

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Battle of the States: 16 teams from five states to vie for tournament title

By Chad Stack  
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Staff Writer

Towns County High School will host the 26th Annual Battle of the States Christmas Tournament, which gets underway Thursday, Dec. 26, and will continue into Saturday, Dec. 28.

The three-day event includes 16 varsity basketball teams – eight girls and eight boys – from five surrounding states hoping to win the Battle of the States title and bragging rights for a year.

Hosting a tournament like this allows teams to compete over Christmas break and see different styles of play, Towns County High School Athletic Director Jim Melton said.

“As a coach, you don’t want a big gap from mid-December to January,” Melton said.

With an extended gap like that, it can mess the season up with long periods of no practice or games, Melton said, adding that it’s nice to have a tournament at your own school where kids can spend time with family, sleep in their own beds and play basketball.

With 16 teams playing in the event from five surrounding states, Melton said the tournament also brings in a lot of money to the county, as people utilize local motels, restaurants and other small businesses, enabling the whole county to benefit greatly from the three-day event.

Melton said the Battle



The Towns County Lady Indians won two games to finish third in last year’s Battle of the States Christmas Tournament. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

of the States Christmas Tournament is something a lot of schools are interested in, as there’s currently a waiting list for the tournament.

Each year after the event, Melton and other members from the tournament committee come together to start deciding on the teams that will play in the following year’s tournament.

This year’s tournament returns most of the teams that played in the tournament last year. Taking Copper Basin’s spot in the girls’ bracket in 2019 will be the girls team from Polk County, Tennessee,

which will travel along with the boys.

The Lady Indians defeated the Lady Panthers in 2018 for a Third-Place finish in the 25th Battle of the States.

Looking to improve from their finish last season, the Lady Indians are hoping to win the school’s first-ever Battle of the States title this weekend.

In order for the Lady Indians to stay in the winners’ bracket, they must win their first game Thursday night when they face off against Polk County at 7 p.m.

The girls’ bracket in-

cludes teams from Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina and Alabama.

On the other side of the tournament, the Indians will look to duplicate what the Lady Indians are hoping to do in winning the school’s first-ever Battle of the States Tournament Title.

The Indians came close to winning the title in 2016, falling to Lumpkin County for a Second-Place finish. In 2017, they lost in overtime for a chance to play in the title game for the second year in a row.

After a disappointing

tournament last year, the Indians are looking to bounce back and compete for the title as they have in recent years.

The Indians are scheduled to tip off at 8:30 p.m. against Armuchee for the final game of day one.

If the Indians win, they will play at 8:30 p.m. the following day and face off against the winner of the Hayesville (NC) vs. Polk County game, with the loser from each game playing at 2:30 p.m.

Competing in the 2019 boys’ bracket are eight teams from Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee and North

Carolina.

The tournament will kick off with girls basketball at 10 a.m. each day of the tournament, starting on Thursday, Dec. 26, with the Lumpkin County Lady Indians taking on the Murphy Lady Bulldogs.

Saturday, Dec. 28, will feature the final games of the tournament, with the girls’ championship set for 7 p.m. and the boys’ championship set for 8:30 p.m.

The cost to attend the tournament is \$5 each day, and guests will receive an armband for reentry each day.

## TCMS: Indians improve to 8-1; Lady Indians fall to 6-3 at Tallulah Falls

By Chad Stack  
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Staff Writer

Towns County Middle’s boys and girls basketball teams traveled to Tallulah Falls on Monday, Dec. 16, for a regional matchup against two excellent teams.

After an overtime loss to Hebron Christian Academy earlier in the season, the Indians have rattled off six wins in a row to improve to 8-1 on the season before going into winter break.

The first half of the match saw a lot of fouls for the Indians, with several players having to sit out most of the second quarter due to foul trouble.

Towns County racked up 14 personal fouls in the first half to only six personal fouls from Tallulah Falls, forcing Head Coach Shea Taylor to play some of the younger players, who were allowed to stay in the game.

