

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Soccer: Lady Indians advance to first State Championship

### No. 5 Towns County stuns second-ranked LOA in penalty-kick shootout

By Todd Forrest  
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The Lady Indians pulled off PK thriller over Lake Oconee Academy on Friday night in Greensboro to move on to this week's Class A State Championship game at McEachern High in Powder Springs.

**Lady Indians 0 (4), LOA 0 (1)** - Through 100 intense minutes of the rematch between No. 5 Towns and No. 2 Lake Oconee Academy, the two squads were scoreless.

"It was a back and forth game with each team controlling possession for a period of time and creating scoring chances in the process," Towns County head coach Clay Livingston said. "Our girls were amazing. They fought through injuries, bloody noses and leg cramps to keep it a 0-0 game through two halves and two 10-minute OTs." Livingston elected to kick

first during the PK shootout to put the pressure on the home team and his decision paid off when Sarah Shook found the net and keeper Laura Mauldin denied LOA's first attempt.

Halie Arrowood connected for a 2-0 advantage but LOA kept pace on its second try.

Abby Gardella made it 3-1 and Mauldin stopped LOA's third PK. As a result, Alana Stowers stepped to the penalty mark with an opportunity to send Towns County to the State finals.

Stowers calmly blasted her shot just under the crossbar to set off the celebration.

"I can't stress enough how amazed I am at these girls and their ability to persevere and overcome adversity," Livingston said. "They are warriors, enough said."

**Lady Indians 2, Hawkinsville 0** - Earlier in the week, Towns traveled to Hawkinsville and took a 2-0

Elite-Eight victory.

Jayden Taylor recorded a brace via assists from Emma Lallement and Gardella.

"Hawkinsville played a very defensive formation that limited our scoring chances," Livingston said. "We did a great job of controlling possession and the game though. The game never really felt in doubt."

After knocking off LOA, the Lady Indians' revenge-tour continues with Aquinas in Tuesday's State Championship game.

Top-ranked and undefeated Aquinas owns a 3-1 home win over Towns County. Aquinas also picked up a 1-0 regular-season win over LOA, who defeated Towns 3-0 in March.

Aquinas punched its ticket to the finals with a 7-0 win over McIntosh County.

Tuesday's final kicks off at 5 p.m. at McEachern High School.



Towns County celebrates its win at Hawkinsville. The Lady Indians jumped three spots to No. 2 in the latest Class A (Div. II) rankings. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Baseball: Indians sweep Mt. Zion, host Chattahoochee Co. in Sweet 16

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Towns County baseball (20-10) will host a second-round playoff series following the Indians' two-game sweep of Mt. Zion-Carroll and Chattahoochee County's upset of top-seeded Glascock County.

Towns and Chattahoochee will open the best-of-three series with a doubleheader on May 4.

**Indians 13, Mt. Zion 3 (GM 1)** - Towns County used a five-run first before junior starter Kade McConnell walked the tightrope through a potentially disastrous three-run second inning.

McConnell settled in and retired the next eight Eagles and the Indians bats opened up some breathing room with two runs apiece in the second and third, then a three-spot in the fourth. Towns County ended the game via a run in the fifth to induce the 10-run mercy rule.

McConnell turned in a 2-hit day at the plate with a walk and one RBI. Zane Floyd scored three times and knocked in a pair during a 2-for-3 performance. Layne Rouse plated two and scored while going 2 for 2; Caleb Berrong drove in three with a pair of runs; Stone Chauncey walked three times, doubled and scored.

Seth Gillis finished 1 for 2 with an RBI, a stolen base and two runs. Ian Wood scored three times and swiped a bag. Cale Kirby scored, plated a run and



Seth Gillis slides safely into home during Towns County's five-run first inning vs. Mt. Zion-Carroll. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

stole a base.

Towns put up five in the first after McConnell worked around a leadoff walk in the Eagles' half of the frame. Floyd opened the Indians' first with a base hit and Gillis reached on an error. An error off the bat of Berrong scored two runs, Chauncey took a free pass and McConnell loaded the bases with a base hit

to center.

