

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians lose key player to injury in loss to Rabun Gap

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Sophomore Cruz Shook had to leave the field and be taken to Erlanger Hospital on Friday night with an injury to his spleen as the Towns County Indians lost the closest game of the year to Rabun Gap at Frank McClure Memorial Stadium.

"We are just praying for Cruz right now and hoping everything will be all right with him," said a concerned Indians' Head Coach Kyle Langford.

The injury happened in the third quarter when Shook caught a pass from senior quarterback Joseph Gibson and carried the ball to the Eagles' 2-yard line with 9:04 left in the quarter.

He landed on the ball as he was reaching for the goal line in an attempt to score. The injury turned out to be a lacerated spleen and the sophomore sensation possibly will be out for the rest of the season as preliminary reports came in.

The game started as Shook took the opening kickoff on the Indians own 9-yard line and returned it to the Eagles 30-yard line.

Junior QB Jackson Noblet and senior fullback Wesley Bloodworth and tailback Joseph Foster were able to move the ball on the ground to the Eagles' 16-yard line but the drive failed and the Indians gave the ball up on downs.

Rabun Gap started to move the ball down field and almost broke a long scoring run until sophomore linebacker



Junior Jackson Noblet carries the ball. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Kyle Davis closed the hole and made the stop. Junior defensive back Vonya Baldwin broke up a 2nd and 6 play that left the Eagles with 3rd and 6.

With 6:01 left in the first quarter, the Eagles found a hole on the left side of the Indians defensive line and broke through to score from their own 45-yard line but the extra point was blocked by Noblet and the Indians found themselves trailing 6-0.

The Indians took the following kickoff but were forced to punt. Bloodworth hit a booming shot that drove the Eagles back to their own 15-yard line where two plays later they fumbled and Towns recovered.

Bloodworth then drove it in from the 4-yard line and the Indians had their first score of

the night. Junior kicker Cesear Butamante hit the extra point and the Indians led 7-6 with 2:13 left in the first quarter.

The Eagles returned the ensuing kickoff from their own 9-yard line to the Indians 22-yard line where junior defensive back Brett Barrett made a great tackle to prevent the score to end the first quarter.

As the second quarter began, Bloodworth and senior Colton Stroud got in the backfield and drove the Eagles back on 2nd and 10.

Stroud followed suit on 3rd and 12 and sacked the quarterback for another loss and Noblet broke up the 4th and 12 pass play and the Indians took over on downs at their own 12-yard line.

The Indians moved the ball down the field behind some



Joseph Gibson fires the ball downfield. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

good ground work until Gibson hit Barrett for a big gain to move the ball to the Eagles 38-yard line. Three plays later, Noblet found some room around the left side and scored from the 5-yard line. The extra point was good from Bustamante and the Indians led 14-6.

The Eagles were on the move after the kickoff until Shook made a crucial interception on the Indians own 20-yard line and returned it to the 32-yard line.

The Indians could not move the ball and were forced to punt the ball away. Afterward, some hard-nosed defense by the Indians held the score in Towns' favor as the halftime horn sounded.

The second half started with freshman Shea Underwood trying to loft a short

kick over the front line of the Eagles return team and the Eagles ended up with good field position.

The Indians drove the Eagles back but on 3rd and 20 they hit a big run from their star running back and he scored from their own 43-yard line.

"He is a good athlete and we knew he could hurt us if we let him get the ball. He is hard to get a solid hit on because of the way he runs. He is just a great athlete," said Langford.

The Eagles were able to complete a short pass for the two-point conversion and the game was tied 14-14 with 9:32 left in the third quarter.

Shook took the following kickoff and returned it to mid-field. From there, Noblet broke a long run from the Indians 41-yard line to the Eagles' 11-yard

line. An offside pass to Shook moved the ball to the Indians 2-yard line and Noblet took it in from there. The extra point was good and the Indians led 21-14. This was the drive that the Indians lost Shook.

Rabun Gap took the kickoff from Underwood and ran the ball 79 yards for a touchdown. The two-point conversion attempt was good and the Eagles led 22-21 with 7:55 left in the third quarter.

The Indians drove the ball on the ground to try and keep control of the clock. Some fine running by Bloodworth put the Indians on the Eagles' 20-yard line. Gibson then hit junior wideout Harrison Hobbs on the 2-yard line where he scored. The extra point attempt failed and the Indians led 27-22.

Davis made another big stop on the following kickoff and Foster and junior line-backer Evan Keyes teamed up to stop the Eagles on second down but the Eagles scored on the next play and led 28-27.

The Eagles went for two, and although the pass was tipped, their big tight end was able to come up with the reception and they now led the Indians 30-27 with 8:36 left in the game.

