

Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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Indians mourn the passing of coach's wife and teammate's mother

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Chatsworth - Monday of last week placed the importance of the game of basketball into clear perspective as being far down any list of what is most important in life to individuals and families.

The Towns County Indians Varsity Basketball team came just short of a victory against Murray County High School at the North Murray High School Gym near Chatsworth in the Mistletoe Madness Tournament but a loss of immeasurable sadness for the team was to occur later on that date.

After returning to Towns County, the tragedy of the passing away of Stephanie Benson, the wife of Indians head coach Rob Benson and the mother of sophomore Indian player Bradley Benson left the game played earlier in the day of little significance.

I believe I can speak with confidence as a reporter of the heartbreak of the citizens of Towns County for the Benson family as related to this loss of their loved one and sincere sympathy is extended from all of us to Coach Benson, Bradley, and their entire extended family.

In the game against the Class AAA Murray County Indians, it was a real battle for nearly eleven minutes at the start of the game with four ties and eleven lead changes and neither



Towns County Head Basketball Coach Rob Benson (standing left) shouts instructions during a game earlier this month. Photo/Todd Forrest

team leading by more than three points by the 5:15 mark of the second quarter.

Murray would strike for the turning point of the game the final 4:31 of the quarter, however, when a 10-1 run extended a 25-24 lead to 35-25 at intermission.

Scoring highlights for the Indians the first half included

eight points by Zach Davenport in the first quarter and six in the first and five in the second by Will DeVries.

The Indians would outplay Murray County the last half and nearly overtake them but not quite be able to overcome the second quarter Murray scoring flurry as the local Indian tribe would hit their free throws at

the end in holding and extending their lead for the victory.

Murray would lead by as few as six points on three occasions during the first half of the third quarter and by as many as eleven on three occasions the last half of the quarter.

But the Towns Indians would close the quarter with a 5-0 run the final fifty seconds in

reducing a 50-39 deficit to 50-44 entering the fourth quarter.

Davenport with seven points and Adam Barrett with six led the Indians in scoring in third quarter action.

The fourth quarter saw the Indians pull to within 54-50 by the 5:24 mark on the strength of a field goal and two free throws by Davenport and they more than

matched a Murray field goal with field goals by Barrett and DeVries for just a 56-54 deficit with 3:06 on the clock.

A pull up jumper by Davenport then matched a Murray field goal as the Indians again edged to within two points at 58-56 with 1:31 left.

Unfortunately, that would be the Indians' last points with Murray sinking seven of eight free throw attempts the final 41.7 seconds of the game for a 65-56 victory.

Davenport, a sophomore, included 12-for-12 free throw shooting among a team leading 23 points for the game for the Indians with other scoring leaders being juniors DeVries with 17 points, Barrett with 9, and Major Moss with 6. Moss led in assists with 5 and was followed by DeVries with 3 and Barrett and junior Colton Shook with 2 each.

The Murray County Indians featured twelve seniors, four juniors, and one sophomore on their roster against the comparatively much younger TCHS Indians and were led in scoring by senior Tucker Humble with 18 points.

The loss leaves the Indians with an overall 4-6 record, including 1-1 in Region 8A, while facing much larger schools for the most part.

The third round tournament games scheduled for the Lady Indians and Indians for Tuesday were, of course, canceled.

Lady Indians fall to strong North Murray team at Mistletoe Madness

By Jerry Kendall
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

Chatsworth - The Towns County Lady Indians Varsity Basketball Team, like the Indians in the first round on Saturday, got a tough assignment last Monday when they faced the Class AAA North Murray Lady Mountaineers on their home court in the second round of the Mistletoe Madness Tournament.

The Lady Mountaineers improved to an 8-3 record with an eventual 65-31 victory over the Lady Indians while the Lady Indians fell to a 2-8 overall record, including 1-1 in Region 8A, while facing mostly much larger schools.

The Lady Indians' scheduled game for Tuesday in the final round of the Mistletoe Madness Tournament was canceled due to the tragic



The Towns County Lady Indians on the defensive end during a game earlier this month. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

passing of Stephanie Benson, the wife of Indians Head Coach Rob Benson and the mother of sophomore Indian Bradley Benson.

The Lady Indians rallied from an early 4-0 deficit against North Murray with a 6-0 run on two field goals by Kristin Byers and two free

throws by Madison McClure for a 6-4 lead at the 4:58 mark of the first quarter and they forced a 7-7 tie on a free throw by Madison Landress

at 3:13.

