

Towns County Sports 2011 Year In Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians' grapplers make a rumble at state tournament

Towns County's Tim Collier finished junior year at the Gwinnett Arena as the fifth best wrestler in the 135-pound weight class of the Class A State Wrestling Championships. Collier battled back from

an opening round loss by an 11-5 decision to eventual state runner up Cole Wheeler from First Presbyterian to earn Class A fifth place recognition at 135 pounds. Collier came back to de-

feat Greyson Cochran of Commerce in a 7-4 decision, before losing to Michael Harrison of Irwin County in an ultra tight 3-2 decision.

"Tim placing fifth is a great accomplishment for him," Indians Head Wrestling Coach Jeff Stowers said.

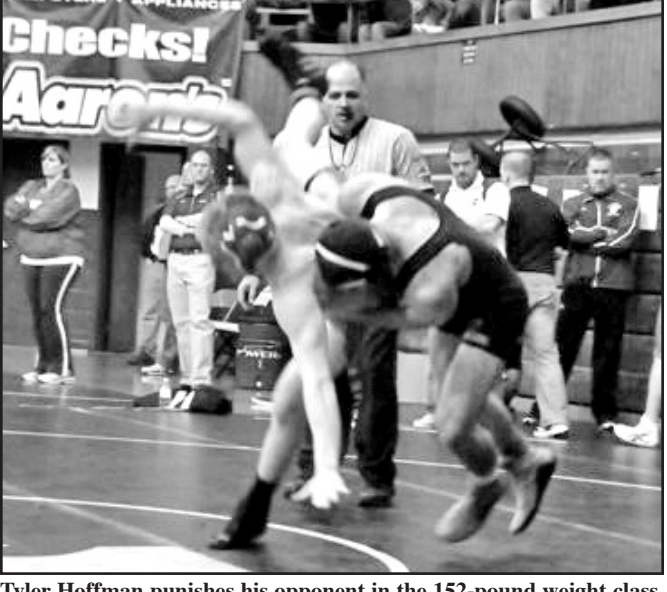
"I'm really proud of our kids they worked real hard. Tyler Hoffman (152) and Tim Collier (135) worked hard all year," Coach Stowers said. "I know that they didn't finish how they wanted it to but they wrestled hard all year long. We're very proud of their accomplishments."

Coach Stowers said that the State Tournament gets tougher and tougher every year.

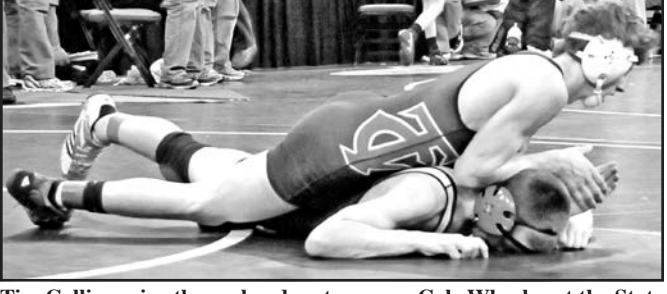
"I really believe that five years ago both of these kids could've won their weight class in the State Tournament," Coach Stowers said. "Wrestling in Georgia has come so far in the last four or five years. It's just really unbelievable to watch."

Towns County's 152-pound entry Tyler Hoffman lost to eventual State Champion James Ballard of Athens Christian School in a 6-0 decision and the third place finisher, Voltaire Driver of Bremen.

"Tyler had a great tournament as well," Coach Stowers said. "You really just can't say enough about those two kids and how much they work and how much they mean to our program."



Tyler Hoffman punishes his opponent in the 152-pound weight class. Photo by James Reese



Tim Collier gains the early advantage over Cole Wheeler at the State Wrestling Championships at Gwinnett Arena. Photo by James Reese

Robinson reaches milestone: Call him "Mr. 600-plus"

When Coach Rick Robinson's coaching days are

over, he'll be a tough act to follow at Young Harris Col-

lege

The now legendary head coach of the Diamond Mountain Lions collected his 600th and 601st career coaching victories in 2011.

Robinson, who revived the Mountain Lions' baseball program more than a decade ago, won No. 600 on a walk-off, 4-3 come from behind win over Southern Wesleyan on April 20.

On April 22, he won No. 601 with a 10-1 thrashing of Toccoa Falls College at Zell B. Miller Field.

"God has blessed me with a wonderful wife and kids and a community that makes us feel like we're coaching a Major League team in a Major League city," Coach Robinson said. "I thank God every day for letting me live in the North Georgia Mountains."



Rick Robinson shakes hands with Southern Wesleyan Head Coach Mike Gillespie prior to the Mountain Lions 4-3 win, Robinson's 600th career victory.

Softball is now a happening sport at TCHS



The Lady Indians celebrate another region win. Photo by James Reese

The Towns County Lady Indians finished the 2011 softball season with a 5-15 record.

By most standards, that would appear to be a losing season. For this team, it is the best season on record.

