

Towns County Sports

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Lady Indians have some misfortune but win two of three games

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The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team took on the challenge of facing the schools in three neighboring counties last week and came away with a highly competitive victory at Hayesville on Tuesday and salvaged a split of a home weekend series against Rabun County and Union County. They were forced to play without the services of point guard Eryn Cochran against undefeated Class AA rivals Rabun County and Union County and rebounded from a loss to Rabun with a tough victory on Saturday over arch rival Union County.

LADY INDIANS AT HAYESVILLE

It was opening night for the Hayesville Lady Jackets on Tuesday with most of the first quarter being a real battle. Hayesville took early leads of 3-0 and 8-4 before a 13-4 run propelled the Lady Indians to a 17-12 lead by quarter's end. The rally was initiated on a putback by Lindsay Patton at the 5:23 mark and ended on a fifteen-foot shot by the senior with 9 straight points by Eryn Cochran coming in between. A trey by Cochran at the 2:19 mark got the Lady Indians a 13-12 lead they would not relinquish although have it challenged throughout the game by the much improved Lady Jackets.

Gabby Arencibia then took the lead in the second quarter for the Lady Indians as she sank three treys and a deuce with all four baskets being assisted by Cochran in less than 3 minutes of playing time, ending at the 3:46 mark for a 32-24 Lady Indian lead. Included in the Arencibia run was a trey at the 4:55 mark, not only giving the Lady Indians a 27-22 lead but propelling Arencibia past the 1,000 points mark for her career with the Lady Indians. A separate article detailing her accomplishments is provided in this week's Herald.

In spite of Arencibia's second quarter heroics, the Lady Jackets kept knocking on the door but the Lady Indians had an answer every time the Lady Jackets closed to within two points on two occasions early in the quarter and to within three on two occasions after that. The Lady Indians led by as much as eight points on two occasions and 39-34 at intermission.

Just as Cochran took the lead for the Lady Indians in the first quarter and Arencibia in the second, Ali Bleckley tossed in ten points in the third. After the Lady Indians built a 50-39 lead by the mid point of that quarter, Hayesville struck for eight straight points for just a 50-47 deficit, only to see the Lady Indians go on an 11-2 run the final two and a half minutes for a 61-49 advantage entering the fourth quarter.

The Lady Indians pretty much maintained the status quo in fourth quarter action until the Lady Jackets made one last ditch run, scoring eight straight points for just a 68-65 deficit

on two free throws at the three minute mark. Arencibia drove the lane for a basket and followed two for four free throw shooting by Bleckley with 4-for-4 accuracy at the foul line during the final half minute of play as the Lady Indians broke away to a 76-66 victory.

The Lady Indians had great scoring balance for the game with Arencibia taking the lead with 25 points but other leaders being Bleckley with 14, Cochran with 11, Kellsie Cowart and Lindsay Patton with 8 each, and Dadrion Blythe with 7. Leaders in assists according to your reporter's unofficial tally were Cochran with 6, Arencibia with 4 and Bleckley with 3.

LADY INDIANS VERSUS RABUN COUNTY

After matching the ultra tough Rabun County Lady Wildcats virtually basket for basket for nearly thirty minutes in Tiger last month before a 10-0 Rabun run the final 2:04 of the game gave them a 76-64 victory, the Lady Indians looked forward to a rematch last Friday on their home court. That was before learning that Lady Indian point guard Eryn Cochran had strep throat and would miss that game and the Union County game on Saturday night, not exactly what a team wants with expected tough games against undefeated Class AA opponents getting significantly tougher.

Not only did the Rabun Ladies return every player from last year's Region 8AA Championship Team which finished with a 27-4 record but they had followed up their very tough opening night home victory over the Lady Indians by defeating two Class AAA schools, Gainesville by twenty five points and Stephens County by twenty, and Class AAAAA Campbell by thirty three points. Campbell was in the state final four in their class last year and ranked sixth in the Georgia Prep Country preseason poll with the Lady Cats' 4-0 record entering the game taking on added luster.

It is always difficult for a team to adjust to the unexpected loss of any valued starting player during the course of a season but the loss is compounded when that player is the point guard and primary ball handler who rarely leaves the game with most all other players facing adjustment to their normal roles. With all this being stated, illness and injury are a part of the game and games must proceed with the Lady Indians giving the Lady Cats about as much as they could handle for nearly three quarters this time before falling to the relentless full court pressure of the visitors from across the mountains.

The Lady Wildcats would lead nearly from start to finish with just a 2-2 tie on a Dadrion Blythe basket a minute and a half into the game being the only exception. It appeared at the outset of the game that the Lady Cats might be taking early control of the game with leads of 6-2 and then 13-6 by the 3:49 mark of the first quarter, but the Lady Indians battled back behind to within 15-14 on an old



Eryn Cochran looks to pass against the Yellow Jackets. Photo by James Reese.



