

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

www.townscountyherald.net • E-mail: tcherald@windstream.net

## Wrestling: TCHS qualifies two for State

By Todd Forrest  
Towns County Herald  
Sports Editor

Towns County seniors Garrett Oakes and Conner King qualified for last week's Class A State Wrestling Championships with a pair of runner-up finishes at the Area 8 Tournament in Commerce earlier this month.

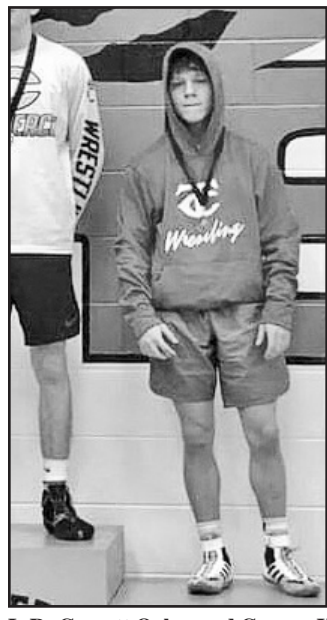
In the 220-pound division, King earned a first-round bye before pinning Taylor Gordon of Loganville Christian to punch his ticket to the Area finals.

In the title bout, King suffered a pinfall defeat to Commerce senior Elijah Burns.

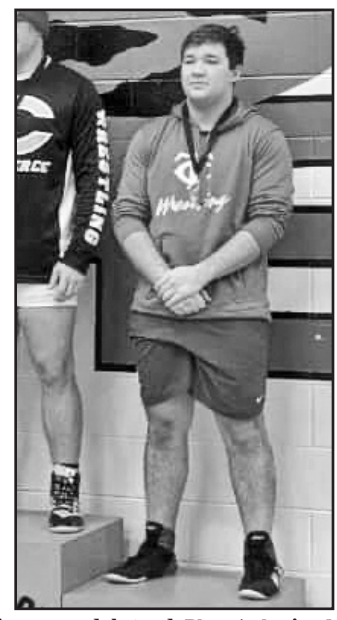
Competing at 120 pounds, Oakes received a bye into the finals, where he fell to Commerce senior Dawson Legg via pinfall.

Other Indians on the mat at Area were 170-pound sophomore Chance Schmeltz, who placed fourth after suffering a pinfall to Washington Wilkes' Kenvonta Jones in the third-place bout.

Freshmen Ian Arrowood (145), Andrew Brinson (195), Zion Calhoun (152) and Stone Chauncey (160) each fell one victory short of competing for third place and a trip to State.



L-R: Garrett Oakes and Conner King on medal stand. Photo/submitted



Photo/submitted an end after dropping a 9-1 decision to Irwin County's Jordan Dunlap.

During last week's State tourney, Oakes picked up three wins to finish with a 3-2 record. In the opening round, he pinned Drew Robinson of Landmark Christian before suffering a pinfall at the hands of Mt. Pisgah's Brady Nardella. Oakes responded with pins over Strong Rock Christian's Jake McDougal and Darlington's Ross Tidwell. His day came to

King scored a first-round pinfall over Bowdon's Chris Solis-Gonzalez, but suffered a loss to Wesleyan's Eric Berry in the second bout. During the consols, King was pinned by Irwin's Travis Cockfield, despite trailing only 2-1 at the time.

## Huffman and Donaldson take 3rd at Lake Seminole



The Chaturge Anglers, River Huffman and Miles Donaldson, won 3rd Place at their last Bass Tournament on February 6 on Lake Seminole. Both boys want to say thank you for the support of the community and the Towns County Herald! T@Feb17.F3/SH

## NASCAR 2021

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### McDowell stuns with Daytona 500 win

Michael McDowell's first NASCAR Cup Series win was a big one. He led only one lap in Sunday's Daytona 500, but that was the last and final one. He avoided a collision between Team Penske teammates Joey Logano and Brad Keselowski during the final-lap for his first win after 357 winless starts.

"I can't believe it," McDowell said. "I've got to thank God. So many years of just grinding it out, hoping for an opportunity like this. I've got to thank (team owner) Bob Jenkins for giving me this opportunity. I'm so thankful."

"What a great way to get a first victory—in the Daytona 500!"

It appeared as if Logano was going to win on the last lap. However, he and teammate Brad Keselowski collided in turn-3, leading to a multi-car pileup. McDowell was able to avoid the spinning cars, and was in first place when the caution flag came out following the crash on Lap 200, edging out Chase Elliott.

