

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians remain undefeated with wins over Fannin, Providence and Union

By Jerry Kendall
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Last week was a busy and rewarding one for the Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team as they took three straight victories in extending their record to 5-0, but not without some moments of drama included.

They led for most of the first two competitive games against Fannin County and Providence Christian while trailing for most of the Union game but rallying in the final two minutes for a resounding victory.

Fannin County and Union County were Class AAA opponents, although Union remains Class AA size based on enrollment, while the Providence Christian game provided the Indians their first Region 8A victory.

Indians 62, Fannin County 53 – The Indians broke out to a 6-1 lead by the 5:37 mark of the first quarter against also undefeated Fannin County with a 3-0 record last Tuesday on a trey by Zach Davenport and an old fashioned three point play by Will De Vries and appeared to be breaking the game open following the third of three ties of 11-11.

Treys by De Vries and Colton Shook and a three point play by Davenport highlighted a 14-3 run by the Indians between the 1:46 mark of the first quarter and the 4:56 mark of the second for a 25-14 Towns lead.

The visiting Rebels then took their turn on a strong scoring surge, however, as they finished the quarter on a 12-2 run for just a 27-26 Indian lead by intermission. De Vries wound up with eight points during first half action for the Indians with Davenport and Logan Cowart right behind with six each.

The Rebels continued their good work by taking leads of 28-27 and 30-29 early in the third quarter but two free throws by Davenport at the 6:25 mark got the Indians a lead of 31-30 they would hold for the remainder of the game but not without a late challenge by the Rebels.

The free throws triggered a 12-2 Indian run ending with dunks by Will Travis and Cowart for a 41-32 Towns lead at 3:06 but the Rebels edged to within 43-37 entering the fourth quarter. Five Indians put points on the scoreboard in the



Logan Cowart goes up for two against Union County. He would later score on a two-handed dunk in the second half Photo/Lowell Nicholson

third quarter with Davenport and Travis leading with four each.

The Indians opened the fourth quarter on a 13-5 run highlighted by a De Vries three point play and Travis' second dunk of the game for a seemingly safe 56-42 lead with just 3:43 on the clock. But the Rebels would not go quietly, however, striking for a 9-0 run between the 3:16 and one minute marks for just a 56-51 Indian lead.

Davenport sank two clutch free throws at 36.7 seconds beginning a six for eight finish at the foul line for the Indians which saw them regain control in a 62-53 victory. Davenport and De Vries provided seven points each in fourth quarter action for the Indians.

Leading scorers for the game for the Indians were Davenport with 18 points, De Vries with 17, Travis with 10, Cowart with 9, and Major Moss with 5 while Davenport and Moss led in assists with 4 each and De Vries followed with 2.

Leaders in rebounds were De Vries with 9, Cowart and Moss with 7 each, and Travis with 5. Junior Cole Ledford returned to

varsity action in this game for the Indians after a long recovery period for a fractured finger.

Indians 83, Providence Christian 61 – It was a lengthy drive to Lilburn in metro Atlanta last Friday for the Indians' game against the Providence Christian Storm but considered to be worth the trip as the Indians took an early lead they would never relinquish and increased it by small margins in each additional quarter on the way to an 83-61 victory.

The Indians forced three ties of 2-2, 4-4, and 6-6 on a field goal by Will Travis and two by Major Moss before a Will De Vries free throw got them the previously referenced 7-6 lead with 6:05 left in the first quarter. They extended the lead to 25-19 by quarter's end with six points each by Moss and Travis and five each by Logan Cowart and Zach Davenport leading the way in first quarter play.

De Vries and Moss each included a trey among eleven and eight points respectively in the second quarter as the Indian lead rose to 47-37 by intermission.

Davenport contributed eight points and Cowart four in the third

quarter with the Indians leading 65-50 entering the fourth when six different Indians dented the scoreboard with Davenport again leading the way with five points as they closed out the 83-61 victory.

The Indians placed all five starters in double figures in scoring with Davenport leading with 22 points and followed by De Vries with 19, Moss with 14, Cowart with 11, and Travis with 10.

