

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians defeat Athens Academy and Lakeview, title game delayed to Monday

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The second seeded Towns County Indians varsity basketball team got impressive victories over Athens Academy on Tuesday and Lakeview Academy of Gainesville on Friday of last week in the Region 8A Tournament in Commerce, earning a trip to the region championship game against the fourth seeded Riverside Military Academy of Gainesville.

The highly anticipated championship game scheduled for Saturday night, however, wound up being postponed until Monday of this week due to significant snow not only in and around Towns County but in metro Atlanta areas as well. Newspaper coverage of the championship game will be in next week's Herald.

The Indians improved their overall record to 18-7 to go along with a 7-3 regular season region record good for a tie for second place in region play and holding the tie breaker over Hebron Christian by virtue of a decisive win over this group of Lions in Dacula. And the two victories over Athens Academy and Lakeview Academy give the Indians a most impressive ten wins in their last eleven games.

The Indians have already qualified for the Class A Public State Tournament and they will host at least one game with the date for the first game depending upon where they finish during the last year of a Power Points system in Class A set up by the Georgia High School Association.

Up to five victories will be necessary to win the state championship in a situation where a victory is required to reach the next level with the losing team's season at each level coming to an end.

With several variables present, it is impossible at this writing to determine when the Indians will host their first game but it will be either on Friday or Saturday, February 14 or 15, of this week or on Wednesday or Thursday, February 19 or 20, of next week, depending upon final Power Points evaluations.

There is one certainty present, however, and that is if the Indians win the region tournament championship game over Riverside on Monday of this week, they will not play until Wednesday or Thursday of next week.

Those wishing to attend the first game will need to call the school or ask coaches, players or other fans when the Indians will play. Also, those on Facebook will be able to learn the date of the first game and any future games if victorious by visiting the Towns County Schools or Towns County High School Facebook site.

Indians 56, Athens Academy 45 – The Indians got off to a rousing start against Athens Academy with junior Kolby Moss including an old fashioned three point play and a trey among twelve points as they led by such scores as 5-0, 9-2, and 14-7 by the 2:32 mark of the first quarter.

A trey by the Spartans got them within 14-10 but a pair of deuces by sophomore Collin Crowder and a trey with five seconds on the clock by junior Colton Day gave the Indians a 17-2 closing run for a 21-12 lead at quarter's end.

The Indians continued their excellent run with a trey by junior Aidan Berrong just seventeen seconds into the



Aidan Berrong pulls up for a jumper from the free throw line during Towns County's Region Tournament victory over Athens Academy. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

second quarter for a 24-12 lead but their shooting suddenly went cold with Athens using three deuces to close to within 24-18. Crowder got the Indians back on track with a steal and coast to coast run for a deuce and a 26-18 lead and following a Spartan trey for a 26-21 score, Moss went four for four at the foul line and Berrong drove to the basket for a deuce as time ran out for a 32-21 Towns lead at intermission.

Berrong got the Indians off to a good start in the third quarter as in the second, this time with a deuce half a minute into the quarter for a 34-21 Indians lead but just as in the second quarter the Indians went cold again. A Spartan trey at the 6:53 mark got them off on an 11-1 run for just a 35-32 deficit at 2:40.

And just as in the second quarter, Crowder gave the Indians a big lift with a deuce with the Spartans, just like in the second quarter following with a trey for just a 37-35 Indians lead. Deuces by Moss, Day, and sophomore Kyle Oakes gave the Indians a 6-2 run for a 43-37 lead at 1:15 but the Spartans closed the quarter with a pair of baskets and were knocking on the door with just a 43-41 deficit entering the fourth quarter.

The Indians proved to be up to the task at hand, however, as they would score the first eight points of the fourth quarter for a 51-41 lead at the 3:26 mark and follow a Spartan deuce for a 51-43 score at 3:05 with five straight points and an overall 13-2 run for a commanding 56-43 lead at the 1:02 mark. The Spartans would score an uncontested layup with eight seconds on the clock with the Indians closing out a 56-45 victory highlighted by a 13-4 scoring advantage in the fourth quarter.

Crowder sank two free throws at the 6:38 mark and a deuce at 3:26 with Moss and Oakes sinking baskets in between during the opening 8-0 run while Moss would sink three of four free throw attempts and Oakes two of two attempts for the 5-0 closing Indians run.

Moss led the Indians in scoring for the game with 26 points and was followed by Crowder with 12, Berrong with 7, Oakes with 6, and Day with 5 while Moss also led in assists with 6 and was followed

by Berrong with 2. Crowder led in rebounds with 7 and was followed by Berrong with 5, Moss with 4, and Day and junior Luis Quijada with 3 each while Crowder and Oakes led in steals with 3 each and Crowder blocked 1 shot.

A staggering difference in free throw shooting accuracy was present in this game as the Indians sank fifteen of nineteen attempts while the Spartans missed all twelve of their attempts in the game.

The Spartans were led in scoring by juniors Deion Colzie with 22 points and Jack Nasworthy with 12. Football fans will probably be interested with many also disappointed to learn that Colzie has committed to leave Athens upon high school graduation to play football as a wide receiver for Notre Dame. The Spartans saw their record fall to 9-11 with the loss after compiling a 5-5 regular season region record.

