

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Scoring woes costly for Indians in home court loss to Union County

By Jerry Kendall
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After putting 79 points on the scoreboard just three days earlier at Rabun County, the Towns County Indians varsity basketball team found difficulty getting points on the scoreboard in a 58-51 loss to Union County in the TCHS gym last Tuesday.

It is quite a challenge with rare clear cut answers for a change in production by a sports team from one game to the next but perhaps two factors can be identified as related to the Indians' struggles following an impressive victory at Rabun County.

In the Rabun County game, both teams were affected by making the state football playoffs with five Indian football players having had just one week of practice to transition to the very different tasks involved in basketball and Rabun having game two top players missing due to their football team still being in the playoffs.

The Indians, then, had just one more day of practice following the Rabun County game while Union did not make the football playoffs this year with several weeks of practice available for their combination football and basketball players.

The major factor, however, may have been the style of play of the Panthers who must be commended for having held Class AAAA Gilmer to a much lower points total than the



Will Travis (left) at the free throw line and leading scorer Logan Cowart (right), who finished with 22 points vs Union. Photos by Lowell Nicholson

Indians in their season opening game as the Panthers took a 48-34 victory four nights prior in Blairsville.

Union County led for most of the first quarter by small margins in spite of the powerful inside presence of Indians senior Logan Cowart who scored ten of the Indians' points as they trailed 17-14 at quarter's end.

They managed a 10-10 tie on a field goal by senior Zach Davenport at the 2:11 mark of the first quarter and took a brief 12-10 lead on two free throws by junior Will Travis at 1:14 but the Panthers finished on a 7-2 run for

the three points lead.

The Indians tied the score on a trey by junior Trent Bradshaw at the 7:42 mark of the second quarter and took a 20-17 lead on an old fashioned three point play by Travis at 7:19 but the Panthers got a 23-22 lead at 4:21 they would not relinquish although the Indians would be within two possessions of a tie as late as the half minute mark of the fourth quarter.

The Panthers led by just a 30-26 margin at intermission but they used three treys to advantage in taking their biggest lead of 46-32 by the 1:50 mark



of the third quarter.

A deuce by junior Brett Denton and a trey by Travis got the Indians within single digits at 46-37 at 1:01 but Union held a 48-37 lead entering the fourth quarter.

Both teams got off to a slow scoring start in the fourth quarter but a Davenport basket at 5:43 had the Indians within 48-39 and a putback by junior Evan Berrong and a three point play on a putback goal by Cowart got them within 52-44 at 2:04.

Bradshaw's second trey of the game got the Indians within 54-47 at forty nine seconds and

another basket by Cowart at thirty nine seconds had them within two treys of a tie at 55-49 but the Panthers more than matched a final field goal by Cowart with three for four free throw shooting the final half minute of the game for a 58-51 victory.

Cowart put points on the scoreboard in all four quarters for 22 points and hauled down a team leading 15 rebounds. Other scoring leaders were Travis with 11 points, Bradshaw with 8, and Davenport with 6 while Davenport was second in rebounds with 7 and the leader in assists with 3 as senior Bradley Benson

followed with 2 assists.

The Panthers, who returned four starters from last year's 10-16 team and have six seniors on this year's squad, were led in scoring by senior Patrick Baggett with 16 points and senior Crawford Colwell with 13. A

fter sinking 22 of 33 free throw attempts in their win at Rabun County, the Indians struggled at the foul line against Union when they sank just six of 16 attempts as compared to 16 for 29 accuracy by the Panthers.

Lady Indians fall just short of victory in overtime loss to Union County

By Jerry Kendall
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Staff Writer

The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team last Tuesday pulled off one of the biggest turnarounds in school history, especially as related to the number of points behind and the short length of playing time required to overtake their opponent, and came within six seconds of a victory but fell just short in falling in overtime to the Class AAA Union County Lady Panthers in the Towns County gym.

The Lady Indians faced a Union County team losing just two seniors and not only returning most of their fire power from last year's 12-14 team, which raced past the Lady Indians in three games, but adding to their team the leading scorer in this game who was injured last year.

After falling behind by a 7-0 score during the first two minutes of the game, the Lady Indians struck for an 8-2 run on a deuce by freshman Vanessa Floyd and treys by freshman Kennedy Henson and sophomore Sophia Shook for just a 9-8 deficit by the 3:28 mark of the first quarter.

The Lady Panthers, however, followed with a 14-3 run for a 28-11 lead by the 4:46 mark of the second quarter. The run was interrupted only by a long trey at the first quarter buzzer by junior Kristen Byers and ended on a second trey by Henson at the 4:02 mark with Floyd adding her second deuce before halftime with Union leading 32-16.

