

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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## Collier, Hoffman compete in Ohio Tournament of Champions

By James Reese  
Towns County Herald  
tcherald@windstream.net

For the second year in a row, varsity wrestlers from Towns County competed in a National Tournament in Columbus, Ohio.

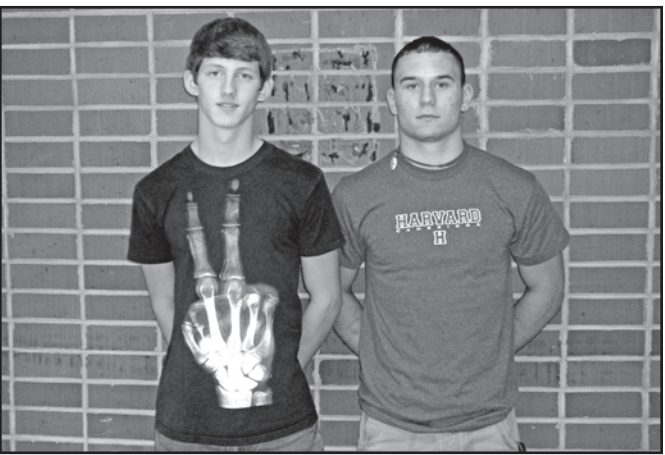
The Ohio Tournament of Champions, held April 21, is the largest one day Amateur Wrestling Tournament in the world. There were more than 2,300 kids registered from almost every state in the nation.

Representing the Towns County Indians were junior Timmy Collier and sophomore Tyler Hoffman.

The competition was unbelievable.

The grapplers also had to adapt to a set of modified rules. There was one 3-minute period, with everything starting from neutral. So, wrestlers have three full minutes of action.

It was an amazing event



to be a part of and the representatives of TCHS did their school proud. The TCHS wrestlers Collier and Hoffman performed and carried themselves admirably as they did a great job representing Towns County.

Collier and Hoffman would like to thank everyone who donated at the carwash, as

well as the following businesses for making it possible for them to go: Sweet & Sparkly Cakes, Cupcake Shop, Strut Shoes, Asianos, Mountain Realty, Community Cash Title Pawn, C & J Mountain Outfitters, Nobile's 5 & 10, Stephens Federal Bank, and Lovely Nails.

## Indians gear up for Spring football practice

By James Reese  
Towns County Herald  
tcherald@windstream.net

Towns County Indians' Head Football Coach Kyle Langford will be keeping on close eye on his squad through May 21st.

The Indians spring football drills cranked up on Monday. It was similar to a regular early season practice, with shorts, helmets and cleats.

The real deal begins May 16th with full pads and contact. On Saturday May 21st at 10 a.m. at Frank McClure Stadium, the annual Blue-White game takes center stage.

"We'll go full contact next Monday," Coach Langford said. "We'll have a little contact at the end of this week and we'll give them Friday, Saturday and Sunday off just to heal, rest up and get their bodies back used to the grind."

On May 16th, Coach Langford and his staff will take the Indians full tilt, as the sounds of thuds, grunts and meshing of pads and helmets become a reality.

"We'll go hard as far as scrimmage time and drills. We'll go hard through Wednesday (May 18th)," Coach Langford said. "On Thursday (May 19th) we'll probably back it off a bit and go back to shorts and helmets to try to let their bodies rest up a bit."

The goal is to work the Indians hard and get them ready to perform in the Blue-White



Senior Billy Meier helps rising freshman Cruz Shook with his equipment needs on Monday. Photo by James Reese.

game.

"We want them to put on a good show for everybody," Coach Langford said. "Friday (May 20th) we'll have two practices after school and try to fine tune them. Saturday is going to be live. We're going to be as live as we can get."

Practice begins at 3:45 p.m. each day after school, Coach Langford said.

"That gives them about 45 minutes from the end of school," Coach Langford said. "That gives them time to make sure they hydrate."

"We have to make sure they hydrate," he said. "That's something we'll demand of them to make sure they stay in good shape and stay healthy. I think they practice better when they're hydrated."

Practices will last until 5:45 p.m. each day, Coach Langford said.

"We like to keep it to about two hours," he said.

The Indians will get a tune up scrimmage before the regular season begins in Blairsville on Aug. 26 against Union County.

