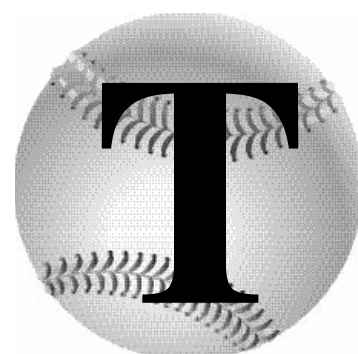


# Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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Hiawassee, Georgia

## Diamond Indians drop a tough one to Rabun Gap



Towns County Indians' Kyle McConnell holds the runner close last week against the Rabun Gap Eagles. The Indians lost the non-region matchup 11-4. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Charles Duncan  
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The Towns County Indians baseball team couldn't get the timely hitting or pitching it needed last week against Rabun Gap.

The Indians dropped an 11-4 decision to the Eagles in Rabun Gap in a game where Towns County's pitchers fell behind in the count early and often.

"When you fall behind in the count and you throw a strike, it's usually a hitter's strike," Head Coach Shannon Moss said. "The hitter is expecting it and they'll make you pay for it."

The Eagles outpaced the Indians in the hit department - 9 to 7 - but they made more efficient use of the offensive firepower. Both teams walked seven batters.

"But they made us pay for the walks they received more than we made them pay for the walks we received," Coach Moss said. "They put the ball in play when they got runners on and we didn't."

The Eagles are a fundamentally sound baseball team and they compete in a North Carolina private school league.

"And they go deep in the playoffs every year," Coach Moss said.

Matt Beni led the hit parade for the Indians, notching two hits, a single and a triple, driving in one. John Bleckley got a big double and two runs batted in.

"Our seniors got some hits for us, but our supporting cast just wasn't enough," Coach Moss said. The Indians' pitchers struggled with control problems the whole day.

"They have an unusual mound at Rabun Gap and I guess you could say their pitchers have a home-field advantage on their opposi-

tion," Coach Moss said. "We couldn't throw a curveball for a strike all day long."

The Indians are a young ball club with only three seniors - two of which are play, one is injured - and six juniors. Towns County also has a handful of sophomores.

"Hopefully the juniors will step it up the rest of this season and into next season," Coach Moss said. "We've got some young guys that are working hard and getting better."

"The pitching staff this year is seeing its first varsity action," Coach Moss said. "We had three seniors last year that threw the majority of our games."

Coach Moss said the key to the remainder of the season is getting his pitching staff rested and back on track.

"The last three games, they just haven't been able to hit their spots," Coach Moss said. "A high school pitcher isn't going to be able to hit their spots all the time, but they should be doing more than they have."

"Earlier in the year our pitching was good, they were throwing well, but right now, they're just tired," Coach Moss said. "They've thrown more innings than they're accustomed to throwing."

The Indians square off against Athens Christian on Friday at 4:30 p.m. at home.

"It's a big region game," Coach Moss said. "Athens Christian is in fifth place and we're in sixth. They've got a couple of tough games ahead of them. I've told the guys that we can't get to fourth place until we get to fifth. This game will mean a lot."

Athens Christian was scheduled to face Commerce on Tuesday and Lakeview Academy on Thursday prior to their matchup with the Indians on Friday.



Towns County Indians' Jimmy Pearce drives the ball into the outfield last week against the Rabun Gap Eagles. The Indians lost the matchup 11-4. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Towns County Indians' Billy Meier appears safe last week against the Rabun Gap Eagles. Meier was called out and the Indians lost the matchup 11-4. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Towns County Indians' Alan Turpin pitched last week against the Rabun Gap Eagles. The Indians lost the matchup against the Eagles 11-4 in Rabun Gap. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Indians, Lady Indians' tennis teams fall to Lakeview Academy

By Charles Duncan  
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Lakeview Academy swept the Towns County Indians tennis teams in Gainesville last week.

The games were a make up affair for matches cancelled March 25 due to inclement weather.

In the boys' matchup, the Lions won 5-0 as they swept singles and doubles play.

