

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Lady Indians win at Talbotton, season ends with competitive loss at GMC

By Jerry Kendall  
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The Towns County Lady Indians varsity basketball team hit the road last week for games at Talbotton in west central Georgia near Columbus and Milledgeville in central Georgia near Macon and got a split decision. As the third seeded team from Region 8A Public, the Lady Indians got a 45-37 victory over Central of Talbotton, the second seeded team from Region 5A Public on Tuesday. They then led for most of the first three quarters but fell by a 53-44 score to top ten ranked Georgia Military College, the top seeded team in Region 7A Public in a game which was not put out of reach by the winners until the final 1:20 of the game.

The Lady Indians completed their season with a 12-13 record against a most formidable schedule as described in articles throughout the season.

There are many points which could be made in describing the challenging schedule but perhaps the most informative may be that twelve of the Lady Indians' losses came against eight teams which all won 16 or more games, including a current 25-0 record by Lake Oconee Academy, the top ranked Class A Public team in the state and the champion of the Lady Indians' Region 8A Public.

All eight teams of course reached the state tournament and three of the eight have qualified for the Elite Eight in their classification and another reached the Sweet 16 in state competition.

**Lady Indians 45, Central of Talbotton 37** - Sophomore Sarah Shook opened the scoring in this game with a steal and a coast to coast run for a field goal at the 7:11 mark of the first quarter for a 2-0 lead the Indians would not relinquish.

The game would be marked by challenges by the Lady Tigers of Central of Talbotton and answers by the Lady Indians who, it might be said, bent but didn't break on occasion in coming up with key shots and defensive plays.

The Lady Indians methodically built leads by scores such as 5-0, 10-3, 13-6, and 17-10 in first quarter action but with two free throws getting the Lady Hawks within 17-12 at quarter's end.

Senior Kennedy Henson led the first quarter excellence by including a trey, a deuce, and 3-for-4 free throw shooting among 8 points with senior Vanessa Floyd contributing four points on two deuces and freshman Laura Mauldin three points on a putback basket and a free throw.

A putback basket by Central at the 7:27 mark of the second quarter got them within 17-14 but the Lady Indians used a trey by Shook and a deuce and trey by Henson in an 8-3 run for a 25-17 lead by the midpoint of the second quarter with the



Senior Kennedy Henson at the free throw line during last week's Sweet 16 contest at Georgia Military College. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

appearance of taking control of the game.

That would not be the case at this time, however, as both teams went more than four minutes from their previous points without scoring until the Lady Hawks sank two treys during the final 1:06 of the quarter for just a 25-23 deficit at intermission.

A Henson trey just twenty four seconds into the third quarter got the Lady Indians ahead 28-23 but it required a trey by Floyd at the 3:34 mark to get a 32-27 Towns lead which became 38-27 on three for four free throw shooting by Henson and a trey by Shook with the Lady Indians lead being 39-29 entering the fourth quarter.

Another dry spell for both teams occurred in the fourth quarter when the Lady Indians managed just a Henson free throw at the 6:18 mark for a 40-29 lead but with the Lady Hawks using a trey and a deuce to close to within 40-34 at the 3:08 mark.

The Lady Indians were up to the task at hand again, however, as Shook sank her third trey of the game at the 2:49 mark for a 43-34 lead and senior Jayce Young nearly matched three for four free throw shooting by Central with a field goal at the 1:57 mark giving the Lady Indians a 45-37 lead which became the final score when the Lady Indians held the Lady Hawks scoreless the rest of the way.

Henson led the Lady Indians in scoring with 21 points and was followed by Shook with 11, Floyd with 7, and freshman Laura Mauldin and senior Jayce Young with 3 each while leaders in assists were Henson with 4 and Floyd and senior Abby Mauldin with 2 each.

Leaders in rebounds were Henson with 8, Floyd with 7, Laura Mauldin with 4, and Abby Mauldin with 3 while leaders in steals were Henson with 3 and Floyd and Young with 2 each.

Scoring leaders for Central of Talbotton were senior Ty'Shemia Bunkley with 17 points, sophomore Alayla Sparks with 9, and junior Renijua Johnson with 8.

The Lady Hawks completed their season with a 7-4 overall record, including 5-2 in regular season region play and they were the Class A Public state runners up last year with a 27-2 record, including losing the championship game to Wheeler County by a 55-50 score.

**Georgia Military College 53, Lady Indians 44** - The Lady Indians faced a tall order in traveling some 150 miles to Milledgeville last Friday to face the Georgia Military College high school division team which entered the game with a 17-1 record and ranked fifth in the state in Class A Public by the Atlanta Journal and Constitution (AJC).

The Lady Bulldogs' only loss was to Region 8AA Elbert County, the top ranked Class 2A team in the state by the AJC with a current record of 24-2 and with their two losses to higher classification schools.

The Indians came oh so close to hosting a game against Bowdon on this date instead of traveling to Milledgeville as the GMC ladies used their earned home court status as the top seeded team from Region 7A to take a win over Bowdon, the fourth seeded team from Region 6A, but just by a score of 54-52 in overtime after trailing Bowdon 25-12 at halftime.

If Bowdon had pulled out a victory they would have had to travel to TCHS for the Friday game as the Lady Indians would have been the higher seed and earning home court advantage. But those are the breaks of the game in post season play.

The Lady Indians used excellent defense the first half and used a game opening three point basket by senior Vanessa Floyd for a 3-0 lead

they would hold, with the exception of a brief tie until the final minute of the third quarter. And they would be within five points until the final minute and twenty seconds of the game when the Lady Dogs finished on a mini 5-1 scoring run for a 53-44 victory.

