

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Lady Indians: still untouchable in Region 8-A

By Jerry Kendall
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Staff Writer

The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team continue to take care of business. Last week the Lady Indians swept past Prince Avenue Christian School in a first round game on their home court on Tuesday, Providence Christian Academy and George Walton Academy in the semi-final and championship rounds at Hebron Christian Academy in Dacula on Friday and Saturday, for the 2013 Region 8-A Tournament Championship.

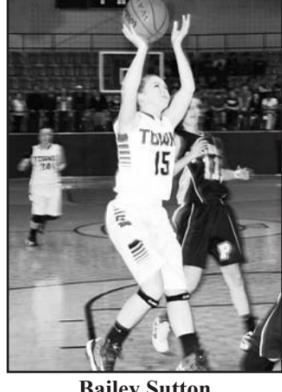
The championship run extended the Lady Indians' record to 24-4 for the season and appears to have set them up for hosting the first two rounds of the Class A State Tournament competition if victorious in the first game.

The Region Championship victory was the Lady Indians' third-in-a row and fourth in the last five years. The significance of the five year run cannot be over emphasized as evidenced by the fact that the Lady Indians had won just one prior region tournament, a David versus Goliath type, 54-51 overtime victory over Buford in 1977. At least one vital starting member of that 1977 championship team was on hand for the victory over George Walton in the person of Susan Waldroup Devries, whose son, Will, is a promising Towns County Middle School eighth grade basketball player. Another vital starter on that championship team was Janine Galloway Gilfilian, the mother of Lady Indian J.V. player Carly Gilfilian.

The three-game sweep in the Region Tournament takes on added luster when considering the competitive regular season games between the Lady Indians and their Semi-Final and Championship Game opponents. The Lady Indians had rallied from an eight-point fourth quarter deficit for a heart stopping 43-41 overtime victory at Providence Christian in their final regular season game. And back on January 15, the Lady Indians had rallied from a 34-21 halftime deficit on their home court to the brink of victory but fell just short in a 58-56 loss to George Walton Academy.

**Lady Indians 64
Prince Avenue 46**

In first round action, the Lady Indians played host to Prince Avenue Christian School on Tuesday with the ultra young and promising Lady Wolverines entering the game with a 16-9



Bailey Sutton



Kellsie Cowart



Eryn Cochran



Stephanie Patton

Photos by Lowell Nicholson

record. The Lady Indians had taken a 64-20 home court victory over Prince last month and they would again maintain control but with impressive improvement shown as the game progressed by the Lady Wolverines.

The Lady Indians quickly gained the upper hand by striking for a 15-0 lead by the two-minute mark of the first quarter and led 16-5 by quarter's end. Six different Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard in the quarter with Dadrion Blythe leading the way with 4.

Stephanie Patton then included three treys among 15 points in the second quarter and Kellsie Cowart added 4 as the Lady Indians built a 41-20 lead by intermission and coasted to a 50-30 lead after three quarters and the eventual 64-46 win. The Lady Wolverines reduced a 63-38 Towns lead with 2:52 left in the fourth quarter with an 8-1 finish.

Patton included five treys among her team leading 25 points with other scoring leaders being Cowart with 12 points, Eryn Cochran with 9, Blythe with 6, and Bailey Sutton with 5 while Cochran led in assists with 7 and Sutton took second

honors with 3. Leaders in rebounds were Cowart and Misty Lindemuth with 5 each and Patton with 4 while Cochran and Patton led in steals with 6 each and were followed by Sutton and Lindemuth with 3 each while Cochran blocked 3 shots.

**Lady Indians 55
Providence 37**

In the Semi Final game at Hebron Christian on Friday, the Providence Christian Academy Lady Storm entered with a 17-8 record, including 12-2 from January 5th forward, with the only two losses during the run having been at George Walton Academy and the home court, overtime loss to the Lady Indians.

The Lady Indians overcame an early 4-0 deficit with a 12-4 finish the final 5:06 of the first quarter for a 12-8 lead by the quarter break with two free throws by Cowart, who was 6-for-6 at the line in the first quarter, giving them a 6-5 lead at 4:15 they would never relinquish. Stephanie Patton contributed a field goal and 2-for-2 free throw shooting in the first quarter for 4 points. Eryn Cochran then in-

cluded a trey among 9 second quarter points and Patton added 5 as the Lady Indians took a 31-12 lead to the dressing room at intermission. After the Lady Indians opened the third quarter with a 7-2 run for a 38-14 bulge with 5:03 on the clock they went stone cold, as so often is the case with a dominating lead, for the remainder of the quarter with the Lady Storm including a pair of treys in a 10-0 finish for just a 38-24 Towns lead entering the fourth quarter.