They'll take on Fanning County, whose Rebels made a state playoff appearance in Class AA last season.

The good news for Indians' fans, the Tribe will play six games at Frank McClure Stadium and four on the road.

Those home games include the opener against Hayesville, as they Indians seek revenge against their border state rivals from a year ago.

"We're excited and geared up for football," Coach Langford said. "I love this time of year."

## Youth Cheerleader sign-up

The Towns County Youth Football Cheerleaders (Kindergarten - 5th grade 2011-2012 season), will be having sign-up and uniform fitting on May 21, at the Towns

Co. Recreation Department from 9:15 - noon. The cost of uniform and pom-pom rental is \$60. We MUST have all of our girls signed up by the end of May. This allows us time

to order uniforms and assign teams/coaches. Please call Bunny Williams at 706-781-8945 with any questions or concerns. TMAY11JZSH

## NASCAR 2011

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Smith gets upset win at Darlington

After staying out on old tires, Regan Smith held off Carl Edwards to win Saturday night's Southern 500 at Darlington Raceway in a dramatic green-white-checked-flag finish.

"I don't really know how to put it in words right now -- it is so surreal," said Smith.

"This is the Southern 500—we're not supposed to win this thing."

After he took the checkered flag to win his first NASCAR race, an emotional Regan Smith, with his voice cracking, radioed his crew to tell them how proud and happy he was for the entire Furniture Row Racing organization.

The victory in Sunday night's race was not only the first for Smith, but also the maiden win for the Denver-Colo.-based team.

The only other time Smith had a brush with victory was at the 2008 fall race in Talladega, Ala. when his apparent win as a driver for Dale Earnhardt Inc. was nullified by NASCAR for passing Tony Stewart below the out-of-bounds yellow line on the final lap.

But Saturday night at the 62-year-old historic Darlington Raceway, Smith was officially referred to as a NASCAR winner.

Brad Keselowski, also on old tires, finished third, with polesitter Kasey Kahne running fourth and Ryan Newman fifth. The remaining top-10 finishers were: Denny Hamlin, Tony Stewart, Greg Biffle, Jamie McMurray, and Martin Truex.

Kevin Harvick, who was angry over an accident with fewer than four laps remaining in the race, attempted to punch Kyle Busch. But he wasn't successful.

With both cars stopped nose-to-tail at the entrance of pit road, Harvick got out of his car and approached Busch's car. Before he could throw a punch at Busch, Busch whisked off, hitting Harvick's car, which veered by crewmen and into a wall on the entrance to pit road.

"He just ran into me twice," Harvick said. "I was getting ready to knock him."

Busch, who called Harvick's racing "uncalled for," didn't seem to mind being called to the NASCAR hauler.

"Good to hash it out now; might as well," Busch said.

Top-12 Chase contenders after 10 of 36: 1. Edwards-378, 2. Johnson-355, 3. Kyle Busch-339, 4. Earnhardt-331, 5. Harvick-328, 6. Newman-317, 7. Stewart-313, 8. Kurt Busch-306, 9. Bowyer-297, 10. Kenseth-295, 11. Allmendinger-287, 12. Biffle-286

**"ROWDY" KYLE GETS 48TH NATIONWIDE WIN**

With a convincing victory in Friday night's race at Darlington Raceway, Kyle Busch scored his fifth Nationwide Series win of the season and the 48th of his career, leaving him one behind Mark Martin for the career victory lead in the series.

Busch's No. 18 did not emerge unscathed as it made its way through the melee, hav-

ing made contact with teammate Brian Scott from behind with nowhere else to go. And he made contact several times with the legendary red-striped Darlington wall with the right side of his Camry. Nonetheless, Busch found the race was coming to him as the closing laps approached.

"It seems to be my best style here at Darlington -- beat it up as much as you can and see if you can win with it," said Busch. "We didn't mean to. There was that one run there that we all started getting tight and it kind of came out, unexpectedly, and I drove it out into (turn) three one time and it didn't stick and went right into the fence."

"I love coming to Darlington and it's a really tough, treacherous place for me. We kind of proved that because the right side doesn't look so great, but we still were able to win today. It's cool to be here in victory lane -- my first time in the Nationwide Series here in Darlington -- so this feels pretty good."

Busch beat teammate Denny Hamlin to the finish line by 3.677 seconds. Elliott Sadler was third, followed by Nationwide points leader Justin Allgaier and Steve Wallace.