Coach Shannon Floyd said that the boys' team is coming along; their record stands at 4-8, with two of those wins coming in region play.

In the Ladies matchup against Lakeview, the Lady Indians fell 3-2 to their region rivals, thus suffering their first region loss of 2010. The Lady Indians lost two singles matches and doubles' play.

Undefeated Athens Academy now sits atop the Region 8-A Ladies' standings.

The Lady Indians are in second with a 6-1 region mark.

Towns' tennis ladies' overall record stands at 9-4 with losses to Banks County (twice), Rabun County and now Lakeview Academy.

The Lady Indians play White County on April 12 at 4 p.m. in Cleveland, a tune up for the Region 8-A tournament



Towns County Lady Indians' Kerri Abernathy serves during last week's tennis action against Lakeview Academy in Gainesville. The Lady Indians lost the region matchup 3-2. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

which is scheduled for April 14-15 at Lakeview Academy. Turn out in support of the Lady Indians as they continue their quest of a region tennis title.

## NASCAR 2010

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Harvick wins with two tires

Kevin Harvick won the Nashville 300, his second Nationwide win of the season by taking only two tires late in the race, while most other teams took on four.

"I knew we had 25-30 laps to hold them off and (the car) got tighter than we would have wanted it to," said Harvick, who was competing at the track for the first time in four years and took home his second guitar trophy from Nashville.

"But we had the track position and it worked out. It was definitely fun. It's a lot more fun when you win."

The driver/owner beat Reed Sorenson by 0.199 seconds.

"We were a little bit better than (Harvick) the whole time and I was catching him," Sorenson said. "When we got caught in lapped traffic, he was able to hold his own through a couple of those corners. At the end, I was catching him. We needed about five more laps to get to him."

Joey Logano, who led 122 of the 250 laps, and Keselowski were the only two lead-lap cars not to pit when the caution came out with 82 laps remaining. Both had to pit later under green, lost a lap and then the caution came out with 38 laps remaining, leaving Keselowski 18th and Logano 19th on the restart with 35 remaining.

Logano got stalled on the inside lane on that restart and ended up eighth.

"We had a winning car," Logano said. "There's no reason why we couldn't have won. We gave it away."

Kyle Busch, winner of Friday night's truck race was third, followed by Justin Allgaier, Brad Keselowski, Carl Edwards, Scott Wimmer, Joey Logano, Michael Annett, and Brendan Gaughan.

Top-10 points leaders after 5 of 35: 1. Edwards-820, 2. Keselowski-804, 3. Allgaier-799, 4. Kyle Busch-764, 5. Harvick-759, 6. Menard-658, 7. Logano-589, 8. M. Wallace-575, 9. Biffle-563, 10. Annett-544

### KYLE BUSCH TAKES NASHVILLE TRUCK RACE

Kyle Busch won the Camping World Truck Series' Nashville 200 at Nashville Superspeedway in a dominating fashion. Busch, who started from the pole position, led 131 of the 150 laps around the 1.33-mile concrete oval and cruised to a victory by 0.426 seconds over Kevin Harvick. It was also Busch's first win as a team owner.

Ron Hornaday, Matty Peters, Todd Bodine, Timothy Peters, Mike Skinner, Aric Almirola, Stacy Compton, and Rick Crawford were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Top-10 points leaders after 4 of 25: 1. Peters-666, 2. Almirola-584, 3. Bodine-573, 4. Harvick-560, 5. Crafton-538, 6. Hor-



naday-488, 7. Carmichael-478, 8. White-477, 9. Malsam-469, 10. Kyle Busch-467

### BIFFLE OFF TO GOOD START

It has been 18 years since a Cup driver has started the season with six consecutive top-10 finishes. Terry Labonte finished fourth at Bristol in 1992, which was the sixth race of that season and his sixth top-10 finish in a row. Greg Biffle took 10th at Martinsville and that was no small feat for a driver whose average finish at the Virginia short track is 22.3. The top-10 finish was his sixth in a string of top-10's that started at the 2010 Daytona 500 when he finished third.