With Cowart contributing 6 points, including 2-for-2 free throw shooting for an 8-for-8 game, the Lady Indians were back out to a 46-28 lead by the mid point of the fourth quarter before three treys gave the Lady Storm a 9-2 run for just a 48-37 deficit with 51 seconds on the clock. The Lady Indians responded, however, with 6-for-6 throw shooting by Cochran and a 1-for-2 trip to the line by Karlie Albach as they won "going away" in taking a 55-37 victory, setting the stage for a rematch with George Walton Academy in the Region Championship Game on Saturday.

Scoring leaders for the game were Cochran with 17

points, Cowart with 16, Patton with 13, and Albach with 7 as she included a pair of treys among her points. Leading in assists were Patton with 3 and Cochran and Albach with 2 each while Cowart led in rebounds with 7 and was followed closely by Cochran with 6 and Dadrion Blythe with 5. Cochran and Patton led in steals with 9 and 6 respectively.

**Lady Indians 44
George Walton 34**

A long awaited potential match up between the Lady Indians and George Walton arrived in the Region 8-A Championship Game at Hebron Christian on Saturday. The Lady Bulldogs feature a decided height advantage over the Lady Indians, highlighted by the imposing presence of muscular 6'1" junior star Ivy Atkism.

The Lady Bulldogs, ranked 5th in Class A by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* with the Lady Indians ranked 8th, entered the game with a 23-3 record and 17-straight wins with two early season losses coming at the hands of Class AAA's North Oconee and the

third, by three points, to Class AAAAA's Berkmar. North Oconee is currently ranked 4th in the state in Class AAA and sports a 26-2 record after sweeping past East Jackson, Hart County, and Elbert County by 16, 23, and 13 points for the Region 8-AAA Championship.

The Championship Game proved to be a defensive battle increasingly so as the game moved along. The Lady Indians entered the game averaging 61 points per game to their opponents' 38 while the Lady Dogs were scoring at a 48 points per game clip and allowing an average of just 30 per game.

The Lady Dogs responded to an early steal and field goal by Bailey Sutton for a 2-0 Towns lead for five different leads of two points during first quarter play with baskets by Dadrion Blythe, Stephanie Patton, and Emily Anderson and two free throws by Patton forcing ties with the last being an 11-11 standoff with 1:17 on the clock.

An Eryn Cochran steal seconds later led to two free throws by Cochran and the Lady Indians had a 13-11 lead at the 1:11 mark they would never relinquish. A putback basket by Anderson at the buzzer gave the Lady Indians a 15-11 lead they would extend significantly in second quarter action.

A Lady Dogs' basket got them within 15-13 early in the second quarter but a 10-2 Towns run highlighted by a basket by Blythe, a putback by Misty Lindemuth, and a pull up jumper and miracle drive for two by Cochran gave the Lady Indians a 25-15 lead by the 2-minute mark. The Lady Dogs followed with 3-for-4 free throw shooting in getting within 25-18 but a Cowart basket at the 1-minute mark and a second putback by Anderson at 34 seconds gave the Lady Indians a 29-18 advantage at intermission.

The second quarter advantage gained by the Lady Indians would turn out to be decisive as the two teams played on nearly even terms the last half although with variances as the Lady Indians built a 15-point lead around the mid point of the third quarter and the Lady Bulldogs rallied to within six late in the game. A field goal by Cowart matched an early basket by the Lady Dogs for a 31-20 Towns lead and the Lady Indians followed a George Walton free throw with a basket by Anderson and a trey by Patton for the Lady Indians' biggest lead of 36-21 at 4:42 of the third quarter.

The Lady Dogs responded, however, with a 3-point play and two field goals after a Patton bas-

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Wrestlers compete at State; Baldwin takes sixth

By Joe Collins
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Towns County wrestlers Vonya Baldwin and Carson Mercer traveled to the Macon Coliseum over the weekend to compete in the Georgia High School State Tournament.

Each qualified to compete as individuals by finishing in fourth place or higher at the Area and Sectional events held earlier in the month.

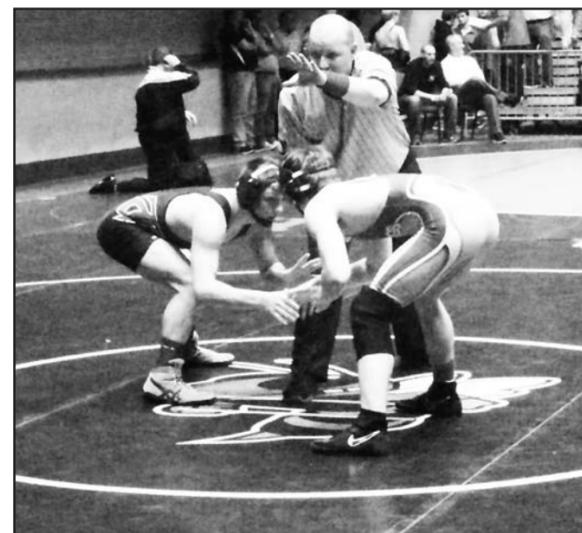
Baldwin and Mercer both wrestled hard but only Baldwin was able to medal by finishing in sixth place in the 132-pound class.

