

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Soccer: Boys defeat Commerce 8-1; Lady Indians fall in season opener

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

After having to reschedule and cancel games in the opening weeks of the 2020 soccer season due to inclement weather, both Towns County Soccer Teams traveled to Commerce on Tuesday, March 3, for their season openers.

The Indians, under second-year Head Coach Rollie Thomas, started their season 1-0 after handing the Commerce Tigers their third loss of the year.

Last year, the Indians advanced to the postseason for the first time in school history, and Thomas said he is expecting another run in the playoffs. The Indians went undefeated in the area in 2019 but struggled against teams from outside the Single-A Public Area, Thomas said.

Things got off to a fast start for the Indians that Tuesday as they jumped out to a 5-0 lead in the first half.

They continued their offensive dominance in the second half, adding three more goals to take an 8-1 lead over the Tigers, and Junior Peyton Barrett finished the day with four goals and one assist in Commerce.

Junior Jenson Brown also scored two goals and got an assist, and he dominated the midfield on both sides of the ball to create opportunities, Thomas said.

"He was very instrumental in all of our set pieces," Thomas said.

Having Brown move back to Towns County has really helped the Indians, Thomas said, especially given the loss of several seniors and Danny Cornett.

Junior Garrett Oakes also



Peyton Barrett and his grandfather Darrell Barrett after the Commerce game. Peyton scored four goals in the 8-1 win over the Tigers. He had a bunch of bad touches and lost our shape multiple times. I was extremely proud of how we battled and stayed positive with each other.

The Indians will go on the road again Tuesday, March 10, to face Washington-Wilkes as they look to improve to 2-0 in the area.

Lady Indians Soccer fell to a 5-0 Lady Tigers team in Commerce on March 3 to lose their season opener.

In their first five games, the Lady Tigers have outscored their opponents 44-2 and climbed their way to the top of Single-A Public Schools.

Last season, the Lady Indians graduated several great players who helped the team advance to back-to-back second-round playoff appearances under former Head Coach John Cornett, who moved back home to Maine last year.

In the team's first game under first-year Head Coach Clay Livingston, the Lady Indians gave up three goals in the first half and six more in the second half, falling to an undefeated Commerce team 9-1.

"I don't think we played as bad as the score may imply," Livingston said. "We performed

like it was our first game. We had a bunch of bad touches and lost our shape multiple times. I was extremely proud of how we battled and stayed positive with each other.

"There were plenty of opportunities for our girls to lose their composure and they didn't. The only card we got was ticky tack (a light foul). Having said that, we obviously have a long way to go."

And the girls have certainly been putting in the work to improve, holding quality practices Thursday and Friday of last week.

"We will just keep plugging away and try to get better every day," Livingston said. "I was certainly hoping for a better outcome in my first game as head coach, but it is not about me. I was very proud of their response to a tough game and have not lost my faith in the fact that we will have a successful season."

The Lady Indians will take the field prior to their Indians counterparts on Tuesday, March 10, at 5 p.m. in Wilkes County as they look to bounce back with a win on the road over the Lady Tigers of Washington-Wilkes.

## Indians Baseball off to a great start with 4-1 record and Top 20 placement

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Indians Baseball Team has won four of its first five games of the 2020 season on the road, including the three games played recently in Savannah and the season opener at Riverside Military Academy.

Returning from their trip to the Hostess City of the South, the Indians were hoping to get right back to playing on the road for a scheduled match against Tallulah Falls March 4, but Towns County was unable to take the field that day due to weather.

The Indians also had to reschedule the team's 100-Inning Fundraiser Baseball Game, Head Baseball Coach Shannon Floyd said, because four starters were unable to play

on Saturday, March 7, due to a HOSA - Future Health Professionals field trip.

They took to the road Monday, March 9, for an out of state matchup against the Copper Basin Cougars of Copperhill, Tennessee. The game occurred after press time.

Towns County will host back-to-back home games on Wednesday, March 11, and Thursday, March 12, at Towns County High.

The Indians will face the Hiwassee Dam Eagles of North Carolina for their home opener March 11 at 4:30 p.m.

For their second home game this week, they will host the Copper Basin Cougars on March 12 at 4:30 p.m.

By press time, the Indians were ranked 16th in the Georgia Class A Public's Top 20 Standings with a 4-1 record.

