

Towns County Sports

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Lady Indians finish third in Region 8-A Tournament

Towns knocks off Gordon Lee 64-56 to advance to Class A Second Round

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Commerce - The quest of the Towns County Lady Indians for a fourth straight Region 8-A Tournament Championship came to an end last Monday when they fell in defeat to the George Walton Academy Lady Bulldogs in the semi finals of the tournament at Commerce High School.

The Lady Indians rebounded the next night to take third place in the Region 8-A Tournament, however, when they took the measure of the host Commerce Lady Tigers in the consolation game.

The Lady Indians had defeated Athens Christian in the weather related delay of the first round of the tournament on Saturday of the previous week to qualify for the semi final match up with George Walton. The win over Commerce gave the Lady Indians their 18th win of the season as they prepared for the Class A State Tournament being played this week and covered in a related article.

**Lady Indians 37
George Walton 62**

The Lady Indians had come within a 3-point basket attempt of a win at the buzzer completing regulation play, and within another trey attempt at the overtime buzzer of forcing a second overtime in their only regular season game against George Walton in Monroe last month. The near victory in that game left the Lady Indians hoping they could follow the pattern set last year in defeating George Walton in the Region Championship Game after a two point loss in Hiawasse in regular season play, despite the fact that the Lady Bulldogs feature three senior class college recruits.

The possibility of such an accomplishment seemed within reach for most of the first quarter of last week's game when the Lady Indians battled the Lady Bulldogs point-for-point for the first 6:30 of the game. They followed the scoring punch of Eryn Cochran who forced a 2-2 tie on two free throws with 6:49 left in the first quarter, and then answered a 3-point play and 5-2 lead by George Walton by outscoring the Lady Bulldogs 6-2 for an 8-7 Towns lead at the 2:20 mark.



Jocelyn Byers fires a trey during Towns County's Region Semi Final matchup with George Walton. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

The Lady Bulldogs struck for the final seven points of the quarter in just 90 seconds of playing time, for a 14-8 lead at the first quarter break and they would outscore the Lady Indians 19-2 in the second for a commanding 33-10 lead at intermission with Cochran scoring all ten Lady Indian points.

The two teams played on virtually even terms the last half with, not as one might expect, the Lady Bulldogs never really letting up as evidenced by their three college recruits playing most of the game and right up to the final buzzer. Perhaps the Lady Bulldogs could not feel their lead to be safe against the Lady Indians who had turned them away in the Championship Game of the Region Tournament the last two years and with the Lady Dogs having won just one of their first five games and two of their first six prior games against the Lady Indians since joining the Georgia High School Association during the 2011 season.

At any rate, four different Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard in both the third and fourth quarters with highlights including four in the third and eight in the fourth by Cochran and four in the fourth by Misty Lindemuth. The Lady Bulldogs extended their lead to 48-20 after three quarters while the Lady Indians outscored the Lady Bulldogs 17-14 in the fourth in reducing the final George Walton margin of victory to 62-37.

Cochran led the Lady Indians in scoring for the game with 22 points with other scoring leaders being

Lindemuth with 6 points and Karlie Albach with 5 while Cochran also led in rebounds with 9 and in assists with 4. Other leading individual statistical leaders included Albach and Kelsie Cowart with 4 rebounds each and Jocelyn Byers with 3 assists and Lindemuth with 2 while Albach led in steals with 2.

An overpowering height advantage for the Lady Bulldogs provided most of the point differential for the game as putback attempts accounted for at least 21 George Walton points on 10 field goals and a free throw, according to your reporter's tally. The Lady Dogs were led in scoring by 6'1" Clemson University recruit Ivy Atkism with 20 points, Shorter University recruit Cynara Pitt with 14, and Young Harris College recruit Jada Williams with 11. The Lady Bulldogs went on to defeat Lakeview Academy 44-37 on Tuesday in winning the Region 8-A Championship.

