

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Towns County's summer league softball kicks into high gear

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Last week was a Dead Week for the Georgia High School Association, during which no sports activities could be held at Towns County Schools, but the Lady Indians began summer practice the week before at Lowell Nicholson Softball Field.

Practices resumed this week.

"We've only had two practices so far," said Head Coach Brandon Rowland. "As far as where we were at this point last year, I'd say defensively, we're doing really, really good. We've got two young pitchers that are coming up, but that's what happens when you graduate your two only pitchers the year before."

Five starting seniors graduated in May, so a host of new leadership will be taking the field when school starts back up.

"It really hurts, but at the same time, we've got girls that come in, and I almost think that, defense wise in the field, we're a lot better off at this point than we were last year," said Coach Rowland.

In years past, it has been difficult for the girls to get used to a particular coaching style, as coaches have come and gone.

"I think this year is the first year in seven years that the



The Towns County Lady Indians will see action next Tuesday vs Union County and White County in Blairsville. These games prepare the Lady Indians for the early start that softball faces every July and August. Photos/Lowell Nicholson and Todd Forrest

Coach Rowland specializes in building strong bonds with his students and athletes, and those relationships and his leadership style are apparent on the field.

"My No. 1 goal is for everybody to have a good time," said Coach Rowland. "Yes, the discipline and all, that's there. But at the same time, if the girls are not having fun doing what they're doing - my thing is, if you're not having fun doing it, then you're probably not going

to stick with it.

"So, we have a good time at practice. We stay serious and get the fundamentals down, but it's a good, nurturing situation. I think the girls have a good time and still get done what they need to get done."

Last year, Coach Rowland's goal for the Lady Indians was to achieve at least seven wins to tie their previous win record - a goal that the girls exceeded with nine wins to have the most winningest season in



to do good things," said Coach Rowland. "We're in a tough, tough region with the private schools and all. Most of the private schools have already established great programs, and that's what we're looking toward, to being able to compete. With having a coach come in who is willing to stay long term and who looks to build, I think we'll reach that goal."

"It may take us three,

four, maybe even 10 years, who knows, but that's our main goal, to be able to compete with some of these that are already established teams."

Looking ahead, the goal for this coming season is to improve upon what he and his Lady Indians have already been able to achieve together.

"Obviously, we want to get better," said Coach Rowland. "I've got to get the pitching staff that I have, I've got to work with them. We've got them going to a couple of different pitching coaches to get extra practice after practice. I think they got one or two nights a week to do that. So, definitely building the pitching."

Shannon Moss assistant coached the team last year, but has moved on to new responsibilities as assistant principal of the elementary school, so player Zandra Churchill's father, Barry, will be stepping into that position as a community coach.

"He's been working with my hitters," said Coach Rowland. "We've also got another guy that some of the ladies go to for extra hitting lessons. The good thing is, all the girls are hungry for it and they knew that we had a good season last year. They're wanting to put in the extra time after practice to get better themselves, and that's something you can't coach - that all comes from within."

## Towns County youth football and TCHS work together at upcoming camp

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Towns County Youth Football Camp will take place Saturday, July 11, from 8 a.m. until noon at the Towns County High School practice football field.

The camp will offer a unique opportunity for varsity Indians and Head Coach Billy Barnhart to interact with youth football players, as many from the high school team will come out to support the camp.

"I want to thank the varsity kids, for sure," said Towns County Youth Football League Director Jimmy Smith. "It makes me feel good when I see them up there during the camp. These kids, I did the same thing for the players that are in high school now, and they remember this, and they still thank me for it."

Director Smith also thanked Coach Barnhart in advance for his participation in this upcoming Saturday.

"He's going to even furnish the water for us," said Director Smith. "He's a very good man, and I appreciate what he does."

And the youth players couldn't do what they do without the help of a tremendous cheerleading effort.

"The cheerleaders have had a good turnout, we don't need to forget them," said Director Smith. "They've got a good turnout this season, and everything's looking good for them. I'd like to thank their coaches for what they do for their girls with the cheerleading, and they work very hard on what they do."