The Indians were driving on their next possession but a fumble recovery by the Eagles left them in good field possession and Rabun Gap scored on the following play from the Indians 47-yard line. The extra point was good and the Eagles

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TCMS falls to Lumpkin 30-12; still in playoffs

By Joe Collins
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It's hard to win football games when you don't have the ball. Such was the case on Thursday when the Lumpkin County Indians visited Frank McClure Memorial Stadium for the last home game of the season. They kept control of the football for over 23 of the 32 possible playing time minutes against the Towns County Middle School Indians football team.

"They played good ball control and kept it out of our hands for most of the game and it's hard to score when you don't have the ball," said a frustrated Head Coach Chris Vardo during the post game interview.

The Lumpkin County tribe just kept grilling it out on the ground and utilizing all their downs to keep the game under their control. They were well coached and committed very few mistakes. Their Quarterback and Fullback worked the Indians defense and seemed to make the first downs on third down running plays for most of the game.

Towns County made good use of their possessions with Kobe Denton scoring twice on long runs and Russell Cox finding his favorite receivers Owen Bouchard and Major Moss at crucial times



Kobe Denton breaks free from the Lumpkin County defense in last week's game. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

but they just didn't own the ball enough.

The TCMS Indians took the opening kickoff and were forced to punt on their first series which led to a LCMS Indians score with 4:00 minutes left in the first quarter. The extra points attempt was good and Lumpkin led 8-0. Denton then answered with a 65-yard run off the left side tackle on the first play from the line of scrimmage after the kickoff. The extra points attempt failed and Lumpkin led 8-6 with 3:43 left in the first quarter.

Lumpkin then took possession after the kickoff from Towns and moved the ball down the field. Good tackles by Cody Williams, Walker Ross, Nick Shook and Ian Thompson kept Lumpkin from making any

big plays but the first downs just kept coming. A QB keeper with 5:03 left in the first half and a failed extra points attempt put Lumpkin ahead 14-6.

Denton took the following kickoff on his own 20-yard line and returned it to the TCMS Indians 45. Towns couldn't move the ball and were forced to punt. The Lumpkin County return man dropped the ball and Ross came up with the ball for the turnover. Cox hit Bouchard over the middle for a short gain and Towns went to a no huddle offense to try and score before the half. They missed the first down by 2 inches and were forced to punt and the half ended with Towns County trailing 14-6.

The second half started with Towns kicking off to

Lumpkin who took control on their own 35-yard line. The LCMS Indians kept their drive alive the whole third quarter and scored with 7:16 left in the fourth quarter. The extra points attempt was successful and they now led 22-6. Towns could not answer and was forced to punt on the following series.

Lumpkin took possession after the punt and found themselves on their own 44-yard line. Their fullback made a run up the middle and Towns County thought they had stopped him in a forward motion standing pile but the whistle had never blown and when the runner walked out of the pile he just started running down field with nobody in pursuit. The TD counted and with a successful extra points attempt the LCMS Indians led 30-6.

Towns took control on their own 36-yard line after the following kickoff. Cox found Moss wide open down the right side line and he carried the ball to the Lumpkin County 36-yard line where he was stopped. On the very next play, Denton hit a big hole behind the left side tackle and rushed in for the TCMS Indians final score. The extra points failed and Towns trailed 30-12 with 3:52 left in the game.

Lumpkin then got possession of the ball and although the TCMS Indians tried hard to get the ball back their efforts

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Joe Collins

Tips from the Range

I have heard it said that there is only one swing for every club and I agree with this statement, for the most part. Every swing has consistent fundamentals and is dependent upon certain repeatable motions but every swing is not the same. Each club is unique in its design and function, therefore; the swing involved with each club will be unique.

When striking most iron shots, you will make a divot. A wedge will typically make a longer and deeper divot than a 5-iron. These divot patterns are in direct relation to the length of the club you're using, so the longer the shaft then the shallower the divot. Since this is true, then it stands to reason that there should be little evidence of impact when using a fairway wood. In other words, a fairway wood should simply sweep the ball off of the turf and this is one of the most difficult actions to perform with a golf club. This fact alone is why fairway wood shots demand precision and the swing must be nearly perfect to consistently hit good fairway wood shots.

Proper impact with a fairway wood is totally dependent on solid fundamentals. It is extremely important to have the correct ball position and to maintain your balance throughout the swing. The bottom of the swing arc must coincide with the position of the ball almost perfectly.

If the ball is too far forward in the stance then you will hit it thin and end up with what many golfers call a "worm burner". If the ball is too far back in the stance then you will top the shot and the ball won't go very far. So, how do we determine the correct ball position to use when playing a fairway wood shot? I am so glad you asked.

