



# Towns County Herald's Sporting News



## Cats open 1st round of GJCAA Region XVII against Andrew

JIM BRYANT  
Sports Writer

**Torrential rains suspend game one of best of two series.**

Things started poorly, the scoreboard was out, the heavens opened and the rains came. Even starting early, the #2 Mountain Lions (41-10) were not able to complete the full game in round one of the GJCAA Region XVII Tourna-

ment against the #7 Tigers of Andrew College (19-35). The Tigers opened well with a booming HR in the second inning for a 3-0 lead. The Cats battled back in the bottom with a walk by Austin Schultz, a HBP to Matt Lowery and a walk by Scoop Pharr to load. The Cats let them die on the diamond and the Tiger lead stood. The Tigers turned the bunt in the third and put runners on first and second after a misplayed bunt by starting pitcher Bryan Cole and first baseman Clay Remole. Cole

however, pitched his way out of the inning. It looked like the Cats would get back in the fray in the bottom when Bryson Smith singled, Kenny Swab followed with a sing and Travis Echols hit into a fielder's choice, getting Swab out at second. Echols then stole second and on the attempted pick, a wild throw sent GJCAA Player of the Year, Bryson Smith across the plate, 3-1.

The Cats battled the Tigers and the elements into the top of the seventh inning, where they had taken charge of the game with a 12-3 lead. Finally, in a pouring down rain that heavily affected play, the offi-

cial decided to call the game just short of one out needed to make it a complete game. In talking with one of the officials on Saturday, he stated that the deciding factor to suspend the game came when a high popup in the infield could not be seen and risked hitting the player trying to field the ball. Suspended play was resumed the next day with YHC leading 12-3. Pitcher, Kurt Frisbee allowed a 2-run double, 12-5 but the Cats came back when Travis Echols scored to make it a 13-5 win over the Tigers. Bryson Smith smashed his 21<sup>st</sup> HR of the season, tying him with Nick Markakis for the single season record.



Austin Schultz and Scoop Pharr run together and subsequently drop the ball.



Kenny Swab slides in at second base in game one of the GJCAA Tournament.



Travis Echols slides in a second as the Andrew Tiger drops the ball on the tag.



Bryson Smith belts his 21<sup>st</sup> HR of the season to tie the record held by Nick Markakis. Photos by Jim and Lisa Bryant

## Local Racing Action

by Carl Vanzura



**Shawn Chastain takes top honors at Tri-County**

On a day that rain just about washed away the pits, parking area and the track, promoter Steve Morris managed to get the track in shape for some exciting action at Tri-County Race Track. The car count and spectator count was way down, but the drivers told Morris they wanted to race even if the track surface was questionable.

Murphy's Shawn Chastain outpaced his older brother Johnny during qualifying turning 13.212 to Johnny's 13.321. On the start, Shawn set sail and walked away with the feature. Johnny took second followed by George Mashburn who had to hold off Gabe Wilson who took fourth. Jamie Oliver, Young Harris's Randy Nichols, Randy Dillard and Danny Ledford rounded out the Super Late Model field.

Bobby Panter blasted around the track for a win in the Sportsman class. Trig Parris, Preston Crisp, Doug Sneed and Devin Dillbeck rounded out the top five.

It was Murphy's Jacob Anderson all the way in the Nesmith Crate Late Model main event as Jason Deal, Josh Henry, Kevin Sutton and Terry Ledford filled the top five spots.

Greg Sudderth had another good night in the Modified Street feature as nobody could catch him even though Jim Twigg was making up distance on him when the checkers fell. Michael Anderson, Heather Taylor and Scot Welch took the checkers in that order.

Hiwassee driver Stephen Sofield won his fourth Street Stock feature in this young season. Charles Toomey and Josh Roberts rounded out the slim field.

A good field of Mini Stocks saw Sylvia driver Justin Woodard battle some strong cars to take the win. In his first race in three years, Andrews driver Marty Clark took second place, followed by Blairsville's Shannon Jones, Casey Carter and Phil Henderson.

Racing returns to Tri-County this Friday night with the first ever go kart event ever scheduled at the track. On Saturday night all six classes will be on the program.

In other action this weekend, Danny Ledford won at Sugar Creek Friday night in the Supers and Blairsville's Brian Kinnersley to the Crate honors. Kinnersley also won the special \$1,000 to win Crate race at Toccoa Saturday night. Johnny Chastain drove Randall Twigg's car to a second place finish. Rain cancelled races at Cleveland, Dixie and Maryville as well as Friday night at Boyds.

Didn't get a full report, but word came in that 13-year old Chase Elliott won the 100 lap Georgia Asphalt Series event at Lanier Speedway Saturday.

