

Woody Gap bounces back at Towns

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
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Woody Gap tennis faced some tough sledding at Rabun County last week but responded nicely at Towns County.

Amber Gooch picked up a win for the Lady Falcons in the No. 1 singles match, taking her sets 8-3.

Meanwhile, the Falcons dominated the courts in Hiwassee.

Eli Gooch won his No. 1 singles match 8-2. Dakota Etheridge and Easton Wood edged out the Indians 8-6 in No. 1 double action to remain a perfect record on the season at 6-0.

Casey McKim and Konnor Sosebee debuted in style during No. 2 doubles competition, thumping their Indian counterparts 8-1.

Etheridge and Wood add-



Amber Gooch



Eli Gooch

ed doubles wins at Rabun for their only victories in Tiger. Staci Clark and Rebecca Etheridge won four games in No. 1 Doubles. Lauren Adams and Brooklyn Dockery won six games in

No. 2 doubles. Eli Gooch won three games in his match.

Woody Gap's Tuesday match at Lumpkin County has been changed to 5 p.m. at Y-hoola Park.

MGC dominant at Spring Break Out

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Woodstock - The Mountain Gymnastics Center's Prep-Op 1 squad took home a first place overall finish on Mar. 3rd.

Eleven-year old Erin Raper picked up first place with an all around score of 35.8.

She finished first on the vault, beam, and floor, and third on the bars.

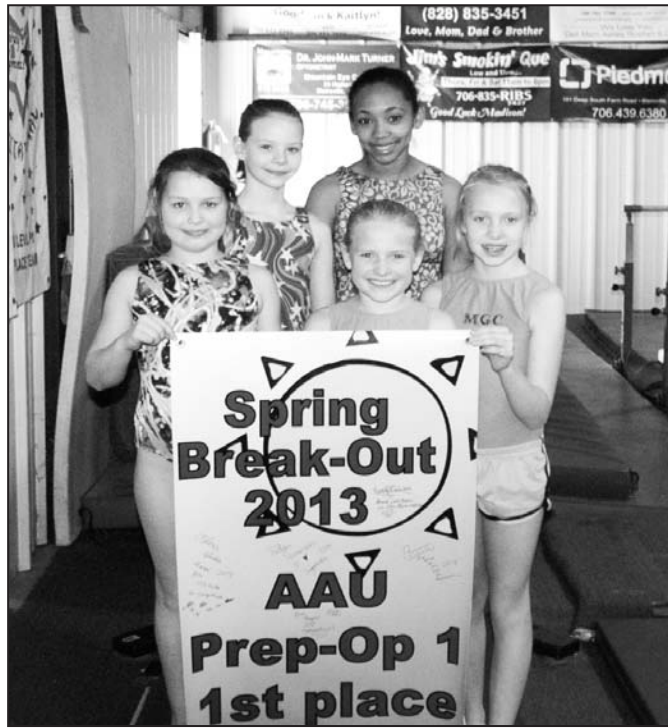
Eight-year old Olivia Blocker was first overall with a 34.525 score. She placed first in all four events.

Jordan Swanson came in second in the 10-year old age group, taking first place on the beam, second on the vault, third on the floor, and fourth on the bars.

Nine-year old Emma Patterson was third overall, placing first on the floor, second on the beam and the bars, and fourth on the vault.

Sierra Louima picked up fourth among the 12-year olds with second place finish on the beams, third on the floor, and fourth on the vault and bars.

In Prep-Op 2, Addy Dockery, Laura McGaha, and Lexi Stephens each finished



Mountain Gymnastics had a successful weekend in Woodstock at the Spring Break Out on March 3rd. Photo/Todd Forrest

first all-around in their respective age groups.

Kaylee Kendall came in third, Evelyn McBride and Reagan Ledford each picked up a fourth place finish.

Mia McCombs came in fifth and Madelyn Savage was

seventh.

Level 3, saw Caymin Thompson place second, Haley Craig was third, Kaitlyn Daves fourth, AnnaLyse Kiernan fifth, Jacey Lee seventh, and Brandy Barlow came in ninth.

The Union County 11-12 All-star basketball team competes in state tournament



(L-R): 1st row - Brian Smith, Jared Nelson and Sawyer Drake; 2nd row - Coleston Daniel, Britt Waller, Dylan Snow, Chayton Schafer, Kanon Hemphill, Pier Allison, Kyle Morlock; 3rd row - Coaches Brian Allison, Danny Hemphill and Trint Rich.

The Union County 11-12 All-star basketball team traveled to Commerce the first weekend in March to participate in the Georgia Recreation and Parks Association state tournament.

