

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Softball: Lady Indians look ahead after two tough losses to start 2019 season



Senior catcher Sophia Shook at the plate during the home opener vs George Walton. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Chad Stack
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Lady Indians played hard but dropped their season opener 10-1 at Gilmer County on Tuesday, Aug. 6, under first-year Head Softball Coach Clay Livingston.

Junior Kennedi Henson started on the mound Tuesday but only pitched a couple of innings, as Livingston tried to ease her back into a starting role after she missed most of last season due to injury.

Behind home plate, senior Sophia Shook, who is also the team's "onfield captain and leader," has continued to grow and develop into a solid catcher for the Lady Indians, Livingston said.

"Sophia and Kennedi have also been our leaders at the plate so far, having been involved in all of our run production," he said.

The Lady Indians only scored one run against the Lady Bobcats that Tuesday after Shook reached base, with sophomore right fielder Alyssa Moss knocking an RBI single to bring Shook home.

Moss went 4-for-5 at the plate Tuesday in Gilmer but did not see any at-bats during the home opener against region opponent George Walton Academy on Thursday, Aug. 8.

After a tough season opener against the Lady Bobcats, the Lady Indians suffered another tough loss last week against the Lady Bulldogs.

Livingston once again called on Henson to start for the Lady Indians, and though she struggled in the first inning, she made a great defensive play on the mound after giving up

three hits in a row by throwing the runner out at first base for the first out.

Sophomore Hannah Wecer and junior second baseman Jayce Young were able to help in stopping the Lady Bulldogs' offense by fielding two more outs to end the first inning down 3-0.

Henson picked things up on the mound in the second, successfully fielding, then throwing out the first two batters who attempted to bunt.

With two outs, the Lady Bulldogs battled and were able to get three hits and two runs to take a five-run lead over the Lady Indians, who didn't generate any offense in the bottom of the second.

The junior pitcher closed the top of the third, fanning two batters and fielding another bunted ball for the throw-out at first.

The Lady Indians started to develop some offense in the bottom of the third when freshman third baseman Jenna Durham got a base-hit single. Durham was thrown out as she tried to steal second base, however, during junior Kenzie Livingston's at-bat.

Livingston struck out for the second out, and Young connected but was unable to beat the throw to first for the third out.

Starting the top of the fourth, Moss made a great play in right field, catching a fly ball for the first out. After the Lady Bulldogs hit a single, Shook completed a great throw to Young at second as the baserunner attempted to steal.

Unfortunately, Young lost control of the ball as she was making the tag, and things got away from the girls after that error at second base.

The Lady Bulldogs scored four more runs to take a 9-0 lead in the fourth.

Henson served as lead-off batter in the bottom of the fourth, hitting a single before stealing second base during Shook's at-bat. Shook hit a ground ball and was thrown out at first, but not before putting Henson in scoring position at third.

After junior first baseman Abby Mauldin grounded out for the second out, sophomore shortstop Rylie Livingston stepped to the plate and drove Henson in with an RBI single for the team's first run of the game.

The team's only other senior, Jessica Taylor, was thrown out at first for the third out to close the inning after hitting a ground ball.

The young Lady Indians continued to battle in the bottom of the fifth but were unable to generate any more offense, falling to the Lady Bulldogs 11-1.

"The most positive thing about this team is the character of these girls," Livingston said. "We played two very good teams this week. We have had some solid play in the field from Alyssa Moss, as well as some good at-bats from Abby Mauldin and Jenna Durham.

"I know myself as well as Coach (Chris) Vardo and Coach (Zeke) Gribble still feel very strongly that this team will be a strong contender come region tourney time."

The Lady Indians will play back-to-back home games this week, one against Rabun County on Wednesday, Aug. 14, at 4:30 p.m. and another against Providence Christian Academy on Thursday, Aug. 15, at 5 p.m.

Chatuge Shores Ladies Golf Eclectic Tournament results



At Big Canoe 2 day tournament: Cathy Clement, Mary Mott, Vicky Healy, Glenda Geddings, Terie McComb, Pam Herrick, Bonnie Shore and Claudia Rinaldo

Tuesday the 6th of August was our second and final week for our Eclectic Tournament. A great turn out, weather was good and most stayed after for a wonderful lunch pre-

pared by Claudia and Elliott.

