

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Towns County topples Pinecrest, get first win of the season

By Joe Collins  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

**Cumming** - The Towns County High School baseball team has won its first game of the season with a win against Pinecrest last Wednesday 7-6. It was a great game that saw junior Harrison Hobbs pitch all seven innings giving up only one earned run in 6 hits with 7 strikeouts. It has been a long dry spell in the win column this season as the tribe has come close on several occasions but just fell a little short.

The team traveled to Cumming on April 24 with high expectations of collecting their first win against a good Paladin team. The Indians came close to winning in their first game of the season against the Paladins but lost 5-2. Now they were out for revenge and despite some crucial errors, they were able to pull it out with a fourth-inning rally that saw the Indians put 5 unearned runs on the board and take the lead 7-5. The Paladins were able to rally in the seventh thanks to some throwing errors by the Indians but Hobbs stayed strong on the mound and the win went in the books for TCHS.

The first inning saw junior Zach Sewell gain first base on a throwing error by Pinecrest. He then stole second and a couple of passed balls later, and with some heads up base running, he crossed home plate to give the Indians the lead 1-0. They threatened again in the third but stranded a couple of runners when their bats grew cold but they warmed up in TCHS fashion as the fourth inning got underway and the Paladins had taken the lead 4-1.

Sophomore Cruz Shook led off the inning with a sharp



Towns County High School baseball honored its senior players and managers at last week's Senior Night. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

ground ball to second for the first out of the inning. Sophomore Boone Moss then followed Shook with a walk putting him at first base. Freshman Gavin Langelier then grounded out to first on a fielder's choice for the second out of the inning but moving Moss to second. Freshman Dale Forrester took his count to 3-2 and with a good eye at the plate drew the walk placing Moss at second and himself at first for the lead off hitter Baldwin. He drove

the first pitch he saw deep into centerfield scoring Moss for the first run of the inning and an RBI for Baldwin. A wild pitch moved Forrester to third and Baldwin to second and a walk to Sewell had the bases loaded for Diehl. He connected on a 1-2 fastball that sent the ball deep into center scoring Forrester and Baldwin to tie the game at 4-4. Hobbs drew a 2-out walk, which again had the bases loaded for junior Slade Davenport who sent a



Towns County Indians baseball photos by Lowell Nicholson

long ball to deep center scoring all three base runners and giving the tribe a 7-4 lead. Shook found himself at the plate for the second time in the inning and took first after being hit by a pitch. Moss then became the 10th Indian batter of the inning, a first for the tribe this season, and went down swinging to make the third out of the rally. It was by far the best inning of the year for TCHS that saw them score 6 runs while facing a 2 out situation.

The Indians threatened again in the sixth and seventh innings following hits by Sewell and Baldwin but were unable to put any more runs on the board for TCHS. The Paladins answered with a run in the bottom of the fourth and another in the seventh.

Hobbs then found himself with 2 out and the bases loaded in the bottom of the seventh as Pinecrest was rallying. Head Coach Chris Vardo left Hobbs in the game to face the dangerous situation, and with some good pitch placement, Hobbs struck out the final batter and gave the Indians the win. It

was the best game statistically the team has played all year, and even though they made some errors, they hung on to victory.

Hobbs pitched a solid game against the Paladins, which was his third full game of the season. He faced 35 batters striking out 7 and giving up

only 6 hits and one earned run. He threw 123 total pitches with 70 of those finding the strike zone while walking only 3 and hitting 3. He pitched strong in the sixth and then pitched himself out of a jam in the seventh. It was a great performance for the junior and a good win for the team.

Joe Collins  
Tips from the Range

A score that qualifies as a legal USGA round of golf consists of 18 holes. You are only allowed 14 clubs under the rules of golf if you are using a stipulated round to confirm or establish your handicap. Your handicap is based on an average score total of at least 10 legal rounds. The score of each round is the base number used to confirm a USGA handicap. Nothing affects this base score more than the "short game".

When we talk about the short game, we are talking about what we do on and around the green. Chipping is the act of hitting really short shots from the edge of the green and trying to get the ball as close to the flag as possible. Putting is in direct association with the ball lying on the green and our efforts to roll said ball into the hole. These short shots have the most positive or negative influence in relation to our total score of any of the shots we hit in a legal round of golf. Trust me on this!

You are only allowed 14 clubs as I mentioned earlier. What is the only club that one uses, theoretically, on every hole? Answer: the putter. If the putter is the most used club in a given round then it will probably have the biggest influence on your score. If short putts are easier than long putts, then chipping becomes the second biggest influence on your score. Get the picture of how important the short game is? The short game really affects your total score and by relation your handicap.

It's hard to be consistent with your short game unless you play a lot of golf and even then it's difficult. The fundamentals we use in performing the short game are based on one concept and that is acceleration. The club must be speeding up as it goes through impact on a short shot. If it's slowing down, then you will have problems.

The proper fundamentals of correctly hitting a chip shot are simple. First, place almost all your weight on the front foot and open your stance to the line you want the ball to travel on. This line will be determined by the slope and speed of the green. You must play the curvature of the

green with a chip the same way you would a putt. Your feet will typically be closer together than on a full shot.

Next, place your hands in front of the ball with the grip of the club ahead of the club head. Use the same grip you would use to hit a full shot. Your hands will stay in front of the club head all the way through the shot. Never let the club head outrun the hands. Finally, use only your shoulders to move the club not your wrists and hands. Keep the backswing short and accelerate through the impact area while keeping your eye on the ball until it is gone on its way.