**Lady Indians 52
Commerce 31**

The Lady Indians appeared poised to dominate the game against Commerce by going on an 18-0 run following a quick Lady Tigers basket for an 18-2 lead by the 6:05 mark of the second quarter, and led 20-3 by the 5:38 mark of that second quarter. The scoring run was highlighted by 8 points from Eryn Cochran and four each by Kelsie Cowart and Madison Johnson.

Just as suddenly as the Lady Indians had struck for the dominant run, however,



Madison Johnson puts up two in the paint against Commerce in the Region 8-A Tournament. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

they went stone cold after that for not only the remainder of the second quarter but the first five minutes of the third as well. The Lady Tigers edged to within 20-10 by halftime and followed a Lady Indian basket by Misty Lindemuth at the 7:18 mark of the third quarter with a 6-0 run for just a 22-16 deficit with 4:43 left in the third quarter.

Lindemuth responded with two free throws at 4:12 for a 24-16 Towns lead but the Lady Tigers followed with a field goal at 3:19, again edging to within six points at 24-18. The Lady Indians came alive after that, however, as a trey by Mckenzi Moss and two free throws by Cochran had them ahead 29-18 at 2:42. The Lady Tigers banked a trey off the glass at the 2:31 mark but a trey by Karlie Albach at 1:10 matched that for a 32-21 Towns lead and the Lady Indians led 33-23 entering the fourth quarter.

The fourth quarter would belong to the Lady Indians as they included two treys and an old fashioned 3-point play by Cochran and another trey by Albach in a 12-2 run by the 4:38 mark of the fourth quarter for a 45-25 lead and they were off and running for a 52-31 victory. Cochran added a third trey in contributing 12 points in the fourth quarter. The Lady Indians included six treys along with the aforementioned 3-point play, beginning with the trey by Moss, during a 28-13 run the final 10:58 of the game.

Cochran scored 22 points for the second night in a row in leading the scoring for the Lady Indians with other leaders being Albach,

Following an appeal by the Lady Indians, they were elevated from the 12th to the seventh spot which would have assured their hosting the opening game of the State Tournament but Region Tournament winners Wilkinson County and Dooly County were elevated from the ninth and 11th spots to the third and fourth seeds.

This pushed long time rival Gordon Lee from sixth to eighth and the Lady Indians from seventh to ninth with the Lady Indians forced to travel to Gordon Lee High School in Chickamauga on Monday of this week to face the Lady Trojans.

Towns County came away with the road victory by a final of 64-56 and will travel way down south on Wednesday.

The Indians second round opponent will be Randolph-Clay High School, the state's top seeded Class A Public team, in Cuthbert. The winner of that game will play on Saturday of this week in the State Semi-Final game at a site to be determined after press time.

The turn of events was a tough break for the Lady Indians, Gordon Lee, and Randolph-Clay as it places three of the State Final Four teams and the top two teams of last year on an early collision course in the first two rounds of this year's tournament.

The Lady Indians fell to Gordon Lee by a 57-49 score in the semi finals after trailing by just a 36-34 score entering the fourth quarter.

In the other bracket of the Final Four event at Fort Valley State University last year, Randolph-Clay had little trouble in their opening game, taking a 57-34 win over Wilkinson County with some observers predicting a decisive win for Randolph-Clay over Gordon Lee. That would not be the case, however, as the Lady Trojans followed their close win over the Lady Indians by leading Randolph-Clay 17-9, 36-19, and 50-30 at the quarter breaks before the Lady Red Devils closed Gordon Lee's margin of victory to 61-56 by game's end.

At any rate, the Lady Indians found themselves in a position of facing the defending Class A State Champion on their home court in the opening round of this year's state tournament and, if victorious, the likelihood of having to face the defending State Runner Up on their home court in the Second Round.

Rogers places third; leads Towns to 10th at State

By Todd Forrest
Towns County Herald
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Macon - Four Towns County wrestlers traveled to Macon last weekend to take part in the Class A State Wrestling Tournament.