Biffle's average finish this season is 7.5 with three 10th-place finishes, one eighth-place finish, one fourth-place finish and the third-place finish at Daytona. He has led a total of 109 laps in three races coming from an average starting position of 17.8. The only column left blank in his 2010 record is the win column and he feels the team is very close to putting a mark or two in that box.

"I am thrilled with they way we've started this season," said Biffle. "This team is incredible in every aspect. They are building fast racecars, they have some of the most consistently fast pit stops in the series and we are all determined to get the best finish we can week in and week out. I really think that a win for the 16 3M team is right around the corner."

Despite all of their success, Biffle and his team seem to be sneaking up on the points lead fairly unnoticed. Perhaps that is because they have yet to put that "W" up on the board or maybe because they have sidestepped all of the drama that has unfolded on the track so far this season. Either way, the team plans to just keep performing at their highest level and let the heads turn when they will.

In that 1992 season, Labonte actually went on to make it eight consecutive top-10 finishes to start the year. That is what Biffle and the team are focused on now and they are determined to get to victory lane along the way. History shows that each of the

eight drivers before Biffle who started the season with six top-10 finishes ended the season no further back than 10th in the point standings.

For Biffle and his team, of course, anything less than a championship trophy would be a disappointment. Having come so close in 2005 and then taking third in 2008, they know what it feels like to get within reach of the title - a title that would put Biffle in the history books as the first driver ever to win the championship in all three of NASCAR's elite racing series.

Meanwhile, the surgery on Denny Hamlin's knee last week was successful. He is expected to make a full recovery and is scheduled for the Phoenix Cup Series race on April 10. His team will have driver Casey Mears on standby should Hamlin experience any complications while driving in the race and need to be replaced in the car.

"Denny had his surgery and everything went well," said J.D. Gibbs, president of Joe Gibbs Racing. "He will start rehab immediately and now we can concentrate on getting his knee back to the full strength. The doctors tell us it will improve with each passing week and that he cannot damage it by driving. We expect him to be in the car in Phoenix, but we're fortunate to have Casey Mears standing by in case he would need to come out of the car for any reason."

**Weekend Racing:** The Cup and Nationwide teams travel to the 1-mile Phoenix, (Arizona) Raceway for two night races.

Fri., Apr. 9, Nationwide Series Bashas Supermarkets 200, race 6 of 35; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: ESPN2.

Sat., Apr. 10, Sprint Cup Subway Fresh Fit 600, race 7 of 36; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: Fox.

**Racing Trivia Question:** Which Cup team is Martin Truex Jr. driving for this year?

**Last Week's Question:** What year did Kasey Kahne begin in the Nationwide Series? **Answer:** His first season was 2002. You may contact the Racing Reporter at: hodgesnews@earthlink.net.

## TCMS Indians' baseball team pummels Lakeview Academy

By Charles Duncan  
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The Towns County Indians' middle school baseball team handed it to Lakeview Academy on Thursday as the home team put a whipping on the visiting Lions 13-5.

The Indians scored early and often as they played fundamental baseball throughout the afternoon. Head Coach Ricky Ellis was pleased with the effort exhibited by his Indians in the season finale.

The young Indians have had their moments during the 2010 baseball season. They've taken some losses on the chin, but last week's victory over Lakeview Academy was something to build on going into next season.

It was the perfect way to head into the school system's Spring Break for the young Indians baseball team.



Run No. 12 crosses the plate for the Towns County Middle School Indians' baseball team last week in a 13-5 win over Lakeview Academy. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Trout stocking sites week of March 29 - April 2

FANNIN: Rock Creek, Toccoa River Tailwaters (below Lake Blue Ridge Dam), Toccoa River.

LUMPKIN: Etowah River and Management, Nimblewill Creek and Management.

UNION: Cooper Creek, Winfield Scott Lake. \*\*\*NOTE: Information is subject to change. Please call the hatchery at 706-838-4723 for questions. The hatchery also provides trout for the state. Please contact Georgia DNR for information on sites stocked by the state. NApr7.Y1/SH