

# Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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February 24, 2010

www.townscountyherald.net

Hiawassee, Georgia

## Lady Indians clinch regular season Region 8A title with win over Prince Avenue



Jordan Moss dives for the loose ball in 64-58 regular season win for #1 seed in Region play. Photo By Jim/Lisa Bryant By Jerry Kendall

The long awaited confrontation between the Towns County Lady Indians and Prince Avenue Christian School Lady Wolverines turned out to be a real battle last Tuesday in the Towns County Gym with the Lady Indians slipping away with a 64-58 victory. The win broke a tie with Prince Avenue for first place in regular season in Region 8A as the Lady Indians finished with a 14-2 region record while Prince finished at 13-3. The Lady Wolverines finished the regular season with a 21-3 overall record with two of the losses coming at the hands of the Lady Indians and the other at Social Circle. The game had been postponed from January 29 to February 13 and then to February 16 due to bad weather.

The Lady Indians not only reached the twenty win level for the fourth straight year with the victory but extended a sparkling regular season record against Region 8A opponents. They compiled a 13-0 regular season record two years ago, a 15-1 mark last year, and the 14-2 record this year for a three year 42-3 record of excellence.

Further, the Lady Indians eclipsed the record for wins during a four year period, improving to a 93-24 record for the last four years with hopefully more wins to come as compared to a 92-23 record compiled by Lady Indian teams from 1997 through 2000. The Lady Indians were coached by Robbie Stancil for the first two of those years and by current Lady Indian Head Coach Jim Melton for the last two. The only other time in school history for basketball teams to win twenty or more games for four straight years

was from 1972 through 1975 when the Lady Indians compiled an 84-21 record under long time coach Dion Eller.

Of course, the primary reward for clinching first place in regular season region play is seizing top seeding for the Region 8A tournament which will be completed, barring additional bad weather, by the time readers receive this newspaper.

The outcome of the game did not look promising for the Lady Indians in the early going as Prince used four treys to break out to a 12-6 lead by the 2:50 mark of the first quarter and then scored the final six points of the stanza for an 18-8 lead at quarter's end. The Lady Wolverines had two leads of eleven points by scores of 20-9 and 25-14 during the first half of the second quarter before the Lady Indians closed out the quarter with a 12-6 run for just a 31-26 deficit at intermission.

Melissa Conrad, a senior playing her last regular season home game, had a powerful first half, scoring six points in the first quarter and four more in the second with more to come while Gabby Arencibia sank a pair of treys in the second to highlight first half action for the Lady Indians. The Lady Wolverines added three more treys in the second quarter, giving them seven for the half.

The Lady Indians adjusted their defense at halftime, limiting the Lady Wolverines to a single trey the last half and continued the late second quarter rally in the third, turning the 31-26 deficit into a 49-42 lead after three quarters. The Lady Indians followed the lead of Ali Bleckley in that third quarter as she gave them three separate

leads. The sophomore sank two free throws for a 34-33 Lady Indian lead at 4:35, took the ball coast to coast for a 36-34 advantage at 4:35, and sank a trey at the 2:40 mark for a 40-38 lead the Lady Indians would never relinquish.

With the Lady Indians experiencing a bit of foul trouble, Freshman Dadrian Blythe entered the lineup and sandwiched two important baskets at 1:17 and :32 around a pair by the Lady Wolverines with the second giving the Lady Indians a 47-42 lead. A late Conrad basket then extended the lead to the aforementioned 49-42 at quarter's end.

The Lady Indians twice led by eight points early in the third quarter but the Lady Wolverines wouldn't go away quietly, reducing the Towns lead to 54-51 on their only trey of the last half with just 3:39 left in the game. Conrad struck for six straight Lady Indian points after that, finishing this run with a three point kept play at 1:17 for a 60-55 Lady Indian lead but two Prince free throws at 1:11 and another at 57.0 seconds got the Lady Warriors to within 60-58.

