

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians get one win, just miss another in Region 8-A Tournament

By Jerry Kendall
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Athens - The Towns County Indians wound up with a split decision at last week's Region 8-A Tournament at Athens Academy in two games marked by potent scoring runs by the teams involved.

The Indians used an explosive three point scoring barrage the last half in breezing past George Walton Academy 61-47 on Monday.

They fell victim themselves, however, to red hot field goal shooting at the start and deadly free throw shooting by their opponent at the end of their twice weather delayed game against Athens Christian on Thursday after overtaking the Eagles near the end of the game.

The loss to Athens Christian ended an excellent season with a 12-14 record with several close losses to top teams for the quite young Indians, who are victimized by their isolated location in having their eligibility for a state tournament berth decided by a flawed system.

A Power Points system is used in determining whether they are eligible for the Class A Public Tournament by evaluating the season long outcomes for the Indians of just two games against a Class A public school, nine against Class AA through Class AAAA public, and twelve against Class A Private.

Their win against Polk County, Tennessee, and loss to Piedmont, Alabama, in the Battle of the States Tournament don't count in the evaluation as the outcomes of games against out of state teams are not considered in the Power Points system.

This is especially unfortunate for the Indians and Lady Indians as they must bypass playing numerous, mostly nearby, Class A Public schools in North Carolina with the nearest Class A Public schools in Georgia being far distant down near Augusta and a couple over near the Alabama state line.

In Classes AA through AAAAAA, eligibility for the state tournament is for the most part decided in region tournament play with the four top finishers from each region quali-



Junior Major Moss drives to the basket vs ACS. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

A few of the higher seeded teams in these regions actually receive a bye into the state tournament based on regular season play and other teams often qualify for the tournament by winning just one game in their region tournament.

Several solutions too lengthy to be addressed here could be explored to allow isolated Class A Public, and Private in some locations in the state for that matter, to have a more reasonable route to the state tournament than is present now.

It is especially unfortunate for a largely young team, such as the Indians this year, or one suffering regular season injuries to top players coming on strong at the end of the season to not have any possible means of making it to the state tournament other than winning a Region Tournament Championship.

Indians 61, George Walton Academy 47 - The Indians had a real home court battle with George Walton Academy in their only regular season game on January 30 and the battle continued for the first half in their Region 8-A Tournament opener last Monday at Athens Academy.

There were two ties and four lead changes during the first seven minutes of the first quarter but a field goal by Major Moss at for two seconds and a three point play by Adam Barrett at 4.8 seconds had the Indians ahead 19-14 by quarter's end.

Zach Davenport sank two treys and a deuce for eight first quar-

ter points for the Indians with Barrett adding an earlier deuce for five points and Moss a game opening deuce for a total of four points in first quarter action.

The Indians led, with the exception of a brief 22-22 tie, for more than four minutes at the start of the second quarter but there were three lead changes the final 3:49 when the Indians were victimized by three treys by the Bulldogs. They sank a trey for a 25-24 lead at that 3:49 mark and more than matched a deuce by Cole Ledford and a trey by Moss for a 29-25 Towns lead with two treys, the last as time expired, during the final forty seconds for a 31-29 lead at intermission.

It was then the Indians' turn to victimize the Bulldogs in a continuing rain of treys in the early minutes of the third quarter and actually throughout the half. Moss sank two treys by the 6:24 mark for a 35-31 Indian lead and the Indians responded to a Bulldog trey at 6:02 with a trey by Davenport, a tip in by Moss, and a trey by Barrett for a 43-34 Towns lead at 4:46.

Still another trey by George Walton at 4:21 got the Bulldogs within 43-37, giving the two teams nine treys—five by the Indians and four by the Bulldogs—in just 5:23 of playing time back to the 1:44 mark of the third quarter.

