

Sports

December 2, 2020

Attendance rules puzzling

The state's limit of 25 spectators for sporting events has Bedford County high schools weighing their options

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

When it comes to the high school sports season, it seems that the more officials try to clarify COVID-19 rules and regulations the cloudier things become.

With less than three weeks until games are scheduled to begin, schools are scrambling to put into place their own set

of guidelines for players, spectators, game officials and others that are needed to have games that are somewhat near what was considered normal in years past.

The Virginia High School League's latest dictate on limiting spectators to just 25 per venue per game is especially perplexing. That number doesn't allow for

players in most sports to have both parents attend, not to mention grandparents and other relatives. It also doesn't allow cheerleaders or pep bands.

And what about attending away games? The VHSL has given the final say on those types of rulings to local school boards, athletic districts and health officials.

The window is closing fast and Bedford County athletic directors are puzzled by what the future could hold. But they are also trying their best to keep players playing.

Some have suggested live streaming

See RULES 3B

Swinging in the sun



Photo by Chris Morris

Trey Leslie of Forest gets in some time on the driving range before starting his round Saturday at London Downs.

Golfers get in post-holiday play at London Downs

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

The calendar may have said Nov. 28 but the thermometer recorded temperatures in the 60s and local golfers took advantage of the spring-like weather to work off some of their Thanksgiving

calories at London Downs Golf Club.

The course was packed Saturday as players tried to get in a few more rounds before winter's icy grasp tightened on Virginia.

Temperatures are expected to be more seasonal this week in the region.



Photo by Chris Morris

Geoff Albach of Huddleston warms up before practicing his putting.



Photo by Chris Morris

A golfer lines up her approach on the No. 6 hole Saturday at London Downs Golf Club.



Photo by Chris Morris

A player prepares to putt Saturday at London Downs Golf Club.

Christmas Classic 5K remains on track

There are some format changes due to COVID-19 rules for the 41st Peaks of Otter race on Saturday

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

Although the numbers are down a bit, the excitement level is high for the 41st Peaks of Otter Christmas Classic 5K, scheduled for Saturday.

Race director Josh Raney said 445 people have signed up as of Monday for the race and he expects more to come in throughout the week. Around 600 competed in last year's race.

"We're down this year, but we expected that," Raney said. "The first wave of 250 runners is full and there's about 130 in the second wave. Counting the virtual race and one-mile kids race, we have 445. But the weather is supposed to be good Saturday so we'll probably get more signups as the week continues."

The forecast is calling for mostly sunny skies and temperatures in the mid-40s when the first wave of the race begins at 8:30 a.m. Saturday. The start/finish line is on the pavilion side of the Bedford Baptist Church, 1516 Oakwood Street.

"The course follows what is known as the Bedford Loop," Raney said. "It's not as hard as last year's course. Last year's course was a lot harder. The record for this year's course is 15 minutes and 35 seconds and was set years ago."

Jedaiah Ruhl of New Hill, N.C. won last year's event with a time of 16:36. Lynchburg's Mary Catherine Newsaw was the first woman to cross the finish line, posting a 19:54. This year, teams can also participate for the Corporate Cup and Raney said big squads like CC Runners and Holy Name of Mary Runner has already signed up.

Like everything else since March, Raney said the event's format has changed from last year to comply with state COVID-19 mandates.

"Basically we have created two separate events which will all be combined in the finish line scoring by Riverside Runners," Raney said.

"The 5K event has two separate starts of 250. Wave 1 is at 8:30 a.m. and Wave 2 is 9:45 a.m. Each Wave will have separate starts for corrals of 25 runners starting approximately one minute apart. Waves are assigned in order of registration."

Other changes are:

* The Youth 1 mile will have a new start time of 10 a.m.

* All results will be ranked on "chip" time and combined from both WAVES.

* Participants are asked to wear a mask when not participating.

* Participants are asked to practice social distancing before and after the event (especially when staging themselves for our start).

* Participants are asked to warm up and warm down away from our start / finish line.

"Unfortunately, we will not be able to hold our post race ceremony but awards will be available for pick up on a later date," Raney said.

Sponsors for this year's event include Destination Bedford Welcome Center and Beacon Credit Union. Visit www.christmasclassic5K.com for more information or to sign up.

Short takes

Liberty returns to top 25 polls – Following the program's first shutout since 2016, Liberty has moved back into the top 25 rankings at No. 25 in the Associated Press and Amway Coaches polls.

It's the fourth week during the 2020 season Liberty has been ranked in either FBS top 25 poll.

The highest Liberty has been ranked during the 2020 season is No. 21 in the Associated Press poll and No. 2 in the Amway Coaches poll on Nov. 15.

The Flames will have their first-ever FBS top-25 showdown in program history when Liberty heads to Conway, S.C., to face off against former Big South rival Coastal Carolina on Saturday.

The Chanticleers, who recently clinched the Sun Belt East Division championship, are currently ranked No. 14 in both national rankings.

Flames McGhee named ASUN player of week – Liberty's Darius McGhee has been named the ASUN player of the week.

In the first week of the season, McGhee was averaging 17.3 points, 5.3 rebounds and 2.3 assists per game. The junior was exceptional throughout Liberty's first four games to begin the season, making the Space Coast Challenge All-Tournament Team, as well as the Hall of Fame Classic All-Tournament Team.