Pit strategy moved Sadler to the front of the field, as crew chief Jimmy Elledge elected to keep the No. 2 Chevrolet out on the track under caution for Michael Annett's backstretch crash on Lap 89.

Sadler passed Allgaier for the lead on Lap 108, but that didn't last. Busch, who had restarted ninth on Lap 104—after an eight-car wreck caused the fifth caution of the race—worked his way through the field and passed Sadler for the top spot on Lap 124.

An eight-car wreck on Lap 95 collected the cars of Carl Edwards and Kasey Kahne, both of whom had battled for the lead early in the race.

Clint Bowyer, Kenny Wallace, Reed Sorenson, Jason Leffler, and Ricky Stenhouse were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Top-10 leaders after 10 of 34: 1. Allgaier-346, 2. Sadler-341, 3. Leffler-331, 4. Sorenson-328, 5. Stenhouse-322, 6. Almirola-304, 7. K. Wallace-280, 8. Scott-272, 9. Bayne-260, 10. S. Wallace-254

**Commentary:** Each week I get several e-mails or letters from fans expressing their views on the present state of NASCAR racing.

About the only thing I can share with them are my personal feelings, because they know as much about what NASCAR is up to as I do. NASCAR has never asked for my input before announcing a decision.

I asked two old timers, men that have been in the sport for many years, to share their thoughts.

The first one is Johnny Benson Sr. of Grand Rapids, Michigan. He started racing in 1956. His son raced in the Cup Series, won the 1995 Nationwide and 2008 Truck championships. There isn't a nicer family in racing.

"Racing means many



**Regan Smith celebrates his Southern 500 win at Darlington**

things to many people," said Benson. "First of all, I was a family man that thought more of my family than all the glory I could win on the track by going full time."

"I used to race quite a bit with Gordon Johncock. At one of our meetings we were talking. I told him we had been through a lot in our time, and he nodded. We talked about how racing was in the past, and all the great moments we'd had. We both accepted the fact that we'd never see those days again. It was a unique experience, where people raced for the love of the sport, and not what they could get out of it."

Fats Harvison of Laurel, Mississippi is considered the "Dean of Southern Sportscasters." His career began in 1948, and at the age of 85, he can still be found in a broadcast booth, even after working 40-hours at a regular job.

"I think the racing fraternity is the best in the world," said Fats. "Money is killing the sport. In the 1950s and '60s, the amount of money a driver won wasn't enough for gas money to and from the track."

"The fans used to love to come and watch the drivers. There wasn't any souvenir trailers parked outside. The only way a track could get any extra money was at the concession stand."

"People came and enjoyed the races, without spending a fortune. There was nothing besides hot dogs, hamburgers, cokes and beer to spend your money on. Now, bless god, it costs more for a family to go to the races than it did an entire team 15-20 years ago."

"I had a nephew that took his wife and two boys to Talladega, and they had to pinch pennies for a long time afterward, because it cost him two weeks pay."

"The average working race fan can't afford that. My crystal ball doesn't always work, but I don't see it improving any time soon. It's just a sign of the times."

**Weekend Racing:** It's on to Dover's Monster Mile for the Sprint and Nationwide teams. The Trucks are off until May 20.

Sat., May 14, Nationwide race, 11 of 34, Starting time: 2 pm; TV: ESPN.

Sun., May 15, Sprint Cup Fedex 400, 11 of 36, Starting time: 1 pm; TV: Fox.

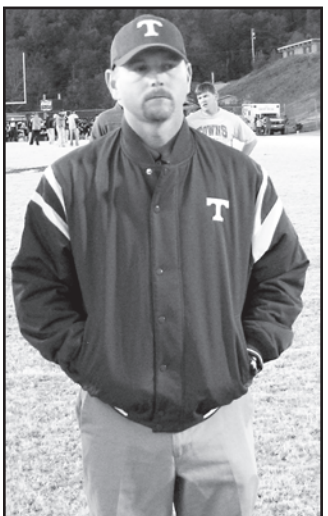
All times are Eastern.

