

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

www.townscountyherald.net • E-mail: tcherald@windstream.net

Morgan Bradshaw signs with Young Harris

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Towns County High School senior Morgan Bradshaw describes herself as unique in the gift she has been given as an intense competitor. That intensity has led her down a path that many young ladies her age are not familiar with because of the effort it requires to succeed.

She has signed a scholarship with Young Harris College and starting May 31st she will become a Mountain Lion competitive cheerleader. This makes Bradshaw the first ever-competitive cheerleader to sign with a NCAA Division II school from TCHS.

Bradshaw began her career in gymnastics and found herself right where she wanted to be.

"I love the intensity of gymnastics and I learned early on that this was the sport for me," Bradshaw said. "I trained hard and was doing really well until I injured my wrist vaulting at the age of thirteen. It took a full year to heal and by that time it was clear that my days as a gymnast were over. I was working with the coach from Dawson County and she offered me a chance to be on the girl's competitive cheerleading squad and that provided me the opportunity I was looking for to pursue my love of gymnastics and the intense competition it provided."

Bradshaw began working with an All-Star team at Dawson, and within a short period of time, she had found her calling. All-Star competitive cheerleading teams are what many know as "traveling squads." Several of the young athletes in Towns County are involved in these off campus athletic teams and travel during their chosen sports off-seasons



Morgan Bradshaw with Principal Roy Perren and YHC Head Cheerleading Coach Chase Carter. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

to enhance their abilities and talents. Travel Ball, as it is commonly called, is popular in sports such as baseball, basketball, softball and soccer but many don't realize these teams exist in the world of competitive cheerleading as well, and Bradshaw fits right in.

"I had just turned fifteen years old when I was introduced to the world of competitive cheerleading," Bradshaw said. "I loved to tumble and work on routines in gymnastics and my talents are perfect for the sport. I had ten years of training and experience in gymnastics and the sport just seemed to fit. Competitive Cheerleading requires a diversity of talents and my training qualified me to participate."

Competitive Cheerleading is a very demanding sport and requires the athletes that compete to be in top physical form. Injuries are common in the sport so the girls, and guys, must be in shape.

"We don't really have an off-season because we have to train and prepare our bodies all year," Bradshaw said. "We work on conditioning constantly and I workout often usually running up to five miles

a day while training. I stretch and workout with light weights doing a lot of repetitions while watching what I eat. Although, I have been known to eat up to five donuts for breakfast, but not during training. The sport is just so demanding."

Bradshaw is interested in pursuing a career in teaching after college and will major in education at YHC.

"I love children and I want to work as a fourth grade teacher when I graduated," Bradshaw said. "One of my favorite things to do is work with the younger students at the Mountain Gymnastics Center and I will go there and help whenever they need me. Shelly Thomas is one of my mentors and I love to go there and help. I will always try and go when she calls. It's tough to teach the little ones but I like it."

Bradshaw's college career will start on May 31 as the YHC teams travel to Myrtle Beach to attend a collegiate cheerleading camp.

"Our goal will be to receive an NCAA bid and compete at the national level," Bradshaw said. "I specialize in tumbling and I hope I can benefit the team in that respect.

I'm not scared at all and I look forward to getting started."

YHC will field two teams of competitive cheerleaders this season and Bradshaw will be placed on either the large or small co-ed team after camp in Myrtle Beach. She has a strong faith in God and places herself in His hands.

"I feel that God has led me to this sport for whatever reason and I thank Him for it," Bradshaw said. "My wrist injury sent me in this direction and I will do the best I can to honor Him in my career. My dad is the Youth Minister at our church and he and my mom are my biggest supporters along with my brother who attends Valdosta State. I know they are praying for me and that gives me strength. I praise God for them."

Competitive Cheerleading is a tough sport but Bradshaw is a tough competitor. She plans to be at YHC at least two years and is interested in the possibility of moving to Division I if the future holds that for her.

Right now her priority is getting ready for the upcoming season and doing the best that she can to try and help the Mountain Lions of YHC win a national title.



