said.

"It was amazing to see them involve him in whatever they were doing. They didn't treat him any differently than any other kid in the class.

**See Sonny, Page 9A**

### Booster Club membership drive

The Towns County Athletic Booster Club will be having a membership drive May 1 - 18, 2013 for the 2013-2014 school year. The Towns County Athletic Booster Club's purpose is to support the Middle and High School athletic programs through fundraising and volunteer efforts.

Anyone who wishes to participate needs to submit

the membership application and fee before May 18, 2013. The membership form can be downloaded at the athletic department's website - tcathletics.weebly.com/ under the Booster Club tab. The membership fee is \$25 per individual and \$35 per couple.

For questions or more information, please see any current Club member. T(May8.F)SH

**SPRING FLING FUNDRAISER**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2013**  
**FUN BEGINS AT 3:00 P.M.**

**TOWNS COUNTY SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD & TRACK**

**FREE GIVE-AWAYS - MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN ONE OF TWO KINDLE FIRE HD TABLETS**  
(Drawings at 4:30 and 5:30 - come early to register to win)

**COW PATTY BINGO BEGINS AT 6:00 P.M.**  
(For bingo tickets, see any Booster Club member)

**CORN HOLE TOURNAMENT BEGINS AT 4:30**  
Tournament Registration from 3:00 to 4:00  
(To pre-register, contact Susan deVries at 706-896-6106)

**JUMPING TENTS**  
**HAMBURGERS -- HOTDOGS**  
**GRILLED CORN ON THE COB**  
**COTTON CANDY -- SNO CONES**

**JOIN US TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR TOWNS COUNTY ATHLETICS**

All proceeds to go support the Towns County Athletic Booster Club. The Towns County Athletic Booster Club is an organization whose purpose is to support the Middle and High School Athletic Programs.

### Chatuge Shores Ladies Golf news

The "Chatugettes" are at it again. The CSLGA opened its 2013 season with a Step Aside Scramble on May 7 followed by a luncheon/business meeting. Scrambling to secure first prize were Judy Schmitt, Nancy Jensen, Pat Seeley, and Janet Woodruff. The second place team consisted of Mary Reece, Barbara Boswell, Donna

Workman, and Bobbi LeHoullier. Last, but not least in 3rd place were Claudia Rinaldo, Lorene Avery, and Judy Wright. We have welcomed 4 new members this season, and we would enjoy more. If anyone is interested, please contact Judy Wright, tournament chair.

*Submitted by Judy Wright*