

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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Towns County Lady Indians Seniors say Goodbye

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It is always difficult for followers of top athletes to see their high school careers come to an end but it becomes especially difficult when losing players reaching such high accomplishments as the 2012 Lady Indian Seniors. That is the case, however, as Gabby Arencibia, Ali Bleckley, and Lindsay Patton all saw their careers come to an end with the loss to Darlington last Tuesday. In addition, this game ended the career of senior Kindle Moss who missed the entire season after having shoulder surgery last summer with an extended recovery period preventing her from seeing any action this season.

Extensive coverage of the heroics of each senior has been included along with looks at athletic accomplishments of the relatives of each over the course of their careers and won't be repeated here. Rather, a summary of unprecedented team success will be provided along with a break down of a most admirable team record.

All four seniors put in innumerable hours of dedicated work in reaching some of the highest achievements one can accomplish in high school. Their four teams compiled not only an overall 98-22 record but the top regular season record all four years in Region 8A and winning three Region



Four years as a Lady Indian came to a close for Gabby Arencibia. Photo by James Reese.

8A Tournament Championships with four trips to the Class A State Tournament included. The three region championships are especially noteworthy when considering that the Lady Indians have won a total of just four region tournament titles in their long history which includes many years of excellence on the basketball court.

Within Region 8A, the Lady Indians compiled an awesome overall 65-4 against Region 8A opponents during the four years, a 12-7 mark against Region 8AA opponents, 15-3 against out of state opponents, and 6-8 against Class A opponents outside Region 8A. All



Lindsay Patton lifts a jump shot against Darlington. Photo by James Reese.

of the non Region 8A games against Class A teams came in either the Battle of the States or Class A State Tournaments with four of the eight losses being in the state tournament and inevitable unless winning a state championship.

The four losses within Region 8A during the four years were regular season losses to Social Circle in 2009 and to Hebron Christian and Athens Academy in 2010 along with a loss to Prince Avenue in the championship game of the 2010 region tournament. Rabun County's Region 8AA Lady Wildcats had the most success against the Lady Indians during

the four years in total wins with a 4-0 record with Union County winning three but losing six against the Lady Indians who enjoyed a 4-0 advantage against Dawson County and 2-0 against Fannin County in Region 8AA.

In out of state competition, the Lady Indians lost two of three games against Polk County, Tennessee, in the Battle of the States Tournament while holding a 2-1 advantage over Hiwassee Dam, North Carolina. Their greatest success against out of state opponents was against Hayesville with five wins and no losses while going a combined 7-0 against six other out of state opponents.



Ali Bleckley drives to the hoop against Darlington. Photo by James Reese.

In Class A competition against non Region 8A opponents, Gordon Lee, Pace Academy, and Wesleyan each won two games without a loss while Holy Innocents' and Darlington each got one win but with Holy Innocents' falling on two occasions to the Lady Indians. The Lady Indians won their only Class A games outside Region 8A with single wins against Eagles Landing Christian, Bremen, Mt. Zion of Carroll County, and Georgia Military in state tournament play.

Senior Lindsay Patton has already signed to continue her basketball career at Point University in West Point, Georgia, and it seems inevitable that Gabby Arencibia and Ali Bleckley will both join Patton in continuing their education and basketball careers at the college level. Thanks for the memories and best wishes are extended for the future to Gabby Arencibia, Ali Bleckley, Kindle Moss, and Lindsay Patton in all of their future endeavors.

Lady Indians season ends with close loss to seventh ranked Darlington



Gabby Arencibia launches a 3-ball against Darlington. Photo by James Reese.

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The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team came one victory short of a trip to the Elite Eight round at Marietta High School when they lost a tough battle to the Darlington School of Rome last Tuesday in the Towns County Gym. Darlington entered the game with a 26-3 record and ranked seventh in two statewide Class A polls. The Lady Indians entered with a 23-6 record and ranked ninth in the Georgia Prep Country Internet Poll.

As might be expected, the game was a real battle from start to finish with Darlington using a 12-1 start to the fourth quarter in building a twelve point lead and held off a late Lady Indians rally for the victory. The win sent Darlington to the Elite Eight round where they fell to perennial state champion Wesleyan by a 95-41 score on Saturday.

