

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Fifth-ranked Indians drop nail-biter against Class 7A Collins Hill

By Chad Stack
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Staff Writer

Suwannee - Even though the Indians' Dec. 28 game at Athens Academy was canceled, Head Basketball Coach Rob Benson was able to schedule a game with Collins Hill in Suwannee on Saturday, Jan. 2.

The Indians, who headed into the game with a 4-0 record and 1-0 in the region, traveled to Gwinnett County Saturday to face off against the 14th-ranked Class 7A Collins Hill Eagles.

Benson was unable to travel with the team due to the last-minute scheduling and being away on holiday, so Assistant Coach Alan Rogers filled in to coach the Indians. Rogers is in his sixth season as assistant coach and is the Indians Junior Varsity head coach.

Towns County got off to a hot start, as senior Kolby Moss and junior Jake McTaggart hit two 3-pointers in a row for a 6-2 lead.

The Eagles, whose football team faced Grayson in the State Championship Game two days earlier, managed to take a 15-10 lead midway through the first when a bucket from senior Aidan Berrong and a 3-pointer from senior Kabe Ellis tied things at 15 with just over three minutes left in the quarter, though Collins Hill ended the first quarter with a 21-20 lead.

Much like the first quarter, the second quarter was a back-and-forth battle between the Indians and the Eagles. But with just over two minutes left in the half, Collins Hill went on a 12-0 streak to take a 44-32 lead.



Towns County traveled to Suwannee to face Collins Hill after Monday's trip to Athens Academy was cancelled. Photos/Chad Stack

Moss was able to add 4 points before the close of the half, cutting the Eagles back down to an 8-point advantage. Collins Hill led the Indians 44-36 heading into the locker room.

Coming out of half-time, shots from Berrong and McTaggart brought the Indians to within 4 points at 44-40. Towns County managed to keep the score close for the third quarter but were unable to take the lead, and Collins Hill ended the third quarter 58-52.

The Indians continued to battle, and after shots

from Berrong, McTaggart, Moss and Ellis, they pulled to within 2 points with 30 seconds left in the game.

Towns County had to foul the Eagles to get the ball back, but Collins Hill hit all their free throws and went ahead by 10, resulting in the Indians taking their first loss of the season with a score of 78-68.

McTaggart led the Indians with 24 points and 15 rebounds, Moss finished with 13 points, and junior Collin Crowder added 12 points.

Ellis and Berrong finished with 6 points apiece,



while seniors Colton Day finished with 3 points and Hayden McClure finished with 2 points. Junior Kyle Oakes also finished with 2 points.

Even though Benson was unable to attend the game, he did catch it from afar, and he liked what he saw on the court that day.

"The team and Alan Rogers and (Assistant Coach) Mike Anderson did a great job Saturday," Benson said. "I was able to watch the game through a live feed from a parent and thought the team responded well to the chal-

enge and played exceptionally well."

Towns County's 4-1 start to the season has the Indians ranked near the top in multiple sets of Class A

Public rankings, (5th by sandyspiel.com; 8th by the AJC) putting them in excellent early position this year.

"We have had several tough ball games thus far, especially a key region win over Social Circle and a hard-fought ball game with 7A Collins Hill," Coach Benson said. "So, this team is meeting my expectations thus far, which are to compete for a region title and a state playoff run."

"I am hoping that the team remains competitive and humble. As most coaches will say, an early loss is much better than a late one. We have several tough games remaining, and Saturday against Rabun County is no different."

The Indians will pick things back up Wednesday, Jan. 6, when they travel to Suwannee again to take on Lambert High School. The boys will tipoff at 7 p.m.

Following the game at Lambert, the Indians will host Washington-Wilkes Jan. 8 for their second region game of the season starting at 7:30 p.m., with the Lady Indians playing at 6 p.m.

Towns County will end the week on the road traveling to Rabun County Jan. 9 to face off against the Wildcats at 6:30 p.m., with the Lady Indians set to tip off at 5 p.m.

CLASS A-PUBLIC			GHSAA
BOYS	SCHOOL	OVERALL	
#1	DREW CHARTER	9-0	
#2	HANCOCK CENTRAL	0-0	
#3	DUBLIN	11-1	
#4	LANIER COUNTY	6-2	
#5	TOWNS COUNTY	4-1	
#6	TURNER COUNTY	5-2	
#7	CHATTAHOOCHEE COUNTY	3-1	
#8	MANCHESTER	2-1	
#9	CALHOUN COUNTY	1-1	
#10	WARREN COUNTY	4-1	

Lady Indians overwhelmed at Athens Academy

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Athens - The Towns County Lady Indians varsity basketball team not only faced misfortune in continuing postponements and cancellations of games due to COVID-19 as addressed in a separate article but in the one game they played last week with a makeup home game scheduled for Wednesday against Region 8-A Public Social Circle postponed again.

