

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians defense smothers Providence; take 20-3 victory in finale

By Shawn Jarrard
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Snellville - Victory is as sweet as Halloween candy. In their last game of the season, the Towns County Indians defeated Providence Christian Academy 20-3 on Halloween night.

"It was great to win again," said Head Coach Billy Barnhart. "It's been a while after the last five or six weeks. It was great to get a win to end the season, and I thought our guys came out and played well. We played well offensively, we played well defensively and I thought we did a really good job on our special teams."

The win came on Charlie Jordan Field in the Shiloh Community Stadium at Shiloh High School in Snellville. A win is a win – the game could have been played in a cow pasture.

The Storm opened the game with an unsuccessful four-play drive that culminated in a punt, and Towns County answered with a seven-play drive that also ended with a punt.

But the very next possession, Providence threw an interception right at Kobe Denton, who carried the ball to the enemy 42-yard-line.

Seven plays later, Denton took the ball into the end zone, and with 17 seconds remaining in the first quarter, Shea Underwood kicked the point after, giving the Indians a lead that would never be taken away – 7-0.

Providence was able to kick a field goal to bring the score 7-3 in the second quarter, but that would be the last offense the Storm would muster.

Not long after the Indian Raider Band performed and entertained the crowd with their halftime show, the skies opened up and the wind be-



Left: the Indians wrap up its first season under Coach Billy Barnhart

gan to blow, as freezing rain moved in to challenge the players on the field. But the Indians could not be deterred. "We've practiced in the rain a few times this year, so I think our guys were used to it when it did come," said Coach Barnhart. "But that cold, I wasn't used to that cold. It was just cold to me standing there."

Freshman Luke Woody paced the sidelines, cheering on his teammates.

"We're from the mountains – this ain't cold," hollered Woody, as the temperatures plunged well into the 30s.

In the fourth quarter, Underwood picked off a pass to start a drive that ended quickly, with Denton running 62 yards for a touchdown with 10:30 left in the game.

With 13-3 on the scoreboard, the Indians weren't done offensively, as Cole Ledford scrambled 34 yards for yet another score – the last touchdown of the game. Underwood made good on the point after attempt, bring-

ing the score to its final tally at 20-3.

"I'm just really happy for them, that they were able to get back in the win column and play as well as they did," said Coach Barnhart.

Denton, Ledford, Cruz Shook and Russell Cox stood out on offense, and defensively, Kevin McConnell, Sterling Hedden, Nick Shook, Grayson Carver, Kyle Davis and Walker Ross made big plays.

Dalton Key came out late in the game to play quarterback and had a solid outing, and Harold Cox made a solid showing in the fourth quarter.

The team on the whole played some great football, and Towns County weathered both the Storm and the storm to come out on top.

Looking back on the season, Coach Barnhart has positive feelings, despite the 2-8 final record.

"I felt that as the year went on, we continued to improve as a team," said Coach Barnhart. "And I think that's all you can ask of your guys each and every week, that

they will come out and work hard every day at practice each week, work hard to get better. And I felt we did that.

"I wish we could have gotten some more wins, there's no doubt about that. But as I've said all year and I'll continue to say, I'm proud of our young men – I'm proud of the way they've worked, I'm proud of what they did this year, being the first year back in Region play in 15 years, and one of the tougher regions in the state of Georgia in Class A. And I felt they came out and fought week after week and gave their best."

Coach Barnhart said he expects the trend to continue into next season, with a focus on getting physically stronger during the offseason.

"I'm glad to be here in Towns County," said Coach Barnhart. "Like I told the guys, I don't believe any of us are here on accident – I believe God put us together on purpose. And I think He's got a purpose for this program and for our young men in our



Right: The Indians during the opening kickoff of last week's road win. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

program, and I'm just looking forward to the future of this program and what He's going to do in it, and where this program's going to go.

"I'm just thankful for Mr. Gibson giving me this opportunity, and me and my family, we're just glad to be a part of this community and be a part of this school system."

Following the game, the players and cheerleaders lingered on the field, despite the cold and the rain, and celebrated the win together.

