

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Memory Lane... continued from Page 2B

the super tall and talented Buford with the always quotable Buford coach Butch Britt commenting, "I thought we would have Towns' girls with their tongues hanging out by the end of the third quarter but it was my girls had their tongues hanging out".

Martha Moss Hufstetler scored 29 points and had 16 rebounds as a sophomore in the Buford game with a packed gym, with the exception of Buford fans of course, roaring its approval for the much smaller Lady Indians. She went on to stardom at Truett McConnell College, then a junior college, and at Berry College with successes including starring for a national championship team as a freshman at Truett McConnell and achieving All American status both for her playing skills and academically.

At the risk of being too lengthy here, it is most noteworthy that the Buford ladies had won the prestigious Gwinnett County Christmas tournament that season with victories included over South Gwinnett, the Class 3A region tournament winner, and Norcross, the Class 2A region tournament runnerup with those two classes being the highest in the state at that time.

Starting forward Susan Waldroup De Vries on the 1977 championship team is the mother of the previously mentioned Will De Vries of the Class of 2017. And top substitute Sherri Garrett Hodnett is an aunt of Lady Indians 1,000 points scorer Vanessa Floyd and Indian freshman Zane Floyd.

The First State Final Four Teams – Although reaching numerous noteworthy achievements from both individual and team standpoints such as mentioned above, neither the Lady Indians or Indians would reach the state final four in the 1900's. The first such occurrence would come during the 2000 season when the

Lady Indians of head coach Jim Melton made this level for the first of three times during the period of 2000 through 2013 with the Indians joining them for the first time this year on the way to the state championship.

It was quite a remarkable 2000 post season for the Lady Indians with much hopefully interesting information to be reported below. The Lady Indians hosted and swept three games over Rabun Gap 78-40, Union County 50-41, and Rabun County 46-35 in winning their fifth Sub-region 8A North tournament championship in six years. During the prior year of 1999, there was no complete sub-region tournament but the Lady Indians had finished first in regular season play and finished above all sub-region opponents during a crossover sub-region and region event but with no official sub-region tournament champion.

The Lady Indians, Union, and Rabun had tied for first place in 2000 regular season play with Rabun winning a coin toss and placing Union and Towns in the second and third spots and in the same bracket with the losing Lady Panthers seeing their season come to an end in a semifinal loss with an excellent 18-4 record. Rabun's loss to the Lady Indians in the championship game left them with a likewise excellent 18-6 record while the Lady Indians finished the tournament with a 21-4 record.

In a unique situation of no traditional region tournament for the 2000 season, the Lady Indians and Rabun County traveled to Jefferson where the two first place sub region teams, Buford and the Lady Indians, squared off for first place in the region and first and second seeding from the region in the state tournament. The second place teams, Jefferson and Rabun County, faced each other for third place in the region and for third and

fourth seeding from the region for the state tournament.

Jefferson defeated Rabun County and the Indians faced a powerful Buford team and were overwhelmed by the presence of 6'3" Christi Thomas and a sharp shooting supporting cast which defeated the Lady Indians by a 79-54 score. Thomas went on to stardom at the University of Georgia and followed that up by playing seven years as a professional in the WNBA and then for nine years abroad in six different countries. But those who may have thought this to be the beginning of the end for the Lady Indians and a likely state championship for Buford that year were in for quite a shock.

The Lady Indians came from behind to take a 69-54 victory over Monticello in the first round of the Class A state tournament at Hancock Central High School in Sparta. And yes, that was the home court of this year's state runnersup to the Indians. They then traveled to Floyd College near Rome where they overcame a 43-35 deficit by outscoring Calhoun, the Region 6A tournament champions with a 23-5 record, by a 31-15 margin the final 11:04 of the game for a 66-58 victory.