Tom Schutte out of Blairsville had a strong eighth place finish.

Lets hope we have some good racing weather for this week's races, and everybody go and support our drivers and race tracks.



Bobby Panter drove Kenny Garrett's Chevy to victory Saturday at Tri-County. Photos by Jack Appleget



Steven Sofield drove to victory for the fourth time this year.

## NASCAR 2009 By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### MARTIN WINS AGAIN

DARLINGTON, S.C.—Mark Martin did it again. The oldest driver in the 43-car field showed the youngsters a thing or two Saturday night in the Southern 500 at Darlington Raceway.

"It's absolutely unbelievable," Martin said. "This is a big surprise. We had a strong car, but I never expected to win. Alan Gustafson (Martin's crew chief) is absolutely the best. I may have been his childhood hero, but I'm living a second childhood now -- and he's my childhood hero."

"We had a good enough car to do it, and pit strategy put us in a position to pull it off."

Fifty-year-old Martin, charged home ahead of three-time Sprint Cup champion Jimmie Johnson and other younger drivers to win the 367-lap marathon on what is known as NASCAR's toughest track.

Martin, an ageless racing junkie who tried to retire a couple years ago but couldn't, won the race in style, pulling away from Johnson at the end.

Physically fit and pumped up for the season in a Hendrick Chevrolet, Martin ran with the big dogs up front all night, keeping his car in one piece and saving the best for last.

It was a record-setting night for cautions under a full South Carolina moon. Seventeen times the caution waved as driver after driver made contact with Darlington's famous walls. Most of them didn't just get a Darlington Stripe as is the norm for this 1.366-mile, egg-shaped oval. They hit hard enough to take the paint off the whole right side of the car.

Trailing Martin and Johnson across the stripe were Tony Stewart and his teammate Ryan Newman. Stewart's third-place run was his fifth top-five in his last six starts.

"This is the best I've run in the 500, so I'm ecstatic about it. We're doing things right, it's just a matter of time," said Stewart.

The remaining top-10 finishers were: 5. Jeff Gordon, 6. Martin Truex, 7. Brad Keselowski, 8. Greg Biffle, 9. Joey Logano, 10. Matt

Kenseth.

Top-12 Chase Contenders after 11 of 26: 1. J. Gordon-1601, 2. Stewart-1572, 3. Kurt Busch-1546, 4. Johnson-1465, 5. Hamlin-1445, 6. Burton-1384, 7. Kyle Busch-1380, 8. Newman-1363, 9. Biffle-1345, 10. Kenseth-1326, 11. Martin-1316, 12. Edwards-1271

Dale Earnhardt Jr. continues to struggle. He finished seven laps down in 27th. Jeremy Mayfield, driver of the No. 41 Toyota, Tony Martin, a licensed crew member of the No. 34 Sprint Cup Series team and Ben Williams, licensed crew member of the No. 16 Nationwide Series team, have been suspended indefinitely from NASCAR's Substance Abuse Policy

**Kenseth Gets Darlington Nationwide Win**  
Matt Kenseth capitalized on Kyle Busch's flat tire with three laps to go to win Friday night's Nationwide Series race. Top-10 points leaders: 1. Kyle Busch-1539, 2. Edwards-1502, 3. Leffler-1386, 4. Logano-1340, 5. Keselowski-1331, 6. Keller-1181, 7. Ragan-1139, 8. Lagasse-1095, 9. Allgaier-1089, 10. S. Wallace-1088

**Another Year For Mark Martin**  
Mark Martin will return in 2010 to drive the No. 5 Chevrolets of Hendrick Motorsports for the entire 36-race NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. It will be the 22nd full-time Cup campaign of Martin's career and his second with car owner Rick Hendrick.

Last July, Martin signed a two-year contract with Hendrick Motorsports covering one full Sprint Cup season in 2009 and one part-time schedule of 26 events in 2010. The revised agreement was signed this past week.

With his April 18 victory at Phoenix, Martin became just the fourth driver to record 400 top-10 finishes in Sprint Cup competition. It was his 36th career win in NASCAR's top series.

"It means a lot to drive the No. 5 Chevy for Rick and for Hendrick Motorsports," said Martin, 50, of Batesville, Ark. "I'm in the best condition of my life, I'm recharged, and

I'm motivated. Going to the racetrack every weekend is still really fun, and that's the key. There's more gas in my tank."

### Who Is James Finch

James Finch is a hero to all the fans who root for the underdog in racing.

I imagine Finch felt like giving up many times.

