

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Indians take decisive victories over Tallulah Falls, Union

### Lady Indians fall in very competitive games to Tallulah Falls, Union County

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The Towns County Indians varsity basketball team took convincing home court victories on Thursday and Friday nights of last week over Tallulah Falls and Union County although following differing patterns in the two games.

They used a 29-18 finish to take an 87-71 win over Tallulah and a stunning 30-5 start in coasting to a 58-28 victory over Union County.

Red hot shooting by two seniors—Kabe Ellis in the Tallulah game and Aidan Berrong against Union—highlighted the two wins but with lots of help, including very accurate shooting, from other members of the team as will be addressed.

The Indians completed the week with a 3-0 record and although very early with some teams having not begun play and others having played just one game it is noteworthy that they were ranked as the top Class A Public team in the state by the nationally prominent MaxPreps high school sports website on Friday prior to the Union County game that night.

**Indians 87, Tallulah Falls 71** - The first quarter of the Indians game against Tallulah Falls proved to be quite a battle with the appearance of the Indians beginning to take early control leading by small margins for most of the quarter but Tallulah taking a 21-20 lead at quarter's end.

Early first quarter highlights for the Indians included an early old fashioned three point play by junior Jake McTaggart for a 3-0 Towns lead and a jump shot by senior Kolby Moss giving them a 5-4 lead.

After Tallulah took a 7-5 lead, the Indians struck for a deuce by junior Collin Crowder for a tie and treys by seniors Aidan Berrong and Kabe Ellis for a 13-7 lead in barely more than a minute of playing time ending at the 4:20 mark. A trey by senior Hayden McClure at 3:18 and a deuce by McTaggart each extended the Towns leads to four points before a basket at the thirty seconds mark by Crowder got the Indians a 20-19 lead.

Tallulah would answer with a field goal for a 21-20 lead at quarter's end, however, and the visiting band of Indians added a quick second quarter deuce for a 23-20 advantage. The Towns Indians were on the verge of a dominant run, however, fueled by spectacular three point shooting. Senior Colton Day got a 23-23 tie with a trey and Crowder a 25-23 Indians lead at 7:18. Tallulah recovered a bit with a free throw and a putback basket for a 26-25 lead at 6:16 but hold on your seat.

A deuce by Day got the Indians a 27-26 lead they would not relinquish at 5:43 with two treys by Moss, a deuce by Crowder, and two treys by Ellis and one by McClure providing a 19-4 Indian run and a 44-30 Towns lead at the 1:17 mark with Tallulah using a late trey to close out the first half with the Indians leading 44-33.

Tallulah must be given credit for persistently challenging the homestanding Indians the last half but with the Indians having an answer each time in extending their leads. The most prominent last half challenge came when Tallulah used a 10-2 run between just the 2:13 and 2:48 seconds marks of the third quarter for just a 58-53 deficit. The Indians were up to the



Senior Vanessa Floyd led Towns County with 19 points, keeping the Lady Indians close vs. Union County. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

task, however, as Ellis followed a Moss free throw by sinking a trey at the buzzer for a 62-53 advantage entering the fourth quarter which they opened with a 12-6 run highlighted by a trey and deuce by Ellis, two deuces by Berrong, and a deuce by Crowder for a 74-59 lead they extended for an 87-71 victory. Ellis had an incredible shooting performance by including seven treys in just nine attempts among a team leading 27 points for the game. And it is even more incredible that when combined with a four for four performance from behind the three point line in the opening game at Union County he sank eleven of his first thirteen attempts for the year.

Ellis got lots of help from Moss with 18 points, Berrong with 12, Crowder with 10, Day and McTaggart with 7 each, and McClure with 6 while leaders in assists were Moss with 7, Ellis with 6, and Day and McTaggart with 3 each. Day, McTaggart, and Moss took the lead in rebounds with 7 each and were followed by Crowder with 4 and Ellis and McClure with 3 each. McTaggart blocked 8 shots and had 5 steals to lead in these categories and McClure followed in steals with 2.

Tallulah Falls was led in scoring by sophomore Anfernee Hanna with 20 points, junior Sammy Davis with 18, and junior Gabe Keene with 14 with Hanna and Davis being residents of Nassau, Bahamas, attending the prominent boarding school while Keene is from not too distant Cornelia, Georgia. Tallulah completed the week by taking a 56-38 home court win over Wesleyan of Norcross on Saturday in improving their record to 3-2.

