

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians defeat Prince Avenue, fall to Lakeview, likely to host state tourney

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team participated in the 2017 Region 8A post season tournament at Lakeview Academy in Gainesville last week with a continuation of a regular season full of totally unpredictable pattern of winning teams and margins of victory being present for many of the teams, including the Indians.

Some factors contributing to these unexpected game results include either red hot or ice cold shooting or successful defensive or slow down strategies by the various teams.

And, unfortunately, most of the teams participating and their followers would likely point out that to a probably lesser extent, the calibre of the officiating by crews assigned from Northwest Georgia was a definite factor in determining the margins of victory.

As one who has closely followed post season tournament play for decades, your reporter doesn't recall, in viewing most or all of eight of the games at this tournament, ever seeing so many instances of players getting hammered by an opponent, often on shots, with no foul called but players getting into foul trouble on foul calls where there was little and sometimes no contact evident.

Some probably left the gym wondering whether the officials themselves should be most embarrassed or the booking agent who sent them to the games thinking they were capable of the assigned duties. One thing is certain, however, and that is a greater appreciation for the work provided by the officials in our area.

At any rate, the Indians was the third seeded team from Sub-Region 8A North behind Lakeview Academy and Tallulah Falls broke away after a very slow offensive start for both teams on Wednesday and took the measure of Prince Avenue Christian, the second seeded team from Sub-Region 8A South behind Athens Christian, by a 54-39 score but fell to red hot shooting by Lakeview Academy in the semi-finals on Friday by an 80-51 score.

The Indians completed their week with an 18-9 record as they prepare to enter the Class A Public State Tournament this weekend.

The final official pairings won't be announced until well past the newspaper deadline when potential appeals to the Power Points ratings unique to Class A due to the separation of public and private competition completed by the Georgia High School Association have been evaluated so those wishing to attend the game should verify the partial information provided here.

If the pairings materialize as the unofficial Power Points ratings are shown at press time



Towns County seniors Will DeVries and Major Moss relaxing after punching their ticket to the State playoffs. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

following region play around the state, the Indians will host Schley County High School from Ellaville which is located just north of Americus in South Georgia, on Saturday with the game time to be announced later.

It doesn't seem at all likely that changes to the rankings would be sufficient to force the Indians to travel for their opening state tournament game but no assurance can be made until everything becomes official from the Georgia High School Association.

There are twenty four public and twenty four private Class A schools making the state tournament this year instead of sixteen in each division for the past several years with the top eight Power Ratings teams getting a bye this week end and the teams placed in positions nine through sixteen hosting those in the seventeenth through twenty fourth positions.

The Indians are unofficially in the fifteenth slot with Schley at number eighteen at press time.

Indians 54, Prince Avenue Christian School 39 – The Indians had sprung out to an early 12-0 lead at Prince Avenue on January 28 and withstood a couple of Wolverine rallies in the second and third quarters before breaking away the final nine minutes of the game for a 64-49 victory with a strong defensive presence being a key to this victory.

But they were also aware of a shocking 80-72 double overtime upset win by the Wolverines at Tallulah Falls on February 3, leaving reason for concern that the Wolverines might be ready to pull off a victory over the Indians.

The Indians used a pair of field goals by junior Logan Cowart for 2-0 and 4-1 Towns leads by the 5:57 mark of the first quarter. But the score would

remain that way as an example of cold shooting mentioned above until the Indians sandwiched a basket by sophomore Will Travis and a three point play by senior Will De Vries around a trey by the Wolverines the final 1:20 of the quarter for a 9-4 Towns lead after one quarter.

In second quarter action, the Wolverines used a trey at the 5:02 mark and a free throw at 4:24 for just a 9-8 deficit before the Indians went on a 9-4 run between the 4:00 and 1:18 marks for an 18-12 lead which became 18-14 at intermission. Junior Zach Davenport provided five of the Indian points during the run with junior Evan Berrong and Travis providing field goals for the other four.

The scoring difficulty for the Indians the first half got reversed in a big way in the third quarter as four different Indians provided the points in a 12-4 run by the 2:58 mark for a 30-18 lead and they responded to a pair of Wolverine baskets with a 5-0 finish for a 35-22 advantage entering the fourth quarter.

Individual highlights of the third quarter dominance included a trey and three point play for six points by De Vries, a three point play and another deuce by Davenport for five, two deuces for four points by Travis, and three assists by senior Major Moss.