"I would race a while, work a while, build up some more money and then come back and race," said Finch. "Some people try and do it the other way-and bam-in a year or so, they have to fold up or whatever because it's really, really expensive to do this."

As an independent race team owner, he had been trying to win a NASCAR Cup race since 1990. His record going into the 2009 season was 105 tries with zero wins. His best finishes were two top-fives; one with Geoffrey Bodine in 2002 and Mike Wallace in 2007

All of us have one particular chunk of life we wish we could go back and live all over again. The one time that will forever stand out with Finch was his win in the Aaron's 499 at Talladega, with young Brad Keselowski at the wheel of his No. 1 Chevrolet.

Before the Aaron's 499 most racing fans outside Florida, or southern short tracks had never heard of James Finch, or his Phoenix Racing team.

Born in Panama City, Fla., his love for racing never swayed him from leaving his Florida home. He built his race shop in nearby Lynn Haven and has been there ever since. In 2000, Phoenix Racing and Yellow Freight joined forces and since then their teamwork has provided great results.

Instead of dress slacks and sponsor adorned team shirts Finch opts for a more laid back look; cowboy boots, untucked shirts and work jeans. Polished and flashy is not in his makeup. Instead Finch chooses to be a blue collar guy with a blue collar work ethic. Everything about him says, "working guy."

Finch dedicated the Talladega win to another great driver in NASCAR that was to make his comeback driving for Finch in 1994. It was Neil

Bonnett. He was to debut the No. 51 Chevy at Speedweeks. Bonnett lost his life in a crash after hitting the outside wall during the first practice session.

Finch is hoping for more wins. "I would like to get some more Busch Grand National wins and I hope to run both Daytona and Talladega Cup races. Those two tracks are very close to my home, so they are personal to me," said Finch.

Next Week: What is Happening to Dale Jr.

Weekend Racing: Friday, May 15, the Camping World Trucks will be at the 1.5-mile Kansas Speedway. It will be televised on Speed, beginning at 7:30 p.m. (EDT).

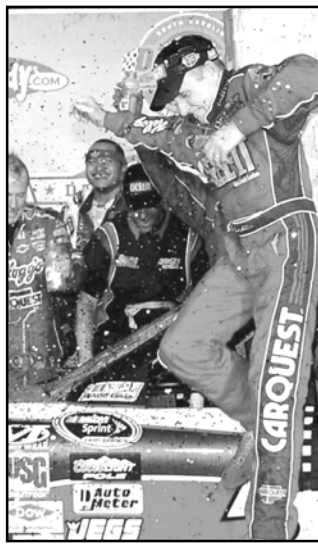
The 2009 edition of the Sprint All-Star Race will be run Saturday, May 16 at Lowe's Motor Speedway. There will be a total of 100 laps on the 1.5-mile tri-oval. There will be four segments - with a 50-lap first segment, two 20-lap segments and one 10-lap shootout to the finish line. It will be televised on Speed beginning at 7 p.m. (EDT).

The Nationwide teams have an off week.

Racing Trivia Question: How many Cup wins does Rick Mears, driver of the 07 Chevrolet have?

Last Week's Question: After a brief absence Sterling Marlin is back in Cup racing. Which team does he drive for? Answer: He is driving part time in the 09 Phoenix Racing Dodge.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: hodge/news@earthlink.net.



## Girl Scouts say thank you!!!



The Towns County Girl Scouts say thank you to the Towns County Recreation Department, Papa's Pizza, Dominoes Pizza, Ingle's, Dollar General, and Hardees.

The Girl Scouts of Towns County would like to thank you for everything you donated to the sleepover on March 27. These girls had a wonderful time. Starting with the Rec. Room, what a great place to have a sleepover.

These girls were able to run, play basketball, sing, play games and watch a movie. The pizzas were an extra surprise for them, and they were so good.

The next morning--what a way to end our sleepover with Hardees biscuits. The adults and girls wish to send you all a BIG THANK YOU!

You all added to the fun for this sleepover for all the girls. Sincerely, Girl Scouts of Towns County

## Corn Hole Tournament on May 30

Towns County High School and the Towns County Lady Indians Basketball Program are holding a cae wash and cook out on May 30. A car wash from 10am to 3 pm will be \$5 or any donation. A hamburger or hotdog plate (available from 11am to 2pm) will be \$5, which includes slaw, baked beans, dessert and chips. The Corn Hole Tournament

begins at 11am and runs until finished. The cost is \$10 per person and \$20 per team registration. Registration will last until 10am on May 30, but please register ASAP. See a Varsity or JV Lady Indian Basketball Player for your tickets or call Coach Melton at 706-896-4131 (ext 1231) for more details and Corn Hole Registration Forms.