

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Football: Indians end season at Washington-Wilkes, earn 3-6 record in 2020

By Chad Stack  
Towns County Herald  
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Washington - The Boys in Blue traveled to Washington, Georgia, on Friday, Nov. 20, for their last game of the 2020 season.

Towns County was coming off a heartbreaking 27-34 loss at home to Social Circle to head into Friday's game with a 3-5 season record.

The Washington-Wilkes Tigers were 7-1 on the season and 3-1 in the 8-A Public Region prior to the matchup, putting them in second place regionally just behind Commerce.

Sitting in the fifth spot behind Social Circle for the region standings was Towns County, which needed fourth-place positioning for a chance at the playoffs.

A win against Social Circle two weeks ago would have placed the Indians in that fourth spot to give them a chance of continuing their season.

The Indians won the coin toss in Wilkes County last week and elected to defer until the second half, giving the Tigers the ball to start



The Indians take the field one final time during the 2020 season. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

game.

Their Big Cat counterparts got into the end zone straight away, making a touchdown pass to take an early 7-0 lead in the first quarter.

The Tigers defense forced the Indians to a quick three-and-out, and the Indians had to give the ball right back to the Washington-Wilkes of-

fense.

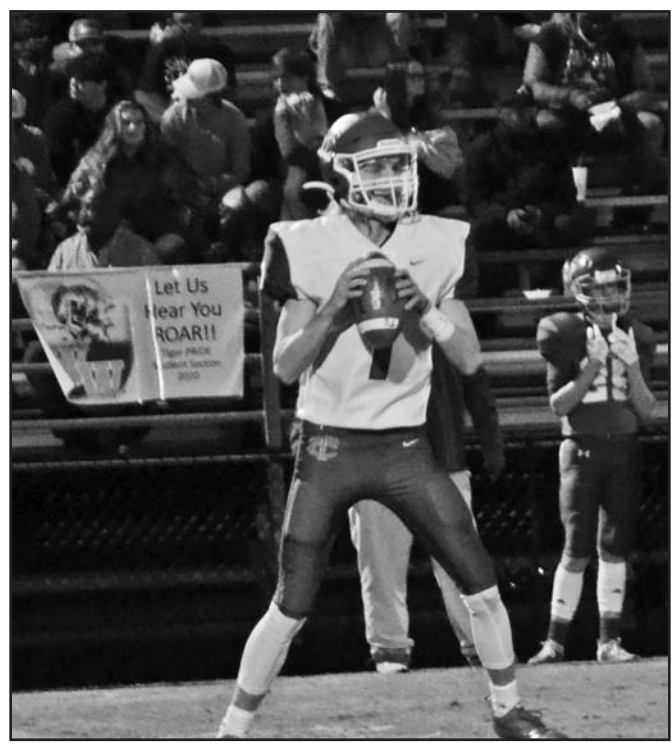
With just under four minutes left to play in the opening quarter, the Tigers scored again with a rushing touchdown to take a 13-0 lead over the Indians.

Facing a fourth-and-short in the first, the Indians went for it but were unable to convert, turning the ball over

on downs to the Tigers.

Washington-Wilkes found the end zone again to take a 20-0 lead over Towns County to end the opening quarter of Friday's matchup.

The Tigers ended up taking a 34-0 lead over the Indians heading into halftime, and the Boys in Blue started the second half with the ball but turned it



Mason Thomas scans the field. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

right back over to the Tigers.

Towns County struggled throughout the night against the Tigers defense and unfortunately was unable to generate points in the second half, though the Indians defense did hold the Tigers to just one more score, in the third quarter.

The Indians ended their 2020 season Friday with a 0-41

loss at Washington-Wilkes to finish with a 3-6 overall record.

All told, the Boys in Blue were thankful to have been afforded the opportunity to play this season, which was challenged, like so many other places around the globe, by COVID-19.

## Indians, Lady Indians enter 2021 with high hopes in new-look Region 8-A

By Todd Forrest  
Towns County Herald  
Sports Editor

The Indians and Lady Indians open the 2020-21 season on Tuesday, Nov. 24 at next-door neighbor Union County, beginning with a 5:30 p.m. girls' tip-off.

A year ago, the Indians started five underclassmen and finished 18-9 with a Battle of the States Christmas championship on their resume. Usually, those credentials alone would be more than enough to launch expectations through the roof, but as we've learned, 2020 has been anything but usual.

Towns County received some good news early in the year when the GHSA's Reclassification Committee separated public and private schools at the region level, immediately thrusting Indians basketball

into the conversation for the Region 8-A Public title in 2021.

Then, as the school year got underway, Towns County picked up three all-region caliber additions to its basketball program when North Carolina pulled the plug on fall prep sports.