Joe Collins

Tips from the Range

This week's tips will extend the short game lesson of last week. It will interest those of you who play golf on a regular basis and find yourself with a shot that is not quite full. Many of these shots are approach shots that affect the position of the ball on the green and have a direct influence on your overall score. These shots, that are not quite full yardage shots, are typically played with the shortest iron in your bag and are called "half shots". These shots range from 10 yards up to 75 yards and can test your patience to the fullest. Many clubs are broken within this short yardage range by frustrated golfers.

The key to striking these shots cleanly is the same as short game shots and that is acceleration. Just like chipping and putting, it is the acceleration of the club head that is important when faced with these little monsters. All too often we make a backswing that is way too long and find the club slowing down as it approaches impact and this will cause all sorts of problems. You will see fat shots, skulls that fly across the green like bullets, shanks and high lofted short little nothings that leave you with a long putt because you slowed the club down through impact. It will drive you crazy and can even make the preacher cuss. Trust me, I've heard it!

The best way to combat these shots is to try and avoid them. Use your game management to leave you with a comfortable yardage into the green. For example: If you are good with your sand wedge and can consistently hit it a certain yardage then try and hit a club from the tee or fairway that will leave you that comfortable yardage from the green on your approach. Don't hit a club that will leave you with less than a full swing on your next shot. The pros do this on a regular basis and you should too. You will find that it is easier to hit the green with a full shot instead of a half shot. Also, a full shot will hold the green better than a half shot giving you more control over the distance your ball will roll following its landing on the putting surface of the green.

Unfortunately, the half shot is usually the result of a missed approach shot and is not exactly what you were trying to do. This scenario is what makes the half shot so frustrating because you just missed an easier shot and now you are faced with a more difficult shot than you had previously. Have you ever been in this position? If you play golf a lot you have, and will in the future if you haven't yet, so here is what to do when it happens.

First, don't get mad at yourself for missing the easy shot. Stay calm and focus on the next shot to be played. Play the game one shot at a time. You probably still have a chance to make par so follow the bad shot with a good one and let the putter save you.

Next, find a comfortable stance over the ball that is slightly open with the hands ahead of the ball and club head. Make sure you are balanced and centered. Keep the lower body quite by allowing most of your weight to stay on the front foot and don't promote a weight transfer through the legs. Use your shoulders to control the club away from the ball during the take away and keep your wrists from hinging on the backswing. This will help you accelerate through impact.

Finally, let the shoulders move the club back and through. Make sure the backswing is shorter than the follow through. A backswing that is longer than the follow through will cause the club to slow down through impact instead of speeding up. Keep your eye on the ball and don't move your head. If you move your head, the shoulders will dip and change your spine angle and you will hinder solid impact.

The half shot is one of the hardest shots in golf and must be practiced. When you practice these shots, judge how far back a comfortable backswing will cause the ball to travel in the air. Be aggressive and don't be scared. Allow the back shoulder to do its work and keep the club moving. Remember, a shorter backswing is better and the more you practice the better feel you will have.

Next week we will look at another very difficult shot: The fairway wood. Also, send "tips" your questions on some of the problems you are having and let's see if I can help. You can email me at jcollins.tcherald@windstream.net.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

NASCAR 2013

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Longshot Ragan gets Talladega victory

Teammates David Ragan and David Gilliland teamed up to win Sunday's rain-delayed Sprint Cup race at Talladega.

The race which was stopped for three hours and forty five minutes with 61 laps to go, because of rain didn't finish until nearly dark, and when it was over, two long shot drivers had taken the top spots.

"I'm kind of a low key guy," said Ragan. "I don't know how we got this win, but I want to thank the lord and my teammate, David."

The final caution came after a big wreck with six laps left caught up about 10 cars. With the field racing four wide, Ricky Stenhouse went to the outside and tapped J.J. Yeley. That took out Ryan Newman and Kurt Busch as Busch's car flipped over the top of Newman's.

Jeff Gordon and Danica Patrick also were caught up in the crash.

After the debris was cleared away, NASCAR announced that since it was getting dark, there would only be one green-white-checkered start.

Matt Kenseth, who led the most laps was at the front of the pack, followed by Carl Edwards, Jimmie Johnson, and Kurt Busch.