"That's what it's all about – it's high school football, and it ought to be fun," said Coach Barnhart, who took his Indians for dinner and a movie before the game Friday.

Coach Barnhart acknowledges the challenges of coaching during a 2-8 season, which is due mostly to entering Region play for the first time in 15 years. But he fervently believes that Towns County's football program can grow given time.

"They worked hard in the offseason, and they worked

hard during the year," said Coach Barnhart. "My thing is, if you're not in region play, to me, you do all that for nothing, because you have no shot at making the playoffs. Yeah, you may win a few more games because you may be able to put some teams on there that you can compete with a little better, but I just feel you have no shot at the playoffs outside of Region."

Having coached in a different system, Coach Barnhart has been in a similar situation to that of Towns County's football program, and he looks ahead with an optimistic eye to the future.

"I just hope that everybody will be patient with this, because I've seen it happen in the past," said Coach Barnhart. "I feel that we're doing the right things in this program, and I feel if we continue to do the right things and hopefully get some more young men out for our program over the years to come, we're going to get better, and we're going to be able to compete in region play."

Towns County boys basketball to host intersquad and alumni games

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County High School Boys Basketball Team will host a pre-season intersquad game to be followed by an alumni game featuring former boys basketball players next Tuesday, Nov. 11, beginning at 6 pm in the high school gym.

This special pre-season event will serve as a fundraiser for the boys team for the upcoming season with no set admission charge but a voluntary donation is asked in the amount those attending choose to pay.

The two games will give fans a chance for a preview of this year's Indians team followed by a look back at some of the players of the past. All former players who are interested are encouraged to attend the game whether participating or not as all in attendance will be introduced to the crowd. Military veterans in attendance



Dallas Manus will also be recognized during the event in celebration of Veteran's Day.

Former Indians planning to attend and graduating in even numbered years are asked to phone Assistant Coach Michael Anderson, a star player from the TCHS Class of 1982, at 706-896-4870 while those graduating in odd numbered years are asked to phone Head

Coach Duncan Weekley at 706-896-9457 prior to the event for planning purposes. Any who don't call are still encouraged to attend and they will be allowed to participate or be introduced to the audience if not playing.

This year's edition of the Lady Indians will see their first public action just three nights later on Friday, November 14 when they, along with the Indians, will face Highlands High School of North Carolina in a pre-season scrimmage. The Lady Indians will begin play at 6 pm with the Indians to follow.

The games with Highlands will be the last chance to see the TCHS teams at home until Friday, December 5 when they will host Union County. In the meantime, they will hit the road for games at Banks County in Homer on Tuesday, November 18, at Lumpkin County in Dahlonega on Friday, November 21, and at Dade County in Trenton on Monday, November 24.

Cross Country sweeps at Area

By Shawn Jarrard
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Athens – Area champs! Towns County's Cross Country Indians and Lady Indians both took first place in the Area Championship Meets Thursday, Oct. 30, at Athens Academy, and are headed to the State Championship Meets in Carrollton on Saturday, Nov. 8.

"This area is the fiercest, so when you're watching this race right here, you're looking pretty much at the battle for next weekend, too," said Coach Jeannie Ledford.

Indians placed two out of the top six individual runners at the area competition, with Marshall Ledford placing fifth overall with a time of 20:19, and Tyler Grimsley placing fourth, running the course in 20:04.

First place won an Area Championship trophy and medals for all of the runners, and the Indians proudly assembled to accept their accolades.

Georgia Military placed fourth overall for the boys'

competition, followed by Commerce in third, with Lincoln County getting runner-up honors.

The Top Five finishers for the Indians were Grimsley, Ledford, Thomas Mitchell with a time of 20:32, Gavin Langelier with 21:32 and Kaine Hoffman with 21:42.

"They really stepped it up," said Coach Ledford of her Indians. "We were coming to this thing hoping for third or second, and that was not good enough, which that's what my kids do. We're going to go after you – we're going after it."

The Lady Indians got their trophy and medals, too, and placed three runners in the top six for the competition.

