

Towns County Sports

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Lady Indians, Indians fall in close games at Tallulah Falls

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County Lady Indians and Indians varsity basketball teams hit the road last Tuesday for games against very formidable Region 8-A foe Tallulah Falls but with the games not counting in the region standings as Tallulah is one of three region teams the Towns teams will face twice this year with just the second counting in the standings for seeding in the region tournament.

Tallulah took close victories in both games but with the outcome of both being uncertain until the final moments of the games.

By week's end, the Tallulah ladies held a 6-2 record on the young season while the boys team's record stood at 4-4 with a 49-39 win over Class AAAA White County included with significance in this win being a later 66-63 win by White County over Indians opponent Lumpkin County.

Tallulah Falls 53, Lady Indians 46 – The Lady Indians entered this game with the handicap of having sophomore Vanessa Floyd sidelined by an injury sustained in the game at Athens Christian just four days prior. She stands second on her team in early season scoring and rebounding with 8.0 points and 4.3 rebounds per game with the averages reduced slightly by her missing more than half of the game at Athens Christian when she was sidelined by injury in the second quarter after scoring six points and claiming six rebounds prior to the injury.

There would be four ties and six lead changes by the 3:25 mark of the second quarter at Tallulah with neither team holding a lead of more than two points. Tallulah struck for a trey at 2:00 and an old fashioned three point play at 1:42, however, for a 21-15 lead which became 24-18 at intermission.

Five different Lady Indians put points on the scoreboard the first half with leaders being sophomore Kennedy Henson who included a pair of treys among nine



Towns County's Trent Bradshaw fires a 3-pointer against Rabun County last week. Against Tallulah Falls, the senior finished with 4 points and 3 rebounds. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

points and senior Kristen Byers with 4.

Tallulah gained four different leads of eight points in the third quarter but the Lady Indians used a trey by Henson and a field goal by junior Sophia Shook to pull within 30-27 at the 4:26 mark and a trey by senior Taylor Cornett and two free throws by Henson to edge to within 36-33 by quarter's end.

Two free throws by Henson half a minute into the fourth quarter then had the Lady Indians within 36-35 and later a free throw by senior Demya Allen and a coast to coast run by Henson prior to two Tallulah free throws and a trey by Shook following the charity tosses had them within 42-41 at the 3:28 mark. And Henson not only more than matched a Tallulah free throw with a drive for two points for a 43-43 tie at the 2:56 mar but followed a Tallulah deuce with a trey for a 46-45 Towns lead at 2:15.

Unfortunately, that basket

would be the Lady Indians' final points with this report not being complete if not mentioning a few disputable officials calls near the end of the game and one clearly missed call as viewed by those near the end line and as viewed by your reporter. Tallulah sank three free throws by the 1:29 mark and added a field goal at 1:07 for a 50-46 lead.

With this being the score, two Lady Indians went after a loose ball near the end line under the Lady Indians basket with a likely honest but mistaken call resulting. The Lady Indian corraling the ball remained inbounds while the one not retrieving it stepped out of bounds with the official mistakenly giving Tallulah possession of the ball.

With the Lady Indians still with plenty of time to overcome a four points lead, especially with possession of the ball near their basket, Tallulah used the gift pos-

session to sink two free throws at 30.1 seconds for a daunting lead of 52-46 and an eventual 53-46 victory.

The Lady Indians were led in scoring by Henson who included four treys among her 25 points with other scoring leaders being Shook with 6 points and the trio of Allen, Byers, and senior Kenzlee Denton with 4 each. Four different Lady Indians contributed at least one assist with Henson leading with 5. Leading in rebounds were Allen and Shook with 8 each, Henson with 7, and Byers with 4. Scoring leaders for Tallulah were senior Nyah Williams with 15 points, junior Santy Demebele with 14, and sophomore Katy Corbett with 11.

Tallulah Falls 59, Indians 49 – The Indians' game at Tallulah Falls came with some striking similarities to the Indians loss a week earlier at Lumpkin County. As at Lumpkin County, the Indians got off to a good start, taking a 3-0

lead on a three point play by senior Will Travis just nineteen seconds into the game and leading 12-8 by the 1:34 mark of the first quarter with highlights being five points by sophomore Kolby Moss and four by senior Trent Bradshaw.

But as at Lumpkin County a period of cold shooting struck the Indians although starting at the 1:16 mark of the first quarter instead of the start of the second. Tallulah struck for a 6-1 run at that 1:16 mark for a 14-13 lead at quarter's end and then opened the second with a 7-0 run for a 21-13 lead.

The Indians did use a deuce and trey by Moss and a deuce by Travis to pull to within 23-20 at the 1:52 mark but cold shooting again hit the Indians with Tallulah going on another run in ending the second quarter with six straight points for a 29-20 lead at intermission and opening the third quarter with a 7-2 run for a 36-22 lead at the 6:15 mark. This completed an overall

28-10 run, not quite as deadly as a similar 25-4 run by Lumpkin but decisive nevertheless with the Indians able to challenge but never overcome the Tallulah surge.

