

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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21st Annual Battle of the States basketball tournament begins Saturday

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The 21st annual Battle of the States Prep Basketball Tournament is scheduled for this Saturday, Dec. 27, and Monday through Tuesday, Dec. 29 and 30th, of next week in the Towns County High School Gym.

Eight games will be played each day, beginning at 10 a.m. and continuing until around 10 p.m.

The Tournament has become a most respected sporting event, drawing interest from fans and teams over much of the southeast, as evidenced by the fact that teams from six different states have made appearances during the first nineteen years the event has been held.

There are several changes among teams appearing in this year's tournament as compared to last year.

The Dawson County (Georgia), Gordon Lee (Georgia), and Murphy (North Carolina) teams will not return while the Hayesville (North Carolina), Polk County (Tennessee), Union County (Georgia), and Towns County (Georgia) girls and boys teams will return along with the Hokes Bluff (Alabama) girls and Piedmont (Alabama) boys.

The Hokes Bluff boys and the Piedmont girls will appear for the first time as will the Lumpkin County (Georgia) girls and boys while the White County (Georgia) girls and boys will return for the first time since the 2006

tournament.

This year's tournament will be a homecoming event for Lumpkin County Girls Head Coach Matt Youngblood, a former star player for the Towns County Indians, who played in the first three tournaments in 1994, 1995, and 1996 and then appeared as head boys coach for Towns County in the 2005 and 2006 tournaments.

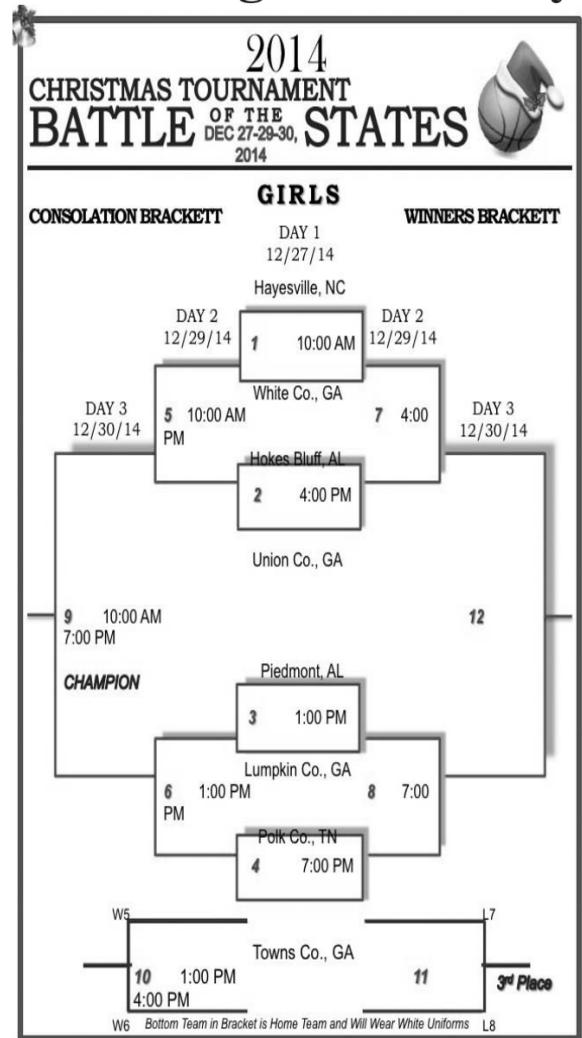
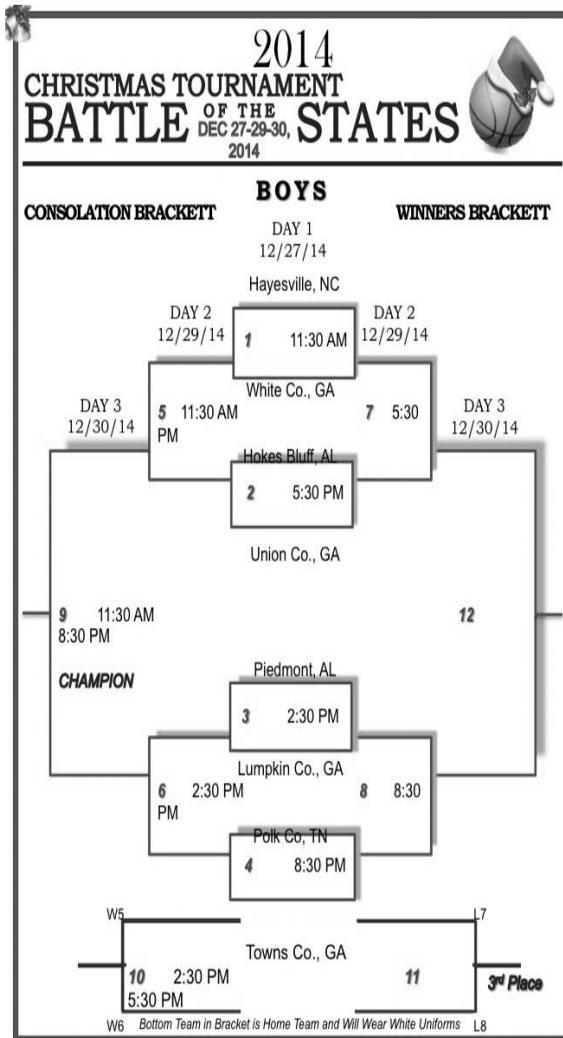
Polk County and Towns County are the only two schools to have appeared in all twenty previous tournaments.