"I saw the lights come on (for the caution), and I knew it was over right then," Elliott said. "We had a fast car. We weren't as good as I thought we were on Thursday (in the Duel 150-mile qualifying race). I thought we did a really good job of executing today, staying out of trouble."

"That's not something I've done a very good job of here in this race, so I'm glad we could at least finish this race and have something to build on for when we come back and try to do better."

Austin Dillon ran third, followed by Kevin Harvick.

Fifth-place finisher Denny Hamlin fell short in his attempt to win a record third straight Daytona 500. Hamlin won the first two stages but lost the lead during the final cycle of green-flag pit stops. He took the lead in the second stage after a cycle of green-flag pit stops and held it through the fifth caution of the race, which waned when Joe Gibbs Racing teammate Christopher Bell cut a left rear tire and spun into the Chevrolet of Ricky Stenhouse Jr.

At that point, Hamlin had led 58 laps, bringing his total of laps led in the Daytona 500 to 434, fifth-all-time and one ahead of Bobby Allison.

Ryan Preece, Ross Chastain, Jamie McMurray, Corey LaJoie, and Kyle Larson rounded out the top-10.

During lap 14, Kyle Busch was pushing Christopher Bell's No. 20, causing Bell to get into the rear of Aric Almirola's No. 10. Almirola's car went up the track and sparked a 16-car pile-up including pole-sitter Alex Bowman.

"We were just getting pushed too hard too early," Almirola said. "It's a long, long race. Man, we were in a fine position, just sitting there riding around in the top two, three and the 20 (Bell) just came with a big run and hit me really hard in a bad spot and it turned me to the right and tore up our race car and ended our Daytona 500 way too early."

Derrike Cope at 62 years of age was the oldest driver to start the race. He has one Daytona 500 to his credit and hoped to add to it. Cope got loose on lap 3, scraped the wall, and had a DNF. This was his first 500 start since 2011.

The race was red-flagged for 5 hours, 40 minutes with 15 laps complete after rain and lightning hit the 2.5-mile track Sunday afternoon. The race resumed under green-flag conditions on Lap 30 at 9:34 p.m. ET, leading to an early Monday morning finish.

### CINDRIC WINS XFINITY SHOOTOUT

Austin Cindric, the reigning champion held off Brett Moffitt in a two-lap Overtime shootout to win Saturday's Xfinity Series race.

Obviously, coming off a lot of momentum winning that championship last year, but nothing is guaranteed and keep working hard," said Cindric.

The runner-up finish was a career-best for Moffitt, who previously had one top five in the series, a fifth at Talladega.

"Once the 22 (Cindric) got up front, every time I got within a car length, I'd just push him farther forward," said Moffitt, who chased



McDowell stuns with Daytona win.



Big wreck on Lap 14.

Cindric in overtime time after taking over second place from Harrison Burton, the third-place finisher.

Jeb Burton ran fourth, followed by AJ Allmendinger, Brandon Brown, Myatt Snider, Brandon Gdovic, Daniel Hemric and Jason White.

### RHODES GETS DAYTONA TRUCK WIN

Ben Rhodes won Friday night's Truck Series race at Daytona.

"This is so special the biggest win of my career," Rhodes said. "I can't even believe this. As a driver, you're always asked about what your biggest accomplishment is. This is it. This is hands-down it. This is the place to be. I can't even believe it."

Jordan Anderson, Cory Roper, Ryan Truex, Carson Hocevar, Sheldon Creed, John Nemecek, Codie Rohrbaugh, Chandler Smith and Drew Dollar were the remaining top-10 finishers.

### "ROWDY" KYLE TAKES BUSCH CLASH

Kyle Busch won the Busch Clash At Daytona last Tuesday night.

Pole sitter Ryan Blaney was leading heading into the front stretch chicane on the final lap when Chase Elliott got into his rear quarter panel. Blaney spun and Elliott lost enough momentum to allow Busch to take the lead and win.

"I didn't know how it was going to play out or what was going to happen there, but I saw those guys go in there two-wide and I was like, I don't know if they're going to come out two-wide," said Busch. "Certainly, it was a tough battle between those two. They were really good. The 9 (Chase Elliott) was fast. I don't know if he was the class of the field, but the 12 (Ryan Blaney) was definitely just fast and made aggressive moves and was doing a good job all night getting himself back up to the front each time. Those two coulda, shoulda, woulda been the two to race it out for the win, and maybe the 19 (Martin Truex Jr.). Just interesting how that plays out sometimes and what dynamic will push you into victory lane."

Elliott finished second fol-

lowed by Joey Logano, Tyler Reddick and William Byron.

