

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Towns County hosts Melee in the Mountains

By Joe Collins  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

Six area high schools converged on the Towns County Middle School gymnasium last Friday night to see who would claim the bragging rights that come with being the champion of the "Melee in the Mountains" wrestling tournament.

The Towns County, Union County, Rabun County, Dawson County, Hiwassee Dam and Hayesville, N.C. teams hit the mats starting at 4:30 p.m. and the intensity filled the air until after 8 p.m.

There were no individual awards in this event. This was all about who had the best team and the Indians were fired up. A solid second place finish behind Dawson County, who has a very strong wrestling program, earned the Towns County High School wrestlers some due respect.

There were five rounds of bouts as each team faced the others to wrestle through each individual weight class. The Indians were faced with a challenge early on as they were forced to award their opponents 36 points per match because of forfeits.

"If you were to have told me that we would have finished second tonight I would have had my doubts. We've



Towns County's Vonya Baldwin was named Wrestler of the Week

got five guys out with the flu and injuries," said a proud and concerned Head Coach Jeff Stowers. "Tyler (senior Tyler Hoffman) showed up with all the symptoms of flu and wanted to wrestle and I had to send him home." That is a testament to how much the wrestling Indians want to compete.

Several of the TCHS teammates were coming off great performances in the King of the Mountain tournament held the weekend before and they had strong showings again last night. Senior Wesley Bloodworth continued his dominance as a premiere heavyweight for Area 4A with a 5-0 shut out of his challenges

including a crucial fall in the last round of the night against Dawson. One of only two the Indians had against the champions in their last round.

Junior Vonya Baldwin found himself in a battle when he faced his final opponent of the evening. The Dawson County wrestler he faced had already defeated him in the KOM as they wrestled for the 132-pound weight division championship. The bout would tie the teams for the night if Baldwin could pull it out but after two and a half hard fought rounds it was not meant to be and he lost by fall. Baldwin is a fast and exciting wrestler to watch and his day is com-

ing. He is very strong for that weight class and he has good technique.

One fascinating aspect of the melee is the exhibition bouts. Many wrestlers including the Junior Varsity and some of the eighth grade team members were on the mats during intermission of the high school matches.

One of the most interesting and courageous bouts involved Junior Bradley Rogers, who lost part of a leg last year to cancer, as he squared off against a Hiwassee Dam wrestler and came away with a fall for a victory. Congratulations Bradley on your win.

"We wrestled hard tonight and I am satisfied with where we are to a point. We aren't there yet but we're getting there and I see improvement. We just had a lot of guys out tonight and that makes it tough to win because you have to give up points to forfeits," said Stowers.

The TCHS wrestlers are having a really good year and their talent runs deep. Even with missing teammates, they fought hard and claimed a solid second place finish. Come out and support the team and watch some exciting action. Their next match is away on Dec. 14th against White County starting at 5 p.m.

Make plans now to come out and see some good wres-



Tips from the Range

There is a dedicated area in the golf swing that will give you the feedback you need to better your swing and as a result enjoy your time on the golf course. You can swing the club in any way you see fit, but if your movement isn't solid in this part of the swing, your will never hit the shots you know you are capable of. It is where the swing starts and stops with every swing of the club and it can assure you of a consistent swing with almost every effort if done correctly. The balance and center of your swing passes through this position every time and can be extremely affected if you move poorly. You hear a lot about it but rarely is it given the level of importance it should. Good ball strikers and solid competitive players know that a good or bad swing is born with? Proper Footwork. It is proper footwork that will make your swing work and help you maintain your center of gravity throughout the whole swing process. It is a very important component of consistent golf.

Go to a PGA tour event and don't be shocked if you see one or more players practicing with their shoes off. It is a great way to learn the feel of how the balance works from the start to the finish of any golf swing. The great Sam Snead would practice with his shoes off and it would help him play better. The pros know the benefit of proper footwork and you need to understand it too.

Proper footwork is dependent on being in the correct set-up. It is very important to be the right distance from the ball at address so that you do not have to lean in and reach for the ball to get the club behind it. This lean will place your balance on the forward part of the feet and make it impossible to move correctly. It is vital for your weight to pass through the ankle to the ground and not on the front of the foot. If the balance in the feet is proper, you will feel a tightening in the hamstring muscle located in the upper back of the rear leg. Concentrate on "sitting" down in this muscle and stay there. The great Ben Hogan said, "I feel like I'm sitting on the edge of a bar stool and staying there until after impact." This is a perfect example of how it feels to stay within your center of gravity on every swing.

What is the proper way

in which to work the feet? I am glad you asked me that! Here it is. First, you must work the feet in a way that promotes a good athletic move through the ball. It should be a balanced move that builds acceleration from the top of the swing and on through impact so that the arms will extend through the hitting area and on into the follow through. It should feel slightly like you are reaching for the ball at impact from the back of your center of gravity. Keeping the knees relaxed and bent up shortly after impact really helps with this especially if you are having balance issues.

