

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Towns rallies in Homecoming game, but too little, too late

By Shawn Jarrard  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Indians lost their Homecoming Game against the Commerce Tigers on Friday, Oct. 23, though the Boys in Blue played with plenty of heart and rallied in the second half.

Commerce managed to put up 42 straight points in the first half of the game, though that lead shrank as Towns County ultimately scored two touchdowns while the Indians defense kept the Tigers to only one additional touchdown in the second half.

Highlights from the game included a forced fumble by Kobe Denton, which was recovered by Dalton Key. After receiving the turnover, the Indians did what Head Coach Billy Barnhart has been talking about all season – they capitalized on the opportunity.

That turnover occurred halfway through the third quarter, and the Indians took the ball all the way to the end zone in four-play drive that culminated in a 35-yard pass from quarterback Russell Cox to Shea Underwood for the touchdown.

Towns County scored again with 4:50 left in the game, as Cox kept the ball to run it in from the Tiger 4-yard line, which was set up by a terrific 10-play series that exhibited great effort on behalf of the Indians.

"They came out in the second half and played hard, and they responded to our challenge to them at halftime," said Coach Barnhart of his Indians. "I didn't talk much, I didn't go in there yelling and screaming – I just challenged them and said, do you want to come out and play 24 minutes, or do you want lay down for them? I felt they came out and played 24 more minutes of football. So I'm proud of them, proud of how they responded in the second half after that first half."

Coach Barnhart was particularly proud of the plays preceding the first Towns County score of the game.

"That was a beautiful throw by Russell, a nice route and catch by Shea," said Coach Barnhart. "That's something



A fired up Indians team takes the field. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Towns County its and coaches regroup during a break in the action. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



The Indians' Captains for the 2015 Homecoming contest with Commerce. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Coach Barnhart sends quarterback Russell Cox onto the field for the game's first possession. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

we've worked on all year long, and we finally ran it the way it should be run. We've run that several times this year, but we've never run it quite like we should, but we did on that play. Like I said, great throw by Russell, good protection up front, great route by Shea, and just a great catch by Shea.

"That was a great play, and it was off the defense causing the turnover. That was a great exchange there of plays, so that was good, no doubt about that. We put 14 points on the board in the second half, and that's positive for our offense, because we haven't been able

to do that much this year. That's the positive. There's some good positive things that happened in the second half for us."

Towns County will play Providence Christian Academy in the team's last game of the year, which also happens to be Senior Night, in Frank McClure Memorial Stadium on Friday, Oct. 30, at 7:30 p.m.

If history repeats itself, the Indians can look forward to a great win over Providence, as last year, Towns County defeated Providence 20-3.

"Providence is probably pretty much a mirror image of Commerce when it comes to of-

fense and defense," said Coach Barnhart. "They run the option on offense just like Commerce does, they run the 5-2 defensively like they do. Obviously, they don't have the players and the talent level right now that Commerce has, so it will be different."

"A lot of what we did this week, we're just going to try to work on for next week, because the things we talked about doing this week we planned on doing next week. I think we'll have more success next week against Providence, I really do."

Looking ahead to the last game of the year, Coach Barnhart

said the team will be focusing on fundamentals. "Something I've said all year and I'll continue to say it each week, is that we've got to get better blocking up front, and we've got to get better tackling on defense," said Coach Barnhart. "We're kind of between a rock and a hard place, because we only dressed maybe 24 guys tonight. We've got to work those things in practice, but at the same time, we've got to be careful we don't get anybody hurt in practice also. But we'll continue to work those things and try to get better at those things."

Providence has remained winless this season, with one of its losses having come against

Lakeview Academy, a team which Towns County defeated this season, so the matchup will surely be a night to remember for departing seniors.

"We've got one more week of football left, and we'll come out every day, and we'll continue to work hard as a staff and continue to push them to give maximum effort every day to get better," said Coach Barnhart. "We're not going to quit or give up. We're 1-8, and this is our last week, so we're going to continue to work hard and try to get better this week and improve as a football team. Hopefully, we'll send our seniors out with a win next week and give us a win going into next season."

## Pickleball tourney still accepting players

By Todd Forrest  
North Georgia News  
sports@nganews.com

Hiawassee - The sport with a funny name that has taken Northeast Georgia by storm looks as if it's here to stay.

Last month, more than 650 players participated in the 2015 Georgia Mountain Pickleball Classic that was held at the newly renovated, 14-court Towns County Pickleball Complex.

Players from as far away as Indiana made the trip to play in the tournament. Several counties from within Georgia were represented, as well as communities in the neighboring states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Florida.

Now Hiawassee's Greg Wilson is taking advantage of the sports' increasing popularity to benefit a worthy cause – the Towns County Food Pantry. And with the holidays right around the corner, making sure every family has a meal should be a priority, and the food pantry can't do it without help from the community.

The tournament is slated for Nov. 7th, however the deadline to register is fast approaching with this Friday, Oct. 30th being the last day to enter. The entry fee is \$20 and the proceeds go to the food pantry.