The Lady Indians edged to within 34-22 by the 6:03 mark of the third quarter on a 6-0 run begun by two free throws by junior Erika Spano and ending on a trey by senior Madison McClure but the Lady Panthers struck back with a 7-2 run for their biggest lead of 43-24 with 2:54 on the clock, setting the stage for the previously mentioned stunning run by the Lady Indians.

The Lady Indians' full court pressure suddenly became very effective and was used to great advantage in changing the momentum of the game as they struck for a 12-0 run between the 2:34 mark of the third quarter and 7:21 of the fourth for just a 43-36 Union advantage.

They then followed a Union deuce at 7:14 for a 6-0 run by the 3:51 mark for just a 45-42 Union lead and they continued the onslaught by following a second Lady Panthers deuce at 3:15 for a 47-42 Union lead with an 8-0 run for a 50-47 Lady Indian lead with just 18.3 seconds left in the fourth quarter.



The Towns County Lady Indians in action vs Union County last week. Photos by Lowell Nicholson

Lady Indian charge in just ten minutes and sixteen seconds of playing time in changing a nineteen points Towns deficit to the three points advantage.

The Lady Indians sank twelve straight free throws during the run and were led by Henson with fourteen points, Floyd with six, and McClure with four. Floyd got the Lady Indians a 48-47 lead at the forty four seconds mark on about a twelve foot base line shot and Henson sank two pressure free throws at 18.3 seconds for the 50-47 Towns lead.

The Lady Panthers sank a free throw with 13.2 seconds left for a 50-48 Towns lead with the Lady Panther missing the second intentionally in hoping for a Union rebound and a chance for a tie but she committed a lane violation giving possession of the ball to the Lady Indians beneath the Union County basket.

defending well against the ensuing inbounds pass, a long Lady Indian pass to near mid court appeared from the stands, the scorer's table, the TCHS bench, and on video of the game to have been touched slightly but not controlled by a Lady Indian before going out of bounds under the Union County basket.

If touched and detected by the officials, the ball would have gone to Union County under their own basket with their being required to move the ball the length of the court in just a few seconds for a potential tying basket.

Of course, it's not at all uncommon and understandable for officials to fail to detect such an action as a slight touch of the ball and avid basketball fans have become accustomed to seeing sometimes lengthy video reviews on TV of calls and non calls either not detected or missed by officials.

Such reviews are not present for high school basketball games, however, with the officials in this game properly returning the ball to beneath the Union County basket to be in-bounded with the Lady Panthers able to get the ball inbounds and score the tying basket for a 50-50 score with six seconds on the clock.

The drama was not over for regulation play, however, as Henson just missed a trey attempt from near mid court for a Lady Indians win but the ball bounced off the rim at the buzzer.

The 50-50 standoff sent the game to a four minute overtime with the Lady Panthers sinking a free throw at the 3:23 mark, adding a field goal at 2:38, and then sinking three of four free throw attempts by the 1:10 mark for what seemed to be a safe 56-50 lead. But the Lady Indians still had some life with Floyd sinking a free throw without the clock starting at 1:10 when fouled during a Union free

throw and Henson nailing her third trey of the game at fifty six seconds for just a 56-54 Lady Indian deficit.

The Lady Panthers would wrap two free throws at the 38.0 and 28.0 seconds marks around one by Shook in between, however, for a 60-55 overtime Union County victory.

Henson led the Lady Indians in scoring for the game with 26 points and in assists with 6 with other scoring leaders being Floyd with 11 points and Byers with 5.

Leading in rebounds were Byers with 5 and Floyd with 4. Lady Indian fans viewing the game are much aware of the team effort beyond the statistics provided here as all eight Lady Indians seeing action provided significant contributions to the near victory.

In spite of the disappointment of not being able to pull off a victory, this performance by the youthful Lady Indians can

serve as a huge building block for future games

The Lady Panthers were led in scoring by junior Aubrey Pack with 14 points, senior Bailey Daniels with 12, and sophomore Brooke Dockrey with 11. Both teams should be highly commended for outstanding free throw shooting as six Lady Indians combined to sink 17 of 21 attempts and seven Lady Panthers sank a nearly identical 17 of 22.

Benton MacKaye Trail group hike

Benton MacKaye Trail group hike, Saturday, December 2nd. Raven Cliff Falls - the falls shoot through a cliff and the water falls 170 feet. Moderate hike, 6 miles, in and out. Register with Hike Leader Larry Dumas: ledumas@hotmail.com; www.bmta.org.