

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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

Indians' preseason concludes at Hayesville; Union rolls into town on Friday

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Indians lost a heroic battle in their final scrimmage match of the year Friday night against the Hayesville Yellow Jackets.

Fans didn't seem to mind, however, as waves of Towns County blue roared from the stands, cheering the Indians on to the very end of the 29-7 loss.

"I was real proud of our young men, I thought they played their hearts out," said Indian Head Coach Billy Barnhart. "We just missed opportunities, and we gave up some big plays on special teams. And just missed an opportunity, I feel, to win a football game Friday night, even though it was just a scrimmage."

The team suffered a loss even before the game started, as a couple of key players could not dress out against the Yellow Jackets.

"Cruz Shook had a concussion in the Rabun Gap scrimmage," said Coach Barnhart. "He was just not ready to play this week."

And Kobe Denton, who scored last week's touchdowns against Rabun Gap, suffered from a possible torn bicep during that same scrimmage. Hopefully, both Shook and Denton will return for the much anticipated regular season opener against Union County, but that remains to be seen.

"It's hard to replace those guys, but I was real proud of the guys we had step in for them," said Coach Barnhart. "Cole



Russell Cox, Zach Sewell, and a host of Indian defenders smother the Hayesville ball carrier Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Ledford is a freshman, stepped in for Kobe, and I thought did a good job. And Dylan Roberts on offense stepped in for Cruz, and I thought he ran the ball well and did a good job."

But the loss of Cruz Shook was a double blow, as he is a force from one end of the football field to the other.

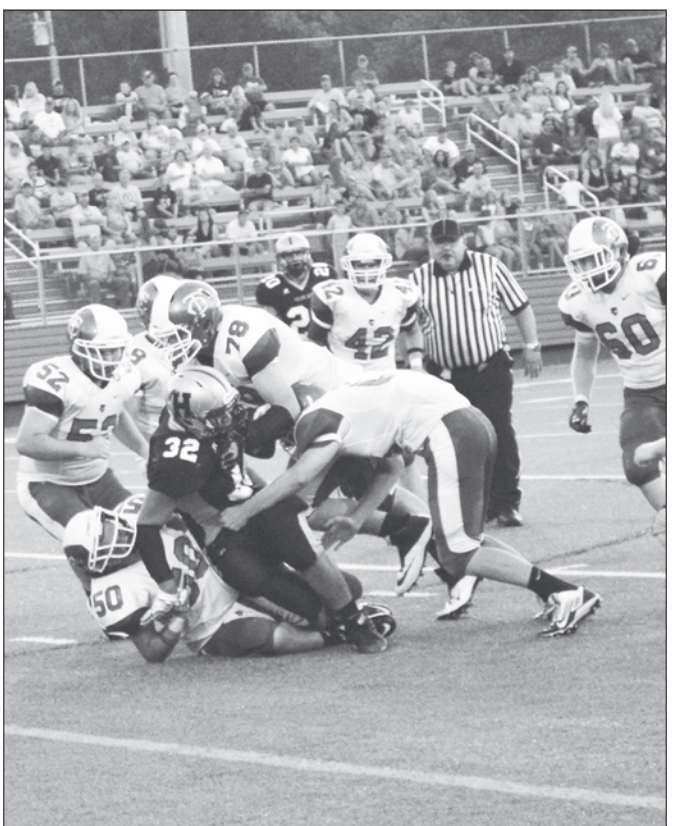
"Defensively, Blake Silvers, who's a sophomore, stepped in for Cruz, and I thought played a really good game defensively," said Coach Barnhart. "We always talk about you've got to

be ready when your number's called, and I felt those guys were last night."

Kyle Davis' name and number came up time and time again through Hayesville's loudspeakers, as he made more than a few Yellow Jackets kiss their own Astroturf.

"He was bringing it last night defensively, and played a great game defensively for us and did a great job both sides of the ball, really," said Coach Barnhart.

Preparing for the Union



Walker Ross, Luke Ledford, and Kevin McConnell lead the way on the defensive end. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

County game, Coach Barnhart feels pretty good about defense.

"I like where we're at defensively right now," said Coach Barnhart. "Obviously, we gave up a couple passing plays Friday night, and Union County does throw the ball around, so we're going to need to work on that this week."

But the real work is going to be centered around moving the ball, as once again, Coach Barnhart talks the need to beef up on offense.

"We've got to get better

up front on the offensive line," said Coach Barnhart. "We were inconsistent Friday night. We would look good for a couple plays, then for two or three plays we wouldn't look good. We'd miss assignments and we'd come off blocks."

