

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians place two in Top 10 at state; Coach Stowers proud of team

By Chad Stack
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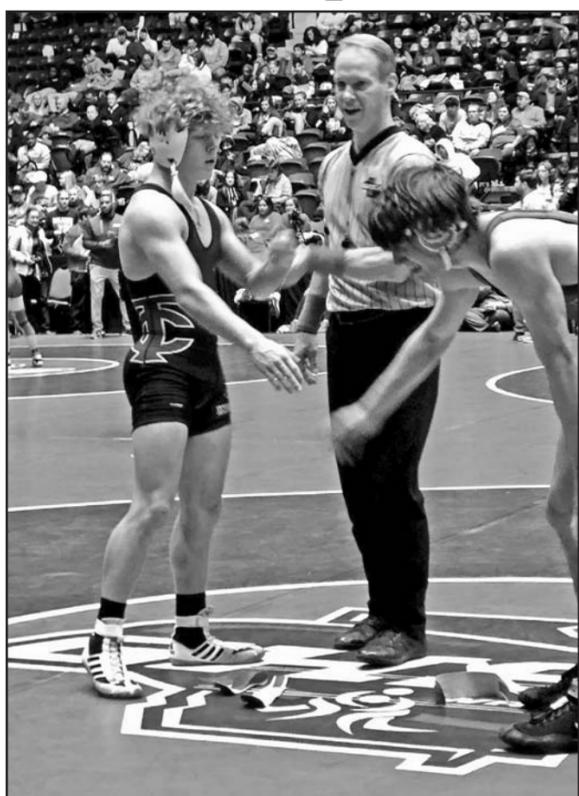
MACON – Towns County Wrestling finished its season last week in the 2020 Georgia High School Association State Tournament in Macon, placing two grapplers in the Top 10 for their respective weight classes.

Senior Austin Edrington, who wrestles in the 160-pound weight class, entered the tournament with a first-round bye. Edrington started the final state tournament of his wrestling career with a win by pin in the second round to advance him to one of the two semifinal matches.

In the semifinals, Edrington faced David Bertrand, one of the toughest wrestlers in the weight class. He battled hard but ultimately lost to Bertrand, who went on to earn First Place in the state for the 160-pound weight class.

Edrington finished the tournament in Sixth Place on Friday, Feb. 14, in Macon, and Head Coach Jeff Stowers said Edrington, who wrestled with a lot of talented grapplers in a tough weight class all season long, did well.

Junior Garrett Oakes advanced to his second straight GHSA State Tournament on Wednesday, Feb. 12, after earning the title of Area Champ followed by a Fourth-



Towns County junior Garrett Oakes on the mat during last weekend's State Wrestling Championships in Macon. Photos/Lisa Oakes

Place finish at sectionals in the 120-pound weight class.

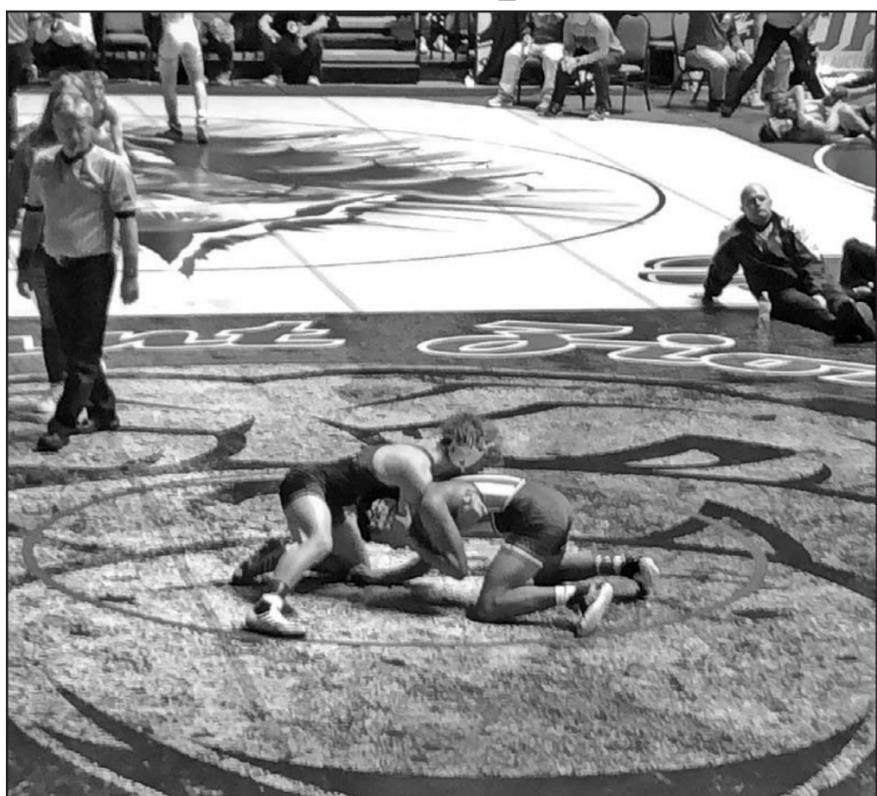
Oakes opened the state tournament with a first-round win over Aidan Conley, pinning his opponent just over three minutes into the match.

