

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Lady Indians win two of three games, finish third in Region 8-A Public

### Towns County visits Central of Talbotton in Tuesday's opening round of State Tournament

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**Commerce** - The Towns County High School Lady Indians varsity basketball team took wins in two of three games in last week's Region 8-A Public tournament in Commerce for a third place finish in the seven-team tournament.

This was the same third place finish as in regular season play behind the state's top ranked Class A Public Lake Oconee Academy and second place Commerce.

The Lady Indians defeated Washington-Wilkes on Tuesday in qualifying for not only the region tournament semifinals but also for the Class A Public state tournament which begins this week. For the third time this season, the Lady Indians came face to face with Commerce in the region semifinals on Thursday and as in the two regular season games they used a rousing late game rally against the Lady Tigers but fell eight points short of victory this time.

The Lady Indians had fallen short by just two points in Commerce and by three points at home in regular season play before facing the Lady Tigers for the second time on their home court in the tournament. The loss to Commerce sent the Lady Indians to the consolation game on Friday as they faced Greene County for third place in the tournament and for seeding for the state tournament and they broke away the last half from a one point lead at intermission for a decisive victory.

The higher seeded state tournament teams host early round games with the Lady Indians traveling to Central of Talbotton High School down near Columbus at 5 p.m. on Tuesday of this week for first round action. Most if not all readers will receive this newspaper too late to attend this game but any who see the information and desire to go should check with Towns County Athletic Director Jim Melton or Lady Indians Head Coach Brian Hunnicutt to learn about limited availability of tickets due to Covid procedures at the school. Information about this and other tournament games featuring TCHS teams can be found at the [www.townscountyathletics.com](http://www.townscountyathletics.com) website.

The Lady Indians' Region 8-A Public drew a tough assignment this year with all



Kennedi Henson and teammates battle for possession during the third period of Towns' win over Washington Wilkes. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

four teams facing a team from Central's Region 5-A which has had a team in the state championship game the last three years and won two state championships with Central finishing as the Class A Public state runnerup last year.

Central of Talbotton is the second place team from the Region 5-A Public tournament with the winner of their game against the Lady Indians seeing action again on Friday or Saturday of this week against the winner of a game between Georgia Military of Milledgeville, the first place team from Region 7-A Public, and Bowdon, the fourth place team from Region 6-A Public. The date and location of this game will be determined following completion of the first round games. The third round of the tournament will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week and the fourth round will follow on Friday and Saturday of next week.

The Lady Indians hold a 10-11 record as they enter the state tournament with a record of 10-5 against region opponents when combining regular season and region tournament play while facing an ultra challenging schedule both within and outside their region.

A large number of games have been played against state ranked teams and other strong opponents as detailed in previous articles and with some very interesting information below following the coverage of the game against Commerce.

There were Lady Tigers in every direction for the Lady

Indians last week as all three of their opponents are known as Lady Tigers so any mentions of Lady Tigers within the summaries of all three games is accurate.

**Lady Indians 59, Washington-Wilkes 40** - The Lady Indians followed a Washington-Wilkes free throw at the 7:36 mark of the first quarter for their only lead of 1-0 with an 8-0 run on two baskets each by seniors Vanessa Floyd and Kennedi Henson on the way to an 18-5 lead by quarter's end. Floyd finished the quarter with eight points and Henson added a trey among seven while sophomore Sarah Shook contributed a trey for the remaining Lady Indian points in the quarter.

The Lady Indians used treys by Henson and senior Jayce Young and a trey and a deuce by Floyd in extending their lead to 29-12 by the 5:03 mark of the second quarter but the Lady Tigers completed the quarter on a 7-2 scoring run for just a 31-19 Lady Indians lead at intermission.

A long two point basket by the Lady Tigers just eleven seconds into the third quarter got them within 31-21 but Shook matched the deuce at 7:15 and the Lady Indians were on their way to a 15-3 third quarter finish for a 46-24 lead entering the fourth quarter. Career thousand points scorers Floyd and Henson continued their powerful games with six points each during the quarter.

Floyd, Henson, and Young each contributed early fourth quarter baskets for a 52-27 Towns lead which became

59-32 on a pair of deuces by freshman Laura Mauldin and a trey by sophomore Tabitha Barnes by the 1:40 mark before the Lady Tigers finished on an 8-0 run the final minute and a half for a 59-40 Lady Indians victory.

Scoring leaders for the Lady Indians were Floyd with 21 points, Henson with 20, and the trio of Laura Mauldin, Shook, and Young with 5 each while leaders in assists were Floyd with 7, Henson with 4, and the trio of sisters Abby and Laura Mauldin and Shook with 2 each. Leaders in rebounds were Henson with 8, Laura Mauldin with 7, and Abby Mauldin with 6 while leaders in steals were Henson and Shook with 4 each.

The Lady Tigers were led in scoring by junior Jordyn Welborn with 17 points and sophomore Kiariah Smith with 11. The Lady Tigers completed their season with just a 2-15 record but with four losses and one victory being by forfeit due to Covid issues.

**Commerce 45, Lady Indians 37** - After struggling to put points on the scoreboard during the early minutes in an early season game at Commerce and later on their home court but rallying to near victory at the end of each game, the Lady Indians returned to Commerce for the semi final round of the region tournament.

The Lady Tigers opened the scoring with a trey for a 3-0 lead just twenty seconds into the game but three for four free throw shooting by senior Vanessa Floyd got the Lady Indians a tie at the 6:27 mark and a trey by senior Kennedi Henson had them within 8-6 at the 3:05 mark of the first quarter.