The team totalled nineteen assists for the game with leaders being Davenport and Moss with 5 each, Colton Shook with 3, and De Vries with 2 while leaders in rebounds were Cowart with 8, De Vries and Moss with 7 each, Davenport with 6, and Travis with 4.

Indians 67, Union County 60 – In coming face to face with the Union County Panthers for the second time in less than two weeks before a nearly full house on Saturday night in the Towns County Gym, the Indians could help but recall the impressive last ditch rally the Panthers used at Union when they reduced a twenty four point lead entering the fourth quarter to nine by game's end.

And there was the matter of

a potential fatigue factor as a result of the Indians having had a long bus trip to Lilburn the night before for a very competitive victory over the Providence Storm.

So the Indians could be expected to have a tough battle with the Panthers who had no game on Friday night. The opening moments of the game gave no indication of a letdown for the Indians, however, as they sprang out to a 7-2 lead barely three and a half minutes into the game.

But the Panthers would quickly turn the game around starting at the 4:19 mark of the first quarter by going on an extended 23-8 scoring run for what would be their biggest lead of 25-15 by the 6:36 mark of the second quarter.

After that it was catchup time for the Indians for most of the remainder of the game with some of the Indian heroics to be addressed in the following paragraphs.

All five Indian starters put points on the scoreboard in the first quarter with Zach Davenport leading with four while Major Moss had the hot hand in the second with eight as the Indians closed the aforementioned 25-15 deficit to

32-29 by intermission.

The Panthers sank three treys in the second quarter and matched that total in the third when they led by as much as 37-30 by the six minutes mark.

The Indians used a mini run within the quarter highlighted by a field goal and two free throws by Moss for four points for 38-37 and 40-39 leads by the 3:11 mark. The Panthers finished the quarter on a 10-3 run, however for a 49-43 lead entering the fourth quarter with Davenport providing a team leading six points during the frame.

The Indians edged to within 49-46 on two free throws by Logan Cowart and 51-48 on a pair by Davenport by the 5:41 mark of the fourth quarter but two Panther field goals tied their biggest second half lead of 55-48 at 4:56. Will De Vries would rise to the occasion after that, initially using a field goal and four for four free throw shooting but for a still prominent 60-55 Union advantage by the 2:13 mark.

The Panthers had used a 12-3 run the final 1:59 of the game as part of an overall 17-6 finish at Union County referenced earlier but this time it was the Indians' turn to return a similar favor during the exact same time frame. De Vries tipped in a field goal at that 1:59 mark and a Moss steal and pass led to another basket by De Vries at 1:48 with the Indians knocking on the door in trailing just 60-59.

With the Panthers unable to connect with the basket during the final Indian run, Moss found Davenport open for a field goal and a 61-60 Towns lead at 1:23. Colton Shook assisted Cowart on a basket at forty seconds for a 63-60 score, De Vries sank two free throws at 18.1 seconds and Moss beat Union's full court pressure in finding Davenport for a final break-away layup at four seconds and the Indians had a thrilling 67-60 victory on a 12-0 run to end the game.

Davenport and De Vries tied for scoring honors for the Indians for the game with 19 points each with other leaders being Moss with 14 and Cowart with 9 while Moss led in assists with 6 and was followed by Davenport with 3 and Colton Shook with 2. Cowart took the lead in rebounds with 11 with Moss right behind with 10 and De Vries adding 5.

Editor's note: Lady Indians coverage from last week's games will be in next week's paper.

More than 1,000 matches wrestled at King of the Mountains

By Shawn Jarrard
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Once again, the King of the Mountains wrestling tournament has proven itself a force to be reckoned with.

Hundreds of spectators recently filled nearly every nook and cranny of the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center, a venue worthy of the six-mat wrestling fest that took place over the weekend.

With 26 varsity teams and 30 junior varsity teams from schools all over Georgia and the Tri-State area, the tournament was just plain massive.

