

Towns County Sports

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Indians get resounding home victories over Lakeview and Fannin, falter at PAC

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County Indians varsity basketball team was served well by youth when it enjoyed the ecstasy of an historic home court victory over the senior laden Lakeview Academy Lions on Tuesday of last week before enduring the agony of an overwhelming defeat in Bogart at the hands of a likewise senior laden Prince Avenue Christian School team on their senior night on Friday with both being Region 8A games. The Indians then recovered most impressively on Saturday on their home court by breaking open a close game for a resounding victory over Class AAA Fannin County, giving them a 2-1 record for the week.

The Indians improved their overall record to 10-13 while finishing the week with a 3-5 record in Region 8A with two region home games scheduled for this week against Tallulah Falls on Tuesday and Athens Christian on Friday. They will play in the Region 8A Tournament next week in Commerce with seedings and dates and times to be determined after all region games are completed this week.

Senior Trent Bradshaw missed all three games for the Indians for the week due to an ankle injury sustained in a prior game at Commerce with sophomore Peyton Barrett stepping forward and contributing extensive and very capable support off the bench.

There is great significance in the Indians' victory over Lakeview in multiple ways. First of all, the victory ended a Lakeview eight game winning streak with the Lions' last loss having been by just a 60-59 score to Region 8AAAAA power Gainesville in the Lanierland Tournament way back on December 28. Further, the win by Gainesville over Lakeview was the third in a still continuing 11-1 run for the Red Elephants with the loss being by just a 78-77 score in overtime at region foe Lanier High School in Sugar Hill.

But there is a much bigger accomplishment to report. It was incredible to learn that the Indians' win snapped a fifty game winning streak for Lakeview in regular season play against fellow Region 8A teams. That is correct as the last previous loss during regular season play for the Lions to a region opponent was to Hebron Christian Academy in their final regular season game way back on February 6,



Aidan Berrong fires away from downtown vs Lakeview Academy. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

2015 by a 65-60 score.

The Indians actually came close to interrupting the fifty straight Lakeview wins early in the streak when the Lions were forced to use a trey and five for six free throw shooting the final 1:40 of the game for an 8-2 finish in overcoming a 54-52 Towns lead in a 60-56 victory.

As a matter of clarification, Lakeview did lose in the semi finals of the 2015 region tournament to Athens Christian by a 90-55 score and to Hebron by a 44-40 score in last year's region tournament semi finals with these being the only two Lakeview losses to region opponents between February 6, 2015 and the Indians' win last week. The Lions won the 2017 and 2018 region tournament titles. With their head coach suspended due to the ejection during the loss to the Indians, the Lions went on to lose their second regular season game in a row by a 75-66 score to a potent Riverside Military team at Lakeview on Friday.

Indians 95, Lakeview Academy 83 – After Lakeview Academy opened the game with a deuce and a trey for a 5-0 lead in the first minute of play and matched a deuce by sophomore Aidan Berrong for a 7-2 lead at the 6:15 mark, the Indians dominated the remainder of the quarter and the start of the second.

By the end of the first quar-

ter, the Indians had completed a 19-6 run with the Lakeview points coming on a pair of treys in rallying for a 21-13 Towns lead with the quarter being highlighted by eight points by Berrong and seven by sophomore Kolby Moss. Berrong wasn't done with his early heroics, however, as he added a trey and a free throw by the 6:52 mark of the second quarter for a 25-13 Towns lead.

But here came the Lions as they struck for a 14-0 run ending on an old fashioned three point play and a trey for a 27-25 lead at the 4:20 mark of the second quarter. The Indians would match points with the Lions in forcing four ties with this being done twice on two free throws by senior Will Travis, a deuce by Travis, and a deuce by freshman Collin Crowder for a 33-33 tie at the 1:38 mark. The Lions would sandwich a pair of treys at 1:28 and at the buzzer around a field goal by Travis and two free throws by Berrong, however, for a 39-37 lead at intermission.

A putback basket by the Lions seventeen seconds into the third quarter had them ahead 41-37 but the Indians struck for a 17-6 run and a 54-47 lead by the 2:48 mark with highlights being eight points by Moss and six by Travis with four of Moss' points being at the foul line following two technical fouls and an ejection for Lions coach Todd Cottrell. Prior to the

technicals beginning at the 4:14 mark, the Indians had sunk sixteen free throws compared to eleven for the Lions with the score tied at 47-47 but with the Indian advantage at the foul line to expand significantly as the game progressed with the circumstances described in the following paragraphs.

