

Towns County Sports

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Indians rally from 16-down in the fourth to stun Athens Academy

By Jerry Kendall
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Athens - After Riverside pulled away in the closing minutes for a victory on Tuesday, the Indians pulled off one of the most stunning comeback victories ever for any Towns County team at Athens Academy.

Indians 69, Athens Academy 68 - Miracle victories are often mentioned in all sports but they are very few and very far between in reaching the status of the Indians' victory at Athens Academy last Friday as will be detailed in the following paragraphs.

After Indians junior Kolby Moss sank two field goals for a 4-0 Towns lead by the 6:24 mark of the first quarter, the Spartans appeared to take control of the game and led by scores of 16-10 after one quarter and 37-23 at intermission.

Top individual scoring totals for the Indians during the first two quarters included four points each by juniors Aidan Berrong and Kolby Moss in the first and eight by Moss in the second.

The Indians would come alive in the third quarter, outscoring the Spartans 13-5 for just a 42-36 deficit at the 2:03 mark but the Spartans appeared to have regained control of the game with not only a pair of treys triggering a 10-0 finish the final minute and a half for a 52-36 lead entering the fourth quarter but Moss committing his fourth foul at the 1:15 mark.

One could easily see a bleak outlook for the Indians entering the fourth quarter with a sixteen points deficit but Crowder gave a preview of great things to come for the Indians when he took a defensive rebound and went coast to coast for a pull up jumper at the 7:40 mark.

This was the start of a 9-1 Indians run including a trey by junior Colton Day and a deuce by Moss and ending with Crowder's second deuce in the run on a driving left handed layup for just a 53-45 deficit but with the run diminished



Kyle Oakes passes to a teammate during the third quarter of Towns' come-from-behind victory at Athens Academy. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

when Moss was lost on fouls at 5:54.

The remaining Indians would rise to the occasion, however, beginning with another trey by Day and a Berrong basket following a Spartan deuce for just a 55-50 Indians deficit at 4:25.

An Athens basket just thirteen seconds later gave them a 57-50 advantage at 4:12 but the never say die Indians would resume their inspired run by using deuces by Berrong, Crowder, and Day between the 3:21 and 2:07 marks for just a 57-56 deficit.

The Spartans sank two free throws at 1:48 for a 59-56 advantage with a scoring dry spell arriving for both teams, including the Spartans missing a one and one free throw attempt at 47.6 seconds with Crowder taking advantage by nailing a trey from near the top of the

circle at 38 seconds for a 59-59 tie. When Athens missed a shot for a potential lead, Berrong took the defensive rebound and got off a long trey attempt right in line with the basket but touching the net just inches below the rim at the buzzer with the game going to overtime.

The Spartans not unexpectedly used their distinct height advantage in taking the possession tip starting the overtime period but Crowder deflected a Spartan pass to Berrong who took the ball coast to coast for a field goal and a 61-59 Indians lead at the 3:37 mark. The Indians were far from through with their heroics, however.

Berrong sank another basket at 2:53 for a 63-59 score and junior Luis Quijada blocked an Athens field goal attempt with Day retrieving the ball and the possession leading to a tip in

basket by Crowder for a 65-59 Towns advantage at 1:23.

That would be the Indians' last field goal as the Spartans would employ the long used strategy of sending the Indians to the foul line hoping for sufficient misses to catch back up but with Crowder and Berrong combining for four for six accuracy in protecting the victory.

Crowder sank the first of two free throw attempts at 54.8 seconds with this point completing a 30-7 Indians scoring run in less than eleven minutes of playing time back to the 7:40 mark of the fourth quarter and gave the Indians a three possession lead of 66-59. Berrong then matched a Spartan deuce with two free throws for a second seven points Indians advantage at 37.2 seconds and he gave them a two possession lead of 69-65 following a Spartan

deuce by sinking the first of two free throws at 19.2 seconds.

That would prove to be the winning margin when Quijada blocked a Spartans trey attempt near the ten seconds mark with this action delaying an Athens trey at four seconds which was not enough for the Spartans to overtake the Indians who took the heart stopping 69-68 victory as time ran out without the Indians having to inbound the ball.

Several mentions have been made of decisive scoring runs both by and against the Lady Indians and Indians during the season with this one certainly the most decisive one yet resulting in the crucial one point region victory.

