

Towns County Sports

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Lady Indians get big win over Hayesville, face misfortune vs Hokes Bluff, Union

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The youthful Towns County Lady Indians saw their season take a very impressive upward turn in the opening round of the Battle of the States tournament on their home court last Wednesday when they led for most of the game in taking a victory over the Hayesville Lady Yellow Jackets only to see their fortunes take a heartbreaking downward turn against Hokes Bluff, Alabama, on Thursday with the effect of the misfortune extending to the third round game against Union County on Friday.

The referenced heart-break actually does not refer to early struggles for the Lady Indians during the Hokes Bluff game but a freak knee injury not related to any physical contact with other players to freshman Kennedy Henson at the 5:38 mark of the fourth quarter.

Further medical evaluation is needed as of the newspaper deadline time to determine if the injury might possibly be of short duration or be determined to be a season ending injury.

But impressive progress made by the Lady Indians to this point in the season thought to be leading to a strong presence in Region 8A play is now left to speculation depending on Henson's recovery period with her being a vital part of very strong teamwork, especially on defense, which has led to the Lady Indians' increasing improvement to this point in the season.

Lady Indians 52, Hayesville 42 – The Lady Indians faced a formidable opponent in the Class A Lady Yellow Jackets who entered the game with a fine 6-3 record but of greater significance was a 59-57 home court victory just five nights earlier over the Class AAA Fannin County Lady Rebels.

The Lady Rebels had earlier defeated the Lady Indians 42-35 in Hiwassee and 53-33 on a cold shooting night for the Lady Indians in Blue Ridge.

The Lady Indians would take a 2-0 lead on a drive for the basket by junior Kristen Byers at the 5:59 mark of the first quarter and lead, with the exception of two ties, for the remainder of the game.

A trey by junior Erika Spano would break the first tie of 2-2 and trigger a 10-1 run highlighted by a second Spano trey and one by senior Madison McClure for a 12-3 Towns lead which became 12-5 by the end of the first quarter.

Treys by sophomore Sophia Shook and junior Taylor Cornett and deuces by freshmen Kennedy Henson and Vanessa Floyd kept the Lady Indians ahead in second quarter action by as few as three points at 12-9 and as many as six at 17-11 with the lead being 22-19 at intermission.

An early third quarter trey by Cornett had the Lady Indians leading 25-19 but the Lady Jackets used a 7-1 run for their second tie of 26-26 at the 4:54 mark.

Henson would then score the first nine Lady Indians points in a 17-4 scoring run from the 3:55 mark to the end of the quarter for a 43-30 Towns lead entering the fourth quarter with two free throws by Shook and treys by Cornett and Floyd the final 1:06 completing the strong run.

The Indians slowed the pace of the game during the early minutes of the fourth quarter with the Lady Jackets closing to within 44-37 on a trey at 2:30 and 46-40 on a trey at forty nine seconds but Henson sank five of six free throw attempts and McClure four of seven during the quarter in protecting their team's lead in taking a 52-42 victory.

Scoring leaders for the Lady Indians for the game were Henson with 16 points, Cornett with 9, McClure with 8, Spano with 6, and Floyd and Shook with 5 each.

Six different Lady Indians combined for eleven assists with leaders being Henson with 4 and Cornett and Floyd with 2 each.



All Tournament Team - Madison McClure. Photos/Lowell Nicholson



Freshman Kennedy Henson during Towns County's win over Hayesville. She was injured vs Hokes Bluff.



Vanessa Floyd appears to draw a foul while attempting a 3-pointer.



The Lady Indians defense clamps down on the Lady Yellow Jackets during their first round BOTS win.

Leading in rebounds were Floyd with 5 and Henson and McClure with 4 each. Scoring leaders for the Lady Jackets were juniors Savanna Annis with 18 points and Hailea Rickett with 17.

With the victory, the Lady Indians qualified for the semi finals of the tournament against Hokes Bluff who defeated Polk County, Tennessee, 32-23 in their opening game while the Lady Jackets lost close games by scores of 37-32 to Polk County and 51-46 to the Darlington School of Rome in the second and third rounds.

Hokes Bluff 49, Lady Indians 38 – A season noted for strong scoring runs and lengthy struggles as well by many teams was never more evident than in the Hokes Bluff game when the Lady Eagles used a 14-5 game opening run and a 10-2 start to the second quarter to great advantage in building a 27-13 lead by the 4:51 mark of the second quarter.

The Lady Eagles held a 17-11 lead after one quarter despite an early trey by Lady Indian junior Taylor Cornett and a late trey by senior Madison McClure with two deuces for four points by freshman Kennedy Henson provided in between and the Lady Indians came alive after the aforementioned 27-13 deficit.

The Lady Indians closed the second quarter with a 10-5 advantage the final 3:48 with Henson starting the run with her second two for two appearance at the foul line in the quarter and the run was completed on a long deuce by freshman Vanessa Floyd and treys by sophomore Sophia Shook thirty six seconds and junior Kristen Byers at the buzzer for just a 32-23 Lady eagles lead.

Both teams went scoreless for more than four and a half minutes at the start of the third quarter with a trey by Floyd at 3:23 getting the Lady Indians within 32-26 but the Lady Eagles scored four points prior to and following a deuce by McClure for a 40-28 lead on two free

throws at 3.9 seconds only to see McClure strike for trey as the Lady Indians beat the buzzer for the second quarter in a row and the same nine points deficit as at intermission for a 40-31 score entering the fourth quarter.

Sparse scoring was present at the start of the fourth quarter just as at the start of the third with the Lady Eagles sinking two free throws at 6:05 for a 42-31 lead not long before the previously described injury to Henson at the 5:38 mark.