And the winners are and congratulations to all for participating in the tournament: 1st Gross - Judy Schmitt, 82 (match of cards); 1st Net - Bon-

nie Shore, 60; 2nd Gross - Claudia Rinaldo 82 (match of cards); 2nd Net - Janet Woodruff, 61; 3rd Net - Mary Reece, 66 (match of cards); Net - Lorene Avery, 66 (match of cards). (Aug14,GI)SH

NASCAR 2019

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

"Happy" Harvick's Fuel Gamble Pays Off

BROOKLYN, MI - Kevin Harvick gained his second Cup Series race of the season by taking a fuel gamble in the closing laps of Sunday's 200-lap event.

"I wasn't sure we had enough fuel to take us to the end, but we came here to win, and just thought, 'what the heck,'" said Harvick. "I may have driven the winning car, but it took a lot of people to get this win. There was a lot of strategy and teamwork that went into it."

Harvick's other win of the season came at New Hampshire in July.

The race's last caution came during lap 149 after a spin out by Ricky Stenhouse Jr. On the restart, the Penske Racing Ford's, driven by Joey Logano, Brad Keselowski, Ryan Blaney, and Paul Menard were running 1-2-3-4, while Harvick was fifth.

Harvick passed Menard, Blaney, and Keselowski within 15 laps. By lap 173, he had caught Logano and was able to pass him for the lead on the next lap.

Neither of the Penske cars had enough fuel to take them to the end of the race, and all had to pit for a splash of fuel. Menard wound up 15th, while Logano was 17th. Pole-sitter Keselowski led the most laps (66), but finished 19th, with Blaney 24th.

Runner-up Denny Hamlin led twice and had enough fuel to go the distance, but lacked the speed necessary to overtake Harvick. He was able to close the gap but didn't have the needed horsepower.

"It was a good day for us, but we got behind Kevin and wasn't able to get a run on him," said Hamlin. "I think if we could have gotten to him, we could have raced for the lead. We gave too much away on that last restart."

Kyle Larson was third, followed by Martin Truex Jr., Daniel Suarez, Kyle Busch, Ryan Preece, William Byron, Chase Elliott, and Alex Bowman.

Jimmie Johnson continues to struggle and is now 18th in points with just three races left in the regular season. He scraped the outside wall during lap 16 and finished 34th.

Top-16 leaders with three races to go before the Chase begins: 1. Kyle Busch-892, 2. Logano-872, 3. Harvick-822, 4. Hamlin-815, 5. Truex-805, 6. Keselowski-754, 7. Elliott-711, 8. Kurt Busch-701, 9. Blaney-654, 10. Bowman-653, 11. Almirola-645, 12. Byron-642, 13. Larson-624, 14. Jones-623, 15. Newman-569, 16. Bowyer-559. Only the top-16 drivers are eligible to begin the 2019 Chase.

CINDRIC GETS XFINITY ROAD COURSE VICTORY

Austin Cindric won Saturday's Xfinity Series road course race at Lexington, OH. Christopher Bell was second, followed by AJ Allmendinger, Tyler Reddick, Noah Gragson, Justin Allgaier, Chase Briscoe, Cole Custer, Justin Haley, and Brandon Jones.

Top-10 leaders after 21 of 33: 1. Reddick-929, 2. Bell-

VFW Golf League results

Chatuge Shores Golf Course hosted the annual Veterans Golf League, Par 3 Tournament on August 8th. Low gross winners were: 1st place Bill Bongiovanni, 2nd place Mel Halfon and 3rd place Kenny Price. Low net winners were: 1st place Ray Ide, 2nd place Gary Jones and 3rd place Gary Nicholson. Congratulations!



"Happy" Harvick's Fuel Gamble Pays Off

901, 3. Custer-824, 4. Allgaier-773, 5. Cindric-746, 6. Briscoe-703, 7. Gragson-702, 8. Haley-658, 9. Annett-657, 10. Nemechek-613.

HILL WINS MICHIGAN TRUCK RACE

Here are the results of Saturday's Truck Series race at Brooklyn, Mich. 1. Austin Hill, 2. Sheldon Creed, 3. Tyler Dipple, 4. Brett Moffitt, 5. Austin Self, 6. Bayley Currey, 7. Grant Enfinger, 8. Stewart Friesen, 9. Roy Ciccarelli, 10. Matt Crafton.