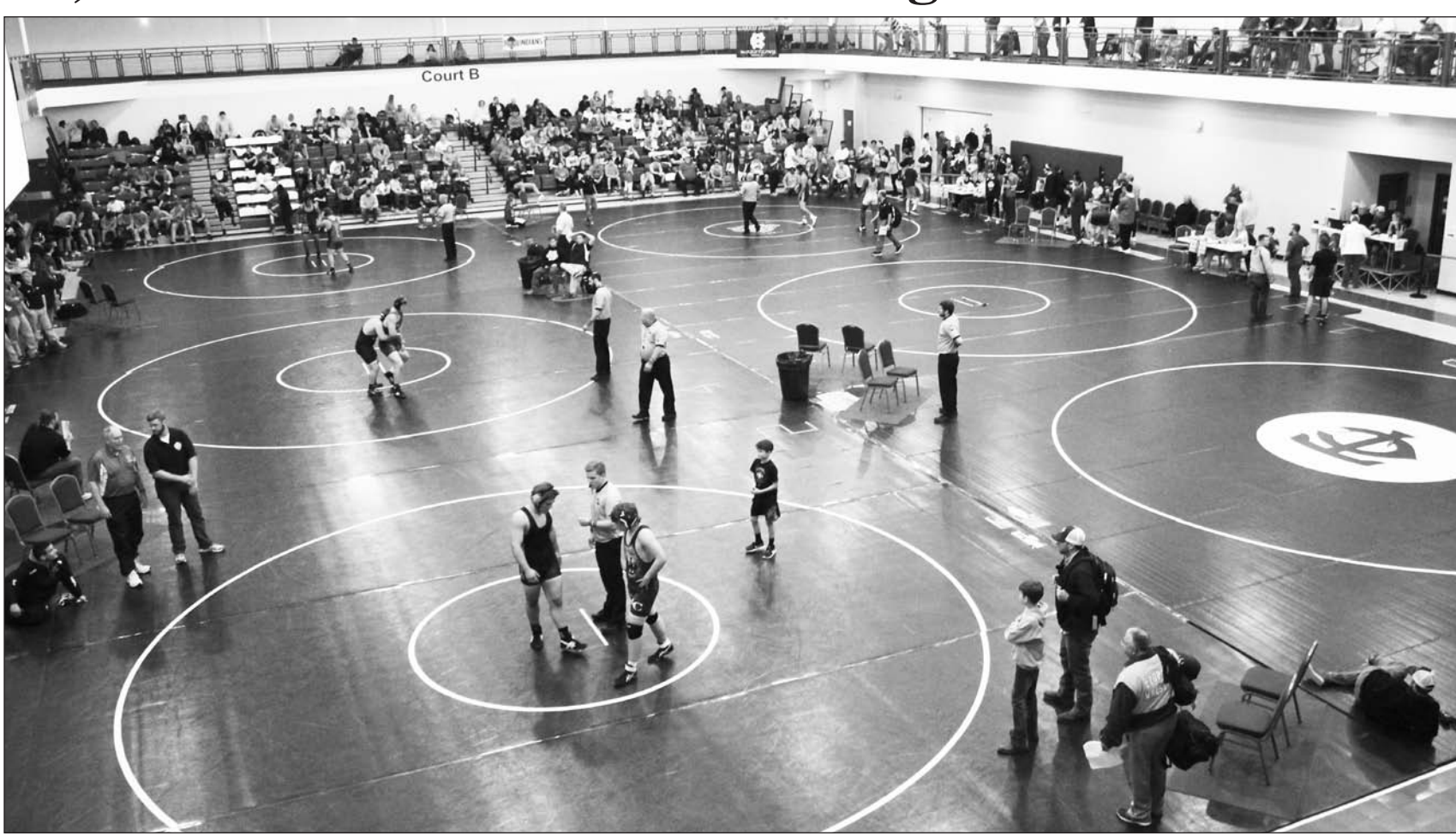
Sponsored by Towns County Wrestling, the tournament spanned two days and needed every last minute of competition to complete the sheer volume of matches – more than 500 competitors and 1,000 matches.

According to Indians Head Coach Jeff Stowers, the 2016 KOM was one of the most successful years for the tournament to date.

