

Towns County Sports

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Indians lose two competitive games, impress in big win over Armuchee in BOTS

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The Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team was in action three times last week when they hosted the twenty fifth annual Battle of the States Tournament and they rebounded from tough losses not decided until the closing minutes to Polk County, Tennessee, and Hayesville by building a big lead and holding off a fourth quarter challenge by Armuchee High School for an impressive victory.

The Indians completed the week with a 6-7 record with primarily Region 8A opponents remaining for the 2019 portion of their schedule. Exceptions are a trip to Hayesville on Saturday of this week and a visit by Fannin County later this month.

Polk County (Tennessee) 74, Indians 66 – The first quarter of the game with Polk County saw six lead changes by the 1:58 mark when a field goal by senior Brett Denton got the Indians a 14-13 lead they would hold with the exception of two late second quarter ties until intermission.

Sophomore Kolby Moss had gotten the Indians an early 6-2 lead on three deuces and by halftime he had fifteen points to his credit. A basket by freshman Collin Crowder broke the first late second quarter tie of 28-28 and a deuce by senior Will Travis gave the Indians a 32-30 lead at the halftime break with Travis having contributed seven points and sophomore Aidan Berrong and Denton four each.

Travis got what would turn out to be the Indians' last lead of 34-32 at the 7:35 mark of the third quarter although they would challenge the Wildcats until the closing seconds of the game. A Polk trey just eight seconds later sent the Wildcats on a 20-10 run the remainder of the quarter for a 52-44 lead entering the fourth quarter. Five different Indians entered the scoring column in the quarter with Crowder leading with four points on two deuces.

A Crowder putback just eleven seconds into the fourth quarter had the Indians within 52-46 but the Wildcats had a 64-53 lead with 3:41 on the clock despite a trey by Moss, a second Crowder putback, and a deuce by Travis. The Indians weren't through, however, as two free throws by Berrong, a Travis basket, free throws by Travis and Crowder, and a putback basket by Travis gave the Indians an 8-0 run and just a 64-61 deficit at the 2:03 mark.

A field goal and two free throws had the Wildcats ahead 68-61 at the 1:09 mark but a three point play by Travis and two free throws by Moss wrapped around a free throw by the Wildcats had the Indians knocking on the door with just a 69-66 deficit at 37.8 seconds. Turnovers would be costly after that for the Indians, however, as Polk sank three free throws and a field goal the final 32.1 seconds for a 74-66 victory.

Scoring leaders for the Indians for the game were Moss with 20 points, Travis with 19, Crowder with 11, Berrong with 8, and Denton with 4 while Berrong contributed 4 assists, Moss 3, and Crowder 2. Leaders in rebounds were Travis with 12, Crowder and Moss with 11 each, and Denton with 6.

Polk County was led in scoring by junior Luke Burrows with 18 points, senior Dalton Laimore with 15, and junior Josh Groomes with 14. Misfortune would strike the Wildcats for their final two games of the tournament as Burrows missed the semi final game against Lumpkin County due to a sprained ankle with the Indians from Dahlonega taking advantage in rallying from a 56-50 deficit entering the fourth quarter for a 71-65 victory. The Lumpkin win was further aided by Polk floor leader Groomes being ejected late in the game for comments made to an official.

And although Burrows returned for the third place game against Union County on Saturday and scored 26 points in a great all around performance, Groomes missed this game due to the ejection on Friday with Union taking a 61-51 victory. Of course, it will never be known but many observers felt that Polk would



The Towns County Indians following their 88-77 win over Armuchee on day three of the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

likely have taken the measure of Lumpkin with Burrows in the lineup and with the likelihood of the Wildcats fortunes being better than for Lumpkin in an indescribable 78-24 loss to Walhalla in the championship game.

Hayesville, NC 61, Indians 47 – With the exception of ties of 8-8 at exactly the mid point of the first quarter and 29-29 and 32-32 during the first minute of the third, the Indians would lead Hayesville until late in the third quarter when the Yellow Jackets would use hot shooting in exploiting suddenly cold shooting by the Indians in pulling away for a 61-47 victory.