The Lady Mountaineers would strike, however, for ten straight points after that for a 17-7 lead by the half minute

mark of the first quarter.

Two late late first quarter free throws by Kristen Henson and an early second quarter field goal by Savannah Dyer got the Lady Indians to within 17-11 half a minute into the second quarter but the Lady Mountaineers would break away for a 37-17 lead at intermission despite a trey and three free throws for six points by McClure.

Byers would include a trey among five points in each of the final two quarters for a ten points second half but the Lady Mountaineers built a 57-24 lead after three quarters on the way to a 65-31 victory.

Byers, a freshman, led the Lady Indians in scoring for the game with 14 points and was followed by McClure, a sophomore with 8. McClure took the lead in assists with 2, according to your reporter's tally.

TCMS Lady Indians take first in Christmas Tournament at home

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

The Towns County Middle School Lady Indians played with much heart and gusto at the annual Towns County Christmas Tournament, clinching the First Place spot in a final victory over Commerce.

"We have been looking really, really good, and just improving, and there was a climax there last week in the tournament," said Lady Indians Head Coach Shannon Floyd on the season. "We beat a much bigger Lumpkin County team, and they were a very good team. We just came out, shot the ball as well as we've ever shot, and had every kid on the court contributing."

"I think Kennedy Henson had 21 or 22 points, hitting five 3's in that game. Vanessa Floyd came out, and she had 10 or 12 and was knocking down jumpers. Sophia Shook contributed two or three 3-pointers, and we were just lights out. Even though we were shooting the ball very well, when we play well, we play good defense, and that was the biggest difference in that game with Lumpkin. They struggled getting into any of their sets, because our defense was just tenacious."

Coach Floyd credited Shelby Turner with her best game of the year in that tournament, guarding against a 6-foot-tall Lumpkin player.

"And in our press, Shelby may have even led us in steals that game, and it was really just a fantastic overall team effort," said Coach Floyd. "We followed up the next night against Commerce, and Commerce is one of our region foes in high school, and it was a great ball game. Again, we started really fast, knocking jumpers down."

"Our press was really effective against them. We just



TCMS 2015 Christmas Tournament photos by Lowell Nicholson

kept mixing it up the first quarter, and we just really hit them hard and fast. I commend Commerce, they came all the way back and got within 6 points of us. I think we had them down 17-2 at a 15-point lead. But they kept fighting, because they were a really good, well-coached team, and they cut it to 6 in the second half in the third quarter."

But the Lady Indians never lost their drive, and as such, never lost their lead.

"The girls just said, that's enough, and we might have won by 12 or 15 points," said Coach Floyd. "We had good, balanced scoring that night. I think Van-

essa Floyd scored 19 that night, and Kennedy Henson threw in 12 points. Sophia Shook and Shelby Turner had contributing baskets, and Kaitlyn Davis, another one of our eighth graders, played really well. They're just a lot of fun to be around. They like to play."

The Lady Indians have enjoyed a successful season so far, with a healthy win record and great team attitude. Last year, six members of the team moved up to high school, where they have since excelled.

And this year's middle school team has worked well to fill the leadership roles vacated

by those six.

"Our girls, the starters in particular on this year's team, they played a lot of minutes last year with those kids," said Coach Floyd. "We were deeper last year with experience, so our starting five - Kennedy Henson, Sophia Shook, Kaitlyn Davis, Shelby Turner and Vanessa Floyd - we do lean heavy on those five, but we've got some kids that are also contributing in backup roles that are getting better."

"And next year we'll have to lose a few of these girls, and have somebody ready to replace them next year. I've been really pleased with all of their



progress."

Coach Floyd means exactly what he says - he's proud of his entire team, including the girls that rotate from the bench during play, who are getting better each and every game.

And nearly the entire team is on the Honor Roll.

"That to me is more important than the athletic part of it," said Coach Floyd. "And even something more important than their academics and their athletics, too, is they're just good kids, fun to be around. They work hard, want to get better, want to have fun, but they want to win. That's pretty easy, when you're

a coach and you've got those elements."

Making up the team are eighth-graders Shelby Turner, Sophia Shook, Alexia Crisp and Kaitlyn Davis; seventh-graders Remi Parker, Alexis Bradley, Vanessa Floyd, Kennedy Henson, Shaleena Morris, Shelby Morris, Ivie Davenport, Maci Walls, Jayce Young and Abby Mauldin; and sixth-grader Lillie Winn.

Coach Floyd's assistant coach for the season is Sheena Kendall, who works for the Towns County Rec Department and helps Coach Floyd after school.