

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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Indians overwhelmed by Athens Christian and Athens Academy

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
tcherald@windstream.net

A difficult season continued last weekend for the Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team as they fell to a metro all star team at Athens Christian on Friday and to a very capable Athens Academy squad at home on Saturday. The week's work leaves the Indians with an overall record of 2-15, including a 1-5 mark in Region 8A.

INDIANS AT ATHENS CHRISTIAN

For any observers wondering why an effort was taken by a number of small community schools to leave the Georgia High School Association, resulting in the GHSA separating public and private Class A schools for post season competition beginning next year, one hundred and seven reasons were on display last Friday night in the Athens Christian Gym. When Eagles Head Coach Ron Link appeared on the scene at Athens Christian for the 2008 season, he took a different approach than most coaches who would present a case as to how they could elevate the basketball program at their school by using the available, home grown players.

In Link's case, he was quoted in an article in the Athens Banner-Herald as saying that, "Every year I pray for 'one more player' and I've been so fortunate in the past to have so many great players move into the area. It's amazing how the Lord answers prayers." Some folks, including your reporter, probably think the good Lord has more pressing issues to address around the universe than taking sides in high school basketball competition. And the appearance is present that Ron Link has taken matters into his own hands when considering the vast numbers of newcomers to Athens Christian who just happen to be superstar athletes.

Maybe the folks at Athens Christian accept his giving the Lord credit for sending these athletes his way but they may have to excuse others who are suspicious that these claims by Link are just a smoke screen, hiding the appearance that it is he who has brought them his way. Included among the numerous newcomers to Athens Christian the last four years are three players from the Bahamas and one from Germany with a more recent arrival, said to be the sixth ranked player in the nation for his age group as an eighth grader last year and said to be from Franklin County which is quite some distance from Athens. It's likely that school officials in Towns and other small counties never expected such a level of competition beyond that of small community schools when signing up with the GHSA decades ago.

Interestingly, the third player from the Bahamas who arrived at Athens Christian this year has been declared ineligible to play and it's hard to imagine that the Lord would have made such a mistake in sending an ineligible player Athens Christian's way. His ineligibility was discovered when Internet bloggers detected that he was shown as a senior in high school in the Bahamas last year and not likely to qualify as a senior in Athens, Georgia, this year.

Supporters of such programs as the Athens Christian boys like to complain that the small, community schools are just whining when appealing for a level playing field or court and trying to deprive athletes from playing for what might be kindly called metro all star teams but your reporter has yet to see any such demands. Rather, the small community schools desire only that a level playing field be allowed with the metro all star teams remaining intact but competing against schools in a division with teams established in the same manner as their own.

With all this being stated, Athens Christian struck for a 4-0 lead half a minute into the game and broke away for a 38-7 lead after one quarter which became 65-21 at intermission and 84-33 after three quarters on the way to a 107-35 victory. Highlights were difficult to come by for the Indians but included Dallas Manus twice taking the ball coast to coast for lay ups and four points in the first quarter with one shot being left handed and the other right handed by the natural lefthander.

The second quarter featured a trio and the third a pair of treys by Grant Arcencibia for fifteen points before a total lack of sportsmanship was displayed by the Eagles in the fourth. Following two free throws by Ryan Tallent setting the score at 85-35, the Eagles finished the game on a 22-0 blitz the final 4:05 in closing out the 107-35 win with the final nineteen points coming after starting guards Rylan Albach and Manus were lost on



Dakota Barrett works through traffic against the Spartans. Photo by James Reese.



Rylan Albach fires a jumper against the Spartans. Photo by James Reese.



Dallas Manus drives to the basket against the Spartans. Photo by James Reese.



Garrett Bradshaw goes for the rebound against the Spartans. Photo by James Reese.

fouls. Perhaps a somewhat valid case could be made for the Eagles pushing hard to reach the one hundred point barrier at the 1:14 mark but what might be described as a lack of class had them using all-out aggressive defense in adding six additional points in the final fifty five seconds with the final two coming at the three seconds mark.

As a sportsmanship comparison, the Lady Indians, who had earlier the same evening used a 25-2 run in vaulting from a 7-4 deficit to a 29-9 advantage only extended a 43-21 lead at intermission against the Lady Eagles to 69-42 by game's end. Further, the Lady Indians extended leads of 22-2 near the mid point of the first quarter, 29-10 after one quarter, and 43-17 at the half to just a 59-27 win over Athens Academy the following night.

It should be noted here that criticism of using loaded up all star teams and what might be kindly referred to as running the score up on an opponent by Ron Link in no way is intended to condemn the athletic programs of all private schools. Actually, many if not most still continue to use what would be considered home grown talent for them in doing the best they can with the hand they are dealt. It is those relatively few schools with stacked teams like the Athens Christian boys who have brought about the separation of small public and private schools for post season play.

Finally, as related to the editorial comments, it is certainly not a case of all sports teams at what might be called an offending school being involved in such activity as has become the suspicion for Ron Link. Indeed, Athens Christian Lady Eagles Head Coach Bruce Hockema appears to use the hand he is dealt with few, if any, outside additions to his team's year to year rosters with much more impressive results in your reporter's view than Link's actually limited success when considering the caliber of athletes he has had at Athens Christian.

Hockema's Lady Eagles, entering each game with losing

records, narrowly missed three upsets in the Region 8A Tournament in each of the last three years. They came close to upsetting the Lady Indians in the semi finals of their region championship year of 2009 and then Prince Avenue the last two years, once in the opening round and once in the semi finals, when Prince won the region championship in 2010 and finished second to the Lady Indians last year.