It was an unbelievable site as you entered the Coliseum on Friday morning as the floor was completely covered in wrestling mats. 12 all total, with teams represented from all levels of high school rankings A-AAAAA. Georgia has an excellent reputation in its high school wrestlers and there were more than a dozen nationally ranked athletes competing for the bragging rights to claim number one as a team and individual. The team from Gordon Lee claimed the Class A title as they basically dominated the dual portion of the competition.

Mercer started the show for the representatives of TCHS in the 113-pound class and faced the No. 2 wrestler in the nation, Jonathon Ragsdale from Gordon Lee. Mercer absolutely had his hands full and Ragsdale won by fall to move on to the Semi-Finals. Mercer then faced Tony Hall from Pace and although he wrestled hard his season came to an end. Baldwin found himself



Carson Mercer



Vonya Baldwin

Towns County Wrestling photos by Joe Collins

in a close match for his first bout of the tournament as he faced William Schubert of Walker in the 132-pound class. The bout was very close and ended regulation time in a tie 5-5. Schubert was able to find a good start at the beginning of OT and scored first beating Baldwin 7-5. Baldwin then moved into the consolation bracket and made short work of Andrew McGuire of Trion winning 12-3. This win moved Baldwin into the Semi-Finals and guaranteed him a medal for his weight class.

The Semi-Finals were very grueling and Baldwin had his hands full early. He would now face another tough Gordon Lee wrestler in Dylan Skipper who ended up on the Class A State Championship Team. Baldwin wrestled hard but a misstep late into the second

period led to a strong hold that he couldn't break and he lost by fall moving him to the final Semi-Final match which he took into a three period overtime before losing by decision but still claiming 6th place for Class A in the individual bracket.

"Vonya is a very solid wrestler. He has improved more in a one-year period than any other wrestler I have ever coached. He made some elementary mistakes today and you just can't make those kinds of mistakes at this level and get by with it. Wrestling is the one sport that totally depends on what you do as an individual and will reward hard work. He works hard and I look forward to watching him next year. This experience will do a lot for his confidence when he finds himself in this position again,"

said Head Coach Jeff Stowers who knows Baldwin's ability better than anyone and felt for his young wrestlers as they struggled with their losses.

Mercer is a freshman and Baldwin is a junior and with some hard work and a guiding hand from Stowers they will have another chance next year.

"Wrestling rewards hard work better than any other sport in high school and if they work hard and get ready for next year there is no question they can make it back to state. It just depends on them and how hard they are willing to work to get back here," Stowers said.

Congratulations to Vonya Baldwin on his medal performance at the State Championships this past weekend.

Towns County says thank you and way to go!

State basketball details

By Jerry Kendall
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Seeding for the Class A Public State Tournament will be set this week after the newspaper deadline with the Lady Indians to host a team to be determined at a time to be determined this Friday, February 22.

If victorious on Friday, the Lady Indians will play again next Tuesday, February 26, once again against an opponent and at a time to be determined but likely as the host team. The winner of that potential game for the Lady Indians will qualify for a State Class A Final Four appearance.

Under a split state tournament sending public and private schools into separate divisions in effect this year for the first time, there will be 16 public schools included in their division of the State Tournament and 16 private in their own division for a total of 32 Class A teams included.

Classes AA and above will include 32 teams without a split between public and private with their State Tournament games beginning on Tuesday of this week. Region championship teams, such as the Lady Indians, will be seeded at the top of the state bracket in the order of their power rankings determined by a formula set up by the Georgia High School Association with additional teams not winning a region championship added for a total of 16 teams based on their power rankings.

The formula gives teams five points for a win plus a point for each win by their opponent with points totaling a third of the

number of wins by a winning opponent also awarded to each team. The number of points are then added up and divided by the number of games played to establish a power ranking.

Games against out of state opponents are not included in the formula, resulting in a somewhat smaller power ranking than would have been received by the Lady Indians if these games were included. They would have received five points for each of two wins against Hiwassee Dam and five for each single win against Hayesville, Murphy, and Highlands plus the appropriate number of points that would have been earned as a result of some seventeen wins by Hiwassee Dam, thirteen by Hayesville, eight by Murphy, and seven by Highlands.

Correction

Your reporter realized past the newspaper deadline that a correction needs to be made to one portion of last week's article about Stephanie Patton and the other Lady Indians and Indians reaching 500 points in a single season.

The article mistakenly gave Patton credit for establishing a new record of fifty 3-point baskets by a freshman for either the Lady Indians or Indians last year.

Actually, Patton does not hold the Lady Indians record, but shares the overall TCHS freshman record with former Indian Grant Arencibia who, in an incredible coincidence, also sank 50 treys as a freshman last year. Apologies are extended for the inadvertent error.