



# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Towns County High School Girls Basketball Wrap-up

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The 2011 high school basketball season in Georgia is now complete so let's take a final look at a few items as related to the Towns County Lady Indians and Indians of this season.

**Class A State Championship** – Although the Lady Indians fell victim to the hot shooting at the start and end of their final game in the State Sweet 16 against Pace Academy, there was an interest in the state tournament right up to the final game of the season.

The Pace Academy Girls made it all the way to the State Championship game where they fell last Saturday to a second-half surge by a 65-43 score to the perennial state champion Wesleyan Lady Wolves. Pace actually held a 20-18 lead late in the second quarter before Wesleyan took a 23-20 lead at intermission and overpowered the Lady Knights the last half in taking a 65-43 victory.

The loss to Pace turned out to mark the fifth straight year that the Lady Indians have been eliminated in state tournament play by a past or present state champion or a state championship finalist. They fell by a 62-53 score in the first round of the 2007 state tournament to then defending Class A State Champion Southwest Atlanta Christian (SACA) on the Lady Warriors' home court. SACA went on to fall in that year's state final four to state champion Hawkinsville.

In 2008, the Lady Indians made it to the final four themselves where Calvary Day of Savannah pulled away from just a 40-35 lead near the three-minute mark for a 50-37 victory and went on to win the state title with a win over Terrell County. And the Lady Indians were overwhelmed by eventual Class A State Champion Wesleyan in both the state elite eight at Marietta High School in 2009 and in the Sweet 16 round at Wesleyan in 2010 before falling to this year's state runner up Pace Academy.

Elsewhere – It's always interesting to see how opposing teams compete in post season play and this year was no exception for opponents of the Lady Indians and Indians. Of course, the eighth-ranked Pace Academy Girls made the most impressive run of any opponent of either team as they defeated second-ranked Southwest Atlanta Christian 60-52 on SACA's home court just prior to defeating the fourth-ranked Lady Indians.

The Lady Knights then defeated third ranked St. Francis of Alpharetta 63-60 in double overtime in the game immediately following for the trip to the state final four.

They then pulled off a 68-48 win over unranked Turner

County who entered the game with a 24-6 record, including just one loss to a Class A team.

Turner had taken back-to-back wins in the first two rounds of the state tournament over seventh-ranked Taylor County and then Bryan County who was actually tied for fourth with the Lady Indians in the Georgia Prep Country Coaches Poll.

The Lady Indians' only loss other than to Pace Academy was in the finals of the Battle of the States Tournament to Gordon Lee of Chickamauga who reached the Elite Eight in Class A before losing 78-43 to Wesleyan.

Among Region 8-A girls teams, third seeds Athens Christian and Hebron Christian took close wins in play-in games over Holy Innocents' and First Presbyterian of Macon but didn't fair as well in first round action as they fell to a pair of region champions, Darlington and Wilkinson County, on the winners' home courts.

Prince Avenue would have to be the disappointing girls team from Region 8-A as the Lady Wolverines were beaten badly at home by Bremen who had lost a two-point game to Mt. Zion in the consolation game of the Region 6-A tournament.

Of course, the Lady Indians crushed Mt. Zion in first round play, leaving those of us seeing Prince play well against the Lady Indians in the Region 8A Championship Game scratching our heads as to how Prince could have played so poorly against Bremen.

In most cases, such results can be attributed to difficult or easy match ups for various teams with this phenomenon especially evident in Athens Christian's surprising play in game win over Holy Innocents.

The Lady Indians took just a five point win over Holy Innocents' on the Lady Bears' home court a few weeks ago, leaving Pace Academy's long and ultra successful run a special puzzle when considering that they only defeated Holy Innocents' 36-32 in a late regular season game and then 55-50 in overtime in the Region 5A consolation game.

The top two teams in that region were Wesleyan and St. Francis.

Probably the most valid explanation for Pace's success in state tournament play is rising to the occasion of the second season of the state tournament just as the Lady Indians have done during prior years.

