

# Towns County Sports

Towns County's Leader In Sports

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## Indians enter State as 4-seed following two tourney losses

By Daysha Pandolph  
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**Warrenton** - The basketball season enters win-or-go-home territory for the Towns County Indians, who lost region tournament games to both Greene County and Lincoln County last week; however, the team sits at 18-7 entering State with five All-Region 8-A players.

On Thursday, Feb. 15, the Indians faced Greene County in the semifinal match of the region tournament, but came up 10 points short of the win.

After a close first half, Greene County pulled ahead during the third quarter. Heading into the final quarter, they were able to take a 14-point lead on a struggling a Towns County squad. While the Indians were able to diminish the lead to as low as 6 points at times, Greene County stayed ahead to claim a 62-52 victory.

"We didn't play as well as we would have liked on Thursday," commented coach Brian Hunnicut. "Driving over three hours and then sitting another three hours caught up with our legs, but Greene County (also) just played a great game (they) coached better than we did. Hats off to them."

Throughout the game, Connor Chastain led the Indians with 12 points and five rebounds. Scoring close behind him, Tanner Cunningham contributed 10 points and five rebounds.



First-team All-Region selection Tanner Cunningham returned to the lineup last week and scored 10 points vs. Greene County in the Region 8-AA semifinals at Warren County. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

Gage Rogers scored nine points with seven rebounds and four assists; Zane Floyd pitched in eight points, nine rebounds and four assists.

The next day, the Indians geared up for the third place region game against Lincoln County. Lincoln played well, leading 20-9 as the first quarter wrapped up. Although Towns County showed signs of a rally, they still trailed by a score of 38-25 moving into the second half.

Early in the third quarter,

the Indians tried to change their fate by forcing turnovers. They were able to close the scoring gap to only a point late in the fourth quarter, but their good fortune only lasted so long. Lincoln persisted for a 64-59 victory.

"We had a terrible first half," said coach Hunnicut. "We couldn't stop turning the ball over and we couldn't throw it in the ocean; however, I knew the boys would fight back, and they did.

"They made a valiant effort in the second half, and we were on the wrong side of some close calls by the officials," he said. "We lost the foul count by nearly double, and you are not going to win many ball games when that happens."

Floyd led in scoring with 17 points, 13 rebounds and three assists. Kade McConnell pitched in 15 points and three assists, Chastain scored nine points and four rebounds and Rogers contributed eight

points, seven rebounds and three assists.

"It was a tough region tournament for us," shared Hunnicut, "but I am extremely proud of the effort by our boys. They never quit and they keep fighting adversity."

"It was not the way we wanted to finish the tournament, but they have had a heck of a season."

Also having a heck of a season were the coaches themselves, who helped lead

the Indians to all of their accomplishments. The Towns County boys' coach won the Region 8 Coach of the Year award for this season.

Many players also received honors last week, such as Tanner Cunningham, who was voted to the First Team All Region. Gage Rogers was voted to the Second Team All Region, and Conner Chastain and Kade McConnell were both selected to the All Region Honorable Mention Team.

Zane Floyd also finished his high school basketball career with a bang by getting voted the Region Player of the Year for the second consecutive season.

The recipients for the awards are chosen by the Region 8-A coaches, and the coaches can not vote for players on their own teams.

"The fact that other region coaches voted for our boys shows the respect that they have earned around the league," said coach Hunnicut.

"I am so proud of the accomplishments of these young men. I am happy that other coaches recognized the type of ball players that they are."

"I am most proud of the type of young men that they are on the court and in the community. It has been a blessing from God to have gotten to coach them for three years; I want to keep coaching them for a little longer though. Hopefully, we can go down to Twiggs County at 6 p.m. on Wednesday and get a victory."

## Lady Indians punch ticket to State with 44-32 victory over Aquinas

By Daysha Pandolph  
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The Towns County Lady Indians basketball team secured the No. 4 seed in the state playoffs last week after defeating Aquinas 44-32, although they did go on to lose to both Lake Oconee Academy and Greene County afterwards.