The Truck Series Chase field is set. Grant Enfinger clinched the regular-season championship. The first of seven playoff races for the championship will start next week at Bristol. 1. Moffitt-2022, 2. Enfinger-2019, 3. Friesen-2014, 4. Hill-2012, 5. Chastain-2012, 6. Crafton-2011, 7. Sauter-2009, 8. Ankrum.

Even though Enfinger won the regular season title, he did not win any races, which dropped him to second in the playoff standings. Confusing, but that's the way NASCAR set it up.

DIBENEDDETTO STILL HAS WINNING HOPES

Matt DiBenedetto, driver of the No. 95 Leavine Family Toyota still has the dream of reaching Victory Lane in one of the NASCAR Cup Series races.

Dibenedetto's sixth-place finish at Watkins Glen was his fourth top-ten of the year.

"That was another good run man," he said at The Glen. "That was so much fun. It's always fun driving through the field at these road courses. I don't know, I guess we're road course aces here. It's not my background but it's just fun, I love doing it."

This is his fifth season full-time at the Cup level.

After forming a technical alliance with Joe Gibbs Racing prior to this season and switching to Toyota, Leavine Family Racing has shown notable improvement on the track since the season-opener where DiBenedetto led the most laps in the Daytona 500.

His best result came at Sonoma Raceway though where he placed fourth in the No. 95 LFR Toyota Camry. Two weeks later, he finished inside the top-five again at New Hampshire Motor Speedway.

Despite the recent results, the 28-year-old's future with the team is uncertain as JGR looks to find room for rising star Christopher Bell.

In 2013, DiBenedetto joined Vision Racing to drive the No. 37 car part-time in the Nationwide Series and also started and parked the few races he was in. DiBenedetto later looked back at the start-and-park time as valuable for the seat time it gave him, which paid off later in his career.

During the 2014 season's Subway Firecracker 250

at Daytona, DiBenedetto replaced Jeffrey Earnhardt in the No. 4 JD Motorsports Chevy during the first caution due to Earnhardt suffering a fractured collarbone in a motorcycle accident during the week. For the second race he joined the Motorsports Group, where he started-and-parked the No. 46 Chevrolet for 12 races and raced the rest with the No. 40. He scored two top-15 place finishes at Road America and Mid-Ohio. DiBenedetto finished a career-high 21st in points.

In 2016, he made his return in the Xfinity Series driving the No. 10 Camry for TriStar Motorsports at Fontana, where he started 33rd and finished 40th after starting and parking. At the Fall Texas race, he crashed into the outside wall in turn 4 ending in a concussion and not racing in the Cup race the following day.

"I'm fighting for my life," he continued. "Everybody knows. They see the headlines and all the mess in the media. I'm just fighting for my life and my ride is all I live for so I hope I can stay with this team for a long time."

"I've known forever that this is what I'm meant to do, this is what I live, eat, sleep and breathe. I know Victory Lane is coming, I hope they keep me around on this team for a long time to come so I can take them to their first victory."

Racing Joke: After the Phoenix race, Kevin and his wife decide to stay over for an extra day. The next morning Kevin goes to a nearby stable, rents a horse and takes a ride into the desert, along with their family dog.

After going along for about a mile, the dog says, "I can't do this. I need water."

Kevin says, "I didn't know dogs could talk."

"Me neither," said the horse.

Weekend Racing: NASCAR racing moves to Bristol's high banks for three night races.

Thurs, Aug. 15; Truck Series race 17 of 23; Starting time: 8:30 PM ET; TV: FoxSports1.

Fri, Aug. 16; Xfinity Series race 22 of 33; Starting time: 7:30 PM ET; TV: NBCSN.

Sat, Aug. 17; Cup Series race 26 of 36; Starting time: 7:30 PM ET; TV: NBCSN.

Racing Trivia Question: How many races per year are held at the Bristol track?

Last Week's Question: Which NASCAR series does Brendan Gaughan drive in? Answer: He drives the No. 62 part-time in the Cup Series, as well as the No. 3 in the Xfinity Series.

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.