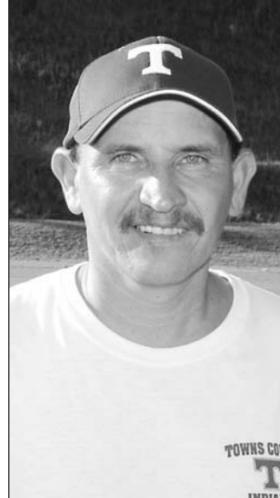
TC Head Coach Billy Barnhart and

Signups have turned out above average numbers so far, and kids and parents are welcome to attend the camp, even if they're still thinking about whether or not to sign up.

"I'm always excited about the camp, just how the kids come out and see it," said Director Smith. "Normally, that's when a lot of kids come out and see if they like youth football, and I say 80 percent, maybe even more, they end up getting their mom or dad to sign them up. They enjoy the camp."

The camp will certainly be fun, but potential and returning players will have their work cut out for them as they learn from Smith, this season's team coaches, and from Coach Barnhart and the Indians.

"They can expect to get in shape - we're going to do a lot of running this week," said Director Smith. "We won't be



hitting or anything like that, as the first week is condition only. We'll just be in shorts and tennis shoes, just mainly going over drills and things like that. We're going to have a good time with it."

Following camp, athletes and parents alike will be treated to snow cones, which will be a great way to finish a warm day of drills and running.

Interested young athletes and their parents can sign up on the day of the camp, and should bring a copy of their child's birth certificate at signup, as it will be provided to the Smoky Mountain Conference as proof of age.

The camp will be free, but a one-time payment of \$90 will be required at the time of signup in order to cover costs of playing during the season, including insurance, a game jersey that kids will get to

keep at the end of the season, and a trophy at the end-of-year banquet.

Again, in order to be accepted on one of the teams, parents will need to provide a copy of their child's birth certificate at the time of signup, along with the \$90.

Kids who played last year will not need to provide copies of their birth certificates at signup.

Teams are broken down into categories according to age: Pee Wees are 5 and 6-year-olds; Termites are 7 and

8-year-olds; Mites are 9 and 10-year-olds; and Midgets are 11 and 12-year-olds.

This year will be Director Smith's 19th year directing the Towns County program, as well as the county's second year in the Smoky Mountain Conference.

As always, Director Smith would like to thank Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall for his support in the program, and he would also like everyone to know that he and his teams are geared up for gridiron

greatness.

"I'm ready," said Director Smith. "I've got all my equipment, got all everything ready to go. I just need more kids to get out here and get signed up, and let's have a good season. I feel good about this season all around. I think we'll have good teams."

Youth football kicks off its regular season on Saturday, Aug. 15, when the Franklin Panthers head over from North Carolina to play at Towns County.

## NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Earnhardt wins at Daytona

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla.—Dale Earnhardt Jr. won Sunday's rain-delayed Sprint Cup race that didn't end until nearly 3 am on Monday morning.

While there have been many wild finishes at Daytona, this was one of the most dramatic.

First, a spin by Sam Hornish with six laps to go set up a green-white-checkered finish. On the restart, Earnhardt was able to lead all the way to the finish line. As he reached the stripe, all hell broke loose behind him, involving 15 cars.

Austin Dillon, winner of Saturday's Xfinity Series race was hit from behind. He went airborne, flying over several other cars, and crashed into the grandstand fence, knocking a big hole in it.

Pieces of his car flew off into the crowd of fans. Several fans received minor cuts, with six needing additional medical care.

When Dillon's No. 3 car came to a stop on the pavement, it was in two different pieces. The car body, which was now just a shell, with Austin in it, was in one spot, while the motor, transmission and running gear were laying about 100 feet away.

Miraculously, Dillon was unhurt, and waved to the crowd after he was extricated from what remained of his race car.

"That scared the hell out of me," Earnhardt said in victory lane. "I saw it in the rear view mirror. Things like that have the potential for real danger."

"This was a great car. It's the same one we ran at Talladega. I hope the boss doesn't put it in the barn anytime soon."