Indians 51, Lakeview Academy 41 – The Indians and Lakeview engaged in a high scoring Indians victory with the Indians withstanding a late Lions rally from a 19-point fourth quarter deficit in a regular season game in Gainesville. Lakeview included four treys in a 19-5 scoring run to pull to within five points on January 21 in Gainesville before the Indians extended the lead for a 77-70 victory but defense came to the forefront by both teams in the heat of the region tournament last week.

Aided by a flurry of several Indian turnovers at the start of the game, Lakeview built a 6-1 lead in just two minutes and three seconds of playing time only to go stone cold shooting with the Indians scoring the final eleven points of the quarter for a 12-6 lead at quarter's end.

To be fair to the Lions, some of their shots during this Indians run appeared destined to fall through the basket but found a way to roll or bounce out or off the rim, something that has been present and reported on several occasions this year when happening to the Indians and Lady Indians, including in the Lady Indians' loss to Tallulah Falls in the tournament last week.

The Indians then got a three point play by sophomore Collin Crowder just twenty seconds into the second quarter for an overall 14-0 scoring run

and a 15-6 advantage. By that point in the game, Crowder had provided another three point play among a total of nine points with junior Kolby Moss sinking a pair of field goals for a 6-6 tie and an 8-6 lead at the 4:19 mark of the first quarter that the Indians would have threatened but never lose.

Following a pair of Lakeview deuces for a 15-10 score, the two teams would play on pretty even terms the remainder of the second quarter with Moss contributing a three point play and a two for two trip to the foul line for five points and junior Aidan Berrong a pair of deuces for four points as the Indians led 24-18 at intermission.

After sinking eight of nine free throw attempts the first half, the Indians would barely survive uncommon free throw shooting difficulties in the third quarter in holding their lead by sinking just five of fourteen attempts with Lakeview edging to within 33-30 entering the fourth quarter with Crowder providing six of nine Indian points in the quarter.

When the Lions sank a deuce almost a minute and a half into the fourth quarter to edge to within 33-32, the Indians responded with a soaring finish although not beginning a finishing surge until more than a minute later at the 5:22 mark.

Two free throws and a deuce by Moss and two free throws by sophomore Kyle Oakes and another by junior Colton Day in less than two minutes of playing time had them leading 40-32 at the 3:40 mark.

But they weren't through, although interrupted by a deuce and trey by the Lions for a 40-37 score at the 3:24 mark, as they used a second 7-0 run between the 3:13 and 1:34 marks on deuces by Berrong, Day, and Oakes and a free throw by Oakes for a 47-37 lead.

Four for four free throw shooting by Berrong then matched a deuce and two free throws by the Lions during the final 1:04 of the game for a 51-41 Indians victory and a trip to the region finals against Riverside Military but with a two days delay from Saturday to Monday night due to snow.

The Indians returned to the free throw shooting accuracy of the first half during the fourth quarter in adding to

and protecting their lead with ten for fourteen accuracy at the foul line with three of the four misses coming after the win was well in hand. This game against very aggressive defensive strategy by the Lions followed a pattern often discussed and present in a number of Indian games of significant advantages for the Indians at the foul line with their drives to the basket and protecting often small leads at the foul line during this very successful season.

At game's end, the Indians had sunk twenty three of thirty seven free throw attempts with thoughts on several occasions by Indians followers that even more attempts should have been awarded.

It is very rare to have had very significant free throw shooting difficulty present by opponents as in this game with the Lions sinking only three of eight attempts and Athens Academy missing all twelve attempts in the prior tournament game resulting in the two opponents sinking a total of just three free throws in twenty attempts.

Scoring leaders for the Indians were Crowder and Moss with 15 points each, Berrong with 10, and Oakes with 7 while leaders in assists were Berrong with 3 and Crowder and Oakes with 2 each. Moss took the lead in rebounds with 8 while the quartet of Berrong, Crowder,

Day, and Oakes followed with 4 each and leaders in steals were Berrong and Crowder with 3 each and Oakes with 2. Scoring leaders for the Lions were junior Conley Millwood with 12 points, senior Sam Stewart with 10, and sophomore Jones Harris with 9.

There are a couple of very interesting statistical comparisons between this game and the earlier game between the Indians and Lions in Gainesville. In the earlier game, the Lions sank twelve treys as compared to two in this game against a different defensive focus by the Indians.

And in the earlier game, 6'5" Lakeview junior Declan Weidner included four treys and eleven for eleven free throw shooting among thirty five points but he was held scoreless in the game last week.

Lakeview's record for the season fell to 11-16 for the season after compiling a 5-5 regular season region record and defeating Hebron Christian 61-43 in the tournament quarter finals on Wednesday.

They had won four straight games between their two losses to the Indians, including a 67-57 victory at Riverside Military, a 58-50 overtime win at Athens Academy, and a home court 70-61 triumph over Hebron Christian in the game prior to last week's tournament win over Hebron.



Kolby Moss splits a Lakeview double team. Photo/Lowell Nicholson