Next you must focus on keeping the feet in touch with the ground. The soles of your feet must stay connected to the ground in order for the swing to be in control. Everywhere I go I see golfers swinging to hard and losing contact with the ground. Many good moves at the ball are spent before impact because of poor footwork. The left heel will leave the ground and the front inside big toe will load up on weight during the back swing and the only thing left is the over the top sling with a lot of hands on the downswing.

Allow the front foot to roll in slightly and move your weight to the back leg with a solid back foot that is flat on the ground or possibly a little heavy on the outside edge of the shoe but not disconnected from the ground at all. Keep the feet grounded until the arms and club have moved through impact and this will ensure that your swing is controlled with the big muscles and that is very important for proper distance. The big muscles move slower than the small muscles so give your swing time to work and be patient out of the top.

Proper footwork will level your swing and focus your attention to swinging within your own power. You will be reminded time and again that your balance needs attention by maintaining correct foot placement and positioning throughout the swing.

Go ahead! Take your shoes off! Stay awhile, and practice barefooted to learn the correct feel of what your connection to the ground should be. Learn to feel the correct feeling in your feet when you play. Your swing will immediately become more controllable and will now perform within your individual ability. You must swing within your own control or you will be forced to use your hands and then the trouble will start.

Good luck and I will see you on the course!

## TCMS wrestlers take Second Place in League Duals

By Joe Collins  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

**JASPER** - After a strong finish in the King of the Mountain tournament on Nov. 17, the Towns County Middle School wrestling team entered the League Duals Saturday, Dec. 3rd with some confidence and it helped boost them to a Runner-Up finish against all League Division teams.

"To go in to the Duals and face eight strong teams and to come out losing only to a AA school is a credit to the team and their talent," stated a proud Coach Jason McClure about their second place finish behind Lumpkin County who brought 55 individual wrestlers to the event. These will be the same teams the middle school tribe will face in the League Championship on Dec. 15th at neighboring Union County.



Luke Ledford was named TCMS' Wrestler of the Week

The team gutted it out and wrestled solid to win the first two duals against Jasper and Dawson, which placed them in the finals. The League Duals are scored only from a team perspective and no individual medals were awarded so every point counted.

"We only made it to the final by 9 points and that was

on the backs of some really good wrestling by Daylen Espalin and J.W. Rosser. They avoided pins and saved us three points each and that was big," said McClure. "All my guys did well but these two really stepped up and helped out. I couldn't ask for anymore out of the team than they gave today. It was a good day for everybody

and I am very proud of their performance."

The middle school wrestling program is strong and even though they don't have the numbers that many schools in their league have, they still wrestle hard and finish well.

"We are wrestling sixth and seventh graders against eighth graders and our guys are still doing very well. That's where we are with our numbers and we deal with it. The guys are working real hard this year and wrestling hard in their bouts. I couldn't be more proud," declared McClure.

The TCMS wrestlers will travel to Union County for their next match on Dec. 14th with an up and coming talented Panthers team. The match will start at 5 p.m. so make plans now to go and see some really good wrestling between the two rivals and help cheer the Indians on to another victory. Go Indian wrestlers!

## Lady Indian JV impressive in win over Lakeview, lose a close one at Hiwassee Dam

By Jerry Kendall  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Lady Indian JV's Basketball Team got a split decision for the second week in a row last week, leading all the way in getting a home court win on Friday against Lakeview Academy of Gainesville but struggling to a close defeat at Hiwassee Dam, North Carolina, on Saturday.

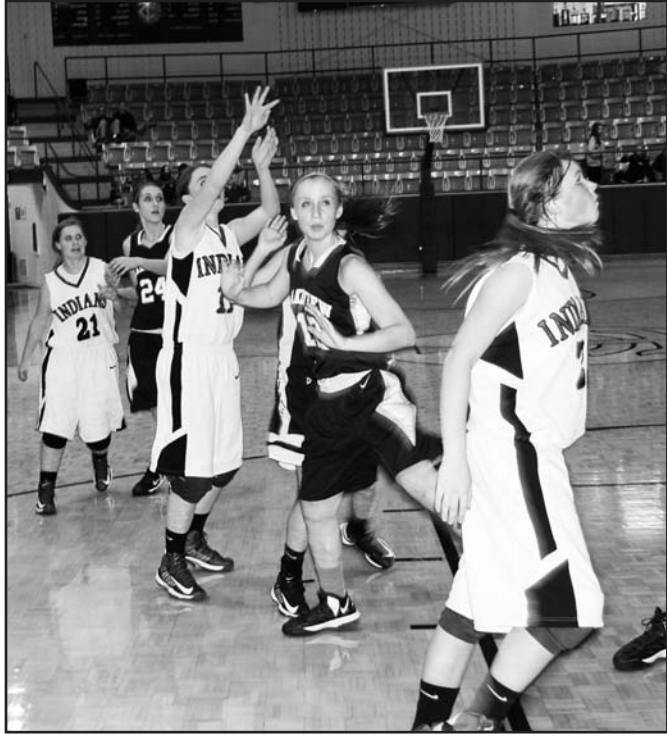
Five different Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard in the first quarter as they exploded out to an 18-4 lead and led by scores of 38-14 and 50-28 at the second and third quarter breaks in taking a decisive 59-34 win over Lakeview Academy.