In less than a lap, Carl Edwards dove down under Kenseth for the lead, but Ragan and Gilliland were drafting up through the field on the outside. They caught the leaders on the backstretch of the final lap, and as the cars headed for the checkered flag, the two leaders had two much momentum to be denied.

"It's been my dream since I started racing to stand in victory lane after a Cup race," said Gilliland. "This is pretty close to winning. I'm just glad I could help David get there."

Matt Kenseth led the most laps, but just got out-traced at the end.

"I don't know what went wrong," said Kenseth. "Carl (Edwards) got a huge run, but I thought I still had a chance, but when David got ahead of me, I knew it was over."

Ryan Newman, who was involved in the last big

wreck, had some choice words for NASCAR, saying, "They got what they wanted....Running in the dark, running in the rain."

The typical Talladega "Big One" came during lap 43. It started after Kyle Busch tapped Kasey Kahne's rear bumper, sending Kahne's No. 5 into a spin. From there it wasn't pretty as cars went sliding, bumping, and wrecking all over the track.

All told, 13 cars were involved. Most of them did not finish the race, including Busch and Kahne.

"I don't know what happened," said Busch. We were all in a bunch just racing. I don't know if he (Kahne) slowed down or what, but I just got into him."

Both cars were racing for second when the accident occurred.

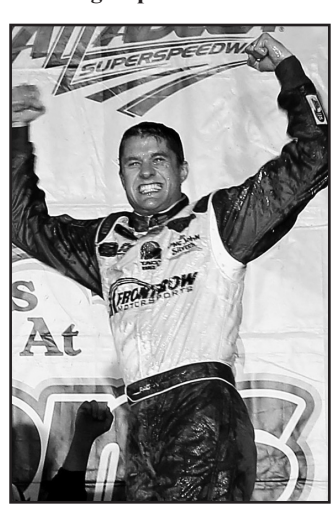
"I just kind of got shot through the center there, just a lot of momentum coming from behind," said Kahne. "Felt the No. 18 pushing me and next thing I know I was spinning. You just can't push with these cars. We learned that at Daytona, he was pushing me and spun me in the wall and then happened again, so that is what it is. I think we both probably understand what happened and we will figure it out from there."

The top-10 unofficial finishers: 1. David Ragan, 2. David Gilliland, 3. Carl Edwards, 4. Michael Waltrip, 5. Jimmie Johnson, 6. Regan Smith, 7. Matt Kenseth, 8. Martin Truex, 9. Scott Speed, 10. Aric Almirola.

Top-12 unofficial points leaders after 10 of 33: 1. Johnson-383, 2. Edwards-342, 3. Earnhardt Jr.-324, 4. Bowyer-316, 5. Keselowski-314, 6. Kahne-299, 7. Almirola-293, 8. Menard-290, 9. Busch-285, 10. Biffle-280, 11. Kenseth, 279, 12. Harvick-276.

SMITH EDGES LOGANO FOR TALLADEGA WIN

With a push from teammate Kasey Kahne, Smith roared out of the pack during the final 400 yards of a green-white-checkered-flag finish and won a race decided when NASCAR called the seventh and final caution an instant before the four cars battling for the win crossed the finish



David Ragan, winner at Talladega

Smith was the leader as the field was frozen when NASCAR called the caution. Kahne was first across the stripe but was scored in third place behind Smith and Joey Logano, who were the two lead drivers when the caution lights came on.

"I was having flashbacks, sitting on pit road--I'm not going to lie--when they were making the decision," Smith said. "I was like 'Man, I hope we got it--I'm pretty sure we got it when the flag came out and I saw the lights come on... They only thing I didn't know was if they took it all the way to the stripe.'"

Joey Logano, Kasey Kahne, Kurt Busch, Justin Allgaier, Parker Kligerman, Mike Wallace, Jason White, Jeremy Clements, and Austin Dillon were the remaining top-10 finishers.

Top-10 points leaders after 6 of 33: 1. Smith-305, 2. Hornish-278, 3. Allgaier-265, 4.Kligerman-258, 5. Sadler-258, 6. A. Dillon-257, 7. Scott-254, 8. Vickers-252, 9. Bowman-231, 10. Bayne-230.

