

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Lady Indians soccer playing for chance at State

By Joe Collins
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The Towns County High School Lady Indians soccer team played to a split last week in two very important Area games.

In the first game, the Lady Indians beat George Walton Academy on the Bulldogs home turf, 7-4 with junior Faith Robinson scoring a season high 5 goals. A tired Lady Indian team then fell to a solid Providence Christian squad 4-0 at Frank McClure Stadium on Thursday. The win and loss has put the girls' team in a dangerous position of having to win the next two area games to get into the playoffs. The games against Lakeview and George Walton respectively will tell the tale.

The girls played Hebron Christian on Tuesday and lost to a tough one 6-1 and the taste of the loss was sour in their mouths. Wednesday found them having to play an area make-up game with George Walton Academy and it was a game the Indians needed to win to enhance their playoff position.

George Walton has not won a game this season and is ranked last in Area. TCHS was slightly beat up with Robinson and junior Makayla Underwood suffering with slight ankle sprains. The girls were slow and sluggish at the beginning of the game and were able to pick up the pace after the half.

The first half saw them trailing and coming back to tie at the half 2-2. Robinson scored 5 goals in the game as Makayla



Junior Faith Robinson scored five goals against George Walton Academy. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Underwood scored one with junior Destiney Blythe also scoring a goal to give TCHS the win and move them closer to the Area Tournament.

Providence Christian then came to town on Thursday and they were running on all eight cylinders when they hit the turf at Frank McClure Stadium.

The Storm hit the field and they were sharp in their warm ups and they were even sharper as the game got underway. Unfortunately, the Lady Indians were still suffering from injuries and the struggle would end in favor of Providence.

The Storm scored early and gave sophomore keeper Taylor McCarter a rough go of it in the first half. She blocked 5 shots in the first half that would have been goals but allowed 4

to get through giving the Storm the lead at half 4-0.

Makayla Underwood, junior Taylor Vardeman, junior Vanessa Eller, junior Elizabeth Turner and sophomore Karlie Albach all stepped up and played good solid defense especially in the second half when they shut out the Storm. Freshman Michelle Miller had huge shoes to fill, as she had to substitute for Robinson who was favoring a slightly sprained and painful ankle. She played well but the TCHS offense just couldn't find the goal in the second half and lost 4-0.

"Providence is a good team and were a little too much for us on the night. Robinson was carrying a slight ankle sprain, as did Underwood and several others. We are a little

beat up and struggling on the field. We will need to win both of our next two games to qualify for the playoffs," said Head Coach Peter Byrne speaking about his team's standings.

The girls still have an outside chance of making it to the Area Tournament if they can get healed up and play some really good soccer. They will travel to Lakeview on Tuesday, April 23rd and will need to win and then turn around and beat George Walton again at home on Wednesday to seal their position in the tournament brackets. Kickoff for both games is 5 p.m.

Make plans now to come out and support the team and help them make it to the season ending area tournament.

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Tips from the Range

For several weeks now, we have been studying the mechanics and fundamentals of the golf swing to try and understand how the whole of the swing works. We've looked at balance, posture, grip, alignment, rotation and weight transfer. All of these elements need to be as close to proper as possible in order to give yourself a decent chance of moving the club to what our focus will be about this week and that is our ultimate goal, impact.

That magical point in the swing where the ball actually makes contact with the face of the club is what determines the flight and direction of the shot. All our efforts are focused on the split second that the ball leaves the ground and begins its journey to what we hope is our chosen target. It's the impact, of the ball and the clubface, which gives us the instant feedback that determines what the next word out of our mouth will be when, or sometimes before, the swing is finished. The only way to control the impact is to correctly do the things which return the club to the original set-up position and those are the mechanics and fundamentals we have been discussing the past few weeks.

Once the club head has moved through the ball, or has passed impact, we move into what we call the "follow-through". This area is the mirror image of the backswing with the triangle in front of the chest and the arms extended. This burning off of energy is where you will find out if you have made a good swing or a bad swing so always finish the follow-through or you

will cheat yourself out of some good feedback. This information is vital in determining whether or not you made a good effort at swinging the club.

If we were to try and pick out the one thing that will affect impact the most, when the swing is done correctly, it would have to be the function of the forward arm. Balance is always first and foremost the primary goal, but if the balance is perfect and the forward arm doesn't perform correctly, the shot can still end up bad.