One batter later, Kirby made it 3-0 with a run-scoring groundout, then Rouse roped a two-out, two-run single to center.

McConnell's second-inning balancing act started after Mt. Zion used an error, a walk and a single to load the bases with nobody out. He proceeded to fan the next batter on three

pitches but plunked the ensuing hitter on 3-2. The Eagles' second came around courtesy of a sacrifice fly, and with two down, consecutive hit-batters cut the lead to 5-3 before a pop-up ended the inning.

During Towns' second, Floyd reached on an error and scored on Berrong's sac fly. Gillis walked and later came around

on a passed ball.

Gillis' two-out RBI single in the third extended the margin to 8-3. Floyd scored later in the inning to hand McConnell a six-run cushion.

The junior needed only nine pitches to navigate the Mt. Zion fourth, then McConnell helped his cause by dropping a base hit into left field that plated Berrong. Floyd opened up a nine-run advantage via a two-run, two-out single -- scoring Wood and Kirby.

Mt. Zion tried working a little two-out magic in the fifth, but McConnell stranded two Eagles when he induced a fly-out to center.

Chauncey's one-out double sparked the Towns County fifth, but after a McConnell walk, Mt. Zion took the force out on Kirby's grounder to third.

With two away, the courtesy runner Wood moved up to third before coming home on an error.

**Indians 12, Mt. Zion-Carroll 1 (GM 2)** - With the two squads flipped on the scoreboard, Towns County trailed for the first time during the series after giving up a run in the bottom of the first.

After the Eagles used a double, a single and a passed ball to grab an early lead on Floyd, the Indians answered in the third when Connor Chastain's two-out

base hit up the middle to tie the game at 1-1.

Floyd tossed a 1-2-3 bottom half, then escaped a second-and-third, one-out jam in the fourth via a strikeout and a greedy baserunner attempting to score on a wild pitch.

Towns County grabbed the momentum with three in the fifth courtesy of two-out RBI singles from McConnell and Berrong, who later scored on a passed ball.

An infield single and two errors put Mt. Zion in business in the Eagles' half of the fifth, but Floyd worked his magic by inducing a pop-up to shallow left and punching out the ensuing hitter on three pitches.

The inning's first pitch nicked Cunningham, and Floyd drew a walk, allowing Chastain to plate both runners via a double into deep center.

Mt. Zion failed to score after putting the first two runners aboard to start the bottom of the sixth. The scoreless sixth closed the book on Floyd at five hits, one earned run, 10 Ks and no walks over six.

Towns County broke things open with six runs in the seventh, taking advantage of four walks, two singles and a hit batter. Cunningham drew a bases-loaded walk, Kirby scored on a wild pitch, Chastain and Gillis each took a free pass with the bags full, Berrong added a sac fly and Mason Barrett bunted home the 12th run.

Matthew Chastain worked a perfect seventh to seal the win.

Floyd finished with four runs on three walks; Chastain drove in four during a 3-for-3 game. McConnell went 3 for 4 with an RBI and one run; Cunningham scored twice and plated another while going 1-of-2 at the dish. Berrong went 1 for 4 with an RBI and one run; Chauncey walked twice; Gillis walked, scored and knocked in a run.

Rouse finished 1 for 4 with one run; Braydon Barrett and Kirby both scored once.

Floyd swiped three bags; Braydon Barrett and Cunningham added one steal apiece for the Indians, who finished 5-for-8 in the stolen-base department.

**Up next:** The Indians are making their first Sweet 16 appearance since 2017 and are hosting the second round for the first time since the 1990s.

Thursday's first pitch vs. Chattahoochee County at Larry Kimsey Field is slated for 3:30 p.m., with the second game at 6 p.m. The third game will be Friday, if necessary.



Stone Chauncey leads off first base during Towns County's 12-1 victory in the second game on Friday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson