

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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

Lady Indians, Ansley Vardeman win State; Smith seventh

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

MACON - It was a most beautiful sight when Ansley Vardeman crossed the hilltop all by herself and started down hill on the final quarter mile of the Class A State Public Schools Cross Country Championship Cross Country Meet.

Georgia Military College's Elizabeth Savage followed Vardeman across the finish line.

An even more beautiful sight was who was following Savage.

Junior Caitlin Sheffield and sophomore Sierra Nichols were the next two Towns County Lady Indians to cross the finish line.

Two more runners crossed, the second was Towns County junior Taylor Vardeman.

Yes, the Lady Indians had four of the top six runners to cross the finish line in a state championship meet.

When the second Vardeman crossed the finish line, cell phones lit up; it was pandemonium in Hiawassee.

The mid-morning sun was just starting to heat things up as the Towns County Lady Indians Cross Country team was blistering the course on the grounds of the Georgia Industrial Children's Home to win the state title of the Class A Public Schools Cross Country Championships. Ansley Vardeman anchored her team to the title and claimed the individual champion's crown with a time of 21:34.37.

Everyone loves it when a plan comes together and Towns' Head Cross Country Coach Jeannie Ledford's plan came together in Macon when her girls varsity team dominated the Class A Public Schools Cross Country Championship.

Ledford put her team under some very difficult competitive situations in the 2012 season to work on their ability to perform at the highest level possible.

"I set up our schedule so that we could run against the



All Towns County's runners huddle and motivate each other before the race. Photo/Joe Collins



The Towns County Lady Indians' "Fast Five" at the starting line of the State Meet in Macon last weekend. Photo/Joe Collins

best and it is hard to find better runners as a whole than right here in this area," she said.

"We ran against impossible odds this year and it was by design so that we would be comfortable with stiff competition when the time came to make it count," Ledford said. "I want my teams to know that I appreciate their sacrifice and staying focused on the main goal and that was the state title and we did it," she said.

Ansley Vardeman anchored her team with a first place finish overall in the individual competition to claim the Overall Champion in Class A Public Schools Cross Country

title with a time of 21:34.37. Junior Caitlin Sheffield claimed third overall with a 22:40.54 barely beating teammate and sophomore Sierra Nichols who managed the course at 22:47.21 to finish fourth. Sixth place saw junior Taylor Vardeman finishing strong with a 23:17.65 and sophomore Karlie Albach rounded out the Top 5 scores for TCHS with a great 16th place finish and a time of 24:54.74 for a team score of 29. Sophomore Miranda Queen completed the race taking the 63rd spot. The Lady Indians beat the second place team by 62 points.

The girls varsity team

wasn't the only Cross Country team member from TCHS to be represented at the meet as senior Bradley Smith qualified to run in the men's varsity meet individually by finishing third at the Area Meet on Oct. 25. Several of his teammates were there to support him and the lady runners as well.

Smith pushed himself to pick up several places and finish in seventh place overall.

"I feel great about the race. The course was a little longer on the backside hill than I remember it being but I got through there okay," he said.

Smith ran the Macon course in 18:48.34.



Getting last minute advice from Coach Ledford. Photo/Joe Collins



Bradley Smith coming down the home stretch. Photo/Joe Collins



Ansley Vardeman receives her first place medal after her championship performance in Macon. Photo/Joe Collins

Indians' two-game winning streak derailed at Lakeview

By Joe Collins
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

GAINESVILLE - The high of winning their last two consecutive games was short lived Friday night as the Towns County Indians football team was shutout by the Lakeview Lions 34-0.

A possible season ending injury to senior Fullback Wesley Bloodworth put four key players on the injured list and has weakened the Tribe in its overall performance.

The Lions were a solid football team and the Indians needed to be firing on all eight to handle their strong offensive attack but the Indians fouled a couple of plugs early and never got the sputtering engine going.

It was a sign of the night when the Indians took the opening kickoff and failed to gain a first down and were forced to punt. The offense never got the momentum it needed from its ground game and was forced to go to the air. Quarterback Joseph Gibson threw for a game high of 110 yards with junior Jackson Noblet hauling in four passes for 55 yards and junior Brett Barrett with three for 47 yards. It was still a frustrating night for Gibson as the Lions were able to find their way into the backfield often.

The Lions hit the field Friday with 17 returning seniors for their Senior Night. They were coming off a big win that had given Lakeview its first winning season in the history of the school. Their emotions were up and they were ready to play when the opening horn sounded. The Indians were shocked early by a fired up Lions team. Couple that with the injuries that have plagued the team this season, and the Indians football team had their backs against the wall.

High School Principal Roy Perren summed it up best



Evan Keyes, Vonya Baldwin, Dustin Brackett, and Garrett Bradshaw swarm a Lakeview Lion ball carrier. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

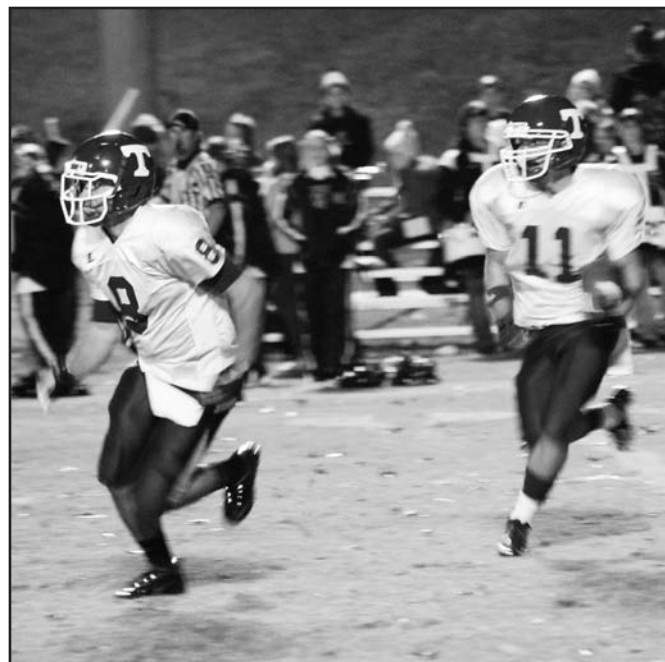
when he spoke about the loss.

"That was a tough one to watch after the last two weeks but it is hard to stay up when the odds are against you. We've got four good players out and Lakeview has a strong offense. It was just a tough loss for the guys and I feel for them. It was our first shutout of the season and that is always hard to take."

The Indians have had a good season despite being on the short end in the wins column. They have been really close to winning several games and if a play or two had gone differently, this season might have been a record season.

"We could easily be 7-2 instead of 2-7 with just a few good breaks this year, but it is what it is and the guys are to be commended," declared Perren.

The Indians football program is not winning the way they had hoped but they are still playing some good football and if you come to a game you get to see some hard-nosed football. "People need to know that if they decide to come to a game they will be entertained with some hard hitting aggressive



Noblet leads the way for Brett Barrett. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

football and the guys need the support of the fans," said Head Coach Kyle Langford on the excitement of TCHS football.

The final game of the 2012 season is Friday, Nov. 9th at home against Hebron.

It is Senior Night and it promises to be some good football. Game time is

7:30 p.m. If you have wanted to see a game this year and haven't made it, then make plans to come and catch this final game.

Let's show our seniors how much we appreciate all their hard work and cheer them on to victory as the season draws to a close.



Senior Joseph Gibson tosses a pass to junior Jackson Noblet last Friday night at Lakeview. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



The TCHS Band at Lakeview. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Sophomore lineman Kyle Davis with the tackle for the Indians. Photo/Lowell Nicholson