

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians fall to early RMA scoring surge; get victory with their own surge at Fannin

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

It was a split decision last weekend for the Towns County Indians varsity basketball team with decisive scoring runs deciding the winner as the Indians fell to Riverside Military Academy of Gainesville at home on Friday but rebounded for a hard fought victory at Class AAA Fannin County High School in Blue Ridge on Saturday while playing at Fannin without the presence of their powerful inside player Logan Cowart.

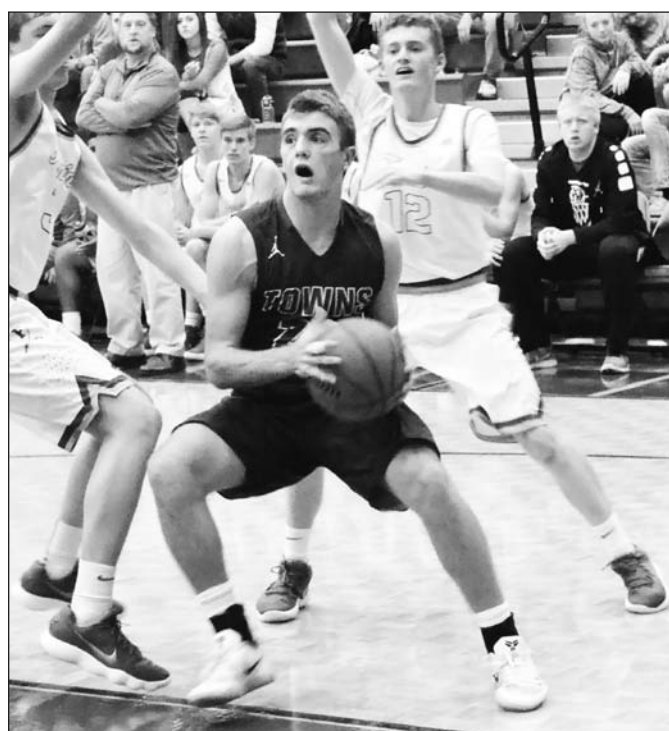
Cowart is being pursued for football by several colleges and universities and a Fellowship of Christian Athletes all star game held at Fannin County High School prior to the basketball games on Saturday served as a showcase for his talents.

He had an outstanding game but, unfortunately, sustained a freak injury to his foot in the final play of the game and missed the Fannin game due to what is hoped to be brief negative effects brought about by his injury. The Indians completed the week's play with a 5-3 overall record, including 2-1 in Region 8A.

Riverside Military Academy 84, Indians 62—As it turned out, the game against Riverside was actually decided in just over eleven minutes at the start of the game when the Indians were plagued with ice cold shooting after a ten days layoff since their most recent game as a result of two postponements due to snow and no game being scheduled for last Tuesday.

It seemed the Indians' basket had a lid on it at the start of the game with a large number of shots, especially on layup attempts, appearing ready to fall in the basket but finding a way to either bounce or roll off the rim.

Riverside had also gone ten days between games but the Eagles, on the other hand, displayed outstanding shooting



Zach Davenport goes up for two at Fannin County (left). The Indians in the early going. The Indians got a 3-0 lead on a trey by senior Zach Davenport just nine seconds into the first quarter but that would be their only lead in the game as Riverside tied the score with a trey just ten seconds later and used two more treys during a 21-3 run the remainder of the quarter for a 21-6 lead at quarter's end.

The Indians scored the first three points of the second quarter for a 21-9 score but the Eagles followed with an 8-0 run for an overall 29-6 run and a 29-9 lead by the 4:47 mark. The two teams would play on virtually even terms the remainder of the game with the Eagles outscoring the Indians by a 55-53 margin for the rest of the way.

The Indians did reduce the Eagles' lead to twelve points on a 9-2 run highlighted by a three point play, a trey, and two free throws by Davenport between the 1:43 mark of the second quarter and 7:25 of the third. A 7-0 Towns run between the 2:08 and forty five seconds marks of the third quarter highlighted by two field goals and a free throw by Davenport then had them within

54-40 and a field goal by junior Will Travis at 7:27 of the fourth quarter again had them within fourteen at 56-42 but that was as close as they would get.

The Eagles held a 79-61 lead at 1:23 of the fourth quarter before a 5-1 finish the final 43.7 seconds set the final score at 84-62.

Individual quarterly scoring highlights for the game included seven points by senior Logan Cowart and five by Davenport in second quarter action, fifteen by Davenport in the third quarter, and thirteen by senior Bradley Benson on four treys and a free throw in the fourth.