Next week, the Indians will play another set of back-to-back games, first against the Union County Panthers away on March 16 at 6 p.m., then at home against Tallulah Falls on March 17 at 4:30 p.m.

Due to inclement weather, the Indians have not been able to play their full schedule, though they are still getting good practice in, as a section of the middle school gym has been converted into an indoor batting cage.

The Towns County Middle School Baseball Team is 2-2 on the season under Head Coach Chris Vardo. The young Indians had an away game in Lumpkin County on Monday, March 9, followed by a home game against the Fannin County Rebels on Tuesday, March 10, at 4:30 p.m. Both games occurred after press time.

Register online at www.GOOOUTDOORSGA.COM; for more information call or email John Nixon at 770-316-8703; johnshawn@bellsouth.net; special classes for groups can be set up.

Know your Georgia laws: Anyone born on or after January 1, 1998 that operates any motorized vessel on the waters of Georgia must have completed a boat education course approved by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Boating under the influence (BUI) of .08 or higher will be charged with

a misdemeanor, punishable with up to a \$1,000 fine and/or 12 months in jail. All vessels built after 1972 must have a complete Hull Identification Number and you need to have on board the following: a current vessel registration in your name, life jackets for everyone on board (children under 13 MUST WEAR a life jacket at all times when the boat is moving), a cell phone, fire extinguisher, visual distress signals, a horn or whistle, a paddle or oar, and navigation lights. NT(Mar11A)SH

## NASCAR 2020

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

### Logano Gets Second Win

PHOENIX, AZ - Four races into the NASCAR Cup season and Joey Logano has captured two of them. His latest win came last Sunday at Phoenix, as he held on to win over a determined Kevin Harvick.

To claim his latest victory, Logano and his team had to overcome several hurdles. First, his car was handling poorly, then on lap 131 of the 312 lap race, he was penalized for a tire violation, after a crewmember lost control of a tire during a routine pit stop.

The race ended under a green-white-checked finish after John Nemechek and Ricky Stenhouse got together bringing out the race's last caution.

The race restarted with Logano leading, followed by Harvick, Kyle Larson, and Kyle Busch. Logano got a good jump, but was never able to pull away from Harvick, who tried twice to pass underneath on the last two laps, but didn't have what he needed and had to settle for second.

"I guess this was just our day," said Logano. "We had so many things go wrong that's unbelievable. We learned today just how good our team is."

Logano's other victory came in the second race of the season at Las Vegas.

Harvick won Stage 1, but didn't have the speed to match Logano's as the laps wound down.

"I had a faster car, but after that last pit stop he gained control," said Harvick. "I got behind and was racing some other cars and we didn't have enough laps left."

Kyle Busch finished third, followed by Kyle Larson, Clint Bowyer, Kurt Busch, Chase Elliott, Aric Almirola, Cole Custer, and William Byron.

The 11th place finisher Brad Keselowski led four times for 82 laps. He was leading the race, but decided to pit for four new tires during the race's last caution. When he returned to the track, he was stuck back in the 14th spot.

"We had lost the lead and knew we had to try something," said Keselowski. "We knew that if we stayed on the track we were going to drop further back. It was a gamble either way we went."

Martin Truex Jr. led twice for 11 laps, but wound up 32nd after being hit from behind by Aric Almirola and pushed into the outside wall.

"What is there to say, I just got run over," said Truex. "He (Almirola) was in back of me. Jimmie (Johnson) was in front. He just tried to wreck me. I don't know what went wrong with him."

Polesitter Chase Elliott led 6 times for 93 laps, but a loose tire forced him to make a green flag pit stop, which put him a lap down.

Top 10 leaders after 4 of 36: 1. Harvick-164, 2. Logano-163, 3. Elliott-144, 4. Bowman-138, 5. Johnson-131, 6. Blaney-123, 7. Larson-121, 8. Almirola-121, 9. DiBenedetto-118, 10. Keselowski-118.

### GIBBS DRIVERS FINISH 1-2-3 AT PHOENIX

Brandon Jones led a trio of Joe Gibbs Toyotas across the finish line in Saturday's Xfinity race. Jones caught and passed Kyle Busch with 20 laps remaining in the 200 lap event for his first win of the season.