In addition to winning the race, Earnhardt started on the pole and led the most laps (96).

"That's just part of our sport," said Jimmie Johnson, who finished second. "But I've never seen anything like that, the way the car is laying out there, and the engine is a long ways off."

Denny Hamlin finished third.

I really didn't see what happened," said Hamlin. "The four-car (Kevin Harvick) had me jacked up. He was pushing and I was lucky to even finish."

The remaining top-10 drivers: 4. Kevin Harvick, 5. Kurt Busch, 6. Jeff Gordon, 7. Austin Dillon, 8. Ryan Newman, 9. Trevor Bayne, 10. Clint Bowyer.

The race which was scheduled for an 8 pm starting time didn't begin until 11:50 pm Sunday night, because of rain. It officially ended at 2:48 a.m. on Monday morning.

Top-10 Chase leaders after 17 of 36: 1. Harvick-656, 2. Earnhardt-593, 3. Johnson-589, 4. Logano-581, 5. Truex-569, 6. McMurray-526, 7. Keselowski-520, 8.

Kurt Busch-508, 9. Kenseth-501, 10. Gordon-500.

### AUSTIN DILLON PERSEVERES FOR XFINITY WIN

Austin Dillon won Saturday night's Xfinity race by avoiding a late accident, and then surviving a green-white-checkered finish.

"This is Daytona, man," Dillon said. "There are so many family memories here. ... I'm just happy for my grandfather (Richard Childress). He told me once when we were here in victory lane with Dale Earnhardt that you'll have this opportunity one day. It means so much to be here."

Elliott Sadler, Chase Elliott, Kasey Kahne, Benny Gordon, Dakoda Armstrong, David Ragan, Erik Jones, Harrison Rhodes, and Ross Chastain were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Top-10 points leaders after 15 of 33: 1. C. Buescher-560, 2. Elliott-526, 3. T. Dillon-517, 4. Smith-493, 5. Sadler-489, 6. D. Wallace-472, 7. Scott-453, 8. Reed-441, 9. Gaughan-438, 10. Suarez-437.

### HOW POLITICALLY CORRECT SHOULD NASCAR BE

It offends me that NASCAR gets offended so easily.

It seems like every week NASCAR derides someone, a cause, or company because of what they consider an incorrect political stance.

This past week Donald Trump was singled out.

Camping World CEO Marcus Lemonis informed NASCAR that neither he nor anyone from his company would participate in any event on Trump property, "due to blatantly bigoted and racist comments from Donald Trump in regards to immigrants."

The announcement, concerning Trump, involved moving the location of the 2015 NASCAR Camping World and Xfinity Series post season banquets.

The series held two of their 2014 banquets at Trump's National Dorale Resort in Miami, but after NASCAR received a letter from Camping World, the decision was made to distance themselves from Trump.

"We started talking about it earlier this week, and we were evaluating everything," NASCAR Spokesman David Higdon said. "We'll stick with our plan to announce later this summer where we will be going. We looked at obviously everything that we saw coming down and what we heard from our sponsors and our partners and what we feel we should be doing, and that is what led us to the decision today."

Two weeks ago, the organization put down the Confederate



Dale Earnhardt Jr. winner of Daytona Cup race.

flag, and issued a statement trying to discourage fans from displaying it at their tracks. The Daytona track offered to exchange an American flag for a Confederate flag. But as of Saturday morning, Joie Chitwood, the track president, said, "there had been no takers."

If anyone would take time to look around them, they will see all types of non-conformity, bigotry, and other undesirable behavior. It's always been there. To some, it might be considered unacceptable, something to be done away with.

On a personal level, we can shun what we don't like, but we can only go so far.

This is not heaven. It never has been, and never will be.

I don't know how far NASCAR will take this political correctness in order to appear "squeaky clean". Appearing to always be the good guy might eventually be their downfall. The sport of racing is built on emotions. Take away the emotional aspect of it, and you water it down, to where it is no longer fit to watch.

In NASCAR's defense: What do you do when a yearly multi-million dollar sponsor, like Camping World, says, "Jump," NASCAR has no other recourse than to comply.