After the Lions used a pair of treys in an 8-0 run for a 55-54 lead at 1:51, Moss used a pair of deuces and two free throws in outscoring the Lions 6-2 the final 1:22 of the quarter for a 60-57 Towns lead entering the fourth quarter. The Indians then continued the run for an overall 21-4 charge by opening the fourth quarter with a 15-2 run in holding a seemingly pretty comfortable 75-59 lead in less than three and a half minutes of playing time by the 4:36 mark. Travis included two field goals and two free throws for six points and was followed by Berrong with two deuces for four, freshman Collin Crowder with a deuce and free throw for three, and senior Brett Denton a deuce for the final two points in the run.

But as earlier in the game, here came the Lions as they included five treys and four for four free throw shooting in a 19-8 run interrupted by two free throws and a field goal by Moss, two free throws by Denton, and a deuce by Crowder, between just the 4:20 and 1:49 marks for just an 83-78 deficit. Moss would respond with

ten for twelve free throw shooting and Travis with two for two success at the foul line the final 1:25 in response to just a deuce and two free throws by the Lions in rebuilding the lead to 95-82 with the Lions reducing the final Indian margin of victory to 95-84 with a basket as time expired.

Moss included incredible record setting twenty three for twenty five accuracy at the foul line among his team leading 37 points and he had lots of help with other scoring leaders being Travis with 22 points, Berrong with 18, Crowder with 11, and Denton with 6. Leaders in assists were Berrong with 7 and Denton and Moss with 3 each while Travis led in rebound with 15 and was followed by Crowder with 7 and Barrett and Denton with 3 each.

Prince Avenue Christian School 81, Indians 44 – Two free throws and a trey by sophomore Kolby Moss and deuces by senior Will Travis and freshman Collin Crowder with each giving the Indians either a tie or lead in a quarter seeing a total of two ties and five lead changes and a 9-8 Towns County lead after one quarter gave the appearance of a battle for the ages at Prince Avenue.

But your reporter wrote a note late in the quarter stating that "BETTER shooting by either team..." with the continuing unwritten thought that after viewing ice cold shooting to that point by both teams either team could have had a large lead with even typical shooting success.

Unfortunately for the Indians, it was the Wolverines who accomplished a switch from ice cold shooting in the first quarter to red hot shooting in the second, with the aid of a few Indian turnovers giving them quick baskets, resulting in a 30-7 scoring explosion for a 38-16 lead at intermission.

The remainder of the game continued to be what might be chalked up as "just one of those games" that sometimes can't quite be explained when everything goes right for one team and wrong for the other as the Wolverines extended their lead to 66-30 after three quarters on the way to an 81-44 victory.

A few scoring bright spots for the Indians the remainder of the game included a trey and deuce by senior Brett Denton for five points and a deuce and two free throws for four in the third quarter by Travis and a trey and deuce by sophomore Aidan Berrong for five points and two deuces for four points by sophomore Peyton Barrett

in the fourth.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Indians were Berrong, Moss and Travis with 10 points each. Denton with 5, and Barrett and Crowder with 4 each while assists leaders were Berrong with 3 and Barrett with 2. Leaders in rebounds were Travis with 12, Crowder with 11, and Moss with 5.

Indians 67, Fannin County 39 – The Indians had quite a battle for nearly three quarters in Blue Ridge last month before breaking away for a 52-40 win and the return matchup in Hiwassee proved to follow a similar path with the Rebels hanging close until the midpoint of the third quarter when the Indians seized control of the game and led 52-35 after three quarters on the way to a 67-39 victory.

There were six ties and six lead changes before the midpoint of the second quarter with the Indians striking for a 31-25 lead they would not relinquish on back to back deuces by freshman Collin Crowder and a deuce by sophomore Aidan Berrong between the 3:27 and 1:30 marks with the score being 31-27 at intermission. Sophomore Kolby Moss contributed eight points and seniors Brett Denton and Will Travis four each in the first quarter action with the Indians holding a 20-15 lead and Moss adding the first five points of the second before the closing run by Crowder and Berrong.

Four different Indians put points on the scoreboard by the 5:05 mark of the third quarter but with the Rebels hanging close with just a 38-33 deficit on a deuce at 4:34. The Indians would use six straight points, however, between the 4:18 and 2:31 marks on a free throw by senior Will Travis, a deuce by senior Brett Denton, and a trey by Crowder for a 44-33 lead as a trigger for a 14-2 run for a 52-35 lead entering the fourth quarter.

They then used a 15-4 fourth quarter surge for a 67-39 victory. Last half scoring highlights for the Indians included ten points by Berrong, eight by Moss, six by Denton, and five by Crowder.

Moss led the Indians in scoring for the game with 21 points but he got lots of help from Berrong with 12, Crowder with 11, Denton with 10, Travis with 9, and sophomore Peyton Barrett with 4 while leaders in assists were Moss with 7 and Denton with 2.

Leading rebounders were Travis with 9, Crowder with 8, Moss with 6, senior Trevor Bradley with 4, and Berrong with 3.

