

Towns County Sports

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Lady Indians get wins over Hebron Christian and Commerce

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County Lady Indians varsity basketball team continued their good fortunes of late last week when they took an easier than might have been expected home court victory over Hebron Christian Academy of Dacula on Tuesday and then ground out a 40-35 victory at Commerce on Friday. Both were Region 8A contests with the Lady Indians improving their overall record to 11-8 and their region record to 5-0 which is good for a near tie for first place with Lakeview Academy of Gainesville with the Lady Lions having played one more region game for a 6-0 record.

As related to Power Ratings compiled by the Georgia High School Association used for determining eligibility for the state tournament and for seeding purposes, the first listing was provided prior to last Tuesday's games with the Lady Indians at thirteenth place among Class A public schools. By week's end with the two Towns victories over Hebron and Commerce included, the Lady Indians were at the eleventh position.

After region tournaments are completed, the top eight teams in the state will get a bye into the second round where they will host a team from the first round of play. The first round will consist of the ninth through sixteenth teams hosting the seventeenth through twenty fourth teams with the remaining schools not making the state tournament. A significant potential change is being considered in Class A in Georgia as described in the related Indians article in this week's newspaper.

The Lady Indians continued an incredible run of 3-point shooting during the first half of the Tuesday game against Hebron Christian. The run began at the 2:58 mark of the third quarter of their home game against Athens Academy just four days prior. They sank five treys during the final ten minutes and fifty eight seconds of that game when they rallied from a 32-17 deficit for a 46-42 victory and continued the run the following night at George Walton Academy.

They sank nine treys during that game in Monroe and then continued with eleven the



The Towns County Lady Indians in action during last Friday's Region 8-A victory at Commerce. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

first half of the Hebron Christian game, giving them an incredible twenty five treys made during just fifty eight minutes and fifty eight seconds of playing time which is less than the sixty four minutes two full games would include. During the run, sophomore Kennedy Henson sank ten treys, sophomore Vanessa Floyd seven, junior Sophia Shook five, senior Taylor Cornett two, and senior Kenzlee Denton one. Trey attempts were not on the agenda for the Lady Indians the last half of the Hebron game due to the one sided nature of the score.

Lady Indians 57, Hebron Christian Academy 36 – The Lady Indians would lead Hebron from the 6:39 mark of the first quarter throughout the remainder of the game with a trey by sophomore Kennedy Henson at that mark giving them a 3-0 lead which would become 16-2 by the 2:36 mark, 22-6 after one quarter, 41-15 at intermission, and 52-21 after three quarters on the way to a 57-36 victory.

Henson included four treys in the first quarter and two in the second along with two for two free throw shooting among seventeen first half points while sophomore Vanessa Floyd included two treys among eight first quarter points, junior Sophia Shook two second quarter treys

for six points, and senior Taylor Cornett a second quarter trey for three points. Six free throws by Henson and two deuces and a free throw by Shook for five points highlighted third quarter action for the Lady Indians.

For the game, scoring leaders for the Lady Indians were Henson with 26 points, Shook with 13, Floyd with 8, and Cornett with 4 among seven Lady Indians who entered the scoring column. Six different Lady Indians contributed at least one assist with leaders being Henson with 5, Cornett with 4, and Floyd with 2. Nine different Lady Indians contributed at least one rebound with leaders in this category being senior Kenzlee Denton with 6, Shook with 4, and Henson with 3.

The Lady Lions were led in scoring by sophomore Ella Heard with 11 points. The Lady Lions completed the week with an overall 12-9 record, including 2-3 in Region 8A with the ease of the Lady Indians' victory being totally unexpected but understandable in view of the avalanche of treys the first half by the Lady Indians. Perhaps the most impressive earlier contests for the Lady Lions are early season region bouts not counting for region tournament seedings in just a 46-45 loss to Tallulah Falls and a 36-32 victory

over Athens Academy.

Lady Indians 40, Commerce 35 – The Lady Indians' earlier home court victory over Commerce by a 57-41 score might lead one to believe the return match in Commerce to have the potential for an easy win for the Lady Indians but in reality, the earlier game was much more competitive than the final score would indicate. The Lady Tigers actually led for much of the first two and a half quarters of the game, including by a 31-27 margin prior to the Lady Indians using a 12-0 run the final three and a half minutes of the third quarter as a springboard to a 39-31 lead at quarter's end on the way to the sixteen points victory.

A return to the outstanding 3-point shooting by the Lady Indians described above gave the impression that perhaps an easy victory was on the horizon as two treys by sophomore Kennedy Henson had the Lady Indians on the way to a 7-0 start and a trey each by sophomore Vanessa Floyd and junior Sophia Shook, with Shook's coming at the first quarter buzzer, had them leading 16-7 after one quarter.

