

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports



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## Diamond Indians drop a pair of region games

By James Reese  
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The Towns County Indians took two tough region losses on the chin last week.

The first loss came at home as the Athens Christian Eagles (7-1) claimed a 12-2 victory in six innings.

Errors and free passes contributed heavily to the Indians' downfall.

Senior starting pitcher Alan Turpin took to the mound following up a terrific outing against Prince Avenue Christian earlier this season. Turpin ran into early trouble due to an outfield error to start the game.

The error allowed Eagles lead off Tyler Hutch to advance to second base. Next batter up, Caleb Shealy promptly drove in Hutch with a go ahead single to give the Eagles the early lead 1-0 in the top of the first inning.

The Indians' diamond miseries continued in the form of walks through the top of the third inning as the Eagles mounted a 6-0 lead.

The Indians came to life in the bottom of the third, as senior Billy Meier led off the inning with a double. With Meier in scoring position, senior Paydon Shook singled to bring Meier around to score the first Indian run and closing the gap to 6-1 Eagles.

The Indians would score again late in the sixth inning on a senior Taylor Denton homered. It wasn't enough to extend the game into the seventh as the Indians dropped the game 12-2.

Later in the week, the Indians traveled to Commerce to face the (6-2) Tigers. Commerce, like the Eagles, has a steady offensive attack with adequate pitching.

Likewise, the Tigers took the visiting Indians by 10 runs in the sixth inning 13-3.

The trip appeared promising early on as senior third baseman Meier led the game off with a solid single. Moving up to the second spot in the order, consistent contact hitter Jimmy Pearce sent a Robert Hayes pitch beyond the straight away 320-foot center field fence.

The two-run homer gave the Indians a 2-0 lead.

Hayes settled in as the Tigers allowed only one more run the rest of the way.

Indians' starting pitcher Paydon Shook enjoyed the lead until the bottom of the second inning, when he ran into

trouble giving up a couple of walks. Bases on balls only lead to trouble and this instance was no exception.

Tigers' freshman Keenan Lord, the number eight hitter, touched Shook up for a three-run homer to give Commerce a 3-2 lead.

Shook regrouped to strike out the next hitter, but then had trouble finding the strike zone again as he issued two more free passes.

Junior Josh Swisstek took advantage of Shook's control issues as he delivered a run scoring single that put the Tigers up 4-2.

At that point, Indians' Head Baseball Coach Chris Vardo had to go to the bullpen in favor of Taylor Denton. Denton struck out the next batter, but grooved a pitch to Tigers senior Addison Davis, who doubled in two more runs for Commerce.

With the Indians trailing 6-2,

Meier again provided the offensive spark in the top of the third inning smacking a lead off double. Pearce worked Hayes for a free pass, followed by a crisp single by Shook to left field that loaded the bases. Senior first baseman Kyle McConnell followed with a run-scoring single drawing the Indians within three runs.

The next batter, shortstop Alan Turpin turned on a Hayes pitch that tailed toward the right field line but was gloved at first by Colton Davis for an unfortunate rally-ending double play. Recapturing the game's momentum, the Tigers poured it on from there, claiming the 13-3 region victory in six innings.

The Indians returned to action on Tuesday against Riverside Military Academy at Kimsey Field in Hiwassee. Results of the diamond action weren't available at press time.

On Thursday, the Indians

square off in a double header against George Walton Academy at Kimsey Field. Game time: 4:30 p.m.

And don't forget Saturday, as the Indians travel to Hayesville to take on the Yellow Jackets at 2 p.m. The game is followed by the Game That Never Happened, featuring the state championship match up between the 1988 Georgia Class A Champion Indians and the 1988 North Carolina Class A Champion Yellow Jackets.



Taylor Denton (25) gets the glad hand following his home run against Athens Christian last week Photo by James Reese

## Jordan Moss To Play In Statewide All Star Game In Savannah

By Jerry Kendall  
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The accolades just keep on coming for Lady Indians Senior Jordan Moss as she will be making what is believed to be the very first ever appearance by a Towns County High School Basketball Player in the prestigious Georgia Athletic Coaches Association (GACA) Basketball All Star Game. The game is scheduled for this Saturday, March 26, at Armstrong Atlantic University in Savannah.

The Association was established in 1938 for the advancement of athletics in Georgia and is dedicated to high school coaches in the State of Georgia.

The Saturday event serves as a showcase for top girls and boys players from all around the state with a total of four games to be played, including a Junior Showcase game and a Senior Showcase game for both the girls and boys. The junior girls' game is to be played at 1 p.m. with the senior game featuring Moss to follow at 3 p.m. The boys games will be played after that with the juniors scheduled for 5 p.m. and the seniors at 7 p.m. An additional bit of local flavor will be present as Union County Girls' Head Coach Jim Hughes will serve as coach for the senior all-stars.

Moss was at the forefront from the beginning of her four-year varsity career, beginning with the Lady Indians' whirlwind and record setting trip to the state Final Four her freshman year and continuing through the successes of two region championships, four state tournament appearances, and the unprecedented record setting 103-19 overall team record for the four years. The previous best four-year team record was 96-26 through the 2010 season.



Jordan Moss adds high school All-Star to her outstanding 2010-2011 season Photo by James Reese.

