

Towns County Sports

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Indians power past Hiwassee Dam, overwhelmed at Andrews

By Jerry Kendall
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The Indians and their followers learned that the undefeated Wildcats were every bit as capable as had been indicated by their winning their first six games by an average of 36.1 points as they took quick control and took an 86-41 victory over the Indians. The Wildcats improved their record to 7-0 with the victory while the Indians fell to 4-3 with both of the previous losses having been very competitive until the closing minutes of the games.

The Indians rebounded from the decisive loss at Andrews the night prior with perhaps their most consistent performance of the season in a resounding 69-49 victory over visiting Hiwassee Dam. The Eagles had used an 18-2 finish in taking a come from behind 56-49 victory in a foul infested game in North Carolina last month with very productive junior Aidan Berrong absent.

Indians 69, Hiwassee Dam 49—It required just twenty seven seconds for the Indians to build a 6-0 lead at the 7:33 mark of the first quarter against Hiwassee Dam on a steal and dash for the basket by junior Aidan Berrong, a putback basket by sophomore Collin Crowder, and a second Indians steal and field goal by junior Kolby Moss.

The early onslaught continued following an Eagles putback basket on a trey by Berrong and a coast to coast run and field goal by Crowder for an 11-2 Towns lead. A trey and a deuce by Hiwassee Dam got the Eagles within 11-7 but the Indians struck again with deuces by sophomore Kyle Oakes, Crowder, and Moss and Berrong's second trey of the quarter for a 20-7 Indians lead which became 20-10 at quarter's end.

The Indians resumed the early scoring prowess with a 9-2 run by the 4:59 mark of the second quarter for a 29-12 advantage highlighted by a trey by Moss and four points on a deuce



Kolby Moss and the Indians would bounce back from the loss at Andrews with four straight wins and a BOTS title. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

and two for two free throw shooting by Crowder. The Indians' only scoring lull in the game followed, however, with the Eagles finishing the quarter on a 12-5 run interrupted only by a free throw by senior Jacob Kinsey and two deuces by Moss for a 34-24 Towns lead at intermission.

The Indians returned to their prior consistency in the third quarter as they outscored the Eagles 21-15 for a 55-39 lead entering the fourth quarter with Moss including a trey among nine points and Berrong adding six and junior Reace Hampton four. The Indians closed out the 69-49 victory with Crowder scoring six points in the fourth quarter and the crowd erupting when inexperienced but very athletic senior Ali Momin placed an exclamation point on the victory when he sank actually his second trey in two nights during the final minute of play.

Scoring leaders for the Indians for the game were Moss with 22 points, Berrong with 17, Crowder with 16, Oakes with 6, and Hampton with 4. Seven different Indians contributed at least one assist with leaders being Moss with 5, Crowder

with 4, and Oakes with 3 while nine Indians provided at least one rebound with leaders being Crowder with 8, Hampton with 7, and Moss with 6. Moss took the lead in steals and blocked shots with 4 of each and Oakes contributed 2 steals. The Eagles were led in scoring by Radford Cheek and Connor Davis with 14 points each as they saw their record fall to 3-4 with the loss.

Several mentions have been made about the early season game at Hiwassee Dam when so much light touch contact resulted in foul calls with the Eagles receiving thirty five free throw attempts and especially benefiting from foul trouble costing Indian players lots of playing time. They again exceeded the highest number of free throw attempts of fourteen by opponents in six prior games as they were twelve for nineteen but with this being misleading as they were five for eight during the final 2:42 of the game while both teams had less experienced player in the game.

Andrews 86, Indians 41—There are actually quite rare occasions when sports teams are forced to simply tip their hat to an opponent and one such occa-

sion came for the Indians when the Andrews Wildcats blistered the nets from all angles during a 34-5 opening run in barely more than ten minutes of playing time by the 5:58 mark of the second quarter. It seemed during this scoring run that radar might be attracting the Wildcats shots in pulling them through the net while rejecting shots by the Indians.

The Indians struck back

the remainder of the first half however, with six straight points between the 5:29 and 4:36 marks and an eventual overall 14-10 run for a 44-19 Wildcats lead by the forty seven seconds mark of the second quarter. The Indians scoring run was highlighted by eight points by junior Aidan Berrong and four by sophomore Collin Crowder with sophomore Kyle Oakes contributing three assists before

the Wildcats sank a deuce near the half minute mark for a 46-19 lead at intermission.

The Indians held a slight advantage of 7-6 for a 52-26 deficit by the 5:32 mark of the third quarter before the Wildcats extended their lead to 63-32 entering the fourth quarter with Berrong contributing six points and Crowder five for the Indians during the quarter. Four different Indians entered the scoring column in the fourth quarter with senior Ali Momin contributing a trey and junior Seth Kinsey and freshman Caleb Berrong a deuce each for their first high school varsity points as the Wildcats closed out an 86-41 victory.