After Friday night's pool game, the Panthers were scheduled to play Commerce in the opening round of single elimination competition. Only eight teams in the entire state had advanced this far in the tournament.

Commerce had defeated Union County in a hard fought battle for the District title by a score of 60 to 53. Union County came out fighting from the start and got revenge by beating Commerce by a score of 37 to 33 due to some aggressive defense that shut down a high scoring Tiger team.

This win earned Union County a spot in the state final four and also a shot at revenge against the team from Man-

chester. Manchester had beaten some of this same group of kids two years ago in the state tournament on their way to a state championship in the 9-10 year old division. Once again, the Manchester team was able to defeat our Union County team on their way to another state title.

Congratulations to the all-star team for a great performance and ending up tied for third place in state. N(Mar13,26)CA

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County Lady Patriots.

They have quite a bit more speed and quickness than we have," Coach Hunter said. "They had a girl up front that we had to drop extra defenders just to deal with her speed. Any time you are facing a player like that with a strong supporting cast, then you are in trouble.

"We did not play terribly well on top of it all and they really exposed many of our weaknesses. We are not very fast as a whole, and speed kills in soccer"

Oglethorpe jumped out

to an early 1-0 lead and cruised from there.

"We did a poor job in the first half stringing passes together and coming to the ball," Coach Hunter said.

Trailing 2-0 midway through the second half, the Lady Panthers were able to regroup offensively but it was too little, too late.

"For the last 25 minutes of the game we were the aggressors but were not able to get any goals on the board," Coach Hunter said. "We tried to play too many long balls and

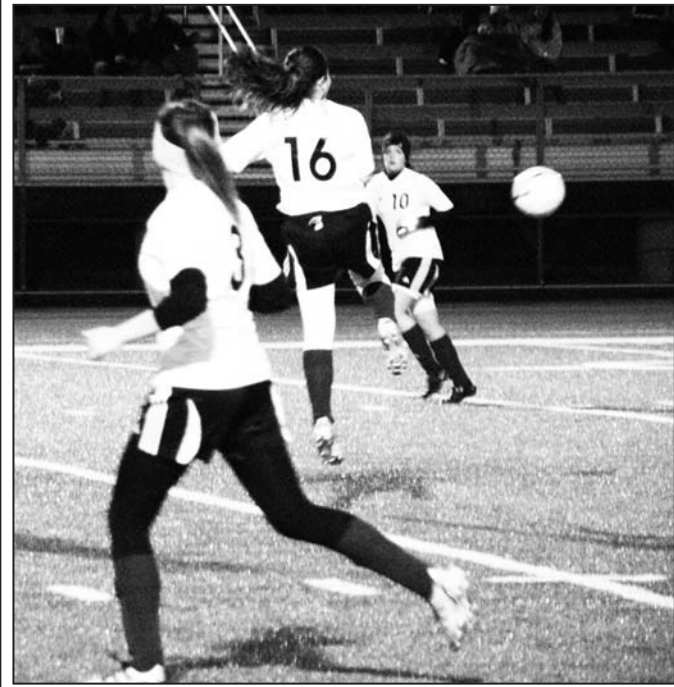
they had too much speed at the back. We had a tough dilemma most of the game. To get more players forward on offense we would have to pull defensive players who were already having a hard time with them.

"Later in the game we didn't have a choice and just had to attack. They were a very sound and skilled team who I knew were going to be tough."

The Union soccer teams will return to action on Tuesday as they host Fannin County at 5 and 7 p.m.

The J.V. squads will play host to Lumpkin County at 5 and 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, before the varsity welcomes Region 8-AA foe Greene County, also at 5 and 7 p.m.

The J.V. teams travels to Banks on Monday for a 5 and 6:30 p.m. encounter with the Leopards and Lady Leopards.



Kenna Bauman (#3) and Mikala Jones (#10) look on as Marissa Spaulding (#16) uses her hip to block kick. Photo/Todd Forrest



Lady Panthers defending during the first half. Photo/Todd Forrest

NASCAR 2013

By Gerald Hodges/the Racing Reporter

Matt Kenseth gets Vegas win

Matt Kenseth celebrated his 41st birthday by winning Sunday's Sprint Cup Kobalt 400. He gained the lead during a restart on lap 240 of the 267-lap race and held off a hard charging Kasey Kahne, who led the most laps.

It was Kenseth's first win in a Toyota for Joe Gibbs Racing after spending 15 years behind the wheel of a Ford for Roush Racing.

"It's always good to be a winner," said Kenseth. "I was nervous during those last laps because Kasey had a great car. Not taking on tires there at the end allowed us to be at the right spot at the right time."

Kahne dominated most of the race, but came up short at the end and finished 0.6-seconds behind Kenseth.