A candidate for shock of the century was in store in the later game that evening when Buford squared off against Model High School from near Rome. In a shocking comparison of scores, Buford had defeated the Lady Indians by twenty five points some two weeks prior on the same night Calhoun had defeated Model by seven points. With the Lady Indians having defeated Calhoun by eight points in the first game of the evening, Buford had an apparent advantage of forty points over Model when adding the twenty five, eight, and seven point margins of victory among the three teams.

It was quite a shock when Model had a tall and physically

strong player who contained Christi Thomas a bit and ice cold outside shooting by Buford led to Model taking a 63-50 victory for a fifty three points turnaround from what might have been expected and Buford's season coming to an end in the second round of the state tournament with the Lady Indians to last two rounds longer than the Lady Wolves. Martha Moss Hufstetler, the aforementioned star of the 1977 Lady Indians team, was in attendance and most happy to see the Lady Indians and Model victories. She had had five very successful seasons, including a Class A State Final Four team, as the head coach at Model before resigning to rear a family and she continued at that school as a teacher and counselor for many years.

The Lady Indians used another miracle finish in third round action in Rome by using a 17-4 fourth quarter in overcoming a 50-38 deficit after three quarters in taking a 55-54 victory over Landmark Christian of Fairburn and earning the schools first basketball trip to the State Final Four. The final 1:09 of the game demands re-creation here for those who did not see it.

Trailing 52-47, Lady Indians sophomore Tiffany Gomez sank a basket at the 1:09 mark for a 52-49 Lady Indians deficit and stole the inbounds pass with senior Brandy McNabb sinking a three pointer from the right corner at exactly the one minute mark for a 52-52 tie. Freshman Ashley Key, a future WNBA draft choice and a long time professional basketball player in Sweden, sank a field goal for Landmark at the twenty four seconds mark setting up a sweet finish for the Lady Indians. McNabb got the ball in the corner again but was covered defensively and drove the baseline, handing off the ball to senior Candice Blythe Thompson who completed a three point play with 4.1 sec-

onds left in giving the Lady Indians the heart stopping come from behind 55-54 victory.

The Lady Indians faced a tough physical road following the victory over Landmark Christian on Saturday, however, as they had to travel more than one hundred miles home from the Rome location, travel more than 175 miles to Macon on Sunday and regroup to play in the state final four at 4:00 pm on Monday. They faced Turner County, a team located less than 100 miles from Macon after playing their region tournament in an auxiliary facility at the Macon Centreplex where the Indians took their state championship this year.

With Turner County being a comparatively short distance from home and no doubt visiting the massive venue where they would play, they had quite an advantage over the Lady Indians who were road weary and likely overwhelmed by the location as well. Turner County, as might have been expected got off to a 9-0 lead by the mid point of the first quarter and, although building some more substantial leads, had increased their lead by just three points and were leading by just twelve points by a score of 44-32 half a game later near the mid point of the fourth quarter before extending the lead slightly for a 51-34 victory.

Turner County was led by 6'4" freshman star Renalda Pierce who went on to receive a basketball scholarship to Florida State University but died tragically of an undetected genetic disorder leading to an aneurysm prior to what was expected to be a resounding sophomore season at FSU.

The focus of this trip down memory lane brings interesting information. Candice Blythe Thompson is a stepdaughter of Melba Hunter Blythe who was a four year starter, including as a senior on the 1973 Lady Indians' first

state tournament team, and Brandy McNabb Warren is a daughter of Susie Nicholson McNabb, a starting guard as a senior on the 1977 region championship team. Blythe scored more than 1,300 career points and McNabb more than 1,200 for the Lady Indians and both went on to very successful college careers. Both first went to Truett McConnell College, then a junior college, and from there Blythe went to Piedmont College and McNabb to LaGrange College.

Changes in Region Alignments – Viewing the names of opposing teams above gives clues to vast changes in the memberships in various region alignments through the years. We have changed from having such comparatively nearby schools as Rabun Gap, Rabun County, Tallulah Falls, Toccoa Falls, Union County, and East Fannin along with Lakeview Academy and even White and Lumpkin Counties in our sub-regions along with such schools as Banks County, Dawson County, Commerce, and Jackson County often in the adjoining sub-region.