Add to these team accomplishments the fact that Moss easily surpassed the personal achievement of 1,000 points in her career and was named First Team All Region during her senior season. She further established a new school record for most appearances in varsity games with 121 with the accompanying additional school record of 102 of these games being victories for her team. And she missed just one scheduled

game, due to illness during her sophomore year, in 10 years of basketball at Towns County Recreation Department right on through Towns County Middle School and Towns County High School.

Congratulations and best wishes to Jordan Moss as she continues to represent her school and community at the highest level of dedication and accomplishment in Savannah on Saturday afternoon.



Billy Meier tries to avoid the pickoff move against Athens Christian Photo by Lowell Nicholson



Jimmy Pearce gets ready to send Mr. Spalding over the left center field wall against Commerce Photo by James Reese

## Lady Indians Ranked In Top 10 In Final Two Statewide Polls

By Jerry Kendall  
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With the Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Teams having fallen to eventual Class A State Runner Up Pace Academy in the sweet sixteen round of the state tournament, one could only speculate as to the effect that loss would have on their placement in the final statewide rankings. After holding a tie for fourth place in the last Georgia Prep Country Coaches Poll prior to post season play and seventh in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution (AJC) Poll, they remained in the top ten in both polls, finishing seventh in the Prep Country Poll and tenth in the AJC poll.

One thing was certain when the brackets for the state tournament were set and that was that there would be no possibility for a large number of top ten ranked teams to go very deep in the tournament. This was assured by the fact that eight of the top ten teams in the Prep Country Poll were among sixteen teams in the same half of the bracket with five of these included in the quarter of the bracket where the Lady Indians were located.

As is common when looking at rankings of any type, there are usually several astute decisions present but maybe a few that lead observers to wonder what the pollsters could have been thinking. The Prep Country Poll took the safe and generally followed route of assigning the state final four teams the top four spots with continuing emphasis on the teams making the elite eight on down the line but apparently rewarding their 27-2 record by inserting the Lady Indians in the seventh spot. Although they fell to state runner up Pace Academy in the sweet sixteen round, the Lady Indians' only other loss was to Gordon Lee who made the elite eighth round and finished one notch above the Lady Indians in sixth place in the final poll.

The AJC poll took a bold step of placing St. Francis and Southwest Atlanta Christian (SACA) in the third and fourth spots above state tournament

semi-finalists Turner County and Calvary Day, presumably as a result of strong showings by St. Francis and SACA against Pace Academy in state tournament play. While praise might be appropriate for this move, one might have expected similar thought to have been included in the remaining spots on the AJC poll rather than leave observers wondering as to whether they even looked at other scores in the state tournament.

The Lady Indians lost by 15 points to state runner up Pace Academy who defeated Turner County by twenty after Turner had defeated Taylor County and Bryan County in the first two rounds of state tournament play. Further, the Taylor County girls lost two of their last three games with one of those being to a team with a losing record. The Lady Indians had the best record of all of these teams at 27-2 and lost only to Pace and elite eight finisher Gordon Lee but were placed tenth in the rankings behind Turner, Taylor, and Bryan.

The Turner County Girls might be considered the greatest recipient of misfortune during the season and in post season. They never received a state ranking while rallying from three straight losses at the start of the season to a 21-5 record entering their region championship game with their five losses including two to Class AAAAA opponents, two to Class AAA opponents, and the other to a Class AA foe.

They lost the services of Antania Graddic, their 6'3" sophomore star, to a broken foot during the region tourney and fell in the championship game to Charlton County but rallied in Graddic's absence in reaching the state final four where they fell to Pace Academy. It takes little imagination when considering their performance without their star player to realize they were among the elite teams in the state in Class A and perhaps worthy of greater respect during the season and maybe greater consideration in the AJC poll for their success without their star player during



Junior Gabby Arencibia had an incredible season for the Lady Indians Photo by James Reese.



The 2010-2011 version of the Towns County Lady Indians was a team to remember Photo by James Reese.

post season. The Lady Indians were one of just eight teams in the state with two or fewer losses with the other seven being Class AAAAA Douglas County and Chamblee with one each, Class AAA Washington County and Dalton with zero losses and one loss respectively, Class AA Kendrick and Laney with one and two losses respectively, and Class A Wesleyan with two losses.

When all was said and done, the two statewide polls addressed above were like most any other poll, reflecting the opinion of various individuals and intended to create interest in the subject. If that be the case, both polls accomplished

their goal and its nice that the Lady Indians were recognized in both for their excellent season whether we in Towns County may totally agree with their placement in the AJC poll or not.

- GEORGIA PREP COUNTRY POLL**
1. Wesleyan (31-2)
  2. Pace Academy (27-6)
  3. Turner County (24-7)
  4. Calvary Day (26-6)
  5. St. Francis (24-4)
  6. Gordon Lee (24-7)
  7. Towns County (27-2)
  8. Southwest Atlanta Christian (24-5)
  9. Darlington (25-5)
  10. Seminole County (20-8)
- AJC POLL**
1. Wesleyan (31-2)
  2. Pace Academy (27-6)
  3. St. Francis (24-4)
  4. Calvary Day (26-6)
  5. Turner County (24-7)
  6. Calvary Day (26-6)
  7. Taylor County (24-3)
  8. Bryan County (24-4)
  9. Darlington (25-5)
  10. Towns County (27-2)



The Lady Indians watched Makayla Underwood become a consistent performer in 2010-2011 Photo by James Reese.



The Lady Indians had a season to remember in 2010-2011 Photo by James Reese.