The forward arm should be straight throughout the swing until the follow-through is nearly finished. Always allow the forward arm to rotate naturally so the following arm will finish over the top of the forward arm after impact. This will make the swing feel smooth and graceful.

This concludes my overall look at the golf swing and the elements that define the proper function of the swing. Remember that you want to think of swinging the club and not "hitting" the ball. The ball simply gets in the way as the club approaches the bottom of the swing. Swinging a golf club correctly is difficult and should be given the respect it deserves by practicing. Nobody hits the ball the same way as anybody else and rarely do we hit the same way from round to round. Someone once asked the great Sam Snead before a tournament round if he was going to play a fade or a draw that day and he replied, "can't say cause I haven't been to the range yet, I'll let you know in a little while." This is an example of how fickle the golf swing can be so if he had trouble from day to day then imagine what us normal people will go through.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

Towns baseball hosts two ranked teams; visit Commerce

By Joe Collins
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Staff Writer

While a large percentage of Towns County High School students were basking on the sunny beaches of nearby Florida or spending time with family and friends in a nice vacation spot taking it easy, the TCHS baseball team was hard at work.

Providence Christian (11-9) came to town on April 11 and the tribe did not fare well against the Storm losing 12-3 to the No. 11 ranked team in the Georgia High School Association's Class-A Private school power rankings. No. 4 ranked George Walton (20-1) visited TCHS and gave the tribe fits but the Indians stayed in the game losing 14-4 in the seventh on April 13 followed by a trip to Commerce (8-11) on April 16 that saw the Indians fall to the No. 24 ranked class-A public team 6-1. Things got close in the final home game of the season as the tribe played catch up in the fifth and sixth innings against Pinecrest (3-13) but couldn't quite do it losing 5-2.

Providence Christian (Storm brought their "A" game to Towns County and struck early scoring 2 runs in the top of the first on 3 hits to take the lead 0-2. Sophomore Cruz Shook led off the bottom of the first with a single followed by a sacrifice fly from junior Vonya Baldwin moving Shook to second. Junior Harrison Hobbs drew a base on balls then junior Slade Davenport delivered a



Towns hosted 11th ranked Providence and 4th ranked George Walton before traveling to Commerce during Spring Break. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

2-run double to score Shook and Hobbs. A couple of passed balls later to sophomore Boone Shook and the Indians grabbed the lead 3-2 as Davenport made it home on the second passed ball. It was a solid inning for the Indians as they were able to produce some runs on the back of some good at bats.

The Storm raised the bar in the second inning and the tribe could only muster 4 more hits as the game progressed. They scored 4-runs in the second and 4 more in the third while adding one in the fourth and another in the sixth to clinch the victory over TCHS 12-3.

Davenport was called on by Head Coach Chris Vardo to take the mound and he kept it the whole game as the squad of pitchers for TCHS has dwindled to but a few. Davenport went the distance tossing 146 pitches

with 79 being strikes. He struck out 3 and gave up 12 runs on 10 hits with 9 walks and a hit batter. Only 6 runs were charged to Davenport.

George Walton Academy came to town next on April 13 and the highly ranked Bulldogs were very impressive in a late game rally that saw them score 9 unanswered runs in the fifth and sixth innings forcing the run rule after the bottom of the sixth inning 14-4. Senior Dillon Diehl was solid at the plate going 2/2 with 2 RBI's and as many walks.

Hobbs was vital at the plate driving in 2 runs on a key single to right field scoring Shook and Diehl. The fifth inning found Diehl's bat hot driving in 2 runs on a long double to center scoring Shook and Baldwin who both drew walks to start the inning.



Diehl opened the game on the mound for TCHS and faced 21 batters in 4 innings throwing 67 total pitches with 44 of those finding the strike zone. He struck out 2 while giving up 6 earned runs on 8 hits. He had one balk, a walk and no wild pitches.

Hobbs replaced Diehl in the fifth facing 14 batters in 1.33 innings. He tossed 37 pitches with 22 finding the strike zone. He gave up 8 runs on 7 hits and a walk with 6 of those runs being earned.

Junior Curtis Swanson finished the last of the top of the sixth facing 3 batters and throwing only 13 pitches of which 6 were strikes. He gave up no runs on one hit and a strikeout.

