

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

www.townscountyherald.net • E-mail: tcherald@windstream.net

Both teams fall short in competitive scrimmage games at Robbinsville

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Robbinsville, NC - The Towns County Lady Indians and Indians varsity basketball teams took their show on the road last Tuesday for pre-season scrimmage games at Robbinsville, North Carolina, and gave a bit of a preview for the upcoming season in games not counting on their regular season records nor with individual stats counting in seasonal totals.

The games were spoiled a bit, in your reporter's view, by the home team choosing to let the clock run, except for time outs, for two halves of twenty minutes each in the girls game and for four quarters of ten minutes each in the boys game with no one and one or double bonus free throws allowed.

As a matter of clarification for any readers not familiar with regular high school basketball rules, there are normally four quarters of eight minutes each with the clock stopping for out of bounds activity and for shooting free throws with these duties extending the length of the games and opportunities to score points by a significant amount.

This was the first time your reporter ever recalls having the running clock procedures as followed at Robbinsville for scrimmage games.

Robbinsville 34, Lady Indians 20 - The Lady Indians made their first official appearance against Robbinsville under new head coach Brian Hunnicutt who has replaced long time head coach Jim Melton who quietly retired after the 2017 season but remains at the school as high school athletic director and assistant principal at both the high school and middle school. Hunnicutt served as an assistant coach for the Lady Indians varsity and head coach for the Lady Indian JV's during the 2017 season.

The defensive minded Lady Indians squared off against the home standing Lady Knights who defeated the Lady Indians 56-35 in a preseason scrimmage in the Towns County Gym last year with the Lady Knights going on to compile a 16-12 record and they lost just three seniors from last year's team to graduation so the Lady Indians faced a formidable opponent.

The very young Lady Indians, on the other hand, had the services of just two seniors and one junior in compiling a 5-19 record last year and they continue to have a very young team for the upcoming season.

Lady Indians lost to graduation from last year were productive seniors Kris-



Towns County High School Indians (left) and Lady Indians (right) 2016-17 basketball photos by Lowell Nicholson



ten Henson and Kirsten Ledford, the second and third leading scorers on the team as seniors. Returning are six of the eight most productive members of last year's team in the persons of senior Madison McClure, her team's leading scorer last year as a junior and the second leading scorer as a sophomore, along with juniors Kristen Byers, Taylor Cornett, Kenzlee Denton, and Erika Spano, and sophomore Sophia Shook.

Newcomers to this year's varsity as full time members are freshmen Kennedy Henson and Vanessa Floyd along with freshman Abby Mauldin who will split her time between the varsity and JV squads. Henson, the sister of the graduating Kristen Henson, was a full time member of the Lady Indians JV team last year and Floyd and Mauldin saw action in a few late season JV games.

Mauldin will join in her part time role with the JV's six additional freshmen, giving the Lady Indians a total of nine freshmen included among fifteen high school Lady Indians participating in basketball this year.

Cold shooting, as is often the case on opening night in basketball, made points hard to come by for the Lady Indians for nearly twenty seven and a half minutes at the start of the forty minutes game as they found themselves trailing 13-8 at intermission and 17-9 before embarking on a strong scoring run over the next eight and a half minutes in trimming the

Lady Knights' lead to 22-20.

Henson, who scored six of the Lady Indians' eight first half points on a drive for the basket for a field goal and four for four free throw shooting got the rally started with a field goal at the 12:37 mark with fellow freshman Floyd sinking two field goals for four points, sophomore Sophia Shook a deuce, and junior Kristin Byers a trey by the 4:06 mark for the aforementioned 22-20 Lady Indian deficit.

At this point, coach Hunnicutt followed a plan placing a higher priority on getting the younger JV players some game action during their first opportunity at the high school level than concentrating on winning a game which does not count as related to their season record with the seven JV freshmen finishing the game over the final four minutes.