And Henson added two more treys in second quarter action as the Lady Indians held a 25-18 lead at intermission. Two free throws by Henson and a trey



by Shook had the Lady Indians seemingly comfortably ahead and on the way to a decisive victory with a 30-19 lead by the 4:30 mark of the third quarter but perhaps this success made the game seem easier than it was to become as the Lady Indians found points hard to come by after that.

The Lady Tigers struck for six straight points between the 4:13 and 1:20 marks for just a 30-25 deficit with a steal and layup by senior Taylor Cornett giving the Lady Indians a bit of breathing room at the seven seconds mark for a 32-25 lead entering the fourth quarter. In a low scoring fourth quarter, however, the Lady Tigers used a 6-2 start for just a 34-31 deficit at the 3:51 mark before a trey by Shook at 3:31 got the Lady Indians a 37-31 lead.

But the Lady Tigers responded with a deuce for just a 37-33 Lady Indians lead at 3:22 with the Lady Indians leaving the door open with uncommon late game difficulty at the foul line where they sank just three of ten attempts with two made by Floyd and another by Henson the final 1:29 with two being misses on one and one chances. But the Lady Tigers could not take advantage against the Lady Indians' strong defense until a putback basket at the three seconds mark

only served to reduce a 40-33 Towns lead to 40-35 Lady Indians final margin of victory.

Henson took scoring honors for the game with 21 points with other leaders being Shook with 9 and Floyd with 7 while senior Kenzlee Denton and Floyd took the assists lead with 2 each. Rebounding leaders were Henson with 7, senior Kristen Byers with 5, Floyd and Shook with 4 each, and Cornett with 3.

Freshman Carson Hobbs led the Lady Tigers in scoring with 10 points while six other Lady Tigers contributed between three and five points each. The loss to the Lady Indians left the Lady Tigers with an overall 10-9 record, including 2-4 in region play with losses to highly regarded Lakeview Academy and Prince Avenue Christian School included.

At press time, the Lady Indians are scheduled to take on Lakeview at home on Tuesday of this week and travel to Bogart to face Prince Avenue on Friday before ending the week at home on Saturday against Class AAA Fannin County. Those attending the games should take note that the JV games against Fannin are scheduled to start at 2:00 pm with the varsity games to begin at 5:00.

Indians fall at home to Hebron Christian, win at Commerce

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A string of difficult matchups continued last Tuesday for the Towns County Indians varsity basketball team when the Hebron Christian Academy Lions of Dacula came to Hiawassee. The Lions feature two ultra tall seniors, Marcus Eiken and David Bowling, who appeared, without their heights being available, to be taller than the two tall visiting players featured by Athens Academy just four days prior. At any rate, the Lions took a 72-53 victory and completed the week with an overall 13-8 record, including 5-1 in region play, after falling on Friday following their win over the Indians by just an 82-74 score to region power Riverside Military Academy.

The Indians got a Region 8A win on Friday when they traveled to Commerce to face the Tigers who have proven to be more capable than just one win this season would indicate. The Indians rallied from a significant early deficit for their second win over the Tigers this season by a 56-44 score with this one counting for seeding for the region tournament to be held in Commerce next month. The loss to the Indians left Commerce with an overall 1-18 record, including 0-6 in region play but with losses being by pretty consistently closer scores as the season has progressed.

The Indians completed the week with an overall 8-12 record, including 4-5 within the region although just 2-4 in games that count for tournament seeding. The victory over Commerce gave the Indians twelve wins in a row over the Tigers back to February, 2014. The Indians have actually gone 13-1 during the same time frame against Class A Georgia public schools with just two additional games being a home court victory over Schley County and a loss at eventual state runner up Calhoun County being by the 2017 state tournament team.

The Lady Indians and Indians are in the unique and unfortunate situation of having trips to the state tournament via use of Power Points decided



The Towns County Indians during last Friday's win at Commerce. Photos/Lowell Nicholson

by the results of their games against primarily Class AA and AAA public schools and Class A private schools but consideration is being given to establishing public only and private only regions in Class A. This would require some lengthy drives to beyond Athens with Commerce being the only nearby Class A public school in Georgia but on the other hand long trips to three Athens area schools, Monroe, Dacula, and Lilburn would no longer be required.

Hebron Christian Academy 72, Indians 56 – The Indians got off to an effective start against Hebron Christian with deuces by senior Will Travis and sophomore Kolby Moss getting them a 2-2 tie and a 4-2 lead by the 4:36 mark of the first quarter and Moss adding three more deuces and sophomore Aidan Berrong a trey for a 13-9 Towns lead at the 1:41 mark.