A Lady Indian turnover at 46.4 seconds returned the ball to the Lady Wolverines and they ran some clock but Gabby Arencibia blocked a Prince shot near the twenty five second mark with Jordan Moss retrieving the ball and Prince being charged with an intentional foul at 22.6 seconds. Moss was perfect at the foul line with two charity tosses as was Lindsay Patton a second and a half later as the Lady Indians retained possession, with the four free throws giving the Lady Indians a 64-58 lead. When Prince stepped out of bounds at 14.6 seconds, the Lady Indians ran out the clock for the hard fought victory.

Conrad contributed at least four points in each quarter of this game for a team leading total of 20 points but with lots of help from her teammates. Arencibia scored 11 points, Moss and Patton 10 each, and Bleckley 9 while Bleckley led in assists with 3 as Arencibia, Conrad, Moss, and Patton contributed 2 each. TCH Sppt/feb24.5mc

## Lady Indians crush Commerce in region tournament opener

It was pretty much as long time followers of the Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team have come to expect in recent years at Athens Academy last Thursday in the opening round of the Region 8A Basketball Tournament. The Lady Indians took a 54-26 victory over Commerce in qualifying for their tenth state tournament berth in the last twelve years under head coach Jim Melton.

Further, the Lady Indians qualified for two remaining games in the region tournament to be held in the friendly confines of the Towns County Gym on Saturday of last week and Monday of this week, prior to entering state tournament play this weekend. These games were originally scheduled to be played on Friday and Saturday but were delayed due to bad weather causing postponements of regular season games. The top seeded Lady Indians improved their record to 21-5 with the victory, qualifying to face the winner of a Friday game between Hebron Christian and Athens Academy in the region semi-finals on Saturday. In a quite physical game,



Senior Melissa Conrad banks two points off the glass and through the net during the Towns County Lady Indians' 54-26 Region playoff victory at Athens Academy. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Commerce took early leads of 2-0 and 3-2, only to see the Lady Indians finish the first quarter on an 11-2 run for a 13-4 lead at quarter's end and continue the good work for a 30-13 lead at intermission. Six points by Melissa Conrad in the first quarter and seven each by Ali Bleckley and Lindsay Patton in the second highlighted first half activity for the Lady Indians. Brittany Walls sank back to back treys among four by her team in the third quarter as the Lady Indians extended their lead to 49-19 and settled

for a 54-26 victory after a mercy rule shortened fourth quarter.

The Lady Indians had a well balanced scoring attack in the win with scoring leaders being Bleckley and Patton with 12 points each, Gabby Arencibia with 9, Walls with 8, Conrad with 6, and Jordan Moss with 5. Conrad took the lead in assists with 3 while Arencibia, Bleckley, and Moss all contributed 2 each. Although rebounding totals are not available, Conrad had an outstanding game on the boards against the physically strong Lady Tigers. TCH Sppt/feb24.7

## Indians' season comes to an end with tournament opening loss to Lakeview Academy



D.J. Rogers weaves through traffic en route to the basket in first-round Region playoff action at Athens Academy. The Indians suffered an early exit from the Region 8 playoffs as the Lakeview Academy Lions topped Towns County 72-50. Photo by Lowell Nicholson

By Jerry Kendall The Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team fell far behind against very aggressive full court pressure and red hot shooting during the first

half of last Thursday's Region 8A Tournament opener at Athens Academy and suffered a 72-50 season ending loss to Lakeview Academy. The loss left the quite young Indians with a 5-21 overall record for the season.

The ultra quick Lions used an avalanche of players, rotating them in and out to build leads of as much as 19-3 and 24-5 on the way to a 26-7 first quarter advantage after the Indians held early 2-0 and 3-2 leads on two free throws by Ethan Burch and another by Bradley Swanson. The Lions sank three treys in the first quarter and added four more

during the final four minutes of the second in holding a 50-14 lead at the half.