The Indians would continue their offensive success of the third quarter and their defensive prowess of the first three quarters in building a 54-33 lead by the 1:14 mark of the fourth before the Wolverines used a free throw, a deuce, and a trey for a 6-0 finish reducing the Indians' final margin of victory to 54-39.

De Vries included a trey and four for four free throw shooting in providing eleven points and Cowart scored four on a pair of deuces in leading the scoring in fourth quarter action.

De Vries wound up with a

team leading 20 points and was followed by Davenport with 12, Cowart with 10, Travis with 8, and Berrong and Moss with 2 each while Moss led in assists with 8 and was followed by Davenport with 6 and Cowart with 2. Moss took the lead in rebounds with 13 and was followed by Cowart with 8, Davenport with 6, De Vries with 4, and Travis with 2. The Wolverines were led in scoring by junior Dalton Meeler with 15 points and senior Sam Todd with 14.

Those fans who didn't stay for the second boys game between Tallulah Falls and George Walton Academy last Wednesday may have an interest in some similarities related to low scoring as was evident to a lesser extent in the Indians versus Prince Avenue game played earlier in the day.

The normally high scoring Tallulah team was surely aware of George Walton's using a twenty four points first quarter in racing past the Indians 69-51 just five days prior to this game.

So it was quite surprising to view the Tallulah boys, who scored eighty four and sixty eight points in two regular season games against the Indians leading by just a 6-2 score after one quarter and 11-7 at intermission before the scoring picked up slightly in the second half with Tallulah still holding a lead of just 25-21 entering the fourth quarter and only a 34-31 advantage before a very late 9-1 run by Tallulah set their final margin of victory at 43-32.

The usually high scoring Tallulah team then went on to struggle to score points again when they fell by a 52-49 score to Athens Christian in the semi-finals on Friday.

Lakeview Academy – With their win over Prince Avenue, the Indians came face to face with Lakeview Academy on Lakeview's home court in the region semi-finals after having lost

two prior regular season games to the Lions in games that were significantly more competitive than the final scores of 69-55 at Lakeview and 72-48 in Hiawassee as detailed in the earlier newspaper coverage of those games. The Lions would in this game show, however, how they had come to be the top ranked Class A private school in the state in the Power Points ratings entering the region tournament as they used red hot shooting in taking an 80-51 victory over the Indians.

The Indians got a 2-2 tie on two free throws by Zach Davenport within the first minute of the first quarter and edged to within 15-11 on a trey by Will De Vries and two free throws by Major Moss by the 2:44 mark but Lakeview scored the final six points of the quarter for a 21-11 lead by quarter's end.

The two teams then played on virtually even terms for nearly four minutes at the start of the second quarter with highlights being a second trey by De Vries followed by two free throws by Davenport for a 23-16 score and then a tip in by Will Travis and a putback basket by Major Moss for a 28-20 score at 5:50.

With the Lions' lead at a very reachable 32-21, however, the second light touch foul called on Moss and third in the game at 4:07 sent him to the bench for the remainder of the quarter with the resulting two free throws being the start of an 11-6 run interrupted by Indian field goals by sophomore Trent Bradshaw and Travis and two free throws by Davenport for a more daunting Indian deficit of 43-27 at intermission.

The hot shooting Lions then opened the third quarter by using three treys in a 16-6 run for a 59-33 lead with 2:45 on the clock but with a 9-2 run by the Indians reducing their deficit to 61-42 by the fifty eight seconds mark.

Davenport included a trey

among seven points and Logan Cowart provided two deuces for four points as highlights of third quarter action for the Indians.

The Lions responded to the brief Indian run with a three point play with 5.3 seconds left in the third quarter for a 67-42 advantage, however, and they opened the fourth with a 10-2 run for a 74-44 lead which became an 80-51 victory. Substitutes played the final 2:59 for both teams with the Indians holding a 2-0 advantage on a field goal by Evan Berrong.

There was a major highlight during the fourth quarter for the Indians when Will De Vries drove to the basket for a field goal at the 5:30 mark in scoring the 1,000th point of an outstanding career. A separate article is being provided covering this important milestone for De Vries.

The Indians were led in scoring by Davenport with 18 points and he was followed by De Vries with 11, Cowart with 9, Travis with 5, Moss with 4, and Berrong and Bradshaw with 2 each while Moss led in assists with 4 and was followed by Davenport with 3 and Bradshaw and junior Cole Ledford with 1 each. Moss led in rebounds with 8 and was followed by Cowart and Travis with 5 each, De Vries with 2, and the quintet of junior Bradley Benson, Bradshaw, sophomore Caleb Clark, Brett Denton, and Cole Ledford with 1 each.