Five Indians put points on the scoreboard in the first quarter with leaders being senior Will Travis with a trey among seven points and sophomore Kolby Moss with a trey among four and the Indians leading 17-12 at quarter's end. The treys by Travis and Moss in that order followed the aforementioned 8-8 tie in giving the Indians a 14-8 lead.

Moss then included a trey among seven points in the second quarter and Travis contributed four this time as the Indians held a 29-27 lead at intermission after a late trey and deuce by the Yellow Jackets reduced a 29-22 Towns advantage.

A trey by Moss got the Indians a 32-29 lead following the aforementioned 29-29 tie and an old fashioned three point play by Travis got them a 35-32 advantage at the 6:51 mark of the third quarter but with the Indians holding a 39-36 lead, the Yellow Jackets struck for three straight field goals between the 3:21 and 1:37 marks for a 42-39 lead with the second of the three baskets putting them ahead for the first time and for good as it turned out by a 40-39 score at the 2:46 mark.

A late deuce by senior Brett Denton got the Indians within 41-42 after three quarters and Denton followed a fourth quarter opening Hayesville trey with a deuce for a 45-43 Yellow Jackets lead which they extended to 61-47 by game's end.

The Indians were led in scoring for the game by Travis with 19 points, Moss with 14, Denton with 6, and senior Trent Bradshaw with 5. Leaders in assists were sophomore Aidan Berrong with 4 and freshman Collin Crowder, Denton, and Moss with 2 each while Travis led in rebounds with 8 and was followed by Bradshaw and Denton with 4 each and Crowder with 3.

Hayesville's roster is dominated by an outstanding group of sophomores and freshmen and they were certainly vital to the Yellow Jackets' victory over the Indians but it was a pair of upper classmen who provided much of their scoring firepower in this game. Senior Dwain Cook led the way with 17 points and was followed by junior Mark Cothren with 13. The Yellow Jackets had lost their opening game to Lumpkin

County by a 65-57 score and won their third round game over rival Murphy by a 60-38 margin as they finished the tournament with a 6-4 record.

Indians 88, Armuchee 77 – The Armuchee Indians from near Rome, Georgia, entered the Battle of the States with a 4-6 record and had fallen by scores of 67-55 to Union County and 61-58 to Murphy before facing off against the Indians on Saturday in the final round. Cold shooting was present for both bands of Indians during most of the first quarter with the Indians holding a 6-2 lead, highlighted by four points by sophomore Kolby Moss, by the 3:23 mark.

A deuce by senior Brett Denton at the 1:27 mark and a trey by senior Trent Bradshaw at fifty two seconds had the Towns Indians leading 11-5 by the end of the first quarter with no hint of the high scoring affair that was about to erupt. The Indians would use five treys—two each by sophomore Aidan Berrong and Moss and a second by Bradshaw—in using a 29-19 surge for a 40-24 lead at intermission. Moss would total nine points, senior Will Travis seven, Berrong six, freshman Collin Crowder four, and Bradshaw three during the quarter.

The Indians then opened the third quarter with a 7-0 run highlighted by a deuce and trey by Moss for a bulging 47-24 lead at just the 6:28 mark and the appearance of a runaway victory for the Indians on the horizon. This would not be the case, however, as the visiting Indians included three treys in pulling to within 58-42 entering the fourth quarter with Brett Denton leading third quarter scoring for the Indians with a trey included among seven points, Moss a trey among five, and Berrong two deuces for four.

Four different Indians put points on the scoreboard as they held a 66-47 lead by the 5:46 mark of the fourth quarter but Armuchee used three of a total of seven treys in the quarter for a 15-5 run and a single digits deficit of 71-62 between the 5:31 and 3:30 marks. From that point forward, the Indians would sink just one additional field goal on an old fashioned three point play by freshman Collin Crowder at the 2:07 mark for a 77-66 Towns lead. Overall, the Indians were fifteen for twenty one at the foul line during the final 3:27 with Moss being eleven for fourteen and Crowder three for three. All of Moss' fourth quarter points were at the foul line while Crowder included three deuces among his nine points.