Nine of 12 Indians playing in the game entered the scoring column with leaders being Aidan Berrong with 14 points, Crowder with 9, and senior Jacob Kinsey and junior Kolby Moss with 4 each while leaders in assists were Oakes with 5 and Crowder with 3. Leaders in rebounds were Jacob Kinsey with 8 and Oakes with 5 while five different Indians contributed one steal each. All 11 Wildcats seeing action in the game entered the scoring column with leaders being juniors Kabe Elis with 22 points, Tucker Holloway with 19, and Gage Gillespie with 11.

Junior Johnson Is Gone

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Junior Johnson, racing icon and winner of 50 NASCAR races passed away last week at the age of 88.

Robert Glenn Johnson Jr., better known as Junior Johnson, was a NASCAR driver of the 1950s and 1960s. He won 50 NASCAR races in his career before retiring in 1966. In the 1970s and 1980s, he became a NASCAR racing team owner, sponsoring NASCAR champions Cale Yarborough and Darrell Waltrip. He produced a line of fried pork skins and country ham. He is credited as the first to use the drafting technique in stock car racing. He was nicknamed "The Last American Hero" and his autobiography is of the same name. In May 2007, Johnson teamed with Piedmont Distillers of Madison, North Carolina, to introduce the company's second moonshine product, called "Midnight Moon Moonshine".

Johnson was 14 when he started hauling liquor for his father's moonshining operation. He was famous for the 'bootleg turn' or 'about-face,' in which, if the Federal agents had a roadblock up for you or were too close behind, you threw the car up into second gear, cocked the wheel, stepped on the accelerator and made the car's rear end skid around in a complete 180-degree arc, a complete about-face, and tore on back up the road exactly the way you came from.

There are several stories about how he got his start in racing, and this is one of them.

One summer day in 1949, Johnson was plowing a cornfield barefoot behind a mule on his family's farm in Ingle Hollow, NC, when his brother pulled up in one of the family's moonshining cars. He said a local racetrack needed cars to fill out the field for a race.

Junior, pushing 16 at the time, tied the mule to a fence, found some shoes, drove to North Wilkesboro Speedway (North Carolina) and entered the race. He finished second, launching one of the most colorful and celebrated careers in American motorsports history.

Long before NASCAR grew into a force in auto racing, the good old boys of the hard-scrabble rural South in the 1940s were racing souped-up autos at small-town dirt tracks. Johnson was among the fastest and most daring of them all.

He entered his first NASCAR race in 1953, and became known as a driver who would come home with either a trophy for winning the race, or the steering wheel with nothing else remaining of the car, because he wrecked it in pursuit of the trophy.

He was just as aggressive on the track. He slid his cars through curves instead of riding the brakes so he could quickly regain speed when he was back on a straightaway.

"I was good on the highway and good on the back roads," he told The News-Journal of Daytona Beach, FL, in 2008, recalling his old-time moonshine deliveries. "The track was not quite as exciting as it was running from the revenuers. If you got caught, you knew you was going to jail."

He won 50 races in 313 starts at NASCAR's top level before retiring from driving at 35. He was bored of endless left turns, and he instead became owner of his own race team. Nine future NASCAR Hall of Famers drove for him. In one 10-year span, his teams won six champi-



Cale Yarborough and Junior Johnson in 1979

onships — three straight by Cale Yarborough (1976-1978) and three by Darrell Waltrip (1981, 1982 and 1985).

Johnson was arrested in 1956. He had gone out to his father's still on foot, unaware that agents had it staked out. The revenuers couldn't catch him in a car, but he could not outrun them on foot. He was sentenced to two years in prison on moonshine and bootlegging charges.

He served 11 months in a federal reformatory in Chillicothe, Ohio — time away that he called a turning point in his life. "I learned a lot of discipline and to listen to people and evaluate their ideas and stuff. I didn't do that before I went there," he told Sporting News.

Pres. Ronald Reagan granted him a full and unconditional pardon in 1986.

Johnson was inducted into the first class of NASCAR's Hall of Fame in 2010. As part of the Hall of Fame's opening, he built a moonshine still as an exhibit. It would have worked had he fired it up.

Richard Petty, one of Johnson's most celebrated rivals, was once quoted by The Tampa Tribune as calling him "the toughest, most stubborn driver" he knew.

NEW CREW CHIEF FOR TRUEX

James Small will be calling the shots for Martin Truex, Jr.'s No. 19 team. He is replacing Cole Pearn who left the team to spend more time with his family.

The 36-year-old Australian has been Truex's lead engineer the past two seasons at both Joe Gibbs Racing and Furniture Row Racing.

Small was previously an interim crew chief for Erik Jones in 2017. While that role only lasted two races, the results were good as Jones finished 10th at Watkins Glen and third at Michigan.

"Having the confidence of Coach (Joe Gibbs), Martin and everyone at JGR means a lot to me," Small said. "I moved to the United States six years ago to work in NASCAR and I wanted to work my way up to become a crew chief. I'm ready for this and I am excited about working with Martin and the foundation we have in place on the 19 team with the group of guys we have."