**Indians 58, Union County 28** - After the Union County Panthers battled the Indians on pretty much even terms for more than a quarter and a half in Blairsville under the handicap of playing without their football players who were still in action, they and the Indians no doubt expected a quite competitive battle.

In the game of basketball, however, there are occurrences that simply cannot be explained with the game last Friday fitting in this category.

Last year's Indians team can easily identify with what

took place last Friday as they traveled to Andrews last year on the way to an outstanding 18-9 season including the school's first Battle of the States Tournament championship to take on the undefeated Wildcats. It was quite a shock when nothing went right for the Indians and the Wildcats couldn't miss the basket in racing out to a 34-5 lead in barely more than ten minutes of playing time on the way to an 86-41 victory. The Indians were able to redeem themselves by taking an 82-81 overtime homecourt victory over the Wildcats in Hiwassee about a month later.

At any rate, such was the situation for the Panthers as for the Indians in Andrews in last Friday's game as Indians senior Aidan Berrong got them a 2-0 lead they would never relinquish at the 6:40 mark of the first quarter. Berrong's basket proved to be an omen of things to come as he would pour in ten first quarter points and seven more by the 1:35 mark of the second quarter in leading to a 30-5 Towns lead as they coasted from there to a 58-28 victory.

Senior Kolby Moss added a pair of deuces in each of the first two quarters for eight points with treys by seniors Colton Day and Hayden McClure and a deuce by junior Jake McTaggart in the second quarter completing first half Indian scoring for a 33-10 advantage at intermission. Eight different Indians put points on the scoreboard in the last half with leaders being Berrong with seven points and senior Kabe Ellis with 6.

Berrong sank seven of nine two point field goal attempts and two of three attempts from behind the three point line in accumulating a team leading 24 points with other leaders being Moss with 10 points, Day and McClure with 5 each, and McTaggart with 4 while leaders in assists were Ellis with 9, Berrong with 3, and the trio of Day, McClure, and Moss with 2 each.

Ellis also led in rebounds with 8 with other leaders being McTaggart with 7, Berrong and Moss with 5 each, and Day with 3. Seven different Indians contributed at least one steal with Ellis and McClure leading with 2 each.

The Panthers were led in scoring by juniors Lake Hughes



Aidan Berrong scored 24 points vs. Union County and 12 vs. Tallulah Falls last week. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

with 8 points and Caleb John with 6. The Panthers completed the week with an 0-3 record with the first two losses coming at the hands of the Indians and the third on Saturday night by a 78-57 score at Class AAA Stephens County High School in Toccoa.

The Towns County High School Lady Indians varsity basketball team played host to Tallulah Falls on Thursday and to Union County on Friday of last week and fell to defeat in games marked by strong scoring runs by both teams in each game with victory not assured for their opponents until the final minute of play. These games were in stark contrast to the Lady Indians' season opening win at Union County reported in last week's Herald when no more than three points ever separated the two teams in a game going two overtimes.

The Lady Indians completed the week with a 1-2 record and entered this week with a scheduled game at Rabun Gap on Monday being postponed until an as yet to be determined date due to Covid issues at Rabun Gap. They have a home game scheduled for this Saturday against Copper Basin at 5:00 pm but next Monday's scheduled home game against Rabun Gap has been postponed until Friday, December 18, again due to the Covid issues at that school.

**Tallulah Falls 48, Lady Indians 44** - The first half was a real battle between the Lady Indians and Tallulah Falls with Tallulah leading by mostly very small margins except for two leads of four points in the first quarter and one lead of four and another by five in the second. The Lady Indians battled back for an 8-8 tie after one quarter highlighted by two treys by senior Jayce Young and a tying free throw by senior Abby Mauldin at the 37.5 seconds mark.

An ice cold first half of the second quarter by both teams got Tallulah the aforementioned five points lead by a 13-8 score on a bouncing field goal and three for four free throw shooting by the 5:16 mark. The Lady Indians would use an 8-2 run on a trey by senior Vanessa Floyd, two free throws by senior Kennedy Henson, and Young's third trey of the half between the 3:57 and 1:54 marks for a 16-15 Towns

lead which became an 18-16 deficit at intermission on three for four free throw shooting by Tallulah by the 1:19 mark.

The first three minutes of the third quarter would unfortunately for the Lady Indians become decisive as Tallulah opened the quarter with an 8-2 run interrupted only by a coast to coast run for a layup by Young for a 27-18 lead at the 5:44 mark that they would not quite be able to overcome. The Lady Indians would give the Tallulah Lady Indians a real battle after that, however, by scoring two or three points on six different occasions between the 4:59 mark of the third quarter and the 4:42 mark of the fourth but Tallulah pretty much matching the Lady Indians points on each occasion for a 39-32 lead at the 3:49 mark. The Lady Indians included treys by Young and sophomore Sarah Shook and two deuces and two free throws by Floyd during the lengthy potent scoring run by both teams.