Berrong and Crowder led the Indians in scoring with 20 points each and were followed by Moss with 18 and Day with 11 while leaders in assists were

Oakes with 6, Crowder with 4, Berrong with 3, and Quijada with 2. Berrong and Crowder also tied for the lead in rebounds with 8 each while other leaders were Day with 6, Moss and Oakes with 3 each, and Quijada with 2.

Day and Oakes took the lead in steals with 3 and 2 respectively and Quijada had a total of 3 blocked shots, including the two crucial ones in the overtime period. Scoring leaders for the Spartans were juniors Deion Colzie with 22 points, Jack Nasworthy with 17, and James Chandler with 10.

The Spartans had entered the game against the Indians with a 5-3 overall record, including three straight wins and no losses in Region 8A. Of special note was their most recent win just three days prior, a 54-49 come from behind victory at Providence Christian which was the first loss for Providence who fell to a 16-1 overall record and 3-1 in the region with the loss.

The Spartans went on to lose a second overtime game at Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville on Saturday and finished the week with a 5-5 overall record including 3-2 in the region.

There are some very interesting rebounding statistics provided on an Athens Academy related internet website link. The site shows the Indians outrebounding the Spartans 34-26 after the Spartans had outrebounded Providence Christian 34-23 in their previous game.

What makes these stats very noteworthy is the height differences in the Indians and both the Athens Academy and Providence Christian Academy. No Indian seeing action is much taller than six feet with two of the top Athens Academy players listed a year ago as sophomores as 6'5" and 6'6".

With heights this year unlisted, perhaps one or both have added some growth since that time. And Providence Christian has players of heights and talents similar to that of the two listed Athens Academy players.

Lady Indians fall to Rabun Gap and Athens Academy, defeat George Walton

By Jerry Kendall
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With the Towns County Indians Region 8A basketball foe Riverside Military Academy having no ladies team, the Lady Indians scheduled a game against the non region Rabun Gap Lady Eagles for the same evening as the Indians' home game against Riverside last Tuesday night.

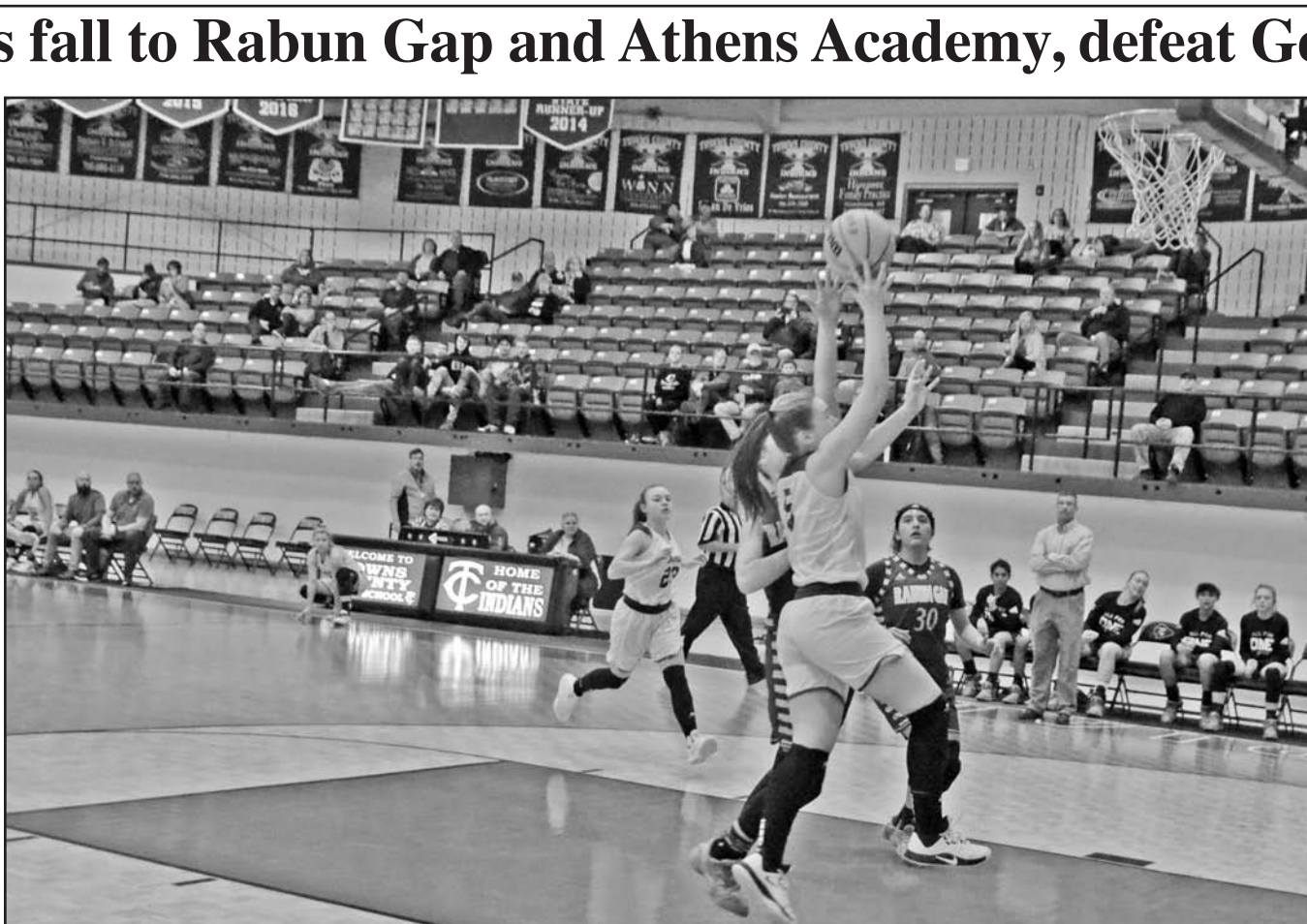
For those who don't know, Rabun Gap was a long time well thought of and usually very competitive region opponent of the Towns County teams before leaving the region and participating in a private school conference based primarily in North Carolina.

