

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Cross Country: Lady Indians cap off the three-peat

Towns County men come up shy of a State Championship; finish second

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Carrollton – State champs!

The Towns County Lady Indians won the Class A Public School State Championship for the third year in a row Saturday, Nov. 8, at Carrollton High School.

Improving over last year's sixth place ranking, the Indians were runners-up at the State Meet finishing just four points behind state champion Jenkins County.

There is no doubt about it – Coach Jeannie Ledford's Cross Country Indians and Lady Indians worked extremely hard for their successes.

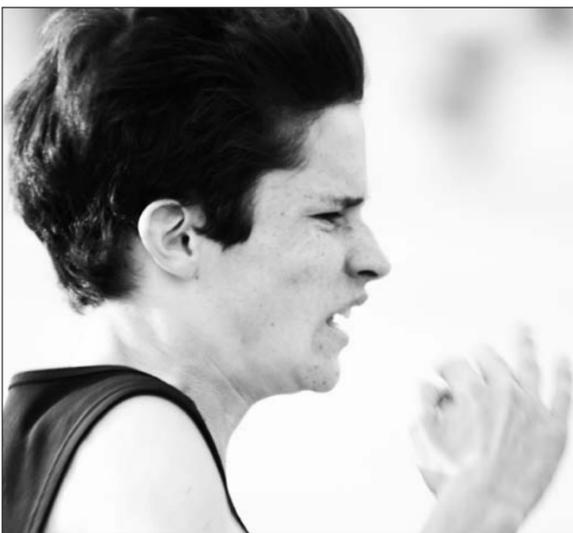
Freshman Hannah Whitehead displayed her leadership when she took an early lead in the girls' race.

Her lead grew phenomenally throughout the race, and she finished first place as State Champion of the girls' meet an astounding 47 seconds ahead of the second place finisher, Kate Massey of Commerce.

The Lady Indians were represented Saturday by Whitehead with a time of 21:47; freshman Taralee Arrowood, who finished sixth in the state with 24:11; and senior Alana Calhoun placed 13th with 25:45.

Victory was cemented for the Lady Indians in the tight grouping that the final four runners were able to achieve during the race.

Sophomore Madison Stroud came in 19th with a time of 26:02,



Marshall Ledford's dash to the finish line. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

sophomore Emma Kate Ledford placed 20th with 26:04 and freshman Lydia Moss took the 21st spot with a time of 26:10. And freshman Hayley Stowers brought up the rear just behind her teammates, finishing with a time of 26:42.

"That's what we worked on," said Coach Jeannie Ledford. "I said, if you win, it will be for that pack right there. And that's what I keep telling my kids, is that, yes, Hannah wins and that's fantastic and we are so proud of her, but that's what I tell every one of those kids when they're in the seven and when they're on that team."

"First or last, you matter. What made them victorious today was those girls in the pack. We

got that big group of girls that run together, they came in and they sealed the deal. Commerce couldn't beat them because we had all of ours in before Commerce's girls came in. That pack wins."

Indian Sophomore Tyler Grimsley has been a team leader all year, and that didn't change one iota on Saturday, as he placed ninth in the State Meet with his time of 19:42.

And to give a better idea as to how close the Towns County boys were to winning the championship, Towns County's total time to finish the race was 1:43:09.72, while state champion Jenkins County's total time was 1:43:10.13. Jenkins County fin-



Whitehead pulling away down 'separation hill.' Photo/Shawn Jarrard

ished slower, but finished ahead of Towns County in the first, second and fifth positions.

The Indians who raced in Saturday's meet were Grimsley; sophomore Marshall Ledford, placing 15th with a time of 20:18; junior Thomas Mitchell, 19th, with 20:46; junior Gavin Langelier, 23rd, with 21:01; freshman Kaine Hoffman, 34th, with 21:20; junior Austin Watson, 62nd, with 23:08; and senior Alejandro Lemus-Gomez, 64th, with 23:29.

"Being here and being Class A Public School, we're running for every tiny little public school that's in this state," said Coach Ledford.

