

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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TCMS: Lady Indians enjoying 6-2 season so far; Indians improve to 7-1

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The Towns County Middle School Lady Indians fell to 6-2 on the season after a loss to the Commerce Lady Tigers on Saturday, Dec. 14.

After serving as the Lady Indians assistant coach and head Junior Varsity coach under Lady Indians Head Coach Brian Hunnicutt for two years, Rollie Thomas accepted the head coaching role at the middle school this year.

Thomas said bringing the high school system into the middle school will help to develop the girls, and they will know what is expected of them when they move on to the next level.

Through eight games, Thomas said he is impressed with the team's intensity, work ethic and their will to keep fighting no matter the score.

The girls have adjusted to the new system really well, but Thomas said they still need to improve with ball handling.

For several years, the middle school teams have played in the Smoky Mountain Region, though this year they are playing in the Tri-State Region.

The Lady Indians started the season 2-0 before a tough loss at Hebron Christian Academy on Monday, Dec. 2.

After dropping their first loss to the Lady Lions, the Lady Indians went on to win three in



McKayla Aston pulls up for a jump shot. Photo/Chad Stack

a row before losing Saturday to Commerce 42-23, falling to just 6-2 on the season.

The Towns County Middle School Indians are only 7-1 after a big win over the Tigers of Commerce on Dec. 14.

The Indians pulled away in the first quarter 18-0, hold-

ing Commerce scoreless in the opening four minutes of the game. After their 18-0 run, the Indians never looked back, and they defeated the Commerce Tigers 49-19.

Zane Floyd led all scorers with 17 points in the first three quarters, followed by



Tanner Cunningham gets open under the basket for a layup at Commerce. Photo/Chad Stack

Seth Rutan with 12 points.

The Indians team consists of 11 eighth-graders who have been playing together for a long time, Indians Head Coach Shea Taylor said, adding that they are just having fun and playing the game of basketball.

After starting the season 2-0, the Indians lost in overtime to Hebron Christian Academy, handing them their only loss of the season thus far.

The Towns County Middle School teams traveled to Tallulah Falls on Monday, Dec. 16, for games that occurred

after press time. Following the matchup in Tallulah, the Indians will host the Hiwassee Dam Eagles at home on Thursday, Dec. 19. The Lady Indians will tip off at 4:30 p.m., followed by the boys at 6 p.m.

Lady Indians... continued from 2B

but Young sank her second trey of the game at 1:07 for a 34-33 Lady Indians lead.

The Lady Tigers came up with a huge play when they missed a free throw at the one minute mark but corralled the rebound and sank a trey at 55 seconds for a 36-34 lead they would increase to the final winning margin of 39-34 on an old fashioned three points play a 29.8 seconds.

The Lady Indians had several inside shots appearing to be about to fall through the net during the late Commerce scoring run but the shots found a way to either roll or bounce off the rim each time, perhaps a few of those times influenced by defensive contact but they didn't get the judgement calls.

Henson led the scoring for the Lady Indians with 16 points and was followed by Floyd, Sophia Shook, and Young with 6 each.

Henson also led in assists with 6 and rebounds with 8 while Floyd followed with 2 assists and other leaders in rebounds were Young with 6 and Floyd and freshman Sarah Shook with 5 each. Sophia Shook took the lead in steals with 5 and was followed by Sarah Shook with 3.

The Lady Tigers were led in scoring by junior Bryanna Sanders with 13 points and sophomore Lauren Massey with 9.



Junior Kennedi Henson passes to a teammate. She led Towns County with 16 points, 8 rebounds and 6 assists. Photo/Chad Stack

Winter Hiking is wonderful in North East Georgia

Those dramatic displays of colorful autumn leaves have fallen and the familiar chill of winter is in the air. But don't pack away the hiking boots just yet, or you'll miss out on one of the best times of year to hit the trail! Winter hiking in the North Georgia Mountains offers secluded trails, mild temperatures, wide-open vistas, and the chance to see a familiar landscape dusted with snow and ice.