"I felt like it was the smoothest the tournament has ever gone," said Coach Stowers. "We didn't have any computer glitches or technology glitches. Ken Edwards did our head table and is phenomenal."

"And all of our alumni and wrestling people that worked the tables did an outstanding job. All weekend long, the people in the concession stand were great and the people in the Hospitality Room were great. It was the best the tournament has ever run from an efficiency standpoint."

"From start to finish, we took a 30-minute break for dinner on Friday night and a 20-minute break on Saturday for lunch, and we wrestled 1,000 matches in that time period. Even the referees commented that it was the best tournament they'd ever been to as far as the running of the tournament went and how smooth everything went."



The new Towns County Recreation Center hosted one of the most successful KOM Tournaments according to Coach Jeff Stowers. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

Of course, as with all contact sports, injuries do occur, and one wrestler out of White County had to be taken to the hospital with a severe concussion, though it has become clear that he is currently recovering and should be okay.

"Besides that, all six mats ran nonstop for two days, and we didn't have any downtime," said Coach Stowers. "That's a testament to the work of the people at the tournament and how well they did. It was a good weekend from that perspective."

The Indians came in Eighth Place for the tournament, though the scores were so close that the Boys in Blue could have come in fourth or better if they'd gotten just a win or two more.

"Nick Shook gets beat by 1 in the semis on what I consider a bad call, and I argued with the referee and lost the argument," said Coach

Stowers. "But he got beat on a bad call in the semifinals."

"Russell Cox is wrestling a match and winning, and winds up getting hooked and getting pinned. And if we win those two semifinal matches, then we're in fourth. We were two matches away from fourth, and that's how close it was. Third through eighth were separated by less than 10 points."

Coach Stowers is definitely pleased with his wrestlers' performances, and concedes that yes, they do have room to improve, but that they wrestled well as a team, with a few individuals standing out over the weekend.

"We had some individuals that had great tournaments," said Coach Stowers. "Kaine Hoffman had an outstanding tournament, finished Second Place. Nick Shook had a great tournament, finished Third. Russell Cox had a great tournament, finished

Third. Blaine Rogers had a great tournament, finished Third.

"There were some matches that we could have won that we didn't, and when you get in a tournament, especially that's that tight, every bonus point counts."

Added Coach Stowers: "We had a great tournament overall. The kids wrestled hard, and the JV kids wrestled great all day Saturday. The field was tougher this year than it's ever been. Top to bottom, the competition level was way up for our tournament."

Even the student athletes who didn't place ended up making Coach Stowers proud, as he recognized the desire to succeed in his young players.

"Our kids competed," said Coach Stowers. "Even kids that didn't place – Blake Silvers, been wrestling for three weeks, and is one match away from placing. Kendall

Barnard hasn't wrestled in two years, one match away from placing."

"I felt like Logan Quinton, who wrestled on Friday – hasn't wrestled in a year and a half, and he comes out and wrestles. I think he probably could have placed, but he got the stomach bug on Friday and we had to send him home, and he didn't get to wrestle at all on Saturday."

"Michael Moss wrestled well and just was in a tough weight class and got beat. Even our kids that didn't place wrestled really well. It was a real competitive tournament – it was tough and it was tight."

"The team didn't finish as well as I'd hoped we'd finish, but realistically speaking, any one of those kids wins another match and we jump up two or three places. Any one of those kids that finished third that's in the finals and finishes second, and we jump up five or six places. I think

that we wrestled well as a group."

Coach Stowers would like to thank Towns County Sole Commissioner Bill Kendall for allowing Towns County Wrestling the use of the facilities at Foster Park.

Also thanked: 911 Mapping Director Marty Roberts; Towns County Rec Department; parent volunteers; alumni volunteers; Ken Edwards; Dr. Lee Church; Tamara Sandler; Cynthia Wood; Sarah Vardo and the students of HOSA; Colette and Jason Hoffman; Joyce and Ricky Rogers; other wrestling parents; and any unnamed who also helped with the tournament.

"It's an incredible number of people that make that thing go," said Coach Stowers of KOM, adding that there are probably 100 people who come together to make the tournament a reality. "It's work that nobody ever sees"