

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Lady Indians Basketball prepares for repeat of 2018-2019 season success

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County Varsity Girls Basketball is putting in hard work this off-season in preparation for the 2019-2020 season starting in late November.

The Lady Indians are coming off a great last season under second-year Head Coach Brian Hunnicutt.

In 2018-2019, the girls finished above .500 with a 14-13 season record, and they had a phenomenal region record, going 7-2 to send them into the postseason.

Finishing the regular season with a 7-2 region win-loss record put them in a three-way tie for Second Place in the region behind Lakeview Academy, giving the Lady Indians a home playoff game against Lanier County.

They dominated Lanier County in the first round with a 76-46 win to advance into the second round, where they fell to Calhoun County.

Coach Hunnicutt and the Lady Indians have been eager to get back to work, and they have been grinding all summer to get bigger, faster and stronger in the



The Towns County Lady Indians in action at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Camp last month in Blairsville. Photo/Todd Forrest

weight room. "Through June, we met at least four days a week if not five, and we went to Union, Highlands and North Georgia to play in tournaments," Hunnicutt said. June 17-18, the Lady Indians were able to get some quality playing time on the court as they competed in Union County's Fellowship of Christian Athletes Basketball Camp.

They played four games over two days, competing against

several high schools from the surrounding North Georgia area at Union County High.

"They won some games, and we lost some games," said Hunnicutt. "They played surprisingly well. They were a little ahead of where I thought we would be with graduating seniors and not having Kennedy (Henson)." Henson was on vacation during the FCA basketball tournament.



Last year, the Lady Indians graduated seniors Taylor Cornett, Kristen Byers and Kenzlee Denton, all of whom played impactful roles during their years in Towns County.

Hunnicutt was very impressed with the way several upcoming juniors, who haven't necessarily seen a lot of varsity time, took to the court, including Jayce Young, Maci Walls and Abby Mauldin. "They really stepped in and filled in nicely, and secondly, our offense was a lot better," he said. "We have the potential to be a lot

better offensive team this year than we were last year. We will suffer a little bit defensively, but the offense is what really impressed me." Offensively, Hunnicutt has been pleased with the performances of several of his athletes this summer. "As far as really surprising me was Jayce Young, in a positive way," Hunnicutt said. "She really stepped up and showed the potential we saw last year and really was an offensive force for us all summer, along with Vanessa Floyd and Sophia Shook.

"Floyd and Shook probably averaged 15 to 20 points in most of the games we played this summer, and Young really stepped up as our third scoring option, and without Henson, that was huge." After two great months of off-season workouts and tournament play, things will scale back, as most of the Lady Indians play softball and run cross country, which begin when school starts in August. But the girls will still be in the weight room and working on getting better as they continue to prepare for another great basketball season in 2019.

Register now for Fall Soccer

Towns County Recreation Fall Soccer signups have started!

UFA Mountains Recreation Soccer Families, regular registration for Fall Rec Soccer will continue through July 20th. Beginning July 21st, a late fee will be added to each registration. Register at www.mountains.unitedfa.org. Sign up now to reserve your spot!

5-Star Basketball Camp

5-Star Basketball Camp with Director: Ray Porredon and Asst. Coach: Lowell Hamilton. Date: July 22nd, 23rd, & 24th. Time: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Ages: 8-17. Location: Towns County Recreation Department. Cost: \$75. Call: (706) 304-8402 to register.

Chatuge Shore Ladies Golf results



Play day July 2nd game was team net score on par 3s and par 4s, 2 net best ball and par 5s one net best ball. The winners are: 1st Place Barbara Boswell, Gail Cole and Bonnie Shore. 2nd Place Kathy Stewart, Karen Whittaker, Janet Woodruff. Pictured: Carol Baxter. T0J10.F3JSH

Free Pickleball lessons on Saturdays



The Georgia Mountain Pickleball Club is inviting you to come to the Towns County Pickleball Complex for free pickleball lessons. We hold these every Saturday morning at 9 AM and they're absolutely free. All you need are comfortable clothing and a pair of non-marking shoes. We have loaner paddles and balls for your use. You've seen all the pickleball activity going on there. Come and join the group and find out what all the fun and excitement is about. This is a sport for all ages and skill levels and is the fastest growing sport in the world. It's a good way to get fun exercise, lose extra pounds and meet a lot of new friends.

The Towns County Complex is right across the highway from the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds entrance. We hope to see you there Saturday! Visit our web site: www.georgiamountainpickleball.com/. T0J10.F3JSH

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NASCAR 2019

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Justin Haley Wins Coke Zero 400



DAYTONA BEACH, FL - Justin Haley was declared the winner of Sunday's postponed Cup Series race after an extensive rain and lightning delay ended the race on lap 127 of the scheduled 160 laps. The win came in only his third Cup Series start. Haley led only one lap after inheriting the lead on lap 126 when Kurt Busch pitted under caution after a wreck. Busch was called into his pits, because his team thought green flag racing would continue. Just a few seconds after Busch pitted, lightning struck nearby and NASCAR put out the red flag. "It's absolutely a blessing," Haley said. "It's pretty incredible that I have so many great people around me that have given me this opportunity to come here to this level and stage that we are performing on."

The 20-year-old was also the runner-up in Friday's Xfinity Series race.

William Byron was second, followed by Jimmie Johnson, Ty Dillon, Ryan Newman, Corey LaJoie, Aric Almirola, Matt DiBenedetto, Matt Tifft, and Kurt Busch.

About midway of Stage 2, the big wreck, or rather several smaller ones sent cars spinning and sliding into the outside wall and down into the infield grass. Kevin Harvick got into Brad Keselowski and knocked him into the wall. Keselowski's day was finished, while Harvick was able to continue. Also caught up were the cars driven by Daniel Hemric and Daniel Suarez.

