

Towns County Sports

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Indians hit bump in the road in region losses to Riverside, Hebron, and Lakeview

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Indians varsity basketball team faced a difficult time in Region 8-A losses last week to Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville on Tuesday and in home games to Hebron Christian Academy of Dacula on Tuesday and Lakeview Academy of Gainesville on Saturday.

In each of the three games, their opponents got off to strong starts as compared with early struggles for the Indians with Riverside and Lakeview going on to decisive victories but with the Indians rallying from a seventeen points deficit only to fall one point short of victory against Hebron.

The three Indians opponents all entered their games against the Indians with impressive records within Region 8A as evidenced by a combined record of 17-3 with Lakeview finishing the week at 8-0 and in first place in the region. The Indians completed the week with an overall record of 9-8 and a region record of 4-4.

Riverside Military Academy 72, Indians 53

The Riverside Eagles have proven in two games to be a very difficult match up for the Indians as they used a 29-9 start in Hiawasse on December 15 and then a similar 26-9 start last Tuesday in Gainesville as springboards to decisive victories over the Indians. The Eagles have not been nearly as impressive in some of their games against other Region 8A opponents but their success against the Indians cannot be denied. This pattern of unexpected results, related either to winners and losers or margins of victories, has been prevalent this year among such games played during regular season and in the Battle of the States Tournament, for example.

Last Tuesday, early Indian turnovers were costly as the Eagles jumped out to a 7-0 lead less than a minute and a half into the game but with the Indians staying close for several minutes of playing time after that. They pulled to within 8-4 on field goals by senior Evan Berrong and junior Will Travis, to within 10-6 on a second basket by Berrong, and still closer on three for four free throw shooting by senior Zach Davenport to within 12-9 by the 2:54 mark of the first quarter.

The Eagles followed, however, by using three treys in a 14-0 run between the 2:41 mark of the first quarter and 7:09 of the second for the aforementioned 26-9 lead.



The Indians lost at Riverside Military Academy on Tuesday before dropping a pair at home over the weekend. Photos by Lowell Nicholson

With the Eagles going into a stall, apparently in an attempt to try and pull the Indians out of a zone defense, following a Berrong basket at 6:41 for a 26-11 score, neither team would score again until the Eagles sank a free throw at exactly the four minutes mark.

It was not until the 3:29 mark, then, when a trey by freshman Kolby Moss got the Indians off on a 9-1 run for just a 28-20 deficit with a steal and basket by senior Bradley Benson and baskets by Davenport and Moss completing the run at 1:19. Davenport then matched an Eagle trey at forty six seconds with a field goal and free throw in the final half minute of play for just a 31-23 Towns deficit at the halftime break.

At the time of the Eagles' late second quarter trey, they had scored just two points on two free throws with both inadvertently banked off the back board between their treys at the 7:09 and forty six seconds marks but as if by magic, they opened the third quarter with a 13-0 run for a 44-23 lead which became 56-31 entering the fourth quarter and ended in a 72-53 Riverside victory.

Davenport scored six points in the third quarter and four in the fourth while Moss scored six points on a pair of treys in the fourth quarter and senior Caleb Clark sank a field goal in each of the final two quarters for four points as highlights of the last half for the Indians.

Scoring leaders for the Indians for the game were Davenport with 18 points, Moss with 11, Berrong with 6, and Benson and Travis

with 5 each. Eight different Indians put points on the scoreboard and eight also contributed at least one assist during the game with leaders being Davenport with 3 and Moss with 2. Davenport also led in rebounds with 10 and was followed by Clark with 4. The Eagles were led in scoring by juniors Isaac Teesley with 21 points, Orlando Stevens with 16, and Trey Greene with 13. The Eagles completed the week with a 6-5 overall record but 5-2 in region play following a 69-59 loss at Lakeview Academy on Friday and a home court 72-66 loss to Class AAAAA Arabia Mountain of Lithonia on Saturday.

Hebron Christian Academy 67, Indians 66

The Indians got early 2-0 and 4-2 leads over Hebron on field goals by senior Zach Davenport and freshman Kolby Moss by the 6:48 mark of the first quarter and they got within 9-8 at the 4:10 mark on second baskets by both Davenport and Moss. But a 26-10 Hebron run between the 3:33 mark of the first quarter and 3:34 of the second had the Lions seemingly in command with a 35-18 lead.