The Lady Indians would make a stunning move on Tallulah after that by breaking the pattern of Tallulah pretty much matching Lady Indians points. A free throw by Henson at the 3:21 mark was followed by a steal of an inbounds Tallulah pass near mid court and drive to the basket for two points by Shook at 2:52 and Floyd sank a trey at 1:29 for just a 39-38 Lady Indians deficit.

Tallulah matched the trey by Floyd for a 42-38 lead at 1:09 but Young sank her fifth trey at 1:01 for just a 42-41 Tallulah lead. Tallulah responded with an old fashioned three points play at 42.4 seconds for a 45-41 lead, however, and then sank three of four free throw attempts following two misses on Lady Indians field goal attempts for a 48-41 lead at the 10.0 seconds mark.

Henson sank a long trey as time ran out for a final 48-44 margin of victory for Tallulah Falls, quite a contrast to a 49-14 Lady Indians loss in a preseason scrimmage game played without Henson at Tallulah Falls last month and quite an encouragement for the future for the team.

Scoring leaders for the Lady Indians for the game were Young with 17 points, Floyd with 12, Henson with 8, and Shook with 6. Leaders in assists were Henson with 4, Floyd with

3, and Shook with 2 while Floyd led in rebounds with 5 and was followed by Young with 4 and Henson and Mauldin with 3 each.

Leaders in steals were Henson with 3 and Shook with 2. Leading scorers for Tallulah Falls were sophomores Veronaye Charlton with 15 points and Denika Lightbourne with 11 with both being residents of Nassau, Bahamas, attending the prominent boarding school.

**Union County 54, Lady Indians 44** - The Union County ladies struck for a 4-0 lead on two field goals in just forty one seconds at the 7:19 mark of the first quarter with both teams then going scoreless until Lady Indians senior Kennedy Henson sank a pull up jumper at the 2:48 mark for just a 4-2 Towns deficit.

The Lady Panthers responded with a trey and two free throws for a 9-2 lead at the 1:57 mark but the Lady Indians completed the quarter on a 7-3 run on a trey by Henson, a deuce by senior Maci Walls, and two free throws by senior Vanessa Floyd for a 12-9 Towns deficit at quarter's end.

The Lady Indians continued their scoring run to 12-5 for a 14-14 tie at the 4:25 mark of the second quarter on a deuce by Floyd and a trey by sophomore Sarah Shook but the Lady Panthers responded in appearing to take complete control of the game with a 19-4 run interrupted only by a pair of deuces by Floyd for a 33-18 lead at the 5:20 mark of the second quarter.

It was once again the Lady Indians' turn to begin an extended rally, however, as they completed the quarter from the 4:46 mark on a 10-3 run in closing to within 36-28 entering the fourth quarter.

They weren't done, however, as three baskets by Floyd completed an overall 16-6 Towns run which had the Lady Indians within 39-34 at the 5:46 mark. And a drive for two points by senior Abby Mauldin got the Lady Indians within five points again by a 42-37 score at the 4:18 mark.

It then appeared that the Lady Panthers had regained control of the game with seven straight points for a 49-37 lead at the 2:19 mark but a deuce and trey by Floyd and a deuce by Shook between the 2:02 and 1:05 marks had the Lady Indians within striking distance with just a 50-44 deficit.

A turnover by the Lady Panthers at the 57.8 seconds mark gave the Lady Indians a chance to close within three points on a trey or four points on a deuce but they couldn't cash in on the possession and the Lady Panthers sank two free throws and then a field goal for a bit misleading final score of 54-44 when considering the competitiveness of the game.

Seven different Lady Indians entered the scoring column during the game with leaders being Floyd with 19 points, Henson with 13, and Shook with 5 while Henson, Mauldin, and Young tied for the lead in assists with 3 each. Leading in rebounds were Floyd, Shook, and Young with 5 each and Henson with 4 while Henson led in steals with 4.

The Lady Panthers were led in scoring by 6' junior Ava Hunter with 20 points and junior Rebekah Chambers with 12. The Lady Panthers completed the week with a 1-2 record with two of the games being against the Lady Indians and the other a 64-44 loss at Class AAA Stephens County on Saturday night.