There's more than one way to register and the simplest way is to pick up a form at Benchmark Physical Therapy, which is next door to Mary's Southern Grill. You can also visit [www.fallpickleballtournament.blogspot.com](http://www.fallpickleballtournament.blogspot.com) where the registration and waiver forms can both be found.

The tournament is open to everyone of all skill levels, but there is no need to worry if you're a newb, the competition will be split into two separate brackets – one for beginners, and another for the more practiced pickleballers.

The tournament will be a round-robin format and you will be teamed up with a different partner in each match. According to Wilson, that allows everyone to play an equal amount of games and whichever players have the highest point total will

be declared the winner.

At the conclusion of the tournament, instead of trophies going to the winners, many local businesses are chipping in to create gift bags for the Top 3 players from each level.

"All of the local businesses have been very helpful and we're going to have a great time," Wilson said.

For the remaining few who haven't heard about Pickleball, the game is similar to badminton, ping-pong, racquetball, or tennis.

The pickleball court is similar to a doubles badminton court. The actual size of the court is 20x44 feet for both doubles and singles. The net is hung at 36 inches on the ends, and 34 inches in the middle. The court is striped like a tennis court, with no alleys; but the outer courts, and not the inner courts, are divided in half by service lines. The inner courts are non-volley zones and extend 7 feet from the net on

either side.

The ball is served with an underhand stroke so that contact with the ball is made below waist level in an upward arc from behind the baseline, diagonally to the opponent's service zone. The player must exit the non-volley zone before playing a volley. The first side scoring 11 points and leading by at least two points wins.

Points are scored by the serving side only and occur when the opponent faults (fails to return the ball, hits ball out of bounds, steps into the non-volley zone [the first seven feet from the net, also known as the 'kitchen'] in the act of volleying the ball, etc.). A player may enter the non-volley zone to play a ball that bounces and may stay there to play balls that bounce.

If you have any questions regarding next month's pickleball tournament, you may call (706) 896-2771.

## Parade turnout highlights community support of students

By Mason Mitcham  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

On Friday, Oct. 23, the Towns County High School 2015 Football Homecoming Parade rolled through Hiawassee.

Starting at the Fairgrounds and ending at Towns County Schools, it boasted an array of vehicles, costumes and characters.

Most impressive, however, were the floats that the students of the high school came together and built from the ground up.

"We just sort of watched while the kids came up with their idea and got their plan together and just made their float. So we were just there for support and to make sure nobody got hurt," said Christa Houser, an English teacher and float supervisor.

She said that her favorite thing about the floats is that working on them afforded the students an outlet for creativity they might not otherwise get to express in the classroom.

"Just watching the kids have fun with each other and think it through and visualize something and make it happen. That's pretty cool. A really cool thing is to see students who are maybe not your star students, but to see them in their element creating something where their real talents are – that was pretty cool, to see their surprise at who can do what and to see their creativity in a different way. In the classroom we get to see what you can do very formally, and this is just something very different," she said.

The parade had a safari theme, and the thematic catchphrase was "Hunt down the Tigers!" for the opponent, Commerce, in Friday night's Homecoming Game. Students dressed as Tigers and Indigenous Americans filled the two floats.

Riding high in a brightly colored Jeep, Quilla Thomas-Bradley, recently named system-wide Teacher of the Year, was Grand Marshal. She confessed surprise at being asked to head the parade.

"I ran into Amy Rosser



on the steps of the elementary school and she said, 'Oh, you know you're going to be Grand Marshal.' And I said, 'What?'" she laughed.

After the parade, students and teachers gathered together for a fire-lit "Spirit Night."

"When everybody gets to the school, they'll do a Spirit Night around the bonfire, and they'll announce the Homecoming King and they'll announce the winner of the school floats," explained Parade Coordinator Amy Rosser.

"They do a student competition for Spirit Week, and part of that is they do competitions, so they'll do like the seniors and sophomores against the juniors and freshman and things like that, so they pick the winner at the bonfire," she said.

For Rosser, the event is as much about the community

as it is about the students. "I love the community spirit. I love just that the kids get so excited and that they work together on the floats and on Spirit Week. We love to see the kids excited and we love when the community is taking part in the day, so when the kids come through town, and the homecoming and the floats, that's really just to support our students and our school. That's my favorite part, is to see the community get involved and to support our students, and that the students know that the community is behind them," she said.

At the bonfire, Dalton Bradley was crowned 2015 Football Homecoming King, and the winners of the school float building contest were the sophomores and seniors, who beat the juniors and freshmen.

### PUTTING HUNGER "IN A PICKLE"



**First Annual Fall Pickleball Tournament**

**All Proceeds Benefit The Towns County Food Pantry**

<b>DATE/TIME:</b>	November 7, 2015 10:00am Start (9:15am Check-In/Registration)	<b>PLACES:</b>	Towns County Pickleball Courts
<b>REGISTRATION DEADLINE:</b>	OCTOBER 30, 2015		
REGISTRATION FORMS AVAILABLE AT BENCHMARK PHYSICAL THERAPY IN YOUNG HARRIS FOR QUESTIONS CALL (706)896-2771			