

sports

BRIEFS

Want to watch Gaffney over the holidays?

The Gaffney High basketball team will be in action Friday and Saturday at the Greer FCA Christmas Classic at Greer High School.

Here are directions for anyone interested in attending the tournament: Take I-85 South towards Greenville and get off at Exit 66 onto U.S. Highway 29 towards Lymam. Stay on Highway 29 for approximately 4 miles. You will make a slight right on Gap Creek Road and will follow the road through several traffic lights. Gap Creek Road will lead you directly to Greer High School.

Tickets are \$5. Teams involved in the holiday tournament include Eastside, Greenwood, Greer, Riverside, Southside, Spartanburg Christian Academy, and Traveler's Rest.

Bowls giving players game systems

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — While their schools are making millions of dollars off their appearance in the Bowl Championship Series title game, each of the players from Ohio State and LSU will at least walk away with one of the hottest gifts this holiday season.

The Buckeyes and Tigers will receive a Nintendo Wii video-game system in addition to several other gifts for participating in the game on Jan. 7 in New Orleans.

Most stores have sold out of the Wii, a game which allows people in their living rooms to participate in video sporting events. A wave of the controller is represented on the screen as the swing of a bat or a golf club or a tennis racket.

The bowls presenting the Wii had to work hard to reserve enough of the games.

"It was not easy," said Mark Neville, a spokesman for the Holiday Bowl in San Diego that also is giving the Wii. The Alamo Bowl in San Antonio is the other bowl with the Wii in its gift package.

Along with the video-game console, each of the Ohio State Buckeyes and LSU Tigers will get four Wii games, a baseball cap, a watch and a fleece pullover.

According to NCAA guidelines dealing with amateurism, a bowl can spend up to \$500 per team member. Each school can also give merchandise worth up to \$350 per player.

"We try to get a feel for what kids like to have," said Mike Schulze, spokesman for the Outback Bowl in Tampa, Fla., which is giving a Sony digital camera, a custom ring and a watch.

As is the case in most homes, electronic gadgets are extremely popular.

The participants in the Rose Bowl, Illinois and USC, will receive a Sony Bravia home-theater system. The Sugar Bowl is giving the players from Hawaii and Georgia a Sony digital camcorder.

The Capital One and Champs Sports bowls, both played in Orlando, Fla., are allowing the players themselves to get what they want. Each player will receive a \$400 Best Buy gift card, and they are then allowed to go on their personal shopping spree while the store is closed to customers.

Each Ohio State player also receives six free tickets to the game, which cannot be resold for profit.

Brady gives advice to Giants' coach

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP) — Tom Brady looked into the TV cameras, smiled and gave some advice to the coach whose defense leads the NFL in throwing quarterbacks to the ground.

As a matter of self-preservation, Brady would rather not see Osi Umenyiora, Michael Strahan and Justin Tuck charging at him. Besides, the Giants might as well rest their top players because they're locked into their first-round playoff game anyway.

So Brady stood at his locker and delivered his message: "Coach Coughlin, if you're listening, definitely rest those guys."

The answer will come Saturday night when the New England Patriots can become the first team to finish a regular season 16-0 when they play New York at the Meadowlands.

Hot shooting propels Indians

By SCOTT POWELL
Ledger Sports Writer
spowell@gaffneylegger.com

A torrid shooting night allowed Gaffney to beat Riverside 95-66 Thursday in the opening round of the Greer FCA Christmas Classic.

Josh Corry scored 23 points and Jazz Palmer had 18 points. They were among five Gaffney players that scored in double figures.

David Dewberry scored 14 points. Jeff Brown added 11 points and Emison Hughes had 10.

Clinging to a 33-30 lead with 2:42 left, Gaffney turned up the pressure on defense and played unselfish on offense to take a 42-35 halftime lead.

Both teams were hot from the perimeter in the first half.

Gaffney connected on seven 3-

pointers while Riverside hit five from beyond the arc.

"This is the best we have shot the ball this year," Gaffney boys basketball coach Mark Huff said. "Riverside shot the ball well, too. I had talked to coaches from several teams and knew going into the game that Riverside had some really good outside shooters."

Riverside's Taylor Payne and Justin Madden did much of the damage from long range.

Payne paced the Warriors with 18 points. Madden had 13 points. Cameron Powell added 10 points.

Gaffney countered with a balanced scoring attack and pressure defense to pull away from Riverside.

Josh Corry hit a 3-pointer to give Gaffney a 58-43 lead with 1:10 left in the third quarter. Payne and Madden

hit three pointers to end the period with their team trailing, 65-51.

Riverside pulled to 71-60 with 4:37 left in the fourth quarter. The Warriors could not pull any closer the rest of the game.

"I think our depth wore them down in the second half. We are fortunate to have good depth that allows us to play 11 players in every game," Huff said. "We did a good job of spreading the ball around and were able to get a lot of open shots."

Gaffney took advantage of turnovers and sloppy ballhandling by Riverside to extend their lead to as many as 29 points in the game's final moments.

Robert Butler teamed with Hughes on a give and go for a transition basket late in the fourth quarter. It was one of several fast breaks that high-

lighted the unselfish play of Gaffney players against Riverside.

