

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Three Indians, Lady Indian qualify for State Wrestling Tournament

By Chad Stack
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ROME - Towns County Wrestling is headed to the Macon Centreplex for the Georgia High School Association Wrestling State Championship after four Indian grapplers qualified at the Sectionals Tournament on Feb. 8 and Feb. 9.

The Indian wrestling team took six wrestlers to Darlington High School in Rome for Sectionals, and four of them finished in the Top Six to automatically qualify for the state tournament that starts on Feb. 14.

Sophomore Garrett Oaks finished in Sixth Place, sending him to states for the second year in a row.

"Garrett wrestled fantastic on Friday against a wrestler that was in the state finals last year," said Indian Head Coach Jeff Stowers. "He lost a real close match and wrestled really good Saturday morning."

"Garrett's weight class is probably one of the tougher ones to wrestle in, but the good news for Garrett is that the wrestler that finished first in Sectionals is a wrestler he beat at Area 13-1."

Senior Blaine Rogers, who finished second in the state just a year ago, is heading back to states this year to wrestle for the last time in his high school career. He finished second at Sectionals in the 160-pound weight class this past weekend.

"I was very pleased with



how Blaine wrestled over the weekend after leaving the Area Tournament due to some health issues," said Stowers.

Senior Tyler Swanger finished in second for the 170-pound weight class and lost in the final match at Sectionals. He is also one of the top wrestlers in his weight class and has a great chance to compete in the finals this weekend, having only lost by three points in the

final match with a score of 9-6.

"Tyler probably had the best tournament of his career this past weekend," said Stowers. "I think that the loss gives us confidence that if he sees the same wrestler at states, it's a very winnable match, and Tyler can step on the mat feeling he can compete."

Senior Wesley Calhoun finished in Eighth Place but will travel with the team this weekend

to states, as he still has a chance to enter the tournament. Calhoun qualified as an alternate, so if one of the wrestlers in the 182-pound weight class is unable to wrestle for whatever reason, then Calhoun can expect to compete.

This year, GHSA started an all girls state wrestling tournament, and Stowers and his coaching staff are excited for this, because they have two very talented girl wres-

tlers on the team.

All year long, they have had to wrestle with the boys - Towns County's King of the Mountain tournament was the only tournament they competed in where they got the chance to wrestle other girls.

This year, the two Lady Indian wrestlers went to Sectionals, and Freshman Hannah Wecker finished in First Place for her weight

class at 106 pounds, more than qualifying her for the first ever GHSA all girls state wrestling tournament.

Sophomore Alisa Moss finished in third at Sectionals, but she will travel to states this weekend as an alternate.

The Indians are leaving for Macon on Wednesday, Feb. 13, at 1:30 p.m. for the state tournament.

Indians edge past Athens Christian, fall to RMA in region tournament

By Jerry Kendall
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COMMERCE - There is usually some anxiety when facing an opponent for the third time during a season with this being especially true if both prior games have been victories as was the case for both the Towns County Lady Indians and Indians in their Region 8A Tournament opener last week at Commerce High School.

A bit more concern can be present when the tournament opponent was the one faced in the regular season finale as had been the case just three nights prior when the Indians used a 29-2 finish in just 6:51 of playing time in charging from a thirteen points deficit to a fourteen points victory.

The Indians opened the tournament game on Monday with a continuation of their last quarter success against Athens Christian but did not claim victory until the final buzzer in taking a two points victory.

Winning the game against Athens Christian sent the Indians into a Wednesday game against senior laden Riverside Military Academy of Gainesville, the Region 8A regular season champion with a 20-4 record, including 9-1 in region play with the lone loss being to Prince Avenue when some of their players had gone home for the Christmas holidays.

The Indians came short of victory in this game as the Eagles played extremely well in taking a decisive victory over the Indians on their way to the tournament championship game on Saturday.

They themselves fell short of victory in the championship game by a 79-73 score against likewise senior laden Lakeview Academy of Gainesville, a team the Indians defeated in an historic encounter last month.

Indians 46, Athens Christian 44 - The Indians followed up on the aforementioned rousing 29-2 finish three days prior on their home court in taking a 78-64 victory over Athens Christian and it was more of the same in the opening minutes of the region tournament game.

The Indians sprang out to a



Sophomore Kolby Moss' (15) marksmanship at the free throw line has been critical for the Indians in 2018-19. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

9-0 lead by the 3:54 mark of the first quarter which became 14-5 at quarter's end and 18-5 by the 5:02 mark of the second quarter.

The 18-5 start by the Indians was led by freshman Collin Crowder who included an old fashioned three point play and two additional deuces for seven points, sophomore Aidan Berrong who used a trey and deuce for five points, and senior Will Travis who scored four points on two deuces.

This opening salvo gave the Indians a most unlikely 47-7 run against Athens Christian back to the 6:51 mark of the Friday game in a total of just seventeen minutes and forty nine seconds of playing time with its own risk of vulnerability in potential loss of focus in view of the dominant scoring run.