Kellsie Cowart fights for the rebound against the Yellow Jackets. Photo by James Reese.

fashioned three point play at the 46.8 seconds mark by freshman Stephanie Patton who scored seven first quarter points.

Once again, the Rabun Ladies seemed to be gaining the upper hand as they scored the final four points of the first quarter and the first eight of the second for a 27-14 lead by the three and a half minute mark. Once again the Lady Indians rallied, this time on an 8-2 run behind six point production by Emily Anderson as the Lady Indians broke through the Rabun defensive pressure for layups and then two free throws by Gabby Arencibia had her team within 30-22 at intermission.

Arencibia then opened the third quarter with a trey and Ali Bleckley took the ball coast to coast for a field goal during the first minute and a half of the third quarter and the Lady Indians were within 30-27. A pair of Lady Cat baskets got the Lady Cats back up 34-27 but Bleckley added two more field goals and Dadrion Blythe a three point play at 2:36 for just a 39-34 Rabun advantage.

As in the first quarter, however, the Lady Cats finished out the third on an upswing with seven straight points during the final two minutes giving them what turned out to be an insurmountable lead of 46-34. Bleckley included a trey among nine fourth quarter points but it wasn't enough as the Lady Cats held as much as a twenty two point advantage near the mid point of the third quarter in taking a 58-40 victory.

Bleckley took scoring honors for the game with 17 points with other leaders being

Arencibia and Stephanie Patton with 9 each, Blythe with 7, and Kellsie Cowart with 6. Leading in assists according to your reporter's tally were Bleckley and Stephanie Patton with 3 each.

LADY INDIANS VERSUS UNION COUNTY

For the second night in a row, the Lady Indians came face to face with an undefeated Class AA team in the Union County Lady Panthers who entered with a 4-0 record with Eryn Cochran still sidelined by illness. Included were two decisive wins over Class AAA White County along with what might be described as comfortable wins over Class AAAAA Forsyth Central and Class AA Jackson County.

The early portions of the game were pretty much a see saw battle with the Lady Panthers taking as much as a 12-8 lead at the four minute mark of the first quarter but the Lady Indians owned the final four minutes as they struck for thirteen straight points and a 21-12 lead by quarter's end. Included in the quarter were six treys—three by Gabby Arencibia, two by Ali Bleckley, and one by Stephanie Patton—with Patton adding a deuce for a five point quarter. Arencibia's second trey got the Lady Indians a 15-12 lead they would not relinquish although the Lady Panthers would not go quietly.

Just as quickly as the Lady Indians had struck gold, however, their luck changed and they managed just four points in the entire second quarter with three of those scored by Kellsie Cowart. The Lady Panthers countered with thirteen points with three treys included



Senior Ali Bleckley fires a three against Union. Photo by James Reese.



Senior Lindsay Patton looks to score in the paint against the Yellow Jackets. Photo by James Reese.



Stephanie Patton fires a three against Union. Photo by James Reese.

as they closed to within 25-23 at intermission.

The Patton sisters carried most of the scoring load for the Lady Indians in the third quarter by scoring six points each on three deuces by Lindsay and two treys by Stephanie. The Lady Indians and Lady Panthers matched baskets for a 32-30 Towns lead by the 5:06 mark but the Lady Indians finished the quarter on an upswing as a trey by Stephanie and a putback by Lindsay had them ahead 37-30 at the three and a half minute mark. Both teams found points hard to come by for awhile after that but Arencibia took the ball coast to coast and nailed a trey from the top of the circle at the forty seven seconds mark for a 40-30 Lady Indian lead after three quarters.

The Lady Indians managed two fourth quarter leads of twelve points, including by a 50-38 score on an Arencibia trey with 1:36 to go but the Lady Panthers struck for two treys by the 1:04 mark for just a 50-44 Towns lead. Two free throws by Stephanie Patton at 17.5 seconds set the Lady Indians' final victory margin at 52-44.

Both teams struggled with turnovers and especially uncommonly frigid free throw shooting, at least for the Lady

Indians who sank forty three of fifty one attempts in their second game of the season at Dawson County. On this night, they made just six of nineteen attempts, including three of nine in the fourth quarter, while the Lady Panthers managed to make just one of eight attempts. Each team sank eighteen field goals but the Lady Indians held the upper hand there with ten treys compared to seven by Union.

Arencibia led the Lady Indians in scoring with 19 points with other leaders being Stephanie Patton with 13, Lindsay Patton with 8, and Bleckley with 7. Leaders in assists according to your reporter's unofficial tally were Lindsay Patton with 4 and the trio of Arencibia, Bleckley, and Cowart with 2 each.

