

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians cruise to 68-79 victory after leading by 24 to begin fourth

Four Indians score at least 14 points as Towns wins in Blairsville for the first time since January 2000

By Jerry Kendall
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Blairsville - The Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team traveled to Blairsville last Tuesday night for their only game of the week and built a large lead significant enough for a fourth quarter when not much going right for them and a rousing Union rally were not sufficient to threaten what turned out to be a 78-69 victory.

The Class A Indians extended their record to 2-0 with the win while the Panthers fell to 1-1 after getting an opening season 55-50 win at Class AAAA Gilmer.

Union County continues to qualify as a Class AA school based on enrollment but has opted to play at the Class AAA level for the next two years to avoid long trips to south of Athens for Region 8-AA games.

The first five minutes of the game were a real battle with Union taking four separate leads of two points but the Indians forcing ties each time with three of the occasions being on field goals by junior Logan Cowart.

The last of the tying field goals came at the 4:54 mark with Union then matching two free throws by junior Zach Davenport for a fifth and final tie of 10-10 at the 3:28 mark.

A trey by senior Major Moss at 3:14 got the Indians a 13-10 lead which they would extend by use of treys by seniors Will De Vries and Colton Shook and deuces by sophomore Will Travis and Davenport to hold a 23-16 lead by quarter's end.

The Panthers used three treys to advantage in matching the Indians' production for a 33-26 Towns lead by the 4:49 mark of the second quarter but the Indians exploded for a 16-4 finish for the quarter, including a 9-0 run the final 1:31, and a 49-30 advantage at intermission.

Davenport and De Vries each used a trey and three deuces in providing nine points each and Cowart added a deuce and two free throws for four points in leading the second quarter onslaught.

Six different Indians put points on the scoreboard in the third quarter with Moss leading with seven, including on an old fashioned 3-point play, and De Vries adding four as the Indians extended their advantage to 69-45 entering the fourth quarter.

It is sometimes difficult to maintain momentum with a large lead and perhaps that contributed to the aforementioned difficult fourth quarter for the Indians when they couldn't get shots that found the mark ear-



In a rivalry game, bodies aren't afraid to dive on the floor after every loose ball. The Indians out-hustled and outplayed Union in every phase of the game. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

lier to fall in the basket and the Panthers found some new life, seizing late momentum largely courtesy of accurate 3-point shooting.

Both teams actually struggled to put points on the scoreboard the first five minutes of the fourth quarter with the Indians holding a 72-52 lead.

That all changed the final 2:59, however, when the Panthers embarked on a 17-6 finish highlighted by four treys, including three the final 1:43 of the game, in reducing the final margin of victory for the Indians to 78-69.

Leading the scoring parade for the Indians for the game were De Vries with 20 points, Davenport with 17, Moss with 15, Cowart with 14, and Shook with 6 while Moss led with a whopping 11 assists and was

followed by De Vries and Shook with 2 each.

Cowart and Moss led in rebounds with 12 each with other leaders being De Vries with 8, Davenport with 5, and Travis with 4.

The Panthers were led in scoring by senior Lawson Baenninger and junior Crawford Colwell with 18 points each and junior Cole Dockery with 12. Baenninger missed significant playing time in the game due to foul problems.

The victory was the first for Towns County in the current Union County gymnasium that opened during the 2002-03 school year.

Looking ahead (by Todd Forrest): Up next for the Indians is another Region 7-AAA team, the Fannin County Rebels.

The unbeaten Rebels are coming off a first place finish in the ETC Tip Off Tournament where they took down Pickens County, Gilmer County, and Hiwassee Dam.

In the first game, they edged Pickens 74-66 before narrowly escaping Gilmer with a 56-53 win.

Finally, they took care of Hiwassee Dam 61-42.

The Rebels should provide the Indians with a favorable matchup as Gilmer lost to Union by five and Hiwassee Dam fell to Union by 30 in a scrimmage.

Based on the way Towns County handled the Panthers, the Indians should be the clear favorites over a team that, on paper, appears to be similar to Union County.

On Friday, Towns goes

back on the road when they open Region 8-A action with winless Providence Christian.