The Clash was a non-points race.

**Racing Joke:** Four expectant fathers were in a hospital waiting room while their wives were in labor. The nurse arrived and proudly announced to the first man that he was the father of twins.

"What a coincidence," he said. "I work for the Twins baseball team."

Later the nurse returned and congratulated the second father on the birth of his triplets.

"Wow, that's incredible," he said. "I work for the 3 M Corporation."

An hour later the nurse returned to congratulate the third man on the birth of quadruplets.

Stunned, he could barely reply. "I don't believe it. I work for the Four Seasons Hotel."

After this, everyone turned to the fourth guy, a race car driver who had just fainted. The nurse rushed to his side. As he slowly regained consciousness, he began to mutter over and over, "We should never have signed 7-Eleven as our major car sponsor. We should never have signed 7-Eleven....."

**Weekend Racing:** Racing continues at Daytona for the second week in a row. This time all three series' will be competing on the 3.66-mile Daytona road course.

Fri., Feb. 19; Truck Series race two; Starting time: 7:30 PM ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sat., Feb. 20; Xfinity Series race two; Starting time: 5 PM ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sun., Feb. 21; Cup Series race three; Starting time: 3 PM ET; TV: Fox.

**Racing Trivia Question:** Derrike Cope, who started this year's Daytona 500 has one 500 victory. What year did he win?

**Last Week's Question:** Who won the first Daytona 500? Answer: The first Daytona 500 was held in 1959. It was won by Lee Petty.

Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter is a syndicated NASCAR writer and author. You may e-mail him at: hodges@race500.com.

## Kennedi Henson joins 1,000-point club

By Jerry Kendall  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

It is not often that three momentous statistical accomplishments occur at any school but especially a very small school within just three weeks.

But this is just what has happened at Towns County High School with Kolby Moss passing the verifiable career scoring record for his Indians team at Copper Basin on January 18, Vanessa Floyd reaching the 1,000 career points total in a home game against Rabun County on January 30, and Kennedy Henson reaching 1,000 points on January 8 at Greene County.

This is such a remarkable achievement for Henson in providing evidence of her perseverance and dedication as most high school athletes do not face the trauma of having even one major knee surgery, or other serious injuries for that matter, but especially not twice in barely more than three years. That is true for Henson, however, as she tore the ACL in her left knee in just the eleventh game of her freshman year and then tore it again in the nineteenth game of her junior season of basketball.

Not only did she have long periods of rehabilitation after surgery but anxiety in returning to sports activity as a star softball player in addition to basketball stardom with no doubt thoughts of potential reinjury which did occur a bit over two years after the first injury. Some observers speculated that she might not return to sports activity following the second injury but those thoughts did not fit the determination of Kennedy Henson.

It has been most impressive to see her return for this season and perform at such a high level, in your reporter's view at a more confident level of play and greater agility and speed displayed than during her return as a sophomore. Perhaps a procedure done during the second surgery said to provide more protection than during the first surgery has made a difference in her confidence and stellar performance level.

Henson scored 143 points as a freshman, 378 as a sophomore, and 235 as a junior with the freshman and junior year totals of course ending with the ACL injuries those years. With a total of 756 career points entering this season, she needed 234 to reach 1,000 career points and she reached the magic number on a two point field goal at the 4:19 mark of the third quarter at Greene County High School in Greensboro, Georgia, on Monday, June 8, 2021.

Henson's arrival as a freshman during the 2018 season was highly anticipated based upon



Kennedi Henson secures a loose ball during her first game back from injury - an OT win at Union in November. Photo/Todd Forrest

prior excellence on both the softball field the basketball court. While providing stardom as both a pitcher and hitter but restricted by the knee injuries at TCHS, perhaps her most memorable moment in softball was hitting a home run over the fence on the high school softball field as a seventh grade Towns County middle school player.

As for basketball, her scoring the previously mentioned 143 points for a 13.0 points per game average in just her first eleven games brought anticipation to this reporter and other observers of likelihood of her approaching as many as 2,000 points for her career. Although the injuries prevented this achievement, Kennedy and her family and many fans can be thankful that the Covid crisis did not bring this season to an early end and prevent the achievements that she and classmates Vanessa Floyd and Kolby Moss have reached during this season.

This is just the fourth known occasion for two teammates, Henson and Floyd in this case, to reach 1,000 career points during the same season. Prior occurrences include Indians Terry Gribble and John Nations reaching this achievement during the 1965 season, Lady Indians Candice Blythe (Thompson) and Brandy McNabb (Warren) during the 2000 season, and Eryn Cochran and Stephanie Patton for the Lady Indians during the 2014 season.

