

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Lady Indians suffer heart breaking defeat at the hands of Gordon Lee

By Jerry Kendall  
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There was reason to expect the possibility of the third confrontation in three years in the Battle of the States between the previously undefeated Lady Indians and two time defending Battle of the States Champion Gordon Lee of Chickamauga in the championship game.

However, the two teams found themselves meeting each other in the third place game instead due to the Trojans falling victim, like the Lady Indians to Union County, to a truly outstanding performance by Class AAA Dawson County in the semi finals on Friday. The Lady Tigers broke away from the Lady Trojans after quarterly leads of 15-14, 29-27, and 46-44 for a 66-52 victory.

The Lady Tigers returned all members of last year's team which failed by virtue of a missed lay up with two or three seconds left of upsetting East Hall in the first round of the Region 8AA Tournament. A win by the Lady Tigers would have finished East Hall's season but the Lady Vikings survived and continued on to win the 8-AA tournament championship and lost by a single point in the Sweet 16 round of the state tournament to Lovett, the eventual state champions via a widely applauded win over a metro all star team from Buford.

And, by the way, the Union County Ladies sank 13-of-16 treys in a 59-56 victory at East Hall last year, one of just four losses and the only loss to a public school for the Lady Vikings, who featured two Division I signees, Jasmine Jenkins now at Vanderbilt University and Morgan Jackson now at Georgia State University.

The Lady Indians got a 62-51 win in their first game against Gordon Lee in the consolation game of the Battle of the States way back in 2007 be-



Bailey Sutton made some big plays for the Lady Indians down the stretch against Gordon Lee. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

fore the Lady Trojans prevailed 62-48 in the championship game in 2010 and 72-61 in the semi final round last year.

After facing red hot 3-point shooting one day prior, the Lady Indians faced a far different offensive tactic with much of Gordon Lee's scoring focused around the basket through magnificent drives by Cassidy Blevins, the Battle of the States Most Valuable Player two years ago and an all tournament selection a year ago, and the towering presence of 6'4" Katelyn Lee along with a capable supporting cast.

Any thoughts that the disappointment of missing the Championship Game would result in a letdown for the Lady Trojans or Lady Indians were quickly dispelled as the game was an intensely played classic from start to finish, highlighted by a resounding comeback by the Lady Indians after the Lady Trojans appeared to be taking control of the game. Both teams appeared in the early minutes to hold a tension perhaps revealing mutual respect for each other's tradition among the top Class A public schools in the state.

There were six lead

changes by the 4:21 mark of the first quarter but with the Lady Trojans extending a 9-7 lead attained by their only trey of the game at that point for as much as a 13-8 lead with 2:38 on the clock. The Lady Indians rallied, however, on two field goals by Dadrion Blythe and two free throws each by Stephanie Patton and Eryn Cochran for a 16-14 lead at the first quarter break. Cochran scored seven points and Blythe six in the initial quarter.

The Lady Indians wrapped field goals by Bailey Sutton and Kelsie Cowart around a Lady Dragons basket for a 20-16 lead by the 6:45 mark of the second quarter but the Lady Trojans embarked on a 13-3 run for a 29-23 lead at the 1:47 mark which became 31-25 at intermission.

The Gordon Lee lead remained at five by a 39-34 score less than three minutes into the third quarter but the Lady Trojans went on a 9-2 run for their biggest lead of 48-36 by the 2:11 mark with the advantage being 48-39 entering the fourth quarter. Lady Indian highlights in third quarter play included six points by Cowart and five by Patton.



Stephanie Patton scores two of her team high 15 points against Gordon Lee. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

The Lady Trojans opened the fourth quarter with a field goal for a 50-39 lead but here came the Lady Indians. A trey by Patton at 7:15 triggered an 18-2 Lady Indians rampage for a sudden 57-52 Towns lead at the 3:50 mark with all kinds of heroics involved. After Misty Lindemuth followed Patton's trey with a drive to the basket for a deuce and Gordon Lee did likewise for a 52-44 score, the Lady Indians followed with a three point play by Cowart, four straight free throws by Cochran, a drive for two by Patton for a 53-52 Towns lead at 4:29, another drive for two by Lindemuth, and two free throws by Cowart for the aforementioned 57-53 Towns lead.

A Gordon Lee field goal at 3:36 for a 57-55 score set the stage for the first of three crucial offensive contributions of enormous proportions by Bailey Sutton. She drove to the basket for a three point play at the 3:25 mark with the 6'4" Lee fouling out and giving the Lady Indians a 60-53 advantage. They had opportunities to extend the lead but a scoring dry spell allowed the Lady Trojans to use a 7-0 run for a 60-60 tie on a free throw at 54.3 seconds and a 62-60 lead on

a drive for two by Blevins at the 22 second mark.

