

Towns County Sports

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Indians fall to late scoring run by Tallulah, use late run for victory over ACS

By Jerry Kendall
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It was a split decision last Thursday and Friday when the Towns County Indians varsity basketball team hosted their final two regular season games and fell to defeat to Tallulah Falls in a weather delayed game on Thursday but came away with a most impressive victory over Athens Christian on Friday in a continuation of a very unique pattern.

Northeast Georgia high school and Young Harris College men's games for that matter have often followed a common trend this season with the Indians and Mountain Lions being both victims and victimizing their opponents with outstanding scoring runs.

Never has this been more evident, however, than last Thursday for the Indians when Tallulah Falls used red hot shooting in breaking away from a 47-43 third quarter deficit for a 90-64 Region 8A victory. But those who didn't see the game "ain't seen nothing yet" until viewing below how the Indians used their own game ending scoring explosion in rallying from a 62-49 deficit to a 78-64 victory over Athens Christian on Friday.

The Indians completed the week with an overall 11-14 record, including 6-7 overall against Region 8-A opponents but 4-6 in games that count for region tournament seeding.

Tallulah finished the week with an overall 10-15 record and 5-5 in the region while Athens Christian completed an 8-16 season, including 2-8 in the region. A separate article gives details about the region tournament being held this week in Commerce for both the Lady Indians and Indians.

Tallulah Falls 90, Indians 64 - After falling by a 59-49 score in an early season game at Tallulah Falls, including trailing by just a 57-52 margin less than a minute and a half from the end, the Indians and Tallulah Falls engaged in a hard fought battle for more than two and a half quarters on Thursday with just three ties but eleven lead changes before Tallulah used seven treys in embarking on the aforementioned game ending scoring charge.

Two of the ties and seven of the lead changes actually occurred in the first quarter of the game with sophomore Kolby Moss contributing eight points and freshman Collin Crowder four while senior Will Travis contributed the Indians' only trey of the first half compared to five by Tallulah which were vital in their holding a 22-17



Senior Will Travis throws down a two-handed slam on Senior Night. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

lead at quarter's end. Five different Indians put points on the scoreboard in the second quarter with Moss again leading with ten and followed by sophomore Aidan Berrong and Crowder with four each with the Indians rallying for a 39-34 lead at the 1:11 mark before Tallulah sank a pair of deuces in the final minute of play for a 39-38 Indian lead at intermission.

After Tallulah opened the third quarter with their sixth trey for a 41-39 lead, Berrong used two treys and a deuce in a 6-2 Towns run for the aforementioned 47-43 lead at the 6:26 mark. Just eleven seconds later, Tallulah began the previously mentioned closing run by striking for three treys and a 52-47 lead at 5:07 but the Indians would delay the dominant run for a couple of minutes.

A trey by Moss reduced the lead to 52-50 at 4:44 and a deuce by Travis at 3:35 had the Indians within the same 57-52 score at 3:35 that was present near the end of the game at Tallulah. Tallulah resumed the scoring surge with two free throws and their sixth trey of the quarter at the 3:03 mark for a 14-4 quarter ending run interrupted only by deuces by Moss and Crowder and ending with a three point play for a sudden 71-56 lead entering the fourth quarter.

Four different Indians put points on the scoreboard with the Indians outscoring Tallulah 8-7 for a 78-64 score at 4:46 but with the visiting band of Indians including

their twelfth and thirteenth treys in a 12-0 closing run for a final victory margin of 90-64 not indicative of the competitiveness of most of the game.

Moss took scoring honors with 25 points for the game and was followed by Berrong and Crowder with 12 each, Travis with 9, and senior Brett Denton with 6. Leaders in assists were Berrong and Denton with 3 each and Moss with 2 while Crowder led in rebounds with 10 and was followed by Moss with 7 and Travis with 4.

The Indians continued to play in both the Tallulah and Athens Christian games without the services of senior Trent Bradshaw who is sidelined by an ankle injury.

Six different Tallulah players sank treys against the Indians with scoring leaders being juniors Matthew Weidner with 27 points, Winston Davis with 15, Reeves Cody with 13, and Hayden Johnson with 10 and freshman Gabe Keene with 11. The thirteen treys bring memories of Rabun County using seventeen treys in rallying from a 28-10 Indians first quarter lead for a 110-74 victory early in the season.

