

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Lady Indians soar past Lanier County, reach State Sweet 16

By Jerry Kendall
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It just doesn't get much better than the precision used by the Towns County Lady Indians varsity basketball team in rolling by a 76-46 score past Lanier County of Lakeland from way down in South Georgia near Valdosta in the first round of the 2019 Class A Public state championships.

The resounding victory gives the Lady Indians a 14-12 record against a very challenging schedule while Lanier County falls to 12-14 with the loss which ended the season for the Lady Dawgs.

The victory by the Lady Indians qualifies them for a Sweet Sixteen appearance in the state tournament. They travel on Thursday of this week to Calhoun County which is located about 70 miles south of Columbus and about forty miles west of Albany. Game time is set for 5:30 pm at Calhoun County High School which is located at 363 Manry Street NE in Edison.

The winner of the game at Calhoun County will advance to the Elite Eight round of the state tournament and face the winner of a game between Wilcox County and Bowdon on either Tuesday or Wednesday of next week so readers may need to be in touch with the school, players, or other fans to learn if the Lady Indians advance to this game as next week's newspaper won't reach readers until late Tuesday or Wednesday with not enough time to attend a distant game.

For those planning to attend the game, the most direct and simplest route is to take Interstate 85 southward from Atlanta to Interstate 185 near LaGrange and follow I-185 southward to Exit 1A where it ends south of Columbus. From there, take US Highway 27 southward to Cuthbert and then Georgia Highway 216 southward to Edison.

This will be the Lady Indians' second time to face Calhoun County as the Lady Cougars, with a 19-8 record, traveled to Hiawassee for the first round of the 2013 Class A Public State Tournament with the Lady Indians taking an 83-73 victory on their way to their third State Final 4 appearance in just 14 years.



Coach Hunnicutt continues to coach up his players as the Lady Indians run out the clock in the final minutes of Friday's playoff victory. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

The Lady Indians then faced Calhoun's best player from that 2013 game the next year when they traveled to Randolph-Clay where she had transferred along with another transfer from Eufaula, Alabama, with the two newcomers combining for 38 points in a 62-48 victory by Randolph-Clay over the Lady Indians on the way to the 2014 Class A Public State Championship.

Some TCHS followers traveled to Calhoun County two years ago when the Indians fell short of victory against the Cougars who were on their way to a state runnerup trophy.

Lady Indians 76, Lanier County 46 – The Lady Indians got an early 4-0 lead they would not relinquish on a free throw by sophomore Vanessa Floyd at the 6:45 mark of the first quarter and a deuce and free throw by sophomore Kennedy Henson by the 5:54 mark and they used a 12-2 run between just the 4:01 and 1:26 marks to extend a 4-3 lead for a 16-5 advantage which became 16-7 at quarter's end.

Three deuces by Floyd and treys by junior Sophia Shook and senior Taylor Cornett accounted for the Lady

Indian points in the 12-2 run.

After the Lady Dawgs matched an early second quarter deuce by Floyd with two free throws for an 18-9 score, the Lady Indians struck for twelve straight points on three treys by Henson and one by Cornett between just the 7:15 and 5:09 marks for a 30-9 Towns lead and a trey and free throw by Shook and a deuce by Henson had the Lady Indians leading 36-11 at the 3:28 mark.

The Lady Dawgs rose up after that to use two deuces before and a deuce and two free throws after a trey by senior Kenzlee Denton for a 39-19 deficit at 1:24 only to have Floyd and senior Kristen Byers sink the Lady Indians' ninth and tenth treys of the half at the 1:13 and fifty seconds marks for a 45-19 Towns lead which became 45-23 at intermission.

The Lady Indians would sink five more treys the last half for a total of fifteen in the game as they led 62-34 after three quarters on the way to the 76-46 victory.

Floyd contributed seven points in the third quarter and four in the fourth while Cornett sank two treys in the third and

one in the fourth, Henson added four points in the third and two in the fourth, Byers sank her second trey, and a deuce by freshman Emily Vargas for her first varsity points interrupted a 6-2 Lanier finish which reduced the Lady Indians' biggest lead of 74-40 to a final margin of 76-46.

When the dust had cleared, six different Lady Indians had combined for the fifteen treys with Cornett leading the way with five and followed by Henson with four, Byers and Shook with two each, and Denton and Floyd with one each.

Scoring leaders for the game were Floyd with 23 points, Henson with 20, Cornett with 15, Shook with 7, and Byers with 6 while six different Lady Indians contributed at least one assist with leaders being Cornett with 8, Henson with 5, and Floyd with 4 according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

Eight different Lady Indians entered the rebounding column with leaders being Denton and Henson with 8 each, Floyd with 5, and Cornett with 3.

Tynasja Sirmans, Lanier's 6-3 sophomore, led the Lady Dawgs in scoring with 23 points and senior Gracie Brunel, who entered the game with a 27.4 points per game average, followed with 16.

As a footnote, the Lanier

County boys, who are led by the same coach as the Lady Dawgs, traveled to Dooly County on Saturday night and met the same fate as the Lady Dawgs, although in a close battle, when they lost by a 49-47 score.



Kennedi Henson drives strong to the hoop. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Indians sophomore Kolby Moss has a season to remember

By Jerry Kendall
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Those who have attended Towns County Indians basketball games this year are not likely to be surprised to read that Kolby Moss has truly had a season to remember with some details of especially noteworthy accomplishments to be provided in the following paragraphs.

500 Points in a Season

– Recognition of Towns County Lady Indians and Indians for reaching 1,000 career points has been done for decades but TCHS sophomore Kolby Moss accomplished something that is even less common in his team's last game game of the season against Riverside Military Academy in the Region 8A Tournament.

