

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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## Three strong challenges not enough for Indians in Battle of the States

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The Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team continued a run of giving opponents a strong battle but falling just a bit short of victory in the Battle of the States Tournament last week in the Towns County Gym. The start of the three day tournament was postponed from Monday to Tuesday due to heavy snowfall in the area over the weekend. The Indians reached nearly identical point totals in each game, falling by scores of 42-36 to Hayesville, 49-37 to Polk County (TN), and 47-36 to Fannin County.

**HAYESVILLE** – The Indians held a 20-20 tie at Hayesville the last day of November only to see the Yellow Jackets run away the last half with a 53-23 victory with the Indians anxious to redeem themselves after that difficult performance. The Jackets lost their best player to a broken wrist since that game but had played very competitively without him in their lineup in games played against Robbinsville and Murphy just before Christmas and they entered the game with a 6-2 record. The Jackets went on to lose a very competitive 62-49 decision to Union County and by a very close 63-57 score to Piedmont, Alabama in their final games of the tournament.

After trailing 2-0 less than half a minute into the game, the Indians forged ahead, taking a 5-2 lead on a Corbin Gilfilian trey at the five and a half minute mark of the first quarter and leading for most of the remainder of the first half. They led by as much as 11-3 late in the first quarter, 15-9 by the mid-point of the second and 18-15 with well under a minute remaining until halftime.

The Jackets used a pair of Indian turnovers to advantage, however, in finishing the second quarter on a 7-0 run in just thirty three seconds for a 22-18 lead at intermission. Highlighting first half action for the Indians was five first quarter points and four in the second by Bradley Swanson.

The third quarter was a real battle between the two teams with the Indians edging ahead 26-25 by the 4:12 mark behind the inside duo of Brett Bradshaw and Brandon Henderson who combined with four points each for an 8-3 run for the Indians and Bradshaw getting them the lead. The scoring pace dropped drastically the remainder of the quarter, however, with a single Yellow Jacket basket at 2:44 the only points scored in more than four minutes but enough to give Hayesville a 27-26 lead entering the fourth quarter.

Henderson got the Indians back ahead 28-27 with two free throws at the 6:33 mark of the fourth quarter but the Yellow Jackets struck for a pair of fast break layups and a free throw by the mid point of the quarter for a 31-28 lead and the Indians having to play catch-up the rest of the game. A Swanson basket got them within 32-30 at 3:40 and he followed that up with two free throws at 2:37 for a 36-32 deficit.

A Henderson putback at 1:48 had the Indians within 38-34 and a steal and two more free throws by Swanson reduced the lead to four once again at 15.5 seconds. Hayesville followed with two free throws at 12.9 for a 42-36 lead which became the final score when the Indians couldn't dent the scoreboard again.

The Indians were led in scoring for the game by Swanson with 15 points, Henderson with 10, and Bradshaw with 7 while Swanson led in assists with 4 according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

**POLK COUNTY** – Polk County used a 7-2 run the final 2:31 of the first quarter in extending a 9-6 lead to 16-8 and sank a field goal barely half a minute into the second quarter for an 18-8 lead. As has been the pattern of late, the Indians shut down their opponent defensively



Brandon Henderson fights for a basket against the Yellow Jackets in tournament action Photo by James Reese.



Devin Henderson calls the play against Hayesville during first round tournament action Photo by James Reese.

for awhile in getting back in the game, holding the Wildcats to one point the rest of the quarter and scoring eight themselves for just a 20-16 deficit at the half. Four Indians sank a two point basket each in the first quarter but Bradley Swanson used a trey and a deuce for five of eight Indian points in the second.

A quick DJ Rogers basket got the Indians within 20-18 at the 7:42 mark of the third quarter but Polk County used three treys and a deuce with lucky bounces going the Wildcats' way on one of the treys and on the field goal for an 11-0 run and a 31-18 lead by the 3:47 mark. Swanson and Brandon Henderson each sank a basket and a free throw for just a 33-24 deficit by 1:30 but Polk closed out the quarter with a 36-24 lead.

A Swanson trey and an inside basket by Henderson gave the Indians hope with a 36-29 score the first minute of the fourth quarter but the Wildcats followed with a field goal and two free throws for a 40-29 lead and the two teams pretty much swapped points after that for a final Polk margin of victory of 49-37. Two putbacks by Ryan Tallent for four points highlighted the final minute of play for the Indians as Polk sank six straight free throws and a breakaway layup the final 1:03 of the game.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Indians were Swanson with 15 points, Henderson with 9 and Tallent with 6. Swanson, Dakota Barrett, and Henderson tied for the team lead in assists with 2 each.

**FANNIN COUNTY** – The first quarter and a half of the game between the Indians and Fannin County on Thursday was about as competitive as a game can be. There were six ties and four lead changes with the Indians holding a 17-15 lead after one quarter and the two teams tied at 22-22 midway through the second. Brandon Henderson, Ryan Tallent, and Brett Bradshaw contributed 6, 5 and 4 points respectively in first quarter action and Bradley Swanson scored 6 in early second quarter action for the Indians.

