

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians surge past Commerce, Athens Christian, and Prince Avenue

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Last week turned out to be a very good one for the Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball Team as they rebounded from three tough losses to the top two teams in their Region 8-A to knock off Commerce, Athens Christian School, and Prince Avenue Christian School in a convincing manner.

In so doing, the Indians improved their overall record to 15-7 and their region record to 8-4 for fourth place in the region standings.

They received high praise for what several observers considered their best defensive effort of the season on Friday and Saturday against the strong Athens Christian and Prince Avenue teams.

The region record and standings are a bit misleading with the Indians as the third place team in Sub-Region 8-A North having lost four games, two each to Lakeview Academy and Tallulah Falls, while third place Athens Christian, with an 8-3 region record by week's end, faced each of these two schools just once each in regular season crossover play.

If counting just one loss to each of the top teams as is the case for Athens Christian, the Indians would have just two losses and Athens Christian three but, of course, Athens Christian would have a valid claim that they had to travel to face the Indians without a return game in last week's loss to be described below.

At any rate, the teams are paired up for the upcoming region tournament based on their record in their sub region with the Indians set to finish third in the north and it appears Prince Avenue will likely be their first opponent in the tournament as the second place team from the south.

The Region Tournament is scheduled for next week at Lakeview Academy in Gainesville with brackets for the event to be established after regular season play is completed this week.

Indians 74, Commerce 60 – After breaking away from a 9-8 deficit the last half of the first quarter for a 19-9 lead by quarter's end against Commerce on their home court early in January



Towns County takes a timeout during the fourth quarter at Prince Avenue. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

for an 85-59 victory, the Indians faced on Tuesday a Tigers team just four days removed from just a 58-57 home court loss to Hebron Christian in a game that was close all the way.

Close followers of Region 8-A basketball will recall that Hebron had fallen at home by just a 73-69 score to region leader Lakeview Academy and by just a 64-59 score to the Indians, leaving some concern for an up and coming Commerce team.

The Indians would encounter a very similar opening minutes scenario on the Tigers' home court as in their home court victory following early 3-0, 6-2, and 8-4 Indian leads on treys by junior Zach Davenport and senior Will De Vries and a deuce by senior Major Moss.

The Tigers used a 7-1 run between the 5:35 and 3:28 marks for two leads of 9-8 and 11-9 before the Indians finished the quarter on a 9-2 run on a game tying basket by junior Logan Cowart, a trey and deuce by Davenport, and a deuce by Moss for an 18-13 lead.

The Tigers edged to within 22-19 by the mid point of the second quarter but the Indians outscored the Tigers 11-7 the remainder of the quarter for a 33-26 lead at halftime. The quarter was highlighted by a trey and two deuces for De Vries for seven points and a late three point play

by Moss before the Tigers got a roller to fall in the basket at the buzzer.

A quick third quarter basket by Cowart got the Indians a 35-26 lead but the Tigers answered with a deuce and a trey for just a 35-31 deficit less than a minute into the third quarter.

The Indians would dominate the remainder of the quarter, however, embarking on 15-2 run between the 6:53 and 2:01 marks for a 52-33 lead which became 56-39 entering the fourth quarter. Moss and Davenport provided seven points each and Cowart six in leading the third quarter surge.

The Tigers would not go quietly, however, as they used two treys to advantage on a 9-3 run for just a 59-48 deficit during a period when the basket seemed to have a lid on it for the Indians with several good shots finding a way to roll or bounce off or out of the basket.

They would sink eleven of twelve free throw attempts, including six for six by De Vries and four for four for Davenport, between the 4:16 and 1:10 marks, however, to regain control with a 70-55 lead and finish off a 74-60 victory. De Vries scored ten points and Davenport six in leading the fourth quarter finish.

Davenport took the scoring lead for the game with 25 points and was followed by De

Vries with 21, Moss with 16, Cowart with 10, and sophomore Will Travis with 2.

De Vries and Moss led in assists with 5 each and were followed by Cowart and Davenport with 2 each and Travis with 1 while Moss led with a whopping 15 rebounds and was followed by De Vries with 8, Cowart with 7, Davenport with 6, and the trio of junior Evan Berrong, sophomore Trent Bradshaw, and Travis with 1 each.

The Tigers finished the week's play with a 2-18 overall record and without a win in region play.

Indians 59, Athens Christian School 38 – The Indians were expected to face quite a home court challenge in Athens Christian on Friday night as the Eagles entered the game with an overall 16-3 record, including 8-1 in region play, and they were allowing an average of only 39.1 points per game by region opponents and 42.1 against all opponents. Included were three wins over Class AAAA Oconee County, a team with a 13-6 record by week's end against teams other than Athens Christian.

Included in Oconee's record was a 61-60 overtime victory at St. Pius X Catholic in Atlanta, their region's top team with a 7-1 record and an overall record of 16-7. Some close followers of Northeast Georgia

prep basketball will recall long time highly successful Dawson County boys coach Thad Burgess who is now head coach at Oconee County.