The overall game plan is pretty clear, and Coach Barnhart and his Indians will be practicing hard all week, getting ready to declaw the Panthers.

"We've just got to get more consistent up front on the offensive line," said Barnhart.

"We've got to be able to bring some pressure to Union this week and be able to defend the pass, because that's what they're going to do."

Offensively, the Indians had 44 rushes for 220 yards Friday, with two for three passing for 13 yards, and a total of 233 yards to Hayesville's 213.

Dylan Roberts had 16 rushes for 75 yards, Cole Ledford with 10 rushes for 50 yards, Zach Sewell 13 rushes for 65 yards, and Russell Cox five rushes for 30 yards as well as the 13 yards passing.

On special teams, Daulton Rogers had three returns for 61 yards, and Cole Ledford returned the ball two times for 37 yards. Shea Underwood punted three times for a 26-yard average.

The Indians suffered seven penalties for 50 yards, while the Yellow Jackets only had four penalties for 25 yards lost. And to prove Coach Barnhart's point about Indian defense, Hayesville only had five offensive plays in the second half.

Dylan Roberts scored the touchdown for Towns County, with Shea Underwood bringing home the point after attempt.

And Zach Sewell made it into the end zone Friday night, but the play was called back due to one of the many penalties against the Indians that contributed to the loss.

"I'm proud of these young men and the way they're working, and I like what we've got," said Barnhart. "But we've got to continue to get better each and every day, so that's what we're going to try to do."

Lady Indians pick up three wins last week; improve to 2-2 in Region 8-A

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Lady Indians Fast-pitch Softball team has been keeping busy.

Gaining their first win of regular season play against Lakeview 4-3 last Tuesday, the team looked ready for anything.

Lady Indian Angel Moss warmed the crowd's hearts pre-game with an angelic rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

Shortstop Tori Morgan got things going as Towns County's first at bat, nailing a triple and going home on a sacrifice hit from pitcher Emily Ledford, and the game just got better from there.

Ledford, who had a few hits on the offense, sent strike after strike over home plate, and the chemistry between Ledford and catcher Zandra Churchill was apparent.

"We leaned on Emily, and she came through for us," said Coach Rowland.

What made the biggest difference against Lakeview was



The Towns County Lady Indians knocked off Lakeview 4-3, Hebron 11-3 and blasted Liberty County 20-0 last week to improve to 4-9 on the year. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

Bradley, Alyssa Pyle, and Tatiana Baldwin.

"We've been working on defense all week, and they came through," said Coach Brandon Rowland.

And even the high school football team, which was holding a practice nearby, stopped by to congratulate the ladies on

a fine win.

One area that needed improvement on the whole was hitting.

"We're still lacking a little bit there, but we had solid defense today. The outfield was perfect," said Coach Rowland.

And improve they did. The very next game, which



was at home against Hebron Christian Thursday, the Lady Indians won the day with a not-too-shabby score of 11-3.

At the Commerce Tournament Saturday, Towns County defeated Lincoln by a whopping 20-0 margin. They went on to lose against Commerce in the same tournament 5-0, but picked

up a win facing North Springs 9-1. They also lost to Hart County 5-0 in the tourney.

So far for the year, the Lady Indians stand 2-2 in conference play, 4-9 overall. And one thing is for sure - the team is making its mark and standing proud in a season that is far from over.

Towns County youth football takes three of four on their home turf

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Youth Football players and cheerleaders went 3-1 at home in games against Hayesville Saturday, a sting the Yellow Jackets aren't likely to forget.

"We had a great week," said Youth Football Director Jimmy Smith. "Coming in taking three out of four was a happy day. I was excited about my teams and all my coaches."

The Pee Wee Indians improved on their already undefeated season, taking the Hayesville Pee Wees by storm with a final score of 32-14.

Offensively, the 5 and 6-year-olds produced a whopping 270 yards, with four touchdowns and four corresponding 2-point conversions.

Greyson Tallent, Lane Haney and Mason Mitchell all had strong defensive starts, while Jamison Dawson and Aiden Reynolds led the team. Jacob Nicholson used his sharp eyes to recover a fumble, and the Indian Pee Wees on the whole were a force to be reckoned with Saturday.

Turning to the Termites, their presence on the field all but spoke for itself. In an undeniable show of

strength, the Termites swatted down their Yellow Jacket counterparts in a 28-6 victory.

Brett Young sailed into the end zone for a touchdown, and teammate Jensen Goble didn't know whether to be a whirlwind or a hurricane, bringing home two touchdowns himself, one of which was a kickoff return. Goble handled the ball for an astounding 152 yards that day.