The Union County Girls, who played one of the most challenging schedules in the state, finished their season with just a 14-14 record but acquitted themselves well in post season play. They defeated both Jackson County and Region 8-AA South top seed Elbert County at



The Lady Indians had a season to remember in 2010-2011 Photo by James Reese.



The Lady Indians watched Makayla Underwood become a consistent performer in 2010-2011 Photo by James Reese.

far distant Elbert County in the first two rounds of the Region 8-AA Tournament.

After losing to eventual Region 8AA Tournament Champion Rabun County on the Rabun court in the semi-finals, they averaged two one-sided losses to East Hall with a 48-41 win over the Lady Vikings in the consolation game for a third place finish in the Region 8AA Tournament.

Unfortunately, the Lady Panthers and Lady Vikings had to travel to face Greater Atlanta Christian and Buford, respectively, on their opponents' home courts in first round state tournament play. Those two teams would wind up in the Class AA State Championship game in Macon with Buford taking the state title by a 57-36 score over GAC.

The Lady Panthers fell by a 60-42 score to GAC after trailing by just 10 points midway through the fourth quarter while East Hall gave the Class AA State Champion Buford Lady Wolves their toughest competition in the five games they played in the state tournament on the way to their third straight state title.

East Hall led 20-19 at intermission on the Buford home court but a 14-2 run in the third quarter gave Buford a 33-22 lead and set the stage for a 55-41 victory, easily the closest margin among the five Buford wins in state tournament play.

It's interesting to note that East Hall not only lost the tournament game to Union

County but a regular season home game to Dawson County as well, a team the Lady Indians defeated by a 10-point margin at Dawson on opening night after holding as much as a 25-point lead in the third quarter.

The Indians' opponents for the most part did not fare as well in post season play as those of the Lady Indians. After the Indians fell victim to red hot shooting throughout the game in their opening round loss to Prince Avenue in the Region 8-A Tournament at Commerce, the Wolverines could not match their success the following night against George Walton Academy. The Wolverines scored 21 points in the first quarter and twenty in the second against the Indians but managed just four in the first six minutes against George Walton who eventually took a 73-57 win.

George Walton made it to the region finals where they lost in overtime to the home standing Athens Christian Eagles 65-63 but was the exception among Indians opponents in doing pretty well in the state tournament. They defeated Eagle's Landing Christian Academy by 13 points in the opening round before falling by just an 87-79 score to Pace Academy who, in turn, lost 85-70 to eventual Class A state champion Wilkinson County.

The Athens Christian Boys won their first round game at home 63-50 against Walker of Marietta but were battered



Jordan Moss has an outstanding season Photo by James Reese.



Many longtime Lady Indian followers liken Eryn Cochran to former Lady Indian great Nikki Winn Photo by James Reese.

at home 90-55 by Whitefield Academy who lost in the state final four 66-63 to eventual state runner up Terrell County.

The Commerce Boys won a play in game 62-59 over Landmark Christian but lost 71-61 to North Cobb Christian who later fell victim to Whitefield Academy by an 86-59 score.

The Athens Academy Boys fell by a 66-52 score to Providence Christian in their play in game, ending their season.

After including impressive performances in winning the Battle of the States in a 15-0 start to the season, the Union County Panthers fell on hard times following a very competitive loss to the powerful East Hall Vikings. They actually won four of five games after that with the loss being in overtime to Rabun County but they lost their last three games, including by a 62-48 score in the opening round of the Region 8AA Tournament to North Oconee, ending their season with a 19-5 record.

KUDOS TO BRADLEY

SWANSON - Although he fell a bit short of the 1,000 career points scoring total, TCHS Senior Bradley Swanson did join a quite elite group of former TCHS players reaching 900 career points.

With his total of 943 points, he joins just four other players with currently verifiable point totals of more than 900 but less than 1,000. These four are Lori Barrett (Cunningham) with 916 reached in 1998, Jeff Dyer with 915 in 1985, Clay Barrett with 913 in 1974, and Ronnie Dyer with 913 in 1972.