There were heroines galore in the game for the Lady Indians with highlights including seven first quarter points by Taylor McCarter, seven by Alyssa Pyle and six by Savannah Dyer in the second, and six points on a pair of treys in the third and five in the fourth by Brooke Smith.

Scoring leaders for the game were McCarter with 15 points, Smith with 13, Dyer with 11, and Jocelyn Byers and Pyle with 7 each. Leading in assists were Pyle with 5, Carly Gilfilian with 3, and Byers and Dyer with 2 each.

The Lady Indians rallied from a 5-2 deficit midway through the first quarter for an eventual 8-6 lead at quarter's end on a 6-0 run enabled by two free throws by Savannah Dyer, a coast to coast run for two by Jocelyn Byers, and Carly Gilfilian's second basket of the quarter.

The second quarter saw the Lady Eagles force three



Towns' JV during its win over Lakeview. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

ties with the Lady Indians taking two leads in between of 10-8 on a steal and basket by Alyssa Pyle and by a 13-10 margin on a trey by Byers with the score dead even at 13-13 by intermission.

Another trey by Byers just twenty seconds into the third quarter gave the Lady Indians a 16-13 lead and a putback by Dyer at 5:45 had them ahead 18-17 but the lead lasted just thirty seconds as the Lady Eagles took a 19-18 lead and extended it to 25-20 entering the fourth quarter.

The Lady Eagles appeared to have the game well in hand with a 29-20 lead at the three and a half minute mark when the Lady Indians made a move.

Four different Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard in a 9-2 run for just a 31-29 deficit, ending

on a free throw at the 1:10 mark and a drive for two at twenty six seconds by Misty Lindemuth.

Both teams had struggled mightily at the foul line throughout the game but the Lady Eagles sank three of four attempts the final 21.7 seconds to clinch a 34-29 victory.

With the late free throw successes, the Lady Eagles finished eight for nineteen at the foul line compared to just five for nineteen for the Lady Indians who sank just one of eight attempts in the fourth quarter.

The Lady Indians were led in scoring by Byers with 10 points and Dyer and Gilfilian with 6 each while Byers also led in assists with 2 according to your reporter's unofficial tally.

## Towns County Middle School Lady Indian Game of the Week

By Joe Collins  
Towns County Herald  
Staff Writer

The Towns County Middle School basketball girls had tough losses to White County last Monday, Dec. 3 in our girl's games of the week.

The sixth and seventh grade team fell 24-9 as the eighth grade girls followed suit with a 36-23 loss. The scores were not indicative of how well the girls played but they came out on the short end just the same.

Madison Thomas had a really strong performance for the seventh grade team scoring seven of the nine points that TCMS had in the game. She was aggressive on defense and had three blocked shots inside the paint. Jordan Hyatt scored two points and also had a good night on defense with three steals.

The girls held tough in the first quarter and only trailed by one point to start the second quarter but a full court press by White County was more than the Lady Indians could manage and the Warriors out scored them with seven unanswered points to lead at half time 11-4.

The Warriors continued the man-to-man press in the second quarter and the Indians had trouble moving the ball on offense. They were getting several opportunities to score but just couldn't capitalize and ended up missing a lot of shots.

"We weren't hitting our shots underneath and that really hurt us. We had trouble moving the ball against their press and the missed oppor-



TCMS' girls going for two against White. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

tunities hurt," stated Head Coach Lana Parker. "We hustled good on defense but need to attack the boards better." The Indians lost to the Warriors 24-9.

The eighth grade team was able to hold their own better in the second game of the night but the Warriors second half defense eventually got the best of a determined Lady Indians team. They fell 36-23 despite only trailing by one to end the first half 13-12 due to good hustle and solid defense.

"When we came out in the second half we seem to lose steam. They out scored us by eleven points 14-3 in the third quarter and that was a real blow," declared a concerned Parker. "We are still in need of someone who will crash the offensive boards and work the inside."

Kirsten Ledford had the team high eleven points for

the Indians while Emory Patton and Madison Stroud each had five points and Cadence Nichols with two points on the night. It was a defensive struggle all night and outside of the breakdown in the third quarter, the Indians held strong. "I see improvement in this team as the year progresses. Our ball handling is getting better as well as our free-throw percentage. We were 11/15 from the line tonight and that is a solid improvement in both areas," praised Parker.

Catch the TCMS Lady Indians on Dec. 13 at Union County. Game time is 4:15 p.m. for the seventh grade team and the eighth grade team will follow at 5:45 p.m. Come out and support the TCMS Basketball program and see the up and coming athletes of Towns County GO TCMS Lady Basketball Indians!