It seems that athletic success for ancestors and siblings, as well as often far extended kinships, is often present when a Towns County athlete reaches 1,000 points and this is the case as related to Kennedy Henson. Her sister, Kristen, was a productive member of the Lady Indians basketball team, including as the second leading scorer on the team as a senior during the 2017 school year and just missing being a teammate of Kennedy who entered TCHS as a freshman during the

2018 school year.

And your reporter has been aware for decades as a dedicated follower of Towns County basketball and hearing of legendary status from those who saw him play for Kennedy's grandfather, Edwin Berrong He was said to have been a basketball player with shooting, passing, and ball handling skills far ahead of what was typical during his 1941 TCHS senior season and beyond.

Although currently hidden among large amounts of sports information hoarded by your reporter, it is recalled that a Towns County Herald article reported that Edwin had scored just under or just over 300 points during his senior season at TCHS with the next highest scorer being below 100 points during an era of much smaller numbers of points being scored at the high school level.

In addition to his high school success, Edwin went on to play for a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) team which won a national championship in an Atlanta tournament. And he expressed being honored to have played against The House of David and The Sioux City Indians, well known professional basketball teams of the day. And finally, Edwin amazed folks attending a TCHS alumni game, including then recent graduates participating, more than fifteen years ago by sinking a field goal from three point range during the game at age 80 or 81.

Sincere congratulations are extended from the Towns County Herald and this reporter to Kennedy Henson for reaching the 1,000 points milestone against what no doubt appeared at times to be insurmountable odds but with determination and perseverance not often seen bringing this accomplishment about. And best wishes are extended to Kennedy for great success in future athletic endeavors and especially in the game of life.

## Indians... continued from 2B

a pair of baskets by McTaggart getting the Indians a 55-47 lead at 2:40.

But once again Lincoln threatened by using a trey and deuce to edge to within 55-52 at the 1:35 mark only to have Berrong come up with a steal near mid court and take the ball to the basket for a 57-52 Indians lead at the 1:14 mark. The Devils were unable to connect for points again and Berrong added a free throw at 9.1 seconds after claiming a defensive rebound and setting the final score at 58-52 in favor of the Indians and clinching the regular season Region 8A Public championship.

McTaggart led the Indians in scoring for the game with 20 points and was followed by Moss with 13, Berrong with 11, Crowder

with 8, and Ellis with 6 while leaders in assists were Ellis with 6, Berrong and junior Kyle Oakes with 3 each, and Crowder and McTaggart with 2 each. McTaggart also led in rebounds with 10 and was followed by Crowder with 7, Berrong with 5, Moss with 4, and Ellis with 3. Ellis led in steals with 2 and McTaggart in blocked shots with 3.

After sinking just three of 15 field goal attempts in the first quarter, the Indians sank a stunning 20 of 23 attempts the final three quarters and were 6 for 8 at the line, compared to 12 for 18 for the Red Devils.

The Devils got a home court 78-69 victory over Greene County on Friday night and completed regular season play with an overall 8-9 record but including 7-5 for a

third place finish in region play behind the Indians and second place Social Circle who survived a massive fourth quarter comeback by Commerce on Friday night before getting a 64-63 overtime win for a 10-2 region record and 15-8 overall.

Footnote: Some readers will recall that stats other than scoring were not available for the Indians game at Lake Oconee Academy by press time for last week's Herald. Assist leaders were Berrong, Ellis, and Oakes with 3 each and Moss with 2. Rebounds: Floyd with 6; Berrong, Hampton and Moss with 5 each; Crowder, McClure, and Oakes with 3 each. Steals: Crowder and McClure with 3 each and McTaggart and Oakes with 2 each. Blocks: McTaggart had one.

## Register now for Baseball, Softball and T-ball

Baseball, Softball, T-Ball registration is now open at townscountyrec.com or come by and register! \$60 registration fee includes, hat, jersey and pants. Some age groups also receive a belt and socks.

Registration will run through the end of February!

Baseball 14U, 12U, 10U, 8U. Softball 14U, 12U, 10U, 8U. T-Ball Co-ed 5 and 6 year old.

Player control date is September 1st of Current year (2021): 14U Birthdate range September 2, 2006 to September 1, 2008. 12U Birthdate range September 2, 2008 to September 1, 2010.



10U Birthdate range September 2, 2010 to September 1, 2012. 8U Birthdate range September 2, 2012 to September 1, 2014. T-Ball Birthdate range September 2, 2014 to September 1, 2016.