

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Lady Indians third at 29th Annual Battle of the States

By Daysha Pandolph
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After a short break, the Towns County girls' basketball team headed right back to the court for the Battle of the States annual tournament. From Thursday, Dec. 28, to Saturday, Dec. 30, the team moved through the brackets to compete with Hayesville, Rabun County and Coosa High School. Senior Scotlyn Fain was even selected for the Battle of the States - Jerry Kendall all tournament team!

For their first game of the tournament, the Indians were paired up with the Hayesville Yellow Jackets. Following a slow first quarter, the team was pleased when Kaleigh Beaver scored a whole seven points to take a five-point lead into the second half.

Hayesville fought back, but could never pull forward with Laura Mauldin, Brelan Seiveking and Jamie McCarter making key rebounds. Emma Lallement kept the Yellow Jackets on high alert as well, making some beautiful passes to log assists, while Scotlyn Fain knocked down 4-3 pointers.

Although the Indians maintained a lead throughout the entire game, that lead was diminished to one point as the second half wound down. Seiveking, however, hit a three-point "dagger" to put Towns County ahead by four and secure a 43-39 victory.

"We were a bit rusty after battling through injuries and sickness," commented Coach Shea Taylor. "It was a physical game and it wasn't



The Towns County Lady Indians finished third at last month's Battle of the States Christmas tournament following wins over Hayesville, North Carolina and Coosa. The Lady Indians' lone defeat came during the semifinals vs. No. 4 Rabun County. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

pretty, but this team found a way to stay in the winners bracket and get a big win over a very scrappy and well-coached Hayesville team."

For the next match, the Indians found themselves facing Rabun County. Unfortunately, they were unable to match Rabun's speed, and lost the game by a whopping 25-70.

Even with the loss, several Towns County players

were able to show off their scoring skills, such as Kaleigh Beaver, who led with ten points and eight rebounds. Seiveking followed close behind with seven points, three steals, two assists and two blocks. Fain contributed six points and five rebounds, while Mauldin and McCarter each had five rebounds.

"This was a tough one. Rabun shocked us early and we could never find a way to

get going," said Taylor. "They have a very good team and have established themselves as one of the top programs in the state, but the score did not reflect how good our team is. Their press gave us a lot of trouble and we missed way too many shots. This one hurts but it also shows where we need to improve."

The loss against Rabun County left the Indians facing Coosa High School in round

three of the tournament. With key scorers Seiveking, Fain, Beaver, Mauldin, Lallement and McCarter, Towns County was able to walk away with a 57-35 victory.

"Playing three days in a row can wear teams down mentally and physically," shared Taylor, "(but) these girls did not let it bother them at all as they played their best overall game of the season.

"The defense was sharp,

we rotated well and rebounded hard. We moved the ball on offense, limited turnovers and shot 80 percent from the free throw line. This was a complete team effort and win!

"I am super proud of these girls for coming out and showing that we deserve to be in the top three of this tournament. Now it's time to rest for a couple of days and get ready to enter the heart of the region schedule."

No. 9 Lady Indians pull away from 8th-ranked Warren County

By Daysha Pandolph
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The 9th-ranked Towns County girls' basketball team hit the court last Saturday, Jan. 6, to battle Region 8-A opponent and 8th-ranked Warren County.

After a well-played contest, the Indians left with a 66-52 victory.

"Coming into the game, I felt like we had a good game plan for Warren County," commented coach Shea Taylor. "A great week of practice led to our team playing well rounded 'team' basketball. We had players stepping up and making plays all night."

After leading much of the first half, Warren County rallied ahead during the third quarter before Kaleigh Beaver and the Lady Indians found another gear, opening up a double-digit lead early in the fourth.

Beaver led the Lady Indians with 18 points, eight rebounds and four blocks. Close behind, Brelan Seiveking scored 15 total points, nine assists and three steals, while Emma Lallement contributed 16 points, ten rebounds, two assists and one block.