And as at Lumpkin County, the Indians finished by outscoring Tallulah the rest of the way, this time by a 27-23 total but with a couple of impressive runs within the finish with the first being a 10-0 run between the 5:08 and 1:39 marks of the third quarter with the Indians edging to within 38-38. A putback basket by freshman Collin Crowder triggered this run with Travis contributing six of the points and sophomore Aidan Berrong taking the ball coast to coast for the other two.

Tallulah then used treys at the start and end of a modest 8-3 run between the 1:11 mark of the third quarter and 6:50 of the fourth for a 46-37 lead. But two baskets by Travis preceding a pair of Tallulah free throws and a trey by Berrong following the charity tosses had the Indians within 48-44 at the 3:07 mark. A field goal and two free throws by Tallulah were almost matched by a second trey by Berrong at the 1:26 mark for just a 52-47 Indians deficit and plenty of time to overtake Tallulah but the home standing band of Indians scored seven straight points between just the 1:23 and fifty five seconds marks for a 59-47 lead which became a 59-49 victory.

Leading scorers for the Indians for the game were Travis with 20 points, Moss with 13, Berrong with 8, and Bradshaw with 4 while Moss took the lead in assists with 5 and was followed by senior Brett Denton with 3. Leaders in rebounds were Travis with 9, Moss with 8, Crowder with 4, and Bradshaw with 3. Tallulah's leading scorers were senior Sebastian Herrera with 24 points, junior Matthew Weidner with 12, and senior Reeves Cody with 10. More trips and better accuracy at the foul line actually pretty much decided the contest as the Indians sank 17 deuces, three treys, and six for eleven at the foul line while Tallulah sank sixteen deuces, four treys, and fifteen for eighteen at the charity stripe.

Lady Indians, Indians overwhelmed by sizzling Rabun County shooting

By Jerry Kendall
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The Towns County Lady Indians and Indians varsity basketball teams hosted Class AA Rabun County last Friday and were stung by incredible shooting and overall powerful play as the visiting Lady Cats and Wildcats came away with one sided victories although with varying routes to victory.

The Lady Cats took a quick lead and never looked back in taking a 75-15 victory while the Wildcats were forced to overcome a 28-10 Indians lead in taking a 110-74 victory.

Rabun County 75, Lady Indians 15 – For whatever the reasons, the Lady Cats have proven to be a most difficult matchup for the Lady Indians the last two years as they took a similar 76-29 victory on their home court last year in the Lady Indians' second game of the season. Perhaps some optimism

can be obtained for the future for the Lady Indians, however, when looking back at last year's loss to the then Class AA defending state runners up as the Lady Indians rebounded by coming home and taking Union County to overtime before falling by a 60-55 score in their next game.

With Union to travel to Rabun for their next game, the scores of the two games seemed to have indicated that Union would face a similar fate as did the Lady Indians at Rabun but that turned out to be far from the case as Rabun had to hold on for a 48-45 victory over the Lady Panthers. So one very difficult loss last year for the Lady Indians at Rabun was not indicative of results in future games for the Lady Indians and should not be such an indicator this year.

Perhaps the best explanation of the Lady Indians' struggle with Rabun for two years in a row is the fact that the two teams play a very similar all over the court defense but with Rabun holding a very significant size advantage and their quick start seizing the momentum in last week's game turning out to be decisive.

In the early stages of the game it seemed sometimes that the Lady Cats only had to get the ball above the rim for a successful basket while similar shots by the Lady Indians found ways to roll or bounce off the rim.

Rabun took a 9-0 lead less than two minutes into the game and followed a trey and deuce by senior Taylor Cornett reducing the lead to 14-5 at the 4:30 mark by finishing on a 17-2 run for a 31-7 lead after one quarter. They then led 54-8 at intermission and 66-10 after three quarters in taking the 75-15 victory.



L-R: Senior Will Travis wins the tip-off vs Rabun County and the Lady Indians' Taylor Cornett drives to the hoop against the Rabun County Lady Cats. Photo/Lowell Nicholson.

Senior Demya Allen entered the scoring column in three of the four quarters and along with Cornett took the lead in scoring for the Lady Indians for the game with 5 points each with sophomore Jayce Young following with 3 points on a trey in the fourth quarter. Cornett led in assists with 2 while leaders in rebounds were sophomore Kennedy Henson with 5, Allen with 4, and junior Sophia Shook with 3. The Lady Cats were led in scoring by seniors Brooke Hendricks with 23 points and Georgia Stockton with 18.

The Rabun ladies completed the week with a 3-1 record which includes an 85-39 victory over Class AAAA Stephens County and a 75-24 conquest of Walhalla, South Carolina, but a 66-44 loss to Class AAAAAA North Forsyth.

