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Hard luck season continues for Indians with three close losses

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A very difficult season of close losses continued last week for the Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team as they fell by single digits to George Walton Academy at home on Tuesday and at Hebron Christian Academy and Riverside Military over the weekend. A couple of added dimensions make this report more difficult than prior coverage of the team. It is much easier to leave out mention of questionable calls and sportsmanship issues but this week's report would not be complete without addressing these issues to at least some extent.

GEORGE WALTON ACADEMY – With a couple of brief exceptions, the first twenty two and a half minutes of the game with George Walton were a real struggle for the Indians. The first exception was back to back treys by Devin Henderson and DJ Rogers at the 6:27 and 5:22 marks of the first quarter for a 6-2 Indian lead. The visiting Bulldogs followed, however, with a 19-0 run for a 21-6 lead by the 5:58 mark of the second quarter.

The second exception referenced above followed for the Indians as a brief 9-5 Towns run highlighted by back to back baskets by Brett Bradshaw and a three point play by Henderson had them within 25-15 with 2:42 left in the second quarter. Once again the Bulldogs seemingly regained control of the game, using a 17-6 run with all the Indian points scored by Rogers for a commanding 42-21 lead by the 1:44 mark of the third quarter.

Suddenly the Indians came alive for an awesome run getting them back in the game. A field goal by Rogers at 1:27 of the third quarter triggered a 24-6 Indian run for just a 48-45 deficit with 4:07 still on the clock

in the fourth quarter. Bradley Swanson followed Rogers' basket with two late third quarter deuces for a 42-27 score entering the fourth quarter.

Three treys by Swanson by the 5:58 mark of the fourth quarter gave him thirteen points in just under three and a half minutes of playing time and a 46-36 score but they Indians weren't through. A drive for two by Devin Henderson, a runner by Bradshaw, a fourth trey by Swanson, and a putback by Brandon Henderson had them within the aforementioned 48-45 score at 4:07 with the overall 24-6 run requiring just 5:20 of playing time.

Alas, the run would come to a very disappointing end with several quick, disputable calls with most, if not all, being called by the same official, destroying the Indians' momentum. In a game which had featured few foul calls with two for three free throw shooting for each team, Swanson, who is not usually prone to much foul trouble, was hit with three rapid fouls at the 4:57, 4:20, and 3:23 marks, giving him four for the game.

With the momentum lost, the Indians failed on several possessions to put additional points on the scoreboard with one shot in and out, a couple of other promising shots rolling off the rim, and a turnover included. Meanwhile, the Bulldogs sank just three of eight free throw attempts by the 56.1 mark but for a 51-45 lead. A Brandon Henderson putback at twenty eight seconds gave the Indians a bit of hope at 51-47 but the Bulldogs sank two free throws at twenty seven seconds and a breakaway layup at the eight second mark for a 55-47 victory.

Missed calls are all apart of the game of basketball but whether the flurry of calls perceived as being missed by the Indians and their followers were

actually missed or not, it can't be disputed that they affected the momentum and perhaps the outcome of the game. George Walton improved to an overall record of 11-3 and 5-1 in Region 8A which became 12-3 and 6-1 by week's end with a two point victory at Athens Academy on Saturday night.

Scoring leaders for the Indians against George Walton were Swanson with 16 points, Rogers with 11, Devin Henderson with 8, and Bradshaw with 6. Leading in assists according to your reporter's unofficial tally were Bradshaw and Devin Henderson with 3 each and Rogers with 2.

HEBRON CHRISTIAN – It was homecoming at Hebron Christian Academy in Dacula on Friday night with a huge large crowd present, always a welcome site in basketball whether a team be at home or on the road as players are often energized by the excitement created by a responsible crowd. Unfortunately, the Indians and their followers came home with a bad taste in their mouths after what might be kindly called an inhospitable reception.

Not realizing my thoughts might fit those of many Towns Countians at the time and with no thought of publishing the comment, your reporter told TCHS scorekeeper Debbie Nicholson after the game that if all basketball games were like that one, I wouldn't be interested in attending further games. After talking with several others who attended the game, however, I realized my thoughts pretty much fit those of many attending the game and decided to include them in this article.

It was not enough that the officiating was perceived to be rather one sided but there was a hostility present not often seen at high school events but especially from dozens of rowdy students who stood on the playing court not far from the side and end lines for much of the game. To attain the respect one would think Hebron Christian Academy would want to achieve, it seems they would want in the future to observe the two middle sentences of the sportsmanship reminder read prior to this and all high school basketball games as follows:

"The GHSA and its member schools have made a commitment to promote good sportsmanship by student/athletes, coaches, and spectators at all GHSA sanctioned events. Profanity, degrading remarks, and intimidating actions directed at officials or competitors will not be tolerated, and are grounds for removal from the event site. Spectators are not allowed to enter the competition area during warm-ups or while the contest is being conducted. Thank you for your cooperation in the promotion of good sportsmanship at today's event."

