

# sports

## BRIEFS

### Softball team has spots open

The CAROLINA THUNDER CATS girls' fastpitch organization has openings for the following positions for the 2008 season: 14U pitcher, 16U pitcher and outfielder. Contact Donnie Moore at 864 505-1588 or Dan Hughes 864 706-0810.

### Knights of Columbus to sponsor FT contest

All boys and girls ages 10 to 14 are invited to participate in the local level of competition for the 2008 Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship. The local competition will be held Saturday, Jan. 26 at 10 a.m. at Limestone Central Elementary School on Pacolet Hwy. in Gaffney.

The Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship is sponsored annually, with winners progressing through local, district, and state competitions. International champions are announced by the K of C international headquarters based on scores from the state-level competitions. Boys and girls 10 to 14 years old are eligible to participate and will compete in their respective age divisions. Last year more than 179,000 sharpshooters participated in over 3,000 local competitions.

### Tar Heels nip Clemson in OT

No. 1 North Carolina passed its first true test — barely.

Wayne Ellington's 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left in overtime lifted the top-ranked Tar Heels to a 90-88 victory over 19th-ranked Clemson on Sunday night.

After weeks of routing nonconference competition — they had won their previous four games by an average of 33 points, North Carolina (15-0) found itself locked in a classic to start the Atlantic Coast Conference season and came out on top.

"It shows our maturity, it shows we can stick it out and get the win when we have to," Ellington said.

Ellington was the main reason that the Tar Heels managed to do that as he scored a career-high 36 points.

None were bigger than his final 3-pointer from the left side of the key after taking a pass from Ty Lawson on North Carolina's final possession.

Right from the moment it rolled off Ellington's fingertips, he knew the Tar Heels would head home happy and with the No. 1 ranking intact.

### Giants top Tampa Bay

The New York Giants' rousing road show powered through Tampa Bay. Now it heads to the only place where it flopped: Dallas.

The Giants moved to 8-1 away from home with a dominating 24-14 NFC-wild-card playoff victory over Tampa Bay on Sunday. New York has won every road game since falling in its season opener against the Cowboys, and it gets a chance to diminish that blemish in a much bigger matchup next Sunday, with the winner going to the conference title game.

"We love playing there, we love going down to Dallas," Eli Manning said. "There are no secrets."

As for concerns the Giants (11-6) left too much of themselves on the field in futilely trying to stop New England's perfect season on Dec. 29, well, forget it. After a lackluster first quarter, New York bullied the NFC South champions, who lost three of their last four regular-season games, including the final two when coach Jon Gruden rested many starters.

### Chargers oust Titans 17-6

Well, wouldn't you know it, the San Diego Chargers can win in the playoffs.

Thirteen long years after their last postseason victory, the Chargers finally came to life late in the second half Sunday to beat the Tennessee Titans 17-6 in an AFC wild-card game.

A gloomy, rainy afternoon never looked so good in normally sunny San Diego. Star running back LaDainian Tomlinson was back to 42 yards, but got to celebrate the first playoff victory in three tries in his brilliant seven-year career.

## Lady Indians earn first region victory

By LARRY HILLIARD  
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Breanna Watkins and Holly Wolff made sure the Gaffney Lady Indians got their first region win on

Friday.

After Boiling Springs took the lead in the second half, Watkins had five points and Wolff had two 3s to fuel an 11-2 run to help the Lady Indians post a 54-42 victory.

The spurt extended the Lady

Indians' lead to 45-37.

Keisha Leach paced the Lady Indians with 21 points. Watkins had 14 points and Wolff added eight.

Lanie Whitaker led the Lady Bulldogs with 23 points.

The Lady Bulldogs closed within

three late in the fourth quarter but Watkins answered with a 3-pointer to seal the win.

Gaffney improves to 1-3 in the region and 5-6 overall.

The Lady Indians travel to Mauldin on Tuesday.



Ledger photo by LARRY HILLIARD

Boiling Springs Chris Hargrove tries to stop Gaffney's Jeff Brown from driving to the basket on Friday. Gaffney topped the Bulldogs, 61-48, to improve to 3-1 in the region.

## Gaffney blasts Bulldogs

By LARRY HILLIARD  
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After a difficult loss to Spartanburg on Tuesday, the Gaffney Indians figured out how to play defense in a 61-48 victory over Boiling Springs.

The Indians held Boiling Springs to just 36 percent shooting from the field, including 3 of 14 from 3-point range.

The win snaps a 2-game losing streak for the Indians, who improve to 11-2 overall and 3-1 in region play.

"We definitely spent a lot of time (after the Spartanburg loss) on defense," Gaffney coach Mark Huff said. "We had given up 78, 75 and 78 points, so we spent an hour and 45 minutes on defensive stuff. I thought our guys got after it on the defensive end because Boiling Springs can shoot the ball."

Not on Friday. The Bulldogs missed their first six shots from the floor, helping Gaffney jump to an early 9-0 lead. Boiling Springs went on a spurt to trail 13-9 heading into the second quarter.