It appears that they made this move when they saw an uneven playing field for the region opponents as they began accepting large numbers of foreign students with quite a large number being top notch athletes.

The Lady Indians then traveled nearly one hundred miles to Athens Academy last Friday and hosted George Walton Academy of Monroe on Saturday with both of these games being Region 8A events. The Lady Indians played very competitively while falling to Rabun Gap and Athens Academy and rebounded for their second region victory of the season over George Walton.

The Lady Indians completed the week's play with an overall 6-10 record including 2-1 in the region with six regular season region games and one non region game against Andrews remaining. Upcoming games include traveling to Dacula to face Hebron Christian School on Tuesday of this week, hosting Commerce this Friday, and traveling to Lakeview Academy in Gainesville next Tuesday.

Rabun Gap 53, Lady Indians 43 - The Lady Indians were victimized by a double trouble attack of thirteen deuces and twelve treys when the Rabun Gap Lady Eagles ran away with a home court 70-36 victory in a preseason scrimmage in early November. This time, however, the Lady Indians



Towns County freshman Sarah Shook glides to the hoop during last week's non-region contest vs Rabun Gap. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

defended their home court quite capably by largely shutting down the two point field goals defensively but they were still victimized by deadly outside shooting in falling by just a 53-43 score last Tuesday.

The Lady Eagles nearly matched their earlier three point shot production with eleven treys in this game but sank just seven deuces with Lady Indian turnovers leading to four of these baskets by the early moments of the third quarter with just three of the deuces made against the Lady Indians defense.

By week's end, the Lady Eagles had won five consecutive games and improved their record to 7-8 with games included against some very imposing opponents over a wide geographical area.

The Lady Indians got off to an ice cold shooting start against the Lady Eagles who wrapped a pair of treys around a deuce for an 8-0 lead by the 5:13 mark of the first quarter. Lady Indians junior Kennedy Henson would strike, however, for two free throws, a trey, and a deuce for a 7-3 run the final

2:57 of the quarter for just an 11-7 Towns deficit at quarter's end.

The second quarter would be played on nearly even terms as they Lady Eagles included four treys in outscoring the Lady Indians 16-14 for a 27-21 lead at intermission. Lady Indian junior Vanessa Floyd included a pair of treys among her ten team leading points during the quarter.

