

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians end five-game skid with 2-2 draw at unbeaten Union

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Blairsville - The Towns County Indians soccer team tied undefeated Union County 2-2 on Monday, March 23.

In the last 25 seconds of the game, Union senior Kyle Hamby scored on a long ball, ending the Indians' chance to beat their rival Panthers.

"That was a heartbreaker at the end," said Indians Head Coach Michael Huwe. "As a coach, there's lots of times where it's not a prevent defense like in football, but you start playing a little defensive. We had a couple of shots where we didn't crash the net in the end because we were trying to stay back. Maybe it could have gotten us an extra goal, but their player had a beautiful strike from about 30 yards out that hit the upper corner. Really, there's not a lot you can do about that when a player makes a shot that's that good."

Heading into the game, the Indians record was 0-5 and the Panthers were undefeated, sitting at 5-0. Coach Huwe said that in a game that close against a team as good as Union County, a tie is much better than a loss.

"We played as well as I think we can play," said Coach Huwe. "We passed the ball, we had good strikes on goal, we finished, we played great defensively, limited them throughout the entire game, and we played under control. So, it's probably some of the best soccer I've seen us play at Towns County so far. You've just got to be able to reproduce that over and over and over again."

This is not Coach Huwe's first time coaching soccer, either. He played goalie in high school and has coached all levels, from little kids all the way up to assistant coach of



Indians at Union County soccer photos by Lowell Nicholson

other high school and middle school programs.

"Overall, the boys are really coming along," said Coach Huwe. "We're starting to be able to pick out three, four, five mistakes during the course of a game instead of it being three,

four, five good plays in a game. So, they're starting to understand how to play soccer and how to play as a team. Right now, we just don't have the skill to overcome mistakes very easily, so we almost have to be perfect to stay in games.



"But they are playing really well. They're handling the basics - they're trapping, they're passing, they're getting open. They're covering for each other defensively. We've got to eliminate mistakes and we'll be right there with teams."

Making the team are seniors Dallas Manus, Cory Ellis, Grayson Carver, Kyle Davis, Efrén Figueroa; juniors Dalton Bradley, Shea Underwood, Austin Watson, Chaiz Davenport, Gavin Langelier; sophomores Tyler Sisco, Tyler Grimsley, Marshall Ledford, Owen Bouchard; and freshmen Xavier Hogsed, Dawson Hogsed and Trent Whidden.

The boys played their first home game of the year on Friday, March 27, against Lakeview, losing 5-3.

Heading into the half, the score sat at 2-0. Lakeview in the lead. Towns County went on to score three goals in the second half, aided by a brilliant header by a Lakeview player into his own goal.

Coach Huwe acts as head

coach for the boys team, while Coach Tucker Blackmon acts as head coach of the girls team. They are each other's assistant coaches when the other is head coaching.

"The program just needs to have a steady growth," said Coach Huwe. "We need to get the middle school more involved, but where everyone is playing the same system and playing soccer more than just during the season - passing and getting together on weekends

and playing a little bit of soccer will help, too.

"We're a small school, the kids are great. They work hard, they've done everything we've asked of them, and it's just a progression. We're in stage one of a progression that usually takes two or three years. And throughout the season, I mean every game, I can see them grow a little bit, and I think Coach Blackmon would say the same thing."

Indians on the wrong end of no-hitter vs GWA

By Shawn Jarrard
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Staff Writer

The Towns County Indians varsity baseball team lost 11-1 at home against George Walton Academy on Tuesday, March 24.

It just wasn't in the cards for the Indians that day, as the Bulldogs pitcher threw a no-hitter, and George Walton's offense supplied 14 hits, including a 3-run homer in the second inning.

The Bulldogs scored 1 run in the first, 5 in the second, 4 in the fourth and 1 in the seventh inning.

Towns County's single run came in the fifth inning to avoid a shutout, when Adam Barrett, who reached base on a walk, was able to steal home as the Bulldogs attempted to catch Kobe Denton stealing second base.

Barrett came in to pitch at the top of the fifth, and was able to get three strikeouts before the game ended.

Offensively, the Indians were connecting with the ball - just right at Bulldog defenders.

The Indians played three more games last week, losing two and winning one.