Indians 78, Athens Christian 64 - The Indians and Athens Christian had an epic battle for three quarters in Athens back on November 30 with the Indians using a 10-1 start and a 5-1 finish in the fourth quarter as part of an overall 17-8 quarter in overcoming

as much as a 44-36 deficit early in the third quarter and rallying from a 55-53 deficit after three quarters for a 70-63 victory.

The first quarter and a half of last Thursday's game was also quite a battle with two ties and five lead changes by the 4:11 mark of the second quarter with the Eagles leading by as much as 11-7 near the mid point of the first quarter and the Indians getting their biggest lead of 24-20 on back to back deuces by sophomore Aidan Berrong in the first minute of the second.

The Eagles began a 6-0 run at that 4:11 mark for a 31-26 lead at exactly the three minutes mark but Berrong wrapped a four point play, on a trey and free throw when fouled on the shot, and a second trey around an Eagles deuce for a 7-2 run and a 33-33 tie at 2:16.

The Indians had some misfortune, however, when senior Brett Denton was charged with his third foul just prior to Berrong's heroics and sophomore Kolby Moss was charged shortly after with his second and third fouls in just thirteen seconds of playing time ending at 1:29.

The Eagles sank two free throws at that point as the beginning of a 6-3 finish with freshman Collin Crowder providing the Indian points for a 39-36 Eagles lead at intermission.

First half scoring heroics for the Indians included nine points in the first quarter and eleven in the second with two treys and a three

point play included for a whopping twenty points by Berrong with Travis contributing six points in the first quarter and Crowder five in the second.

The Eagles opened the third quarter with a 5-0 run for a 36-44 lead at the 7:01 mark not long before Moss and Denton were charged with their fourth fouls at the 6:30 and 5:29 marks with both spending the remainder of the quarter on the bench.

With sophomore Peyton Barrett and freshman Kyle Oakes providing capable work off the bench, the Indians were able to stay on virtually even terms the remainder of the quarter with Barrett contributing two assists and Oakes one as the Eagles increased a 47-40 lead at the time of Denton's departure by just two points to 58-49 entering the fourth quarter.

Travis contributed eight points on four deuces and Berrong five on his third trey and two free throws during the quarter.

The Eagles sank two field goals for a 62-49 lead and seemed to be in control of the game by the 7:10 mark of the fourth quarter but lightning was about to strike as here came the Indians.

Moss struck for fourteen straight points, ending on two old fashioned three point plays between the 6:51 and 3:05 marks in giving the Indians a 63-62 lead but they weren't through.

A baseline drive for two points and a three point play by Travis and two free throws by

Moss completed a 21-0 run for the Indians for a 70-62 lead at the 1:15 mark and they extended the great work following an Eagles deuce at 1:08 with Moss sinking four free throws for twelve in a row in the quarter and Travis adding two free throws and a dunk for a final Indian margin of victory of 78-64.

When the smoke had cleared, the Indians had finished the game on a 29-2 run in just six minutes and fifty one seconds of playing time with Moss scoring twenty of the points and Travis the other nine.

Scoring leaders for the game for the Indians were Berrong with 25 points, Moss and Travis with 23 each, and Crowder with 15 while Moss led in assists with 4 and was followed by Barrett and Denton with 3 each and Berrong and Crowder with 2 each according to your reporter's unofficial total. Leaders in rebounds were Crowder with 12, Travis with 5, and Berrong Denton, and Moss with 4 each.

Scoring leaders for Athens Christian against the Indians were freshman Kyle Cowan with 32 points and junior Jarrett Boyd with 20. Athens Christian finished regular season play with just an 8-16 overall record, including 2-8 in region play, but with nine of the sixteen losses being by ten or fewer points and five of those losses by five or fewer points.

In a quirk of scheduling fate, the Indians and Eagles are scheduled at press time to face each other again in the opening round of the Region 8A Tournament in Commerce on Monday at 8:30 pm. A separate article provides information about the tournament schedule for the full week.