They traveled to Athens Academy on Monday where they faced a team playing their 10th game of the season and in midseason form while the Lady Indians were playing their first game in twenty four days with the home standing Spartans using hot shooting in springing out to a dominant lead and coasting to a 58-24 victory.

The Lady Indians had taken a double overtime victory at Union County and fallen in very competitive games at home with victory not assured until the final minute of play by Tallulah Falls and Union County between November 24 and December 4 but it is not uncommon to experience cold shooting and turnovers when experiencing, in this case, a super long period of game inactivity. On the other hand, the Athens Academy Ladies had compiled a very impressive 6-3 record compared to 1-2 in limited play for the Lady Indians.

References were made



Senior Kennedy Henson finished with 5 points and 4 steals at Athens Academy on Monday, Dec. 28. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

in an early season Indians article about the unusual and, yes, unexplainable events of the Indians being victims of a 34-5 opening run at Andrews last year and the Indians having a 30-5 opening run against Union County this year with the Lady Indians being victims of a very similar opening start at Athens Academy.

The Lady Spartans sank their first three shots—a pair of treys and a long deuce—for an 8-0 lead by the 5:19 mark and were on their way to a 17-0 lead after one quarter and a 32-4 lead at intermission. The Lady Indians got a number of good shots off that simply would fall in the basket and

they made several turnovers not uncommon for a team not seeing action in more than three weeks.

Junior Emily Vargas got the Lady Indians' first point of the game on a free throw at the 5:17 mark of the second quarter and added a deuce at 2:33 while senior Kennedy Henson completed first half scoring with a free throw at 5.9 seconds.

The Lady Indians would become much more competitive during the final half although the Lady Spartans added their sixth trey, two free throws, and a deuce for a 39-4 lead at the 6:45 mark before the Lady Indians came to life.

Five different Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard in the third quarter as they outscored Athens 15-12 during the final 6:22 for a 51-19 score entering the fourth quarter.

Third quarter highlights for the Lady Indians included a deuce and three for five free throw shooting by senior Vanessa Floyd for five points and a four point play on a trey and a free throw when fouled on the shot by sophomore Sarah Shook.

It was especially noteworthy that junior Payton Calvert and freshman Laura Mauldin scored their first varsity points in the quarter on two for two free throw shooting by Calvert and a deuce by Mauldin.

The Lady Spartans outscored the Lady Indians 7-5 in a mercy rule shortened fourth quarter for a final Athens Academy margin of victory of 58-24. A trey by Vargas highlighted the final quarter for the Lady Indians.

Leading scorers for the Lady Indians for the game were Vargas with 6 points, Floyd and Henson with 5 each, and Shook with 4. Leaders in rebounds were Floyd with 5 and Shook with 4 while Henson led in steals with 4 and was followed by Shook with 2.

Scoring leaders for the Lady Spartans were senior Meg Williams with 13 points and junior Meredith Reynolds with 11. The Lady Spartans completed the week with a 51-29 win over Commerce as they improved their record to 8-3.

Scheduling misfortunes continue for TCHS Basketball

By Jerry Kendall
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After having a large number of games either cancelled or postponed due to COVID issues at other schools, the Towns County Lady Indians and Indians varsity basketball teams looked forward last week to having recently scheduled games at former Region 8A foe Athens Academy on Monday and the Lady Indians making up a home game postponed earlier against Region 8-A Public foe Social Circle on Wednesday.

The scheduling misfortune would continue, however, as Social Circle informed the Lady Indians that they had to postpone their game again the week prior to the event due to continuing COVID issues and the Indians got word about an hour before their scheduled departure for Athens Academy that their only scheduled game of the week was being cancelled.

The Indians did come up with a game on Saturday at Class 7A Collins Hill in Gwinnett County, however, with much appreciation extended to Chad Stack for covering this game as your reporter missed learning of the game.

So the Lady Indians trav-

eled alone to Athens Academy for their first game in 24 days with the Indians playing their game at Collins Hill on Saturday and both teams not scheduled to see action again until hosting Washington-Wilkes on Friday and traveling to Rabun County on Saturday of this week.

The Washington-Wilkes games on January 8 will be just the second since December 4 for the Lady Indians and the third since that date for the Indians. Fans should be aware that the TCHS coaches are pursuing additional games with some hopefully being scheduled as we go along with some games perhaps being scheduled on short notice such as the Indians game at Collins Hill.

By comparison with other seasons, it has been common for the TCHS teams to play around 10 games prior to the Battle of the States Tournament which was scheduled to have been played on Monday through Wednesday of last week but had to be canceled due to the COVID difficulties and what would have been difficult scheduling for eight girls and eight boys teams.

Hopefully the TCHS teams will be able to play their remaining games without interruption.