That accomplishment is reaching a total of 500 points in a single season and the event is even more remarkable for Moss as he is considered very likely the first Indian sophomore to reach this total and he is certainly the first non senior since 1955. And he won't turn sixteen years old until March 9.

With quite a number of score books missing, it is impossible to state for certain that no one has ever reached this total as a sophomore but it is your reporter's opinion after sixty years of closely following TCHS basketball, including a number of years as scorekeeper and reporter and research of prior activity, that '64" Indians legend Bob Bryson would be the only one who may have reached this total as a sophomore in 1954.

Bryson is the only Indian known to have reached 500 points as a junior, during the 1955 season with that scorebook being available, with just five other Indians known to have reached the total in sixty four years between Bryson's and Moss' accomplishment. It is interesting that Bryson did not reach the landmark total as a senior as Carol Shook rose up to



join Bryson in another noteworthy accomplishment as the only known teammates to average twenty or more points per game in the same season for either the Lady Indians or Indians.

Lady Indians and Indians known to reach 500 points in a season were recognized publicly for the first time upon the occasion late last season of senior Zach Davenport reaching the total but some who would be interested may have missed the listing so it will be provided again here.

Joining Bryson and now Moss in reaching the magic number for the Indians are seniors Bruce Wilson in 1962, John Nations in 1965, Eddie Rushton in 1975, Heath Hooper in 2005, and Zach Davenport in 2018.

Like the Indians, the Lady Indians have had just seven players known to have scored 500 or more points in a season with two reaching the magic total on two occasions and they are Bonnie Huggins (Nicholson) in 1952, Pat Hooper (Smith) in 1961, Amy Allen (Silvey) in 1985 and 1986, Brandy McNabb (Warren) in 2000, Blair Barrett (Burch) in 2005, Nicki Winn (Kendall) in

2008 and 2009, and Stephanie Patton in 2013.

A confirmation of the rarity of a TCHS player reaching 500 points in a single season is established by comparing the fact that just the seven Lady Indians and seven Indians identified above are known to have reached that total as compared with the fact that twenty one Lady Indians and thirteen Indians are known to have reached a career total of 1,000 points.

Free Throw Excellence

– A very important related aspect of Moss' season to remember just as remarkable, in your reporter's view, as reaching 500 points as a sophomore is his success at the foul line, both from the standpoint of drawing fouls resulting in free throw attempts, and the stunning percentage he made.

For the season, Moss sank 177 of 213 free throw attempts for an 83.1 percentage rarely seen at the high school level but especially so for the large number of attempts and a most noteworthy success rate when done at the college and professional levels. For example, if Moss were playing in the prestigious NCAA Divi-

sion II Peach Belt Conference which includes our own Young Harris College, his 83.1 percent success rate at the foul line would place him sixth in the conference, just 0.8 percent away from third place.

One particular game stands out just as much as the season long excellence with that being as part of an historic victory over Lakeview Academy in the Towns County gym when the Indians ended a fifty game winning streak in regular season games against region opponents by the Lions.

Among Moss' 37 points scored in that game were 23 of 25 accuracy at the foul line for 92.0 percent success with a large portion of this success resulting from the Lions' strategy of sending Moss and other Indians to the foul line in an effort to overcome a sixteen points Towns lead that proved unsuccessful in a 95-84 Indians victory.

In your reporter's view once again, there seems in view of close observations and research already mentioned by your reporter that there is no chance but that the 83.1 percent season wide success rate set an overall TCHS

record and the twenty three free throws made in one game set a school record for the Indians. Margie Gibson (Hooper) continues to hold the Lady Indians single game free throw record when she sank 24 of 29 attempts under the very different half court rules in effect during the 1968 season with every free throw being needed in an 82-81 Lady Indians victory.

There have been no record setting type free throw percentages from the 2012 season until now so interested readers may want to look at two pretty extensive articles revealing much TCHS free throw research in the Towns County Herald Archives on the Internet at www.townscountyherald.net.

One of these articles provided then current coverage of Eryn Cochran sinking 19 of 20 free throw attempts in a game against Dawson County and the other is an unedited reprint of an article covering 17 of 17 free throw shooting by John Allen against Banks County during the 2000 season. A lot of other free throw accomplishments by TCHS Lady Indians and Indians are also

included in these articles. The referenced articles can be found by clicking on the Archives link and then on Sports Page 1 of the November 30, 2011 issue.

Kudos to Teammates

– With basketball being a team sport, Moss would of a certainty agree that he would not have reached 500 points this season without the dedicated play of his teammates. This season has been a special enjoyment for your reporter and expressed by others in viewing the great teamwork of both the Lady Indians and Indians in some very memorable successes against very formidable opponents.

And the outstanding free throw shooting by Moss was accompanied by also top notch work at the foul line by his teammates. It has been most noteworthy and rare for individual Lady Indians and Indians to have as much as a seventy percent and above success rate at the foul line through the years but this year's Indians as a team sank 395 of 565 free throw attempts for 69.9 percent accuracy.

Examples include 26 for 30 accuracy by the Indians in a game against Athens Christian when three of their first five attempts being missed, 42 for 52 overall in the previously mentioned Lakeview Academy game with Moss' teammates sinking 19 of 27 attempts, 23 for 28 success in a game against Riverside Military Academy, and 22 for 27 in a game against Commerce.

The unique presence of Moss actually being responsible for three of the five misses against Riverside and two of the five against Commerce emphasizes the capabilities of his teammates in those two games.

In summary, congratulations are extended to Kolby Moss for a season to remember and to his teammates who were instrumental in his success in reaching 500 points and provided a large part of overall great success for their team at the foul line.