**Racing Trivia Question:** How many Cup teams does Hendrick Motorsports have?

**Last Week's Question:** Who is the driver of Kevin Harvick's No. 2 Nationwide car? **Answer:** Elliott Sadler.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodges@race500.com. NT(MAY11,FI)ac

### Indians could benefit from GHSA realignment



Coach Kyle Langford is anxious to play a region football schedule in 2012. Photo by Lowell Nicholson.

By James Reese  
Towns County Herald  
tcherald@windstream.net

The sounds of pads and helmets bumping will soon be heard from Konahetah Drive again as the Towns County Indians prepare for the annual rites of spring.

Spring football practice kicked off on Monday as visions of a region football schedule danced in Head Coach Kyle Langford's head.

The Georgia High School Association was scheduled to make a decision Tuesday on realignment for the 2012-2013 prep sports season and there's a possibility that Towns County will be in a region and a classification with a whole new line up of gridiron opponents.

Coach Langford said he looked forward to playing a region schedule in an alignment that will be more competitive for his Indians than the current alignment.

The Indians haven't played a region football schedule for several years now because of the unbalanced number of football programs from powerhouse private schools. Those larger private schools recruit talent and speed that the Indians just couldn't compete with.

If everything works out on Tuesday, the Indians could find themselves in a football environment in which they can compete within the framework of a region schedule.

"Ultimately, that's what we want to do is compete for a region championship," Coach Langford said. "Depending on what the high school association's decision is, we just may get to do that."

The Georgia High School Association will weigh a proposal that could create a 4 and 8 alignment in each classification. Those changes would create a higher and lower tier in each classification. There would be a higher classification champion and lower classification champion.

Because of its student population, Towns County would be in the lower classification of Class A, with a more level competitive environment from a football standpoint.

"We'll have to wait and see what happens on Tuesday," Towns County High School Principal Roy Perren said. "Hopefully, things will work out and we'll play a region football schedule beginning in 2012."

### Local Racing Action

By: Carl Vanzura

**FEATURE WINNER!**

**Bobby Panter drove Kenny Garrett's car to victory Friday night at Tri-County.**

Saturday night Louisiana driver Chris Wall won the \$3000 to win race at Cleveland Speedway and in Victory Lane announced that his winnings would be donated to a long time fan of the speedway who suffered damage by the tornado that went through Cleveland. Before the feature the 24 drivers in the race went through the stands and with helmets in hand collected with Wall's and several other drivers' donations raised a total of \$7000. Ronnie Johnson returned to the track once owned by his father Joe Lee Johnson after a 20 year absence following a disagreement in the mid 90's when he announced he would not ever race there again. Blairsville driver Jacob Grizzle finished seventh, Johnny Chastain was 12th and Ray Cook was 15th after leading the race and getting caught up in

lapped traffic and crashing.

At Tri-County Friday night, Johnny Chastain in Randall Twigg's Super Late Model completely dominated the race putting a half lap on the second place car of David Payne. George Mashburn, David McCoy and Young Harris's Randy Nichols rounded out the top five. Bobby Panter out dueled Charlie Parker to win the Lim-

ited/Crate main event that saw 18 cars start in an action packed event. Devin Dilbeck, Jason Payne and Jason Deal filled the top five spots. From Union and Towns, Jamie Lunsford, Billy Roberson, Kevin Bradshaw and Stephen Sofield all raced in the feature. Greg Sudderth won the Modified feature. Josh Roberts was the winner in the Street Enduro race with Hiawassee's Stacy White and Ricky Smith taking the next two positions. Blairsville's Shannon Jones won the Pony feature.

At Dixie Speedway, Michael Page led a big field of supers under the checkered flag. Kenny Collins won the South Eastern Sportsman feature at Westminster Speedway. North Georgia Speedway was closed Saturday due to management changes, but should be open again soon. Chris Madden won at Volunteer Speedway after Blairsville's Jonathan Davenport crashed with just a handful of laps to go. Ray Cook took a fourth place finish.

### Turkey Shoot & Cookout

The Men's Ministry of North Mt. Zion Church of God is sponsoring a Turkey Shoot & Cookout Fundraiser for The Refuge Ministry Retreat Center.

The event is scheduled for Saturday, May 21st from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Entry Fee: \$3 per shot.

The Refuge Ministry Retreat Center is located on Hwy. 76, Young Harris. Turn on Plot-town Road, then take 2nd driveway to the left.

For more information, please call Mitchell Sanders at 706-896-8206.