"I drove so hard every single lap. I didn't leave anything behind," said Kahne. "I thought we had the best car, but my tires began slipping there at the end."

Brad Keselowski didn't lead a lot of laps, but he passed Kyle Busch for third late in the race.

"We needed a little more speed," said Keselowski. "When I lost spots on the track, the guys in the pits helped me out. We didn't have the fastest car in practice, or during the race, but it turned out pretty good."

Kyle Busch raced back from a pit road speeding penalty to finish fourth.

"All in all, it was a great race," said Busch. "Our short speed was good, but we just needed to pick up more speed on the longer runs."

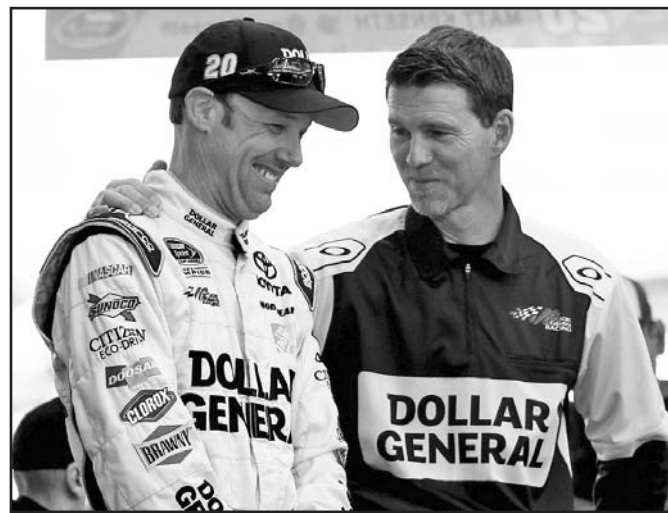
Carl Edwards finished fifth, followed by Jimmie Johnson, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Martin Truex, Kevin Harvick, and Paul Menard.

Danica Patrick finished 33rd, six laps down.

Top-10 leaders after 3 of 36: 1. Johnson-129, 2. Keselowski-124, 3. Earnhardt-119, 4. Hamlin-102, 5. Edwards-98, 6. Martin-95, 7. Kenseth-93, 8. Biffle-93, 9. Bowyer-89, 10. Almirola-88.

HORNISH IS VEGAS NATIONWIDE WINNER

Sam Hornish Jr. drove an absolutely dominant car to victory Saturday afternoon, streaking away from Kyle Busch during a seven-lap dash to the finish in the Nationwide race at Las Vegas Motor



Matt Kenseth, winner of Sunday Vegas Cup race and crew chief Jason Ratcliff

The win was Hornish's second in NASCAR's Nationwide Series and his first since Nov. 12, 2011 at Phoenix. It was the first Las Vegas victory for Penske Racing in any NASCAR series.

The Penske organization also collected its first victory after switching from Dodge to Ford between seasons.

Busch rolled across the finish line in second, 1.1 seconds behind Hornish. Brian Vickers ran third, followed by Trevor Bayne and Elliott Sadler. Bayne recovered from an early brush with the wall to post the fourth-place result.

Austin Dillon, Regan Smith, Alex Bowman, Brian Scott, and Travis Pastrana were the remaining top-10.

Top-10 points leaders after 3 of 33: 1. Hornish-127, 2. Allgaier-108, 3. Sadler-108, 4. Scott-108, 5. Smith-103, 6. A. Dillon-100, 7. Vickers-96, 8. Bayne-95, 9. Piquet-93, 10. Bowman-90.

NASCAR IS WRONG

NASCAR has gone too far in attempting to manage its image.

The organization assessed Denny Hamlin \$25,000 for bashing the new Gen 6 car. But he only stated what fans saw in the first two races, that it's difficult to pass and teams need time to work on the new car, just like they did when the old model was rolled out.

Others drivers have said the same thing.

"The short of the long of it is I believe I was severely disrespected by NASCAR by getting fined," Hamlin said. "I believe that the simple fact of us not even having a conversa-

tion about this issue before I was hit with a fine has something to say about our relationship. What I said was one sentence taken completely out of context."

Hamlin said he will not pay the fine.

"Most drivers will tell you that we constantly have sponsors and NASCAR's best interest in mind when speaking," he continued. "On the other hand I am a person that worked very hard from the bottom to get where I am today and someone telling me that I cannot give my one hundred percent honest opinion really bothers me.

"I feel as if today NASCAR lost one of its biggest supporters. So in the end there are no winners. I said today I would not pay the fine. I stand by that and will go through the process of appealing. Trust me; this is not about the money. It's much deeper. I will now shift my focus on giving FedEx and my team what they deserve this weekend, a win."

