

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Lady Indians advance to Elite 8 in GHSA Tournament

By Jeremy Foster
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Staff Writer

Last week, the Towns County Lady Indians Basketball Team fought hard to secure a spot in the Elite 8 round of the Georgia High School Association Class A Division II State Championship Playoffs.

The quarterfinal match-up occurred after press time on Tuesday, Feb. 28, at 6 p.m. in Clinch County, way down state near the Georgia/Florida line. If victorious, the Lady Indians will play in the semifinal round of the tournament on Saturday, March 4.

Their tournament success last week began with a home game win against Christian Heritage of Dalton on Tuesday, Feb. 21, with a score of 49-38. They kept the momentum going with another win over Chattahoochee County, also at home, on Friday, Feb. 24, earning a 66-57 victory.

Against Chattahoochee, junior Laura Mauldin netted 12 points, 11 rebounds (a double-double), one charge, and one assist; junior Breelan Sievking, 18 points, 5 rebounds, 3 assists and 2 steals; sophomore Kaleigh Beaver, 9 points and 10 rebounds; senior Sarah Shook, 8 points, 6 rebounds and 4 assists; and senior Tabitha



Coach Shea Taylor and the seventh-ranked Towns County Lady Indians celebrate the program's first Elite Eight berth since 2014 following a 66-57 victory over Chattahoochee County in the GHSA Class A-Div. II Sweet 16. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Barnes, 8 points, 4 rebounds and 3 steals.

"Great team effort overall, with a lot of girls contributing," Girls Head Coach Shea

Taylor said. "We played a complete game, and even though it was very physical, that did not slow us down.

"(Defeating Chatta-

hoochee) was a huge win for this team. We had a magnificent home crowd, and we are so thankful for the support of this community."

The Lady Indians have had an amazing season, going 11-1 in Division 2 Region 8A and 21-8 overall – not to mention their ascension to the Elite

8 round of the state tournament in their pursuit of championship glory for the 2022-23 school year.

Go Lady Indians!

Indians look ahead after season wraps in state tourney

Floyd headlines Towns County's All-Region selections

By Jeremy Foster
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Towns County Indians Basketball finished up a stellar season with an away game loss to Greenforest Christian Academy on Wednesday, Feb. 22, coming up short 80-37 in the first round of the Georgia High School Association Class A Division II State Championship Playoffs.

"On the season, I am just immensely proud of the boys," Indians Head Coach Brian Hunnicutt said. "We had a momentous year with 17 wins, especially with having to fight some injuries with some key players during the second half of the season.

"We got beat by the No. 1 team in the state, and our boys fought tooth and nail with them. But they persevered and finished being tied for Second Place in the region for the regular season.

"I also want to recognize two of my seniors, Grant Ingram and Lane Rouse, who from ninth through 12th grade have been in the program all four years and making it to the playoffs every year, and that is a huge accomplishment.

"More than anything, it was just such an excellent group of kids that are so easy to coach and give their absolute best efforts night in and night out, and on top of that they are simply good kids.

"And their parents are just wonderful. They are incredibly supportive and overall raise great young men. So, although the season did not end the way we wanted it to, I could not be more satisfied."

Looking ahead, Hunnicutt said he is excited to be coaching a veteran group next year.

"We will have around seven to nine returning juniors and seniors that have had varsity experience with the likes of (sophomore) Julian Mo-



Grant Ingram is one of the Indians' four outgoing seniors from this season. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

sely, (junior) Kade McConnell, (sophomore) Eli Newberry, and (junior) Walker Underwood," Hunnicutt said.

"And we are certainly going to miss our four seniors that are leaving who have done a lot for the program: Ingram, Rouse, Jon Dockery and Chance Schmeltz," he continued. "Ingram showed so much growth during his time in the program and really became a Senior Captain and defensive stalwart and adding scoring in for us.

"Dockery and Schmeltz joined the team for their first (and only) year of basketball, and they brought tremendous mettle to the team that we needed."

That being said, Hunnicutt reiterated that the Indians will have a lot of returning production for next year "and an awesome group of younger guys, too, who are stepping up to join those veteran players."

"We have a chance to have an incredibly special season next year with everybody to continue bettering our

program," he said.

Hunnicutt highlighted amazing accomplishments by junior Zane Floyd, who has been named the 8A Region II Division Player of the Year thanks to amassing statistics such as averaging 18 points per game (450 total), in addition to close to 7 rebounds, nearly 4 assists and 2 steals per game.

"With us coaches not being allowed to vote for our own players," Hunnicutt said, "it was just a sign of great respect for how others thought of him as well.

"And for (junior) Tanner Cunningham being named Second Team All-Region, I am very proud of that. He's such an unselfish player and plays so hard, and he earned that award because this year he made major improvements that helped his offensive game.

"Tanner has an engine that doesn't quit. He is completely selfless. I am very proud of the improvement he made this year. He became a big time player for us."

Cunningham averaged

9.6 points, 5 rebounds and 1.6 assists per game. He led the team in free throw and 3-point shooting percentage.

"Then we have Rouse being named All-Region Honorable Mention. He had a tremendous year and overcame so much by playing this year on a torn meniscus, showing so much toughness and grit.

"(Junior) Gage Rogers was also named All-Region Honorable Mention. He stepped up from JV to be a big scoring threat for us on the varsity level and a great rebounder.

"And finally, (junior) Connor Chastain was recognized by the other coaches as well. He was such an elite defensive player and is deadly with a 10 to 15-foot shot.

"Overall, I am so proud of all of these young men. Not only were they recognized by their peers for outstanding effort on the court, they are all even better off the court. My job is easy when you get to coach kids like these young men. So, I'm just extremely proud of all those guys."

Put them in, Coach: Indians Baseball ready to play



Junior Zane Floyd returns as the staff ace. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

By Jeremy Foster
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The time has finally arrived for Towns County Indians Baseball to step up to the plate for the start of the 2022-2023 season.

Games started after press time this week on Monday, Feb. 27, at Lumpkin County, and the schedule continues at a rapid pace with six additional away games through Saturday.

On Wednesday, March 1, the Indians will play a doubleheader against Peach County down near Savannah, with JV at 4 p.m. and Varsity at 6 p.m.

Then on Thursday, March 2, Towns will face Jenkins High School for more doubleheader away action starting at 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, March 4, will see the Indians facing off against Jenkins once more at 11 a.m., following by a game versus Bryan County at 1:30 p.m.

Towns County will play its first home game of the season on Tuesday, March 7, against Hiwassee Dam out of North Carolina – another doubleheader – with JV play starting at 4 p.m. and Varsity at 5:55 p.m.

"Most of the state has already started playing," Baseball Head Coach Shannon

Floyd said. "We were waiting for wrestling and basketball to be nearly finished up so we would have closer to 100% of our full team.

"We had 15 kids out for practice, whereas last year we only had five, so we've got quite a few kids that have moved up from the Middle School.

"It's good that we have a full Junior Varsity lineup and schedule, because we have a great chance to really build up the program for the next few years with a younger generation, and that is certainly going to help strengthen our future.

"In practice and training and going over things with the younger kids and the older, more experienced ones together, it is just a good balance.

"Our expectations are high this season; no one is going to give it to us. We must go out and work hard to earn everything and improve from where we were last year and not think that it is all just written in for us because the team is a little older now.

"We are extremely excited for this year and confident. You may not win every game, but you will always get better, faster and stronger, and I just want to invite the community out to enjoy some good spring weather and be ready to watch some baseball."

Go Indians!