

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Towns County baseball looks to right the ship after Spring Break

By Joe Collins
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The Towns County High School baseball team is struggling as the mid-season mark comes and goes.

It has been a difficult year for the Indians as they have yet to gain a mark in the win column despite continued improvement at the plate and in the field.

Their last three games have seen the Indians come close to a win but they are still looking for the right combination to gain a victory. Their closest game of the year was at home against Hebron Christian Academy last week taking the Jacks to the sixth inning when Hebron scored one run to take the lead and holding the Indians in the seventh to win.

They then played host to Commerce and put up a solid performance before falling 6-2 followed by Athens Academy who defeated the Indians at home 9-4.

It has been a tough year for the Indians baseball team.

The Hebron Christian Academy Lumberjacks came to town on March 29 and the Indians were near the top of their game as junior Payton Chambers threw the first pitch.

He had a great game from the mound backed up by some really solid defense on the part of the Indians who managed to strand eight Jacks runners.

Senior Dillon Diehl took over in the top of the fifth and



Towns County Indians baseball in action last week against Hebron Christian Academy and Commerce. Photos by Lowell Nicholson.



with one out hit a Jacks batter, who then stole second and scored on a double to left for the RBI and the only run of the game while the Indians left five men stranded on the bags.

Chambers was solid from the mound as was Diehl. Chambers threw 58 total pitches with 30 of those finding the strike zone and only gave up one hit with 2 strikeouts as he faced 16 Hebron batters.

Diehl in relief faced 14 batters throwing 41 pitches with 25 finding the strike zone. He gave up 2 hits with one earned run on 2 walks and 2 strikeouts.

It was a pitcher's duel until the end with the Indians only managing one hit by junior

Vonya Baldwin, which was a single in the fourth, while only giving up 3 hits to Hebron. The slight slip in the sixth was enough to beat the Indians and they fell 1-0 as the seventh inning ended.

The Commerce Tigers then came to town on April 1 and it was not a fool's day ending as the Tigers got hot early scoring 2 runs in the first, one in the second, 2 in the sixth and one in the top of the seventh to savor victory on the ride home.

The Indians answered, scoring one run in the first on an RBI by junior Harrison Hobbs and one in the seventh as freshman Dale Forrester drew a walk to open the inning and scoring

on a sacrifice RBI by Baldwin but it was a little too late as the Tigers won 6-2 as the seventh closed out on a pop fly by Diehl to right field. Hobbs was solid at the plate going 2-for-3 with the one RBI however the Indians left 7 runners on base of which 2 were in scoring position.

Hobbs had a decent game on the mound tossing 6 innings and facing 27 batters while throwing 92 pitches of which 58 were strikes. He gave up 7 hits and 3 earned runs while striking out 3 and walking one. He had one wild pitch and 2 hit batters.

Junior Slade Davenport relieved Hobbs in the top of the seventh and was solid facing 5 Tiger batters and striking out

one with no base on balls. He threw 18 pitches of which 12 were strikes and gave up one unearned run. He is really coming into his form as the season progresses.

The final game of the week saw a charged up Athens Academy team come to TCHS and have to play really hard to win against an improving Indians team.

Head Coach Chris Vardo had his team ready to play even though the Indians came out on the losing side due to some throwing errors and a few mistakes on the bases. They produced 4 runs on 5 hits with 3 of those runs earned while stranding 10 base runners of which 4 were in scoring position.

Junior Cruz Shook was solid at the plate with one hit in 4 tries while drawing 2 walks and scoring a run in the sixth. Diehl again had a good game at the plate going 1-for-3 with an RBI, sophomore Boone Moss had a good game at the plate scoring a run and producing an RBI while Chambers got a single in the fourth.

Diehl opened the game for the Indians on the mound and had a tough time of it giving up 5 hits and 4 earned runs while pitching 2 1/3 innings. He faced 16 Spartan hitters throwing 45 pitches of which 29 found the strike zone walking only one.

Moss came on in relief in the top half of the third inning and he faced 15 batters throwing 52 total pitches of which 29 were strikes. He struck out one and walked 2 giving up 2 earned runs in the process.