The irony of this is that what Hamlin said about the new car and the racing last week at Phoenix wasn't all that harsh. But because Hamlin didn't choose his words correctly, or dared to compare the new car to the old one, he was called out and made the poster boy for free speech.

A few drivers like Dale Earnhardt Jr., a ten-time fan favorite are wishy-washy, when it comes to voicing their true opinions about what is happening in NASCAR. Prior to Daytona practice, Earnhardt sang praises about the new car. After a crash during a practice session, he said, "I guess I still

have a lot to learn about it. It's just not handling the way I thought."

Earnhardt believes he can voice his opinion but sometimes it needs to happen behind closed doors.

"I don't think they mind you coming up in the hauler and talking about what you think about the racing and how you think things could improve or what might improve things," he said.

"I think that they're open to listening to that kind of stuff."

Earnhardt then switched the conversation to how much he liked the new car, a move that likely made NASCAR officials smile.

Tony Stewart pretty much summed up the NASCAR organization back in 2002, when he said, "It's NASCAR's way or the highway."

Hamlin is determined to fight back, and fans and competitors are rallying behind him.

Fining Hamlin, or anyone for stating their opinion in a reasonable manner is going to come back and bite NASCAR.

This is a battle that NASCAR cannot win.

Its image is going to be tarnished even more.

Weekend Racing: It will be short track racing at Bristol's .54 mile bullring for the Nationwide and Sprint teams. The Trucks do not race again until April 6.

Sat., Mar. 16, Nationwide Series, race 4 of 33; Starting time: 2 pm ET; TV: ESPN2.

Sun., Mar. 17, Sprint Cup Series, race 4 of 36; Starting time: 1 pm ET; TV: FOX.

Racing Jeep Question: Camping World Truck Series champion Ron Hornaday Jr. heads five 2013 inductees into the West Coast Stock Car Hall of Fame next weekend. How many truck titles did he win?

Last Week's Question: Who owns the Las Vegas track? Bruton Smith and his Speedway Motorsports Inc.

You may contact the Racing Reporter at hodges@race500.com. NT(Mar13,C)ac

Fuzion Dance and Notariety featured in benefit concert March 23

Benefit Concert featuring Notariety and Fuzion Dance Company on Saturday, March 23 at 7 p.m. Towns County School Auditorium. Tickets: \$10 adult, \$5 student.

Proceeds to benefit the non-profit organizations of McConnell Memorial Baptist Church Peru Mission Trip, Fuzion Dance Company and Towns County School Music Program.

MMBC PERU MISSION TRIP: McConnell Memorial Baptist Church works with Runa Simi, a Peru based Mission, to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Quechua Indians by providing health-care, building assistance, trade skills, & veterinary medicine. Each year our team consists of many from our local community churches, not just McConnell. Please prayerfully consider your involvement. For more information contact the church office at 706-896-2281.

Notariety is an audition acapella group at Towns County High School directed by Chris Adams. The 12 members are Brittany Boyer, Celeena Corbin, Christa Hamill, Kayla Olin, Natalie Freel, Megan O'Donald, Bonnie Bennett, Alana Calhoun, Sierra Nichols, Jessie Poole, Meagan Corbin, and LeAnn Dean.

The Fuzion Dance Company, a project of Brass-town Dance Academy, was created in August, 2007 for the serious dancer ready to spend more hours at the studio training in a variety of dance styles.

Fuzion is a non-profit organization which promotes the performing arts and expands the opportunity for dancers to perform. Membership is by audition only and member are required to attend Royal Academy of Dance examinations annually. Company co-directors are Madge Smith and Amy McIntyre.



Jeep? Come join the Blairsville Jeep owners group

Do you wish you could be more adventurous with your Jeep? Then here is the perfect group for you to hangout with. No officers, no dues, just good fun-loving people who all own some kind of a Jeep!

We meet monthly every 3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m., in the Cadence Community Room. If you need more information, please send an email to blairsvillejeepowners@yahoo.com to Jim, this group's creator.



Mountain High Hikers schedules two hikes each Tuesday, occasional specialty hikes, and regular trail maintaining trips - all in the beautiful mountains of Georgia and North Carolina.

Check the website www.mountain-highhikers.org for schedule and meeting locations.

Benton MacKaye March hike

Benton MacKaye Trail Association's March hike will be on Saturday, the 16th. The 5.2 mile in and out hike is from Bushy Head Gap to Hudson Gap with a 500 foot elevation gain.

Non-members welcome. Wear sturdy hiking shoes; no dogs please. Call Hike Leaders, Vic & Paula Fredlund for details: 239-292-6933 or email: bmtahiker@brmemc.net. N(Mar13,A2)SH