Well, enough for the editorial comments. The game was a hard fought defensive battle from beginning to end with the

Lions holding a stunningly low 4-2 lead after one quarter. The Indians rallied for as much as a 14-9 lead, highlighted by a pair of treys by Bradley Swanson, by the 2:27 mark of the second quarter but led by just 15-14 at intermission.

After Hebron took an 18-15 lead early in the third quarter, a Swanson trey tied the score and two free throws by DJ Rogers got the Indians ahead 20-18 but a 5-0 finish the final three minutes of the quarter had the Lions ahead 23-21 entering the fourth quarter. The Indians again rallied following an early fourth quarter Lion basket on a trey by Swanson, a drive for two by Rogers for the lead, and two free throws by Swanson for a 28-25 lead with 4:27 left.

Two free throws and a trey by Hebron had them back ahead 30-28 at 2:57 but Brett Bradshaw tied the score with two clutch free throws at 2:12. The Lions then took the ball coast to coast for a field goal just nine seconds later and a 32-30 lead the Indians would not overcome. They missed a one and one free throw attempt with a chance for a tie at 1:41 and were victimized by a crucial call at the fifty nine second mark.

With the Lions running some clock, the Indians appeared to have a held ball and possession of the ball near mid court with a chance for a tie or lead under the alternate possession rule. The officials allowed Hebron a time out well after the tie up was evident, however, with the Lions retaining possession and the two point lead. The Indians were forced to foul at 37.5 seconds with Hebron sinking two free throws for a much more daunting 34-30 lead with more than twenty seconds less time than if awarded possession with a two point deficit. The Lions eventually made five of six free throw attempts as the game wound down for a 37-31 victory.

The Indians were led in scoring by Swanson who included four treys among his 14 points, Rogers with 9, and Dakota Barrett with 4. Devin Henderson dished out 2 of the six assists by the team as tallied by your reporter.

RIVERSIDE MILITARY ACADEMY – Although the Indians would suffer another ultra close loss on Saturday afternoon amongst a sparse crowd, there was thankfully a far more hospitable atmosphere than on Friday night at Hebron Christian Academy and few if any disputable calls by either side. Riverside Military Academy of Gainesville hosted the Indians for the first time in several years as the Eagles participated for several years in a private school association before returning to the Georgia High School Association for the 2009 season but in Class AA for two years.

The Indians sprang out to an 8-0 lead by the 3:28 mark of the first quarter on the strength of a pair of treys by Bradley Swanson and a drive for two



DJ Rogers goes up for the layup against RMA Photo by James Reese.

points by DJ Rogers. They managed just a field goal by Brett Bradshaw after that, however, for just a 10-8 lead after one quarter. In a very low scoring second quarter, the Indians used four Brandon Henderson points and a pair of free throws by Swanson to take a 16-12 lead to the dressing room at intermission. The Indians' defense totally shut down Riverside's offense during the quarter as the Eagles managed just two baskets on putbacks of missed field goal attempts.

The Indians then seemed to be taking control of the game on two quick baskets by Bradshaw for a 20-12 lead just over a minute into the third quarter but their shooting went cold and the Eagles scored twelve straight points for a 24-20 lead by the three minute mark. Bradshaw continued his good work with a three point play at 2:54 for just a 24-23 Indian deficit and Rogers and Ryan Tallent almost matched Riverside's scoring the rest of the quarter for a 29-27 Eagles lead after three quarters.

After the Eagles increased their lead to 32-27 just thirty five seconds into the fourth quarter, the Indians rallied with a 10-2 run which gave them a 37-34 lead with just 2:16 on the clock. The run included six for six free throw shooting with two each by Rogers and Swanson at the start of the run and Bradshaw at the end. Brad-

shaw and Rogers sank back to back field goals in between for a 35-34 Indian lead on a coast to coast run by Rogers.

A free throw for a four point Indian lead by Devin Henderson at 1:25 was nullified by a lane violation leaving the score at 37-34. The Eagles followed with a field goal at 1:07 for a one point game and an inbounds turnover by the Indians led to an Eagles putback and a 38-37 Riverside lead at the forty eight second mark.

The Eagles left the door open for the Indians by missing a one and one free throw attempt at 24.4 seconds and the Eagles fouled Devin Henderson on a shot at 4.2 seconds with a chance for a tie or lead. The first shot was a soft one with a good chance of falling in the basket but it rolled off the rim and the second was in and out with the Eagles claiming the rebound and drawing a foul with 2.2 seconds left.