First, take your normal stance and push a short tee into the ground just inside your front foot so that the top of said tee is the same height as the turf grass and located at the proper distance away to play a 3-wood shot. Next, place another tee about 8 inches back from the front tee, at the same height, but

still in line with your take away path. Now, place another tee 12 inches behind the middle tee again at the same height and on the same line as the other two. Place the head of your 3-wood behind the middle tee and start taking some practice swings being careful to not hit the tee but simply swing over the top of it to make sure you can maintain your balance. If you can barely brush the top of the tee then your balance is close to being proper. Now comes the more difficult part of finding the exact location to place the ball in your stance.

To find the best ball position, place the head of your 3-wood behind the middle tee and make your normal take away. Make sure you swing the club down the same way as you always do and try to make contact with the forward tee. The place where the club hits the ground is the exact position your ball needs to be in order to make good contact with a fairway wood on a normal shot or in other words, the spot where the club head impacted the ground is the ball position spot you should use when playing fairway woods.

As I stated earlier, your fundamentals need to be solid to make consistent impact with fairway woods. Do not let your head move and make sure you keep your eye on the ball. Impact has to be precise to hit a good shot off the fairway so swing smooth and keep your grip light. Stay away from the ball and always let your arms straighten through impact. Practice is crucial when learning to hit this shot.

Okay, we have now covered the basic swing development aspects and I hope it has been helpful.

I would like to start having some fun by helping you with your swing problems. I will need to know if the ball is starting off on the target line and moving one way or another or if the ball is starting off left or right of where you are aiming. Please email me at jcollins.tcherald@windstream.net with any questions you have. You will be surprised by how common your flaws are among most golfers. I will analyze your issue and discuss it here in "Tips". Go ahead and give it a shot. I bet I can help. Good luck and I will see you on the course!

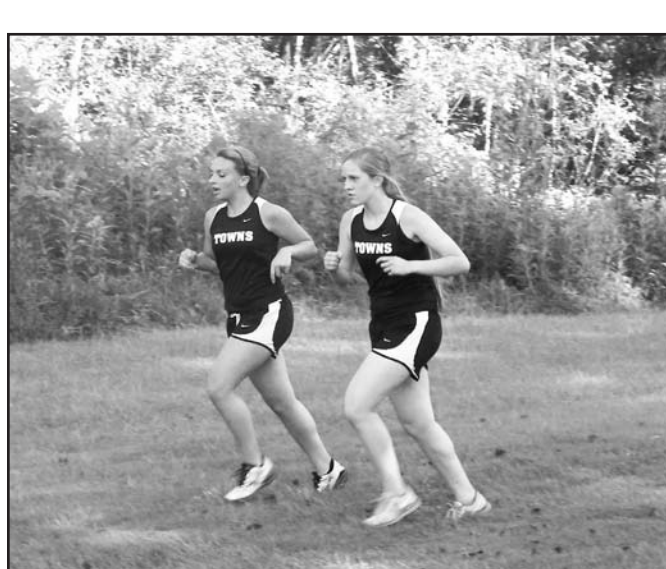
Cross Country competes at Konehete Park in Murphy

By Joe Collins
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Staff Writer

Head Coach Jeannie Ledford is right on track to get her teams ready for the Area Championship this October. In Monday's meet, all her team members ran their best times of the year and this proves that her training technique is working to prepare the teams to excel in October.

It is very important for all the members of the Men's and Ladies' teams to work hard to improve their individual scores because it takes five individual scores to comprise the total team score in each meet. These first five runners will determine how Towns County High School will place at the Area Championship meet in October.

"Union County and The Smoky Mountain Conference are the best runners in the mountains and we didn't beat them, but we improved against them from the first time we ran against them this year. Our fifth and sixth runners need to work harder and keep improving



Towns County High School's Cross Country teams in action last week at Konehete Park in Murphy, NC. Photos by Joe Collins.

Our top four runners are doing well but it takes five scores to compete," said Ledford.

Senior Bradley Smith and junior Ansley Vardeman are still doing well finishing first again for the TCHS teams but freshman Miranda Queen is coming into her own by improving her personal best time by more than 8 minutes and sophomore Alana Calhoun is working hard to try and become

the fourth place runner on the ladies' side.

Dillon Thompson, on the men's team, was severely injured in an accident this summer that required emergency surgery on his spleen, but has fought back and is now coming into his own and improved his personal best for the year by 4 minutes.

All in all, the teams are doing better each event and



seem to be on track to be at their best in October.

"We don't care who is in the meet, we are going to show up and run our hearts out. We still need to come together and reconnect as a team, but we are still doing well," said a proud Ledford.

Their next meet is Sept. 27 at Fannin County. Starting time is 4:30 p.m. Come out and support the TCHS runners.