McGhee set career-high scoring marks in the first two games of the season in the Space Coast Challenge. Against Purdue, McGhee scored 21 points to go along with six rebounds in the first game of the season and to close out the tournament, McGhee scored a career-high 23 points, shooting 66 percent from the field.

The Flames face St. Francis (Pa.) on Thursday at the new Liberty Arena. Tipoff is set for 7 p.m.

UVa-Boston College game time set – Virginia returns home on Saturday when the Cavaliers host Boston College. Kickoff is 3:30 p.m.

This is just the seventh meeting between BC and UVA and the fifth in ACC play. The Eagles own a 6-0 edge in the series, including a 4-0 mark since joining the ACC.

UVa-William & Mary game postponed – Virginia's home men's basketball contest against William & Mary on Saturday, Dec. 12 at John Paul Jones Arena has been postponed following a positive COVID-19 test within the Tribe's Tier 1 Personnel.

No make up date has been announced.

UVa No. 15, Hokies No. 16 in top 25 basketball poll – Following its 3-0 start to the season and a ranked win on its resume, the Virginia Tech men's basketball team was ranked No. 16 in the latest AP Top 25 poll.

Tech enters the poll for the first time in two years, finishing No. 16 in the final poll after its Sweet 16 run in the 2019 NCAA Tournament. The highest the Hokies climbed during that historic season was No. 9 in the month of January.

Previous No. 4-ranked Virginia dropped 11 spots in the poll to No. 15, one spot ahead of its state rival.

The Cavaliers are 1-1 after a stunning loss to San Francisco.

The Hokies will be back in action on Thursday at home, taking on VMI (1-1) at 8 p.m.

Hokies' Aluma wins weekly ACC honors – After leading Virginia Tech men's basketball to three wins during

the first week of college basketball, Keve Aluma earned ACC Player of the Week.

The redshirt junior averaged 18 points, five rebounds, 1.3 blocks and one assist per game last week, guiding the Hokies (3-0) to three victories and a ranked win. His 18 points and 1.3 blocks a game are team highs.

Aluma becomes the first Hokie to earn the honor since Nickeil Alexander-Walker on Feb. 4, 2019.

Ravens-Steelers moved to Wednesday afternoon – The Baltimore-Pittsburgh game has been moved again.

Originally scheduled for Thanksgiving night, the game was moved to Sunday, Nov. 29, after several Ravens players tested positive for COVID-19.

Next the game was moved to Tuesday, Nov. 1. Now it has been rescheduled for Wednesday at 3:40 p.m. on NBC.

The early kickoff is so NBC can air "Christmas in Rockefeller Center" later that night.

Because of the juggling of the days, the Week 13 Washington Football Team at Pittsburgh game, originally scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 6, will be moved to Monday, Dec. 7 at 5 p.m.

Also, the Week 13 Dallas at Baltimore game, originally scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 3, will be moved to Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 8:05 p.m.

Rockbridge County High suspends winter sports – Rockbridge County High School has suspended all athletic activity because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the Twitter account of the school's athletic department: "All workouts, practices, tryouts are put on hold until further notice. We hopefully will have more information in the coming days on when and if we can move forward with winter sports."

In addition, Fluvanna County High canceled its wrestling season Monday.

LaJoie joins Spire team for 2021 NASCAR season – Corey LaJoie will drive the No. 7 Chevrolet for Spire Motorsports in a multi-year agreement for the 2021 NASCAR Cup Series season, the driver announced on his "Sunday Money" podcast on Monday.

Previously, LaJoie competed in two full-time seasons driving the No. 32 Ford for Go Fas Racing. On Aug. 21, LaJoie announced he would not return to the organization, and in October, Go Fas Racing revealed it would scale back to a part-time operation next season.

Spire Motorsports agreed to purchase assets from Leavine Family Racing for the No. 7 team and will move into the former organization's old shop. Spire will announce the driver of their second full-time entry, the No. 77 Chevrolet, at a later date.

Allmendinger returning to Kaulig team – After contributing to Kaulig Racing's best season in the NASCAR Xfinity Series, AJ Allmendinger will return to the team in 2021 for a to-be-determined number of races.

Allmendinger, who also serves as a motorsports analyst for NBC Sports, made the announcement Sunday on social media.

"When it comes to 2021, I can tell you this – I will be back at Kaulig Racing," he said in a video. "How many races? I don't know yet. We are working together on my schedule and how many races will fit into my schedule next year, and Kaulig Racing as well."

"I promise you, when that comes out, we'll deliver that to you, so everybody knows what racetracks we'll be at."

Wrestling notes

Nininger piles up wins at tourneys

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

Noah Nininger, an 8th grader at Staunton River Middle School, may be small in stature but he's looming large in national wrestling circles.

Nininger won the 100-pound class of the Super 32 tournament in Myrtle Beach, S.C. in late October, then took second in the World of Wrestling (WOW) meet in Tulsa, Okla., a few weeks later in the 95-pound class.

Both competitions are among the most prestigious preseason tournaments in the country.

Scott Fike, Nininger's coach and skipper of the Golden Eagles' renown wrestling programs, said the youngster is among the best grapplers in the country for his age.

"He's actually No. 1 in the country in the national middle school age division," Fike said. "Noah's been competing on the national scene for years. He's done it all."

"He's a special kid and he puts in a lot of work. He's constantly competing."