After being delayed a week due to winter weather, the Indians finally hit the mat and took home three Top 5 finishes.

Freshman Daulton Rogers placed third at 170 pounds, junior Aaron Collier was fourth at 126 pounds, senior Vonya Baldwin was fifth at 138 pounds, and senior Kyle Davis saw action at 182 pounds and the Indians came in 10th overall.

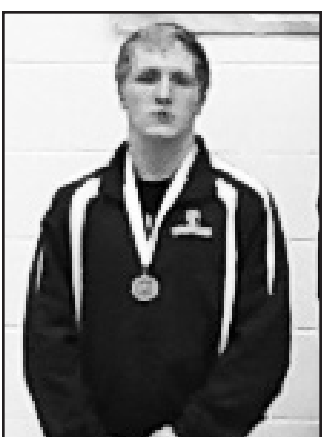
"We finished 10th as a team and I am so proud of these young men and the way that they have competed all year," Towns County Head Wrestling Coach Jeff Stowers said. "They have put in the time and effort to be competitive with the elite in the State and it was fun to watch it pay off for them."

Collier dropped his first match to the eventual State Runner Up, Stihl Lance of Gordon Lee. He would then defeat Hunter Smith from Mount Zion and Mark Watson of North Cobb Christian. In the third place match he fell to Turner County's Antozio Dawson to finish the tournament in fourth place.

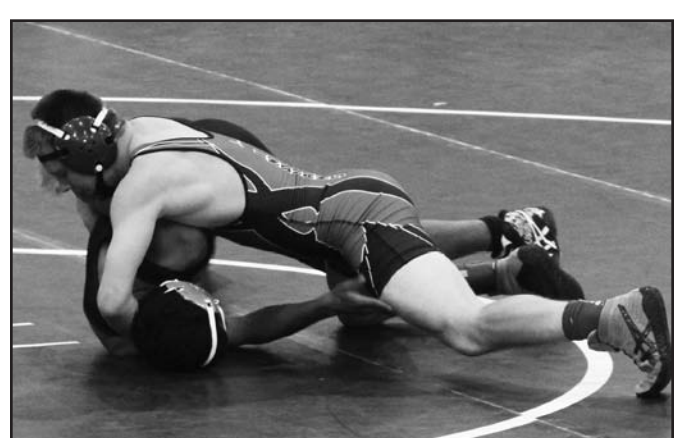
Trion's Dustin Thrasher was victorious in his opening round matchup against Vonya Baldwin. The Towns County senior then fell victim to a familiar



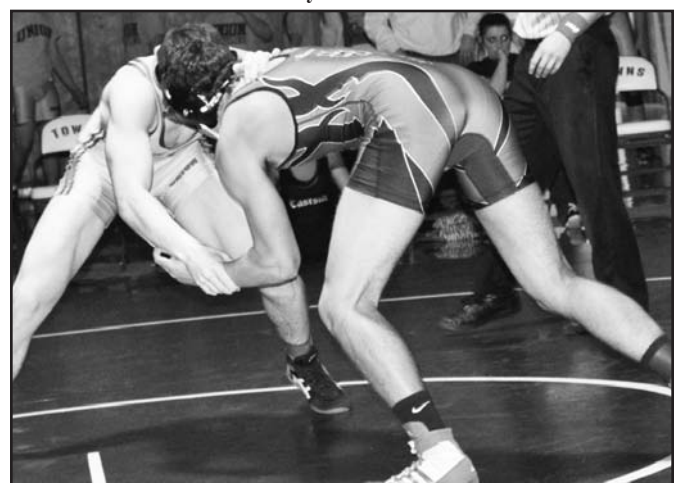
Aaron Collier



Kyle Davis



Vonya Baldwin



Daulton Rogers

face in Commerce's Cole Chancey. Balwin responded nicely in the fifth place contest in a rematch with Thrasher. This time, Baldwin got the better of Trion's 138-pounder to take home fifth.