Headlining the pickups is 6-foot-8 post Jake McTaggart from Hayesville, NC. Also making the jump across Lake Chatuge is wing Hayden McClure, who joins his former Yellow Jacket teammate in Hiwassee.

Rounding out the Smoky Mountain Conference transfers is former Andrews, NC point guard Kabe Ellis.

The three newcomers will assemble on an Indians squad that features an already-stocked cupboard, anchored by four-year starter Kolby Moss, who led the way with 23 points

a game as a junior. Senior Aidan Berrong is coming off a junior season that would have made him a standout at most north Georgia programs, averaging 15.2 points, 4.2 rebounds and 3 assists a night.

The same could be said for junior Collin Crowder, who poured in 13.3 points and 7.2 boards nightly.

Additionally, junior Kyle Oakes led the team at 4 assists a game, to go with 6 points and 2 steals. Other returners to watch are seniors Colton Day, Luis Quijada and junior Reace Hampton.

A sophomore starter on a Union County state playoff squad in 2018-19, Day joined the Indians at midseason in 2019-20 following a semester at Robbinsville, NC. Day would average just under 4 points and 4 boards in 17 games a year ago.

As for Quijada, the se-

nior guard finished the 2019-20 season at 2.2 points and 1.5 rebounds per game.

Another newcomer to watch is freshman Zane Floyd, who scored 18 points in the scrimmage at Tallulah Falls.

The Indians' non-regional schedule includes Class AA's Fannin County, Rabun County and Union County. Towns will also face Athens Academy, Copper Basin, TN, Rabun Gap and Tallulah Falls.

In region play, the Indians and fifth-ranked Lincoln County appear to be the early favorites in 8-A Public. However, Social Circle is coming off a 20-win season after placing second in Region 8-AA. The Redskins' methodical, slow-paced style of play can induce headaches on any given night.

Meanwhile, the Towns County Lady Indians are still without the services of do-

everything senior Kennedy Henson, who underwent her second ACL surgery last season. However, head coach Brian Hunnicutt expects Henson to receive the go-ahead to practice in the coming days and believes she could see game action in December.

The Lady Indians must also replace guard Sophia Shook from last year's 9-15 squad that finished 4-5 in region play with victories over Providence, George Walton, Commerce and Athens Christian.

Until Henson's return, the Lady Indians will continue relying on fellow seniors Vanessa Floyd and Jayce Young to help carry the load.

Others to watch are seniors Abby Mauldin and Maci Walls, juniors Peyton Calvert and Emily Vargas, along with sophomores Sarah Shook, Tabitha Barnes and Morgan Pierson. According to Hun-

nicutt, Towns County will also call upon its freshmen for important minutes this season.

On the Region 8-A girls' side, Lake Oconee Academy looks like the early frontrunner, opening eighth in the initial sandyspiel.com Class A Public rankings.

Behind LOA, the region is wide open with Greene County and Lincoln County combining for only four wins last season. Washington-Wilkes and Social Circle weren't much better with eight and seven wins, respectively.

Commerce, who finished 15-11 a year ago but went 3-6 in Region 8-A, appears to be the preseason favorites to challenge LOA. The Tigers return five of their top six scorers from last year, along with their top two in rebounds, assists and steals. Commerce also knocked off LOA 56-49 in Greensboro to tip-off the 2019-20 season.

## Towns County splits scrimmage at Tallulah, opens at Union on Tuesday

By Jerry Kendall  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Tallulah Falls - The Towns County High School Lady Indians and Indians varsity basketball teams traveled to Tallulah Falls last Tuesday for closed to the public preseason scrimmages against a different band of home standing Lady Indians and Indians.

Missing for the Lady Indians was senior Kennedy Henson who is awaiting medical approval for return from last year's surgery for a torn ACL while senior transfer from Andrews Kabe Ellis was awaiting medical clearance from having a meniscus procedure. By week's end, Ellis was cleared for play with Henson hopefully to be approved soon for perhaps a gradual and increasing return to game action.

Returning junior starters Collin Crowder and Kyle Oakes along with senior substitute Reace Hampton from last year's stellar Indians team were also missing along with newcomer senior Hayden McClure and newcomer junior Jake McTaggart who have transferred to TCHS from Hayesville due to continuing involvement with Indians football.

Tallulah Falls 49, Lady Indians 14 - The Lady Indians faced a tough season opening

assignment without primary ball handler Henson by aggressive man to man full court pressure for most of the game as they fell to Tallulah by a 49-14 score although displaying some bright spots within the game.

The situation of Henson's absence was compounded by the loss to graduation last year of outstanding ball handler Sophia Shook. And then the Covid virus especially prevented a normal offseason transition for the team through the loss of as many as twenty five games for the team during summer play for adjusting to the loss and addition of players with varying talents from one season to the next.