Nininger's teammate Macon Ayers, another 8th grader, took fourth at the Super 32 tournament and went 4-2 at the WOW competition.

Having that kind of talent coming up makes Fike optimistic for the future of wrestling at Staunton River.

"Both of them have been wrestling since they were 4 years old, Fike said. "We have a really special group coming to Staunton River."



Submitted

Noah Nininger, an 8th grader at Staunton River Middle School, stands with his medal and trophy after taking 2nd in the World of Wrestling tournament last month in Tulsa, Okla.

JF wrestlers at 'The Bear'



(Above) Nicholas Kaufman tosses an opponent to the mat during "The Bear" national wrestling tournament Nov. 20-22 in Gatlinburg, Tenn. The local team, made up of mostly Jefferson Forest wrestlers, placed 10th out of 24 teams, winning three dual matches and losing 2. In individual matches, Kaufman went 4-2 and placed 4th in the 125-pound class. Kaine Morris (right) went 4-0 and was champion of the 167-pound class. Photos submitted.



Outdoor news



Photo by Steve Crist

Walker Morris bagged this 12-point deer on Nov. 24. The 15-year-old shot the deer with a 25.06-caliber rifle.

DWR warns wildlife are animals not pets

RICHMOND - The Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) wants to remind the public that if they encounter any wild animal acting tame or unafraid of humans, to please leave the animal alone.

Recently, several individuals have been injured by a white-tailed deer that had become accustomed to people after being held illegally in captivity.

Wild animals that lose their fear of humans can injure people or pets.

Wild animals are meant to be wild, not pets.

When wild animals are fed, held in captivity, or otherwise treated as pets, they become accustomed to people. This can lead to serious injuries to both people and domestic pets as the animal grows.

White-tailed deer natu-

rally become more aggressive during the fall breeding season, when they can cause serious and even life threatening injuries if held in captivity or provoked.

DWR asks anyone who sees an approachable or sick wild animal to please report it to the wildlife conflict help line at 1-855-571-9003, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Concerned citizens often pick up animals that they think are orphaned. Most "orphans" that good-intentioned citizens "rescue" every spring should have been left alone.

Wild animals rarely abandon their young, but they do leave them alone for long periods of time.

If a wild animal has been injured or truly orphaned, do not take matters into your own

hands.

You may locate a permitted wildlife rehabilitator by calling the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources' toll-free wildlife conflict helpline at 1-855-571-9003, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday or using the DWR website to locate a permitted wildlife rehabilitator in your area: dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/injured/rehabilitators/

It is illegal to raise any wild animal in captivity in Virginia.

Permitted wildlife rehabilitators are authorized to hold and care for injured or orphaned wildlife on a short term basis before releasing them back to the wild.

With even the best professional care possible, the survival rate of rehabilitated fawns and many

other animals is very low. The best advice for someone who wants to help wildlife is to keep it wild.

Once people interfere, we reduce the opportunity for animals to receive natural care and we increase the risk of harming our wildlife heritage.

For more information, please visit the following website about keeping deer wild: dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/deer/keeping-deer-wild/.



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Ricky Stanley of Big Island takes a turn during a Hare Scramble series race last season. Stanley won the 2020 championship of the Virginia Cross Country Series.

Dirt biker motors to title

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

Ricky Stanley can be considered an adrenaline junkie.

When the Big Island resident isn't climbing towers for a local broadband provider he's zooming through challenging motorcycle trails across the state.

The 31-year-old recently won the 2020 championship of the Virginia Cross Country Hare Scramble Series (VXCS).

In addition, he finished fourth in the Virginia Championship Hare Scramble Series (VCHSS). He said some "terrible bike problems" caused him to post some DNFs in a few races in that series.

Surprisingly, he accomplished these feats competing against riders much younger than him.

"Yeah, I go out there against the young bucks," he said. "It's a good healthy hobby. It gives you a reason to stay in shape."

The Hare Scramble series is an off-road competition that is somewhere between moto-cross and enduro racing.

Stanley said it's more technical than moto-cross and requires a great deal of endurance.

In Virginia, the season runs from March to October and traverses the state.

"We've had races in the Virginia Beach area and have gone down around Grundy and Clintwood, he said.

Stanley raced in six VXCS races last season and 10 races in VCHSS. He competes in the 30+ C Class.

He's only been competing in the series for a couple of years and admits he's "doing really well."

He's looking forward to the 2021 season to defend his title.



Ricky Stanley was doused with mud during one race last season. The Hare Scramble series is held on many courses across the state.



Ricky Stanley (right) prepares for the start of race last season.

Rules: From Page 1B

games, others are mulling allowing just seniors' parents to attend games and there's even the possibility of a total ban on spectators altogether.

"At this time, Bedford County Public Schools are looking into virtual options for all three county high schools," said Staunton River Athletic Director Josh Smallwood. "One is the NFHS Pixellot system that the VHSL uses for its state game and over 200 schools in Virginia have signed on to use."

The Pixellot system allows for spectators to live stream games from their home computers or any digital outlet that has the capability.

"It's a great network for our fans to subscribe to and even watch our teams when they travel, assuming our opponent is also using Pixellot."

Staunton River also faces another situation. Recently, school administrators within the Alleghany and Roanoke Health districts, which includes 13 high schools, agreed to determine whether their winter sports teams will compete based on the spread of the virus.