However their 0-4 record is a bit deceiving as most of their losses came to quality teams from AAA and AAAA.

North Hall, White County, and Galloway all routed Providence while Brookstone was a three-point loss.

The Storm are led by a pair of sophomores, Aldain Dorsey and Parker Trump, that combine for more than 30 points-per-game and are attempting to make Providence great again.

Dorsey is scoring just under 16 points-per and at 15 PPG, Trump isn't building any walls from throwing up bricks.

With just one senior that sees action for the Storm, and

the Indians relying heavily on juniors and seniors, the experience edge definitely belongs to Towns County, Friday's game will feature a stark contrast between youth and experience.

On Saturday, Towns will host Union in a rematch, who have Friday off. If Providence gives Towns County all it can handle, the Indians could be tested by a Panthers squad that's out for revenge with fresh legs.

If Towns sends Union home with a loss, that would mark the first time since 1995-96 that Towns County has defeated the Panthers in consecutive seasons.

An Indians win would also give Head Coach Rob Benson a winning record (3-2) vs Union County for his career.

Lady Indians fall at Union County; open region play on Friday

By Jerry Kendall
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Staff Writer

Blairsville - It was a difficult night last Tuesday for the Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team in their only game of last week at Union County as the Lady Panthers steadily pulled away for a 55-31 victory.

The Class A Lady Indians saw their record fall to 0-2 on the young season while the Class AAA Lady Panthers improved to 1-1 when combined with a 58-37 season opening loss at Class AAAA Gilmer.

Union actually remains eligible for Class AA based on enrollment but has opted to "play up" in Class AAA for the next two years to avoid long region road trips to south of Athens if remaining in Class AA.

Union jumped out to a 6-0 lead by the 5:40 mark of the first quarter with the Lady Indians able to stay close to the Lady Panthers for awhile on two free throws each by sophomore Kristin Byers and junior Madison McClure for a 6-4 score and on a field goal by McClure for an 8-6 Towns deficit by the 3:41 mark.

But the Lady Panthers closed out the quarter on a 6-0 run for a 14-6 lead by quarter's end.

Union then followed an early second quarter Lady Indian field goal by sophomore Erika Spano for a 14-8 score with an 8-0 run for a 22-8 lead which became 30-19 by intermission despite seven points by Byers on a trey and four for six free throw shooting and four points



The Towns County Lady Indians' Head Coach Jim Melton regroups his squad during the Union County game last Tuesday. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

by freshman Sophia Shook on a long deuce and two for two free throw accuracy.

The Lady Panthers extended their lead to 40-26 after three quarters and to a 55-31 margin by game's end with the last half highlight for the Lady Indians being a field goal in the third quarter and two more in the fourth for six points by sophomore Lexi Ledford.

Byers included a pair of treys among her team leading

12 points for the game with other scoring leaders being McClure with 7 points and Lexi Ledford with 6 while Byers, senior Kirsten Ledford, and Shook contributed 1 assist each, according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

The Lady Panthers were led in scoring by senior Ashley Fair with 15 points, freshman Kait McCarter with 13, and junior Bailey Daniel with 11.

Looking ahead (by Todd

Forrest):The Lady Indians host Fannin County on Tuesday.

After struggling in recent years, the Lady Rebels appear to be much improved as they were victorious in three overtimes over Hiwassee Dam, who drilled Union by 26 in a scrimmage.

They also suffered a one-point loss to Gilmer County, who routed Union by 22.

As for Providence, like the guys, they have struggled

against larger competition and currently have a 1-4 record to prove it.

They fell to Class AAAA's White County by 13 and Class AAA's North Hall by 15. Class AAA's Pace Academy took them out by 21

Providence lost a close one to Galloway and defeated Brookstone by 20.

On Saturday, the Lady Indians and Union County will tip-off at 6 p.m. with Towns

County looking put an end to their recent struggles with Head Coach David Tucker's Lady Panthers.

Union features just one senior and have been very streaky this season. They played their best game of the young season vs Towns but host Rabun County on Tuesday. An ugly loss to the Lady Cats and they could easily enter Hiwassee down and out, and ripe for the taking.