Lady Indians fall short of victory during very challenging week

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County Lady Indians varsity basketball team faced a very challenging schedule last week as they hosted Region 8A leader Lakeview Academy of Gainesville on Tuesday and traveled to Prince Avenue Christian School near Athens on Friday to face the defending region tournament champion Lady Wolverines before returning home to face the Class AAA Fannin County Lady Rebels on Saturday.

Lakeview lost a couple of top seniors from last year's team but benefited greatly by the transfer of two top players from St. Francis, a Class A Private power school in Alpharetta who provided decisive production in a victory over the Lady Indians and they came up short in the final minute of play at Prince Avenue before Fannin County pulled away from the home standing Lady Indians on Saturday.

The losses left the Lady Indians with an overall 11-11 record but 5-2 in Region 8A with two region home games scheduled for this week against Tallulah Falls on Tuesday and Athens Christian on Friday. They will play in the Region 8A Tournament next week in Commerce with seedings and dates and times to be determined after all region games are completed this week.

As of press time the Lady Indians are at the fourteenth position in the statewide Power Points rankings with the top twenty four teams in the state to make the state playoffs and the top sixteen to host their first game in either the first round between teams ranking ninth through twenty fourth or in the second round when the top eight teams host the winners of first round games.

Lakeview Academy 62, Lady Indians 39 – The Lady Lions threatened to take complete control of the game at the beginning when they used three treys in a 13-1 start by the 3:53 mark of the first quarter before two treys by sophomore Vanessa Floyd by the 1:46 mark got the Lady Indians within 15-7. The Lady Lions used a deuce to finish the quarter with a 17-7 lead and opened the second quarter with two free throws and a deuce for a 21-7 lead at the 6:53 mark.

The Lady Indians used a trey by sophomore Kennedy Henson and two by senior Taylor Cornett for a 9-3 run and a single digits deficit of 24-16 at the 4:20 mark of the second quarter but Lakeview used two more treys in increasing their lead to 34-16 before a drive for two by Henson as time expired had the Lady Indians within 34-18 at intermission.

After the Lady Lions used four more treys in building a 50-23 lead after three quarters, the Lady Indians closed the gap a bit in the fourth quarter against, for the most part, Lakeview's front line players. Eight points by Henson and six by sophomore Jayce Young were highlights as the Lady Indians outscored the Lady Lions sixteen to twelve for a final Lakeview margin of victory of 62-39.

Scoring leaders for the Lady Indians for the game were Henson with 17 points and Cornett, Floyd, and Young with 6 each while Henson also led in assists with 3. Leaders in rebounds were Floyd with 6, Henson with 5, senior Kenzlee Denton with 4, and Cornett with 3.

Scoring leaders for the Lady Lions were junior Eliza Snyder with 16 points and junior Jackie Allen and freshman Joelle Snyder with 11 each. The Snyders are sisters and the previously mentioned transfers from St. Francis with Eliza holding a scholarship offer from Mercer University in Macon. The Lady Lions added a victory over Class AAAAA Johnson on Saturday and completed the week with an overall 19-4 record, including 7-0 and in first place in Region 8A.

Prince Avenue Christian School 45, Lady Indians 37 – The Lady Indians got off to a good start at Prince Avenue in claiming a 3-2 lead on a trey by sophomore Kennedy Henson at the 6:13 mark of the first quarter and a deuce and a trey by senior Kristen Byers and a deuce by junior Sophia Shook got them a 10-4 lead by the 2:16 mark. A putback basket by sophomore Vanessa Floyd then matched a Lady Wolverine deuce and a trey by senior Taylor Cornett as time expired more than matched another Prince deuce for a 15-8 Lady Indians lead at the end of the first quarter.

The Lady Indians then followed two Prince free throws with field goals by Byers and Henson and a second trey by Cornett for a 22-10 lead at the 5:58 mark of the second quarter. Henson then followed a Prince trey with a deuce for



Vanessa Floyd launches a three vs Lakeview Academy. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

a 24-13 Towns lead at the 4:52 mark and all seemed well for the Lady Indians but their first of two long scoring droughts followed.

They would go for more than ten minutes of playing time until the 2:25 mark of the third quarter when a free throw by Henson broke the scoring drought but not before the Lady Wolverines had used a 14-0 run and a 27-24 lead. Henson then matched a Prince deuce with two free throws and Floyd matched a Lady Wolverine trey at the eleven seconds mark for 32-30 Prince lead entering the fourth quarter.

An old fashioned three point play by Floyd and two free throws by Henson by the 6:21 mark got the Lady Indians back in front by a 35-32 score but a second long scoring drought raised its ugly head for the Lady Indians. The Lady Wolverines would struggle for points too but managed two deuces and a trey by the 3:09 mark for a 39-35 lead with the Lady Indians having plenty of chances but the ball refusing to fall in the basket until past the one minute mark.