The Lions would score the final seven points of the first quarter, however, for a 16-13 lead they would expend to 22-16 by the 4:18 mark of the second quarter. A trey at 4:05 by senior Trent Bradshaw got the Indians within 22-19 but the Lions would include three treys in a 15-7 finish for a 37-26 lead at intermission. Moss included a

trey and two free throws among seven second quarter points for the Indians, giving him fifteen points at the halftime break.

The Indians edged to within 39-32 on deuces by Moss and Berrong sandwiched around two free throws by Moss by the 3:58 mark of the third quarter but the Lions would regain some control by quarter's end by a 53-40 score despite two deuces and two for two free throw shooting for six points by freshman Collin Crowder and a second deuce by Berrong.

Two deuces by Moss and a trey by Berrong got the Indians to within single digits at 56-47 at the 5:54 mark of the fourth quarter but the Lions pulled away after that despite two deuces for four points by senior Brett Denton for a 72-53 victory.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Indians were Moss with 23 points, Berrong with 10, Travis with 7, Crowder with 6, and Denton with 4 while five different Indians contributed at least one assist with leaders being Berrong with 3 and Bradshaw with 2. Leaders in rebounds were Crowder with 10, Travis with 6, and Berrong and Moss with 3 each.

This was the second game in a row for Crowder to lead



his team in rebounds with ten, a remarkable accomplishment for any freshman but especially for one like Crowder who is just fourteen years old and won't turn fifteen until May 5. The Lions were led in scoring by sophomore Zach Calvert with 17 points, senior Alex Calvert with 17, sophomore Scott Gabel with 16, and the previously mentioned senior Eichen with 12.

Indians 56, Commerce 44 – At the start of the game in Commerce, the Indians suffered through ice cold shooting while the Tigers were red hot in building a 14-2 lead by the 3:24 mark and then 17-4 on their third trey at 2:51. A pull up jumper by senior Brett Denton at 2:19 was matched by a deuce by Commerce for a still prominent 19-6 lead until the Indians completed the quarter with four points in a unique manner.

Freshman Collin Crowder sank his second field goal at 2.2 seconds and was fouled on the play, resulting in a free throw attempt. It turned out to be good fortune for the Indians when the free throw rimmed out as sophomore Kolby Moss grabbed the rebound and was fouled on a quick putback attempt and sank two free throws at 1.0 second for just a 19-10 Indians deficit

at quarter's end.

A second quarter opening trey by sophomore Aidan Berrong and a coast to coast run for a deuce by Moss were more than matched by the Tigers' fourth and fifth treys in less than a quarter and a half for a 25-15 Commerce lead at the 4:10 mark. But here came the Indians as the hot shooting by the Tigers suddenly went ice cold. The Indians edged to within 27-24 at intermission on a 9-2 quarter ending scoring spree highlighted by a deuce, an old fashioned three point play, and two two free throw shooting by Moss giving him nine total points in the quarter.

The Indians would outscore the Tigers 18-8 in third quarter action in rallying to a 42-35 lead entering the fourth quarter. Five different Indians put points on the scoreboard in the quarter with Berrong giving them a 30-29 lead on an ultra determined drive for the basket at 5:52 and a deuce by senior Trent Bradshaw gave them a lead of 32-30 at the 4:59 mark they would not relinquish. By quarter's end, Berrong had contributed eight points and senior Will Travis four for the Indians.

The Tigers turned a loose ball into a three point play just thirty one seconds into the fourth

quarter for just a 42-38 Indians lead but Moss contributed ten points and Crowder four as the Indians used a 14-6 game ending finish and pulled away for a hard fought 56-44 victory.

Moss led the Indians in scoring with 23 points for the second game in a row with other scoring leaders being Berrong with 11, Crowder with 10, and Travis with 8. Leading in assists were Denton with 6 and Berrong and Moss with 2 each while leaders in rebounds were Travis with 15, Moss with 13, Crowder with 9, and Bradshaw with 4 before leaving the game with an ankle injury. Scoring leaders for the Tigers were sophomore Creed Dunbar with 16 points and seniors Jalen Dorsey with 12 and Darren Simpson with 9.

At press time, the Indians are scheduled to take on Lakeview Academy at home on Tuesday of this week and travel to Bogart to face Prince Avenue Christian on Friday before ending the week at home on Saturday against Class AAA Fannin County. Those attending the games should take note that the JV games against Fannin are scheduled to start at 2:00 pm with the varsity games to begin at 5:00.