Going into the half, the Indians lead Tallulah 28-20 and only allowed two points in the second half, defeating Tallulah Falls 48-22.

Eight different Indians scored during Monday’s games. Zane Floyd and Tanner Cunningham both led the way with 12 points apiece.

Seth Rutan, Conner Chastain and Drew Scofield poured in six points each. Kade McConnell finished with four points, and Walker Underwood and Gage Rogers both added a point.

The Lady Indians Middle School Team fell to an undefeated Tallulah Falls team that improved to 10-0 after defeating Towns County that Monday night.

Towns struggled with



Top: Zane Floyd dribbles up the court vs Tallulah Falls. Bottom: Laura Mauldin leads a fast break vs Tallulah. Photos/Chad Stack

turnovers and was just unable to find an offensive rhythm, as Tallulah Falls handed the Lady Indians just their third loss on the season at 38-19.

Six Lady Indians scored, with Kaleigh Beaver and Laura Mauldin leading the way with six points apiece. Jenna Pyle added three points, Brittany Cook finished with two points,

and Natalie Barnes and Eliz Edwards both tacked on a point each.

The Middle School Teams will resume play on Monday, Jan. 4, following Christmas break when they take on the Hiwassee Dam Eagles at home. The Lady Indians will tipoff at 4:30 p.m., followed by the Indians at 6 p.m.

## Wrestling: Indians take it to the mat in Gilmer, look ahead to 2020

By Chad Stack  
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Staff Writer

The Indians Varsity Wrestling Squad traveled to Gilmer County on Wednesday, Dec. 18, to take on one of the top 4-A wrestling programs in the state.

Grappling in their last match before heading into winter break, Head Wrestling Coach Jeff Stowers said the team got better as the night went on.

Even though they didn’t win any matches on Wednesday, Stowers said the kids who hit the mat wrestled well. Junior Garrett Oakes wrestled a two-time state finalist and only lost by two, and senior Austin Edrington shared the mat with a nationally ranked wrestler and grappled well.

“We’re just trying to get

better every time we step on the mat and fix some things,” Stowers said. “We’re doing good things and we’re getting better. We’ve just got to get where we can put it all together on a mat.”

Coming back after Christmas break, Stowers said that’s when they will start getting into the matches that really count.

Not to say that every match doesn’t count, but with such a large group of young wrestlers, Stowers said the first part of the season was a lot of learning and understanding what goes into being a championship wrestler.

“We’ve made some really good strides, we’ve wrestled some really good matches, and we did some really good things,” Stowers said of his young team, now midway through the season.

He is very impressed with how far the kids have come this

season, saying they continue to get better every day.

With a lot still to work on, however, Stowers said he hopes everyone will return healthy and ready to get back after it following the holiday break.

The Indians will have four matches and the Burnt Mountain Classic before they go into the Single-A Area Tournament Friday, Jan. 31, at Commerce High School.

With injuries starting to pile up, and with the way the holidays fall during the week, Stowers said they would not practice together as a team but knows his wrestlers will do what they need to do to stay in shape and be ready to go when they come back after the break.

The Indians will travel to White County on Tuesday, Jan. 7, to take on the Warriors and Madison County.

## Senior Center Wii Bowling Team prepares for Nationals



Annual Senior Wii Bowling Tournament Championship awarded to the Towns County Senior Center. The tournament is sponsored by Legacy Link Area Agency on Aging. Lisa Howard, Wellness Programs Manger presented the bowling team the Certificate of Achievement award and trophy for the Winners of the 2019 Senior Center Wii Bowling Tournament. Team members include: Louise Card, Gwen Childress, Patsy Giddens, Annette Hedrick, Gene Hedrick, Trudy Laliberte, David Lamon, Sandy Reich, David Sokol, Myrtle Sokol and Gladys Stevens. Our seniors are already preparing and hoping to win the National Tournament in February 2020.