The visiting Rebels seemed to take control of the game the last half of the second quarter, using an 11-0 run for a



Bradley Swanson concentrates on his foul shot during the Battle of the States Tournament Photo James Reese.

33-22 lead by the 1:57 mark. The Indians weren't through, however, as Corbin Gilfilian sank a trey and Swanson took a defensive rebound coast to coast for a basket the final 1:03 of the quarter for just a 33-27 deficit at intermission.

Once again the Indians would shut down the offense of their opponent for an extended period of time, holding the Rebels to a single free throw in the third quarter with three Indians combining for five points and just a 34-32 Fannin lead entering the fourth quarter. A DJ Rogers basket just thirty eight seconds into the fourth quarter had the Indians within 36-34 but the Rebels finished the game on an 11-2 run, largely on 7 for 15 free throw shooting in taking a 47-36 victory. The large number of missed free throws by the Rebels left the door open for the Indians but they seemingly couldn't get a break as several field goal attempts appearing headed in the goal found a way to roll or bounce off the rim.

Swanson again led the Indians in scoring with 11 points with other leaders being Henderson with 9, Bradshaw with 6, and Tallent with 5 and Dakota Barrett leading in assists with 2.

## Lady Indians runners up in Battle of the States

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The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team took victories over neighborhood rivals Hayesville and Union County in last week's Battle of the States Tournament in the Towns County Gym before falling to a late scoring run by Gordon Lee of Chickamauga in the Championship Game. The start of the three day tournament was postponed from Monday to Tuesday due to heavy snowfall in the area over the weekend.

The wins over Hayesville and Union County gave the Lady Indians what is believed to be a girls school record eleven straight wins at the start of a season under full court rules with a still gaudy 11-1 record as they await a heavy Region 8A schedule in January. The Gordon Lee Girls were said by Head Coach Lester Galyon to have easily played their best basketball of the season in the Battle of the States in extending their record to 7-4.

**HAYESVILLE** – As at Hayesville nearly a month before, the Hayesville Girls took an early lead on Tuesday with the Lady Indians having to rally from behind for impressive victories in both games. Early turnovers were costly for the Lady Indians as the Lady Jackets held an 8-2 lead less than three minutes into the game before the Lady Indians began to improve their fortunes, pretty much holding their own and within 15-10 by quarter's end.

While four Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard in the first quarter, Jordan Moss took the lead in the second by scoring eleven of her team's eighteen points as they took a 28-23 lead to the dressing room. She got them their first lead of 16-15 on a putback at 6:20 and got them ahead for good 19-17 on a field goal with 4:26 remaining in the first half. The Lady Jackets sank six field goals in the first four and a half minutes of the game but just one in the second quarter and none in the third as the Lady Indians extended the halftime lead to 42-26 and coasted to a 58-34 victory.

Scoring leaders for the Lady Indians were Jordan Moss with 19 points; Gabby Arencibia with 12; Ali Bleckley with 6; and Kindle Moss, Eryn Cochran, and Makayla Underwood with 5 each. Leading in assists according to your reporter's tally were Cochran with 4 and Ben Pong with 3.

**UNION COUNTY** – It was a typical battle on Wednesday between the Lady Indians and the Lady Panthers from Blairsville. The Lady Panthers got the better of an intense first quarter, including three treys and a long deuce in building an 18-7 lead which became 20-7 early in the second quarter.

As against Hayesville, however, the Lady Indians came charging from behind with a trey by Ben Pong at the 6:51 mark of the second quarter triggering what would be come an extended 43-19 run. The scoring explosion, including a 12-0 run the final 2:06 of the second quarter, gave the Lady Indians a 31-28 lead by intermission and a 50-39 bulge by the 1:09 mark of the third quarter. Highlighting the run were eleven points each by Gabby Arencibia and Ben Pong, eight points and two assists by Jordan Moss, and four points each by Eryn Cochran and Makayla Underwood.

As might have been expected when considering past games between the two rivals, the Lady Panthers would not go quietly. They would sink four free throws during the final minute of the third quarter for just a 50-43 deficit and then twice pull within three points and once within two of the Lady Indians late in the fourth quarter with the Lady Indians having a positive answer each time.

After a Moss field goal gave the Lady Indians a 52-43 lead less than half a minute into the fourth quarter, the Lady Panthers used a 6-0 run for just a 52-49 deficit with just 3:57 on the clock. Moss and Ali Bleckley answered this time with field goals for a 56-49 Lady Indian lead by the 2:14 mark but Union followed with another challenge.

The Lady Panthers wrapped a field goal and a trey around two free throws by Arencibia and added a free throw between the 1:24 and 48.2 seconds mark for just a 58-55 Towns lead but Pong responded with two clutch free throws at 43.6 for a 60-55 Lady Indian lead. The Lady Panthers still weren't through, however, as they sank a 3-pointer at thirty two seconds and the Lady Indians had a slender lead of 60-



Ali Bleckley puts in two points against Hayesville in tournament action Photo by James Reese.