Against George Walton Academy away on Thursday, March 26, the Indians lost once more to the bulldogs, but by a slimmer margin, 9-5.

Also away, the Indians faced off against Mount Vernon Presbyterian in a doubleheader on Saturday, March 28.

The first game was an Indian defeat, 12-2, but the second game saw the Indians bouncing right back, winning 5-4 in a close and exciting contest.

Overall, the Indians, headed up by Coach Shannon Floyd with Assistant Coaches Josh Rider and Scott Neal, are sitting right at a 6-8 record for the season, with 2-4 in Region play.

The team has at least nine more games to play before the season is over, and certainly has time to swing its record back to the positive.

On Thursday, April 2, at 6:30 p.m., and Friday, April 3, at 5 p.m., the Indians will play against Athens Christian, away and home.

Nearly a week later during spring break, the Indians will play Providence in a doubleheader at home, Thursday, April 9, beginning at noon.

After that, Towns County heads to Commerce on Monday, April 13, to play at 5 p.m., only to come back home to face them again on Tuesday, April 14, at 5:30 p.m.

Hebron Christian will be the next opponent for the Indians, as they play home on Thursday, April 16, at 5:30 p.m., and away on Friday, April 17, at 5 p.m.

The last two games of the year will be against Lakeview, away on Tuesday, April 21, at 5 p.m., and home on Friday, April 24, at 5:30 p.m.

Be sure to head to the games to support the Towns County baseball program.

NASCAR 2015

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Hamlin holds off Keselowski

MARTINSVILLE, Va. — Denny Hamlin ended a 31-race winless streak as he held off a hard-charging Brad Keselowski to win Sunday's Sprint Cup race by less than two-tenths of a second.

The race was characteristic Martinsville, because of the bumping and shoving, but it was also the best Cup race of the season so far.

Hamlin, who led 91 laps took the lead from Matt Kenseth on lap 473 of the 500-lap race and held on for his first Cup win of the season, which automatically assures him a Chase spot.

"It was just a great car the guys gave me today," said Hamlin. "If I hadn't won, I would have been disappointed. I've missed out on a lot of wins here because of mechanical problems, but we weren't to be denied today."

Brad Keselowski, winner of last week's Cup race in California caught up with Hamlin on lap 485. He remained on his rear bumper for the last 15 laps, but was unable to get by.

"I really wanted to win," said Keselowski. "I really wanted one of those clocks the winners get. We had the car but just couldn't quite make the move we needed."

Keselowski's teammate and polesitter, Joey Logano was third.

"I was just watching and trying to keep up there at the end," he said. "Our car went away during the center of the race, and we had to work our way back to the front."

Matt Kenseth was the leader when the race's last caution for debris came out on lap 462. On the restart, he spun his tires, and Hamlin and several other drivers were able to get by him.

"I really thought we had a shot to win," said Kenseth. "We had a good car, but that last restart killed us."

David Ragan, who was substituting for the injured Kyle Busch was fifth, while Martin Truex was sixth.

Danica Patrick was seventh, her highest finish of the season.

Kevin Harvick, who came in eighth, saw his string of top-two finishes end after eight.

Jeff Gordon came on strong in the latter stages of the race, even leading 21 laps. A pit road speeding penalty during the race's last caution sent him to the tail-end of the field, but he still managed a ninth-place finish.

"We struggled early in the race," said Gordon. "We finally got our car in a position to win, then -oh my gosh- I really messed up."

Jamie McMurray was the 10th-place driver.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. had a rough day on the track. First, his car developed a vibration, which broke the gear shifter, and then he was involved in several accidents, finally running into the back of Paul Menard. His team managed to patch up his damaged car and he returned to the track to finish 36th.

Young Chase Elliott was finally able to realize his dream of one day racing in the Sprint Cup series. The 19-year-old driver was caught up in several racing skirmishes that made his "dream" race appear "nightmarish". He wound up 38th.

There were 16 caution periods for 112 laps.

Top-16 Chase contenders after 6 of 26: 1. Harvick-263, 2. Logano-239, 3. Truex-231, 4. Keselowski-206, 5. Kahne-193, 6. Newman-180, 7. Menard-173, 8. Hamlin-172, 9. Earnhardt-172, 10. Almirola-170, 11. Johnson-168, 12. Kenseth-168, 13. Ragan-163, 14. Mears-161, 15. McMurray-154, 16. Patrick-148.