Following an early third quarter Lakeview basket, the Indians put together a 20-4 run from the 6:52 mark of the quarter to the 1:01 mark for just a 56-34 deficit before the Lions bounced a field goal in the basket for a 58-34 lead at quarter's end. The Indians then included 5-0 and 8-0 runs in fourth quarter action but could get no closer than 68-47 by the one minute mark as the Lions closed out the 72-50 victory. Scoring highlights by quarter for the Indians included five points in the second by DJ Rogers, eleven by John Bleckley and seven by Ethan Burch in the third, and six by Bradley Swanson in the fourth.

It was fitting that the Indians' only seniors, John Bleckley and Ethan Burch, took scoring honors for the game with 14 and 12 points respectively as they closed out long and dedicated service to their team. Bleckley included four treys and Burch two in their point production. Other scoring leaders were Swanson with 11 points and Rogers with 10 while assists leaders were Devin Henderson with 4 and Swanson with 3. TCH Sppt/feb24.7mc

## Lady Indians struggle but eek out 46-38 region semi-final win

Anytime you walk away from a plane crash, it was a good landing. Such was the case Saturday night as the Lady Indians squeezed by the Athens Academy Lady Spartans in a Region 8-A semi-final round. The Spartans were one of only two region teams to beat the Indians in regular season play. For both teams the first quarter was a nightmare as each struggled to find the hole during the first two minutes. Finally, at 5:23 the Spartans made it 1-0 from the charity stripe. By now the contest had become a game of offensive nerves and defensive steals until the visitors scored inside 3-0. Lindsay Patton took the lid off the iron inside at 2:14 and it was 3-2. Gabby Arencibia then iced a "3" off the left wing and the Tribe took a 5-3 lead. After a Spartan 5-5 tie, Brittany Walls sent one via air mail, 8-5 to end an offense-challenged quarter.

After the Spartans gave the ball up via a backcourt violation, Jordan Moss toed the line for two and it moved to 10-5. A right glass by Missy Conrad was followed by an inbounds steal and left glass by Gabby Arencibia and the Indians were on the move, 14-5. Back came Arencibia with a shot at the head of the arc, 17-7. Conrad then made a monster block but on the next trip down the hardwoods, the girls in green made it a 17-9 ball game. A couple of traded steals got the ball back for the visitors and it was 17-11. A lay-up by Patton cutting across the lane made it 21-11. In the first half, the Lady Spartans had made a living off picking the pockets of the Indians when a steal and dash to the glass made it 21-16. Two more picks and conversions made it 21-20 at the break.

Starting the second half, the ten point Indian lead had dwindled to one point and the Spartans immediately took a 23-21 lead. Moss then took a steal to the left glass, 23-23. Conrad and Patton then gave the Tribe a 27-23 lead from the line after the big green post player got her fourth foul. A stolen drive poached the shot, drew the foul and botched both charity tries. Still, thanks to poor shooting by the Indians the Spartans



Missy Conrad tries to chase down the ball in 46-38 Region 8-A semi-final win. Photo By Jim/Lisa Bryant

managed to stay in the contest, 27-25 before knotting the score at 27-27. The Indians couldn't buy a basket ant at the 2:00 mark, the visitors took 1 29-27 lead. Three ties later, at 31-31, both teams made steals but at the horn it was the Spartans up two shots, 37-33.

A rebound put-back by Moss re-tied the game 37-37 in the fourth quarter and after twenty-five minutes of basketball, nothing had been decided. After a three minute scoreless streak, Arencibia helped the Indians in the charity stripe to a 40-37. A crack in the green defense gave Ali Bleckley room to split the gap for two points, 42-37. Another pick and dash was thwarted when Missy Conrad went vertical for her second huge block of the game. With less than :50 on the ticker, Gabby Arencibia hammered the nail in the Spartan coffin for the 46-38 Region 8-A semi final win. The regular season 14-2 Indians now move to the finals against the regular season 13-3 Wolverines from Prince Avenue. By press time the championship game will have already occurred (Monday) but with just over sixty points per game averaged during the season by the Indians, it probably was a higher scoring game. Scoring Summary: Bleckley 4; Arencibia 13; Moss 10; Walls 3; Conrad 6 and Patton 10 points.