It was a season that marks progress; a season that raised the bar for future softball teams at Towns County.

First year Head Coach Lakyn Traquair was pleased with the progress made by the Lady Indians during the 2011 season.

"I'm pleased with the season," she said. "Obviously

as a coach and former player I would strive for better, but it's been a good place to start."

The Lady Indians lost two seniors, Felicia Baker and Makayla Moody.

"We lost Felicia Baker who came to us from Ohio," Coach Traquair said. "This was her first year here and if I could've had her here for three more years I would have been delighted."

"Makayla Moody, it was her first year playing for me, Coach Traquair said. "She was a big impact player for the team. We put her in when we needed her and she always came through."

It was a season of firsts in home runs, wins, and several other categories. The Bash Sisters, home-run legends Emily Anderson and Claire Wilson, return as seniors.

The Lady Indians now have traditions and standards that have a set bar to catapult beyond.

"As far as the other girls go, I've told them along with the seniors, that I feel like they have started a legacy," Coach Traquair said. "Many years from now they are going to look back once Towns County is a Softball powerhouse and say that they were there to help start all that."

Square Dance for fun with fitness

Fitness doesn't have to be the same old song and dance. Experts say Western Square Dancing is an excellent form of aerobic activity. It keeps the heart rate elevated without putting a lot of stress on the joints. Some people, for example, who have had heart surgery, hip and knee replacements, are advised by their doctors to continue dancing as often as possible. The

fact is if you can walk, you can square dance. Best of all, Western Square Dancing is universal. You will be able to dance anywhere in the world. Think of the people you will meet! Once you hit the floor you'll fall in love with Western Square Dancing.

Beginner classes are organizing now. Call now to sign up or for more information. Call Al at 706-379-2191

or Nick at 706-897-2247. Classes will begin on Monday, January 9 from 7 to 9 PM at Union County Nursing Home at 164 Nursing Home Circle in Blairsville.

Sponsored by Enchanted Valley Squares Dance Club. Regular dances are every 2nd and 4th Friday nights at Towns County School in Hiwassee 7 to 9 PM. NT(Dec28,A1)SH

NASCAR 2011

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Stewart and Zipadelli reunited
Santa came early for Tony Stewart.

Greg Zipadelli, who helped Tony Stewart win two championships and 34 races, was given his release from Joe Gibbs Racing and has been named competition director at Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR).

"It's great to have Greg join us," said Stewart, the reigning Sprint Cup champion. "Greg and I have a long and successful history together. I know him and he knows me, and we both know what it takes to build race teams. We took our time in searching for a competition director because it's an important role with a lot of responsibility. Greg knows all that goes into the job, understands the importance of teamwork and communication across all levels of the organization, and is ultimately someone I have a great deal of trust in."

He will work with Vice President of Competition Matt Borland and oversee the No. 14 and No. 39 teams, while also building the No. 10 team for Danica Patrick, who will run a 10-race Cup schedule in 2012.

When Stewart left JGR following the 2008 season to form SHR, Zipadelli stayed and spent three years as the crew chief for Joey Logano, where he helped deliver Logano's only Sprint Cup victory in 2009.

"Joe Gibbs always says that you win with people, and Tony Stewart is a winner," Zipadelli said. "We won a lot together at Joe Gibbs Racing, and it was a sad day when he left. But Tony had an unbelievable opportunity with Stewart-Haas Racing, and he's obviously made the most of it."

"To become a part of what he's already built, but to do it in a new role with a new set of responsibilities, was a challenge I wanted. I really appreciate Joe and J.D. Gibbs for all that they've given me over the years and for allowing me to seize this opportunity."

Zipadelli will help Patrick's team prepare for her Daytona 500 debut in February. He might also crew chief all 10 of her Cup races next season if the right candidate is not found.

Roush Racing in, Petty Motorsports out

This past week Best Buy Stores announced they would be moving their sponsorship from Richard Petty's No. 43 to Roush Fenway Racing.



Greg Zipadelli and Tony Stewart in 2008

primary sponsor of Carl Edwards' No. 99 for two races and Matt Kenseth's No. 17 for nine races. In addition, the company will serve as associate sponsor for the remaining races.

"Roush Fenway Racing is a great fit. NASCAR continues to be a relevant way for us to connect with our customers," said Drew Panayiotou of Best Buy. "Our goal is to reach our target audiences in a meaningful way, while maximizing the value of our marketing and sponsorship investments."

Best Buy has been involved in some form of NASCAR sponsorship for the past seven years.

"We have had a successful and rewarding relationship with Best Buy for the past few years and appreciate all they have done for us," said Petty. "Although it is very disappointing that Best Buy is changing directions at this late date, we wish all of our friends there the best in their future endeavors."

"Our plan has always been to run a two-car team in the Sprint Cup Series in 2012 and we are continuing down that path. We have several partners that remain committed to the No. 43 team. We will move forward and explore all of our options in regard to the No. 43 program in the coming weeks."