Davenport finished the game with another solid performance facing 7 batters and striking out 3. He gave up no runs on one hit and a walk while throwing 29 pitches of which 17 were strikes. It was another tough loss for the Indians 9-4.

It has been a long season for the Tribe but the guys are playing hard, as is the style of TCHS.

They are showing improvement in several areas and will have a positive ending soon. They will face a tough Providence team at home on April 11 and then George Walton will be in town for the next game on April 12.

Tennis has a tough time with Athens Christian

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County High School tennis teams played host to Athens Christian last Tuesday at TCHS and the Eagles were not very hospitable defeating both the varsity teams in all but one match.

Athens Christian has a solid program and the girls and boys are both ranked third in the 8-B area which didn't bode well for the TCHS teams who are ranked fifth in the 8-A area.

The girls opened their singles matches with junior Eryn Cochran taking the court and playing hard but losing 4-8 which set the tone for the day for TCHS. Senior Kayla Olin struggled early and lost 1-8 while senior Amanda Chastain lost her match 0-8. Senior Mackenzie Mirandi won big 8-0 but it was an exhibition match and did not count toward the overall score in singles play as the girls fell in singles 0-3.

The doubles matches didn't fare any better against



Towns tennis vs Athens Christian. Photos by Lowell Nicholson

the Eagles of Athens Christian. Junior Allison Page and sophomore Carly Gilfilian got the doubles started and had a good match going but it got away from the ladies as the match progressed and they fell 3-8. The high spot of the day for TCHS was a solid win by junior Courtney Marshall and junior Lesleigh Irvin as they continued their winning ways as a team and won a tough

match 8-6.

The girl's varsity played hard but just couldn't get it done against the Eagles losing overall 1-4.

They have one match left before the ever important Area tournament begins later in the month.

The boy's varsity also had a tough time with the Eagles losing in both the singles matches and the doubles

matches overall 0-4.

Senior Tyler Hoffman opened the show for the TCHS boys and faced a tough number one seed for the Eagles and played hard but lost 0-8.

Senior Bradley Smith followed Hoffman and played very well taking his match to a close finish but also lost in the end 6-8 as the guys closed out the singles matches with and overall loss 0-2.

The doubles matches were not much better for the guys as senior Wesley Bloodworth and junior Garrett Bradshaw lost a close match falling 5-8 while junior teammates Cody Canterbury and Jaryd Gurly lost a hard fought match 3-8. This gave the Eagles the overall doubles win 0-2.

The team's final regular season match is on April 17 at home against another tough customer in Lakeview Academy. First serve is at 4 p.m. so if you haven't had a chance to make a match this season now is the time to come out and support the team before they head to the Area tournament on April 20.

Joe Collins

Tips from the Range

The golf swing is an athletic motion. It depends on balanced force to properly move the club head away and back through the hitting area. It is impossible to achieve maximum speed through impact without moving the center of balance to the back foot and then returning it to the front foot. We call this motion the "weight transfer".

When watching a major league baseball pitcher, you notice that the force of the action is from the back leg to the front leg during the pitch. The baseball is then released toward home plate at an amazing speed. If the pitcher stood flat footed and tried to release a pitch then his career would be short lived because the ball would have no speed. This force from the back leg too the front leg is the same theory we use in golf to accelerate the club at a really fast speed.

The proper weight transfer is totally dependent on having a solid stance and good posture because the balance of the motion must remain centered. If you lose your balance anywhere throughout the swing then the weight transfer will be blocked. You will end up hitting the ball with your hands and arms instead of allowing the club to follow the rotation of the body.

You must be very careful in trying to execute the proper weight transfer. It requires a rotation of the torso and not a sliding of the hips to move the weight to the back foot. This is where you will experience difficulty in your efforts to "load" the back foot. The start of the backswing is primarily done with the chest and shoulders.

Notice that when you have successfully addressed the ball there will be a triangle in front of the chest formed by the connection of the arms to the shoulders with the grip at the bottom and the shoulders at the top. The triangle is in the center of the chest

and should stay in front of the chest as the weight is transferred to the back foot. Maintain the triangle by keeping the forward arm straight. Do not let the turning of the upper body pull your balance to the front of your feet or the proper weight transfer will not happen.