Will De Vries then outscored the Bulldogs 8-2 between the 4:02 and 1:20 marks, scoring six of those points on a three at a time basis on a trey and an old fashioned three point play, as the Indians extended their lead



Cole Ledford looks for an opening vs ACS. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

to 51-39.

A late field goal by Barrett then matched a Bulldog deuce for a 53-41 Towns lead entering the fourth quarter.

A total wipeout of the Bulldogs by the Indians appeared to be underway when Barrett sank two treys by the 6:04 mark of the fourth quarter, giving them a 32-11 run with seven treys included in just under 10 minutes at the start of the second half.

But the Indians went stone cold after that, missing several layups and scoring just a deuce on a jumper by Barrett the rest of the way, at the 2:40 mark. Fortunately for the Indians, the Bulldogs continued their last half scoring woes, sinking only a single free throw at 3:01 and then a deuce and a trey the final 1:31 in reducing a 61-42 Towns lead to a final margin of 61-47.

Barrett took scoring honors for the game with 21 points with other leaders being Moss with 15 points, Davenport with 13, and De Vries with 10. The Indians had a basket full of assists as De Vries led with 6 and was followed by Moss with 5, Davenport with 4, and Cole Ledford with 2. George Walton was led in scoring by senior Denzel Coley with 17 points.

Athens Christian School 56, Indians 47 - After having the scheduled Tuesday game against Athens Christian postponed from Tuesday at 8:30 to Wednesday at 2:30 and then to 6:00 on Thursday, the Indians were anxious to redeem themselves after probably their low point of the season

at Athens Christian on December 12. Nothing went right for them in that game as they fell by a 59-30 score in their only regular season game against the Eagles, who finished in first place in Sub-Region 8A South in regular season play and were the only one of five teams in the south to defeat the Indians in regular season play.

The Eagles would use hot shooting and spring out to a 19-8 lead by the 1:09 mark of the first quarter in giving the appearance of another decisive win against the Indians before the Indians struck back with a vengeance. Zach Davenport, who had the Indians within 9-6 near the mid point of the quarter with their first six points of the game, sank two treys wrapped around the Eagles' fourth trey of the quarter, during the final forty seven seconds with the second coming at the buzzer for just a 22-14 Indian deficit.

The Indians continued their good fortune with six straight points on field goals by Will De Vries, Davenport, and Adam Barrett by the 4:48 mark of the second quarter to pull within 22-20 and Barrett matched an Eagles basket with two free throws for a 24-22 score at 4:14. A Davenport jumper and two free throws by Major Moss then got them within 27-26 at 2:19 but lady luck smiled on the Eagles for the third time in the first half.

The Eagles, who had two field goal attempts literally crawl into the basket during the first quarter, had lady luck smile on them agains when a trey attempt rolled and bounced all over the rim and finally fell into the basket at the 1:20 mark for a 30-26 lead at intermission.

No one could have imagined after the first quarter shooting success of the Eagles and an 18-11 Indians' rally between the forty seven seconds mark of the first quarter and 2:19 in the second that both teams would struggle mightily to score in the third.

That turned out to be the case, however, as the Eagles sank a deuce barely half a minute into the quarter and another at 3:50 as their only points in the quarter while the Indians managed just a free throw by Davenport at 2:02 for a 34-27 Eagles lead entering the fourth quarter.

A tip in by Davenport, a three points play by De Vries, and a trey by Barrett gave the Indians an 8-4 run at the start of the fourth quarter for just a 38-35 deficit. With the Eagles then holding a 40-36 lead, Davenport struck for a base line drive for two points at 2:35 and a steal and

drive for the basket at 2:21 for a sudden 40-40 tie.

The standoff would last for just six seconds, however, as the Eagles sank the first of two free throws at 2:15 and then two more charity tosses at 2:10 after the second attempt was missed but kicked out long to the Eagles for the rebound. With the Indians sinking just two of four three throw attempts and the Eagles a field goal off an Indian turnover and ten of eleven free throw attempts following the tie, Athens Christian had a 52-42 lead by the forty seconds mark.