For the game, Davenport led the Indians in scoring with 26 points with other leaders being Benson with 13 points, Cowart with 8, and Travis with 7. Leaders in assists were senior Cole Ledford with 3 and Davenport and freshman Kolby Moss with 2 each while Travis led in rebounds with 5 and senior Caleb Clark followed with 4.

The Eagles were led in scoring by senior Will Eidson with 22 points, junior Isaac Teasley with 15, junior Trey



huddle during a timeout vs Riverside Military Academy. Photos by Lowell Nicholson

Greene with 14, and senior Jabari DePass with 11. The Eagles' hot shooting against the Indians would not continue on Saturday, however, when they fell on their home court by a 70-55 score to Tallulah Falls, a 75-73 victim of the Indians in their most recent prior game. Riverside finished the week with a 3-3 overall record, including 2-1 in the region while Tallulah completed the week with an overall 5-6 record and 2-2 in the region.

Indians 52, Fannin County 44— BLUE RIDGE - There were five ties and four lead changes at Class AAA Fannin County by the 1:45 mark of the second quarter, including an 11-11 standoff after one quarter and a 22-22 score at that 1:45 mark before the Rebels struck for a 7-0 run the final 1:29 for a sudden 29-22 lead at intermission.

First quarter highlights for the Indians included a field goal for a 4-4 tie by senior Evan Berrong and treys by junior Trent Bradshaw for a 7-7 tie and by senior Bradley Benson for a 10-7 Towns lead by the 2:53 mark. And second quarter highlights included field goals by senior

Cole Ledford for a 13-11 Towns lead, junior Brett Denton for a 15-13 advantage, junior Will Travis for a 17-16 Indians advantage, and senior Zach Davenport for the aforementioned 22-22 standoff.

The Rebels scored the first basket of the third quarter for a 31-22 lead and held a 34-26 lead on a trey at 4:20 only to be victimized by an extensive game ending Indians scoring run mentioned in the opening paragraph. The Indians finished the quarter on a 7-0 scoring run on a field goal by senior Cole Ledford and a three point play and a field goal by freshman Kolby Moss the final 3:36 for just a 34-33 deficit entering the fourth quarter.

A field goal by Denton at 6:58 of the fourth quarter got the Indians their first lead since Travis' basket at 5:12 of the second quarter and a Davenport trey at 4:20 got them a 38-37 lead it turned out they would not relinquish. Steals and field goals by Berrong and Berrong who completed a three point play on his had the Indians leading 44-37 with 2:02 on the clock.

And a field goal and two

free throws by the Rebels for just a 44-41 Towns lead at 1:31 were followed by two clutch free throws each by Moss at 1:17 and Bradshaw at 1:00 and a basket by Berrong at forty six seconds as the Indians held a 50-41 lead which became a 52-44 victory.

At game's end, the Indians had completed a 26-10 scoring run led by ten points by Moss and five each by Berrong and Davenport in barely more than eleven and a half minutes of playing time back to the 3:36 mark of the third quarter in rallying from an eight points deficit of 34-26 to the eight points victory.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Indians were Davenport with 14 points, Moss with 10, Berrong with 8, Bradshaw with 6, and Ledford with 5 while Davenport also led in assists with 5 and was followed by Ledford with 3 and Moss with 2.

Davenport led in rebounds as well with 10 and was followed by Bradshaw with 5 and Ledford with 4. The Rebels were led in scoring by seniors Payton Holt with 11 points and Joe Satchell with 8.

Cold shooting costly for Lady Indians in loss at Fannin County

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

BLUE RIDGE - With Region 8-A opponent Riverside Military Academy of Gainesville not having a girls team, the Towns County Lady Indians varsity basketball team was in action just one time last week, on Saturday at Class AAA Fannin County High School in Blue Ridge. The Lady Indians had given the Lady Rebels all they wanted and more too on the Lady Indians' home court just eighteen days prior when Fannin extended a 34-30 lead the final two minutes for a 42-35 victory but difficulty putting points on the board by the Lady Indians would allow the Lady Rebels to prevail by a 53-33 score this time at Fannin.

Fannin County 53, Lady Indians 33—The home standing Lady Rebels had been in game action two times, on Tuesday at North Hall and Friday at Dawson County, since the Lady Indians' most recent game eleven days prior at Union County. And the Lady Indians, like the Indians on Friday night struggled to put points on the scoreboard, actually throughout the game but especially in the early minutes, perhaps due in part at least to the long layoff.