Once the weight is on the back foot, simply let the arms relax to the top while trying to keep the forward arm straight from set-up to the finish of the backswing. The straight forward arm will guide the club head back to the original position you had when the backswing started.

Notice that the movement from address to the top of your arc is called the "backswing" because that is just what it is. Simply turn the chest and let the club swing to the top. Shoulders will lead the hips on the backswing and then the hips will lead the shoulders on the downswing. You really need to follow this order or your downswing path will be outside the backswing path and across the ball through impact.

Now that the backswing is completed and your center of balance, or your weight, is on the back foot, give a good push from the back foot and let the hips start to reverse their turn back to the ball. This is the start of the downswing and the beginning of the weight shift to the front foot. Simply follow this transfer of weight from back to front and let the club fall slightly inside the takeaway path. Keep your head behind the ball well in to impact and let the arms release naturally. The weight transfer is an important key in helping you find accuracy and distance because, when done properly, it allows you to maintain balance throughout the entire swing.

Without the proper transfer, the correct swing is almost impossible and consistency is virtually nonexistent.

The great Lee Trevino said it best when he said, "the more I practice, the luckier I get," so practice this package of fundamentals and you too will become "luckier."

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

Mountain Gymnastics refuses to settle despite breakout performance in Gainesville

By Todd Forrest
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Gainesville - Being the best at what you do takes practice and lots of practice. Then you must allow the chips to fall and hope your perseverance pays off.

Coach Shelley Thomas and her group of assistant coaches don't have much of an off season, if any, as they and their talented crop of young gymnasts work year-round preparing for the State Meets in late-April.

With only one meet between the MGC Competition Team and the State Meet, our young gymnasts rose to the occasion with three girls placing First All-Around and five posting an All-Around score of 35 or above.

Eleven-year-old Erin Raper had a spectacular performance on the beam scoring a 9.7 out of 10 to go along with three other first place finishes en route to a Prep-Op 1 overall best score of 37.225.

Erin scored a 9.13 on the vault, 8.95 on the bars, and a 9.45 on the floor exercises.

In the Prep-Op 1, 9-year-old division, Emma Patterson took first place All-Around with a score of 35.525. She placed first on the bars and the floor and second on the vault and the beam.

In Level 3, 9-year-old Haley Craig was first All-Around,



The MGC Competition Team points at each one of their ultimate goals: to score a 9.0 in an event and get their star on the wall as a member of the 9.0 Club. Photo/Todd Forrest

posting an overall score of 35.775. She was first on the vault with a 9.10 and second on each of the other three events.

Six-year-old Caymin Thompson scored a 9.30 on the floor, giving her a first place finish in the event and a second All-Around finish.

Jacey Lee finished first on the beam in the 9-year-old division and third All-Around.

Others competing were 8-year-old Brandy Barlow (fourth All-Around) and 9-year-old Kaitlyn Daves (fifth All-Around).

In Prep-Op 2, 9-year-old Reagan Ledford scored an outstanding 9.425 on the vault, 11-year-old Evelyn McBride put up a score of 9.30 on the floor exercises, and 9-year-old Addieyn Dockery also scored a 9.30 on the floor, giving each first place respectively, in each event.

The next meet will be the Zenit Invitational this Friday and Saturday in Canton before the State Meets begin.

"All the girls have qualified for State by scoring at least 29 All-Around so they are

looking really good for State," Coach Thomas said.

Since the first meet back in December, Coach Thomas has seen substantial growth in her squad during the past four months.

"We have improved tremendously since December 1st," Coach Thomas said. "Right now it's all about routine and getting them polished for state. We are fine-tuning every little thing. We're not quite as hands on as we were, so we pretty much have our skills down, we're just fine tuning."

Miller snags 10-pound largemouth



Trystin Miller of Mineral Bluff, GA caught this 10-pound 9-ounce largemouth Sunday April 7th while fishing with his father on Lake Nottely. This is his first largemouth. His father commented, "he has high expectations now so watch out Pro Bass Circuit, Trystin is in it to win it."