Although in your reporter's view the Lady Indians actually handled the ball quite well in making just a small number of turnovers in view of the intense pressure by Tallulah, it appeared that the brand new in game challenges of the unfamiliar ball handling chores reduced the Lady Indians' ability to concentrate on their other duties due to going directly to the presence of the new duties from last season to this season without the usual advantage of summertime game experiences.

Both teams got off to a cold start with Tallulah Falls leading by just a 5-0 score on

a deuce and a trey past the mid point of the first quarter. A trey by senior Jayce Young at the 3:35 mark got the Lady Indians within 5-3 and a deuce by senior Vanessa Floyd had them within 8-5 at 3:13 but Tallulah outscored the Lady Indians 5-0 the remainder of the quarter and 20-1 overall the remainder of the half for a 28-6 advantage at intermission and led 40-12 after three quarters on the way to the 49-14 victory.

Five Lady Indians entered the scoring column during the game with Young leading the way with 6 points while Floyd, senior Abby Mauldin, and Young each contributed 1 assist according to your reporter's unofficial tally. Tallulah Falls was led in scoring by sophomores Denika Lightbourne with 12 points and Veronaye Charlton with 10.

Indians 67, Tallulah Falls 66 - The Indians provided a very impressive performance at Tallulah Falls, leading for most of the game and surviving a long scoring drought at the start of the second quarter and a flurry of three points at a time on four treys and an old fashioned three points play by Tallulah in the final five minutes of the game in coming away with a 67-66 victory.

Tallulah Falls took an early 2-0 lead but treys by freshman Zane Floyd and senior Aidan

Berrong got the Indians leads of 4-2 and 7-4 which they held until Tallulah got a pair of leads during the second quarter scoring drought by the Indians.

The Indians held a 19-12 lead after one quarter with highlights during the remainder of the quarter including two deuces and a trey for seven points by senior Kolby Moss and Floyd adding a deuce and a second trey for a total of eight points in the quarter.

The Indians would go scoreless for nearly four and a half minutes at the start of the second quarter, however, with Tallulah edging ahead 21-19 at the 3:46 mark. But the Indians finished the quarter on an upswing with Moss giving them a 21-21 tie and his third of three baskets coming between the 2:35 and 1:06 marks giving them a 25-24 advantage.

Tallulah responded with a deuce for a 26-25 lead at fifty four seconds but a deuce by senior Colton Day got the Indians a lead of 27-26 they would not relinquish at thirty eight seconds with a deuce at four seconds by Floyd giving them a 29-26 advantage at intermission.

The Indians would use a trey by Berrong and a coast to coast run by Day for a 34-29 lead at the six minutes mark of the third quarter and then extend

just a 34-33 lead on treys by senior Luis Quijada and Day and a deuce by Berrong as they seemed to be taking control of the game by a 42-33 score at twenty two seconds but Tallulah would continue to challenge throughout the game.

The home standing Indians scored the final basket of the third quarter and the first of the fourth for just a 42-37 deficit with the Towns Indians responding with their biggest lead of the game of 55-44 on a 13-7 run at the 5:21 mark on treys by Moss, Day, and Berrong and deuces by Floyd and Berrong. But once again here came Tallulah as they included the aforementioned old fashioned three point play and one of the four late treys during an 11-2 run and just a 57-55 deficit at the 2:13 mark.

The Indians proved to be up to the task again, however, as Floyd sank a trey for a 60-55 lead at 1:53 and matched a Tallulah trey with his fourth of the game at 1:03 for a 63-58 Towns advantage. Moss would match a Tallulah deuce with two free throws for a 65-60 Indians lead at 22.3 seconds only to see a Tallulah trey more than match the free throws for just a 65-63 Towns lead at fourteen seconds.

Moss again sank two free throws at 10.3 seconds for a 67-63

lead which brought about a final score of 67-66 when the Tallulah Indians sank their fourth trey of the quarter as time expired.

The Indians placed four players in double figures in scoring for the game with Moss leading with 21 points and followed by Floyd with 18, Berrong with 13, and Day with 12 while Moss led in assists with 6 and was followed by Day with 4, Berrong with 3, and Quijada with 2 according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

It is quite noteworthy that five different Indians combined in sinking twelve treys in the game with excellent accuracy being present. Scoring leaders for Tallulah Falls were sophomore Devonte Allen with 24 points, 6'6" junior Gabe Keene with 17, and junior Sammy Davis with 12.

Unfortunately, fans planning to attend games this season need to be aware that seating will be limited by host schools on a game by game basis due to the presence of the Covid virus and social distancing requirements with little advice possible at present as to how fans can address this situation.

Hopefully better advice can be provided as the schools adjust to the requirements and issues can be addressed as the season progresses.