On Tuesday, Feb. 13, the girls got off to a slow start against Aquinas, but were able to score 28 of their 44 points during the second half.

The determination of players such as Emma Lallement, who scored 14 points, Breelan Sieveking, who scored 10 points, Ansleigh Hardin, who scored nine points and Kaleigh Beaver, who scored seven points, allowed the team to walk away with a 12-point victory against the region opponent.

"(The game) was a must-win in order to make the state playoffs," commented coach Shea Taylor, who is determined to extend the Lady Indians' basketball season as far as he can.

The following Thursday, Feb. 15, Towns County faced an unfortunate loss of 55-29 to Lake Oconee Academy, despite a close first half.

Coach Taylor shared that the Lady Indians tried to keep Lake Oconee's best player, Georgia Bosart, in check, but were unable to keep her down. During the first half, they held Bosart to only seven points, but were down 21-16 at halftime.

During the second half, Bosart scored 25 points, which solidified the Towns County loss.

While they were unable to match the intensity of Lake Oconee Academy's players, the Lady Indians did put forth their best effort. Sieveking led in scoring with 12 points.

Behind her, Beaver contributed eight, Lallement con-



Emma Lallement scored 14 points during Towns County's win over Aquinas at Washington-Wilkes. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

tributed five and Laura Mauldin and Draven Kirkland each contributed a basket.

The next day, Feb. 16, the Lady Indians suffered another loss, this time to Greene County. The team got behind by 10 points early in the game, but were able to take the lead by halftime. Greene County managed to tie the scoreboard during the fourth quarter at 37-37, and then went on to defeat Towns County by 57-46.

"Defensive rotations were slow at times and they hurt us on the boards," said coach Taylor. "We had our opportunities to win and got some good looks, but we didn't shoot well all weekend."

Beaver led in scoring with 16 points, followed by Sieveking with 14, Mauldin with eight, Hardin with five and Lallement with three.

Following the loss, the Lady Indians will travel to Johnson County High School on Tuesday, Feb. 20, as the #4 seed in the state playoff bracket.

"Starting now, it is survive and advance," commented coach Taylor. "I'm not ready for this season to end and I know this team isn't either. We are going to give Johnson County everything we have on Tuesday and keep this season going."



Coach Shea Taylor and the Lady Indians during the win over Aquinas. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

## Wrestling: Mason Deal fifth at State

By Daysha Pandolph  
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The Towns County wrestling team finished their season strong at the GHSA State Championships last Feb. 15-17. The team took two wrestlers, Mason Deal and Jack Stowers, to the event at the Macon Centreplex.

Both boys wrestled well, just barely missing the season goals they had set. Deal finished fifth at 138 lbs and Stowers finished 2-2. Coach Clay Livingston explained that his second loss came in the final seconds of a "blood round," in which the wrestler must win to place top six and stand on the podium.

While Stowers did not finish as victoriously as he had hoped, Livingston still expects great things from him in the years to come.

"Jack has two more years to earn his way up to the podium," said Livingston.

For Deal, however, his high school wrestling career has come to a close.

He battled hard at his final



Mason Deal (second from left) was fifth at the State Championship.

tournament, pinning the fourth place finisher early on, but lost to the eventual champion in the semifinal round, which went into overtime.

"Mason's weight class is probably the deepest in Class A," said Livingston. "We could've wrestled that 12-man bracket 10 times and the results would've been different each time."

Despite the boys coming up short, Livingston couldn't be prouder of their effort this year.

"Both of them competed hard and won and lost graciously and with class," he said.

"I had more than one coach and competing wrestler brag on them. We are excited to have our wrestlers have such a good showing at the state tournament and have a state placer."

"It was a great season with great improvement by all of our kids. We will miss our two seniors, Mason (Deal) and Stone (Chauncey), but look forward to next year and what we have coming back and coming up from the middle school," he commented with thanks to everyone who supported the Towns County Wrestling Program this year.