The fundamentals of putting are simple but very difficult to do correctly. First, find a balanced stance the same way you would on a long shot. Center yourself over the ankles with your weight distributed equally from the front of your feet to the heels.

Next, let your arms fall limp under your shoulders to determine the placement of the putter grip in relation to your stance. Grip the putter with a reverse overlap so that the forward index finger is lapped over the bottom hand fingers. Work with this concept because grips are very independent from golfer to golfer. The point is that the forward wrist never breaks down. This will cause the putter head to close and you will pull the putt. Most importantly never move your head until the ball is rolling down the intended line. Head movement is the number one fault of a bad putt.

Finally, use your shoulders to move the putter head and not your hands and arms. The small muscles of the hands and arms are extremely detrimental to a good stroke.

Practice is the key to maintaining a solid short game and it does not have to be done on the course. Putting and chipping at home on the carpet drives my wife crazy but it is the only way that I can get enough practice in to keep my short game sharp. Besides, she calms down when I bring home some "skins" money and take her out to dinner.

Try these fundamentals and hopefully you will lower your scores but remember that practice is the key. For every hour you practice swinging, spend two hours on your short game.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

## Lady Indians win Area, on to State

By Joe Collins  
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Staff Writer

**Fort Oglethorpe** - The Towns County Lady Indians golf team traveled to Ringgold last Tuesday, April 23, to play in the Area Championship and challenged a tough Battlefield Golf Club.

The 5,200-yard Harry Schumaker design was wet and played long for the girls but they rose to the occasion and played their hearts out to win the overall team competition over runner-up rival Gordon Lee with a score of 198.

The win gives the Lady Indians the opportunity to bypass the sectional event and go straight to the State Competition at Victoria Bryant State Park Golf Club on May 20.

They will be the first ever TCHS girls golf team to compete at the State level and what an honor for the girls and for TCHS.

Sophomore Stephanie Patton anchored the team with a score of 93, which also won her the individual Low Medalist honors for all the girls in the competition.

Sophomore Danielle Diehl finished second with a 105 while sophomore Mia Manto was solid with a 109 and junior Amber Williams closed with a 114.

It was a special day that found the girls playing smart to save strokes.

"They rose to the occasion today and did what they had to do to win. It was an overwhelming effort by all the girls and they all played well when they needed too. It was the best they played all year given the circumstances and it couldn't have come at a better time," said Head Coach Brett Keller.

The girls finished the regular season undefeated and proved that they were for real when they won the Area tournament. The season has been an example of all the girls contributing from match to match.

"This season has been a team effort. It seems like each new match saw one of the girls scoring well when another team member was struggling. A prime example of this is Mia Manto. She qualified as our fourth position for the Area but she finished second and her score was one of the ones that were counted to give us



The Towns County Lady Indians golfers won the Area Championship. Led by Coach Brett Keller, sophomore Stephanie Patton was the low medalist of the tournament with a 93. Sophomore Danielle Diehl shot a 105, sophomore Mia Manto fired a 109, and junior Amber Williams rounded the scoring with a 114. Towns now prepares for the State Match at Victoria Bryant State Park on May 20th.

the win. "They are just a good bunch of girls that are very competitive. They did what they had to do to win and it's just that simple. They played great and I couldn't be more proud of them as they beat Gordon Lee on their own home course," said Keller.

It was difficult for Keller to talk about one of his girls over the others because of their competitive team connection, but when an athlete beats all the athletes from all the other schools then that athlete has earned some recognition.

"I don't want to single out one of our team over the others but winning Low Medalist at the Area competition is spectacular.

"There were several good girl golfers there and Stephanie played smart and won. She was not driving the ball that well, which is usually her strong suit, but she elevated the rest of her game to save shots and eventually win over the first seed from runner-up Gordon Lee. She

played smart and when she found trouble she used her head and got her ball back in play and went from there. It was exciting to watch as she and the number one player from Gordon Lee duelled it out," stated Keller.

This was a sanctioned Georgia High School golfing event and that means the players must play their balls "through the green." This basically means that you play by the strict rules of golf by not improving your ball position and hitting it as it lies after the previous shot. It is the fundamental format of competitive golf.

Once you have teed off on a particular hole, you don't touch your ball until it comes to rest on the putting surface of the green for that hole. You are allowed to spot your ball on the putting surface and clean it but there is no improving your lie on the course outside of casual water in the fairway or rough.

This format is designed to make every shot count on the card. Playing the ball as it

lies is a very demanding style and requires the player to pay attention at all times to prevent any penalty strokes from being added to the final score. The girls adhered to the rules and beat the runner-up team of Gordon Lee by two strokes. Just one penalty charge of two strokes because of carelessness and that would have been the difference in the final positions. It was a great effort for the whole team in a very mentally demanding sport.

"The girls are excited and are looking forward to the State tournament in May," Keller said.

"We have a lot of work to do and will be working hard to improve our game. The girls are very competitive and will do the best they can when they get there. They are a good group of girls and it has been my pleasure to coach them this season."

"They played great when it counted at Battlefield and I know they will rise to the occasion when they go to State because the cream always rises to the top," he said.

# Turkey Shoot

**May 4<sup>th</sup> • 9 a.m.**

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For More Information Contact:  
**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.