

Towns County Sports

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Towns County High School basketball 2013-14 season wrap-up

By Jerry Kendall
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The high school basketball season is now complete for the Lady Indians, Indians, and Battle of the States participants with state tournament play, in contrast to prior years, being pretty brief for most of the teams who made it to state this year.

We will take a look at some of the activity of these teams and provide comments and observations about the Lady Indians season in the following paragraphs.

LADY INDIANS SECOND BEST CLASS A PUBLIC TEAM IN STATE TOURNAMENT? - The question raised here might not be as far fetched as some might initially think with the Lady Indians having been eliminated in the second round of the tournament. Comparing scores of games can bring about some interesting and occasionally quite improbable conclusions, due to the effect of differing match ups, but it is always interesting to do so and especially in the case of post season tournament play when some teams rise to the occasion and reach far greater heights than would have been expected, while other teams often fall far short of expectations.

As related in prior articles, the Lady Indians got a tough draw under the power points system used this year and last for Class A Public and Private State Tournament divisions, having to travel as a defending State Final Four team to defending state champion Gordon Lee in the opening round and then to top seeded and state defending runner up Randolph-Clay in the second round after defeating Gordon Lee.

The Lady Indians proceeded to survive a 22-6 start the first ten minutes by Randolph-Clay in not only outscoring the Lady Red Devils the final twenty two minutes by a 42-40 margin but making things very uncomfortable for the Lady Devils the last half. They trailed by just eight points with less than five minutes remaining in the game and by ten with less than two minutes left before falling by a 62-48 score.

Randolph-Clay had easily defeated Central of Talbotton 71-48 in the opening round and then defeated Claxton 45-30 in the semi finals in Savannah and fellow Region 1A foe Mitchell County 53-32 in the championship game in Macon. While the margin of



Towns County basketball stars Dallas Manus and Eryn Cochran overcame early injuries and made a difference in the second half of the season. Manus saw action during the Battle of the States and Cochran returned as the calendar flipped to 2014. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Randolph-Clay during regular season and region tournament play would override a sub par performance in the state title game. But responding well, or poorly, under the far more intense scrutiny of state tournament play in that second season provides a unique separation to the issue.

One of the most striking examples of second season performances as compared to regular season and region tournament play can be found by a memory lane look at the first Lady Indians appearance in the State Final Four in 2000 when they outlasted fellow Region 8-A tournament champion Buford by two rounds and finished ahead of the Lady Wolves in the final statewide poll.

The Lady Wolves featured 6'5" senior Christi Thomas, who would go on to a stellar career at the University of Georgia, while the Lady Indians' tallest player stood at just 5'9". The Lady Wolves took a 69-44 victory over the Lady Indians in the region championship game with Buford considered by most observers as the favorite to win the state championship as both teams headed to state tournament play.

The Lady Indians defeated Monticello 69-54 in the first round and took an eight point win over Calhoun in the second round in Rome. With Calhoun having taken a seven point win over Model in the Region 6-A tournament the same night as the Buford win over the Lady Indians, a win by some forty points seemed likely for Buford in view of their twenty five point win over the Lady Indians, the Lady Indians' win

by eight points over Calhoun, and Calhoun's seven points win over Model.

That was not to be the case, however, as Model had a starter standing around 6' who was able to contain Thomas a bit and the usually deadly outside shooting by Buford failed them completely with Model taking a quick lead and eventually a shocking 63-50 win, eliminating Buford from the tournament. The Lady Indians went on to defeat Landmark Christian in the third round in Rome in becoming the school's first ever state final four team in basketball.

TOUGHSTATE TOURNAMENT COMPETITION FOR LADY INDIANS - The loss to Randolph-Clay this year marks the fifth time in the last seven years that the Lady Indians have been eliminated in the state tournament to the eventual state champion. They fell in prior years to Calvary Day in 2008, to Wesleyan in 2009 and 2010, and to Gordon Lee in 2012. Beyond that, they lost in 2011 to Pace Academy who finished second to Wesleyan in the state tournament and in 2012 to Darlington who lost in the next round to eventual state champion Wesleyan. And in addition to that, the Lady Indians fell in the first round seven years ago, in 2007, by a 62-53 score at then defending Class A State Champion Southwest Atlanta Christian, a team that made it to the state final four during that season.

REGION 8-A TEAMS IN STATE TOURNAMENT - Just two girls teams and one boys team from Region 8A made it past the first round in

state tournament play this year. Of course, the Lady Indians made it to the second round where they fell to eventual Class A Public State Champion Randolph-Clay. Likewise, the George Walton Academy Girls made it to the second round by defeating fellow Region 8-A opponent Prince Avenue Christian 39-21 but they fell to eventual Class A Private State Champion Southwest Atlanta Christian 48-37 in the second round.

In a game of double interest to Towns followers, Sub-Region opponent Lakeview Academy fell in the first round of the Class A Private Tournament 52-49 to Mt. Paran Christian, a non region opponent of the Lady Indians this year. Mt. Paran in turn fell 72-51 to Holy Innocents', the Class A Private State Runners Up who were undefeated until their loss to Southwest Atlanta in the championship game.

The Athens Christian boys won their first two games in the Class A Private Tournament by scores of 74-37 over fellow Region 8A foe Providence Christian and 59-45 over Aquinas of Augusta but fell by a 79-64 score to St. Francis in the state semi finals. St. Francis went on to win the Class A Private State Championship by a 65-60 score over Whitefield Academy.

OTHER GEORGIA TEAMS IN STATE TOURNAMENT - The Union County Lady Panthers and Panthers, TCHS opponents in both regular season and Battle of the States tournament play, fell to one sided defeats in the first round of the Class AA State

Tournament on the home courts of metro all star teams, the Wesleyan girls and the Greater Atlanta Christian Boys. Class AA does not have the public and private split present in Class A the last two years.

The Wesleyan Girls went on to finish as state runners up to Kendrick of Columbus in Class AA, ending a string of six straight state championships and nine in the last ten years split between Class A and Class AA while the nationally ranked Greater Atlanta Christian Boys went on to win the Class AA State Championship with a much closer than expected 58-55 win over Calhoun.

The Battle of the States runners up Dawson County Girls defeated Cartersville 58-48 in the first round of the Class AAA States Tournament but fell in the second round by a 67-59 score to Morgan County. And the Battle of the States Tournament Champion Dawson County Boys won their first Class AAA State Tournament game 55-43 over Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe but lost a 62-33 decision to Cedar Grove in the second round. And, of course, the third place Gordon Lee girls made it to state but fell to the eighth place Lady Indians in first round play.

OUT OF STATE TEAMS IN STATE TOURNAMENT - Out of state teams participating in the Battle of the States making it to state included the champion Hayesville and fifth place Hokes Bluff (Alabama) girls and the runners up Hayesville and seventh place Murphy Boys with both Hayesville teams the only ones surviving first round state tournament play.

The Hayesville girls included their third win in four games against prominent Smoky Mountain Conference foe Cherokee among four straight state tournament wins in making it to the state semi-finals where they fell by a 57-49 score to Bishop McGuinness. Bishop McGuinness is a private school in Kernersville, often compared to Wesleyan dominance in Georgia, that has won seven straight state championships since being admitted to the formerly all public North Carolina High School Association with an eighth perhaps coming in the North Carolina Class A State Championship game this week. Hayesville's Boys, who finished in a three way tie for first place in regular season play in the Smoky Mountain Conference easily defeated Hiwassee Dam in first round play but got a tough draw and fell at top seeded Cherryville by a 90-78 score in the second round.



Towns County basketball stars Dallas Manus and Eryn Cochran overcame early injuries and made a difference in the second half of the season. Manus saw action during the Battle of the States and Cochran returned as the calendar flipped to 2014. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

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Lady Indians soccer out of the gates

at 3-0; host Union County on Tuesday

By Todd Forrest
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The Towns County Lady Indians (3-0, 1-0) are continuing to plow their way through the early segment of the 2014 schedule and will look to record back-to-back wins over the Union County Lady Panthers on Tuesday.

Last month, the Lady Indians faced light resistance from the Fannin County Lady Rebels (2-3) in a 7-0 Towns County victory.

On March 1st, Region 8-A foe George Walton hosted the Lady Indians, who disposed of the home team in overtime by a 2-1 score.

Senior Faithe Robinson scored both Towns County goals, including the game-winner, coming with 3 minutes left in the overtime session.

"This game was very difficult and we grinded out the victory," Lady Indian Head Coach Peter Byrne said. "George Walton had the edge in possession but we were more dangerous side when we got the ball in the final third."

Recently, Highlands, NC visited Frank McClure Stadium and Towns County held on for a 3-1 win.



Senior Alaina Papazian last Friday vs Highlands, NC. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Senior Faithe Robinson leads the team in goals and provided 100 percent of the offense vs George Walton. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

soccer and attack when the opportunity arises, and avoid youthful mistakes on the defensive side.

"Overall, we're a fairly balanced side but we tend to rely a lot on Faithe for our

goals," he said. "Defensively, we're young but improving. We like to play possession soccer and move the ball around the field. Having a forward of Faithe's caliber, also allows us to counterattack effectively."

Baseball: Indians take care of

Tallulah to break into win column

By Todd Forrest
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The Towns County Indians picked up a 12-8 win over Tallulah Falls at the Tallulah Falls Diamond Day on Saturday.

The victory came on the heels of a 7-3 loss to East Jackson that saw senior Jackson Noblet smack a two-run homer to left in the sixth inning to cut the Eagle lead to 7-2.

In the seventh a two-out RBI single by Cruz Shook made it a 7-3 game, but that's as close as the Indians would get.

Towns equaled East Jackson's seven hits, but four Indian errors proved too much to overcome.

Last Tuesday, Towns traveled to Cumming to face Pinecrest Academy where RBIs from Noblet and Adam Barrett were all the offense the Indians could manufacture.

Harrison Hobbs worked five innings, surrendering four earned runs, seven hits, while striking out two. Will De Vries struck out two in one inning of action, yielding one hit and one run.



Jackson Noblet after a homer off East Jackson. Photo/Lowell Nicholson



Cruz Shook on Saturday at Tallulah Falls. Photo/Lowell Nicholson