With the Lady Knights not having their JV players dressed for the game, a group of their front line players scored the final twelve points of the game for the Lady Knights for the victory by a 34-20 score not indictative of the competitiveness of the game.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Lady Indians were Henson with 8 points, Floyd with 4, and Byers with 3 while junior Erika Spano led in rebounds with 6 and was followed by Junior Kenzlee Denton with 4 and Floyd and Henson with 3 each. Shook took the lead in assists with 2.

The Lady Indians lost the services of their senior floor leader Madison McClure for a significant portion of the last half as a precaution after she was shaken up by an on court fall not thought to be serious enough to restrict her availability in future games. Lady Indians seeing action but not mentioned above are freshmen Kenzie Livingston, twins Shaleena and Shelby Morris, Remington Parker, Maci Walls, and Jayce Young.

Robbinsville 41, Indians 39 (OT) - The Indians will be looking to continue the excellence of last year's team which compiled a 19-10 record under the direction of head coach Rob Benson, who begins his third year at the helm.

Last year's 19 victories represent the highest win total for the Indians since the 1975 Region Championship Team finished with a 24-4 record and excellent season got them in the state tournament for just the fifth time overall and the first since head coach Darren Berrong's 2005 team achieved this goal.

The Indians got their season underway at Robbinsville under the situation of both teams having missing football players with both teams having made the state playoffs for this year, resulting in the Indians having a very different look for this game as compared to last year. In addition to the loss to graduation of Adam Barrett, Will De Vries, Major Moss, and Colton Shook, five return-

ing basketball players—seniors Zach Davenport, Logan Cowart, and Cole Ledford and juniors Trent Bradshaw and Will Travis—were missing as prime contributors to the success of this year's Indians football team.

Davenport has been the team's leading scorer for the last two years and Cowart the second leading rebounder last year.

Four Indians with varying amounts of varsity experience—seniors Bradley Benson, Evan Berrong, and Caleb Clark and junior Brett Denton—were available for the game and they were joined in the starting lineup by freshman Kolby Moss with junior Dillon Shook; sophomore Jacob Kimsey; and freshmen Peyton Barrett, Aidan Berrong, Liam King, and Luis Quijada providing backup duties off the bench.

As can be expected in the first game of the season and especially with the clock running, both teams got off to a slow start with Robbinsville holding a 5-4 lead after one quarter.

Moss included two steals in striking for three straight deuces and a 10-5 Indians lead by the 6:51 mark of the second quarter but it required a late trey by Benson following a deuce and trey by the Black Knights to give the Indians a 13-10 lead which became 13-12 at intermission.

Robbinsville struck for a trey just ten seconds into the third quarter for a 15-13 lead but two free throws by

Berrong near the nine minutes mark triggered a 10-0 Indians run for a 23-15 lead at 6:51 which became 27-19 at 3:37 with Denton and Moss scoring six points each in an overall 14-4 run. The Black Knights would respond, however, by including a trey in a 7-0 finish and open the fourth quarter with a putback basket for a 28-27 lead.

A trey by Shook seconds later got the Indians ahead 30-28 and Denton matched a Robbinsville deuce for a 32-30 Towns lead at 8:21 before deuces by King and Moss and a trey by Clark extended the Indians advantage to 39-30 with 3:49 on the clock.

The Indians would not score again, however, with the Knights including a trey in edging to within 39-37 with forty four seconds left and they scored on an inbound play with just seven seconds on the clock for a 39-39 tie and overtime.

Neither team could put points on the scoreboard in the five minute overtime until Robbinsville sank two free throws with 1:36 on the clock and the lead held up for a 41-39 overtime victory for the home standing Black Knights.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Indians were Moss with 14 points, Denton with 10, and Berrong with 4 while Berrong led in rebounds with 8 and was followed by Clark with 5 and Moss with 4. Moss and Benson each contributed 3 assists and Denton followed with 2.

Photos from Towns County Cross Country at Class A Public State Championships

By Todd Forrest