Since Staunton River plays in the Blue Ridge District, all of its opponents fall into those health districts.

With the high number of cases in those regions now, there would be no high school games of any sort.

The schools in those divisions are trying to come up a plan to play during the pandemic, but nothing has been determined for certain.

"I feel like I should put 'to be continued' at the end of every statement dealing with this," Smallwood said.

Seminole District teams Liberty and Jefferson Forest shouldn't be affected by those health district rulings, but they are dealing with their own issues. Jedd Zaring, Jefferson Forest athletic director, said the district is considering allowing no spectators into games.

"Obviously, the Governor's announcement mandating a maximum of 25 participants severely limits our ability to accommodate spectators," he said. "And with school cheer squads, pep bands and student spirit groups like our Hype Platoon considered part of the 25 number, there really won't be any available seating to speak of."

"Additionally, in an effort to give our athletes the best opportunity for a season, the Seminole District is recommending that no outside spectators be admitted this year.

"We are well aware of the hardship this puts on our parents, especially senior parents, so we are working hard on a plan to

"We hope that the community understands that we are doing the best we can during these unprecedented times."

Jedd Zaring
Jefferson Forest
Athletic Director

be able to live stream games so families have an option for watching their kids play. Our goal is to have a system operational by the time games start in late December.

"We are also looking at structuring our Senior Night ceremonies in a way that allows senior parents and families admittance into at least one game this winter season."

Lori Mattson, Liberty High athletic director, also said the school is working on a plan that will include the parents of seniors.

"Once we finish up tryouts with cheer we will know how many additional spectators we will be able to bring in," she said. "We will be using our home games to provide an opportunity for our senior families to get to see their child compete and cheer. We will be trying to solidify a plan as soon as those rosters are finalized."

Mattson said there is a Region 3C meeting this week and some more clarification may come from that.

But while some counties and districts are working toward having an abbreviated season for all high school sports, some across the state have scrapped the seasons. Roanoke's private schools are opted to forgo sports this season as have Richmond and Alexandria city schools. Last week, Williamsburg and James City schools announced they were cancelling the season.

Bath County schools have delayed winter sports seasons until Jan. 18.

"Hopefully the state will provide some clarification as we get closer to the start of the season," Mattson said.

No matter what happens, there is no option that is going to make 100 percent of the folks in Bedford County happy. But officials in the county and at the schools are trying to find the best option that is acceptable to the most people.

"These are difficult decisions with many unintended consequences," Zaring said. "We are cognizant of the fact that folks won't be happy with all of our actions, but as I said, our main priority is to do everything we can to get our kids' games played. We hope that the community understands that we are doing the best we can during these unprecedented times."

No more training wheels



With some help from his father Ryan, Peyton White, 7, took his first bicycle ride without training wheels Saturday in the parking lot at Jefferson Forest High School. Looking on were Peyton's mother, Jenny, and his sisters Kaley, 10 and Elle, 3. After taking a few solo laps without dad's help, Peyton got tangled with Kaley and they fell into a heap (below). Good thing they were wearing their helmets. (Photos by Chris Morris)



Sports

December 9, 2020

Christmas rush



Photo by Chris Morris

Lee Sandstead (middle) of Bedford donned his Santa Claus costume to participate in the 41st Peaks of Otter Christmas Classic 5K on Saturday. Sandstead was among several runners who traversed the course with their dogs.

Hundreds were dashing through the streets during the festive 41st Christmas Classic

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

More than 500 runners from across the area and of all ages turned out Saturday for the 41st Peaks of Otter Christmas Classic 5K.

The rain and wind that lashed the town a few hours before the race subsided and the competitors were greeted with mostly sunny skies and temperatures in the upper 40s, which helped increase the turnout.

But given the state of the world today because of the COVID-19 virus, it was a small miracle the race ever got underway, said director Josh Raney.

"We're just glad to be able to do it because for a while there we didn't know if we were going to be able to do it or just go virtual with it," Raney said. "We just tried to make it as normal as possible and everybody has done well with their social distancing, wearing masks. Lots of people told me this is the first event they've got to do in person."

David Angell of Blue Ridge was the overall winner with a time of 16:10 and Mary Catherine Nesaw of Lynchburg repeated as the top female finisher with a time of 19:34.

But most competitors Saturday were more interested in enjoying the race than where they finished. Many were dressed in holiday costumes, from Santa to elves and reindeer. Some brought along their dogs and others ran the course with babies in strollers.

Ages ranged from 85-year-old Bill Hammond of Lynchburg to 19-month-old Nolan Wallace, who was pushed along the course by his mother Ashley.

"I started doing it four years ago and I wanted to keep doing it," said Ashley, holding Nolan after the race. "This is his first year."

Longtime competitor Marion Childress, a 68-year-old from Vinton, was pleased with the changes to the race

See CLASSIC 2B



Photo by Chris Morris

Rustburg residents Traci Lipscomb (left) and Tab Robertson kick toward the finish line Saturday during the Christmas Classic.



Photo by Chris Morris

Dressed in holiday garb, a runner makes her way down Oakwood Street on Saturday during the 41st Peaks of Otter Christmas Classic.



Photo by Chris Morris

There were many family members who participated in Saturday's race including Mary Doss (left), Casey Doss (middle) and Anna Doss of Forest.