A putback basket by De Vries and a Davenport trey wrapped around an Eagles free throw had the Indians within 53-47 with nineteen seconds on the clock but the Eagles sank another free throw at 18.3 seconds and two more on a picky foul call at 4.4 seconds for a final misleading 56-47 margin of victory for the Eagles. The Eagles, who had made just one of ten free throw attempts, including two one and one bonus misses prior to the Indians forcing the tie, sank 14-of-17 attempts after the deadlock in attaining and protecting their lead for the victory.

Davenport poured in a career high 28 points for the game with other scoring leaders being De Vries with 9 points and Barrett with 7 while De Vries and Moss led in assists with 3 and 2 respectively, according to your reporter's tally. The Eagles were led in scoring by senior Marcus Wilson and sophomore Cody Boyd with 13 points each. The Eagles would fall to Hebron Christian 42-40 in overtime in the tournament semi-finals on Friday with Hebron then taking it on the chin by a stunning 71-44 score in the championship game against Lakeview Academy on Saturday.

Lakeview winning the game over Hebron was not shocking but the margin of victory was a surprise as the Lions had defeated Hebron by just a 57-54 score in both teams' final regular season game in Dacula just eight days prior. The result in this game was not nearly as shocking, however, as was present in back to back games between Tallulah Falls and Prince Avenue Christian.

Tallulah had taken their frustration of falling to the Indians on Friday, February 5, by burying Prince Avenue at Tallulah the following night by a 76-44 score only to fall to Prince in the region tournament just four days later by a 64-46 score for a fifty points turnaround.

Still another shocking game was to be played by Prince Avenue in the semi-finals against Lakeview Academy on Friday when top seeded Lakeview sank two free throws with 1.5 seconds left for a 41-40 win over the Wolverines. This was the third nail biting win for Lakeview in their last five games back to their 60-56 win over the Indians which was not assured until the closing seconds on January 29 and including the aforementioned three points win over Hebron. It just proves that "you never know" when seeing the ease by which Lakeview defeated Hebron in the championship game after the heart stopping win over Prince the night prior. Lakeview improved to a record of 21-4 with the region championship and they were ranked third in the state in the Private Class A Power Points ratings entering this week.

Lady Indians season closes with narrow loss in 8-A Tourney

By Jerry Kendall
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Staff Writer

Athens - The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team saw their season come to an end in the opening round of the Region 8-A Tournament at Athens Academy last Monday when they rallied from behind for a late lead but couldn't quite close out the win as Providence Christian finished on a 13-4 run to take a 42-37 victory.

The mostly quite young Lady Indians finished their season with a 4-21 record but with several other near wins along with victories over Class AA Social Circle and Region 8A foe Prince Avenue Christian School being quite noteworthy.

The Lady Indians got a 53-52 win at Social Circle on a steal and two free throws by Jocelyn Byers with one second on the clock after taking the Lady Redskins to overtime in Hiwassee in an 82-77 loss and they got an impressive 52-41 victory at Prince Avenue in their only game against the Lady Wolverines.

Social Circle has a current record of 13-12 and won two of three games in last week's Region 8-AA Tournament, finishing third in the region in both regular season and tournament play and falling by just a 50-43 score to Union County in the tournament semi-finals.

Prince Avenue has a 12-13 record and is on the bubble for a possible trip to the Class A Private State Tournament under the Power Rankings procedures described a bit more fully in the Indians' coverage.

The Lady Wolverines, the third place team in Sub-Region 8A South, lost by just a 35-33 score to Commerce, the regular season overall second place team in Region 8-A, in the quarter finals of the region tournament last Wednesday.