"And the other thing that I

told some of those boys that were here supporting," said Coach Ledford of Zach Whitehead and Johnny Arrowood, both of whom ran for Coach Ledford in past years and now have freshman sisters on the team. "If we had been split years ago, these boys would have had one of these back in the day. So, this stuff is, yes, for my kids, but they paved the way for them, and they've just got enough courage to keep on going."

It has become a Towns County High School tradition to compete at the state level, but Coach Ledford was working with a virtually clean slate this year, as last year's championship team graduated several key seniors.

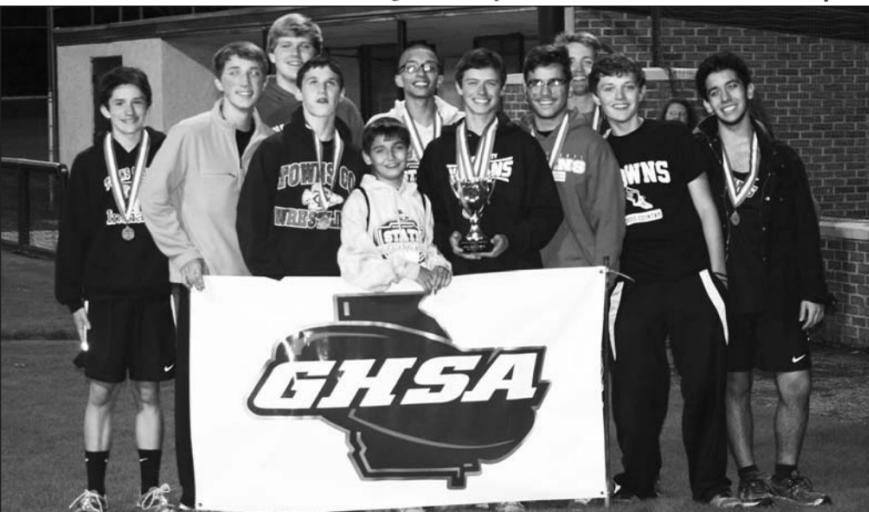
"In this, you're only ever as good as your last race, and whenever they came in this season, they were so raw," said Coach Ledford. "They were so inexperienced, but the harder the challenge is, that's whenever their courage rises. In this arena, it's a numbers game. You've got to know your opponent, but you can't ever underestimate your opponent."

The youth of this winning batch of students bodes well for Towns County's Cross Country future, at least for the next few years. Only two students, Lemus-Gomez for the boys and Calhoun for the girls, will be graduating this year, and the teams have already accomplished so much in this group.

Coach Ledford and her teams are thankful for the support of Towns County residents who contributed to the fundraiser at Ingles Supermarket that helped them eat their victory dinner at Olive Garden and travel to Carrollton for the competition.

"We are forever grateful for their graciousness," said Coach Ledford. "To everybody that sent them off at the school, in town, for the well wishes and most of all for the prayers and the kind thoughts. For everybody that came down here, that's what this stuff is for."

"We're just happy that we can bring it back to Towns County, and we're happy that we can put another banner up on the wall for our school. But more so, I'm just happy that my kids have done this for each other."



The Towns County men finished with a strong second place showing at State. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

The future of Towns County honored at Youth Football Banquet

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Youth Football Program held its annual end of the year banquet Saturday, Nov. 8, at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center.

Youth Football Director Jimmy Smith played host of the banquet once again to show appreciation for the kids who play football, as well as for the young cheerleaders and all of the coaches and parents and members of the community who came together to make the 2014 season possible.

"Saturday's banquet went wonderful," said Director Smith. "The kids had a ball, they loved their trophies. The cheerleaders, they came of course, and got their trophies. We had probably around 240 people there. It was a big turnout – it's the biggest turnout I've had in many years for a banquet."

Dave McCoy, president of the Smoky Mountain Conference, couldn't make the banquet as initially planned because the Cracker Bowl, which was originally slated for Saturday, Nov. 1, was rescheduled to Saturday, Nov. 8, due to bad weather.

The Indian Pee Wees had a shot this year to go to the Cracker Bowl, but they ended their season 7-3 after a loss in their playoff game against Robbinsville.

Robbinsville and Cherokee Pee Wees spent the early part of the day squaring off against one another for the Cracker Bowl title.

