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Indians Soccer makes program history with Region Title

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
Sports Writer

The eighth-ranked Towns County men's soccer team made quick work of No. 4 Social Circle on April 13, securing the first Region title in program history with a 9-1 rout that Tuesday.

And the Indians blanked Washington-Wilkes 8-0 on Friday, April 16, for their ninth victory of 2021 – a men's soccer single-season record at Towns County High School.

The Indians entered the spring with unfinished business after COVID-19 shortened a promising 2020 campaign that saw Towns race out to the best start in team history at 3-0.

In the early stages of 2021, the Indians quickly seized control of Region 8-A while climbing to second in the Eurosport.com Class A Public rankings with seven straight

victories to open the year.

Despite consecutive late-season losses to Hart County and Lake Oconee Academy – the latter briefly tightening the standings atop Region 8-A Public – third-year Head Coach Rollie Thomas' squad responded by outscoring the opposition 17-1 over the final two regular-season matches.

In the region-clinching victory over Social Circle last week, seniors Peyton Barrett and Jensen Brown each recorded a four-goal haul while dishing out a pair of helpers. Garrett Oakes chipped in one goal and an assist, and Jordan Lovelace added one dime.

Friday's win over Washington-Wilkes gives the Towns County defense four shutouts on the year as they enter the Class A Public State Tournament outscoring the opposition by a 60-14 clip in 2021.



Congratulations to the Towns County Indians for being Region Champs! Pictured here following their April 13 title-clinching game at home against Social Circle. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

With the No. 1 seed from the 8, the Indians will receive a first-round bye at State with opening-round

action getting underway this week.

Towns County will kick off postseason play at home

on Tuesday, April 27, with a second-round fixture versus the winner of Crawford County and No. 10 Armuchee.

Armuchee enters its third-straight Tournament as the second seed from Region 8. See Soccer Champs, Page 6A

Seniors Peacock, Barnard crowned TCHS Prom King and Queen

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Many high schoolers around the country are missing out on prom this year, but fortunately, the seniors at Towns County High School in a community where the schools have been able to successfully weather the COVID-19 pandemic and stay open year-round.

Thanks to this success, the district was thrilled to host the Towns County High School Prom on Saturday, April 17, at the Recreation and Conference Center in Foster Park.

Juniors and seniors rolled into the prom wearing their best suits, dresses and smiles as they got to have their first major student event since the onset of COVID-19.

In the leadup to the big day, some seniors were



TCHS Seniors Robby Peacock and Lelia Barnard shared a dance as King and Queen of their 2021 Prom April 17. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Hamilton Gardens celebrates bloom; Garden Club hosts sale

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On Saturday, April 17, volunteers with the Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge celebrated the opening of their annual spring event, "A Blooming Affair," featuring the wondrously colorful rhododendrons and azaleas of the gardens.

Coinciding with the spring bloom kick-off that will run through mid-May was the yearly giant plant sale, which saw people lined up to purchase one of hundreds of native and hybrid rhododendrons and native azaleas in the greenhouse of the gardens.

The affair and sale are always well supported by people from all over, and



The Hamilton Gardens greenhouse was the base of operations for the organization's giant plant sale April 17, coinciding with the annual "A Blooming Affair." Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Vaccination efforts continue as state pauses J&J vaccine

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

On April 13, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention along with the Food and Drug Administration recommended a pause in the use of the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

That same day, the Georgia Department of Public Health announced it would be administering the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines only until further notice. All three vaccines that have been used in the U.S. and Georgia are being administered under emergency use authorizations.

"The FDA and CDC are reviewing data involving six reported cases of a rare and severe type of blood clot occurring in women aged 18-48 about a week after vaccination," DPH said last



week. "None of the six cases are in individuals vaccinated in Georgia and are unrelated to the reactions reported last week at the Cumming Fairgrounds site."

As referenced in the DPH statement, in a separate incident from April 7, eight people experienced dizziness or fainting at a vaccination site administering the J&J vaccine in Forsyth County.

"There is no reason to believe there is anything wrong with the vaccine itself, and other individuals who have received the J&J vaccine should not be concerned," Public Health Commissioner Dr. Kathleen Toomey said April 9.

Continuing, "We are looking into what happened and what

may have caused the reactions, including the conditions at the fairgrounds such as heat and the ability to keep the site cool."

DPH paused J&J vaccine administration at that site specifically following the incidents, after total of 425 shots had been administered there that day.

For the federally recommended pause that is currently in effect statewide, Public Health is working to provide Pfizer or Moderna mRNA vaccines for individuals previously scheduled to receive the J&J vaccine.

"Right now, these adverse events appear to be extremely rare, but out of an abundance of caution DPH will temporarily stop the administration of the J&J vaccine while scientists review the data around these cases," DPH said April 13.