Makayla Underwood puts up a shot and Jordan Moss waits for the rebound against Gordon Lee Photo by James Reese.



Gabby Arencibia tosses in a layup as she fights off a host of Lady Panthers during tournament action Photo by James Reese.

58. Once again the Lady Indians were up to the task at hand as Moss sank two free throws at 28.6 seconds and two more at the 17 second mark for a 64-58 lead which would become the final score when the Lady Panthers missed an ensuing trey attempt. The Lady Indians sank eight of nine free throw attempts in the fourth quarter and an outstanding twenty two of twenty eight for the game after having made a similar twenty three of thirty in their win at Union County just twelve days prior. The victory was the Lady Indians' third in twenty five days over the Lady Panthers who completed Battle of the States play with a 6-4 record.

Moss led the Lady Indians in scoring with 21 points while Arencibia and Pong each included three treys in 13 point performances and Bleckley scored 7. Pong added luster to her finest hour in a prime time game for the Lady Indians with a team leading 3 assists with Moss right behind with 2.

**GORDON LEE** – In their only previous meeting, the Lady Indians took a 62-51 victory over Gordon Lee in the third place game of the 2007 Battle of the States, the year the Lady Indians finished with a 28-4 record and made it to the Class A State Final Four. In fact, Union also defeated the Lady Dragons that year by a 64-47 score in the semifinals with the Lady Dragons to go on to a 24-6 record, including a trip to the Elite Eight in Class A. Union finished with a 20-8 record and a trip to the Class AA State Tournament later that season.

For the third straight game, the Lady Indians found themselves with a significant early deficit as the Lady Trojans broke out to an 11-2 lead not much more than three minutes into the game. And for the third straight game, the Lady Indians would rise to the occasion, using an extended run to get back in the game, taking four separate leads with four ties also involved by the two minute mark of the third quarter.

A 9-1 run between the 4:30 and 1:18 mark of the first quarter had the Lady Indians

within 12-11 but an in and out and back in trey by Gordon Lee at twenty eight seconds had them ahead 15-11 at quarter's end. After an early second quarter Lady Trojan basket extended their lead to 17-11, the Lady Indians went on an 11-5 run, ending in a Gabby Arencibia trey and two free throws by Eryn Cochran for their first tie of 22-22 at 2:30.

Highlighting the overall 20-11 game tying rally in exactly twelve minutes of playing time were six points by Lindsay Patton, five points with a trey included and two assists by Cochran, and four points by Jordan Moss. A second lucky bounce for the Lady Trojans got them back ahead 24-22 at 2:11 but a three point play by Moss at 1:04 gave the Lady Indians their first lead of 25-24 which became a 25-25 standoff at intermission.

Two free throws by Moss, a trey by Ben Pong, and two free throws by Cochran gave the Lady Indians leads of 27-25, 30-27, and 32-30 by the 2:09 mark of the third quarter, completing an overall 30-19 run with lucky bounces accounting for five of the Gordon Lee points. No one could know it at the time but it was the Lady Trojans' turn for a rousing run which would decide the outcome of the game.

A trey at exactly the two minute mark gave Gordon Lee a 33-32 lead they would never relinquish as it turned out and they added a field goal gave them a 35-32 lead entering the fourth quarter. They then completed an overall 21-3 run by the mid point of the quarter for their biggest lead of 51-35 which became a 62-48 victory. Moss scored the first eleven points of the quarter for the Lady Indians and Pong added five on a deuce and a trey in the closing seconds but the sixteen point quarter wasn't enough to offset the strong finish by the Lady Trojans.

Leading the Lady Indians in scoring for the game were Moss with 22 points, Pong with 8, Cochran with 7, and Patton with 6 while Cochran led in assists with 3 according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

## Mountain United Soccer Association spring registration

The Mountain United Soccer Association is accepting registration forms for the Spring 2011 season. The association has provided youth soccer in Union and Towns counties for 25 years. The program serves over 500 players annually.

Younger age groups play within Towns, Union and Fannin Counties. The older age groups play a circuit of competition around North Georgia.

The season will begin in March. Teams will be filled based on date the registration form is received. A player must be at least four years old on August 1, 2010 to be eligible to play.

Registration forms were mailed and emailed to current members. Registration forms will be available at the following locations: Blairsville- Blimpie, Branan Lodge;

Hiwassee- Marathon Gas Station.

The returning player deadline for Spring soccer is January 11, 2011. After this date, players will be placed on teams requested if space is available. There will be a late fee of \$10 per player for registrations received after Febru-



ary 11, 2011.

There will be a referee certification class hosted by the association prior to the start of the season. This course will cover the basic Laws of the Game.

For more information, call 706-745-7865 or visit www.mountainssoccer.org.