"In the Pee Wee, Robbinsville won – they beat Cherokee," said Director Smith. "And then the Termites, Franklin won it. And the Mites, Swain County won, and the Midgets, Hayesville won theirs."



The Indians huddle one last time in 2014. Towns has big plans for their second year in the Smoky Mountain Conference. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

dian Termites finished the season 4-5, the Mites went 5-4 and the Midgets were 0-8 for the year.

"I would like to thank Alan Rogers down at the rec center," said Director Smith. "He had all of the tables set up for us and the room ready to go for us. All I had to do was come in and set the food up, the trophies and all that. Alan, he had it all taken care of for us."

Emotions ran high Saturday as the coaches for these kids got up to say a few words in remembrance of the season they had in the new conference.

"And I had a lot of emotional coaches," said Director Smith. "I told them if they didn't quit they were going to make me cry. I think every head coach I had got up there and cried."

Director Smith thanked his coaches, both for the football players and the cheerleaders, recognizing the fact that "they work hard, just as much as we do, the little cheerleaders do."

This is Director Smith's 18th year in youth football, and since the beginning, he has always given trophies

and a meal to his football players and cheerleaders to end a season.

"They like their trophies," said Director Smith. "Something that they can go back and look at it 20, 30 years later, and I hope they remember all the coaches – I'm sure they will."

Many volunteers have aided Director Smith in this program, including Danny and Angie Reagan, Wayne and Sherry Canterbury, as well as Chris and Lisa Gibson. Danny Reagan couldn't make the banquet because of an illness in the family, and Director Smith and the entire Towns County Youth Football program wish the Reagans well.

"I'd like to thank the community for standing behind the youth football season this year – we've had a lot of good support," said Director Smith.

Football fans can look forward to another youth football season in the Smoky Mountain Conference. Due to space constraints, the Towns County Herald will run more pictures of the Youth Football Banquet next week.

NASCAR 2014

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Harvick wins race, makes final cut

PHOENIX, AZ. — By winning Sunday's Sprint Cup race, Kevin Harvick will join the three other drivers, Denny Hamlin, Joey Logano, and Ryan Newman, that will battle it out for the 2014 Chase Championship next week at Homestead, FL.

Harvick, who started third, had to win the race in order to advance to the last race of the season. He led 264 laps of the 312-lap race, and finished nearly 2-seconds ahead of second-place driver Jeff Gordon.

"We had a fast car, but I knew we weren't going to walk into it," said Harvick. "It took a lot more than just speed on the track. Practically every time we pitted, the guys did a great job in getting me out."

"There were several times during the race I wasn't sure about the outcome. We had talked it over with the entire team and were shooting for the win. We knew that a win would put us in. Anything less and we probably wouldn't have made it."

Jeff Gordon never led a lap, but gained valuable track position when he only took on two fresh tires instead of four near the end. On the last restart with 26-to-go, he was second. Despite another caution, he was not able to challenge Harvick for the lead or win. Without the win, Gordon must wait until next year to claim his fifth championship.

"I'm disappointed," said Gordon. "We raced hard and we raced clean. I couldn't be more proud of this team the way they've handled themselves this year. I'm not happy that we won't be racing for the championship next week, but maybe we can win the race."

Matt Kenseth was third, followed by Brad Keselowski, Denny Hamlin, Joey Logano, Kurt Busch, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Greg Biffle, and Marcos Ambrose.

Ryan Newman's 11th-place finish allowed him to be the fourth and last driver in the final round.

"It feels good to make it," said Newman. "I gave it my all. I wasn't sure what was going to happen, but today, just like the rest of the season, we did our best."

The Chase boils down to next week's race at Homestead. All of the final four drivers have had their points rest to 5000, and whichever one finishes the highest will take home the trophy.

Several drivers had tire problems and hit the outside wall during Sunday's race. Both of the Busch Brothers became acquainted with the concrete. Kurt hit it on lap 234, while brother, Kyle slapped it during lap 202.

Jimmie Johnson also had some problems. His team never got a handle on his race car. During lap 235, he was bumped from behind and

pushed into the Turn-1 wall. He finished 39th.

Others that had problems included Jamie McMurray, Clint Bowyer, Josh Wise, Cole Whitt, and Austin Dillon. Kyle Larson was running sixth when he lost control on the last lap and wound up 13th.