Basketball practice tips off

Local coaches begin drills under cloud of uncertainty due to COVID-19 constraints

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

The sound of bouncing balls, whistles and coaches loudly calling out instructions filled local high school gyms Monday as public schools began boys and girls basketball practice.

Coaches have two weeks to get their teams in playing shape before their first games, scheduled for Dec. 21.

But added to the anxiety and stress that typically comes with the beginning of a new season, coaches are dealing with how to navigate a campaign dominated by rules and regulations designed to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Some are worried that the season may be over before it begins. Several districts and schools across the state have cancelled their sports seasons already and many

systems, including Bedford County, are still considering what their next course of action will be.

"There's a lot of uncertainty," said Jefferson Forest boys basketball coach Jeff Monroe. "I tell our guys let's take each day as if it might be the last day. Our school board has a meeting on Thursday to settle everything, if we play or not."

Nick Lawrence, Liberty's girls basketball coach, said the motto for his team is "adjust and adapt."

"We're feeling cautiously optimistic," Lawrence said. "We're excited to get back to normalcy and we're just taking it day by day. They understand it will be a challenge and it will be different."

Whatever happens, it will be a season that no coach or

See PRACTICE 2B



PDGA photo

Five-time Professional Disc Golf Association champion Paul McBeth was the lead designer of the new 18-hole course at the New London Business and Technology Center park.

New disc golf course coming to county

PDGA champ Paul McBeth designed new 18-hole layout

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

Kenny Palmer wants Bedford County to be THE destination for disc golf in Virginia.

To that end, the operations coordinator for Bedford County Parks and Recreation, announced recently that the county will be opening the sixth disc golf course within its borders. The new championship course is planned for the New London Business and Technology Center park in Forest and is expected to open this spring.

What's most unique about this course is it's being designed by disc golf superstar Paul McBeth, a five-time Professional Disc Golf Association champion. The Huntington Beach, Calif., native was the top ranked player of the PDGA in 2015, 2017, 2018, and again in 2019.

"It gives relevance to the

course, having his name on it," said Palmer. "People will travel from out of state to play on this course because it has his name on it."

Palmer said McBeth has been working on designing the course "a good six months" and finalized it about two weeks ago. Building has begun and if there are no delays due to COVID-19 concerns or problems with materials, Palmer expects it to be ready for the public in the spring.

It will be the first course McBeth has designed. In addition to designing the course, McBeth will have his own signature series baskets on it in his custom color, also a first.

"The opportunity to design a course from beginning to end is a first in my career, and to be able to do

See DISC 3B

UVa, Hokies enter rivalry from different directions

Cavaliers riding 4-game win streak into Commonwealth Cup showdown while Virginia Tech is on a 4-game skid

By **CHRIS MORRIS**
Sports Editor

Finally, Virginia Tech and Virginia will meet in the Commonwealth Clash on Saturday at 8 p.m. in Blacksburg.

The rivalry game was originally scheduled for Nov. 28, then, because of the pandemic, it was moved to Sept. 19. It was reset for the third time for Saturday. It will be the first time the two teams have met in December in a rivalry that began in 1895 and has been played 102 times.

Virginia Tech has won 19 of the last 21 games in the series and is seeking to reclaim the Commonwealth Cup after UVA snapped a 15-game losing streak to the Hokies last season.

The Cavaliers haven't won in Blacksburg since 1998 when they posted a 36-32 victory. UVA hasn't recorded back-to-back wins against Tech since 1997-98.

The Hokies come into the game reeling, having lost four straight games to Liberty, Miami, Pittsburgh and Clemson. Conversely, UVA enters on a 4-game win streak, having bested North Carolina, Louisville, Abilene Christian and Boston College.

Saturday marks only the third time in the last 30 years UVA has entered its yearly meeting with VT on a four-game winning streak.

Top storylines for UVA

* QB Brennan Armstrong is the only player in FBS this season with six game

totals of 200+ passing yards and 45+ rushing yards.

* WR Lavel Davis Jr. ranks No. 7 in the nation among freshmen with 440 receiving yards and is tied for No. 2 in the nation among freshmen for receiving touchdowns with five. Davis Jr. ranks No. 3 in the nation (No. 1 in the ACC) with 25.9 yards per reception.

* WR Billy Kemp IV is No. 1 in the ACC and No. 21 in the nation with 6.4 receptions per game.

Top storylines for Virginia Tech

* RB Khalil Herbert has an ACC-high 1,020 rush yards, making him VT's first 1,000-yard rusher since Travon McMillian (1,043 in 2015).

* The Hokies are tied for fourth in the nation with 32.0 sacks. That total is just 6.0 shy of VT's 38.0 sacks accumulated through 13 games in 2019.

* K Brian Johnson has made three FGs of 50+ yards in 2020, the best total by any VT kicker dating back to 1987.

* The Hokies own a 32-4 mark under coach Justin Fuente when leading at half. Tech has led at the half in all four of its wins in 2020, outscoring its opponents by a 79-38 margin in the first half.

* VT is 32-2 when holding foes to 21 points or fewer dating back to the start of the 2015 season (6-1 in 2019).

* DE Amare Barno is tied for second in the ACC with 14.0 tackles for loss. Pitt's Rashad Weaver (14.5) leads the ACC.



Photo by Chris Morris

A runner makes his way to the finish line Saturday during the Peaks of Otter Christmas Classic 5K.

Classic: From Page 1B

this year. He was also happy with his time of 30:16, good enough to finish 134 overall.