Alana Calhoun finished sixth, running the course in 25:51, while Taralee Arrowood took the third place spot with a time of 24:17.

Hannah Whitehead finished first in the girls' area championship race, officially becoming this year's Class A Area Champion with a time of 21:58.

"Hannah actually shattered the existing area cham-

pionship time that had been set by Ansley Vardeman since we have been separated from Class A public and private," said Coach Ledford.

The previous record held by Vardeman was 23:21 for the area championship.

Top Five for the Lady Indians Thursday were Whitehead, Arrowood, Calhoun, Lydia Moss with a time of 25:56 and Hayley Stowers with 26:05.

Commerce High School's girls finished second in the Area Meet with a total score of 30 points, which was a close race with Towns County Lady Indians, who finished with 27 points as Area Champions.

The camaraderie was palpable Thursday, as members from each team cheered on their teammates throughout the course as their time to run came.

Emotions ran high following the unequivocal victory of both the Indians and Lady Indians, as these youths of Towns County celebrated with their coach as a team, as best friends and as a family, with smiles all around and from ear to ear.



YHC to open basketball season on Nov. 15 with Homecoming

Young Harris College students and alumni and Mountain Lions fans will kick off the 2014-2015 basketball season with Homecoming on Friday-Saturday, Nov. 14-15. With festivities centered around the theme "Magic in the Mountains," this exciting annual event will be presented in collaboration with the Division of Student Development, Office of Alumni Services and Department of Athletics.

In anticipation of the big weekend, students will participate in a variety of challenges and events throughout the week, including a dodgeball competition, lip sync challenge, and trivia night.

Students will also attend a food-packing event in which volunteers will pack meals to assist Stop Hunger Now, an international hunger-relief agency that coordinates the distribution of food and other lifesaving aid around the world.

"We've created a well-rounded schedule that will be inclusive of a variety of different interest types," said YHC Director of Campus Activities Ashley Randall. "We also have two exciting new events planned that will keep the spirit going before, during and after the basketball games."

These additions include a dueling pianos show scheduled for Friday evening and a "Light it Up" dance party on Saturday night.

Homecoming weekend will kick off Friday night, Nov. 14, with a student-led pep rally. That evening, the College will also host an induction ceremony for the YHC Athletics Hall of Fame. Members of the 2014 class include Charlie Blackmon, '06, Cory Gearrin, '06, Rev. Dr. Don Harp, '61, Dr. Bob Nichols, Stacie Oakley, '04, Bob Short, '51, Damien Westfield, '02, and Dimelon Westfield, '01.

The public is invited to join the festivities on Saturday, Nov. 15, beginning with a Homecoming parade at 11:30 a.m. that will include a variety of student-created floats. The parade will begin on Maple Street and progress up toward U.S. Highway 76 where it will turn south. The route will lead back into campus at College Street and continue into the interior of campus, past Susan B. Harris Chapel and Sharp Hall, ultimately ending at the Recreation and Fitness Center.

Tailgating festivities and a celebratory pre-game picnic lunch catered by Atlanta's world-famous drive-in The Varsity will follow for YHC students and alumni beginning at 12 p.m. A special reception

for all former YHC athletes will begin at 2 p.m. in the Recreation and Fitness Center Studio.

The women's basketball team will take on Brenau University at 1:30 p.m. in the Recreation and Fitness Center, and the men's basketball team will play Tennessee Temple University at 3:30 p.m.

The Homecoming King and Queen will be crowned during the basketball games, and a 50/50 3-point shootout benefitting student scholarships at YHC will take place between the men's and women's games.

Combination tickets for lunch and both games are available to YHC alumni for \$20 per adult and \$10 for children under 10 through the Office of Alumni Services at (706) 379-5334 or online at yhc.edu/homecoming.

Tickets for the games only are available to the public through the Department of Athletics at (706) 379-5218.

The public is welcome to park in any available, unreserved spots on campus for the parade and basketball games. Recommended lots are the large lot on Maple Street and the Fine Arts Annex across U.S. Highway 76 from campus.

For more information, visit yhc.edu/homecoming.