The Lady Eagles led by as much as 20-11 and 25-14 during the quarter before a trey by Floyd and late deuces by senior Sophia Shook and Floyd gave the Lady Indians a 7-2 run and closed the margin to the 27-21 deficit at halftime.

A trey and a deuce by Henson by the 5:58 mark of the third quarter had the Lady Indians within 29-26 and a late trey by Sophia Shook had them within 38-32 entering the fourth quarter but a quarter opening 10-0 run by the Lady Eagles got them ahead 48-32 with just 5:45 remaining in the game.

Henson then included three treys among eleven points the final 5:25 in reducing the final Rabun Gap margin of vic-

tory to 53-43.

Henson led the Lady Indians in scoring for the game with 26 points and was followed by Floyd with 12 and Sophia Shook with 5 while leaders in assists were Sophia Shook with 6 and junior Jayce Young with 2.

Leaders in rebounds were freshman Sarah Shook with 7 and Henson with 5 while Henson led in steals with 2. The Lady Eagles were led in scoring by seniors Aileen Marquez with 25 points and Derin Akdeniz with 13 and 5'11" sophomore Quincy Ji with 6.

Athens Academy 42, Lady Indians 35 - At Athens Academy, the Lady Indians fell victim to a 12-0 Lady Spartans start by the 4:29 mark of the first quarter before valiantly battling back during the remainder of the game but never quite able to overcome the early deficit.

A pair of turnovers by the Lady Indians led to four of the Athens points and a pair of treys accounted for six more during the early scoring run.

The Lady Indians struck for seven straight points be-

tween the 3:34 and 2:25 marks of the first quarter on deuces by juniors Vanessa Floyd and Jayce Young and a trey by Young for just a 12-7 deficit but the Lady Spartans struck for a trey before quarter's end for a 15-7 lead and added their fourth trey less than a minute into the second quarter for an 18-7 lead.

The Lady Indians finished the second quarter on an upswing, however, with a 9-2 finish in less than two and a half minutes of playing time on a trey, a deuce, and two free throws by junior Kennedy Henson and a pair of free throws by Floyd for just a 23-18 halftime deficit.

With the Lady Spartans holding a 28-20 lead, the Lady Indians finished the third quarter much like the second on a putback basket by freshman Sarah Shook, two free throws by Henson, Young's second trey of the game, and a late deuce by Henson for just a 33-29 deficit entering the fourth quarter.

For nearly four and a half minutes at the start of the fourth quarter, both teams

struggled to put points on the scoreboard with Athens holding just a 2-1 advantage for a 35-30 lead before a deuce by Henson got the Lady Indians within 35-32 at the 3:38 mark. Floyd nearly matched three for four free throw shooting by the Lady Spartans with a deuce at 1:20 with the Lady Indians still within striking range at 38-34.

The Lady Indians then sent the Athens ladies to the foul line four times during the final 56.6 seconds hoping for enough misses to overtake them and they opened the door a bit by sinking just one of two free throw attempts each time but the Lady Indians managed just one free throw in two attempts in failing to take advantage as they came short of victory by a 42-35 score.

Scoring leaders for the Lady Indians were Henson with 13 points, Floyd with 12, and Young with 8 while senior Sophia Shook led in assists with 6 and was followed by Floyd with 2. Leaders in rebounds were Henson with 8 and Floyd with 5 and leaders in steals were Sophia Shook with 3 and Henson with 2.

The Lady Spartans were led in scoring by 5'11" junior Rose Bone with 17 points and sophomore Jaiila-Salley-Barnett with 11. The Athens Academy ladies improved their record to 9-7 overall and 3-0 in the region with the victory.

Lady Indians 45, George Walton Academy 36 - A trey by freshman Sarah Shook and two free throws by junior Vanessa Floyd got the Lady Indians off to a 5-1 start by the 4:02 mark of the first quarter against George Walton Academy.

Following two deuces by the visiting Lady Bulldogs for a 5-5 tie, a basket by junior Kennedy Henson got the Lady Indians a 7-5 lead they would hold with the exception of a brief tie in the second quarter and a similarly short one point deficit in the third quarter for the remainder of the game.

The Lady Indians extended the lead to 10-6 by quarter's end and they would erase a 12-12 tie after just thirty four seconds when Henson

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