Next Sunday's race at Homestead will wrap up the 2014 racing season. It will also be ESPN's last race. The network will be replaced by NBC in 2015.

CHASE ELLIOTT CLINCHES NATIONWIDE TITLE

Brad Keselowski won Saturday's Nationwide Series race, but a 5th-place finish allowed Chase Elliott to clinch the 2014 Nationwide Series title.

Kyle Busch led 187 laps of the 200-lap race, but had to watch as Keselowski took the lead from him on a green-white-checked restart and had to settle for runner-up.

Elliott Sadler was third, and then it was Ty Dillon, Chase Elliott, Erik Jones, Brian Scott, Brendan Gaughan, Trevor Bayne, and Regan Smith.

Top-10 leaders with one race left. 1. Elliott-1185, 2. Smith-1133, 3. Scott-1120, 4. Sadler-1119, 5. T. Dillon-1111, 6. Bayne-1052, 7. C. Buescher-975, 8. Gaughan-939, 9. Reed-872, 10. Kwasniewski-842.

In addition to being the first rookie to win a national title, at 18 years, 11 months, and 18 days, he is also the youngest. There is one more race left on the schedule, but Elliott's lead of 54 points assures him of the championship no matter where he finishes next week.

ERIK JONES GETS SECOND TRUCK WIN

Erik Jones took the checkered flag in Friday night's Phoenix truck race for his second win of the season.

The remainder of the top-10 finishers: Matt Crafton, Cole Custer, Ryan Blaney, Ben Rhodes, Darrell Wallace Jr., John Nemechek, Austin Dillon, Johnny Sauter, and Tyler Reddick.

Top-10 leaders with one race to go: 1. Crafton-798, 2. Blaney-773, 3. Wallace Jr.-752, 4. Sauter-739, 5. Peters-705, 6. Coulter-659, 7. Quiroga-654, 8. Kennedy-652, 9. Burton-645, 10. Minges-530.

KURT BUSCH ACCUSED OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Say it ain't so!

Kurt Busch has been accused of domestic assault by his ex-girlfriend.

Police in Dover, DE said the allegations were filed Wednesday by Busch's ex-girlfriend, Patricia Driscoll, 36. The allegations involved an incident inside his motorhome at a race at Dover International Speedway in September.

Driscoll has filed court documents asking that a judge order Busch to stay away from



Kevin Harvick

her and not contact her. She also is asking that Busch undergo a psychiatric evaluation and be evaluated by a certified domestic violence treatment agency.

In the documents it states that Busch was despondent the night of Sept. 26 after his poor performance at the qualifying session.

"He was verbally abusive to her and said he wished he had a gun so that he could kill himself," Driscoll stated in the documents.

Driscoll said Busch, called her names and accused her of "having spies everywhere and having a camera on the bus to watch him." He then jumped up, grabbed her face and smashed her head three times against the wall next to the bed. Driscoll says she pushed Busch away and ran from the bedroom, going to a nearby bus to put an ice pack on her head and neck. She said the incident caused her severe pain, difficulty breathing and bruising on her neck. A hearing in the case is scheduled for Dec. 2.

Weekend Racing: All three of NASCAR's major series will wrap up their season next weekend at the 1.5-mile Homestead, Florida track.

Fri., Nov. 14, Truck Series race 22 of 22; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sat., Nov. 15, Nationwide Series race 33 of 33; Starting time: 4 pm ET; TV: ESPN2.

Sun., Nov. 16, Sprint Cup race 36 of 36; Starting time: 2 pm ET; TV: ESPN.

Racing Trivia Question: Who has the most Sprint Cup wins this season?

Last Week's Question: This driver won the 1972 Daytona 500. He never ran more than seven NASCAR races in a season, and he also had four Indianapolis 500 wins. Answer: A. J. Foyt.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: www.hodges@race500.com. NT(Nov12,22)CA

Fund raiser for Varsity Baseball

The Towns County Indians Varsity Baseball team invites you to come out to Ingles on Saturday, November 22, 2014, for their "bag boy" fund-raiser.

The players will be bagging your groceries for the day from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. Please come out and help support your team. Any and all donations will be greatly appreciated. Thank you!