Six Indians entered the scoring column in the game with all six reaching double digits. Moss led the way with a career high 29 points and was followed by Travis with 14, Crowder with 13, Berrong and Denton with 11 each, and Bradshaw with 10. Berrong led in assists with 6 and was followed by Crowder and Denton with 4 each and Moss and

Travis with 2 each. Leaders in rebounds were Travis with 14, Moss with 10, Crowder with 9, and Denton with 6.

Scoring leaders for Armuchee were seniors Jacob Stanley with 22 and Brayden Perry with 13 points and junior Kody Manikas with 12. Armuchee sank ten treys with three coming in the third quarter and seven in the fourth while the Indians sank eight with six coming in the first half and two in the third quarter. The Armuchee Indians have a 4-9 record as they enter the 2019 portion of their season.

From December 20
Indians 71, Hiwassee Dam, NC 63 – The first quarter was quite a battle at Hiwassee Dam with Indian highlights being two quick baskets by senior Will Travis included in a 6-0 Towns lead just a minute and twelve seconds into the game. The Eagles would respond with eight straight points for an 8-6 lead but just one of two leads they would have in the game.

Baskets by sophomore Kolby Moss and Travis would give the Indians a 10-8 lead at the 3:20 mark before freshman Collin Crowder included a three point play in scoring the final seven Indian points of the quarter. Crowder's first basket gave the Indians a 12-10 lead and his second a 14-13 advantage they would not relinquish. The Indians then led 17-13 on Crowder's three point play at the 1:03 mark but two deuces by the Eagles during the final forty two seconds got them a 17-17 tie at quarter's end.

The Indians then opened the second quarter with a 14-3 run for a 31-20 lead at the 5:33 mark with Travis opening the quarter as he had the first, this time with a pair of deuces in

less than a minute of playing time, and sophomore Aidan Berrong scoring six points on three deuces. The Eagles followed, however, by including a pair of treys in an 8-2 run for just a 33-28 deficit at the four and a half minutes mark. The Indians would finish the quarter with a modest 10-7 advantage and a 43-35 lead at intermission. Highlights for the quarter for the Indians in addition to Travis' early four points were ten points on three deuces and four for four free throw shooting by Moss and eight points on four deuces by Berrong.

The Indians responded to a quick third quarter deuce by the Eagles for a 43-37 Towns lead with a trey by senior Brett Denton, a second old fashioned three point play by Crowder, and two free throws by senior Trent Bradshaw between just the 6:22 and 4:42 marks for a suddenly prominent 51-37 Indians lead. Berrong would then contribute a deuce at the 2:03 mark and a trey at the buzzer with the Indians holding a 57-42 lead entering the fourth quarter.

The two teams would then play on even terms for a 65-50 Towns lead at the 4:43 mark on a deuce by senior Trevor Bradley with Travis having contributed a deuce and two free throws but here came the Eagles. They used three Indian turnovers for six points in a 10-2 run interrupted only by two free throws by Crowder for what still seemed a pretty comfortable 67-60 Towns lead with 2:18 on the clock.