Joey Logano and Austin Dillon won Stage 1 and 2 respectively, in a race highlighted by car manufacturers teaming up with one another. Driving became much more aggressive as Stage 2 went on, with drivers thinking the race may end due to approaching storms. The Coke Zero 400 was originally scheduled for Saturday night, but weather forced NASCAR to move the race to Sunday. The race was moving along Sunday as scheduled until lightning struck nearby and cars were called down pit road.

Top-10 leaders after 18 of 36: 1. Logano-700, 2. Kyle Busch-682, 3. Harvick-625, 4. Keselowski-613, 5. Truex-597, 6. Hamlin-588, 7. Elliott-585, 8. Kurt Busch-564, 9. Bowman-534, 10. Almirola-512.

Sunday's race was the last time Daytona International Speedway will host NASCAR races on the Fourth of July weekend, a tradition dating back 61 years. In an effort to change up the playoff picture in 2020, NA-

SCAR will begin and end its regular season at the iconic track. Daytona will play host to next year's regular-season finale on Aug. 29 and retain the tradition of holding the first race of the season in February.

CHASTAIN WINS DAYTONA XFINITY RACE. Ross Chastain held off teammates Justin Haley and AJ Allmendinger to win Friday night's rain-delayed Xfinity Series race at Daytona.

Kaulig Racing entered three cars in a race for the first time and had all three cars cross the finish line. Allmendinger, who made his first start of the year for the team, finished third, but was disqualified after his car failed post-race inspection and placed last. "Oh my gosh, we did it!" Chastain said. "I sat here as a kid. I watched these races as a kid every Fourth of July, never could come in the spring because we were growing watermelons. These guys right here gave me a race car that, oh my gosh, could win a race at Daytona!"

The top-10 finishers: 1. Chastain, 2. Haley, 3. Christopher Bell, 4. Austin Cindric, 5. Stephen Leicht, 6. Brandon Brown, 7. Jeff Green, 8. Gary Gaulding, 9. Jeremy Clements, 10. Matt Mills.

Top-10 leaders after 16 of 33: 1. Reddick-718, 2. Bell-642, 3. Custer-637, 4. Cindric-599, 5. Allgaier-573, 6. Gragson-526, 7. John Nemechek-504, 8. Haley-501, 9. Annett-500, 10. Briscoe-498.

PHELPS SPEAKS ABOUT NASCAR'S FUTURE. NASCAR president Steve Phelps spoke to a group of news journalists last Friday at Daytona. He touched on numerous subjects from the fan reaction of the new aero-engine package to changing the NASCAR business model to future Cup Series schedules. "I think the racing product has been exceptional," he said. "The good news is, it's not just me ... by and large the fans are incredibly excited about what they're seeing. From a (data perspective) I'm very pleased with what the 2019 racing has looked like."

"We are continuing discussions with our stakeholders about where we are going to race in 2021. Our broadcast partners have a voice. Our teams have a voice. All the stakeholders have a voice. The 2021 schedule is important to us. Our two largest voices are our fans and broadcast partners. We're going to continue and study it and figure out where to go. That dovetails into where we are going to go with our sanctions. It's very important to us to get this right. We normally announce our next schedule on (or about) April 1. We have some time here. We want to get this thing right."

Q: Is it fair to assume fans want more short tracks and road courses? Phelps: "I think they've said that. We have to watch this. When I first came into this sport, fans didn't like road courses. They like it now. It's about the racing. Do we want to listen to what the fans have to say? We absolutely do. Are fans speaking loudly about seeing more short tracks and road courses? Yes."

Q: Will we see a reduction of races in the future? Phelps: "The current thinking, the way I see it, is we will not reduce the number of races in 2021. I would say it's on the table. Part of it has to do with our broadcast partners. I would sug-

gest that they would like to have more NASCAR content, more races, because it drives ratings."

Q: Do you feel your disqualification policy is working as it was intended? Phelps: "The disqualifications we've had, we feel it's working the way it's supposed to work. I think it is a deterrent model that seems to be working. We've had none on the Monster Energy Cup Series side. We don't want to disqualify anyone, it's not the business we want to be in, but we need to make sure the rules are in place and that we are going to officiate this sport as fair as we can. Thus far, it has worked well."

Q: What is the feedback from race fans about the current package used in the Cup Series? Phelps: "There are significantly more fans who like this package than who don't like it. Are we going to make every fan happy? We will not. I wish we could. People like different things, different styles of racing. The majority of races we've had this year have passed the eyeball test. They have for me and the majority of fans that we are talking to."

Racing Joke: Brad and Joey are leaving the race car shop and heading home. They are riding in Brad's car. Suddenly Brad pulls into a Starbucks and orders a cup of coffee. He asks Joey if he would like one, also. "No, When I drink coffee I can't sleep," said Joey.

"Really? I have the exact opposite, said Brad "Wow, seriously?" "Yes, when I sleep I can't drink coffee."

Weekend Racing: NASCAR's Cup, Xfinity, and Truck Series teams will be at the 1.5-mile tri-oval in Sparta, Kentucky for three night races. Thurs, July 11; Truck Series race 13 of 23; Starting time: 7:30 PM ET; TV: FoxSports1. Fri, July 12; Xfinity Series race 17 of 33; Starting time: 8 PM ET; TV: NBCSN.

Sat, July 13; Cup Series race 19 of 36; Starting time: 7:30 PM ET; TV: NBCSN.

Racing Trivia Question: Who is the current driver of the No. 3 Chevrolet made famous by Dale Earnhardt?

Last Week's Question: What year did Rusty Wallace win the Cup Series championship? Answer: It was 1989.

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