Winter hiking offers the chance for a little serenity on the trail. After the crowds of summer visitors and leaf-watchers have headed home for the season, the forests take on a quiet stillness. It's not uncommon to find yourself alone on a trail that typically draws crowds in other seasons.

Long gone are the sweltering temperatures of Georgia summer. The dry, chilly air of winter is a welcome relief from the heat and humidity of summertime. Brisk mornings may require gloves, hat, and layers, but afternoons typically climb to milder temperatures perfect for hiking. Layering is the key to staying comfortable on the trail in winter. A lightweight, insulated jacket over a sweat-shirt or fleece keeps the cold at bay and packs easily in a backpack when the temperatures rise.

One of the best things



about wintertime hiking adventures are the wide-open views. Many of North Georgia's mountain tops are thick with trees, offering only occasional views from rocky outcrops. But in winter, leafless trees open up vistas otherwise hidden by leaf cover in warmer months. Try hiking a familiar summertime favorite in the winter, and you'll be surprised at the fantastic views that have been hiding behind the leafy canopy all summer and fall.

What could be more magical than hiking after a snowfall? Winter offers the rare chance to enjoy the forest's evergreen branches covered with fresh snow and catch fragile icicles glistening from the faces of tumbling waterfalls. A light dusting of snow, a thin layer of delicate ice, or a wintery fog transforms a familiar landscape into a whole new experience for the senses.

Favorite Local Wintertime Hikes

The area surrounding Hiwassee and Young Harris is prime for hiking and backpacking adventures. Here are a few of our favorite local wintertime hikes.

High Shoals Falls: Explore two stunning waterfalls on one scenic trail. This hike trails through a lush forest of towering trees visiting Blue Hole Falls and High Shoals Falls. When temperatures dip below freezing, the falls are a great place to catch icicles hanging from the rocky ledges.

Unicoi Gap to Rocky Mountain on the Appalachian Trail: It's a workout, for sure, but the views are worth the effort. Along the climb, wintertime views open up thanks to bare trees, and the expansive vistas from the summit of Rocky Mountain are breathtaking.

Blood Mountain: Explore the highest elevation peak along the Appalachian Trail in Georgia. The hike to Blood Mountain from Neels Gap is one of North Georgia's most popular treks. The views along the way are outstanding at any time of year, but even better in winter after the autumn leaf drop.

Submitted by Rob Sollie
Trailful Outdoor Co.

NASCAR 2019

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Truex Losing His Crew Chief

Cole Pearn, crew chief for Martin Truex Jr. for over five seasons has decided to leave NASCAR in order to spend more time with his family.

"This was an incredibly difficult decision," Pearn stated, in a team press release. "At the end of the day, I really want to spend time with my family and actually see my kids grow up. Being on the road, you are away from home so much and miss a lot of time with your family. I don't want to miss that time anymore. I want to be there for all the things that my kids are going to experience while they are still young. I love racing and there isn't a better place to be than Joe Gibbs Racing, but I don't want to look back in 20 years and think about everything I missed with my wife and kids while I was gone. They are what is most important to me."

Pearn and Truex saw a multitude of successes together over five seasons. Together they won the 2017 NASCAR Cup Series Championship and went on to qualify for the Championship 4, a total of four times. Their 23 wins since the beginning of the 2016 season are the best among all driver and crew chief combinations in that time span.

Following the 2018 season, Truex and Pearn joined Joe Gibbs Racing after Furniture Row Racing closed. He led Truex and the No. 19 team to a runner-up finish in the 2019 NASCAR Cup Series points standings.

In the 2019 playoffs alone, Pearn, Truex and the No. 19 team won three times and found themselves only finishing outside the top-seven once in 10 races.

"I cannot say enough good things about Cole and what he has meant for my career," Truex said. "I appreciate his hard work and dedication to our race team over the past six years going back to when he was my engineer at Furniture Row. Our friendship is what matters most to me and I'm happy that he's doing what's best for him and his family."

Pearn did not always fit in with what was expected of a crew chief. He refused to wear a firesuit atop the pit box opting to wear a team T-shirt instead.