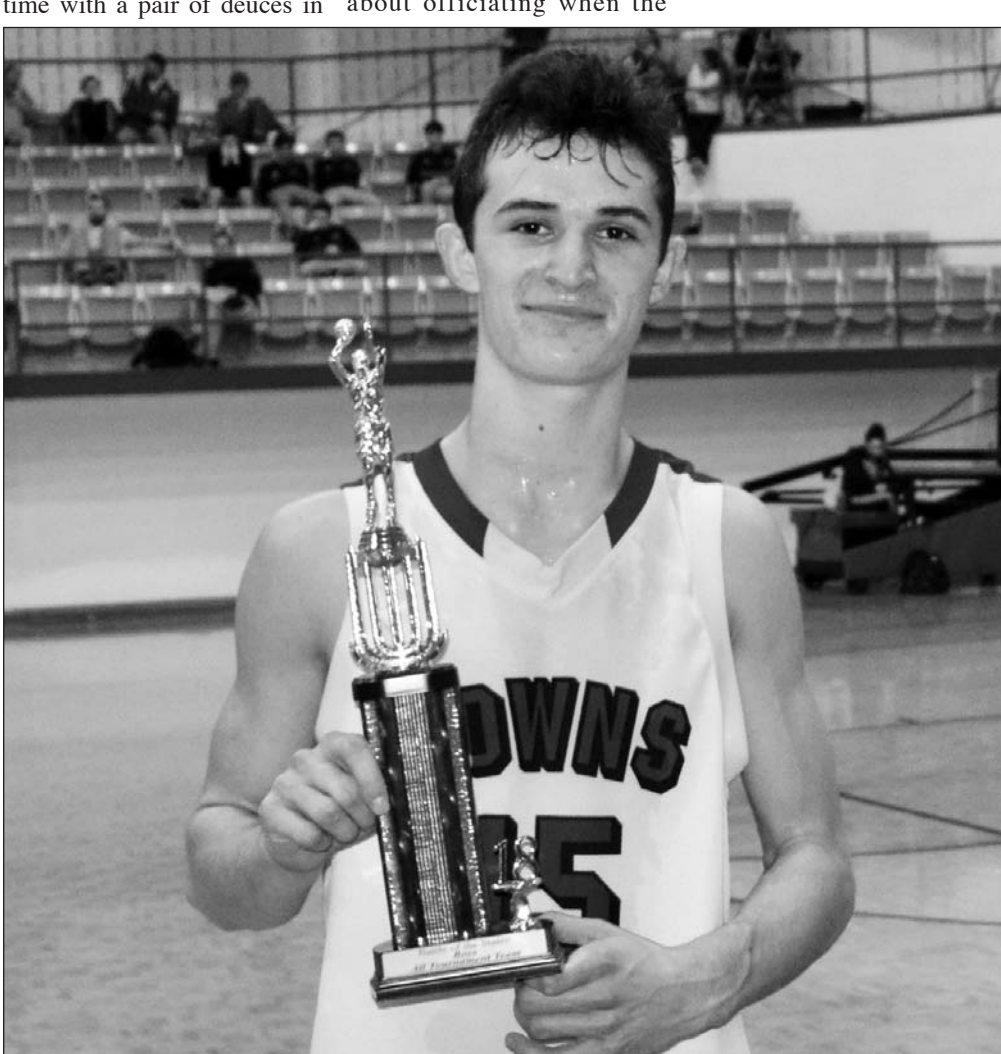
The Eagles got a huge break near the one minute mark, however, in a game not marked by serious complaints about officiating when the

Indians were victimized by a clearly missed call near the one minute mark with the Indians holding the 67-60 lead. With Moss dribbling the ball down the sideline, he was clearly fouled by an Eagles player with the ball sailing out of bounds and the appearance of the foul being intended to send Moss to the foul line in the hope that a miss would give the Eagles a chance at reducing the lead.

Instead of the foul, however, the official simply made an out of bounds call with the potential for two free throws by the outstanding free throw shooter Moss and a nine point lead instead giving the Eagles possession of the ball. They took advantage of the gift possession with a trey at fifty four seconds for a slender 67-63 Indians lead and a potentially dangerous situation for the Indians.

The Eagles would not be able to score again, however, with Moss completing an eight for eight night at the foul line with two free throws at both the 46.5 and 21.5 seconds marks as the Indians closed out a 71-63 victory.

Moss and Travis led a well balanced scoring attack for the Indians with 16 points each but with lots of help from Crowder with 15 points, Berrong with 13, Denton with 5, and Bradshaw with 4. Leaders in assists were Moss with 6 and Bradshaw and Travis with 2 each while Travis led in rebounds with 10 with other leaders being Moss with 9, Crowder with 5, Bradshaw with 4, and Berrong with 3. The Eagles were led in scoring by senior Reece Howard with 31 points and sophomore Micah Anderson with 11.



Kolby Moss was selected to the BOTS All Tournament Team. Photo/Lowell Nicholson