And this dominance may very well have contributed to the presence of the oft used phrase that "all good things must come to an end" with this especially perhaps being true against a very capable team with two top of the line players with the Indians having to fend off Athens Christian in a game not decided until the final field goal attempt of the game by the Eagles.

The Eagles included a trey

and a three point play in an 8-0 run in edging to within 18-13 at the 3:28 mark of the second quarter and matched field goals by Crowder and Berrong at 2:54 and 2:30 for a 22-13 score with two of their own for a 22-17 deficit at 1:31 which became 24-17 at intermission on a late drive for two points by sophomore Kolby Moss.

The Indians led by as many as nine points on three occasions by the 3:59 mark of the third quarter but as few as three at 34-31 at twenty one seconds before a three point play by Travis at 11.2 second had the Indians ahead 37-31 entering the fourth quarter. Travis scored eleven of thirteen Indian points in that third quarter.

Two deuces by Moss and one by Travis in between almost matched two deuces and a trey by the Eagles as the Indians held a 43-38 lead at the 3:49 mark of the fourth quarter but five for six free throw shooting by the Eagles got them a 43-43 standoff at 1:49 with four of the charity tosses coming at that 1:49 mark when displeasure and a technical foul on a firm bounce of the ball by Travis in frustration following a foul call.

That tie was the only time the Indians did not lead from the

5:23 mark of the first quarter and it lasted for just thirty three seconds when a drive for the basket for a deuce by Moss at 1:12 got the Indians a 45-43 lead they would not relinquish.

An Eagles free throw at 19.3 seconds was matched by one by Moss at 11.5 seconds for a two point Towns lead which would hold up for the victory when the Eagles missed a field goal attempt and two putback shots for a tie with the second attempt coming at the buzzer and the Indians holding on for a heart stopping 46-44 victory.

Travis took scoring honors for the game with 17 points and was followed by Moss with 11 and Berrong and Crowder with 9 each while Moss led in assists with 4 and was followed by senior Brett Barrett with 3 and Crowder with 2. Leaders in rebounds were Crowder with 14, Travis with 9, and Moss with 7.

Athens Christian was led in scoring by freshman Kyle Cowan with 21 points and junior Jarrett Boyd with 15. The very youthful Eagles of former University of Georgia basketball star Carlos Strong completed their season with an 8-17 record.

Riverside Military Academy 80, Indians 53 - The senior

laden and easily the region's quickest and most athletic Eagles entered the game with a 20-4 record, including 9-1 in regular season region play with some of their players gone home for the Christmas holidays when they lost their region game to Prince Avenue Christian School.

In the only regular season encounter between the Indians and Eagles last month in Gainesville, the Indians gave the Eagles quite a battle, including trailing by just a 61-53 score before Riverside finished the game with a 6-1 run the final 1:26 for a final margin of victory of 67-54.

There are always opinions and often strong ones, not always thought of as being a result of wrong doing by the officials, as to a very difficult task as to how a basketball game should be called, ranging from "let 'em play" with few fouls called to those preferring that basketball not be so much a contact sport with wonders such as, for example, "why was that not a foul?"

In a game with what appeared to your reporter to fit the "let 'em play" pattern with fewer fouls than sometimes might have been called on the veteran Eagles squad being to the detriment of the largely youthful Indians, a

second observation by your reporter has been noting that there are often more fouls called with increasing aggressiveness than might have been the case if taking greater control of the game at the start.

There is evidence of confirmation of this taking place when noting that the Indians attempted just two free throws prior to the Eagles holding a 32-16 lead by the 5:58 mark of the second quarter, after which they sank fifteen of twenty two attempts by the end of the third quarter.

At any rate, the Eagles overcame 2-0 and 6-5 Indian leads on an early deuce by sophomore Kolby Moss and a trey by senior Will Travis by using four treys in building a 22-14 lead after one quarter.

The four treys were noteworthy in that the Eagles sank just one on an inadvertent bank shot in the entire game in their earlier 67-54 win over the Indians with three more to come by game's end. Travis contributed seven points and Moss four for the Indians in first quarter action.

Moss contributed ten points and sophomore Aidan Berrong included a trey among five in the second quarter when Riverside pulled out to a 43-29 lead which became 73-42 after three quarters on the way to an 80-53 victory.

Five different Indians put points on the scoreboard in the third quarter with Moss leading with five and Travis included his second trey among seven points in the fourth quarter.

Scoring leaders for the Indians for the game were Moss with 19 points, Travis with 16, Berrong with 9, and freshman Collin Crowder with 5.

Leaders in assists were Berrong and Moss with 3 each and Crowder with 2 according to your reporter's unofficial tally while Crowder led in rebounds with 8 and was followed by Travis with 6 and Moss with 4 according to Indian statistician Kendall Floyd who is much appreciated for providing these stats this season.

The Eagles were led in scoring for the game by 6'4" senior Isaac Teasley with 29 points, sophomore Areeb Ahmad with 18, and senior Shad Dabney with 12 while four other seniors combined in providing 15 points.