The Hayesville Lady Jackets will be hoping to repeat their championship of a year ago but there will of a certainty be a new boys champion this year as defending champion Dawson County is not returning.

Complete girls and boys brackets are included in this week's paper but in their opening games the Towns County Lady Indians will face Polk County at 7 p.m. on Thursday with the Indians to follow against Polk County at 8:30 p.m.

Starting times and opponents for future games in the Tournament for all teams will be based upon the results of the contests as they are played.

For quite a number of years, an annual edited and updated review of previous winners, details from some of the prior tournaments, and a look at some of the often stunning future successes of the teams and individuals who have played in previous tournaments has been provided in the Herald.



With a 20-year tournament history, however, the articles have become so cumbersome, lengthy, and largely old news that one will not be provided this year. For newcomers to the

area and visitors to the tournament who would like to view some of the history of the tournament and those who would like to refresh their memory, articles from prior years can be found by

visiting the archives on the Towns County Herald website at www.townscountyherald.net.

Readers can click on the Archives link and then on the newspaper date usually

nearest Christmas Day all the way back to 2009 for information about the tournament usually included on both the front page and on the sports pages.

Indians wrestling continues to battle through illness and injury

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Indian grapplers have been performing remarkably well for a season that has become weighed down due to injury or illness.

Three Indians placed in the tough Creekview Invitational tournament on Saturday, Dec. 13, and Sunday, Dec. 14, in Woodstock, and Towns County finished 11th overall.

"That's probably the toughest tournament we've been to in the last four or five years," said Head Coach Jeff Stowers. "Some really good, topnotch programs from all over the state and a couple from out of state."

Nick Shook, Kyle Davis and Daulton Rogers all took third in their weight classes.

"Nick got beat in the second round, and then wrestled all the way back and was able to finish third," said Coach Stowers. "He won a huge match against one of our area rivals, St. Francis, in the semis, which



Towns County's three individual medalists from the Creekview Invitational: Kyle Davis, Daulton Rogers, and Nick Shook

is going to be huge for him come area time and seeding criteria.

"And Kyle Davis did the same thing, he lost his second round match and then was able to wrestle all the way back and get third. And again, beat a kid from St. Francis in a big match for some area seeding criteria

to get to the console finals, and then in the console finals won a big match, too."

Coach Stowers is a firm believer in wrestling tough opponents in order to get ready for area and state competition.

"We scheduled it because we've got some kids that need to see that level of competition

before we get to the state tournament," said Coach Stowers. "And so, we expected that some of our kids were going to have a tough time, and they did. In fact, we only entered six kids in the varsity part of the tournament and entered the rest of them in the junior varsity.

"Our JV kids finished

third overall, which was really good for them. They've got some really tough competition, so that was a good thing for our young kids to be able to wrestle and have a lot of success."

Then, on Tuesday, Dec. 16, the Indians lost to Rabun County by a mere 6 points, though they gave up 36 points

in forfeits. At that same match, the Indians lost to Riversville by 18 points, but again, forfeited 36 points due to injury or illness.

