

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Indians headed to State, face Turner County in Round 1

By Shelly Knight  
Staff Writer  
Towns County Herald

The Indians have been playing big boy basketball in the last few games leading up to the state tourney, which opens Feb. 18 or 19 at Turner County.

On Friday Feb. 7, the boys took on Washington-Wilkes and in a tightly contested game they won 63-50.

The Lady Indians season came to a close following a 54-41 loss to Greene County in the first-round of the Region 8-A tournament.

In the boys win over Washington Wilkes, the Indians trailed by a point at the end of the first, but Towns was able to rebound and go into halftime with a 7-point lead. The teams traded the lead several times, but in the end, Towns scored 26 points in the fourth quarter. The win allowed the Indians to advance to the state playoffs for the sixth year in a row.

Tucker Engert led the scoring with 23 points and Cruz Kitchens scored 16 points. Dustin Barrett pitched in 10 and Jonas Rouse had 9 points. Mason Pierson scored 3 points and Sam Sarafin scored two.

"I'm so proud of the boys



Freshman Tucker Engert went for 23, 21 and 29 points in three region tournament games. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

tonight. We locked up state with tonight's game," said head coach Brian Hunnicutt.

But Washington Wilkes was not the last battle to fight. On Thursday, Feb. 13th the boys took on Warren County and lost by a final score of 67-64.

"Very, very proud of the boys' effort tonight," said Coach Hunnicutt. "Warren County has won this region for the last several years. They are atop of the state. We knew it would be a tough game and we just came up a little bit short. But I'm



Jonas Rouse averaged nearly 14 points a game in Towns County's three region tournament games last week. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

so proud of their effort. Twice tonight Warren stretched the lead to double digits and were going to pull away. But the boys fought back and made it a game. I couldn't be more proud."

The Indians made it a game at the end, but ultimately, Warren hit enough free throws to hold on.

"At that point the clock is your worst enemy," said Hunnicutt.

Engert led the scoring with 21 points. Rouse had 18, Barrett had 13, Cruz had eight, Pierson had 2 points and Sarafin had two.

last two years so to beat them for the third time this year kind of seems like redemption. Obviously, they came out ready to play and had a lead on us at the half. The third quarter made all the difference. I think we out-scored them by 15 points. We challenged the boys at halftime. We knew what they had in them. They just played magnificently and I'm just so proud of them."

Engert led Towns with 29 points, followed by Rouse with 14. Kitchens scored 13 points and Barrett netted 12 points. Sarafin had three and Pierson scored two. John Durham added some good defense in a team effort.

Towns has secured third place Region 8-A and will challenge second-seeded Turner County this coming Tuesday or Wednesday, depending on how other match-ups play out.

"It'll be a tough task, going all the way down there playing in their home gym and so far from home but the one good thing about being in this region is it prepares our kids for long trips. We do it every week," said Hunnicutt.

"For most kids around the state, when playoffs start it's a unique experience having to travel for three or four hours. For our kids it's just another weeknight. If the boys win this next contest, we will move on to the 'Sweet Sixteen.'"

Whatever happens the Towns county boys have shown incredible athleticism and resilience this season, while they have put on some amazing shows for an adoring crowd.

## Wrestling: Jack Stowers places sixth at State

By Shelly Knight  
Staff Writer  
Towns County Herald

Jefferson - Towns County sent five grapplers to the state qualifier the week of Feb. 10th.

"We were only able to get one wrestler through: Jack Stowers," said Coach Clay Livingston.

"Overall, we wrestled pretty well, but this tournament was one of the toughest and deepest qualifiers I have ever been to. As far as I can tell, wrestling is the only sport in Class A where D1 and D2 are combined. We also compete against private schools. It was disappointing not to get more kids through, but I am proud of the way they competed and how much all of the kids improved over the course of the season."



Jack Stowers

Stowers competed in the State tournament held in Macon on February 13-14, finishing sixth at 165 lbs.

"He overcame a first-

round loss to win three matches and make it to the medal rounds. It was one of the more gritty and impressive performances I have ever seen at the state tourney," Livingston said.