The Lady Indians and Indians both completed the week with 2-4 records when their scheduled home games against Union County on Saturday were postponed until Tuesday, Dec. 11 because of the threat of winter weather. The difficult weather did not materialize but officials are to be commended for postponing the games in avoiding potential danger for players and fans. The TCHS teams have two games scheduled this week at home against Commerce on Friday night and afternoon games at Class AAA Fannin County on Saturday with the JV games beginning at 1:00 pm and the varsity games at 4:00 pm.

Rabun County 110, Indians 74 – The Wildcats actually used a coast to coast run and a trey for a 5-2 advantage just a minute and ten seconds into the game before the Indians embarked on a dominating 26-5 run for a 28-10 lead at exactly the two minutes

mark of the first quarter. The Indian run was highlighted by twelve points by senior Will Travis, nine by sophomore Aidan Berrong, and four by sophomore Kolby Moss.

With the Wildcats having lost all three three prior games by an average score of 75-48, the powerful start by the Indians certainly gave the appearance of a fourth one sided defeat for the Wildcats but a miracle run was on the horizon as they came alive for one of the most dominant scoring runs imaginable for the remainder of the game.

The Cats finished the quarter by using two treys in a 7-1 run for a 29-18 deficit and opened the second quarter with a third trey, an old fashioned three point play, and a deuce for just a 29-26 deficit at the 6:55 mark. Moss responded with a deuce and two free throws and senior Trent Bradshaw provided three for four free throw shooting which still had the Indians leading 36-32 at the 4:38 mark of the second quarter but Rabun included a pair of treys in a 14-0 finish for a 46-36 lead at intermission.

The Indians reduced the Rabun lead to 50-46 by the 5:11 mark of the third quarter with the 10-4 run highlighted by four points each by Bradshaw and Travis but the Wildcats included three treys in a 21-5 run by quarter's end for a 71-51 lead entering the fourth quarter. They then opened the final quarter with 9-0 run for an 80-51 bulge with 6:15 on the clock and used six more treys in completing the 110-74 victory. Moss contributed eleven points on two deuces and seven for seven free throw shooting and Berrong six points on a pair of treys in fourth quarter action for the Indians.

Although the Indians followed a tendency to go cold in

shooting for awhile after a good or exceptional start as on this date and endured a few other cold spells during this game, the greater factor in this game proved to be the red hot shooting by the Wildcats during the final two minutes of the first quarter and for the remainder of the game. The seventy four points scored in this game by the Indians would be sufficient for victory in most games played during the season but not in this one.

Scoring leaders for the Indians for the game were Moss with 21 points, Travis with 18, Berrong with 15, Bradshaw with 9, and senior Brett Denton with 6 while Moss led in assists with 5. Leaders in rebounds were Travis with 9, Berrong and Denton with 6 each, and Bradshaw and Moss with 3

each. Five different Wildcats hit double figures in scoring and another added eight points for ninety eight of their points with leaders being senior Kasin Old with 35 and junior Dawson Latham with 22. The Wildcats sank an incredible seventeen treys with a Rabun County related link showing that they sank and also incredible fifty percent of their 3-point attempts.

This was the first win for the Rabun boys and it is impossible to explain the blistering of the nets for such an extended period of time by any team but especially by the Wildcats who had scored just forty points in two of their three prior losses. Your reporter recalls a strikingly similar game which occurred just two years ago when Rosman, North Carolina, the far east team

with their 42-20 victory. They had faced one Class AAA, two Class AAAA, and one Class AAAAAA school with the four victories being by an average score of 62-35. The Lumpkin Indians improved to 2-3 with the four prior games having been played against Class AAAA teams with their three losses having been to teams with a combined 9-4 record through games of Tuesday.

Lumpkin County 42, Lady Indians 20 – Kennedy Henson's 12 points led the Lady Indians in scoring while seniors Demya Allen and Kenzlee Denton contributed 1 assist each and Denton led in rebounds with 4 against the much taller Lumpkin County girls who were led in scoring by sophomore Isabel Davenport with 14 points and senior Makenzie Pulley with 13.

Lumpkin included eight treys for twenty four of their forty two points and it is commendable that the Lady Indians' overall defense held the homestanding band of Indians to twenty points below their scoring average entering the game. Often a large lead results in lots of substitutes seeing action and resulting in lower scoring totals by winning teams but Lumpkin had only seven players dressed for the game and one of those had to sit out most of the game after sustaining an injury in the early minutes.

Lumpkin County 55, Indians 36 – Scoring leaders for the Indians for the game against Lumpkin were Travis with 13 points, Denton with 7, Moss with 6, Bradshaw with 5, and Crowder with 4 while Moss led in assists with 4 and sophomore Aidan Berrong followed with 2. Leaders in rebounds were Travis with 9, Moss with 6, and Crowder with 3. Lumpkin was led in scoring by senior Matt Seabolt with 15 points. By Jerry Kendall

Basketball: Towns at Lumpkin County recap