Other players were key to the win as well, such as Laura Mauldin, who scored nine points and ten rebounds, Scotlyn Fain with eight points, four assist, four steals and one block, and Ansleigh Hardin with two assists and two steals.

"We fought hard on the boards and out-rebounded them 46 to 33," said Taylor, who has high goals for the team as they move deeper into region play.

"Our goal is to continue getting better and working hard,



Kaleigh Beaver scores inside during Towns County's region victory over Warren County on Saturday. With 18 points, the junior finished 2 rebounds shy of a double-double. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

trying to secure the highest seeding we can moving into the region tournament.

"I am proud of this team,

but we still have a lot of basketball left, and (we) have to find a way to consistently play like we have our past two games," he



Emma Lallement, who battled an injury throughout much of December, returned to form with 16 points and 10 rebounds during Towns County's weekend victory over 8th-ranked Warren County. Photo/Lowell Nicholson.

shared. "After battling sickness and injuries, we are starting to get healthy. It will be big for us to get our main rotation back to

full strength."

Moving into next week, the girls will play Swain County, NC, on Tuesday, Jan. 9,

then Lake Oconee Academy on Friday, Jan. 12, and lastly, Washington-Wilkes on Saturday, Jan. 13.

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Indians sink Warren County, remain unbeaten in region

By Daysha Pandolph
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After finishing strong with a victory on the final day of the Battle of the States annual tournament, the Towns County boys' basketball team headed back to the court on Saturday, Jan. 6, to defeat last year's Region 8A champion, Warren County, by a score of 71-58.

This win ties Towns County with Green County for first place in region play at 5-0.

The beginning of the game was highly contested, with both teams sharing the lead. As they moved into the second quarter, however, Towns County held a five-point lead over Warren. During the second quarter, the Indians managed to extend their lead by 11, finishing the half with a score of 38-27.

Warren County decreased that lead to five points after applying some defensive pressure early in the third quarter, but that didn't last long. By the end of the quarter, the Indians held a nine-point lead, which they would build to as much as 17 points throughout the final quarter.

In the end, Towns County was able to hang on to their 13-point lead for a 71-58 victory.

To pull off the astounding win, the entire team had to work hard. Senior Zane Floyd contributed a whopping 17 points, ten rebounds and seven assists, while seniors Tanner Cunningham and Gage Rogers



The Indians survived a physical contest against the defending 8-A Region Champion, Warren County, on Saturday night in Hiawassee. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

each scored 15 points.

Along with their high-scoring contributions, Cunningham and Rogers also added eight rebounds apiece. Senior Connor Chastain scored nine points and six rebounds to greatly lament Warren County, 6'6" post to a largely ineffec-

tive gain.

Sophomore Dustin Barrett pitched in ten points, while Senior Kade McConnell added five points.

"I think this was our best game of the year," commented coach Brian Hunnicut. "The boys did a great job of sharing

the basketball and shooting the ball well. Most importantly, we limited our turnovers.

"These boys continue to give a great defensive effort night in and night out. It is a marvel to watch these boys rebound bigger and more athletic teams. This was a big

step towards our goal of winning region, but we still have nine games against region opponents; so we will have to continue to come out and work and play up to our potential.

"This is such a great group, and I enjoy having the opportunity to coach them. I'm

excited to see what they do over the next month."

The Towns County boys' basketball team will play their next region matchup on Friday, Jan. 12 at Lake Oconee. The next day, they will host a match against region opponent Washington Wilkes at home.

Indians close Battle of the States Christmas tourney with win over Coosa

By Daysha Pandolph
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The Towns County boys' basketball team headed to the court with high goals at the Battle of the States annual tournament last weekend; however, they got off to a rough start, and after losing both the Hayesville and Polk County games, were unable to win the competition. On Saturday, Dec. 30, they bounced back with a victory over Coosa High School, but still couldn't take the overall win. Zane Floyd was named to the Battle of the States Jerry Kendall All Tournament Team, however, following his fantastic performance last weekend.