Towns County freshman Daulton Rogers was the top finisher for the Indians, picking up third place in the 170-pound bracket during his first State Tournament appearance.

Mt. Zion's David Ramirez fell victim to Rog-

ers in the opening round. Rogers dropped his second round match to the eventual State Champion Greyson Cochran of Commerce.

In the third round, he defeated Trion's Jordan Coker to reach the third place match. In the fourth and deciding contest he knocked off Jamie Walker of Strong Rock Christian Academy to pick up the bronze.

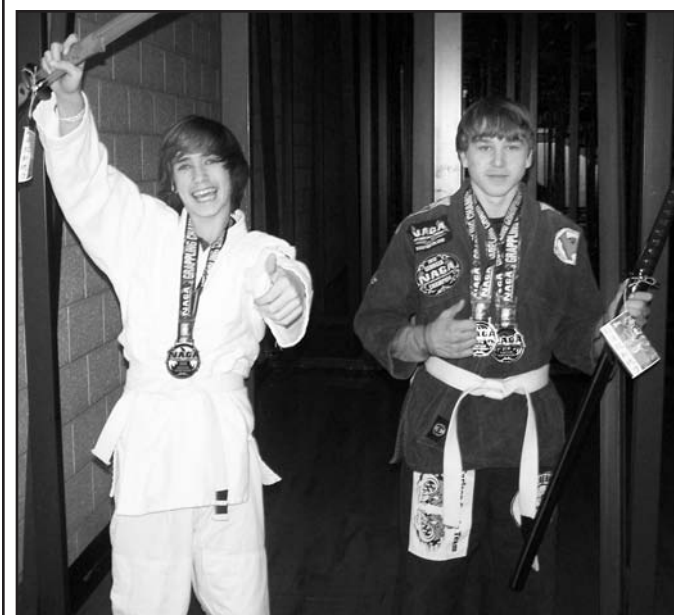
"Kyle davis was our other qualifier and although

he wasn't able to place he wrestled well," Coach Stowers said.

In other Indians wrestling news, Towns County Middle School's Kane Hoffman placed third in the 100-pound division at Gilmer County to qualify for the State Tournament.

Hoffman will be in action this weekend at the Georgia Dome when wrestling opens on Saturday at noon.

Local students win in Jui Jitsu



(L-R): Sean Fair and James "Tiger" Grubbs

Local middle school students, Sean Fair & James "Tiger" Grubbs both bring home gold and silver from The NAGA (North American Grappling Assoc.) Atlanta Championship held February 1st in Riverdale, GA.

Sean, competing for the first time, had a great day in winning 2nd place in No-Gi grappling and bringing home a Samuri Sword as 1st place in

Gi BJJ (Brazilian Jui Jitsu). James Grubbs won his 5th Samuri Sword and 1st place by a submission in No-Gi grappling, while placing 2nd in Gi bjj and another 2nd in a separate No-Gi grappling div.

Sean and James trained hard and gave a great effort. Both students train in BJJ at the Yama Bushi Karate dojo in Blairsville. NFeb26ZS/CA

Blairsville Jeep Owners Group II news

Presidents Day our group visited the Union County Senior Center and Lazy R Nursing Home handing out Valentine's Day cards and candy to the residents. Moving along we also gave cards and candy to the volunteers at the Humane Society Mountain Shelter Blairsville Thrift Store and the volunteers at our Union County Hospital.

Our goal as a group is to add to the quality of life in our county, and we find activi-

ties that emulate that goal give meaning to our group. Jeep rides over our local network of USFS roads let us enjoy our jeeps and pets in an outdoor environment second to none. We stop only to appreciate what Union County gives us and we will do our part to give back.

If you have a jeep and would like to join us, meet other people in the area, please contact us at 706-340-3772 for membership information.