



Towns County Herald's Sporting News



More pictures of the high school spring scrimmage game



Matt Beni drives for the end zone in practice drills as two tacklers give pursuit.



John Swilley finds an open receiver on the left wing in practice scrimmage.



John Swilley takes off left as a host of Indians lead the way.

Photos by Jim and Lisa Bryant



Matt Hogsed gives a tackler the stiff-arm in run off the right side.

NASCAR 2009 By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

BLISS WINS RAIN SHORTENED NATIONWIDE RACE

CONCORD, N. C.-- Better fuel mileage got Mike Bliss out front late in Saturday night's Nationwide Series race at Lowe's Motor Speedway.

Three laps after Bliss took the lead from runner-up Brendan Gaughan on Lap 167, NASCAR red-flagged the race because of rain and made Bliss' win official by calling the event 30 laps short of its scheduled distance of 200 laps.

Bliss and runner-up Brendan Gaughan were the only two drivers who remained on the track during a cycle of green-flag pit stops that started on Lap 144.

"We stayed out as long as we could, and it paid off," said Bliss, who gave team owner James Finch his second unlikely victory in a month. Brad Keselowski won the NASCAR Sprint Cup event at Talladega in April driving a car owned by Finch. "I knew we had a pretty good car in practice and kind of worked our way into the top-10. We stretched our fuel mileage quite a bit, and that's why I'm here."

Asked whether he felt as if he had stolen the race, Bliss chuckled, "Yeah, I did -- but from a guy who wins too much (Kyle Busch) -- and nobody likes him."

Top-10 Nationwide Series leaders after 11 of 35: 1. Kyle Busch-1714, 2. Edwards-1641, 3. Leffler-1541, 4. Logano-1495, 5. Keselowski-1473, 6. Keller-1296, 7. Ragan-1285, 8. Gaughan-1237, 9.

BLISS-1234, 10. Allgaier-1210 STEWART/HAAS RACING; A BIG SURPRISE

When Tony Stewart announced in 2008 he was going to accept an offer to become half owner of Haas CNC Racing, a Sprint Cup team, many fans questioned his decision.

Owner, Gene Haas had been convicted of mail fraud and was serving time in a California federal prison. While the financial end of it looked good for Stewart, there were many in the Cup garage who thought he might be taking on more than he could handle.

But Stewart, along with his teammate, Ryan Newman are proving the sceptics wrong.

After 11 races into the regular 36-race schedule, Stewart is second in points, just 29 points behind Jeff Gordon.

But even better, he found his first victory in the 25th annual (non-points) All-Star Race at Lowe's. Stewart's first win as a driver/owner and first All-Star win came in a race that turned into a fender-banging, hot mix of hard racing in the final 10-laps. His win, combined with the string of recent successes at Stewart-Haas Racing, makes him one of the hottest drivers in Sprint Cup racing.

"It's been the whole team, man," said Stewart after his win at Lowe's. "They've been an awesome group of guys to work with up to this point. And that's the most gratifying part about it. It's about seeing those guys and seeing them celebrating and smiling in victory lane when I got there -- and seeing how

happy they were and the excitement on their faces. There's no check that you can write in any amount that's going to make up for that and could take the place of it."

Now that he's second in Cup points, there's much being said about him defeating the odds in the gamble he took in leaving a secure job driving Joe Gibbs' No. 20 Toyota.

But Stewart said co-owner Haas is the one who took the biggest risk.

"You really have got to give him the credit for taking the gamble and taking the risk and having us come be a part of this organization like that and trusting us to make some pretty big decisions and personnel changes," Stewart said. "That's not something that a lot of people in that position are willing to do and give up that kind of control to let a totally different group of guys come in and all of a sudden start changing things around, but Gene was willing to do that."

Newman didn't get off to quite as good of a start as Stewart, but he has run up front and is currently eighth in points.

"We haven't quite reached victory lane yet, but we can sure feel it and taste it," said Newman. "It has been exciting to be a contender week in and week out. The more you contend, the odds get better to see the checkered flag first."

The No. 39 and No. 14 Stewart-Haas teams have performed well this season. The real question is what kind of additional momentum the teams will be able to garner from the all-star win. I think we'll see

both Stewart and Newman take a checkered flag before the season is over -- and who knows, maybe even more than once.

Weekend Racing: All three of NASCAR's major series will be at the Dover Monster Mile.

Fri., May 29, Camping World Truck Series AAA Insurance 200, race 7 of 25; Starting time: 8 p.m. (EDT); TV: Speed Channel.

Sat., May 30, Nationwide Series Heluva Good 200, race 12 of 35; Starting time: 2 p.m. (EDT); TV: ESPN2.