Gaughan switching to RCR
Brendan Gaughan and some of his family's cash are transferring over to Richard Childress Racing.

The 36-year-old Gaughan, who has eight wins in the truck series, will bring sponsorship from his family's South Point Hotel & Casino for most of the events.

"The last few years, I have been racing for teams that try to buy their engineering or

equipment from organizations as great as RCR, but doing that is never the same as racing for RCR," Gaughan said. "I have always steered away from switching to a part-time schedule in the past but I had to look at where I would have the best opportunity to win races again and the opportunity to race for Richard Childress is one I couldn't pass up."

Gaughan finished 12th in the trucks driving for Germain Racing in 2011. The two previous years he drove for Rusty Wallace Racing in Nationwide with finishes of ninth and 11th in the standings.

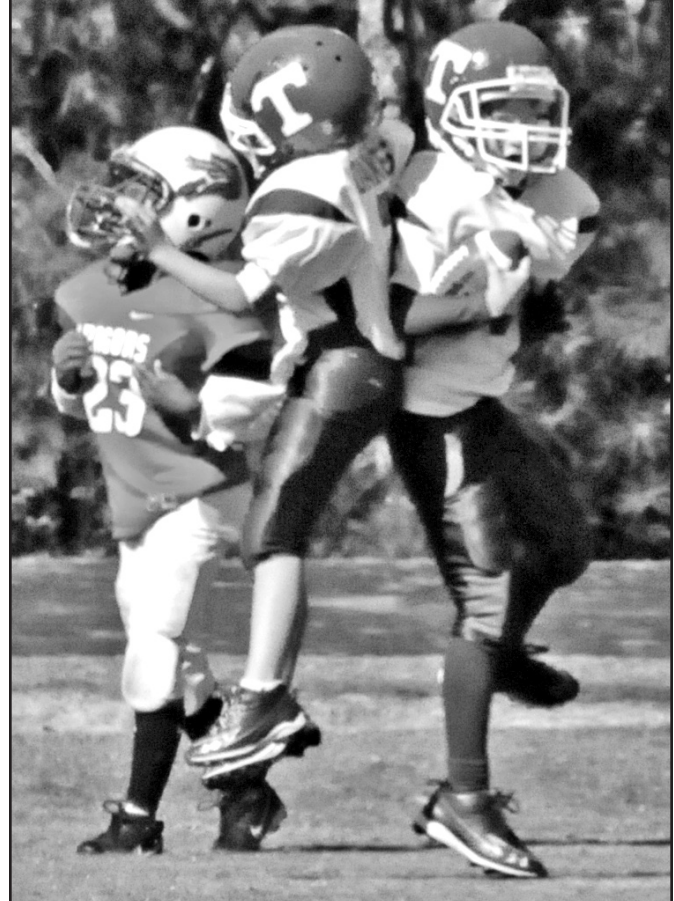
Top-12 driver payouts

Ever wonder how much the top Cup drivers make? Here is what the top-12 drivers earned. This was their total winnings. Most drivers have contracts that allow them to keep from fifty to sixty per cent of their gross take. The remainder goes to the car owner. 1. Tony Stewart - \$12,671,071, 2. Carl Edwards - \$11,351,964, 3. Kevin Harvick - \$8,072,369, 4. Matt Kenseth - \$7,901,409, 5. Brad Keselowski - \$6,503,444, 6. Jimmie Johnson - \$7,599,034, 7. Dale Earnhardt Jr - \$5,329,888, 8. Jeff Gordon - \$7,126,719, 9. Denny Hamlin - \$6,578,688, 10. Ryan Newman - \$6,388,178, 11. Kurt Busch - \$6,714,991, 12. Kyle Busch - \$7,160,043

Racing Trivia Question: Car owner James Finch has one Cup victory, which came at Talladega. Who was his driver?
Last Week's Question: Which Cup team will Kasey Kahne drive for in 2012? He will drive for Hendrick Motorsports.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodges@race500.com. NT(Dec28,Z8)CA

Towns County Tiny Mites were the real deal in 2011



The Tiny Mites celebrate won of their seven victories in 2011. Photo by James Reese

For much of the fall, the Towns County Tiny Mites' football team was the hottest ticket in town.

The Indians' 8-year-old squad won seven games before they were ousted in the playoffs by Rabun County.

The Indians were led in many games by Payton Ivester who rushed for a school record in touchdowns and racked up the rushing yards.

Hayden McClure, Kyle Oakes and Colin Crowder also contributed mightily for the Tiny Mites offensive attack.

Crowder, McClure, Ivester, Kyle Oakes and Clayton Gibson were men among boys on defense as the Tiny Mites proved to be one of the stingiest defenses in the league.

Towns County Youth Football Coordinator Jimmy Smith was especially encouraged in 2011 by the Tiny Mites' stellar effort by its offensive line. Smith said that all season long, the play by the offensive line has contributed to the gaudy rushing numbers put up by the Tiny Mites backfield.



The Tiny Mites celebrate won of their seven victories in 2011. Photo by James Reese