"We've been wrestling pretty well," said Coach Stowers. "We're trying to get some kids healthy, and kids are ding-ed up and that kind of stuff. We've passed the flu around a little bit, so we've been struggling with the flu bug and some injury bugs since Thanksgiving, but we're hopefully getting everybody on the mend so we can come back in January ready to rock and roll."

The Indians also beat Hayesville by more than 60 points on Tuesday, Dec. 9, and have a few matches left before area, then state, duals.

"When we get back in January, it's wide open to the finish line," said Coach Stowers. "We've done all the preparing we can do, and we're going to see where we are right now. Over Christmas, we'll tweak the things we can tweak and try to fix the things we can fix, and from then on it's just hammer down to the finish line."

TCMS Lady Indians basketball ground the Eagles; fall at Hiwassee Dam

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In its most recent games, the Towns County Middle School Lady Indians experienced a split, one win and one loss.

On Monday, Dec. 15, the girls' basketball team defeated Rabun Gap 39-17 in Eagle territory.

"We played well and had a few kids not feeling well," said Head Coach Shannon Floyd. "Our starting point guard has been out all week. Our defense was stifling and got all our girls playing time."

Then, on Tuesday, Dec. 16, the Lady Indians lost by a mere 3 points to Hiwassee Dam in North Carolina, final score 38-35.

"I am not much of one to blame officiating, but it was a contributing factor," said Coach Floyd. "Hiwassee Dam shot 38 free throws to our 10. They were clearly as aggressive as we were. We still had a chance to win the game and missed too many free throws and did not execute."

"I hate that my girls worked as hard as they did and were not allowed to play the same as the opposing team. But, we did not help ourselves either. I told the girls we can only control our game and make the most of the opportunities given to us. We did not, and it cost us a game."

Due to widespread illness, both girls' and boys' Towns County Middle School basketball



games were canceled for the last home game of the year against Lakeview Academy on Saturday, Dec. 20.

"Nine out of 14 of our team missed practice either Wednesday or were missing on Friday," said

Coach Floyd. "Practice was canceled Friday, and we canceled the game to be safe."

The Indians lost both of their games last week - 46-26 against Rabun Gap, and 39-38 against Hiwassee Dam.

Indian JV's overwhelmed at Union County and Mount Pisgah

By Jerry Kendall
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The youthful Towns County Indian JV's saw their first action in nearly two weeks last Friday at Union County and Saturday at Mount Pisgah Christian School in Johns Creek near Atlanta and took it on the chin in 49-16 and 58-27 losses. They played without the services in these two games of freshman Evan Berrong who was out of state with his family and with sophomore Kobe Denton and freshman Zach

Davenport seeing very limited duty as usual for availability for the varsity games with a combined five quarters allowed for the two games. At Union County, the Panthers broke out to an 18-0 lead after one quarter and led 26-7 at intermission and 39-11 after three quarters in taking a 49-16 victory. The best quarter for the Indians was the second when Denton and Davenport saw their only action with Denton contributing a trey and deuce as Union held only an 8-7 advantage for the quarter. Denton led the scoring in

the game with the 5 points with other leaders being freshman Cole Ledford and junior Kevin Reardon with 4 points each.

At Mount Pisgah, the Indians remained within striking distance of the Patriots into the second quarter with Denton and Davenport seeing action in the first. Back to back baskets by two brothers, freshman Cason and sophomore Colton Shook, had them ahead 4-3 by the five and a half minute mark of the first quarter and a trey by Cason had them within 8-7 near the mid point of the quarter.

After the Patriots used a 9-0 run for a 17-7 lead, late first quarter field goals by Davenport and freshman Chase Williams got the Indians within 17-11 by quarter's end and freshman Cole Ledford opened the second quarter with a trey with the Indians now trailing by just a 17-14 score. The points were hard to come by after that for the Indians, however, as the Patriots sprang out to a 33-15 lead by intermission. Davenport returned for a second quarter in this game and struck for a trey, a deuce, and two free throws but the Patriots led 48-22 after three quarters and continued on for a 58-27 victory.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Indians were Davenport with 9 points and Ledford and Cason Shook with 5 each while Davenport also led in assists with 2.