On Thursday, Dec. 28, the Indians battled their first opponent of the tournament - Hayesville, North Carolina. They held a five-point lead after the first quarter all the way into the half, but the Hayesville Yellow Jackets played well during the third quarter and stole the lead with three points.

The final quarter looked like it could favor either team, with Towns County out-scoring Hayesville briefly. Unfortunately, however, the Yellow Jackets took and maintained a two-point lead with only six seconds left on the clock, leaving the Indians at a loss of 58-60.

Zane Floyd led in scoring with 22 points and six rebounds, and Tanner Cunningham followed close behind with 11 points and 11 rebounds. Kade McConnell contributed seven points, Walker Underwood scored six and Connor Chastain impressed the audience by scoring six points and



Senior Zane Floyd earned All-Tournament Team honors for the Indians during the Battle of the States. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

six rebounds all while battling sickness.

The next day, Towns County lost a close game to Polk County, Tennessee, by a score of 73-75. The game started slow with Polk County taking a five-point lead by the end of the first quarter, but during the second quarter both teams took off in scoring. Polk County managed to maintain

the lead, though, even extending it to nine points.

During the third quarter, Polk County led by as much as 22 points, but after a strategically staged comeback, Towns County tied the game with only a few seconds left on the clock. Polk County managed to hold on to their victory, however, and finished ahead by two points.

Floyd led scoring once again, with 27 points and ten rebounds. Cunningham followed with 19 points and nine rebounds, while Gage Rogers scored ten points and five rebounds. Jonas Rouse contributed seven points, two rebounds and two steals.

On Saturday, Dec. 30, the Indians closed the tournament in a match against Coosa

High School. The Indians took a five-point lead during the first quarter, and had increased it to 12 points by halftime. They maintained the lead throughout the third quarter, but after Coosa staged a late rally in the fourth quarter, it was diminished to one point.

Floyd made two back to back baskets to bring the lead up to five points as the game

came to a close, securing a 60-55 victory.

Cunningham led in scoring against Coosa with 12 points and five rebounds. Rogers and Floyd each contributed 11 points and seven rebounds alongside nine points and six rebounds by Chastain.

"Overall, this was a tough tournament for us," commented Coach Brian Hunnicut. "We lost two games by a total of four points. We played well at times in those games, and then we didn't play so well at times in both of the first two games."

"The third game of the tournament was probably one of our most complete games of the season. We shared the basketball extremely well and played phenomenal defense. The whole team contributed to the victory, and that is when we are playing our best and is what we need to happen."

"I am very proud of the boys' effort throughout the tournament. They are a hard-working group. They never lay down and they fight until the end. Their heart and grit showed up throughout the whole tournament."

"Most teams would not have come back and had a chance to win against Hayesville and Polk county, but these guys never quit. A lot of teams would not have come out and played so well the third game, especially, after the two heart-breaking losses from the first two days."

"But these boys just have a different motivation about them. They refuse to lay down, and for that, I could not be more proud as a coach. Now, we start the meat of our season with region play."



Senior Kade McConnell at the free throw line during Towns County's BOTS win over Coosa. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Eller, Kendall, Smith recognized for years of dedication

Dion Eller, Jerry Kendall and the late Jimmy Smith were honored for their years of service to Towns County basketball and the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament.

Represented by his wife Pat Smith, Jimmy Smith was recognized with the naming of the Battle of the States championship trophy in his honor.

Kendall, a longtime sports writer and statistician for Towns County basketball, had the tournament MVP trophy named after him.

Also honored was former TCHS basketball coach, Dion Eller for his years of dedication to the school and its athletics programs.

The recognition ceremony was held during the opening night of the Battle of the States Christmas Tournament on Dec. 28.

Pat Smith was on hand Dec. 30 to watch the Jimmy Smith trophy presented to the boys and girls winners.



Dion Eller (L) and Jerry Kendall alongside Towns County Athletic Director Jim Melton (R) during the Battle of the States. Photo/Lowell Nicholson