"Last year, he came up just short of the medal round and this year he was dominant in the blood round to punch his ticket to a spot on the podium, beating Gordon Lee 11-0. We look forward to his senior year and hopefully a chance at the finals."

"Overall, it was a very successful year. We will sorely miss senior Nick Vargas, not only for all of the team points he racked up, but even more so for his leadership and presence in the practice room."

"We have four sectional qualifiers coming back and many who were close and some solid middle school kids coming up. We are excited about the possibilities next year."

"I would like to thank Jack Stowers for all of his sacrifices this year for our program and the parents for all of their hard work fundraising and supporting our wrestlers."

## Shop with a Cop Bass Tournament Fundraiser

Shop With a Cop Bass Tournament Fundraiser on March 29th at Ledfords Chapel Boat Ramp. Entry fee: \$70 prior to March 29th or \$90 at the ramp. Register by emailing Bronson.Kirby@andrewsnc.gov. TIFeb12.A2JH

## Towns County Recreation Department Senior (60+) 3 on 3 Basketball League

The Towns County Recreation Department is starting a Senior (60+), 3 on 3 league. Thursday Mornings at 9 AM. \$40 per person.

The number of games are to be determined by the number of teams in the league. Sign-up individually, but the teams can be made. Please email tcrecchris@gmail.com for more details. TIFeb12.A2JH



## YHC Athletics chalk up team, individual victories

Young Harris College Men's and Women's Basketball teams both defeated Southern Wesleyan soundly in the Harp Recreation and Commencement Center on Tuesday, Feb. 11.

The women put up a dominant and historic performance, getting past the Warriors with a final score of 99-69. The Mountain Lions had an impressive six athletes in double-digit figures; 99 total points, 17 players with 3-pointers, and 29 assists are all new records for Young Harris Women's Basketball in Division II program history!

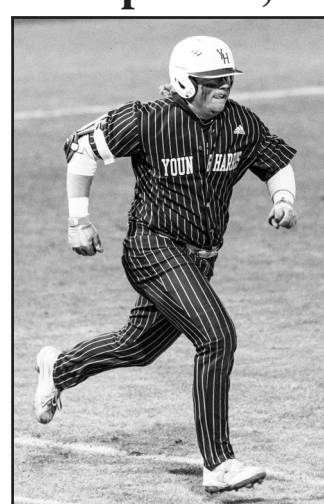
On the men's side, YH fended off a late push from SWU and won with a final score of 78-68 for another home win.

Women's Lacrosse picked up their first win of the year in a 18-13 victory over Converse University on the road Feb. 12. Riley Parker led the charge with an astounding offensive performance, recording seven goals and two assists to fuel Young Harris to the win.

YH Baseball's Kade Smallwood was awarded NCBWA Southeast Region Player of the Week and Conference Carolinas Player of the Week accolades. The sophomore designated hitter hailing from Flowery Branch, Georgia, delivered an outstanding offensive performance for the Mountain Lions during their four games in the inaugural Conference Carolinas/South Atlantic Conference/Peach Belt Conference series this season.

Smallwood was a force at the plate, hitting an impressive .529 while launching three home runs, driving in 10 runs, and crossing the plate five times.

Junior midfielder Evan Anderson picked up Conference Carolinas Defensive Player of the Week honors after playing a major role in the



Kade Smallwood

YH Men's Lacrosse victory over Tusculum. He scooped up 17 groundballs and went 24-27 in face-offs.

Senior attackman Tommy Christz was named the Conference Carolinas Player of the Week after scoring five goals and adding five assists over the weekend as well. Collectively, Anderson and Christz were named to the USILA Men's Lacrosse Team of the Week for their impressive efforts.

YH Baseball was set to take on the University of North Georgia in the Battle of Blood Mountain after press time on Feb. 18, first pitch scheduled for 3 p.m. Also, be on the lookout for the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony that is happening at the Men's Basketball game vs King University on Feb. 19! Tip-off for the women is scheduled for 5 p.m., and 7 p.m. for the men.



Courtney Davis with Ball Possession for the Mountain Lions