Senior Colton Shook missed the game due to illness and Cowart was under the weather with a respiratory problem but saw extensive action nevertheless.

The Lions were led in scoring by senior Josh Randolph and junior Drew Cottrell with 20 points each and senior Tre Goben and junior Evan Pitts with 11 each. Pitts is the nephew of TCHS Dare Officer Donnie Jarrard.

With the victory, the Lions qualified for the region championship game on Saturday which provided some of the hot and cold shooting and margin of victory surprises mentioned in the opening comments.

After shooting the lights out against the Indians on Friday, the Lions trailed 13-7 after one quarter before rallying with a bit better shooting for leads of 26-21 and 37-27 at the second and third quarter breaks but they scored just six points in the fourth quarter and allowed fourteen by Athens Christian in surviving for a 43-41 championship win, their second in a row.

The championship game provided another example of an unexpected margin of victory with most observers expecting Lakeview to take a pretty easy victory.

The Indians and their fans will recall the Indians pretty much having their way with Athens Christian last month in a 59-38 victory in Hiawassee, scoring sixteen more points than Lakeview and holding Athens Christian to three less than they got against the Indians.

Lady Indians season ends with loss to George Walton in region tournament

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team saw their season come to an end last Wednesday in a 51-24 loss to George Walton Academy of Monroe in their opening game in the Region 8A Tournament at Lakeview Academy in Gainesville.

With the loss, the Lady Indians completed their season with a 5-19 record with much improvement shown following a difficult 0-9 start for the mostly very youthful squad.

George Walton entered the game against the Lady Indians with an 18-5 record, including 10-3 and good for a tie for second place with Prince Avenue overall behind Lakeview Academy in Region 8A and a tie for first place with Prince in Sub-Region 8A South.

The Lady Bulldogs went on to give the top seeded Lakeview Academy Lady Lions a pretty good battle in the region semi-finals before falling by a 63-45 score with Lakeview then taking a 41-34 victory over Prince Avenue in winning their second straight region championship on Saturday.

After giving the Lady Bulldogs a real battle in Hiawassee just five days prior before falling by a 39-29 score, the Lady Indians got off to a great start on Wednesday when senior Kirsten Ledford



Coach Jim Melton and the Lady Indians during the playoff contest with George Walton Academy last week. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

struck for two treys for a 6-0 lead by the 6:28 mark of the first quarter. They then used drives for deuces by sophomore Taylor Cornett and Ledford as highlights in withstanding a pair of Lady Dogs treys for a 12-7 lead at

quarter's end. George Walton opened the second quarter with a third trey for just a 12-10 deficit before junior Madison McClure took the ball to the basket for a deuce at 7:09 for a 14-10 Lady Indian lead.

The points were hard to come by for the Indians for an extended period after that, however, with the Lady Bulldogs using a 17-0 run for a 27-14 lead by the 7:16 mark of the third quarter.

A runner for two points

by senior Kristen Henson at 6:07 and Ledford's third trey at 5:08 of the third quarter got the Lady Indians within 27-19 and they came oh so close to just a five points deficit shortly after that when an in and out trey attempt by Henson

would have reduced the lead to 27-22.

Once again, the Lady Indians would go cold, however, with George Walton going on a 24-5 finish interrupted only by a trey by sophomore Kristen Byers and free throws by McClure and freshman Sophia Shook for a 51-24 victory.

The Lady Indians were led in scoring by Ledford with 11 points and she was followed by Byers, Henson, and McClure with 3 each and Cornett and Shook with 2 each while Byers, Cornett, Henson, and sophomore Erika Spano contributed 1 assist each.

The Lady Bulldogs were led in scoring by senior Sophie Chapar with 13 points and sophomore Capriya Carr with 11.

Youth baseball, softball registration

The Towns County Recreation Department will begin sign-ups for baseball and softball on Monday, February 6th, and will run through February 25th. Registration is for boys and girls ages 9-14. Age control date for baseball is May 1st of the current year and the age control date for softball is January 1st of the current year. Fees for players will be \$55 per child. You may register at Foster Park Recreation Center Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - 8 p.m., and on Saturday from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

For additional information, phone us at (706) 896-2600. T(Feb15, Feb22, F15)SH