The first shot was made and the Riverside player intentionally missed the second, banging the ball hard off the front of the rim. It bounced all the way back to the shooter who maintained control of the ball as time ran out with the Eagles taking a 39-37 victory.

Bradshaw led the Indians in scoring for the game with 13 points with Swanson and Rogers contributing 10 and 8 respectively while Rogers led in assists with 2.



Brandon Henderson puts up a deuce against RMA Photo by James Reese.

Indian JV's fall to two tough opponents on the road

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The very young Towns County Indian JV's Basketball Team took to the road last weekend for their only games of the week and took it on the chin at the hands of strong teams from Hebron Christian Academy in Dacula on Friday and Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville on Saturday. In both games the Indians fell behind early and were forced to try and play catch up the remainder of each game with encouraging results in catch up duties in both games.

At Hebron Christian, the Lions used excellent strength, quickness, and aggressiveness in a dominating first half as they outscored the Indians 23-2 with the Indians' only points in the half being on a drive for two points by Slade Davenport in the first quarter. The last half was to be much kinder to the Indians who rallied to within 30-14 after three quarters and to within 36-24 by the 1:38 mark of the fourth.

The Lions then used seven for eight free throw shooting the final minute and a half of the game in extending their final margin of victory to 43-24. Five different Indians put points on the scoreboard in the third quarter and again in the fourth with Dallas Manus leading the way on four for six free throw shooting in the third and Ryan Tallent scoring four points on two field goals in the fourth.

Scoring leaders for the Indians were Manus with 7 points and Tallent and Grant Arencebia with 4 each while Manus also led in assists with 2.

The Indians wrapped field goals by Dallas Manus and Brett Barrett around a three point play by Riverside for a 4-3 lead less than a minute and a half into their game in Gainesville on Saturday afternoon. The home standing Eagles

struck with a barrage of treys after that, however, for a 19-9 lead after one quarter and a 34-18 lead at intermission.

The Eagles sank seven well spaced treys by the 1:59 mark of the second quarter before Grant Arencebia sank the Indians' first trey sixteen seconds later. Manus led the Indians in scoring during the first half with seven points while Ryan Tallent included a trey while scoring all nine of the Indians' third quarter points as the Eagles led 46-27 by quarter's end. A trey by Aaron Dodson then high-

lighted fourth quarter action for the Indians as the Eagles closed out a 58-34 victory.

The Indians were led in scoring for the game by Tallent with 10 points, Manus with 7, and Barrett with 5 while Arencebia led in assists with 3. The Eagles were coming off just a three point loss to Athens Christian the night before, making the Indians' much stronger competitiveness in this game than against Athens Christian just eight nights earlier quite encouraging.



Garrett Bradshaw goes for a deuce against RMA Photo by James Reese.



Luke Parker has his eye on a rebound against RMA Photo by James Reese.

Mountain Lions can't recover from big deficit in loss

CLEVELAND – The Young Harris College men's basketball team fell behind early and nearly rallied back from an 18-point first-half deficit, but fell Saturday afternoon to Truett McConnell College, 94-74.

Frank Adams led the Mountain Lions with 21 points, including going 11-of-12 from the free-throw line. Bryson Robertson had 19 points and 14 rebounds for a double-double and Steve Viterbo finished with 17 points and nine boards. Matt Preston dished out a team-high seven assists as Young Harris was 23-of-65 from the floor for 35 percent.

The Mountain Lions (3-12) trailed, 22-12, but cut the deficit to 24-19 with 7:43 remaining in the opening half as Young Harris five free throws during that span.

However, the Bears (8-9) used a 19-6 run during the next six minutes to grab a 43-25 advantage and Truett McConnell led, 45-27, at the half.

The Mountain Lions trimmed the double-digit deficit to 62-56 on a pair of free throws by Viterbo with 9:45 remaining, but Truett McConnell put the game away with a 28-12 run during the next seven minutes.

Roderick Bombard paced the Bears with 25 points on 8-of-16 shooting and handed out a team-high six assists. Deric Ware and Tre Dudley each had 15 points, while Tulio Yamasisa recorded 12 points. Tyrone Louis finished with a team-high 11 rebounds as Truett McConnell shot 51 percent (35-of-69).

Young Harris concludes its four-game road trip 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 26 against Berry College.



Bradley Swanson nails a deuce against RMA Photo by James Reese.



Frank Adams pumps in 2 of his game high 21 points Photo by Towns County Herald.



Steve Viterbo looks for an open man in the Lions loss on Saturday Photo by Towns County Herald.