To be fair to Commerce, the Lady Tigers suffered a major blow late in the regular season when sophomore Mya



Towns County sophomore Madison McClure (4) and senior Savannah Dyer (2) battle in the paint during the Lady Indians contest with Tallulah Falls. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Jones, their best player, suffered an ACL injury and was lost for the season. The 2015 Region Tournament Champion Lady Tigers suffered a similar blow last year when Jones was injured in the first minute of play in their second round state tournament game when they fell without her to Terrell County by a 41-31 score.

Providence Christian Academy 42, Lady Indians 37 - After falling at home to Providence Christian 71-63 in a game not out of reach for the Lady Indians until the final half minute of play, the Lady Indians saw the Lady Storm spring out to 10-2 lead in the opening region tournament game last Monday.

They would begin to close the gap after that, to 10-5 on a trey by Madison McClure and to 12-8 on a late drive to the basket for two points by Madison Landress.

A runner for two points by McClure then got the Lady Indians within 13-10 by the six and a half minutes mark of the

second quarter but the Lady Storm used a pair of treys, their third and fourth of the half, to advantage in holding a 23-16 lead at intermission.

The Lady Indians would not go away, however, as they outscored Providence 12-6 in the third quarter for just a 29-28 deficit by quarter's end.

Third quarter highlights for the Lady Indians included an early deuce and trey by Jocelyn Byers for five points and a 25-22 score at 5:44 before two deuces by Savannah Dyer got them within 25-24 at 3:48 and 27-26 at 3:00 minutes. A drive for two points by Kirsten Ledford then put the aforementioned 29-28 score in place at 1:14.

Kristen Henson then got the Lady Indians ahead 30-29 on a drive to the basket at 6:44 of the fourth quarter and a three point play on a putback basket by Lea Neumyer at 5:37 had them ahead 33-29 but the Lady Storm used a 10-2 run for a 39-35 lead at 2:22.

A basket by Dyer got

the Lady Indians within 39-37 at 2:11 but they would not be able to enter the scoring column again and the Lady Storm sank three of four free throw attempts the final 38.6 seconds of the game to take the 42-37 win.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Lady Indians were Dyer with 9 points, McClure with 7, Byers with 6, and Neumyer with 5 while Byers led in assists with 5 and was followed by McClure with 3.

Senior Megan Parker with 14 points took the scoring lead for the Lady Storm who finished their season with a 7-20 record after falling in the next round by a 46-38 score to Athens Christian, the top seeded team from Sub-Region 8-A South.

Athens Christian then went on to defeat Commerce 41-24 in the semi-finals on Friday before bowing to Lakeview Academy 47-41 in the Region 8-A Championship game on Saturday.

Register now for softball and baseball at Rec Center

The Towns County Recreation Dept. is having registration for softball and baseball for boys and girls ages 8 thru 14 beginning February 15, 2016 thru February 27, 2016. Late registration will be held the week of February 29, 2016 through March 5, 2016.

The fee for registration

is \$45. Sign-ups are held at the new Towns County Recreation Center. Our hours of operation are Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. till 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m.

If you have any questions please call the Recreation Department at 706-896-2600.

7th District Basketball Tournament coming to Towns County

The Towns County Recreation Department will be hosting the Georgia Recreation and Park Association 7th district, class C, "mite" division tournament this coming Friday and Saturday, February 19th and 20th.

The tournament is for boys ages 10 and under and will include all star teams from Banks County; Commerce; Lumpkin County; Rabun County; Oglethorpe County; Union County; White County; and of course Towns County. The tournament will be held at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center. It will begin this Friday at 6 p.m. with

Towns County versus Oglethorpe County on Court A and Union County versus White County on Court B. Following at 7:30 p.m. will be Lumpkin County versus Banks County on Court A and Rabun County versus Commerce on Court B. Winners of these games will advance to Saturday and will begin at 10 a.m.

We invite everyone to come out and enjoy a fun and exciting group of boys playing their hearts out. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2 for students and seniors.

For more information you can contact the Recreation Department at (706) 896-2600.