The first quarter saw each team show signs of gaining the upper hand with Darlington taking an early 6-2 lead and a late advantage of 17-12 but with the Lady Indians holding a 12-8 lead mid way through the quarter and trailing by just a 17-15 margin by quarter's end. Ali Bleckley scored seven points in the first quarter for the Lady Indians, including a trey with nine seconds left in reducing the aforementioned five points Lady Tigers advantage.

Darlington opened the second quarter with their first five points on a coast to coast run and 3-pointer for a 22-15 lead

but the Lady Indians responded with a 19-6 run for a 34-28 lead less than a minute from intermission which became 34-30 at the half. Twelve of the Lady Indians points during the run came courtesy of two treys by Stephanie Patton and one each by Gabby Arencibia and Bleckley.

The Lady Tigers opened the third quarter on an 8-2 run for a 38-36 lead but the two teams played on virtually even terms the remainder of the quarter with Bleckley including her third trey of the game among seven points production. Bleckley's trey gave the Lady Indians a 43-43 standoff at exactly the two minute mark and Arencibia's third trey of the game at the twelve seconds mark had them within 47-46 entering the fourth quarter.

The first five and a half minutes of the fourth quarter proved to be very difficult for the Lady Indians with the aforementioned 12-1 Lady Tigers run giving them a 59-47 lead and seemingly in control of the game. The Lady Indians would not go quietly, however, as Stephanie Patton struck for three straight treys, interrupted only by a Darlington putback between the second and third, in just forty two seconds of playing time between the 2:26 and 1:44 marks for just a 61-56 Lady Indians deficit.

When Kellsie Cowart then followed two missed free throws by Darlington by sinking two clutch charity tosses at 47.9 seconds, the Lady Indians were within 61-58. They had additional chances the rest of the



Eryn Cochran goes to the rim early against Darlington. Photo by James Reese.



Stephanie Patton fights for the ball against Darlington. Photo by James Reese.

way to reduce the lead further but the shots wouldn't fall in the basket and the Lady Tigers sank an insurance basket near the eighteen seconds mark and escaped with a 63-58 victory.

It is easy to think of the final score and realize that just three more deuces or just two more treys during the course of the game would have had the Lady Indiana ahead at game's end or that one of each would have had a tie. On the other hand, the Lady Tigers would have kicked themselves all the way back to Rome if coming short of a victory after sinking just five of eighteen free throw attempts, including missing all nine attempts in the fourth quarter. Both teams felt that they played well below their capa-

bilities but reality compels one to consider that the competitive level of each team affected the level of play of the other with this often being the nature of the game as post season play progresses.

The Lady Indians were led in scoring for the game by Bleckley with 17 points, Patton with 16, Arencibia with 12, Cowart with 6, and Eryn Cochran with 5 while Cochran led in assists with 6 as Bleckley and Patton added 2 each according to your reporter's unofficial tally. The key to the outcome of the game was easily the play of Darlington's Terar Stewart, the 5'11" Region 6A Player of the Year who scored 34 points and claimed 22 rebounds in the game according to the Prep Cen-



Coach Jim Melton talks it over during a timeout. Photo by James Reese.



Lindsay Patton drives to the basket against Darlington. Photo by James Reese.



Kellsie Cowart launches a three-pointer against Darlington. Photo by James Reese.

tral Online Website which covers high school sports in Northwest Georgia. With Darlington's loss to Wesleyan in the Elite Eight round, a run of five straight years of the Lady Indians falling to at least a state final four team through last year has come to an end. The Lady Indians lost

at defending state champion and State Final Four finisher Southwest Atlanta Christian in the first round in 2007, to state champion Calvary Day in the State Final Four in 2008, to state champion Wesleyan in 2009 and 2010, and to state runner up Pace Academy in 2012.

UCB supports Touchdown Club Bass Tournament



Coach Langford (left) accepts check from Rick Martin of UCB. Kyle Langford, Head Football Coach of Towns County High School, is pictured accepting a donation

from Rick Martin, President of United Community Bank in support of the Towns county Touchdown Club's 3rd Annual Lake Chatuge Bass Tournament. The donation and all proceeds from the tournament go to provide financial support for the football program at Towns County.

The annual tournament takes place on Saturday, March 24th at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds in Hiwassee. For more information or for registration information, contact Nathan Noblet at 706-896-7543. T(Mar7,G1)SH

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