There is a lot of uneasiness in NASCAR right now, as they attempt to create some type of racing-utopia.

I would enjoy receiving fan comments. Maybe it's me that has a blind spot. Contact me at: hodges@race500.com, or call me: 251-626-4086.

**Weekend Racing:** The Sprint Cup, Xfinity, and Truck teams are at the 1.5-mile Kentucky Speedway for three night races.

Thurs., July 9; Truck Series race 10 of 23; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: Foxsports1.

Fri., July 10; Xfinity Series race 16 of 33; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: NBCS.

Sat., July 11; Sprint Cup Series race 18 of 36; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: NBCS.

**Racing Trivia Question:** Which team owner helped Carl Edwards break into NASCAR?

**Last Week's Question:** Where did Jeff Gordon win his first Cup race? Answer: It was the 1994 Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte. He also went on to win the Inaugural Brickyard 400.

### 2015 Summer Day Camp

Summer is just around the corner and that means hot weather and Summer Day Camp for boys and girls ages 6 thru 12, the session being two weeks, running Monday thru Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Session IV: July 20th thru July 31st.

The fee for the two week session is \$120 or \$60 per week. The fee is payable to the Towns County Recreation Department.

Day Camp offers children sports game activities,

social game activities, field trips, nature hikes and much more. Children need to bring a swimsuit, towel, sprayable sunscreen and sack lunch. The Recreation Department will furnish the ice water for the campers.

Registration will be the first Monday at The Towns County Recreation and Conference Center located 150 Foster Park Rd. For more information please call the Recreation Department at 706-896-2600. TJUBH,F5JSH

### MUSA Fall Registration

Mountain United Soccer Association's Fall Registration is now open. Age groups from U6 to U16. You can register online at [www.mountainssoccer.org](http://www.mountainssoccer.org). Registration forms are also available to print from the website. Forms can be mailed to P.O. Box 1862, Blairsville, GA 30514. Deadline to register is July 18th.

For additional information, please check our website at: [www.mountainssoccer.org](http://www.mountainssoccer.org) or email us at: [musa.soccer@g.mail.com](mailto:musa.soccer@g.mail.com)

### Dash to the Vineyards 10k and 5k

Join us for a race through the rolling hills of Young Harris! The Second Annual Dash to the Vineyards 10K & 5K Race presented by Towns County Chamber of Commerce & Crane Creek Vineyards will be held Saturday, August 22, 2015.

The 10K race will begin at the Brasstown Valley Resort Riding Stables at 8 a.m. and finish at Crane Creek Vineyards. The 5K will also begin at 8 a.m. but these racers will start and end at the vineyards. Runners will leave the stables and exit the main entrance of the Resort, run down Hwy. 76 to the intersection of Hwy. 66, make a right on Hwy. 66 and continue on to Byers Creek Road. From there, competitors

will experience both downhill and uphill climbs to the finish at Crane Creek Vineyards. It's the best time to dash to the vineyards because Crane Creek in August has the most breathtaking views of the year!

Trophies will be awarded to 10K runners as follows: Top overall male and female, and top male and female finishers of all age divisions. Ribbons and commemorative glasses will be given to top 3 male/female in a variety of age groups.

Shuttles will be available after the race to take 10K runners back to the Stables. T-shirts will be guaranteed to all who pre-register. Registration is now open at the Towns County Chamber office locat-

ed at 1411 Jack Dayton Circle, Young Harris (directly across the street from the entrance to The Ridges Resort) or online at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com). Forms are also available on the Chamber's website [www.mountainssoccer.org](http://www.mountainssoccer.org). (On the home page click the link for "Things To Do".) Entry Fee is \$25 before 8/07/15 and \$30 after. The cost is the same for both the 10K and 5K race. A portion of the proceeds will benefit scholarships for graduating student athletes.

For more information, call the Towns County Chamber of Commerce at (706) 896-4966, or you can email Candace Lee at [candacelee@brmmemc.net](mailto:candacelee@brmmemc.net). TJUBH,F5JSH