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Lady Tigers beat Lady Indians 8-1;

On Deck May 4

***Trenton vs. Fort Meade at Trenton and
Chiefland vs. Frostproof at Frostproof***



The Lady Tigers pose with their trophy Friday night.



The Lady Indians pose with their trophy Friday night.

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Story and Photos By Jeff M. Hardison © April 29, 2017 at 9:37 a.m.

CHIEFLAND -- The Trenton High School Lady Tigers Varsity Softball Team beat the Chiefland High School Lady Tigers Varsity Softball Team by a score of 8-1 on Friday night (April 28).

This means the Lady Tigers are the 2017 Florida High School Athletic Association District 7 Softball Champions.

The Lady Indians are the FHSAA District 7 Softball Reserve Champions and they remain in the playoffs for what could be the team's fourth consecutive Florida High School Athletic Association Class 1A State Championship.

The Lady Indians are the defending champions, having earned the title for the past three consecutive years.

There are two games on May 4 -- one in Trenton and one in Frostproof.

The Fort Meade varsity softball team has an away playoff game at Trenton on Thursday, May 4 at 7 p.m.

The Frostproof varsity softball team has a home playoff game where Chiefland Lady Indians will be visiting that home team there on Thursday, May 4, at 7 p.m.

Frostproof and Fort Meade played against each other in that District 8 championship round.

To reach this point where Trenton faces Fort Meade in Trenton, and Chiefland plays against Frostproof in Frostproof, the Gilchrist and Levy County teams went seven innings in Chiefland on Friday night.



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Chiefland's Kensley Durrance sends a fast-pitch softball through the air so quickly that it appears to become an oblong light green or yellow blur in this one-sixtieth of one-second in time Friday night.



Lady Tiger Jenny Lynn Johnson looks back as Lady Indian Emily Hallman prepares to catch the softball. The crowd seen along the third base line on the other side of the fence is similar all the way around the ballpark that night. The game attracted a lot of fans from near and far.

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The softball flies fair and true from a Lady Tiger's effort.



At the top of the batting order for the Lady Indians, Sydney Parks prepares for a pitch.

The starting Lady Tigers on Friday night were Josie NesSmith (#13); Jenny Lynn Johnson (#3); Hallie Bryant (#2); Kyndall Williams (#12); Lillian Wilkerson (#1); Bryn Thomas (#4); Jaycee Thomas (#11); Ashley Biddle (#9); Adrian Ingram (#7); and eighth-grade pitcher Darian Ingram (#6). Substitute players for the Lady Tigers on Friday night were Regan Couch (#8); Grace Guthrie (#10); Savannah Capps (#33);

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Zkyah Frazier (#21) and Taniah Bowers (#32).

The Head Coach for the Lady Tigers is Todd Bryant. The assistant coaches for the Lady Tigers are Clint Anderson and Ben Jacqmein.

The starting Lady Indians on Friday night were Sydney Parks (#11), Emily Hallman (#14), Lauren Parker (#3), Takiya London (#4), Macie Thomas (#15), Samantha Rolfe (#9), Erika Gilliam (#33), Aleaha Rhoomes (#1), Taylor Simpson (#19), and pitcher Kensley Durrance (#20). The substitute players were Tristan Drummond (#2), Brittany Tindall (#7), Karlie Meeks (#10), Raven Sheppard (#12), Simone White (#22), Jocelyn McGee (#17), and Chrystian Wetherington (#71).

Head Softball Coach Wayne Weatherford is joined by Assistant Coach Jimmy Anderson and Assistant Coach Harland Stalvey. Lena Weatherford is the team's scorekeeper.

The visiting Lady Tigers opened the game with Johnson and Bryant crossing home plate with sets of singles bringing them around the bases. Chiefland's shortstop London tagged Trenton's Wilkerson to end the first inning.

Trenton led 2-0 at the end of the first. Trenton scored four runs in the third inning, bringing the total to 6-0.

Chiefland's London smacked a homerun after Trenton was credited with a double play in the fourth inning. That seemed to be the pinnacle for the home team's fans, but even with that big spark from London, the Lady Tiger defense outperformed the Lady Indian offense; and when the batting opportunities switched hands, the Lady Tiger offense outperformed the Lady Indian defense.

Trenton scored a run in the fifth inning and Trenton's Williams sent the softball speeding over the outfield fence for a homerun and wrapped up the offense of the night, making the score 8-1 Trenton.

There was no shortage of spectators Friday night. Fans from both counties, and beyond (including at least a couple of visiting grandmothers from Pinellas County), were lining the fences three to four rows deep. Many people stood through the whole game.

Trenton Head Coach Bryant shared his perspective immediately after the game, and indicated that one young player may have felt differently from the crowd size Friday night in contrast with the Tuesday night crowd.

"We played great tonight. (Pitcher) Darian (Ingram) was a little bit shaky to start. She had some eighth grade nerves going on," Coach Bryant said. "But she settled in. She was throwing strikes. She was pounding the zone. We made some adjustments from the last game – both hitting and pitching."

The coach said some outfielders were moved a bit and the catches seen by them showed an even stronger defense than they showed just two nights earlier on the same playing field when they trounced the Bell High School Lady Bulldogs.

Coach Bryant said there are four hitters on the team now that are already playing at a college level.

When asked if he sees the Lady Tigers as being the next Class 1A State Champions in FHSAA Softball, Coach Bryant said he has not seen the teams from "out west," but he sees the Trenton Lady Tigers as definitely being contenders.

The coach predicted having to play the Chiefland team again, and seeing the success from the Chiefland-based team, Bryant was not about to even call that victory.

"Let's be honest," Coach Bryant said. "When we meet up in two weeks, it's going to be another barn-burner. It's going to be a huge crowd. There is a lot of emotion – a lot of

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intensity, and Chiefland has done it three times.

“But this team (of Lady Tigers) believes in themselves,” Bryant continued. “They get along very well. They practice extremely hard.”

The coach said the players take 500 ground balls at one practice. The girls are dedicated to their school and to their teammates, and to the sport of softball.

Coach Weatherford said the Lady Indians are ready for the next phase.

“It was a tough game,” Weatherford said. “We had to practice hard. We probably weren’t prepared like we should have been. They had 10 hits. We had four.”

The coach said three errors by the Lady Indians led to their defense giving up a number of runs to the Lady Tigers.

“They took advantage of that,” Weatherford said. “They are quick. They’ve got a lot of speed.”

The coach said good teams do just as the visiting Lady Tigers did that night. They see an error and don’t let that opportunity slip by.

Coach Weatherford was quick to note his pride in the Lady Indians’ effort on Friday night.

“I’m real proud of our effort,” Coach Weatherford said. “I think we’ll be down south (at Historic Dodgertown in Vero Beach) for the final four. We’re going to fight to be there.”

If the games unfold so that Chiefland faces Trenton again in this trip to the East Coast of Florida, and the sojourn required for deciding the FHSAA Class 1A State Softball Champions, then Weatherford said the Lady Indians will be better prepared for that potential future game against the girls from Gilchrist County.