Before moving to America, Small spent several years working in V-8 Supercars as a race engineer.

Meanwhile Ryan Newman is hoping to improve on his 2019 racing season.

After recording nine top 10s in the regular season, Newman entered the playoffs 16th. He started the playoffs strong with finishes of 10th and fifth, respectively, at Las Vegas Motor

Speedway and Richmond Raceway. However, a late-race penalty at the Charlotte Motor Speedway Royal eliminated his chances of advancing to the Round of 12. Newman was one point ahead of the cutoff on Lap 106, but was assessed a 30-second penalty after failing to perform a stop-and-go for missing the chicane.

"I felt like I made a lot of mistakes trying too hard," Newman said after the Charlotte race. "We did not have the race car and that's what I had to do. I felt like we were in a position at one point and then just kept trying too hard trying to keep the 10 car behind us and missed the curbs. That was unfortunate."

His best finish of the season came in the 31st race of the season at Talladega Superspeedway when he placed second to Ryan Blaney in the sixth closest finish (0.007 sec.) in NASCAR history.

"I mean, we just came up that little bit short," Newman said after the race. "I don't know what else to say. I could have pinched him some more. I could have probably took the aero. You can go back and bench race that three weeks from now. It was a good race until the end."

Racing Joke: During a slow day at the race shop, Jeff and one of his crew members decide to drive into Charlotte and take a walk in one of the neighborhood parks.

They pass an old man sitting on a park bench with tears in his eyes. Jeff stops to talk with him.

"I'm ninety years old," the old man said. "Last week I married a woman half my age. She does everything for me. She cooks my meals, washes my clothes, shops for me, and will do anything I ask in the bedroom."

"Oh, replied Jeff. "Well, that doesn't sound bad at all. Why are you sitting here crying?"

"Because," the old man sobs loudly, "I can't remember where the heck I live."

Racing Trivia Question: What year was the first race held at Daytona International Speedway?

Last Week's Question: Bill France Sr. is the man that is credited with starting NASCAR racing. What was his profession before he became a race car driver? Answer: He was a mechanic and service station owner in Washington, DC. When cars started racing on the beach near Daytona Beach, FL he moved south.

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others recalling the previously mentioned 20-4 Union finish in Blairsville. An old fashioned 3-point play by Crowder on a baseline drive at the 7:09 mark of the second quarter and a pair of three point plays by Moss at 4:43 and 3:54 had the Indians ahead 22-15 and a runner by sophomore Kyle Oakes and a drive for two points by Crowder during the final minute of the quarter more than offset a 4-1 Union mini run for a 27-19 Towns lead at intermission.

The Indians appeared, again to some viewers, to be taking complete control of the game when they opened the third quarter with a 15-5 scoring run for a 42-24 lead at the 3:24 mark highlighted by a trey and two deuces for seven points by Crowder and two deuces and two free throws for six points by junior Aidan Berrong.

The Panthers would however end the third quarter on a 17-8 run of their own interrupted only by a deuce by sophomore Kyle Oakes and two treys by

Berrong and Moss for just a 50-41 Indians lead. The Indians opened the fourth quarter with a slight 9-8 advantage on a deuce by Moss, two deuces by Berrong, and ending with a trey by junior Luis Quijada at 3:16 for a 59-49 Towns lead.

The Panthers would include a trey and two free throws in a 9-2 run, however, between the 3:01 and 1:00 marks for just a 61-58 Indians lead. The Indians proved that they could bend but not break from this point forward, however, as Berrong sank two free throws at 45.7 seconds for a 63-58 Towns lead and Moss responded to a Union trey at thirty two seconds for a 63-61 score with two more free throws at 29.6 seconds for a 65-61 Indians lead with one additional heroic act to follow for the Indians.

With the game still in doubt with just a four point Towns lead, Oakes came up with a steal near mid court and took the ball to the basket for a layup and what proved to be

an insurmountable Indians lead of 67-61 at twenty one seconds and the Panthers could not dent the scoreboard again with the Indians having the long coveted championship.

Moss led the Indians in scoring with 23 points with other leaders being Berrong with 18, Crowder with 15, and Oakes with 8 while Oakes and Moss led in assists with 3 and 2 respectively. Leading in rebounds were Crowder with 7 and Moss with 6 while Oakes contributed 4 steals, Quijada 3, and Crowder 2. The Panthers were led in scoring by seniors Kyle Morlock with 19 points, the previously mentioned Sawyer Drake with 18, and Pierson Allison with 10 and sophomore Lake Hughes with 8.

The Indians placed Aidan Berrong and Collin Crowder on the All Tournament Team and Kolby Moss was named the Most Valuable Player in this year's Battle of the States.



Collin Crowder drives to the basket for a layup during the win over Union. Photo/Todd Forrest