In the Athens Christian game, the Indians were led in scoring by Arcencibia with 15 points, Tallent with 6, and Brett Barrett with 5 while Manus led in assists with 4.

INDIANS VERSUS ATHENS ACADEMY

Against Athens Academy on Saturday in the Towns County Gym, the Indians fell to a 6-1 deficit just past the mid point of the first quarter and despite four points by Rylan Albach trailed 13-5 by quarter's end. The Spartans led 25-11 by the mid point of the second quarter before the Indians closed the gap to 30-19 by intermission. Ryan Tallent with five points and Dallas Manus with four provided most of the scoring punch for the Indians in the second quarter.

The final two quarters proved to be very difficult for the Indians as the visiting Spartans broke away for a 55-28 lead entering the fourth quarter on the way to a 78-40 victory. Six different Indians put points on the scoreboard the final half with Grant Arcencibia leading with six points on a pair of treys in the fourth quarter.

Albach led the Indians in scoring for the game with 11 points with other leaders being Manus with 8, Tallent with 7, and Arcencibia with 6 while Albach and Manus each contributed 2 assists according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

Following games against two Region 8A foes, George Walton Academy in Monroe on Tuesday of this week and Hebron Christian Academy of Dacula at home this Friday, the Indians travel to Prince Avenue Christian School to face still another Region 8A opponent in Bogart near Athens next Tuesday.

Lady Indians breeze past Athens Christian and Athens Academy

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
tcherald@windstream.net

The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team had little difficulty in extending their overall record to 12-5 and to 4-1 in Region 8A with victories over Athens Christian on the road and Athens Academy at home last weekend. After traveling to George Walton Academy in Monroe on Tuesday of this week, the Lady Indians return home to face Hebron Christian Academy on Friday and then go to Prince Avenue Christian School in Bogart near Athens next Tuesday with all three being Region 8A opponents.

LADY INDIANS AT ATHENS CHRISTIAN

The first half of the first quarter proved to be a battle for the Lady Indians at Athens Christian on Friday as the home standing Lady Eagles more than matched a pair of put back baskets by Kellsie Cowart for a 7-4 lead with 3:58 on the clock. That was their last lead of the game, however, as Stephanie Patton not only tied the score at 7-7 with a trey at 3:34 on the clock but triggered a 21-0 run for a 25-7 Towns County lead at 7:29 in the second quarter which became a 29-9 bulge at 5:04.

The overall 25-2 run was highlighted by three treys, four for four free throw shooting, and a deuce good for fifteen points by Gabby Arcencibia. Patton not only ended the run with two free throws but added two more treys by intermission for an eight point quarter with Alyssa Pyle putting an exclamation point on the first half with a trey as time expired for a 43-21 Towns advantage.

Five different Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard in the third quarter with Lindsay Patton leading with four as they extended their lead to 58-31. The fourth quarter was an 11-11 standoff as Bailey Sutton scored eight points to lead the way for the Lady Indians.

For the game, the Lady Indians were led in scoring by Arcencibia with 19 points with seventeen coming in the first half, Stephanie Patton with 14 including eleven in the first half, Sutton with 10, and Ali Bleckley and Lindsay Patton with 6 each. Leading in assists were Bleckley with 5, Stephanie Patton with 4, and Pyle with 3.

LADY INDIANS VERSUS ATHENS ACADEMY

It was Ali Bleckley who had the hot, first quarter hand at home on Saturday against Athens Academy as the Lady Indians exploded out to a 22-2 lead by the 3:47 mark of the quarter and led 29-10 by quarter's end. Bleckley included three treys in a thirteen point first quarter performance while Eryn Cochran included four for four free throw shooting in a six point quarter which saw six different Lady Indians enter the scoring column.

The Lady Indians continued to dominate in the second quarter as Kellsie Cowart contributed the first four points, Stephanie Patton the next five with a trey included, and Bleckley the final five as they led 38-12 barely three minutes into the quarter and 43-17 at intermission. Seven different Lady Indians then put points on the scoreboard the last half with Alyssa Pyle leading with four in the third quarter as they led 56-22 after three quarters and took a 59-27 victory.

Nine different Lady Indians entered the scoring column during the game for the second night in a row with leaders being Bleckley with 18 points, Stephanie Patton with 11, Cochran with 8, Cowart with 7, and Gabby Arcencibia with 6. Forty one of these fifty points came during the first half. Arcencibia took the lead in assists with 4 with Cochran right behind with 3, according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

Green named to UGA Dean's List

Heather Elizabeth Green, daughter of Sanford and Liz Green of Hiawasse, GA, has been named to the University of Georgia's Dean's List for the fall semester. This is her second consecutive semester receiving this honor.

To earn this distinction, a student must maintain a 3.5 grade point average in all courses while taking a minimum of 14 hours.

Heather is a 2008 graduate of Towns County High School and will be completing her last semester at UGA this spring. She will be graduating in May 2012 with an ABJ degree in Public Relations from The Grady College of Journalism.



Ali Bleckley goes for three against Athens Academy. Photo by James Reese.



Dadrion Blythe positions for the rebound. Photo by James Reese.



Lindsay Patton draws the foul against Athens Christian. Photo by Lowell Nicholson.



Eryn Cochran goes for the steal against the Lady Spartans. Photo by James Reese.



Stephanie Patton gets a deuce against Athens Christian. Photo by Lowell Nicholson.

Holiday fun for Red Hatters



The Red Hat Mamas of Hiawasse held their Christmas luncheon at Brasstown Valley Resort. The affair was enjoyed by all and as part of the festivities, they held a Best Hat contest. The winners were (left to right): W. E. Warenik, Virginia Scherer, and Sharon Stetzel. Congratulations to all! T(Jan18)11/SJH