Changes have occurred such as East Fannin and West Fannin consolidating in the 1970's, the Toccoa Falls High School affiliated with Toccoa Falls College being discontinued years ago, and Rabun Gap joining a private school conference primarily in North Carolina after experiencing vast increases in foreign students. Most of the other public schools listed have gone to higher classifications with even Class 2A having just four schools in our area this year with these being Union, Rabun, Banks, and the far distant Elbert County while Fannin went with the Class 2A schools in Northwest Georgia this year after dropping from Class 3A.

Jerry Kendall's "A trip down Memory Lane" will conclude in next week's Towns County Herald.

Towns County golfers take on Panthers at Old Union Golf Course



Towns County golf traveled to Blairsville to face Union County at Old Union Golf Course on Tuesday, March 23. The Towns men fell 214-225. The Towns ladies came up short 108-120. Photos/Todd Forrest

Benton MacKaye Trail Association hikes for April

The following hikes are sponsored by the Benton MacKaye Trail Association. The current social distancing and health rules are used by hike Leaders.

April 2 (Friday) - The Benton MacKaye Trail Association sponsors a 5 mile moderate at Sawnee Mtn near loop in Cumming, GA. This is a newer and less used section of the Preserve.Hike Leader Howard Baggett. For more information, contact the HikeleaderHB@bmtamail.org

April 2 (Friday) - The Benton MacKaye Trail Association sponsors a 10.8 mile moderately strenuous hike on the BMT Bushyhead Gap north to Hatley Gap in the Cohuttas . This is a "moving meditation." hike limited to 5 people. Hike leader Collin Chambers. For more information, contact the HikeleaderCC@bmtamail.org.

April 4 (Sunday) - The Benton MacKaye Trail Association sponsors a 4.8 mile moderately strenuous hike on the BMT Dyer Gap on FS 64 south to the headwaters of the Jacks River near Flat Top Mountain in the Cohuttas . Elevation gain is: 900'. This is a "moving meditation" hike limited to 5 people. Hike leader Collin Chambers. For more information, contact the HikeleaderCC@bmtamail.org.

Chatuge Shores Ladies Golf offers free play dates in April

The Chatuge Shores Ladies Golf League is starting pre-season on Tuesday, April 6. Play is every Tuesday at Chatuge Shores Golf Course 260 Golf Course Rd, Hayesville, NC 28904. Tee times during pre-season start at 10 a.m. with a shot gun start. During the month of April anyone can come out and play without joining the league. A fun group of ladies, the league has 20 members from throughout the tri-county area. The course fee



is \$27 which includes a cart. Members can sign up on the web site. Nonmembers interested in playing should email vhealy55@gmail.com. The league web site is www.chatugeshoreslga.com.

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DEADLINE
APRIL 20, 2021



Indians T-shirt

50/50 Short Sleeve T-shirt

Size	Cost	Qty	Total
Youth Medium	\$15		
Youth Large	\$15		
Adult Small	\$15		
Adult Medium	\$15		
Adult Large	\$15		
Adult XL	\$15		
Adult XXL	\$17		
Adult XXXL	\$18		



Long Sleeve T-shirt

100% Cotton Long Sleeve T-shirt

Size	Cost	Qty	Total
Youth Medium	\$20		
Youth Large	\$20		
Adult Small	\$20		
Adult Medium	\$20		
Adult Large	\$20		
Adult XL	\$20		
Adult XXL	\$22		
Adult XXXL	\$23		

Hooded Sweatshirt

Fleece Hoodie

Size	Cost	Qty	Total
Youth Medium	\$25		
Youth Large	\$25		
Adult Small	\$25		
Adult Medium	\$25		
Adult Large	\$25		
Adult XL	\$25		
Adult XXL	\$28		
Adult XXXL	\$29		

Royal Blue

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