"It's a fantastic course, a little bit of a change from the past years," said Childress, a cancer survivor who was using the race to train for a double marathon in April. "I've run this about 10, 12 times. I think this is much better because before you see the hill later on in the second half of the run. This one, you got it early."

Other changes included this year were staggered starts rather than one big start. Waves of 250 runners would go off at a time, 25 in each pool, one minute apart. In addition to the main 5K there was the one-mile run for kids and virtual options for runners who didn't want to attend in person.

"We had over 500 register with the virtual and kids one-miler," Raney said. "The town's really been supportive of us and allowed us to do this because we basically had two different races of 250."

"It takes a lot hands to make this thing happen. We have about 20 volunteers and the boy scouts are doing the water station at the old middle school. I just want to thank all the volunteers and all the people who have supported us throughout the years. There's people that have been here since 1986 doing this."

Complete results of the race can be found at the Riverside Runners website.



Photo by Chris Morris

Ashley Wallace pushes her son Nolan toward the finish line Saturday.



Photo by Chris Morris

Marion Childress of Vinton takes a rest after crossing the finish line Saturday.

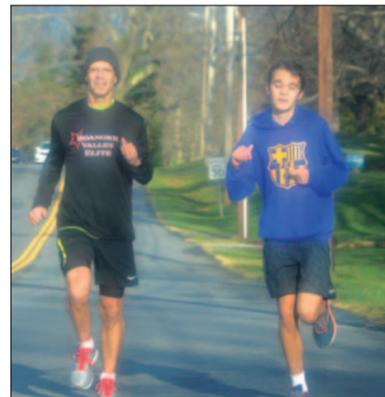


Photo by Chris Morris

A pair of runners pound the pavement on Oakwood Street shortly after starting the race on Saturday.



Photo by Chris Morris

Holiday costumes were seen all along the course Saturday at the Christmas Classic 5K.



Photos by Chris Morris
A runner (left) turns the corner to make his final sprint down the stretch to the finish line Saturday. Heidi Overhill and her dog walk up Oakwood Street toward the finish Saturday.



Outdoor news

Colder temperatures mean improved fishing in December

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Fishing will be good the next several weeks as the water temperature has fallen and will be in the 50s. Most species of fish will become more active as the water temperature cools. Look for striped fishing to continue to improve. The baitfish are in shallow water in the back of the creeks and deep in the lower end.

Largemouth bass

Fishing should improve this month. Best lures will be jerk baits, drop shot rigs, crank baits, shaky heads, spoons, spinner baits, Carolina rigs and plastic worms. Most largemouth bass will be caught on points, rock piles, brush piles and docks. Best depths will be from the surface to 30 feet. Bass will be caught both deep and shallow. Points, rocks, stumps and brush piles are key factors to finding them. Practice catch and release.

Smallmouth bass

Fishing for smallmouth should be good this month. Best areas will be rocks, ledges, humps and main channel points. Best lures will be Ned rigs, hair jigs, drop shot rigs, crank baits, jerk baits and Carolina rigs. Best areas will be in the mid- to the lower sections of the lake. Smallmouth bass will feed heavily on crawfish this month. Cloudy days are good times to try. Light line will increase chances of catching, and night fishing will be fair.

Striped bass

Fishing will be good. Strippers will be caught in the mid- to upper sections of the lake and in the larger creeks. Best lures will be swim baits, jigging spoons and Zoom flukes fished on ¼- to ½-ounce lead heads. The best depths will be from near the surface to 60 feet. Vertical jigging is a good method to catch strippers. Try to find areas with the largest concentrations of baitfish. Fishing at night will be fair, and some



Submitted

Captain Dale Wilson shows off a huge largemouth bass.

stripers will surface early morning and late afternoon this month. Live bait fished on planer boards and down lines are also good methods to try.

Crappie

Fishing for crappie will be good this month. They will be found 5 to 15 feet, and the best areas will be in the main creeks around docks, fallen trees, stumps and brush piles in the mid- to upper parts of the lake. Small live minnows and 1½- to 2-inch tubes or shad-shaped plastic lures fished on 1/32 to 1/16 ounce lead heads will work best to catch them.

Tips of the month

Fishing should improve as the water cools. Fishing in the early morning, late afternoon and at night are usually the best times to fish. Try fishing after dark on warm nights. Wear a life jacket and never fish alone at night. Also, keep running lights on after dark. Remember to practice catch and release and take a kid fishing.

Practice: From Page 1B

player in the state has ever experienced.

Lawrence said that the boys and girls teams at Liberty have a two-hour block of practice time six days a week with a 30-minute window between practices to clean and sanitize the balls and gym and conduct health screenings.

Other schools are following similar protocols.

"We've spent so much time trying to cover as many 'what-if's' and protocols," said Staunton River boys basketball coach Brandon Harris. "Trying to work out a practice plan with time for cleaning basketballs is a new thing for sure."

Depending on the decision of the school

board Thursday, practices for wrestling, indoor track and swimming are scheduled to begin Dec. 14. Until then, coaches are striving to balance keeping their teams safe and getting them in shape for a condensed season that crams 14 games into a two-month window. State finals for basketball are set for Feb. 20.