In talking with him away from the mainstream media, he occasionally shared opinions that did not match those of his competitors. He was not big on social media, and rarely boasted of his team's accomplishments, except to celebrate wins.

The news of his resignation did not come as a surprise to those who have followed his career. He has always said he didn't expect to be a racing-lifer, citing the length of commitment to travel with the sport at the highest level.

He talked about that last week during an appearance on Dave Moody's radio show. "Everybody in the sport understands the grind of what the schedule is," Pearn said. "To do it at the top level, you have to be all the way in. I was somehow making it work with my family until my kids got in school and once they're in school and you have a day off on a Thursday, it really doesn't matter. You pretty much go all week and



Cole Pearn and Martin Truex Jr. in 2017

you barely see 'em.

"I didn't want to look back at my life and miss those moments. For me to get the opportunity to work in racing has been just a dream come true and then to have the success we've had just blows my mind. When you've achieved more than you've ever dreamt, you look at the other things in life you've been missing and I just felt like it was time."

Pearn's resignation wasn't something his team expected to happen this off-season, especially considering Pearn and Truex had arrived at Joe Gibbs Racing as a packaged multi-year deal at the end of the 2018 season.

And racing goes on for the other teams.

Team Penske, which did not have a driver in the championship battle at Homestead, returns the strong lineup of former champions Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano, along with Ryan Blaney. It would be surprising not to see one of them in the championship race in 2020.

One of the more interesting lineups is at Ganassi Racing, where former series champion Kurt Busch elevated the overall performance of the team. Kyle Larson came on strong the second half of the year.

Larson ended a 75-race winless drought and finished sixth in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series standings in 2019.

He accumulated eight top-five and seven top-10 finishes during the campaign that also included a pole position.

Larson made it to the Round of 8 after winning at Dover in October. The victory gave Larson an opportunity to keep his championship hopes alive.

Unfortunately for Larson those dreams ended when he wasn't able to advance to the Championship 4 after the Round of 8.

He has another year on his contract with Ganassi. His current deal allows him to run 25 open wheel dirt races in and around his NASCAR commitment.

The question is whether Ganassi can improve enough in 2020 to keep Larson or will he move to either the No. 48 Hendrick ride vacated by Jimmie Johnson or possibly Stewart-Haas Racing.

How much longer Kevin Harvick races is a question at Stewart-Haas. The former series champion is 44, the same age as Johnson. One major difference is Harvick's

performance has never been better than the last two seasons.

The rest of the lineup with Clint Bowyer, Aric Almirola and the rookie Cole Custer will be under pressure to be more on par with Harvick.

Hendrick Motorsports showed flashes of getting back on track with Chase Elliott clearly the best road racer in the series right now. Elected NMPA Most Popular Driver for the second straight year, Elliott looks to go from playoff driver to a true championship contender.

Alex Bowman won his first race in 2019 and William Byron captured five poles, second only to six for Harvick. Byron got stronger as the year went on and it would appear he's a likely candidate to become a first-time winner in 2020.

While there are plenty of other changes with Richard Childress Racing, Roush-Fenway Racing, Richard Petty Motorsports and JTG Daugherty Racing, next year's main storyline will center on Johnson's last attempt at a record-breaking eighth NASCAR Cup Series title.

Racing Joke: During the off season Kevin goes to the doctor for his yearly routine physical. The nurse chats with him about the basic health questions.

"How much do you weigh?" she asks.

"Oh, about 165 pounds," he said.

The nurse puts him on the scales and his actual weight is 187.

The nurse then asks, "And how tall are you?"

"Oh, about six feet," he said.

The nurse checks and sees that he is only five foot ten. She then takes his blood pressure and tells him its incredibly high.

"High!" Kevin shouts.

"Well, what do you expect? When I came in here today, I was tall and lanky. Now I'm short and fat."

Racing Trivia Question: What year happened to Mark Martin?

Last Week's Question: What year did Dale Earnhardt Sr. win his first Cup Series championship? Answer: He won his first title in 1980 driving for Rod Osterlund by 19 points over Cale Yarborough.

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