Interestingly, the two Barretts and the two Dyers are not related as Lori Barrett and Ronnie Dyer are natives of the county while Jeff Dyer and Clay Barrett moved to the county with their families at young ages. Lori Barrett's total is especially impressive when considering that she had five teammates during her four-year career who reached the 1,000 career points level. They were Keisha Taylor, Julie Walls, Candice Blythe, Brandy McNabb, and Gina Bradshaw.

## Towns County Indians, Hayesville Yellow Jackets match up of 1988 State Championship baseball teams continues to evolve



Indians Head Baseball Coach Chris Vardo is all smiles after learning he'll pitch for the Indians' 1988 State Championship team in The Game That Never Happened Photo by James Reese.

Everyone from the 1988 Towns County squad will play with the exception of All-State catcher, Brad Wilson.

Wilson's daughter Claire Wilson is involved in a crucial softball tournament the weekend of March 26. So, count Brad Wilson, who went on to sign with the Detroit Tigers, out with The Game That Never Happened.

The mother of the late Derrick Marshall will be on hand and will be presented with a jersey remembering her son, who played for the Indians' state championship team.

On the Yellow Jackets side of the diamond, Mitch Parker and Dwayne Bradley will be absent. Parker, who lives out of town, couldn't fit the game into his schedule. Bradley hasn't returned phone messages about the game.

On the mound for the Indians will be current Towns County Indians' Head Baseball Coach, Chris Vardo. His counterpart from Hayesville,

It's his senior project for English.

Zach's father, who played on the Yellow Jackets' championship team, inspired his son to focus on the game that never was for his senior project. The project must benefit a charity of the student's choice.

Actually, Zach had another inspiration for organizing the event, Brent Moody, his mentor in Hayesville, and also a member of the 1988 Indians' championship baseball season.

"We're going to try to get as many members from those two teams to commit to play in this game," Zach said.

"It's never been done to this point, getting two teams like this together. Baseball is kind of a big deal in my family.

"It just seemed to be the right thing to do, getting these two teams together for that one game that didn't happen 23 years ago," Zach said.

Proceeds from the game will go toward a \$1,000 scholarship for an athlete pursuing the continuation of his baseball career at the college level.

Rib Country of Hayesville will be on hand with food; and after The Game That Never Happened, a home run hitting contest will take place among the game participants.

## Arencibia named area's best girls basketball player for 2010-2011



Gabby Arcencibia has been named the top girls basketball player in Northeast Georgia Photo by James Reese.

By Charles Duncan  
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Gabby Arcencibia has added another piece to her trophy mantle.

Arencibia, the junior guard on the Towns County Lady Indians' 27-2 squad from 2010-2011, was named the Windstream Channel 4 Blitz girls basketball Player of The Year.

Arencibia broke two school records and set the state record for most 3-pointers made in a regulation game. She missed setting the National Record by a pair of 3-point baskets.

Arencibia hit 40 percent of her 3-point attempts this season and averaged 15.3 points per game. In addition, Arcencibia averaged 4 rebounds, 3.2 steals, 2.5 assists and 1.3 blocks

## T-Ball and Farm League registration

The Towns County Recreation Department will be holding registration for T-Ball and Farm League March 12 through March 26.

T-Ball is for boys and girls ages 4 and 5. Farm League is for boys and girls ages 6, 7 and 8. The age control date will be prior to May 1 for boys and girls. Boys and girls ages 6 may play in either the T-Ball or the Farm League programs.

Cost for these programs will be \$35 per participant. All registration will be held at the Recreation Department. Our hours of operation are: Monday through Friday 9 AM until 9 PM and Saturday from 9 AM until 7 PM. For more information please call the Recreation Department at 706-896-2600. (TMar16,F)SH

## St. Patrick's Day 5K Run

St. Patrick's Day 5K Run Saturday, March 19, Mayor's Park, Young Harris, GA. Official race t-shirt, refreshments following the race. Registration \$25 per person - Kids Fun

Run \$12. Start time: Kids Fun Run 9 a.m. 5K to follow. Register at BRODI, 927 Main Street, Young Harris, GA 30582 or call (706) 379-2092. (TMar16,G)SH

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