It was Sutton to the rescue, however, at 13.8 seconds as she was perfect with two free throws for a 62-62 standoff which sent the game to a four minute overtime when a late shot by the Lady Dragons missed the mark.

A field goal by Blythe got the Lady Indians ahead 64-62 at the 3:40 mark of the overtime and she matched a Gordon Lee free throw for a 65-63 Towns lead at 3:05 but drives to the basket for field goals by Blevins at 2:07 and 1:27 had the Lady Trojans back in front 67-65. Another Blythe free throw at 1:19 had the Lady Indians within 67-66 with more heroics on the horizon for Sutton.

The quick junior known more for her relentless pressure defense rose to the offensive occasion once again at 41.0 seconds for a second three point play in less than seven minutes of playing time and a 69-67 Lady Indians lead. One of two free throw attempts by the Lady Trojans at 23.9 seconds got them within 69-68, however, and Blevins did what superstars do as she made a huge play by driving the lane for a layup with

two seconds left for a field goal and a hard fought 70-69 Gordon Lee victory.

Blevins has signed to play basketball next year at Samford University in the Division I Southern Conference. She scored 26 points against the Lady Indians with the overtime required for six of the points after pouring in 37 in a 67-60 win over Hayesville in the opening round and 29 in the 66-52 loss to Dawson County.

All Lady Indian starters contributed mightily to an inspiring effort in making all Lady Indians followers immensely proud of their performance. All five starters scored in double figures in all around solid performances and with Karlie Albach, Emily Anderson, and Misty Lindemuth providing solid minutes off the bench. The Lady Indians came oh so close on several occasions to possibly putting the game out of reach but the shots just wouldn't fall and of a certainty Gordon Lee would have looked back in the same manner at several of their late shots which appeared to be certain points roll out of or off the rim if Blevins's last ditch shot had missed the mark.

Although disappointed to have fallen short in two games in the Battle of the States, the Lady Indians can look to the future as so many Lady Indians teams of the past have done in reaching historic achievements after similar learning experiences and, yes, confidence builders as a result of their success against prominent opponents.

Patton led the Lady Indians in scoring with 15 points and was followed by Cowart with 14, Blythe and Cochran with 13 each, and Sutton with 10 as Cochran led in assists with 7 with Cowart taking second honors with 2. Leaders in rebounds were Blythe with 11, Patton with 7, Cochran with 6, Sutton with 5, and Cowart and Lindemuth with 4 each. Taking the lead in steals were Cochran with 6, Sutton with 3, and Patton with 2.

## Lady Panthers shoot lights out vs Towns

By Jerry Kendall  
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There are times when you just have to tip your hat to an opponent and that time came for the Lady Indians last Friday when the Union County Lady Panthers lit up the gym with red hot 3-point shooting and rallied from an early 17-4 deficit for an eventual 65-56 victory.

It was the third meeting of the two teams with the Lady Indians having taken decisive victories in the first two games and facing the often difficult burden of defeating an opponent three straight times.

The Lady Panthers entered the game with a 7-3 record with two of the defeats having been to the Lady Indians and the other a one point decision to Class AAA White County.

Further, the Lady Panthers lost by a single point in a preseason scrimmage to Class AAAA Chestatee, the Region 8AAA runner up and a Sweet Sixteen team last year which opened the regular season this year with an 11-1 record, including the championship of the prestigious Lanierland Tournament in Hall County. So the Lady Panthers came into the game as a more capable team that might have been assumed by those seeing the first two games between the two teams, especially when considering that the Lady Panthers were handicapped greatly by foul trouble the last half at Union County when the Lady Indians broke open a close game.

At any rate, the Lady Indians appeared to be again taking control of the game when they held such leads as 4-0, 9-2, and 17-4 by the 2:44 mark of the first quarter but the Lady Panthers wrapped two treys around a long deuce the final 1:13 of the first quarter for just a 17-12 deficit. The early run by the Lady Indians was highlighted by five points and three assists by Eryn Cochran and Dadrion Blythe and Kelsie Cowart each contributing four points to the run.

The Lady Panthers sank another deuce just ten seconds into the second quarter, reducing the Towns lead to 17-14, and added a trey following a Blythe basket for just a 19-17 deficit at 7:06 before the Lady Indians appeared to have



Junior Kelsie Cowart posted 10 points against Union County. Photo/Lowell Nicholson.

regained momentum with a 6-0 run for a 25-17 lead at 5:46. The Lady Panthers struck for a 10-4 finish, however, for just a 29-27 Towns lead at intermission. Six different Lady Indians entered the scoring column by halftime with Cochran adding six in the second quarter for a total of eleven the first half. 18 of the Lady Panthers' 27 first half points came on six 3-point baskets, highlighted by stunning accuracy.