TCH Sppt/feb24.5mc

## Indian rally falls just short of spoiling Social Circle strategy



Bradley Swanson looks for hoop, help or hope when the Redskins finally decided not to stand and freeze the ball. Photo By Jim/Lisa Bryant

By Jerry Kendall In probably the most unusual game of the season, the Towns County Indians narrowly missed spoiling some questionable strategy by the Social Circle Redskins last Tuesday in the Towns County Gym. The Redskins had overcome a 5-2 Indian lead with a 15-0 run for a 17-5 lead which became 17-6 after one quarter and then used a 10-5 finish in the second quarter to extend a 21-16 lead to 31-21 at intermission.

In a surprise to most observers, the Redskins came out in a stall at the start of the third quarter, running nearly three minutes off the clock before turning the ball over to the Indians with a double dribble. After both teams missed opportunities to score, the Indians struck for the final six points of the quarter from the 3:48 mark for just a 31-27 deficit. DJ Rogers took the ball coast to coast and was fouled, sinking two free throws, and John Bleckley sank a trey at 1:40 before Devin Henderson sank the second of two free throws at 12.8 seconds for the four point deficit.

The Redskins again went into a stall at the start of the fourth quarter, running nearly two minutes off the clock before walking at 6:02. The Indians didn't score that time but Rogers came up with a steal and took the ball to the basket for just a 31-29 Social Circle lead at 5:02. Once again, the Redskins ran some

clock and this time scored their first points of the second half on a field goal at 2:33 but Rylan Albach again got the Indians within two at 33-31 on a putback basket just eighteen seconds later.

The Redskins seemed to have put the game out of reach with a drive for two at 1:01 and a breakaway layup after an Indian miss at twenty seven seconds. The Indians misfired on two free throws at 17.7 seconds and a putback attempt following the second attempt just missed but Rogers sank a trey at seven seconds for just a 37-34 Redskin lead for still a one possession margin.

With few fouls having been called during the slowly played second half, the Redskins were nowhere near a one and one situation with the Indians having to foul quickly on three occasions before sending Social to the line for a one and one with 1.7 seconds left. The Redskins made the first of two attempts, putting the game out of reach for a final score of 38-34.

Rogers put points on the scoreboard in every quarter and included three treys in his team leading 18 points performance while Bleckley took second honors in scoring with 5 points. Bleckley and Devin Henderson tied for the lead in assists with 3 each. Brett Bradshaw remained on the disabled list after suffering a pulled muscle against Lakeview Academy.

## Aerobics return to Rec Department

Beginning Tuesday, March 2, Jeannie Ledford-Stephens will bring her challenging, fun, motivational and supportive aerobic classes back to Towns County Recreation Department gym. Classes are a high energy mix of step, body toning, weight training, cardio training, circuit training, kick boxing, yoga, pilates and stretch. These classes are for ALL fitness and experience levels.

Jeannie has a bachelor's degree in education and health, specializing in Physical Education. She has over 14 years of aerobic, personal training, group exercise training and coaching experience. Classes will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 - 6:30 PM on the main floor of the recreation center. The cost is \$5 per class. Clients can pay by the month and receive a class free. Come be a part of this annual exercise tradition!

TCH Feb24.A4SH

## Mountain United Soccer registration for Spring Season



The Mountain United Soccer Association is still accepting registration forms for the Spring season. The association has provided youth soccer in Union and Towns counties for over 20 years. The program serves over 500 players annually.

Teams will play within Towns, Union and Fannin Counties. The under 14 boys team will be traveling to the Atlanta area and hosting competition in Blairsville.

The season will begin in mid March. Teams will be filled

based on date of receipt. A player must be at least 4 years old on August 1, 2009 to be eligible.

Registration forms were mailed to current members. Registration forms are available at the following locations: Blairsville- Blimpie, Branan Lodge; Hiawassee- Towns County Recreation Department and the Marathon Gas Station. Forms are also available at your school.

For more information, contact us at 706-745-7865 or www.mountainssoccer.org

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