See Vaccinations, Page 6A

Brown signs with Berry, experiences banner senior year

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Just two days after helping Indians Soccer earn a program-first Region Title last week, Towns County High School Senior Jensen Brown signed a letter of intent to play soccer for Berry College.

The signing ceremony took place in the campus Media Center last Thursday, April 15, and featured family, friends and coaches congratulating the young man with cake, company and photos.

Brown has been playing soccer for as long as he can remember, including club soccer and two years while attending high school in Pennsylvania,

where his family moved during his freshman and sophomore years before returning to Towns County for his junior year.

And after an incredibly successful senior year as an Indian, in which his team also finished with a record-breaking 9-2 regular season, he's ready to take his soccer playing to the next level as a Berry Viking.

Several factors went into Brown's decision to sign with Berry, like impressive facilities and one of the most beautiful places to attend college anywhere – at 27,000 acres of mostly natural wilderness, Berry has the world's largest campus, hands down.

Then there's the academic scholarship he will be receiving

to attend, and of course it didn't hurt that the Berry soccer coach reached out to Brown to ask if he would be interested in playing on the men's team, "and I couldn't pass it up," he said.

While there, Brown plans on studying secondary education for an eventual career in teaching, with an ultimate goal of embracing his love of the game by becoming a high school soccer coach.

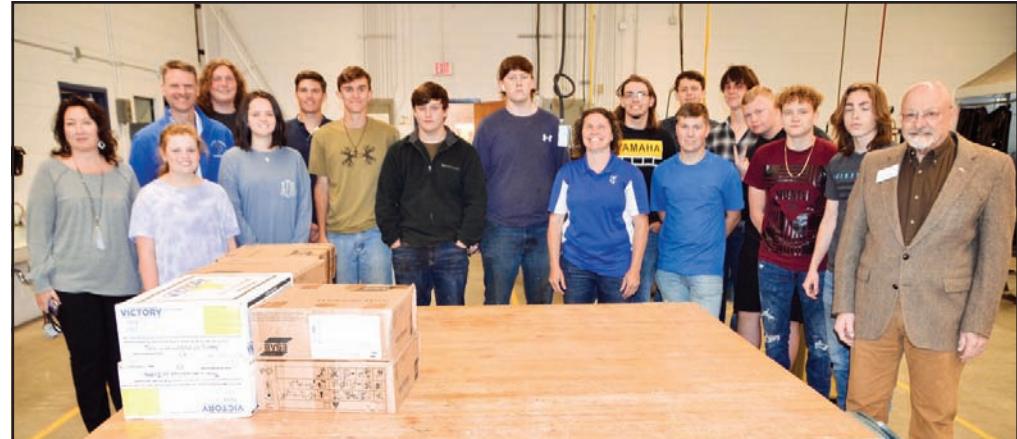
"I've always looked up to my high school coaches and been through their classes in the school," Brown said, "and just that feeling of knowing someone's there for you, pushing you on the soccer

See Brown, Page 6A



TCHS Senior Jensen Brown was honored to have his family and girlfriend attend his Berry College signing ceremony on April 15. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

American Welding Society donates materials to High School



TCHS students were excited to receive a materials donation from Carl Matricardi of the American Welding Society for their Agricultural Mechanics and Metal Fabrication Program last week. Photo by Jarrett Whitener

By Jarrett Whitener
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

On behalf of the American Welding Society, Carl Matricardi donated metal materials such as filler rods and electrodes to Towns County High last week, meeting with staff and students of the Agricultural Mechanics and Metal Fabrication Program on Thursday, April 15.

Matricardi, of Young Harris, has made similar

donations to the school system for the past three years, with this particular contribution coming in around \$1,600 in value.

Giving to the school is part of an initiative to get younger people involved with welding and keep programs like the ones in Towns County running since funds for such programs are often limited.

"We try to support the high schools and technical colleges in any way we can,"

Matricardi said. "The schools don't really have large budgets, so it helps them when folks in the community donate metal or help out with these programs."

Added Matricardi, "We donated some metal from EMS Machine in Gainesville. The other stuff is from the American Welding Society. It is filler wire, and it should help them out quite a bit."

Matricardi finds it See Welding Society, Page 6A

2 Sections 12 Pages
Lake Levels
Blue Ridge 1,682.63
Chatuge 1,922.67
Nottely 1,775.47

Inside
Arrests 2A
Chamber 5A
Church 3B
Classifieds 5B
Opinion 4A
Legals 6B
Obits 4B
Sports 2B

SPORTS
BASEBALL
4/20 vs. Lincoln Co.
5:30 PM
4/23 @ Lincoln Co.
Double Header
5 PM

Frank Riley
wins
Smokey Bear
Award
See page 5A

FBLA
Students
Advance to
Nationals
See page 3A

Enotah
Garden Club
RAFFLE
See page 5A