"I could not believe he



Logano Gets Second Win

(Kyle Busch) left the bottom (lane) open. We were so strong on that top lane," said Jones, whose victory is the 500th in NASCAR's three national series for Toyota Racing..

Harrison Burton was second, while Busch wound up third.

The remaining top 10 were: Brad Keselowski, Justin Haley, Chase Briscoe, Noah Gragson, Austin Cindric, Ross Chastain, and Riley Herbst.

Top 10 leaders after 4 of 33: 1. H. Burton-176, 2. Briscoe-173, 3. Cindric-155, 4. B. Jones-148, 5. Chastain-146, 6. Gragson-143, 7. Siegler-143, 8. Haley-140, 9. Allgaier-138, 10. Annett-119.

### STEWART TO COMPETE IN XFINITY RACE

Tony Stewart will compete in the NASCAR Xfinity Series race July 4, at Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

The three-time NASCAR Cup Series champion and 2020 NASCAR Hall of Fame inductee will headline the inaugural Xfinity Series event on Indianapolis' 2.439-mile, 14-turn road course. It will be his 28th overall start at the Brickyard, but his first in the Xfinity Series. He has competed in 18 Brickyard 400s, five Indianapolis 500s and four IROC Series races. Stewart is a two-time Brickyard 400 winner (2005 and 2007) and a member of the IMS Hall of Fame.

"Everyone knows what Indy means to me, so I can't think of a better place to race on Fourth of July weekend," said Stewart, who grew up 45 minutes from Indianapolis in the towns of Columbus and Rushville, Indiana. "It's going to be cool making history by turning left and right in a stock car at the Brickyard, and the racing will be full of action and contact. Any time you can drive any race car at the speedway is special, and you know I'm going for the win. The date is already circled on my calendar."

Stewart's most recent road-course outing came in a demonstration run last October at Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas. He took a Ford Mustang specially outfitted with a passenger seat around the 3.426-mile, 20-turn layout and showed Haas F1 Team drivers Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen how to wheel a 3,200-pound race car around the course.

The race will mark Stewart's 95th career Xfinity Series start and his first since the 2013 season opener at Daytona, where he collected his 11th Xfinity Series victory. It will also mark his first NASCAR start since the 2016 NASCAR Cup Series season finale at Homestead-Miami Speedway.

### Other Racing News:

The NASCAR NextGen car, which debuts in 2021 will feature an aluminum wheel with a single lug nut instead of the five-lug pattern that has been a mainstay since the formation of the series. NASCAR is also moving to an eighteen inch wheel because manufacturers want stock cars to be more like production cars.

Race teams know from experience that getting all five lugs on perfectly doesn't always happen. This presents a safety issue, as well as a cost issue if a wheel is damaged. Therefore, one lug offers a better solution.

Once the choice of aluminum alloy was made, going to a single lug was essentially the only option to satisfy financial and safety constraints.

Each car will require between sixty and seventy of the new wheels.

**Racing Joke:** An old time race car driver goes to his doctor and says, "I don't think my wife's hearing is as good as it used to be. What should I do?"

The doctor replies, "Try this test to find out for sure. When your wife is in the kitchen doing dishes, stand fifteen feet behind her and ask her a question. If she doesn't respond, keep moving closer, asking the question until she hears you."

The old driver goes home and sees his wife preparing dinner. He stands fifteen feet behind her and says, "What's for dinner, honey?" No response. He moves ten feet behind her and asks again, but no response. Five feet with still no answer. Finally, he stands directly behind her and asks, "Honey, what's for supper?"

She says, "For the fourth time, I said chicken."

**Weekend Racing:** All three of NASCAR's major series' will be at the 1.5-mile Atlanta Motor Speedway.

Sat, Mar. 14; Truck Series race 3 of 23; Starting time: 1:30 PM ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sat., Mar. 14; Xfinity Series race 5 of 33; Starting time: 4 PM ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Sun., Mar. 15; Cup Series race 5 of 36; Starting time: 2 PM ET; TV: Fox.

**Racing Trivia Question:** What year did Dale Earnhardt Sr. win his last Cup Series championship?

**Last Week's Question:** Who won the 1970 NASCAR Cup Series Championship? Answer: Bobby Isaacs in a Dodge.

Gerald Hodges is a syndicated NASCAR writer and author. His books may be viewed and ordered online at Amazon.com. You may contact him by e-mail at: hodges@race500.com.