Incredible free throw accuracy - After sinking all eight free throw attempts against Tallulah Falls the night before with Crowder going four for four and Denton and Moss two for two each, the Indians sank twenty six of thirty attempts against Athens Christian, including twelve for twelve by Moss, six for six by Berrong, and two for two by senior Travon Bradley for remarkable combined thirty four for thirty eight accuracy in the two games.

It is stunning to compare this 89.5 percent accuracy for two games by the Indians with eight of twenty two futility for 36.4 percent accuracy by the Michigan State University men's team in a 79-75 home court overtime loss to Indiana University on Saturday night. Michigan State entered that game ranked sixth in NCAA Division I basketball in the nation with an 18-3 overall record, including 9-1 as the top team in the Big Ten Conference.

Wrestling: Towns County puts in work at 2019 Burnt Mountain Classic

By Chad Stack
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JASPER - The Towns County Indian Wrestlers competed in the 2019 Burnt Mountain Classic at Pickens High School on Friday, Jan. 25, and Saturday, Jan. 26.

Because Towns County wrestles in a region where not many schools have wrestling programs, the Indians fill up their schedule by competing against non-region schools in matches and tournaments like the Burnt Mountain Classic.

The tournament in Pickens County was Towns' last chance to get some quality grappling in before the Area Traditional Tournament at Commerce High School on Saturday, Feb. 2.

Towns County took seven wrestlers to compete in the tournament, three of which were highly seeded in their weight classes: No. 1-seeded Blaine Rogers at 160 pounds; third-seeded Tyler Swanger at 170 pounds; and third-seeded Wesly Calhoun at 182 pounds.

Sophomore Garrett Oakes entered the tournament as the eighth seed in the 132-pound weight class.

Overall, Towns County finished eighth as a team and placed three wrestlers in the Top 5 for their respective weight classes in the Burnt Mountain Classic.

Senior Blaine Rogers went 4-1 and finished second in the tournament, having only lost a single hard-fought match that went all three rounds.

Senior Wesly Calhoun finished third in his weight class, winning his final match with a pin. Calhoun finished the weekend 4-1. Tyler Swanger came in



Senior Blaine Rogers (right) on the podium after placing second at Pickens County. Photo/Chad Stack

Fourth Place for his weight class, finishing 3-2 for the tournament.

Garrett Oakes walked away with an even 2-2 tournament record, but he had a really nice win Saturday with a vicious takedown that led to a pin in under 30 seconds in the first round.

Junior Austin Edrington also went 2-2, while freshmen

Alisa Moss and Hannah Wecer competed in the Junior Varsity portion of the tournament.

"I knew our Top 3 wrestlers would compete and do well, but I also was pleased with how the others wrestled," said Stowers.

The Indians were the smallest of the 22 schools participating in the Burnt Mountain Classic that weekend, so

having four Top 10-seeded wrestlers in the tournament served as a demonstration of the talent that exists in the Towns County Wrestling program.

"It's just a great example of what can happen when you come to work every day and have kids that believe in themselves," said Stowers.

Towns to participate in Region 8-A Basketball Tournament

By Jerry Kendall
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The Region 8A High School Basketball Tournament is scheduled for this week at Commerce High School in Commerce with both Towns County teams participating.

In a region meeting on Sunday afternoon, a coin toss was held to break a three way tie for second place between the Lady Indians, Prince Avenue Christian School of Athens, and Athens Academy with the Lady Indians losing the toss and placed in the fourth position behind Prince Avenue in second and Athens Academy in third place.

At press time, the Lady Indians are scheduled to face fifth seed Commerce at 7:00 pm on Wednesday with the winner of that game to face the winner

of a game between top seeded Lakeview Academy and the winner of an earlier game between George Walton Academy of Monroe and Athens Christian at 7:00 on Friday. The winner of that contest will qualify for the region championship game at 6:00 pm on Saturday.

At press time the eighth seeded Indians are scheduled to face ninth seed Athens Christian in a rematch of last Friday's game at 8:30 pm on Monday with the winner of that game to face Riverside Military Academy of Gainesville at 8:30 pm on Wednesday.

The winner of that contest will face the winner of an earlier game between fourth seed Prince Avenue Christian School of Athens and Hebron Christian Academy of Dacula. That winner will qualify for the region championship game at 7:30 pm on Saturday.