Sun., May 31, Sprint Cup Autism Speaks 400, race 13 of 36; Starting time: 1:30 p.m. (EDT); TV: FOX.

Racing Trivia Question: Where is Tony Stewart's home town?

Last Week's Question: Why has NASCAR suspended Cup driver Jeremy Mayfield? Answer: For failing two drug tests.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: hodgesnews@earthlink.net.



Mike Bliss, winner of Saturday's Nationwide race

Mountain Lions' Smith & teammates receive honors

JIM BRYANT

Sports Writer

Bryson Smith named GJCAA Player of the Year.

Again this year the YHC Mountain Lions loaded the GJCAA with eight honorees. Topping the list was infielder Bryson Smith from Watkinsville, GA, named GJCAA Player of the Year.

Although growing up in the shadow of UGA, Smith has put his name on the line to play at the University of Florida next season. The sophomore transfer is ranked third in the nation in homeruns and tied for first in RBIs.

As a Mountain Lion, Smith is hitting .467; 99 hits; 21 homeruns; 19 doubles; second in hits and 90 runs batted in. At press time he trailed teammate Travis Echols (26) for the longest hitting streak at 24.

Smith is joined on the All GJCAA 1st Team by outfielder, Daniel Warzon, Lawrenceville, GA; outfielder, Travis Echols, Suwanee, GA and designated

hitter, Derrick Lowery, Laurinburg, NC. Making the All GJCAA 2nd Team for the Mountain Lions was pitcher, C.J. Smith, Temple, GA; catcher, Kenny Swab, Kernersville, NC; infielder, Clay Remole, Marietta, GA and Austin Schultz, Alpharetta, GA.



Bryson Smith named GJCAA Player of the Year. Photo by Jim and Lisa Bryant

The Rock Regional Sports Academy

The Rock Regional Sports Academy (formerly Baseball Instructional Camps @ YHC) has set dates for summer camps for baseball, soccer and tennis. Our 2009 Cross-Training for Christ Multi-Sport camp and Leadership Training Camp dates are July

6-10. New to The Rock are Tennis, Soccer & Baseball lessons ranging from individual to small group to team. For more information or for a registration form, call 706-897-2363 or e-mail LuannR36@yahoo.com

2009 Rec Dept Summer Day Camp

Summer is just around the corner and that means hot weather and Summer Day Camp for boys and girls ages 6 thru 12. This summer The Recreation Department will offer day camp for 4 sessions, each session being two weeks, running Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sessions will be as follows:

Session I June 1 - June 12
Session II June 15 - June 26
Session III July 6 - July 17
Session IV July 20 - July 31

The fee for the two week session is \$120, payable to the Towns County Recreation Department the first Monday of each session. Day Camp offers children

sports game activities, social game activities, field trips, nature hikes and much more. Give your child a lot to do this summer and sign them up for Day Camp. You may send your child to any or all of the sessions.

Children need to bring a swimsuit, towel, sprayable sunscreen and sack lunch. The Recreation department will furnish the drinks for the campers.

Registration will be the first Monday of each session at the Recreation Department located on Hwy. 76 west of Hiawassee. For more information please call the Recreation Department at 706-896-2600.

Remember safety first when boating, swimming

The thought of tragedy or death probably never enters the minds of most swimmers and boaters out enjoying a day of fun on the water -- perhaps it should. Last year, 56 people drowned and 18 others died in boating related incidents in Georgia. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources encourages everyone to practice safety at all times when in and around the water.

A recent U.S. Coast Guard report indicated that 90 percent of boating incident victims who drowned in 2007 were not wearing a life jacket. Always remember -- it won't work if you don't wear it!

Some tips for both boating and water safety include:
- Take a boating safety course and/or a swimming course.
- Never swim alone. If

you are a marginal swimmer, wear a flotation device.

- Don't mix alcohol or drugs with boating or swimming.

- Never let children swim or boat unsupervised. Remember, children under the age of 10 must wear a life jacket while on a moving boat.

- Keep life jackets accessible -- never make someone feel uncomfortable if they choose to wear a life jacket.

- Don't overdo boating and water fun. Don't swim when you are too tired, too cold or too far from safety.

- Learn and obey the "rules of the road" for boating.

- Always be aware of the possibilities of hidden dangers such as underwater obstacles, changing currents and underwater drop-offs.

- Tell someone where you are going and when you will return.

- When you find yourself in a stressful situation, don't panic. If in non-flowing water, float or "dog-paddle" to safety. If in flowing water, float with the current, don't fight against it.

Prevention and common