The Indians would overcome early Athens Christian leads of 3-2 on a Logan Cowart basket and 5-4 on a free throw by Major Moss and a Will De Vries field goal on the way to a 10-0 run and a 14-5 Indians lead at the 1:37 mark with Moss adding a three point play and deuce during the run and Cowart along with Moss winding up with six points in the first quarter with the Indians leading 16-7.

The Indians would lead by as much as 19-7 early in the second quarter but need a trey included by Zach Davenport during a 13-4 Eagles run for the difference in just a 23-20 advantage with 1:08 on the clock.

The Indians would end the quarter on Cowart's second deuce of the quarter at fifty six seconds and a trey by Moss at five seconds for a 28-20 advantage at intermission.

The Indians would then follow an early third quarter Eagles deuce for a 28-22 score with a three point play by Cowart, who was on his way to a ten points quarter with De Vries providing the other five points, as the Indians led 35-23 by the 4:33 mark.

They then answered a 6-2

Athens Christian run for a 37-29 score with a 6-0 run for a 43-29 lead entering the fourth quarter.

Davenport opened the fourth quarter with a field goal for a 45-29 Towns lead prior to a field goal and two free throws by the Eagles and a 45-33 score being answered by and 11-0 Towns run between the 4:40 and 1:34 marks for a 56-33 Indians lead which became a 59-38 victory.

Fourth quarter highlights included four points each by Cowart and Davenport and a late trey by junior Bradley Benson following a brief five points run by the Eagles.

Cowart poured in a career high 24 points to take the scoring lead for the game and he was followed by Moss with 13 points, De Vries with 10, Davenport with 9, and Benson with 3 while the team combined for fifteen assists as recorded by your reporter with Moss leading with 7 and followed by Davenport with 4, De Vries with 2, and sophomore Caleb Clark and Travis with 1 each.

Seven of the assists recorded were on passes to Cowart who punished the Eagles with his powerful inside play. Moss took the lead in rebounds with 8 and was followed by Cowart with 5, De Vries with 2, and Evan Berrong, Davenport, and Travis with 1 each.

The Eagles were led in scoring by juniors Cody Boyd with 10 and Richard Jibunor with 9. The Eagles would go on to host Tallulah Falls on Saturday night in Athens and fall in perhaps the most notable see saw battle, at least as far as quarterly results go, of the season and probably lots of other seasons.

Athens Christian led 17-14 after one quarter with Tallulah outscoring the Eagles 13-5 in the second quarter for a 27-22 lead at intermission.

Incredibly then, the Eagles would hold the usually high scoring Tallulah Falls squad scoreless while racking up fourteen points themselves in the third quarter for a 36-27 lead only to see Tallulah strike for a 24-9 fourth quarter advantage for a hard fought 51-45 victory.

Indians 64, Prince Avenue Christian School 49 – Any folks who think of Prince Avenue and downtown Athens as being a match may wonder how it is

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Lady Indians get win at Commerce, come close against ACS, fall at Prince Ave

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team got last week off to a good start with a 50-38 victory on Tuesday at Commerce, came ever so close to a victory over visiting Athens Christian in a 43-41 loss on Friday, and fell by a 65-28 score to the tall and hot shooting Prince Avenue Lady Wolverines near Athens on Saturday.

The week's work left the Lady Indians with a 4-16 overall record, including 3-7 in region play for eighth place overall in Region 8A but third in Sub-Region 8A North. It would require a miracle week for Commerce to displace the Lady Indians in third place by season's end as the Lady Indians hold the tie breaker for seeding with two wins over the Lady Tigers who are 3-17 overall and 2-8 in the region at the start of this week.

Region Tournament seeding is decided by how teams finish within their sub-region with the Lady Indians, if finishing third, to face the number two team from Sub-Region 8A South with this opponent likely to be either George Walton Academy or Prince Avenue, depending on the results of games played by these two teams this week. The Region Tournament is scheduled for next week at Lakeview Academy in Gainesville with brackets for the event to be established after regular season play is completed this week.

Lady Indians 50, Commerce 38 – The Lady Indians got off to 3-0 and 5-2 leads against Commerce on a trey by senior Kristen Henson and a basket by sophomore Kristen Byers by the five minutes mark of the first quarter but there would be five ties and seven lead changes by the end of the second quarter, including for a 9-9 standoff after one quarter and a 22-21 Lady Tigers lead at intermission.

There would be just one more lead change and no ties after that, however, as a drive for two points by senior Kirsten Ledford got the Lady Indians a 23-22 lead just twelve seconds into the third quarter that they



The Lady Indians battle in the paint at Prince Avenue. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

would not relinquish. They embarked on a 15-2 third quarter advantage for a 36-24 lead entering the fourth quarter with the two teams playing on even terms in that quarter and the Lady Indians taking a 50-38 victory.