A basket by sophomore Sarah Shook then matched a deuce by the Lady Tigers at the 2:37 mark with the Lady Indians hanging close in the early going of this game with just a 10-8 deficit but a Lady Tigers trey had them ahead 13-8 at quarter's end and they opened the second quarter with a trey and a deuce for a quick 18-8 advantage.

A trey by senior Jayce Young got the Lady Indians within 18-11 at the 6:21 mark of the second quarter but the Lady Tigers finished on a 7-3 run for a 25-14 advantage at intermission. The Lady Tigers then extended their lead to 37-22 despite two free throws and two treys for eight points by Floyd in third quarter action.

The first four and a half minutes of the fourth quarter saw both teams struggle mightily to put points on the scoreboard with the Lady Tigers holding just a 2-1 advantage during the period of play for a 39-23 lead before the Lady Indians embarked on a third last ditch rally in three games against the Lady Tigers.

Two free throws by Floyd at the 3:26 mark triggered a flurry of Lady Indian treys with one by Shook, two by Young, and one by junior Emily Vargas accounting for a 14-5 Towns run in barely more than three minutes of playing time for just a 44-37 deficit with 23 seconds left to play. And Shook came up with a quick steal but the Lady Indians couldn't put additional points on the scoreboard with the Lady Tigers sinking a free throw with 14.3 seconds on the clock in holding on for a 45-37 victory.

Floyd led the Lady Indians in scoring for the game with 14 points and she was followed by Young with 9, Henson and Shook with 5 each, and Vargas with 4 while leaders in assists were Henson with 5 and Floyd with 2. Leading rebounders were Floyd with 10, Henson with 7, and Young with 4 while leaders in steals were Floyd with 5 and Henson with 3. Scoring leaders for the Lady Tigers were senior Bryanna Sanders with 16 points and junior Carson Hobbs with 13.

The Commerce Lady Tigers went on to fall to Lake Oconee Academy, the top ranked Class A Public team in the state by the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* (AJC), in the region championship game by a 54-36 score but with the game having been much more competitive than the final score would indicate.

The Lady Tigers were within single digits well into the fourth quarter before the Lady Titans extended their lead significantly with deadly free throw shooting.

The Lady Tigers have an overall 16-10 record after just a 2-8 start with four of those losses being by five or fewer points against higher classification schools. Included was just a 47-44 loss to Elbert County, the top ranked Class AA team in the state by the AJC and the Region 8-AA champions with a 21-2 record.

The Lady Tigers followed the 2-8 start by winning

13 straight games, including the two previously mentioned two and three point victories over the Lady Indians, before falling twice in their final three games, one in regular season and the other in the region finals, to region foe Lake Oconee Academy, the state's top ranked Class A Public team by the AJC with a 23-0 record.

**Lady Indians 52, Greene County 32** - It was a game of striking contrasts for the Lady Indians in their consolation contest for third place in the region against Greene County. After taking two very convincing victories in regular season against the Lady Tigers, the Lady Indians encountered a tough battle the first half in this contest.

They got off to a promising start on a pair of deuces by senior Kennedi Henson wrapped around a trey by senior Jayce Young for a 7-0 lead at the 4:55 mark of the first quarter but points became hard to come by against very effective defense by the Lady Tigers who used a 10-3 run between the 4:17 mark of the first quarter and 5:34 of the second for a 10-10 standoff.

A trey by senior Vanessa Floyd at the 2:18 mark got the Lady Indians a 13-10 lead but the Lady Tigers got a trey of their own for a 13-13 tie at the 1:51 mark and two free throws got them their only lead of the game of 15-13 at 1:38. Perhaps the deficit aroused the Lady Indians as a field goal by Floyd at 41 seconds and a free throw at 0.7 seconds by senior Abby Mauldin got the Lady Indians a 16-15 lead at intermission.

The final three TCHS points in the second quarter were the start of a massive 21-0 scoring run in barely more than four minutes of playing time as the Lady Indians seized a 34-15 lead at the 4:25 mark of the third quarter. A sudden 8-0 scoring run by the Lady Tigers between the 3:53 and 1:52 marks got them within 34-23 but a basket by freshman Laura Mauldin got the Lady Indians off on an 8-3 third quarter finish in just 1:36 of playing time for a 42-26 lead entering the fourth quarter.

The Lady Indians continued their dominance by opening the fourth quarter with a 10-2 run for a 52-28 lead at the 3:07 mark with the Lady Tigers scoring the final four points for a 52-32 Lady Indian victory. Floyd and Henson each provided 14 points during last half action with Young being the other leader by including a trey among five points.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Lady Indians were Henson with 21 points, Floyd with 19, and Young with 8 while leaders in assists were sophomore Sarah Shook with 4 and the quartet of Floyd, Henson, Abby Mauldin, and Young with 2 each.

Leading rebounders were Henson with 5 and Abby Mauldin and Young with 4 each.

The Lady Indians had an enormous number of 34 steals with leaders being Henson with 9, Floyd and Shook with 8 each, and Abby and Laura Mauldin with 3 each.

The Lady Tigers completed their season with a 6-13 record with sophomore Chris'tia Hilsman leading the scoring against the Lady Indians with 27 points.



Vanessa Floyd (15) and the Lady Indians open State tourney action on Tuesday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson