

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians defeat Union in OT at home; fall at White County and Athens Christian

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team last week experienced the height of taking a thrilling come-from-behind overtime victory over Class AA Union County in ending a long losing streak to the Panthers, but fell victim to an outstanding Class AAAA White County Team on Tuesday and fell victim to their own struggles in a loss at Region 8A foe Athens Christian on Saturday.

The week's work left them with a 3-4 overall record, including 1-1 in Region 8-A.

**Indians 64
Union County 63 OT**

It had been exactly one week since the Indians saw a hot start give the appearance of a likely win at Union County only to see the home standing Panthers rally from as much as nineteen points behind during the first half and take a 76-63 victory in a game much closer than the final score.

It was the Indians' turn last Friday, however, to rally from a 7-point deficit the final 1:15 of regulation play and deprive the Panthers of what appeared to be a likely win for them with a win of their own in overtime.

The Indian win ended a 36-game winning streak by the Panthers over the Indians extending back to January of 2000.

Although the Panthers have had the upper hand for such an extended period of time, this wasn't always the case as the Indians had much success against the Panthers in years prior to 2000 but especially in the 50's, 60's, and first half of the 70's.

Included among Towns County successes was winning at least 13 games-in-a-row over the Panthers during the mid 60's, according to a Towns County Herald article from the period.

In those years, it was common for the two teams to play four times against each other during regular season, due to financial considerations for both schools with high interest and great attendance, plus any invitational tournament and post season tournament play.

At any rate, it was quite a thrill for the current group of Indians to end the long losing streak with hope for maybe beginning a winning streak of their own.

Of course, the Lady Indians have had much success against the Lady Panthers during the last twenty or so years but with the Lady Panthers holding the upper hand the last couple of years.

The game of last Friday would be a classic, reminding long time fans of some of the great contests between the Indians and Panthers teams of the past.



Junior Adam Barrett goes up for two during the first half vs Union County. Photo/Todd Forrest

The Indians would battle cold shooting and turnovers and trail by small margins for much of the first quarter and a half of the game after enjoying a red hot start at Union County a week earlier.

The Indians did hold a pair of brief one point leads in the first quarter but it required a trey by Zach Davenport at the buzzer to reduce a six points Union lead to 13-10.

The Panthers took two leads of five points during the first three minutes of the second quarter but Davenport got the Indians even with two free throws and a 3-point play at 19-19 and field goals by Jake Pyrlik and Colton Shook gave the Indians what would actually be their biggest lead of the game of 23-19 with the nine points run coming between just the 4:47 and 3:05 marks.

The lead would change hands four times in the final minute of the second quarter when Davenport ended that quarter as he had the first with a trey at the buzzer for a 30-28 Towns lead at intermission.

This time, lady luck smiled on Davenport and the Indians as he banked the ball off the backboard but the successful shot was well earned as he made exceptional effort to get the shot off under heavy traffic as the clock wound down. Davenport scored ten points and Will de Vries four for the Indians in second quarter action.

There would be five ties and five lead changes in the third quarter with the Panthers holding a 46-45 lead entering the fourth quarter on a field goal with five seconds left in the third quarter.

Adam Barrett led the Indians in scoring for the quarter with six points while de Vries again contributed four.

The scoring pace was slow for more than four and a half

minutes at the start of the fourth quarter with the Panthers using a 5-2 run for a 51-47 lead before a trey by Davenport at 3:20 got the Indians within 51-50.

The Panthers would respond with two field goals and two free throws, however, for a 57-50 lead with just 1:58 left and the appearance of control of the game.

The Indians would not be denied, however, as de Vries sank a trey at the 1:15 mark and Major Moss came up with a steal near mid court and took the ball to the basket for a slam dunk at 59 seconds for a sudden Union lead of just 57-55.

The Panthers then misfired on a one and one free throw attempt at 39.7 seconds and the Indians used the possession to advantage when Moss got the ball to Davenport for an inside shot on an inbounds play and a 57-57 standoff at 14 seconds.

Neither team could dent the scoreboard after that and the game went to a four minute overtime period.

Davenport got the Indians a 58-57 lead on a free throw at 3:23 and the game was a see saw battle the rest of the way with two free throws by de Vries at 2:28 matching a Panther field goal for a 60-59 Indian lead and two free throws by Moss at 1:11 matching a Panther basket for a 62-61 Towns advantage setting the stage for a tense final 33 seconds.

The Panthers got a 63-62 lead on a field goal at that 33-second mark with Moss driving the left side of the lane and laying the ball in the basket at eight seconds for a 64-63 lead which held up for the win but not without drama until the final buzzer.

The Panthers got off a three point field goal attempt and a putback attempt for the win during the final three seconds



Junior Will deVries drops in two of his 15 points vs Union County on Friday night. Photo/Todd Forrest

but both shots were well off the mark and the Indians had the hard fought victory.

Moss and Davenport each contributed six points in the fourth quarter and overtime period while de Vries added five.

When the smoke had cleared, there had been an incredible eight ties and 21 lead changes during the course of the game.

The Indians were led in scoring for the game by Davenport with 19 points, de Vries with 15, Barrett and Moss with 10 each, and Shook with 8. Leaders in assists were Moss with 5 and Davenport and de Vries with 2 each.

The Indians welcomed junior Darringer Barrett back to the team and he made a brief appearance near the end of this game and in the Saturday game at Athens Christian after having been sidelined by serious injuries suffered in a car accident back in May.

The Panthers were led in scoring by sophomore Crawford Colwell with 21 points, junior Lawson Baenninger with 13, and 6'8" senior Chase Shook with 12.

**Indians 52
White County 80**

Cleveland - In a game marked by many missed Indian shots they often make, many puzzling officials calls and non calls as related to both teams, and especially the presence of an outstanding opponent, the Indians would see the home standing Warriors break away from an 8-6 lead the final 3:42 of the first quarter and lead by scores of 20-9, 49-25, and 64-38 at the quarter breaks in taking an 80-52 victory.

The Warriors extended their early season record to 7-1 with the victory with five of their

six prior opponents sporting a combined 25-7 record in their games played against opponents other than the Warriors.

The Indians would trail by just an 8-6 score on the strength of three field goals by Will de Vries by the 3:51 mark of the first quarter but two quick fouls perhaps fitting the "puzzling" or at least inconsistent category, ending at the 4:24 mark, sent floor leader and prime inside player Major Moss to the bench for awhile.

The Warriors took full advantage in springing out to the aforementioned 20-9 lead and the Indians would not be able to recover as the Wildcats pulled steadily away for the victory.

De Vries wound up with eight points in the first quarter, Moss with five late points in the second and seven in the third while Cole Ledford sank a pair of treys for six points and Zach Davenport a deuce and a trey for five in the fourth as quarterly scoring highlights for the Indians.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Indians were de Vries with 13 points, Moss with 12, Davenport with 8, and Ledford with 6 while Davenport led in assists with 3 and Moss followed with 2, according to your reporter's tally. The Warriors were led in scoring by senior Whit Mauney with 24 points, junior John Ward with 19, and senior Bradley Hurst with 14.

**Indians 30
Athens Christian 59**

Athens - There was concern a week earlier that the disappointment of their loss at Union the night before might carry over and create a sub par performance the next night at home against Athens Academy but that was not the case as the Indians took a resounding 83-65 win over the

Spartans. There can also be carry over from a draining win such as the long sought victory over Union last Friday night and it can never be known if that were a factor or not but Murphy's Law certainly gave the Indians a right cross to the jaw on Saturday night at Region 8A foe Athens Christian.

The Eagles took full advantage of the "anything that can go wrong, will go wrong" adage as was the case for the Indians' play with ice cold shooting and an unusually high number of turnovers in a 59-30 loss but the Eagles should be given credit for playing well in not only winning their first game of the season after three losses but easily exceeding their highest prior points total of 44.

The first quarter was very difficult for the Indians as they went nearly four minutes without scoring until an Adam Barrett basket reduced an early Eagles lead to 8-2 and it was near the one minute mark when the Indians' second field goal, a trey by Major Moss, had them within 15-6.

The Eagles scored the first basket of the second quarter in less than a minute for a 17-6 lead but they struggled themselves, not scoring again until 18 seconds were left in the quarter, for a 19-15 lead at intermission.

The Indians had used a 9-0 run to edge within 17-15 with Barrett sinking a deuce and trey for five points in the run.

A three point play by Will de Vries and two baskets by Barrett had the Indians within 24-22 near the mid point of the third quarter but the Eagles used an 8-0 run for a 32-22 lead with 2:15 on the clock.

Davenport cut the lead to 32-25 with a trey at fifty seven seconds but the Eagles matched it, courtesy of a slow start of the clock, at the buzzer putting them back in front by 10 at 35-25 entering the fourth quarter.

A 12-0 run by the Eagles the first four minutes of the fourth quarter gave them a 47-25 lead which they extended to 59-30 by games end for the Region 8A victory.

Scoring leaders for the Indians for the game were Adam Barrett with 11 points, Davenport with 8, and Moss with 5 while Moss and Colton Shook led in assists with 2 each.

The Eagles were led in scoring by senior Marcus Wilson with 13 points and sophomore Kole Phillips with 12.

For readers who wonder if it is common for a team to score 83 points against a quite good team in Athens Academy on one Saturday and just 30 the next week against a similar team, it is not really common but not unheard of either as addressed in a related article since the Lady Indians had scoring problems of their own on this night.

Lady Indians have tough week with losses to White, Union, and Athens Christian

By Jerry Kendall
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Last week proved to be a difficult time for the mostly quite young Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team as they fell to defeat in three games against very capable opponents, to White County and Athens Christian on the road, and to Union County on their home court. They completed the week with an overall 1-6 record, including 1-1 in Region 8-A.

**Lady Indians 38
White County 50**

Cleveland - At White County on Tuesday, the Lady Indians would actually outscore the Lady Warriors 33-26 in three of the quarters but see a 24-5 Lady Warriors advantage in the third quarter decide the game in a 50-38 White County victory.

The Class AAAA Lady Warriors improved their record to 4-4 with the win over the Lady Indians after having six of their prior games against Class AAAA and Class AAAA teams in addition to neighborhood rival Class AAA Lumpkin County.

In first quarter action, the Lady Indians rallied to within 8-6 on baskets by Kristin Byers and Savannah Dyer during the final 28 seconds and then outscored the Warriors 11-8 in the second in holding a 17-16 lead at intermission.

Second quarter highlights included an early Kristen Henson basket for an 8-8 tie and a last minute Dyer free throw for a 14-14 standoff and a trey by Madison Landress at thirty seven seconds for a 17-14 Lady Indian lead.



Kristen Byers defends a Union jump shooter. Photo/Todd Forrest

The third quarter would prove to be the Lady Indians' undoing, however, as the Lady Warriors opened the quarter with a 14-0 run for a 30-17 lead by the three minutes mark and an eventual 39-19 lead by the 1:21 mark.

The Lady Indians would follow, however, by edging to within 40-22 entering the fourth quarter and continue a mini run of 9-1, all on 9-for-12 free throw shooting, to within 40-28 less than a minute and a half into the fourth quarter.

The two teams would play on even terms the remainder of the game as the Lady Warriors came away with a 50-38 victory. Lady Indian seniors Jocelyn Byers and Dyer contributed four points each in the final minutes of the game.

Jocelyn Byers led the Lady Indians in scoring for the game with 11 points with other leaders

being Dyer with 7 points, Landress with 6, and Kristin Byers with 5 while Jocelyn Byers and Landress tied for the lead in assists with 3 each, according to your reporter's tally.

The Lady Warriors were led in scoring by junior Charlsie Maddox with 19 points and senior Jordan Taylor with 17.

**Lady Indians 26
Union County 48**

The Lady Indians came face to face with longtime neighborhood rival Union County for the second time in a week on Friday on their home court with the Class AA Lady Panthers steadily pulling away the final three quarters in taking a 48-26 victory following a 57-32 win the previous Friday in Blairsville.

The Lady Panthers extended their record to 3-4 with the win against a pretty chal-



Jocelyn Byers and the Lady Indians battle it out. Photo/Todd Forrest

lenging schedule as they and Rabun County are, like the Class A Towns County and Commerce teams, isolated from other schools in their Class AA and wind up facing larger schools for much of their season.

The Lady Indians would give the Lady Panthers quite a battle for more than a quarter and a half of their game, forcing ties of 2-2 on two free throws by Madison McClure and 4-4 on a basket by Jocelyn Byers who then pulled the Lady Indians to within 12-7 after one quarter on a late trey.

Jocelyn's freshman sister, Kristin Byers, then scored seven Lady Indian points on four for five free throw shooting and a trey by the 3:35 mark of the second quarter for just a 17-14 Lady Indian deficit.

The Lady Panthers would use two treys to advantage during a 9-0 run the final 3:25 of

the second quarter, however, for a 26-14 lead at intermission that they would extend it to 40-23 after three quarters on the way to the 48-26 win with six different Lady Indians putting points on the scoreboard the last half.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Lady Indians were Kristin Byers with 9 points, Jocelyn Byers with 7, and McClure with 5 while Jocelyn Byers and McClure provided the only two assists tallied by your reporter.

The Lady Panthers were led in scoring for the game by sophomore Bailey Daniel with 24 points and senior Layne Colwell with 12.

**Lady Indians 15
Athens Christian 58**

Athens - The Lady Indians would face their most difficult game of the season to date at Athens Christian where the Lady

Eagles, who lost just two seniors from last year's team and have six seniors on their team this year, broke away to a 17-1 lead by the 1:52 mark of the first quarter and never looked back in leading 19-4, 35-10, and 50-12 at the quarter breaks in taking a 58-15 victory.

The Lady Eagles finished last year with a 15-10 overall record, including 10-3 for third place in Region 8-A, and they are off to a 4-2 record this year with the two losses being by two points to Heritage of Conyers and by 13 to Lakeside of Evans with both of those schools being in Class AAAA and already with six wins each.

It was just one of those games when the Lady Indians, like the Indians in the second varsity game of the day, just couldn't get anything going other than for a brief 7-2 run between the 1:16 mark of the first quarter and the 5:35 mark of the second in reducing the Lady Eagles lead from 17-1 to 19-8.

Madison Landress scored three of the points in the run on a field goal and one for two free throw shooting while Madison McClure also provided three points on three for four free throw shooting.

McClure led the Lady Indians in scoring for the game with 7 points and she and Kenzee Denton each provided one assist as tallied by your reporter. For readers who wonder if it is common for a team to score 67 points in an overtime game against a quite good team in Class AA Social Circle and just 15 against Athens Christian less than three weeks later, it is not really common but not unheard of either as addressed in a related article since the Indians had scoring problems of their own on this night.