Seth Barnhart, son of High School Head Coach Billy Barnhart, made everyone proud with a touchdown and 73 yards rushing. Now, if only Barnhart the younger had played Friday night. And young Connor Chastain held his own on offense, running the scoreboard up with a 2-point conversion to help his fellow Termites win.

Holding Hayesville to a single touchdown was a remarkable showing from players Dawson Smith, who had four tackles on defense, Griffin Nichols with three tackles, and Dawson Devane, who brought two Yellow Jackets screeching to the ground.

Moving on to the Mites, 10-year-old Kyle Oakes had 150 rushing yards and 110 yards of passing, numbers that would surely garner millions in the NFL.

New to the Indians this year is Union County native Griffin



The Towns County youth football players and cheerleaders are the future of Towns County. Not only on the gridiron but as fine young men and women in the community. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

Young, who lit up the board with a 2-point conversion. Welcome to Towns, Griffin.

The Towns County Mites proved mightier than Hayesville might have wished, and the Yellow Jackets buzzed off with their third loss of the day at a score of 22-16, thanks in large part to the defensive capabilities of A. J. Miles, who had seven tackles on the day.

And while they did their best, the Midgets came up short for the second week in a row, missing the win by 42 points to 0.

"We're young, of course, but we've just got to get better," said Midget Head Coach Rodney Thomas. "We can't make mistakes like we've been making, and the offensive line is just going to have to pick up and do a little bit better."

The next match in Robinsville is a bye for the Towns County Midgets, as the Robinsville Midget team doesn't exist. Two weeks of practice before their next game should help the Midgets come



The Towns County youth football players and cheerleaders are the future of Towns County. Not only on the gridiron but as fine young men and women in the community. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

back stronger than ever, and Coach Thomas plans on using that time wisely.

Director Jimmy Smith is appreciative of his coaches. Heading up the Pee Wees is Shane Haney, with assistant coaches Joey Floyd, Branan Burns, and Justin Mitchell.

Joseph Goble is head coach for the Termites, with assistance from Ricky Moss, Cody Cranberry, and Michael Chastain.

Head Coach Patrick Oakes runs the show for the Mites, and Randy Smith, Aaron Burrell, Chris Gibson, Craig Young, and Shawn Mulkey round out the side of assistant coaches.

Last but not least, the Midgets find leadership in Head Coach Rodney Thomas, Sheriff Chris Clinton, Damon Crowder, and Jackson Noblet.

"This is our second Smokey Mountain team we've faced and their first home game since I've changed the Smokey Mountain Conference," said Director Smith.

Smith decided to leave the North Georgia Youth Football Association in favor of the Smokey Mountain Conference over scheduling issues.

"Imagine if you had a cheerleader and a football player," said Smith of the NGYFA. "The mom may have to go to with the cheerleader because they may be cheering at Pickens County, and the dad may have had to go with the son, who could be playing at Dawson County. It was tough, especially if you had two kids playing. There were very few times they got to play at the same place."

And parents couldn't be happier with the change, as it only makes sense to have all four age groups play at the same place on the same day.

"Smokey Mountain is a very tough conference," said Smith. "I've never said that they weren't a tough conference. The reason I changed was to help the parents of Towns County."

And plenty of people in the community support and will hopefully continue to support the children, who are recognized and treated accordingly as the future of Towns County.

"As long as I've done this, I've never had so many people at a ballgame," said Smith, now in his 18th year of youth football. "I'd like to thank the people from Hayesville, they brought a lot of people Saturday. And also, I saw people at our ballgame from Towns County that I haven't seen up there in 10 years."

Towns County High School Principal and Athletic Director helped set up the snow cone machine Saturday, and even the commissioner gets in on the fun in a major way.

"Commissioner Bill Kendall, I can't say enough," said Smith. "If it weren't for Bill, I couldn't run this program, to be honest. He supplies us with a lot of equipment and helps us out on stuff. He cares about all sports of the youth, not just football - basketball, baseball, soccer, whatever, he's supporting it."

The next game is away at Robinsville, NC, but following that is a home game against Murphy, and Smith hopes the turnout is just as good as this past Saturday.

VFW Golf League news

Put together 9 birdies and 1 eagle and you have shot 11 under par. That's what Bill Kiser, Frank Geddings and Tom Moyher did Tuesday for a VFW score of 61 at the Ridges golf course in Hayesville. Thursday back at Chatuge Shores Mel Halfon, Ray Ward and Glen Greenwald shot 7 under, for a score of 65. The VFW had some great golfing for the week.