"As we approach this season we've been doing our best as a program to force the players into a sense of normalcy with our offseason and preseason workouts," said JF girls coach Jake Whitman. "It's been tough, though, with everything still being up in the air just like everything has been since March. We've tried really hard to implement drills, skills, and everything possible we can to help us prepare for a season."

Season preview: Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy



Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy boys basketball coach Mike Greathouse talks to his players before a recent practice. The Ospreys begin their season on Friday.

Photo by Chris Morris



Photo by Chris Morris

Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy girls basketball coach Amanda Beverly (right) is in her first year with the Lady Ospreys.

Lady Ospreys seek turnaround

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

Amanda Beverly knew she had some big challenges when she took the head coaching job of the Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy girls basketball team.

The former middle school coach took the reins of a varsity squad that had won just one game last season and was blown out in most of the others. But Beverly is confident that a successful future awaits the Lady Ospreys and she wants to be the one to light the fuse.

"I really think, and I could be wrong, that people don't expect to see much when they face us," Beverly said. "So, we have a lot to prove and a lot of growing to do. But I think we have a great group of girls and I think we will surprise some people."

To turn the program around, Beverly wants to instill a new attitude and philosophy. She saw what wasn't working last year and is striving to change it. And she thinks she is making progress despite the extra challenges of the pandemic.

"I tell them that a team that wants to win never loses," she said. "Meaning if you go in there and play with your heart and give 110 percent, even if the score says you lose, you walk away a winner. That's really what we're trying to push because we are still building a program here."

The Lady Ospreys are small, both in size and numbers. There are just nine players on the roster - 10 if you count an 8th grader that also plays on the middle school team. And they have no players who are very intimidating in the paint.

They do have a lot of guards who are quick and are good ball-handlers. That was a something missing from last year's team, Beverly said.

"They did not have a consistent ballhandler which I think we do have," Beverly said. "It seemed hard for them to get the ball up the court last year. Another big thing that I think will be important is our conditioning. Being able to run. With only nine players, we have to be able to play long stretches."

"I feel like each person has a role. We're a young team and we're a small team in numbers and size, so I feel like it's going to be a lot of rotation and versatility."

The consistent ballhandler that Beverly referred to is Alexis Teeter, a sophomore. Alexis is the sister of Emma Teeter, the team captain and the only senior on the squad. Beverly is expecting much from her lone senior.

"She's our senior, she's our captain, so we're going to be looking for leadership from her," Beverly said.

Other players who make an impact this season for the Lady Ospreys are Paris Williamson, Gracie Gordon and Casey Relyea. All could sub in for Teeter at point guard.

"Any given point, which ever one is out there, I'm looking at them to be the leader on the court," Beverly said.

After several attempts, the Lady Ospreys opened their season Tuesday night against Timberlake Christian. The season was supposed to start two weeks ago, but COVID-19 concerns kept pushing the start date back.

Beverly said during these times, it's vital to be flexible.

"You have to be ready to go or not go at any given moment," she said. "Like last week, this (Timberlake) game was supposed to be last Tuesday and I got a call Tuesday morning at 9 o'clock that it's been cancelled. Then I got a call today at 2 that said we're going to play tomorrow."

"You just have to be flexible. With COVID, too, it's really impacted people being able to be at school. If they don't necessarily have it, but have been exposed, or think they may be exposed, then they aren't going to be able to come school and obviously they can't come to practice. I feel like it's hurt preparation, but for the most part the girls seem pretty dedicated and committed to it."

It's that commitment and dedication that has Beverly convinced that success will soon come to the Lady Ospreys program.

"We're coming," she said. "It may not be this year, but we're coming."

Ospreys boys aim to return to the heights of VACA

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

In his first year as coach of the Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy's boys basketball team, Mike Greathouse took the Ospreys to the edge of a state championship.

But after graduating nine seniors off the team that finished third in the Virginia Association of Christian Athletes (VACA), Greathouse admits it's going to a little more difficult to make it back to those heights. The obstacles created by the pandemic won't make it any easier, either.

But Greathouse is optimistic that his squad will again be a force in the VACA, especially if a few pieces fall into place.

"Our team chemistry has to come along," he said. "I've always been fortunate enough to be part of teams that the team chemistry was really effective. Last year's team bought into it. ... Team chemistry, that will be number one."

"Last year's team played really well defensively. I'm anxious to see how well these guys pick up that defensive intensity. I hope they do. I still don't know how this going to look. We should rebound, we should be able to score. We've just got to play good team defense, talk and communicate."

His team gets its first test Friday when they host the Southwest Virginia Homeschoolers in the season opener. The follow that up with a road game at Roanoke Valley Christian on Monday. The Ospreys were supposed to begin play a couple weeks ago, but COVID-19 concerns forced the postponement of some games.

That's not the only disruption caused by the pandemic the team has had to face. Like all the schools in the state, SMLCA is limited to just 25 spectators per game and those who come to the school's first-class new gymnasium will have to sit in folding chairs because delivery of bleachers for the facility was held up because of the virus.

"Practices have been hit and miss, too," Greathouse said. "It's just been who's here and who's not."

Enthusiasm around the program, fortunately, hasn't been a casualty of the virus. Greathouse said 30 players tried out for the JV and varsity squads.

And while this will be a rebuilding year, the coach has a solid core of returning players to build around. Leading that group is 6-4 senior Mason Neighbors, who Greathouse describes as "tenacious."



Photo by Chris Morris

Coach Mike Greathouse works with Mason Neighbors (right) and Colt Webster (left) on a drill.