At this point, Cornett stole an inbound Prince pass near mid court and took the ball to the basket for a deuce and just a 39-37 deficit at the forty one seconds mark. The Lady Indians sent Prince to the foul line at the 31.1 seconds mark with the first free throw being made for

a 40-37 score but when the second was missed, Prince claimed the rebound and went to the foul line again at 25.6 seconds with the same results of making the first for a 41-37 lead, missing the second, and claiming the rebound. This time they made two free throws at 20.6 for a 43-37 lead and added two of four more attempts for a 45-37 victory.

Henson led the Lady Indians in scoring for the game with 12 points with other leaders being Cornett and Floyd with 8 each and Byers with 7. Leaders in assists were Henson with 3 and Byers with 2 while leaders in rebounds were Henson with 11, Shook with 4, and Floyd with 3. Prince Avenue was led in scoring by senior Janie Henderson with 15 points and freshman A G Vandagriff with 10.

The Lady Wolverines would fall by a 45-42 score at Athens Academy on Saturday, leaving them with a 12-10 overall record and like the Lady Indians 5-2 in the region for a tie for third place. Athens Academy finished the week with an overall 15-6 record, including a 6-1 region record for second place behind Lakeview Academy with the region loss being to the Lady Indians.

Fannin County 51, Lady Indians 38 – The Fannin County Lady Rebels got a 2-0 lead just

thirty two seconds into the game and would lead for the entire game with the exception of an 8-8 tie but with the Lady Indians in hot pursuit until the Lady Rebels pulled away in the fourth quarter for a 51-38 victory.

The Lady Rebels took 4-0 and 8-2 leads with the only interruption being a field goal by sophomore Vanessa Floyd by the 3:32 mark of the first quarter but here came the Lady Indians. A deuce by sophomore Jayce Young and two free throws and a deuce by sophomore Kennedy Henson between just the 2:41 and 2:25 marks forced an 8-8 standoff.

Floyd sank two free throws following a deuce and a trey by Fannin for just a 13-10 Towns deficit at 33.4 seconds but the Lady Rebels sank a deuce just nine seconds later for a 15-10 advantage after one quarter.

A low scoring second quarter followed with senior Kenzlee Denton matching a Fannin deuce and Henson likewise matching a Lady Rebels trey for a 20-15 Fannin lead at 3:21. When the Lady Rebels sank a deuce at 3:02, Floyd more than matched it with a drive for two points and a long deuce for just a 22-19 Lady Indians deficit at fifty four seconds but a Fannin basket at forty one seconds gave them their same lead of five points

by a 24-19 margin as at the start of the quarter.

Fannin opened the third quarter with an 8-2 run for a 32-21 lead at 2:55 but senior Kristen Byers took a loose ball coast to coast. Floyd made a three point play, and senior Taylor Cornett drove to the basket for two points between the 1:53 and twenty nine seconds marks for just a 32-28 Fannin lead entering the fourth quarter.

The Lady Rebels would use 14-5 run by the 1:41 mark, however, for a 46-33 lead and go on to a 51-38 victory. Highlights for the fourth quarter for the Lady Indians included a deuce and a trey by Henson for five points and a trey by Cornett for three.

The Lady Indians were led in scoring by Henson with 14 points, Floyd with 13, and Cornett with 5 while Henson and Floyd led in assists with 3 and 2 respectively. Leaders in rebounds were Henson with 6 and Cornett and Denton with 3 each. The Lady Rebels were led in scoring by junior Morgan Holt with 17 points, sophomore Abby Ledford with 11, and senior Maleah Stepp with 10.

Some readers will no doubt recall the report of an incomprehensible number of fouls and free throws reported from the prior game between the Lady Indians and Lady Rebels in Blue Ridge with the officials calling that game seemingly having no clue as to what to consider a foul in a game between two teams employing all over the court clean defensive pressure. At any rate, the Rebels sank 22 of 47 free throw attempts and the Lady Indians 14 of 36 for a total of 83 attempts. This time, the two teams showed much better accuracy and a reasonable number of attempts with Fannin again having an advantage but sinking 10 of 18 attempts while the Lady Indians were a perfect 9 for 9.

Fannin County, as one of the smallest Class AAA schools in the state, completed the week with just a 7-16 record but with such noteworthy successes as having defeated Region 7AAA foe Lumpkin County 56-48 at Lumpkin and losing to them by just a 55-50 score at Fannin.

Lumpkin has gained notoriety by losing by just a 48-42 score to region leader Greater Atlanta Christian at Lumpkin and then pulling a major upset over GAC by a 61-57 score in Norcross.