The Lady Indians endured a long dry spell for nearly six and a half minutes at the start of the third quarter as a 12-2 run, with one trey included, had the Lady Panthers leading 41-31 by the 2:07 mark. The Lady Indians sank four field goals the final 1:36 of the quarter but they were of the two point variety while the Lady Panthers sank two treys for just a net gain of two points as Union led 47-39 entering the fourth quarter. Included in the closing run for the Lady Indians were two field goals by Stephanie Patton, including a runner in the lane at the buzzer.

The Lady Panthers opened the fourth quarter with a deuce and their tenth and eleventh treys of the game for a prominent 55-39 lead but the Lady Indians didn't go quietly. Two free throws by Cochran and baskets by Cowart and Blythe had them within 55-45 with 4:30 still on the clock. Missed opportunities at the foul line for both teams, including three one and one misses by the Lady Panthers, followed for a 56-46 score before two charity tosses by Union had them ahead 58-46 at 2:01 but the Lady Indians still weren't done.

A field goal by Misty Lindemuth, a trey by Patton, and a long deuce by Karlie Albach countered only by a Union free throw gave the Lady Indians a glimmer of hope within 59-53 with 1:12 on the clock but six for eight free throw shooting by Union followed for a 65-53 lead before a late trey by Albach reduced the final Lady Panthers margin of victory to 65-56. The Lady Panthers continued their excellent work the first half against Dawson County but managed just five points the last half in falling to a 69-35 defeat in the Championship Game on Saturday.

The Lady Indians actually sank two more field goals than the Lady Panthers but the difference in the game came in the type of baskets made. The Lady Panthers sank 11 treys to just two by the Lady Indians while the Lady Indians hit nineteen deuces compared to eight for the Lady Panthers. Accurate Lady Panther free throw shooting in protecting their lead gave them an advantage at the foul line where they were 16-for-25 compared to 12-for-15 for the Lady Indians.

It's a tribute to the Lady Indians that they could follow a pattern of mostly scoring two points at a time compared to the Lady Panthers often making three for just the six points deficit near the end of the game.

The Lady Indians were led in scoring by Cochran with 15 points Blythe and Cowart with 10 each, Patton with 8, and Albach with 7 while Cochran also led in assists with 9 and added 4 steals in her All-Tournament performance.

## Lady Indians suffocate Murphy, NC

By Jerry Kendall  
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The opening game of the tournament for the Lady Indians against Murphy was a total mismatch from start to finish in the only non competitive game of the opening day of the Battle of the States.

The Lady Indians held leads of 7-0 and 24-2 on the way to a 26-7 lead after one quarter and it never got any better for the Lady Bulldogs as the Lady Indians led 42-14 at intermission and 61-21 after three quarters on the way to a 70-25 victory.

Stephanie Patton poured in ten points and Eryn Cochran and Kelsie Cowart six each in first quarter action with additional top point production by quarter including five points by Patton in the second and nine in the third while Cochran added eight in the third.

Scoring leaders for the game were Patton with 24



Eryn Cochran scores early vs Murphy. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

points, Cochran with 18, Karlie Albach with 8, and Cowart with 6 while Cochran led in assists with 4 and Patton followed with 3. Leaders in rebounds were Dadrion Blythe with 8

and Misty Lindemuth with 4 while Cochran and Albach led in steals with 6 each and were followed by Lindemuth with 5 and Blythe and Patton with 3 each.

## Rabun no match for Lady Indians

By Jerry Kendall  
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A highly anticipated match up of two ultra successful girls basketball programs of late proved to be a mismatch from the beginning as the home standing Towns County Lady Indians led from start to finish in exploding past the Lady Wildcats of Rabun County by a 67-43 score.

The game was actually not nearly as close as the final score might indicate.

The Class AA Lady Cats of Coach Dee Dee Dillard compiled a 102-16 record the last four years while the Class A Lady Indians of Coach Jim Melton were 126-26 the last five years with neither team winning fewer than twenty three games during these individual runs. Each team has had admirable success within their region, Region 8-AA for Rabun and Region 8-A for Towns, and in state tournament play with the Lady Indians including a trip to the Class A State Final Four during their run.

Both teams lost vital contributors to graduation from last year with the Lady Cats having the misfortune of losing



Dadrion Blythe goes up for two of her 12 points in Towns' blowout victory over Rabun County. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

two additional players for this season due to injury. The Lady Indians entered the game with a 9-0 record compared to 6-4 for the Lady Cats.

For the second game in a row, Bailey Sutton got the Lady Indians a lead they would not relinquish, this time with a field goal just 23 seconds into the game, and the points just kept on coming for the Lady

Indians. They followed the lead of Dadrion Blythe with six points, Stephanie Patton with five, and Eryn Cochran with four as they erupted from a 4-2 lead for a 14-2 finish the final 4:47 for an 18-4 lead at the first quarter break.

The Lady Indians went more than three minutes at the

See *Outgunned*, Page 9