After opening their Region 8AA season at Tallulah Falls on Tuesday night of this week, the Lady Indian will host regional rival Lakeview Academy this Friday and Class AA Dawson County on Saturday. They will have an off night on the schedule on Tuesday of next week while the Indians travel to face Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville and close out the 2011 portion of their regular season at Union County on Friday, Dec. 16.

Lady Indian JV's take two victories in three attempts



Elizabeth Turner shoots a freethrow against Rabun County. Photo by James Reese.

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The Towns County Lady Indian JV's were in action three times last week and came away with victories over their closest neighbors, Hayesville on the road and Class AA Union County at home, while letting a third quarter lead get away in a home loss to Class AA Rabun County. The week's work leaves the Lady Indians with a 3-2 record on the young season.

At Hayesville, the Lady Indians broke out to a 6-0 lead by the 2:16 mark of the first quarter but saw the Lady Jackets rally for a brief 7-6 lead and an 8-8 tie before edging ahead

12-8 at the end of the second quarter. The Lady Jackets would force one final tie in the third quarter but with the Lady Indians taking and maintaining the lead for the remainder of the game for a 26-23 victory.

A McKenzie Moss field goal got them an 8-7 lead at 2:43 of the second quarter and two field goals snapped an 8-8 tie in the final seconds of the quarter for a 12-8 lead at intermission. Sierra Nichols was involved in both as she assisted Misty Lindemuth at twenty four seconds for the lead and then sank a field goal at the buzzer for halftime insurance.

Lindemuth sank a field goal at the start and one at the end of the third quarter for four points as the Lady Indians led 18-15 entering the fourth quarter but it had required a field goal by Moss at the 3:28 mark to snap a tie lasting just ten seconds and give the Lady Indians a 16-14 lead they would not relinquish. The Lady Indians maintained leads of between two and six points throughout the fourth quarter with a trey and late free throw for four points by Bailey Sutton leading the way as the Lady Indians came away with a 26-23 victory.

Lindemuth and Moss led the scoring for the game for the Lady Indians with 10 and 6 points respectively while Sutton and Elizabeth Turner led in assists with 2 each.

Against Rabun County, the Lady Indians trailed for all of the first quarter except for a scoreless tie at the start, led for most of the second and

third, and then trailed again for most of the fourth in falling by a 34-26 score. Two field goals by Misty Lindemuth and one by Elizabeth Turner lifted the Lady Indians from a 9-6 first quarter deficit to a 12-9 lead by the four minute mark of the second quarter and they clung to the lead, including by a 15-13 score at intermission, until the Lady Cats scored the final six points of the third quarter for a 22-22 standoff.

The Lady Indians got the lead back 23-22 on a free throw by McKenzie Moss just twenty seconds into the fourth quarter but they managed just three well spaced free throws after that and the Lady Cats pulled away for a 37-26 victory. A basket getting Rabun ahead 24-22 was the only field goal for either team the last quarter as the Lady Cats sank ten of sixteen attempts compared to just four of nine for the Lady Indians.

Lindemuth and Moss again led the Lady Indians in scoring by nearly identical totals with 11 and 6 points respectively this time. Four different Lady Indians recorded one assist each according to your reporter's tally.

The first quarter of the Union County game was a nip and tuck affair after the Lady Panthers took a 2-0 lead nearly four and a half minutes into the game. The Lady Panthers led for most of the remainder of the quarter until McKenzie Moss came up with a steal near mid court and took the ball to the basket for a layup and a 6-5 Lady Indian lead with eight

seconds on the clock.

A Union County trey got them a brief 8-8 tie but a Moss basket got the Lady Indians back ahead for good 10-8 at the 3:29 mark of the second quarter and they led 20-11 at intermission, largely on the strength of a seven point quarter by Madison Johnson. In an interesting final thirty six seconds of the second quarter, a deuce by Johnson gave the Lady Indians a 17-8 lead which the Lady Panthers reduced on a trey at eleven seconds to 17-11 only to see Johnson respond with a long trey at the buzzer for a 20-11 Towns lead at intermission.

Misty Lindemuth took the scoring lead with six points in the third quarter as the Lady Indians extended their lead to 35-19 and five different Lady Indians entered the scoring column in the fourth as they held a whopping 43-22 lead on a Destiney Blythe trey at the 3:58 mark. The Lady Panthers then finished on a 10-1 run with two treys included the remainder of the game as the Lady Indians prevailed by a 44-32 score.

Johnson had perhaps a breakout game with 14 points, including five for six free throw shooting, but she had lots of help as ten of twelve Lady Indians seeing action in the game entered the scoring column. Other leaders were Lindemuth with 9 points and Moss who scored 6 points in each of the three games played during the week. Leaders in assists were Karlie Albach with 3 and Destiney Blythe and Alyssa Pyle with 2 each.



Misty Lindemuth puts a shot back in the basket against the Wildcats. Photo by James Reese.



McKenzi Moss fires a three pointer against Rabun County. Photo by James Reese.