The early scoring difficulty was perhaps no more prominent



Freshman Kennedy Henson defends the inbounds pass (left) and junior

than at the foul line where the Lady Indians have shown excellent accuracy in their prior games. On this evening, however, they sank just five of their first sixteen free throw attempts up to the 2:08 mark of the third quarter before sinking an excellent sixteen of twenty four attempts the rest of the way. It is interesting that one might expect the veteran Fannin team to display excellent free throw shooting but they sank just

thirteen of thirty four attempts for the game.

Turnovers proved to also be a problem for the youthful Lady Indians who faced a tall Fannin starting lineup featuring four seniors and a junior. The Lady Rebels sprang out to an 8-1 lead by the 4:36 mark of the first quarter and held leads of 13-5, 25-12, and 44-24 at the quarter breaks in taking the 53-33 victory.



Erika Spano attempts a first half free throw at Fannin County. Photos by Lowell Nicholson

The Lady Rebels pretty consistently added to their lead throughout the game but a few Lady Indian highlights can be presented. A trey by senior Madison McClure at the 5:02 mark of the second quarter got the Lady Indians within 15-8 and a trey by freshman Vanessa Floyd got them within 27-15 at the 7:15 mark of the third quarter. And the Lady Indians put together a 7-0 run in just thirty five seconds

near the end of the third quarter highlighted by three for four free throw shooting by junior Erika Spano and an old fashioned three point play by sophomore Sophia Shook.

Seven different Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard in the game with leaders being McClure and Shook with 8 points each and Floyd with 7 while Shook led in assists with 2. Leading in rebounds were fresh-

man Kennedy Henson with 6 and junior Kristen Byers and Floyd with 3 each. The Lady Rebels were led in scoring by 6'1" senior Hope Franklin with 15 points and 5'10" senior Makenzie McClure and junior Maleah Stepp with 9 each.

The Lady Rebels completed their week with a 5-4 record while the Lady Indians finished the week with a 2-6 overall record but 2-0 in Region 8A.

Towns County to host 24th annual Battle of the States basketball tournament

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The 24th annual Battle of the States Prep Basketball Tournament will be held next Wednesday, December 27 through Friday, December 29, in the Towns County High School Gym.

Eight games will be played each day, beginning at 10 am and continuing until around 10 pm. The Tournament has become a most respected sporting event, drawing interest from fans and teams over much of the Southeast, as evidenced by the fact that teams from six different states have made appearances during the first twenty three years the event has been held.

There have been just two changes in the lineup of teams from last year's tournament as Murphy (North Carolina) is replacing Swain County (North

Carolina) of Bryson City and the Darlington School (GA) of Rome girls are replacing Piedmont (Alabama) while the Piedmont boys will be returning. Joining the Murphy girls and boys teams and the Darlington girls in the tournament will be the boys team from Piedmont and the girls and boys teams from Hayesville (North Carolina), Hokes Bluff (Alabama), Lumpkin County (Georgia), Polk County (Tennessee), Union County (Georgia), and of course host Towns County (Georgia). Polk County and Towns County are the only schools to participate in every prior Battle of the States.

The Hokes Bluff Girls and Lumpkin County Boys are the two times defending Battle of the States champions with Hokes Bluff having defeated then two time defending champion Hayesville 36-21 and Lumpkin defeating defending champion Hayesville 46-43 in



the 2015 championship games. Hokes Bluff again defeated Hayesville by a 53-22 score and Lumpkin defeated Towns County 70-67 in the 2016 championship games.

The Towns County Lady Indians and Indians will face Hayesville on Wednesday, December 27, beginning around 7:00 pm, depending on the length of the earlier games with the Union County girls to face Darlington around 4:00 pm and the Union boys to face Piedmont around 5:30, with game times for all teams on Thursday and Friday depending upon the results of games from the previous day.

For many years, an annual edited and updated review of previous winners, details from some of the prior tournaments, and a look at some of the often stunning future successes of the teams and individuals who have played in previous tournaments has been provided

in the Herald. With a twenty three years tournament history, however, the articles have become so cumbersome, lengthy, and largely old news that they have been discontinued as of three years ago.

For newcomers to the area and visitors to the tournament who would like to view some of the history of the tournament and those who would like to refresh their memory, preview articles from prior years can be found by visiting the archives on the Towns County Herald website at www.townscountyherald.net.

Readers can click on the Archives link and then on the newspaper date usually nearest Christmas Day from 2009 through 2013 for information about the tournament which is usually included on both the front page and on the sports pages.

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