No one notified the Indians of anything like this being an insurmountable lead, however, as a 9-0 run between the 3:19 and 2:19 marks had them within 35-27 and a trey by senior Bradley Benson at twenty one seconds had them within striking distance at 40-31 at intermission. The Indians had reduced a seventeen points deficit to nine in well under half a quarter with Davenport and junior Will Travis contributing seven and six points respectively during



second quarter action.

The third quarter was pretty much a standoff with the Lions increasing their lead by two points to 50-39 until a three points play and steal and basket by Davenport during the final 38.5 seconds got the Indians within 50-44 through three quarters. Davenport scored eleven of thirteen Indians points during the quarter after having provided thirteen points the first half.

A Davenport basket half a minute into the fourth quarter had the Indians within 50-46 but a 7-0 Hebron run seemed to have the Lions in control at 57-46 at the 5:31 mark. A baseline drive and reverse layup by Benson and a coast to coast run by Davenport had the Indians within 57-50 at 5:01 and Davenport matched a Lions basket at 4:30 for a 59-52 score.

A Hebron basket at 3:51 had the Lions seemingly in control again but the Indians went on an 8-0 run highlighted by three for four free throw shooting and two field goals by Davenport with the Indians knocking on the door with just a 61-60 deficit at 1:42. The Lions put back an air ball at fifty nine seconds for a 63-60 lead and two free throws by the Lions followed one by Moss for a 65-61 Hebron advantage at 28.6 seconds.

Davenport drove to the basket for a field goal at twenty two seconds for just a 65-63 Indians deficit and the Lions committed an inbounds turnover at 19.3 seconds, giving the Indians possession. Junior Trent Bradshaw then sank a trey at twelve seconds for a 66-65 Indians lead but the Lions sank two

free throws at 8.4 seconds for 67-66 lead which held up for a Hebron victory when a late Indians trey attempt bounced off the rim. When the smoke had cleared, Davenport had scored fifteen more points in the fourth quarter, giving him a total of twenty six in the second half.

Davenport led the Indians in scoring for the game with a career high of 39 points with other scoring leaders being Travis with 6 points and the quartet of Benson, senior Evan Berrong, Bradshaw, and Moss with 5 each. Six different Indians contributed at least one assist with Davenport also leading this category with 2. The Lions were led in scoring by seniors Caden Luke with 18 points and Will Warbington with 14. A three game winning streak by the Lions came to an end on Saturday night in a home court 72-65 loss to Prince Avenue Christian School, leaving them with a 6-3 Region 8A record.

Lakeview Academy 81, Indians 56

The good news for the Indians during the first quarter against Lakeview Academy on Saturday was that they scored a significant nineteen points but the difficult news was the visiting Lions including six treys among thirty points for a 30-19 lead by quarter's end. First quarter highlights for the Indians included a field goal and trey by senior Zach Davenport and Will Travis for just a 15-12 deficit at the 3:23 mark and a trey by junior Trent Bradshaw and a deuce by junior Brett Denton for a 27-19 deficit at six seconds but the Lions followed with a trey at the buzzer for the aforementioned

30-19 lead.

Two treys by Indians senior Bradley Benson matched three deuces by Lakeview for a 36-25 Lions lead at 5:16 of the second quarter but the Indians managed just two free throws by Davenport and a trey by junior Will Travis the rest of the quarter as the Lions led 50-30 at intermission. The Lions would lead 65-37 after three quarters on the way to an 81-56 victory with last half highlights by the Indians including six points by Davenport and four each by junior Brent Denton and senior Cole Ledford in the fourth.

The Indians were led in scoring for the game by Davenport with 16 points, Travis with 8, and Benson, Bradshaw, Denton, and freshman Kolby Moss with 6 each. Leaders in assists were Bradshaw, Davenport, and Ledford with 2 each. Lakeview scoring leaders were senior Jack Blackburn with 20 points, junior Blake McIntyre with 19, junior Arturo Varela with 12, and senior Noah Lindler with 10.

Indians Injury Update

Senior Logan Cowart has been sidelined by a stress fracture in his foot since December 16 but as of the newspaper deadline time, he is scheduled to have his foot x-rayed on Monday of this week with a follow up medical evaluation scheduled for Wednesday. Cowart has missed ten games through last week due to the injury and he will hopefully receive quick medical clearance to return to the team where he was averaging 15.1 points per game and leading his team in rebounding prior to the injury.



Students fill the TCMS gymnasium prior to Friday's Basketball Homecoming pep rally at Towns County High School. Photos by Lowell Nicholson