

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Soccer: Lady Indians finish as 2023 State runner-up

### Top-ranked Aquinas pulls away from Towns in OT of championship game

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**Powder Springs** - The Lady Indians fell 5-2 in overtime to the top-ranked team in Class A, Aquinas, during last week's Class A (Div. II) State Championship game hosted by McEachern High School.

"I'm proud as can be of what we've done, it's amazing," head coach Clay Livingston said. "In my 27 years of coaching, I've never seen anything like what these girls have done. I hate they didn't get to host a playoff game despite being one of the two best teams in the state. I understand it is what it is, but it's just frustrating for these girls."

Towns County fell into a 1-0 deficit in the 17th minute of last Tuesday's State Championship contest when Caroline Jackson put undefeated Aquinas on the board. The edge would hold until the second half when Towns called upon a pair of late equalizers from Sarah Shook and Alana Stowers to force the extra session.

The Lady Indians' first goal came courtesy of Shook



The Lady Indians accept their second-place trophy after the game. Photo/Penny Ledford

during the 63rd minute - knotting the score at 1-1 - via an assist from Abby Gardella.

With only two combined goals through 75 minutes, Towns and Aquinas matched that total over the final four-plus minutes of regulation, beginning with a score from Aquinas' Landry Washington in the 76th.

Stowers responded in the 78th with an unassisted long-

distance goal, resulting in an extra 20 minutes to determine a state champion.

Jackson's second goal put Aquinas out front during the first 10-minute overtime session. In the final OT, Elle Morris' score mounted a 4-2 edge during the 92nd minute.

Aquinas tacked on one more in the 99th.

"To be honest, in overtime, I think we just ran out

of gas," head coach Clay Livingston said. "We played three games in eight days, two of them going to OT, and traveled 944 miles and spent 20 1/2 hours on a bus in those eight days. I don't want to sound like I'm making excuses, but the body can only handle so much."

Pick up a copy of next week's *Towns County Herald* for a season wrap-up interview with Coach Livingston.



Senior Sarah Shook scored the equalizer with 17 minutes remaining. Photo/Penny Ledford

## Baseball: Indians rally into Elite Eight; visit No. 5 ECI on Wednesday

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The Indians (22-11) advance to this week's Elite-Eight round after surviving a three-game series vs. Chattahoochee County, storming back from a 7-1 deficit in the third-and-final game on Friday at Larry Kimsey Field.

**Indians 8, Chattahoochee Co. 7 (GM 3)** - Trailing 7-1, Towns County got four in the second and three in the third before senior Seth Gillis kept the Panthers off the board over the final five innings.

During the seventh inning, Chattahoochee County moved the tying run into scoring position with two away when senior right fielder Layne Rouse charged in to make a backhanded stab on a sinking line drive that sent the Indians into the Class A quarterfinals.

Down 5-1 in the second, Gillis entered with two aboard and allowed two runs to come around on a two-run error. The senior started off clean in the third and immediately stopped the bleeding, silencing the Panther bats the rest of the way.

At the plate, Gillis finished 2 for 4; McConnell went 2 for 3; Cunningham, Floyd and Cale Kirby each ended the day 1 of 2.

**Indians 13, Chattahoochee Co. 3 (GM 1)** - A seven-run sixth inning allowed Towns County to bring game one to an early end on Thursday afternoon at Larry Kimsey Field.

Clinging to a 6-3 edge in the middle of the sixth, the Indians got to Chattahoochee reliever Carter Trim in the bottom of the inning following five solid frames from southpaw starter Alex Prevost.

Junior Kade McConnell went the distance for Towns, allowing three hits, one earned and striking out nine on 88 pitches.

Tanner Cunningham opened the game-ending sixth with a walk before the Indians sent 12 batters to the dish, eventually walking it off on Gillis' RBI single.

Floyd followed Cun-



Towns County celebrates its game-three victory over Chattahoochee County on Friday afternoon in Hiawassee. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

ningham with a free pass of his own and Gillis loaded the bags with a base hit up the middle. Connor Chastain dropped a single into right field that scored two, Berrong reached on a hit-by-pitch and Stone Chauncey made it 9-3 via a sacrifice fly.

An error off the bat of McConnell brought home another run and Rouse extended the margin to 12-3 on a two-run error. Cunningham singled and Floyd wore a 2-2 pitch to load the bases for Gillis.

Gillis ended 2 for 4 with two runs; Cunningham went 3 for 3 with a walk, two doubles, two RBIs and two runs. McConnell plated a pair during a 2-for-4 day. Floyd finished 1 for 3 with a walk and a run; Connor Chastain drove in two during a 1-for-2 game; Rouse doubled, scored and plated another run while finishing 1 for 4. Caleb Berrong added a run; Chauncey drove in one; Braydon Barrett and Morgan Walker scored two runs apiece.

Chattahoochee took advantage of two errors to grab

an early 1-0 lead in the second, but Towns County answered with two in the bottom half courtesy of Rouse's double and one of five Panther errors.

Towns' third error made it 2-2 in the third but two-out hits from McConnell and

Rouse opened up a 6-2 advantage through three.

A two-out single by Chattahoochee sliced the deficit in half at 6-3 in the sixth, but Towns County put up a 7-spot in the bottom of the inning to end game one at 13-3.



Seth Gillis earned the win in game three. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

hits over six innings, striking out five without issuing a free pass. Parkes fired a two-hit shutout with seven Ks and a pair of walks.

Chattahoochee got on the board in the third following a leadoff double and a one-out single. A triple to open the fourth bumped the margin to 2-0 when an RBI groundout brought home the runner from third.

Floyd opened the sixth with a base hit and stole second before he was stranded in scoring position. Chauncey walked to begin the seventh, but two strikeouts and a groundout ended the game.

Rouse delivered Towns' only other hit of the night. Floyd also reached on an error and swiped two bags. Gillis earned a free pass and Cunningham hit into a fielder's choice.

**Up next:** Towns County visits No. 5 Emmanuel County Institute (ECI) for a twin bill on Wednesday, May 10 at 3 p.m. If necessary, game three will be Thursday at 3 p.m.

The Towns-ECI winner will face either No. 3 Schley County or fourth-ranked Wilcox County on May 16-17.

Meanwhile, Region 8-A's top-seeded and ninth-ranked Washington-Wilkes travels to No. 2 Charlton County on the opposite side of the brackets.



Connor Chastain greets Zane Floyd at home. Photo/Lowell Nicholson