

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Towns County YFL struggles at home after sweeps

By Joe Collins
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Staff Writer

The North Georgia Youth Football League returned to Frank McClure Memorial Stadium this weekend after all three teams won their games the last two weekends.

The tide turned on the Termites who lost to Dawson County 42-32 and the Tiny Mites who lost to Union 31-12. The Pee-Wee group held their own in a close game that saw them come back in the second half and win 27-21 against a really strong Pickens County team.

The first game on Saturday had the 7-8 year olds playing the Union County Panthers in a game that promised to be exciting and it was. Union drew first blood with 3:29 left in the first quarter and the Indians quickly answered when Kyle Oakes broke a 4th and 7 running play around the left side and scored. Both teams failed on the two-point conversion attempts and the score was tied 6-6 as the second quarter started.

The Panthers answered quickly and scored with 7:45 left in the second quarter. The Indians held fast on the extra points, and for the rest of the quarter, holding the Panthers scoreless. Unfortunately, the Indian offense couldn't gain any ground either and the half ended with the Indians trailing 12-6.

The second half was all Union as the Indians were out scored by three touchdowns. The Indians played some solid football but the Union offense found the holes in the front line that the defensive line couldn't close and Towns suffered their second loss of the season 31-12 moving the Tiny Mites record to 3-2.

The Termites ended up having trouble against Dawson County in the second game of the day. It all started bad when the Indians took the kickoff, and on the first play of the game, lost the ball on a fumble. The Dawson County Tigers then scored on their second play from scrimmage. The Indians



answered when Braylen Rader scored one of his 4 TDs of the game as he followed some solid blocking around the left end and broke a long play into the end zone. Both teams made the extra points and the score was 8-8.

The teams exchanged TDs throughout the remainder of the first half and on in to the second half as the Indians struggled to keep the Tigers out of the end zone. The Tigers led 42-26 with .30 seconds left in the game but still refused to give up. They marched their last possession down the field and Rader again found the goal line for the score. The final minute proved that this team desires to do well because they never gave up even though they only had 12 players compared to the Tigers 25, which forced the Indians to play both offense and defense while Dawson was able to rotate players on both sides of the ball. This was the second loss of the season for the Termites and leaves them with a 3-1 record.

The Towns County Pee-Wee team played the final game of the day against the Pickens County Dragons. The 9 year olds had their hands full with a team that had a lot more players and size, but in the Towns County tradition, that didn't scare them. This team has

some talent and it showed on Saturday. Towns County football fans should look forward to the team's achievements in the future.

The first quarter was a defensive struggle as both teams found running room but could not find the end zone until the Dragons crossed the goal line with 26 ticks left on the clock. The extra point attempt was good and the Indians trailed 7-0. The Indians defense held strong with Payton Ivester and Garrett Oakes both making excellent tackles in the second quarter to keep the Dragons from scoring and the half ended with the score in favor of the Dragons 7-0.

The second half saw the Indians answering early with Ivester breaking a big play around the left end and scoring from the 40-yard line. The extra point attempt failed and the Indians trailed 7-6 with 7:35 left in the third quarter. Colin Crowder and Shannon Hawkins both made big tackles in the third quarter to help hold the Dragons. However, Pickens moved the ball down the field and scored with 2:27 left in the third quarter. The extra point was good and the Indians trailed 14-6. Hayden McClure returned the favor by crossing the goal line with 47 seconds left in the third. The

extra point was good and the Indians moved to within one point of the Dragons 14-13.

Ricky Krokoko kicked off to start the most exciting quarter of the game that found a host of Indians playing some of the best football of the year. One of the crucial plays was at the beginning of the fourth quarter when a host of Indians broke the wedge play that Pickens had been very affective with all game and forced a fumble that the Indians recovered. The third play from the line of scrimmage found Ivester following his lead block and breaking a long TD run from the Indians 39-yard line. The extra point was good and the Indians led for the first time in the game 20-14. "Our running backs played a great game and this made a huge difference toward the end. Our defense held strong and gave the offense the opportunities it needed," said a proud Head Coach Rodney Thomas.

Pickens drove the ball down the field and scored with 3:37 left in the game. The extra point was good and the Dragons led 21-20. The Indians' Ivester answered on the following kickoff with a 62-yard return for the score. The extra point was good and the Indians now regained the lead 27-21 with 3:05 left in the game.

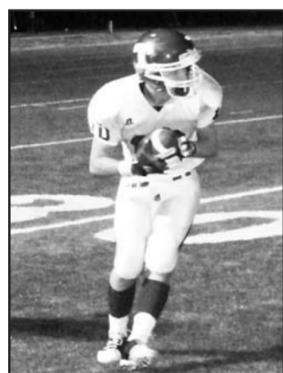
The last three minutes had the Dragons on the move. The Indians got tough when it was needed and stopped the Dragons on their own 5-yard line and refused to let them in. The Indians took over on downs and ran the clock out for the victory over the best team they have faced all year and boosting their record to 3-1.

YFL director Jimmy Smith was so impressed with the blocking of Mason Thomas that he gave him a game ball for the blocks he made on the final scoring drive of the game for the Indians.

The YFL teams will be away next Saturday with the Tiny Mites and the Pee-Wee teams playing at Fannin. Game times are 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. respectively. The Termites will play at Pickens at 10:30 a.m. Make plans now to go and see these athletes play some really good football.

Get well soon, Cruz

By Joe Collins
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Cruz Shook

The Towns County Indians football team asks for your prayers for sophomore Cruz Shook who suffered a lacerated spleen in Friday night's game at Frank McClure Memorial Stadium.

Shook was attempting to score early in the third quarter on a left side pass play when he landed wrong on the ball after his reception and injured his spleen.

"He thinks he just landed wrong on the ball when he was trying to cross the goal line. He stayed in for a couple more plays, but you could tell he was in distress when he came to the side lines after we scored," Inidans' Head Coach Kyle Langford.

Shook was taken by ambulance from the stadium to Chatuge Regional Hospital and then later transported by ambulance to Erlanger Hospital in Chattanooga, Tenn. where he was diagnosed with the lacerated spleen.

Doctors determined that internal bleeding had subsided and that surgery was not needed at that time.

"It was an answer to prayer that he didn't need surgery Friday night but he is not out of the woods yet. He should go home on Monday but has to return in 10 days for evaluation if all goes well. The doctors think it will be three months before he can play again," Langford said.

Shook started his football career at age 9 when he was part of the North Georgia Youth Football League under the direction of Jimmy Smith.

"He was a good football player when he played for us in the YFL and just got better," said Smith.

Shook's older brother Devin Henderson played high school football at TCHS and Cruz was always involved with the team's activities.

"We feel like Cruz is one of our veterans because he was always with his brother and working out with the team even though he was in middle school. He has been a part of this team for a long time and became a starter when he was a

freshman," Langford said. Shook's enthusiasm is contagious and his presence benefits the team just as much as his talent on the field.

"He brings electricity to the team. All the guys like him and he gets them fired up and going. He brings a sense of toughness to the team because he is not scared of anything. It doesn't matter what play we run or who we play. He has great hands and will catch any ball thrown his way. He is our slot back and that means he is involved in a lot of motion plays and it just doesn't bother him. He is so good that teams we play have had to double-team him to try and keep the ball out of his hands cause when he gets it he can run too. He is still with us and is still part of our team and with God's healing he will get better," Langford said.

Shook is an All-Star athlete and is involved in other sports at Towns County. His talent will be missed on Friday nights but his health is the first priority.

"He is a person first and that means his health is most important at this time. We are praying for him and his family and me and the coaches wish him well. We are very concerned for him and feel very fortunate that he is healing," Langford said.

Pray for Shook as he continues the healing process. The players and coaches know that prayer is powerful and that God is in control. He has been watching over Shook since the moment the injury occurred and will continue to watch over him until he is healed. Everyone wishes him the best and a speedy recovery. Take care Cruz, you are on our minds and in our hearts.

The hunt of a lifetime for Matthew McClure

By Joe Collins
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Staff Writer

Young Harris resident and mountain native Matthew McClure recently traveled to Catlettsburg, KY to take part in a special deer hunt provided by the Kentucky Antler Company.

After several hours of patient hunting on the 400 acre preserve that manages trophy deer hunts, Matthew was able to harvest an exceptional 8-point buck. What made this hunt so special? Matthew has been confined to a wheelchair for all of his 25 years because of a premature birth condition that left him with Cerebral Palsy.

Modern technology has enhanced the lives of so many people by providing them with opportunities that would normally not have been an option. Matthew's hunt is one of those special opportunities.

Matthew's hunt started last Nov. when his dad, Robby McClure, and several of his fellow church members from the Mt. Zion Church of God, booked an "open ground" hunt with the Kentucky Antler Company. A deer preserve located in Catlettsburg, KY. While there, Robby met preserve owner and fellow Christian Kevin Reece who, after learning of Matthew and his condition, invited the family back for a hunt in the fall of 2012.

"Kevin told me that they donate two special hunts a year to people who would otherwise not be able to actually hunt and harvest game. He asked me then if I thought Matthew would be interested. I immediately told him I was sure he would be very interested," said McClure who has often allowed Matthew to accompany him on his own hunts.

"Matthew can't handle a gun and I harvest the game when we go hunting but he is always excited to be outdoors and on a hunt. He loves being in nature and going hunting with me," declared McClure.

Being in a wheelchair



Young Harris' Matthew McClure with his 8-point buck following a deer hunt sponsored by the Kentucky Antler Company.

is not a problem for the Kentucky based outfitter. They are able to borrow the appropriate computerized equipment from the National Turkey Federation when planning a specialized hunt of this nature. The equipment mounts to the wheelchair and allows the hunter to manipulate the single shot H&R .243 caliber rifle with a tube that extends to the mouth of the hunter. They can site in the rifle, which Matthew did on the gun range, and pull the trigger with little or no help by simply sucking on the tube as they would a straw.

Kentucky Antler Company rigged a special trailer for Matthew that allowed him to enter the deer hunting woods just like any other deer hunter. The road to the action was rough and although Matthew had to be strapped in, he made it without any problems.

The trailer came equipped with a blind for cover and gave Matthew, Robby and Reece the cover they needed to get close to the deer.

The first evening of the hunt was on Thursday and although it was filled with several deer sightings, none of the deer were mature enough to be har-

vested. Matthew had to sleep on the anticipation that Friday night by his lucky day.

Friday evening found the trio poised and ready to harvest Matthew's first ever deer. A front was moving in and the deer were active. Around 7:30 that evening Matthew spotted his deer; a huge 8-point. The silence in the blind was ghostly as Robby helped Matthew get ready.

The deer presented an ethical broadside shot and Matthew squeezed the trigger. At the sound of the gun, the deer ran off. The shot was good but being an ethical hunter Matthew decided to give the deer time to expire and everyone returned to the lodge where it was a sleepless night for Matthew and his dad.

At daybreak the guides went to the area where the hunt had taken place and there was Matthew's deer. No hunter has ever been as excited as this young man from Young Harris, GA as he dragged his trophy from the woods.

Matthew's hunt was filled with all the hospitality that one could hope for when going on one of these hunts. He enjoyed excellent food and lodging. He

got to do some fishing between hunts where he landed some good sized bass. He spent time with his parents while waiting to hunt and enjoyed the fellowship of other hunters and hearing their hunting tales. It was a hunt of a lifetime and he will never forget it.

Matthew's parents, Robby and Jana, would like to say thank you to everyone at Kentucky Antler Company for the kindness they experienced during their stay and especially to Kevin Reece and Wayne Sizemore for their generous gift that changed their son's life.

"We can't thank them enough for what they did for Matthew. They are good Christian people and we thank God for them. Words just can't express our appreciation for what they did," proclaimed a grateful McClure.

Modern technology helped change the life of this young man. He will remember this hunt from now on and will look back at his experience as something most people in his position will never have. With the help of his parents and some loving people in the right environment, his life was changed forever.

Indians...continued from page 10A

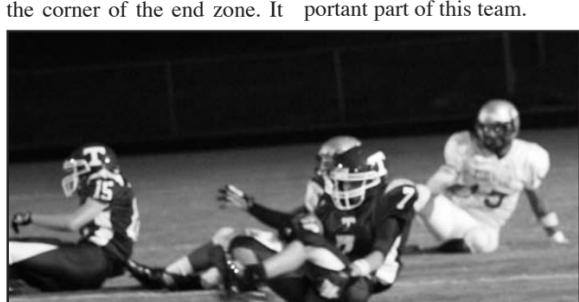
had their final points of the night and led 37-27 with 5:26 left in the game.

On the Indians' next possession, the clock became their enemy. A short pass to Bloodworth on 4th and 7 scored the final TD of the night for the Indians and another great catch by Bloodworth added the final two points of the game with 3:58 left in the game. The Indians were able to hold the Eagles and forced them to punt but the clock run down to 24 seconds and time ran out as the Indians tried a "hail Mary" to Noblet in the corner of the end zone. It

was batted away by an Eagle defender. The Indians lost 37-35 in a nail biter.

The Indians are off next week and return to action on Oct. 5 at Copper Basin. Game time: 7:30 p.m. Make plans now to come out and support the Indians.

Remember to pray for Cruz Shook as he is fortunate to avoid surgery for now. He will be reevaluated in 10 days. It looks like he might be out for the season. He will be missed by his teammates and his coaches. He is a very important part of this team.



TCMS...continued from page 10A

were in vain. Lumpkin ran the clock out and won 30-12.

"We are progressing every week and are holding our own during every game. We just have to learn to play all four quarters. We are getting closer to doing just that and I think it is just a matter of time until it all comes together," stated a confident Vardo on his teams struggle to put it all together. The Towns County coaching staff would also like

to say thank you to all the eight graders and wish them well in high school.

The TCMS Indians have played well enough this year to gain a spot in the Conference Playoffs starting the first of Oct. Next Thursday, Sept. 27, will find the Indians in Rabun County for their last game of the regular season starting at 5:30. Come out and support the TCMS Indians football program and help them win.