The Indians failed to score any runs in the bottom of the sixth as the George Walton

closer struck out three of the four Indians he faced. Freshman Dylan Roberts was able to draw a walk with two out in the bottom of the inning against the tough closer but no rallies followed for TCHS and they lost 14-4 at the end of six innings.

The tribe then traveled to Commerce on April 16 and kept the game tied through the middle of the fourth inning when the Tigers scored 4 unanswered runs in the bottom of the inning and the Indians just couldn't answer even though they left 8 runners on the bags. Baldwin had a good game at the plate going 2/4 with both hits being singles. The Indians only run came on a walked in run in the first.

Moss opened the game for the Indians and faced 22 batters in 4.33 innings while tossing 78 pitches with 44 of

those pitches finding the strike zone. He gave up 5 earned runs on as many hits while striking out 2 and walking 2. He also hit 2 batters.

Davenport relieved Moss and pitched the remainder of the game facing 8 batters while giving up one earned run on 2 hits and 2 walks. He threw 37 total pitches with 21 being strikes.

The final home game of the season took place on April 18 as the Pinecrest Paladins came to town to face the Indians and were leading 3-0 after the fourth inning. The Indians were able to get one run in the fifth and another in the sixth but couldn't manage at the plate well enough to salvage the final home game of 2013 as they again stranded 9 runners on the bases. Baldwin had a good game at the plate going 2/4 with both his hits being singles while junior Dillon Ingram went 1/3 with an RBI.

Diehl got the call from Vardo and pitched the whole game. He faced 31 hitters while tossing 92 pitches with 64 being strikes. He struck out 3 while giving up 5 runs on 9 hits with 4 of those runs earned. He only walked one in seven innings and had one wild pitch in the 5-2 loss.

It has been a tough season for the TCHS baseball Indians. They have yet to win a game although they have had some good stretches throughout the season. They rap up their season with 4 away games with the final game being on April 26 at Tallulah Falls, a team that TCHS has had some success with in the past.

Indian soccer adds one to the win column

By Joe Collins
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Monroe - The Towns County High School boy's varsity soccer team won their first game of the season on Tuesday, April 16 as they traveled to George Walton Academy to take on the Bulldogs.

The game was coming off a tough loss to Providence Christian and they were looking for justification. One hard fought game and several overtime penalty kicks led to Sophomore Dallas Manus hitting his penalty kick and scoring the winning goal for TCHS. It was the highlight of the teams play so far this season to beat a good team like George Walton.

The game began with the Indians keeper Manus stopping several shots and the Indians defense having to step up and stop the Bulldogs from moving the ball. They answered the call by playing solid at midfield and kept the score tied 0-0 until



Towns soccer picked up its first win of 2013. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

the final buzzer of regulation sounded. Another key play was a great goal saving effort by junior defender Nick Santisi during regulation time. The offense had a few chances but none ever drew blood.

The first 10-minute overtime went scoreless as both teams battled for possession. Manus deflected any shots at goal and the George Walton defenders and keeper matched him. All in all

the performance was a stalemate and had to be decided by penalty kicks. Senior Blake Burnette, senior Adam Plott, junior Cesar Bustamante and freshman Shea Underwood all hit their penalty shots with Manus saving one against George Walton in the first overtime. The teams were tied at the end of the first overtime 4-4.

In the sudden death penalty kick overtime period, TCHS

and George Walton were trading penalty kicks when Manus stepped up and saved three more goals.

"We were able to save three more goals during the sudden death but could not answer with any of our own. Fortunately, Manus was able to hit his penalty kick and that gave us the score to win. The guys played really well against a pretty good George Walton team. I am very proud of them," declared Head Coach Tim Rosser about the win. "It was a great game which unfortunately saw us lose Cesar Bustamante to a concussion and freshman Quinton Owenby to an ankle sprain."

The TCHS soccer teams will play host to George Walton Academy in their final home game at Frank McClure Stadium on Wednesday, April 24 with kickoff at 6:30 p.m.

Make plans now to come out and support the team in their last home appearance of the 2013 season.

Turkey Shoot

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Larry Stover 706.897.9769

Directions from Blairsville: Take Hwy 129 South (Gainesville Hwy.) approx 8 miles. Turkey Shoot will be held in the field on the left just past Owltown Rd. If you make it to Hwy. 180 East you've went too far.