In looking at additional Lady Indians highlights during the game, freshman Sophia Shook got the Lady Indians a 9-6 lead late in the first quarter not only to see the Lady Tigers get the 9-9 quarter ending tie on a late trey but add another trey just ten seconds into the second for a 12-9 advantage. Second quarter Lady Indian highlights included a game tying three point play by sophomore Kenzlee Denton on a putback basket just twenty four seconds following the trey and then two free throws by Byers, a trey by sophomore Taylor Cornett, and a drive for two points by Ledford each giving them leads, including by a 21-20 score on Ledford's basket at 1:12.

A Lady Tiger field goal at the three seconds mark gave them their halftime lead of 22-21, setting the stage for Ledford's quick third quarter basket that triggered the decisive

third quarter Lady Indian scoring surge. Five different Lady Indians had entered the scoring column in the second quarter and they repeated this task in the third with junior Madison McClure and Shook leading the way with five points each. Sophomore Erika Spano distinguished herself with at least three steals during a short period of time late in the third quarter.

Shook had scored the final three points of the third quarter for the Lady Indians on a late trey and they opened the fourth on a 6-3 run on treys by Spano and Byers for 39-25 and 42-27 leads. When the Lady Tigers then closed to within single digits at 42-33 with 4:44 on the clock, McClure responded with back to back drives to the basket for two deuces and a 46-33 lead at 3:23 which became the 50-38 victory.

Eight different Lady Indians entered the scoring column for the game with Shook leading the way with 12 points and she was followed by McClure with 10, Byers with 9, Cornett with 5, Ledford and Spano with 4 each, and Denton and Henson with 3

each. McClure led in assists with 4 while Cornett and Ledford added 1 each. Statistically, each team sank nine deuces during the game and the Lady Indians sank fourteen of twenty five free throw attempts while the Lady Tigers hit a nearly identical fourteen of twenty six with the twelve points difference in the game being a result of five different Lady Indians combing for six treys compared to just two by the Lady Tigers. The Lady Tigers were led in scoring by juniors Gracie Hamilton with 14 points and Marae Carruth with 12.

Athens Christian 43, Lady Indians 41 – The Lady Indians would lead for much of their home game against Athens Christian on Friday night, including by five points late in the game but they couldn't quite close out the win as the visiting Lady Eagles scored the final seven points in taking the 43-41 victory. The Lady Eagles would then take another razor thin victory on Saturday night as they came away with a 32-31 home court win over Tallulah Falls to improve their overall

record to 9-11 and their region record to 5-5.

The game was very close during the opening minutes with a Kristen Henson trey less than a minute into the game matching a Lady Eagles trey getting the Lady Indians a 3-3 standoff, a free throw by Madison McClure getting them a 4-3 lead, and a field goal by Henson getting them ahead 6-5 at the 2:49 mark of the first quarter. They would increase the lead to 13-8 by quarter's end with Henson adding two free throws for seven points in the quarter.

When Henson opened the second quarter with a field goal at 7:16 and Taylor Cornett came up with a steal near mid court and took the ball to the basket for a field goal just twelve seconds later, the Lady Indians had a 17-8 lead before the Lady Eagles came up with an 8-0 run for just a 17-16 Towns lead at 4:09. The Lady Indians responded with field goals by Kenzlee Denton and Sophia Shook for a 21-16 lead at 2:22 and it appeared they had more or could have had more points added to this total.

Two disputable calls went

the Lady Eagles' way, however, when a drive to the basket for a field goal by Henson was nullified by a charging call and moments later, McClure drove for the basket with the players for both teams lining up for expected free throws by McClure only to be surprised when the official informed them that he had called another charging foul. The Lady Eagles took advantage of their good fortune by sinking a trey and deuce for a 21-21 tie at the 1:01 mark.

Cornett came up with another steal and took the ball to the basket for a 23-21 Lady Indian lead with ten seconds left but the Lady Eagles came right back with a basket as time expired for a 23-23 tie at intermission.

It required more than two minutes at the start of the third quarter for the Lady Eagles to put the first points on the scoreboard for a 25-23 lead at 5:44 with the Lady Indians responding with a game tying field goal by Shook and a trey by Henson at 4:13 giving the Lady Indians a 28-25 lead. The Lady Eagles responded with a trey of their own, however, for still another tie of 28-28 at 3:54. Field goals by McClure at 1:22 and Henson at thirty eight seconds were matched each time by the Lady Eagles for a 32-32 tie entering the fourth quarter.

In fourth quarter action, Cornett's third steal and drive for two points at 7:30 matched an earlier Athens Christian field goal for a 34-34 score but with the Lady Eagles again taking a lead of 36-34 at 7:11. Both teams then went well over two minutes without denting the scoreboard until Kirsten Ledford tied the score with two free throws at 4:47 and a field goal by Erika Spano at 4:01 and Henson's third trey of the game at 3:14 gave the Lady Indians a 41-36 lead.

Unfortunately, that would be the Lady Indians' final points as turnovers were costly with the Lady Eagles using a drive for two points at 2:58, a free throw at 1:32, and a field goal at 1:22 for a 41-41 tie. The Lady Eagles then took a 43-41 lead off a Lady

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