Going into his second-round bout, Oakes faced off against Trevor Borom from Strong Rock Christian School, with whom he

grappled just a week before during sectionals.

The junior grappler went the distance with Borom once again, though Borom ended up defeating the Indian by an 11-5 decision to give Oakes a Seventh-Place finish at state.

Oakes is a tough kid and a great wrestler, Stowers said, and the team is excited for his return next year during



his senior season. Stowers added that, like Edrington, Oakes wrestles in a tough weight class with a lot of very sound grapplers.

He has shown he can go toe to toe with the best of them, but unfortunately, last week just wasn't his week, Stowers said.

Also competing in the state tourney were juniors Hannah Wecer in the 122-

pound weight class and Lindsey Giles in the 172-pound weight class. It was Wecer's second appearance at the Girls State Wrestling Tournament, now in its second year.

Wecer and Giles wrestled well but were unable to advance in the competition.

Stowers and his coaching staff have had great success over the years with the

wrestling program at Towns County. Bringing back the middle school wrestling program will help to continue their success, Stowers said.

The middle school has a great head coach in Evan Woodard, who has a wealth of wrestling knowledge, Stowers said, adding that the kids really seem to like him and enjoy wrestling for him.

Soccer: Indians, Lady Indians to kick season off in Stephens County Feb. 20

By Chad Stack
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Staff Writer

Towns County Soccer will take to the road for season opening matches against Stephens County on Thursday, Feb. 20. The Lady Indians will play at 5 p.m. followed by the Indians at 7 p.m.

Soccer players have been busy practicing in the weeks leading up to the start of the spring sports season.

Looking to build on to last year's stellar performance, second-year Head Coach Rollie Thomas said he feels good about 2020, as he is returning 11 of the 14 players who made history with the first Indians playoff berth in school history.

Certainly, the Indians have set the bar high for the 2020 season after finishing 2019 with a 6-7 overall record while going undefeated in the region, 6-0.

And the Indians finished with a Top 15 ranking to earn them a homefield playoff game, though their postseason berth was short lived, as Morris Innovative of Dalton defeated the Indians at home.

With most of last year's team returning, Thomas said he feels confident they can build on their recent successes to make another playoff run. Furthermore, as this is his second year at the helm, all his players have a full year of experience playing in his system.

Returning from last, junior midfielder Peyton Barrett is expected to continue his dominance on the field with excellent ball skills and



Clay Livingston takes over as the Lady Indians' new head coach following three successful seasons under coach John Cornett. Photos/Chad Stack

footwork.

Barrett is an exceptional talent who knows the game very well, Thomas said, adding that his sister Brooke Barrett did great things for Towns County Soccer as well.

Also returning for the 2020 season are junior goalkeeper Liam King and junior forward Garrett Oakes, along with several others.

Thomas said he was honored to be coaching such a great group of kids, all of whom have a lot of experience, play hard and genuinely love the game of soccer.

The Lady Indians will start the 2020 season with a new head coach in Clay Liv-

ingston after the departure of three-year Head Coach John Cornett. Livingston will be working hard to build on the successes the Lady Indians have experienced over the last three years.

Last year, the Lady Indians advanced to the Elite Eight, forcing their match against the Academy for Classical Education Charter School into overtime before losing to ACE in a penalty-

kick shootout.

The Lady Indians have cultivated a reputation for winning, and with several players returning from last year's Elite Eight team, Livingston should have no problem carrying on the success of recent years.

Losing Taylor Cornett and Lea Neumyer to graduation in 2019 will make things tougher this season, but Livingston still has 12 Lady

Indians who have experience playing in two Elite Eight matches.

The Lady Indians will travel to Hayesville for a game against the Lady Yellowjackets on Tuesday, Feb. 25, at 4:30 p.m.

Towns County will host the Rabun County Wildcats for the Indians and Lady Indians' home openers on Friday, Feb. 28, with the girls starting things off at 5 p.m. followed by the boys at 7 p.m.