PENSKE PENALTIES UPHELD

The NASCAR Appeals Panel upheld the penalties Wednesday to the Penske Racing teams of No. 2-Brad Keselowski and No. 22 of Joey Logano. Team owner Roger Penske said he would appeal the ruling to National Stock Car Racing Chief Appellate Officer John Middlebrook.

"I can't make any comments, it's clear we have a process and I'm better off to wait to see that conclude," Penske said. "All I can say

about the process is it's fair and equitable. We had an opportunity to explain our case in detail. We will move onto the next step."

Penske will utilize the final step in the appeal process, in which NASCAR chief appellate officer John Middlebrook will hear from both sides. The hearing will take place May 7.

Weekend Racing: The cup and Nationwide teams are at Darlington. The Trucks do not race again until May 17.

Fri., May 10, Nationwide Series race, 9 of 33; Starting time: 7:30 pm ET; TV: ESPN2.

Sat., May 11, Sprint Cup race, race 11 of 36; Starting time: 7 pm ET; TV: FOX.

Racing Trivia Question: Who is Aric Almirola's teammate at Richard Petty Motorsports?

Last Week's Question: Kasey Kahne's Cup career began in 2004. Which team did he start with? **Answer:** Ray Evernham Motorsports.

You may e-mail the Racing Reporter at: hodges@race500.com.

VFW Golf League news

Howdy folks, I am back. The reason there has been no news until now is I have been laid up with a total left knee replacement. Also this is the first week that I have received any results from the players. So here goes--We had 15 players this week. Four foursomes and one threesome. The winning team had a blistering hot day. Posted a score of 63, 9 under par. A 34 on the front nine and a blazing 29 on the back nine. Team members consisted of Danny Barrett; J.C Berong; J.C. Garrett and Robert Lisle. Great shooting guys. With any luck I will be able to join you by June.

Chuck

Summer Baseball Camps at YHC

Summer Baseball Camps at Young Harris College on-line registration now open! TheRockSports.com.

2 camp weeks: June 3rd and July 16th, 3 camps each week. Quality instruction for every level of player. 706-897-2363. NT(May8,ZJICA

Trout stocking sites week of April 29-May 3, 2013

Fannin: Rock Creek and Toccoa River.
Lumpkin: Etowah River and Nimbalewill Creek.
Union: Cooper Creek.
Note: Information is subject to change. Please call the hatchery at 706-838-4723 for questions. The hatchery also provides trout for the state. Please contact Georgia DNR for information on sites stocked by the state. NT(May8,VJICA

Booster Club membership drive

The Towns County Athletic Booster Club will be having a membership drive May 1 - 18, 2013 for the 2013-2014 school year. The Towns County Athletic Booster Club's purpose is to support the Middle and High School athletic programs through fundraising and volunteer efforts.

Anyone who wishes to participate needs to submit the membership application and fee before May 18, 2013. The membership form can be downloaded at the athletic department's website - tcaathletics.weebly.com/ under the Booster Club tab. The membership fee is \$25 per individual and \$35 per couple.

For questions or more information, please see any current Club member. TM(May8,FJSH

SPRING FLING FUNDRAISER SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2013 FUN BEGINS AT 3:00 P.M.

TOWNS COUNTY SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD & TRACK

FREE GIVE-AWAYS - MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN ONE OF TWO KINDLE FIRE HD TABLETS (Drawings at 4:30 and 5:30 - come early to register to win)

COW PATTY BINGO BEGINS AT 6:00 P.M. (For bingo tickets, see any Booster Club member)

CORN HOLE TOURNAMENT BEGINS AT 4:30 Tournament Registration from 3:00 to 4:00 (To pre-register, contact Susan deVries at 706-896-6106)

JUMPING TENTS

HAMBURGERS - HOTDOGS

GRILLED CORN ON THE COB

COTTON CANDY -- SNO CONES

JOIN US TO SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR TOWNS COUNTY ATHLETICS

All proceeds to go support the Towns County Athletic Booster Club. The Towns County Athletic Booster Club is an organization whose purpose is to support the Middle and High School Athletic Programs.