The Lady Eagles would sink a field goal at 4:09 for a 44-31 lead before McClure scored the Lady Indians' first points of the quarter at the three minutes mark for a 44-33 score.

A three point play and two free throws by the Lady Eagles would give them a 49-33 advantage at 1:34 but the Lady Indians would finish the game on a five points run themselves begun by a three points play by Floyd for a 49-38 victory for the Lady Eagles.

Six different Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard with leaders being McClure with 14 and Floyd and Henson with 8 each while Byers led in assists with 3 and Henson followed with 2.

Byers took the lead in rebounding with 3 with junior Taylor Cornett, Floyd and Henson following with 2 each.

The Lady Eagles, who would finish the tournament with a 13-3 record, were led in scoring by senior Amanda Noah with 26 points and sophomore Madison Ingram with 10.

The Lady Eagles went on to play competitively but fall by a 50-26 score to the powerful Murphy Lady Bulldogs who were led by 6'2" tournament MVP and future part time Towns County resident Jessica Beckner who has signed to play basketball at Young Harris College next year.

Union County 52, Lady Indians 33 – The loss to Hokes Bluff sent the Lady

Indians face to face with the Union County Lady Panthers for the third time this season after coming within six seconds of a victory in regulation before falling 60-55 in overtime in Hiwassee and by a 54-42 score in Blairsville when the Lady Panthers extended just a 45-42 lead the final 1:49 of the game for a deceptive final score.

This time, however, the Lady Indians were playing without the services of freshman Kennedy Henson who scored 26 points in the overtime home court loss and 20 in the loss in Blairsville.

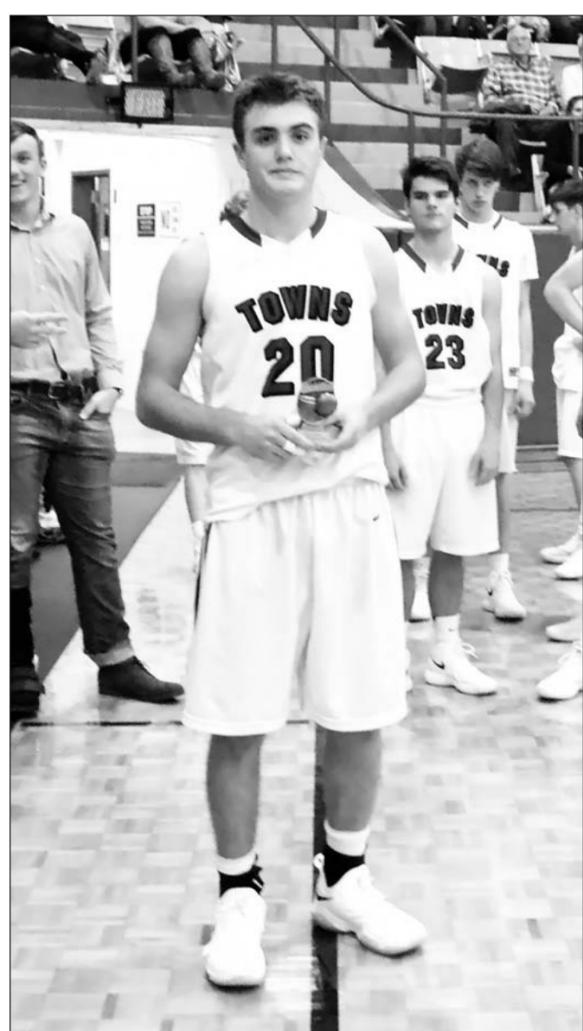
The Lady Indians got off to a good start with a trey by junior Kristen Byers giving them a 3-2 lead and a long deuce by freshman Vanessa Floyd giving them a 5-4 advantage by the 5:54 mark with a long deuce by senior Madison McClure extending the lead to 8-4 at the 3:28 mark.

The Lady Indians would endure a long dry spell after that, however, with the Lady Panthers using a 19-0 run for a 23-8 lead at 1:49 of the second quarter.

The Lady Indians would strike back, however, with a field goal by Floyd at forty one seconds and Byers' second try with three seconds left lifting them to within 24-13 at intermission. And when junior Taylor Cornett struck for a deuce and trey in just thirty three seconds at the start of the third quarter, the Lady Indians were suddenly within 24-18.

A trey, two free throws, and a field goal by the Lady Panthers had them ahead 31-18 at the 5:58 mark but the Lady Indians were within 37-27 entering the fourth quarter on the strength of three more treys by McClure, junior Erika Spano, and sophomore Sophia Shook during the final 5:46 of the third quarter.

The Lady Panthers would pull away during the final quarter, however, for a 52-33 win despite Shook's second trey and a two for two trip to the foul line for five points.



Boys All Tournament Team Zach Davenport. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

Leading scorers for the Lady Indians for the game were Shook with 9 points, Byers with 6, and the trio of Cornett, Floyd, and McClure with 5 each. Leaders in assists were all tournament selection McClure with 3 and Byers and Shook with 2 each while Floyd and Shook led in rebounds with 4 each and McClure followed with 3.

The Lady Panthers were led in scoring by sophomores Brooke Dockrey with 15 points and Andelin Hill with 10.

The Lady Panthers completed tournament play with an 8-4 overall record while the hard luck Lady Indi-

ans finished the 2017 portion of their schedule with a 4-8 overall record but including 2-0 in Region 8A.

TCHS basketball scheduling alert

Decisions about rescheduling the home games against Lakeview Academy and Southeast Whitfield County postponed by snow have been completed. The Lakeview Academy games have been rescheduled for Saturday, January 13 while the games against Southeast Whitfield County which were rescheduled for this Thursday, January 4, have now been canceled and will not be made up.