"We had a pretty good practice Wednesday before the tournament," Huff said. "I have been coaching for 27 years, and I have never told a player to not shoot the ball. If there is an open shot, I expect a player to take it. I hope we can keep it up for the rest of the tournament."

Gaffney (9-0) will play Greer today at 7 p.m. in the second round of the Greer Christmas Classic.

Greer beat Spartanburg Christian Academy 72-62 in the nightcap of Thursday's action.

Each team will play at least three games.

The winner of the Gaffney-Greer game will advance to the championship game Saturday at 7 p.m. The loser will play at 5:30 p.m.



Lady Indian defenders harass a Gaston Day ball handler during Thursday's semifinal game in the Lady Hilltopper Tournament in Rutherfordton, N.C. Gaffney was able to pull out the win, 38-35.

Lady Indians advance

Gaffney survives late flurry by Gaston Day; move on to Lady Hilltoppers Classic title game

By JOE L. HUGHES II
Ledger Sports Writer
joe@gaffneylegger.com

Gaffney girls head coach Stacey Parris came into this week's Lady Hilltoppers Classic in Rutherfordton, N.C. believing her team had what it took to win in spite of their youth at several key positions.

After two consecutive hard fought victories on their resume at the tournament, it can definitely be stated that the coach was right.

A night after claiming an overtime victory over cross border rival Shelby in the first round Wednesday, the Lady Indians were able to escape with a 38-35 win against Gaston Day to advance to Friday's title game.

"We are definitely glad to be in the championship game," Parris said. "We came into the tournament a little nicked up, but we have fought through it and have wound up in a

great position."

The first half saw Gaffney dominate play, using defense and aggressive play on the boards to take an 7-point lead.

The Lady Indians, however, could not put away their opponents from the Tar Heel State though, as Gaston Day's size advantage and sharp shooting from the field helped them stay in the contest.

"We knew coming in that their point guard and center were big parts of their offense," Parris said. "That is why we went in at halftime to make adjustments that we hoped would slow them down."

Those adjustments were just what the doctor ordered for the Lady Indians, who came out of the locker room using a press defense that suffocated Gaston Day and forced them into several turnovers.

"We tried to put pressure on them and give ourselves more opportuni-

ties on the offensive end," Parris said.

The momentum on the defensive end turned out to have an impact on the scoreboard with Gaffney once taking a 13-point advantage midway through the third quarter.

Gaston Day would put together one last flurry before things were said and done, however, using Lady Indian fouls and mistakes to pull to within a point of taking the lead.

But a ball control offense helped erase some of those mistakes, helping Gaffney pull out the win.

"We are still a young team, and should be expected to make mistakes," Parris said. "Fortunately for us these mistakes are fixable."

The Lady Indians will face either Lexington or Boiling Springs in today's final. Tipoff is slated for 6:30 p.m.

"To win, we must be patient and take care of the ball," Parris said. "This team will be ready to play."

Summerville's Green among football's finest on All-State team

■ No Gaffney players appear on this year's list

By PETE IACOBELLI
AP Sports Writer

COLUMBIA (AP) — A.J. Green couldn't have imagined the stellar career he would have when he first came out for the Summerville High School varsity team. Four years later, Green is ready for even greater things in the game he loves.

The Green Wave's star receiver heads up The Associated Press' 2007 all-state team. He has earned the honor in each of his four seasons at Summerville's tradition-rich program, and did not coast into selection in his final season.

Green caught 87 passes this season for 1,517 yards and 24 touchdowns. He leaves the state — Green's verbally pledged to Georgia — with nearly 5,400 yards receiving.

"I am ready to take my game to the next level," Green said recently, "and I plan to keep working hard. There is a lot I still have to learn, but I have enjoyed the competition and look forward to the future."

"I love the game," he says, "and hope it takes me a long way."

Green's coach thinks it will.

Coach John McKissick, 81, has seen untold amounts of talent, including NFL players in Keith and Stanford Jennings, since first coaching the Green Wave in 1952.

Green, McKissick says, "is the best all-around athlete that I have ever coached. He'll be playing on Sunday one day."

Green may not be the only one from this group.

DaQuan Bowers of Bamberg-Ehrhardt heads up the all-state defense. Bowers, who has committed to Clemson, had 14 tackles for loss and also rushed for more than 1,200 yards this season.

Joining Green as all-state receivers were Blythewood's Maquan Jones and Hartsville's Jordan Lyles. Jones had 71 catches while Lyles had 81 this season.

Jones' Blythewood teammate and quarterback, Richard Mounce, also was named to the team. Mounce won South Carolina's "Mr. Football" award in leading his team to a second-straight undefeated season. Blythewood was banned from the state playoffs, however, for violating rules.

The running backs are Andre Ellington of Berkeley and Johnathan Holmes of Carvers Bay. Ellington rushed for 1,820 yards and 24 TDs this season. Holmes had 2,129 yards and 31 touchdowns to lead his school to the Class A championship game.

Abbeville's Toquavius Gilchrist is the team's all-purpose player, rushing for 882 yards and making 38 tackles.

● See ALL STATE, Page 12A