The Bulldogs cut a six-point halftime deficit to 27-25 on a Charles Burgess basket early in the third quarter. But Josh Corry, who struggled in the loss to Spartanburg, regained his shooting form on a layup and two consecutive 3s to stretch the Indians' lead to 36-27. Corry finished with 19 points for the game.

The Indians stretched their lead to 15 on David Dewberry's hoop near the end of the third quarter.

The Bulldogs never seriously threatened in the fourth quarter.

Johnny Woods provided another spark off the bench for the Indians. Woods, who scored 11 points, showed his hustle in the second quarter by blocking a shot on one end and racing downcourt for a layup.

Gaffney, which was beaten on the boards against Spartanburg, outrebounded the Bulldogs, 29-24.

The Indians also took care of the basketball, committing only 11 turnovers.

"It's a big win," Huff said. "We didn't want to lose two in a row at home in the region."

Dylan Thompson had 17 to lead the Bulldogs, who fall to 0-4 in the region.

Gaffney travels to Mauldin on Tuesday.

## Wildcats take their lumps

By LARRY HILLIARD  
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The new year hasn't started out to Blacksburg boys basketball coach Travis Miller's liking.

The Wildcats dropped to 0-5 in the region following weekend losses to Broome and Southside.

Top-ranked Southside opened up a 64-18 halftime lead en route to a 91-42 victory on Saturday. The Wildcats were more competitive in an 86-60 loss Friday against Broome.

Blacksburg went on a 13-0 run to take the lead in the second quarter. Rashad Earls, Dante Brown and Ken

Littlejohn hit 3s to spark the surge.

But the Centurions answered with a 22-10 run for a 45-37 lead at halftime. Stephen Burgess hit three straight 3s to extend the Centurions' lead to 65-41 in the third quarter.

Burgess had seven 3s for the game. He finished with a game-high 23 points.

Littlejohn paced the Wildcats with 18 points.

Against Southside, Miller said the Wildcats were simply overmatched.

"Southside is just a much better team," Miller said. "They have experience. They lost in the state final last year and they'll likely be back this season."

Littlejohn had 14 points to lead the Wildcats.

Despite the lopsided score, Elmore, Brown and Earls stood out against Southside.

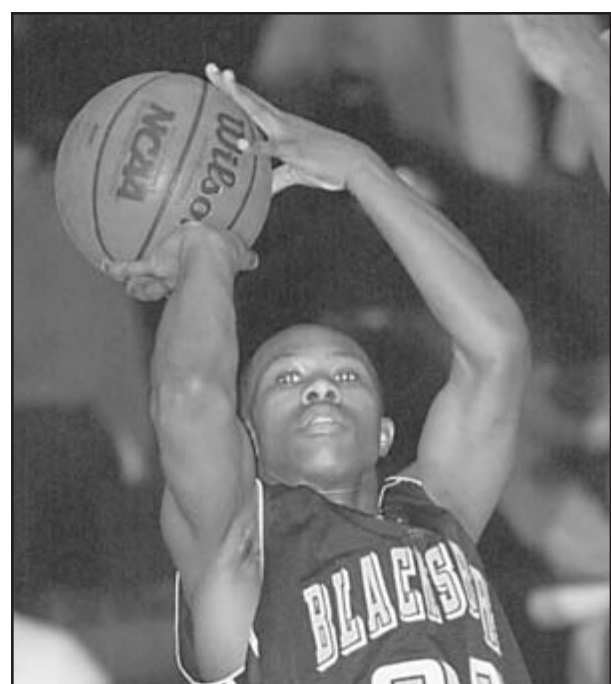
"Those players gave it everything they had," he said.

The Wildcats will host Chesnee on Friday.

Miller said the Wildcats will use the layoff to regroup, especially defensively.

"The last two games our defense was nonexistent," Miller said.

In girls' action, the Lady Wildcats remained winless in the region with a 77-18 loss to Broome. Catherine Tate led Blacksburg with seven points. Brittany Babb hauled down 12 rebounds for the Lady Wildcats.



Ken Littlejohn had 18 points against Broome and scored 14 in a loss to Southside on Saturday.

## Balanced scoring attack propels Lady Saints to victory

By LARRY HILLIARD  
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Shelly Robinson, Essence Greer and Addie Graves were too much for Coker on Saturday.

Robinson, Greer and Graves each

scored 13 points while Lindsey Kyle and Ariel Lyons also scored in double figures to lead the Limestone Lady Saints to an 82-71 win over Coker.

Limestone improves to 7-6 overall and 2-1 in conference play.

The Lady Saints never trailed in

the game after jumping to an early lead. Limestone led 36-20 at halftime.

Lyons hauled down 10 rebounds.

In men's action, Lukas Varga scored 22 points off the bench to help Coker to an 83-53 win.

Mason Ambler, Stevie Evans and

Josh Poston each scored 10 points for the Cobras, who improve to 2-2 in conference play.

Marques Williams had 19 points and Andrea Franklin added 11 points to pace the Saints, who fall to 2-6 overall and 0-3 in conference play.