LOGANO TAKES TRUCK RACE

With his win in Saturday's Truck race at Martinsville, Joey Logano has now won at least one race in all three of NASCAR's major series.

He led 150 laps of the 258-lap race on the way to his first Truck win.

Matt Crafton, who led six times for 100 laps,



Denny Hamlin celebrates his Martinsville Cup win

was second, followed by, Erik Jones, Johnny Sauter, Tyler Reddick, Daniel Suarez, James Buescher, John Wes Townley, Matt Tift, and Justin Boston.

Top-10 leaders after 3 of 23: 1. Crafton-128, 2. Reddick-126, 3. Jones-122, 4. Sauter-112, 5. J. Buescher-100, 6. Townley-90, 7. Black-89, 8. Hayley-84, 9. Gallagher-84, 10. Kennedy-83.

LARSON OUT AT MARTINSVILLE

Kyle Larson, driver of the No. 42 Ganassi Racing Chevrolet didn't make Sunday's Sprint Cup race.

During an autograph session at his hauler on Saturday, Larson fainted and slipped to the pavement unconscious. He was first taken to a Martinsville hospital, where he reported that he was feeling fine. Later, he was transferred to Charlotte's Carolina Medical Center for further evaluation by a neurologist. After the initial examination, it was recommended that he stay over for additional tests on Monday.

A team press release said all tests came back negative and Larson feels completely fine, but his doctors felt like he should be held for more testing, and subsequently, was unable to race at Martinsville.

Regan Smith filled-in for him and finished 16th.

Smith, who drives full time in the Xfinity Series for JR Motorsports, has 175 career Cup starts. He has nine career Cup starts at Martinsville, with a best of 13th in 2011. He has not raced at Martinsville since April 2013.

Smith also filled in for Kurt Busch for the first

three races this year when Busch was suspended.

Larson became the third driver to miss a race this season with medical problems.

Kyle Busch is sidelined indefinitely after breaking his right leg and left foot in the season opening Xfinity Series race at Daytona on Feb. 21.

Brian Vickers, who drives the No. 55 Toyota for Michael Waltrip, is out while being treated for blood clots. He missed the first two races, returned at Las Vegas and Phoenix, and then was pulled out of the car last week prior to the California race.

Meanwhile Joe Gibbs Racing announced that J.D. Gibbs, president of Joe Gibbs Racing, is starting treatment for symptoms impacting areas of brain function. Gibbs has undergone a series of tests after experiencing a gradual onset of symptoms that includes speech and processing issues. Gibbs' doctors believe the complications he has experienced were triggered by head injuries likely suffered earlier in life.

"As he goes through treatment, he will probably be doing less at the race track because he has a full week that demands quite a bit from him as he goes through treatment," said Joe Gibbs. "You will probably see less of him at the race track, but he'll be there on a day-to-day basis with the race team and be in all of our meetings and all of the key decisions that we make, J.D.'s going to have a huge impact on that."

NOTE: There is no NASCAR racing the weekend of April 3-5. Teams have the week off because of the Easter Holiday.

Racing Trivia Question: Where is Cup driver Paul Menard's hometown?

Last Week's Question: The first NASCAR race held at Martinsville Speedway was in 1949. Who was the winner?
Answer: It was Red Byron, driving for Raymond Parks.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at: www.hodges@race500.com.



Towns takes on George Walton Academy last week in Hiawassee. The Indians will be back home on Friday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Recreational Department annual Easter Egg Hunt

The Towns County Recreation Department will be hosting its annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 4, 2015. The hunt will begin promptly at 10:30 a.m. All boys and girls ages four through nine are invited to come out and enjoy the hunt.

The hunt will be held on the recreation ballfields located on U.S. Hwy 76 just west of Hiawassee. Entrance to the ballfield complex will

be through the upper gate located near the Georgia Mountain Fairground Office. We will have over 2,500 eggs, including special prize eggs to be found.

The hunt is free and for all boys and girls ages four through nine. Make plans now to join The Recreation Department on Saturday, April 4, 2015 at 10:30 a.m. For more information contact The Recreation Department at 706-896-2600. TRAPR.F3SH