Floyd completed the quarter with a pair of deuces for seven points and senior Kennedy Henson, who had sunk two free throws early in the quarter, ended it with a long bank shot trey at the buzzer for a 12-9 Lady Indians lead following the aforementioned tie of 9-9 which lasted for just 19 seconds prior to Henson's shot.

The Lady Indians then used the scoring punch of Floyd and Henson in second quarter action in building leads of 17-9 and 23-12 before Georgia Military sank two free throws with 24.4 seconds on the clock for a 23-14

Towns lead at intermission.

The Lady Indians continued to maintain control of the game at the beginning of the third quarter with four points on a deuce and two free throws by Floyd and field goals by Henson and sophomore Sarah Shook giving them a slight 8-7 advantage to that point in the quarter for a 31-21 lead at the 5:39 mark.

Just nine seconds later, however, the Lady Dogs sank the first of two treys in less than a minute of playing time and added a pair of deuces by the 53-second mark for a 31-31 tie.

Henson sank a free throw at 11.2 seconds for a 32-31 Lady Indians lead but as Henson had done at the end of the first quarter, the Lady Dogs sank a long bank shot trey with "lots of iron" on this one but the ball finally falling in the basket at the buzzer for a 34-32 GMC lead.

The Lady Dogs would

maintain their fortunate lead for the remainder of the game but not without serious challenges by the Lady Indians.

After the Lady Dogs opened the fourth quarter with a pair of baskets for a 38-32 lead, two free throws by Floyd and a field goal by Shook had the Lady Indians within 38-36 at the 4:45 mark.

A driving layup for two points by senior Jayce Young then had the Lady Indians within 42-38 at 3:26 and a trey by Henson and a deuce by Floyd wrapped around two free throws by the Lady Dogs had the Lady Indians within 48-43 at the 1:32 mark and victory still within reach.

But a drive for two points by GMC at the 1:20 mark got them started on the aforementioned 5-1 finish, including just three for seven free throw shooting, for a deceptive final score of 53-44 when considering the competitiveness of the game.

Officiating has not been mentioned as a factor in who has won a game played by the Lady Indians or Indians all season with no thoughts of this having happened but there were times in your reporter's view during this game when more consistent officiating related to fouls called on light touches and no calls on sometimes heavy contact could have changed the outcome of the game.

Scoring leaders for the Lady Indians for the game were Floyd with 22 points, Henson with 14, and Shook with 4 while Floyd, Henson, and senior Abby Mauldin led in assists with 2 each.

Leaders in rebounds were Henson with 11, Floyd with 5, Mauldin with 4, and Young with 3 while Henson and Shook led in steals with 2 each.

The Lady Bulldogs were led in scoring by seniors Deandria Stephens with 22 points, DeAisha Stephens with 15, and Mary Lawrence with 6.

## Mountain Gymnastics Center captures four golds at Winter Warm-Up

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**Dahlonega** - Blairsville's Mountain Gymnastics Center brought home four first-place all-around performances from January's Winter Warm-Up in Dahlonega.

Shy'Ann Beasley, Addison Harkins, Madelyn Primeaux, and Josie Poston each turned in their respective levels' highest all-around score at the January 23-24 event. In AAU Silver competition, Beasley's 37.4 marked the overall high score of the entire day and Harkins' 36.9 all-around tally was the fourth-best total.

Primeaux recorded a 36.3 score in AAU Bronze, finishing tied for first with a 9.6 on the beam and tying for second on the bars with a 9.0. In USA Gold Level 6, MGC picked up the top four spots, headlined by Poston's first-place performance.

Poston's 36.65 all-around score featured a pair of first-place finishes on the vault (9.3) and floor exercises (9.5). Right behind Poston was teammate Emma Schuette with a 36.625, highlighted by a first-place score of 9.3 on the bars. Lola Patton came in third with a 36.6 behind a high score of 9.35 on the beam.

Rounding out Union's top four was Avery Frechette's 36.15 that included third-place performances on the vault and the bars.

As for Beasley and Harkins in AAU Silver competition, Beasley's day included first-place scores on the vault (9.5) and bars (9.4). Meanwhile, Harkins placed first in three of four events, along with a second on the beam.

Other notable AAU Silver performances included Keely Shook's second-best all-around score of 35.4 that saw her place second on the vault. Madelyn Early came in third all-around after taking first with a 9.6 on the bars.

Addyson Lee (sixth), Grace Rice (seventh) and Lind-



The Mountain Gymnastics Center AAU Silver squad featured two first-place finishers at the Winter Warm-Up in Dahlonega. Photo/submitted



The USA Gold Level 6 team took home each of the top four spots in Dahlonega in January. Photo/submitted

Sey Hammond (eighth) each recorded a top-eight finish for MGC.

Kylee Coggins was third all-around in AAU Bronze, tying for second on the beam. Lucie Burgess, Brooke Mowry and Selah Patterson each placed fifth in their respective AAU Bronze age groups, while Bay-

lor Sullivan was sixth.

Shaylynn Davis came in third behind a second-place score on the bars in AAU Gold. Abby Brown placed eighth; Nevaeh Leopold was ninth.

In USA Gold, Reese Chambers turned in a pair of top-fives on the bars and beam.



The third-seeded Lady Indians went on the road twice in last week's Class A Public State Tournament, falling just short of two victories and an Elite 8 appearance. Photo/Lowell Nicholson