"He doesn't give up on any play," Greathouse said of Neighbors. "He's a joy to coach because he listens to everything you say. He's one of our better ballhandlers. He can step out and shoot the 3 and he can take it all the way in. He plays bigger than 6-4."

Other returning seniors are Caleb Colomba and Sam Smith.

"Caleb is kind of a wing man, shooting guard and Sam has just raw athletic ability. He's going to yank down every rebound that's near him," Greathouse said.

The coach also has high expectations of Colt Webster, a 6-8 transfer from California.

"They weren't doing basketball in California, so he moved out," Greathouse said. "He's a shooting guard and a Division I recruit."

Filling the final fifth spot in the starting lineup is up in the air. Trent Harper, Eli Phillips and Ben Robertson will all be competing for that spot.

Disc: 'We are striving to become the disc golf capital of Virginia' - Kenny Palmer

From Page B1

so with the Bedford County Parks and Rec has been a blessing. The attention to detail on this course will make it one of the best in Virginia," said McBeth in a news release. "I honestly don't feel like I'm reaching when I say it could even be among the top 10 in the world and put Bedford County on the map when it comes to best disc golf communities in the world."

The 18-hole course will be designed along existing open areas of the business park's perimeter. It will be challenging to players as it will include both open and wooded holes. The course is being built with donated money. So far, Palmer said, they have sponsors for all 18 holes at \$500 a hole. For that donation, sponsors get their company logo on the designated hole for at least two years and founding sponsors will be listed on a permanent sign on the first hole.

"That shows that the community supports this," Palmer said.

There are other benefits to this course and the others in the county.

"By adding a disc golf course it provides another amenity for the people who work in the park, as well as for the community as a



Submitted

Kenny Palmer (middle) works with a team to scope out where the baskets will be placed on the new disc golf course.

whole," said Jim Messier, Chairman of the Bedford County Economic Development Authority in the news release. "This course, in addition to the seven miles of biking and walking trails in the park, helps us attract even more prospects looking to move their business to Bedford County, as well as enhancing the work environment for our existing companies."

The new course will join with

two layouts in Bedford, one in Moneta and one in Montvale, all affiliated with the Parks and Rec Department. There is also a course at Liberty High School. Because the courses are in public parks, there is no charge to play on them.

"That's one of the allures of disc golf," Palmer said. "Most of the time, it's free to play."

It is also a growing sport. During a recent tournament at the Moneta course, the field was filled to



Photo by Chris Morris

A player lines up a putt during the Moneta Madness disc golf tournament last month. The new course at the New London Business and Technology Center park will give Bedford County six disc golf courses.

capacity with 18 foursomes. It can be played by practically any age. The rules are easy to follow and it gives players a good workout. And players will travel to play challenging course, much like golfers.

"As a matter of fact, more people traveling to Bedford and staying here for that purpose," Palmer said. "A mother from York, Pennsylvania, came here with her son a few weeks ago. She gave him for his birthday a three-day

disc golf vacation in Bedford County."

Palmer is hoping for more stories like that, especially after the new course is built and word gets out about the disc golf offerings in the county.

"We're striving to become the disc golf capital of Virginia," Palmer said. "You've got to be known for something. If somebody wants to consider us that, that's a great title to have."

Sports

December 16, 2020

NO ADMITTANCE

The Bedford County School Board gave its OK for high school sports, but it also ruled that no parents or fans can attend

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

High school athletes got good news and bad news last week from the Bedford County School Board.

The good news, after weeks of uncertainty, was that high school sports will happen, albeit in an abbreviated, controlled manner.

The bad news was that those athletes will not be playing in front of their families and friends, who will have to watch the games at home on their computers.

After much discussion and public comment, the school board voted unanimously that the high schools will play sports, but the playing of those games will be determined by the color-coded state virus map. If Bedford County or the county of an opponent is shaded red, the game will be postponed.

And the board OK'd that no spectators will be allowed to attend the games, despite Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's announcement earlier Thursday that 25 spectators will be allowed at recreational sporting events.

It was a tough compromise and one the school board went back and forth with for nearly two hours at its packed meeting. Some board members cited the risk of players contracting the COVID-19 virus and passing it along to others as reason to cancel sports throughout the county's public schools.

Several members of the public, mostly health and medical employees, expressed the same sentiment.

Others, led by board chairman Martin Leamy, argued that athletes face risk every time they suit up. Not just from the virus but from everything from broken bones to cuts and scrapes. Leamy said the mental health benefits the athletes get from organized

"I understand and I respect this disease. But we can't live in fear."

Martin Leamy
Bedford County School Board chairman

sports outweighed the possibility of getting the virus, which, according to most data, is not as dangerous to teens as it is to older members of the population.

"I understand and I respect this disease, I truly do," Leamy said. "But we can't live in fear. We have to understand that life is all about risk mitigation. We have cars. People get killed in cars, so what do we do? We've got air bags, we've got seat belts, we've got turn signals, we've got traffic signals. Those are all risk mitigation mechanisms."

"The VHSL has provided us with risk mitigation protocols. I don't understand why this is even an issue. We've provided parents and families an academic choice. Are you comfortable sending your son or daughter to school? If you are, great. Here's an option. If you're not, Bedford Connects is tailor-made for you. We need to provide the same athletic choice to families as we do with academics."

"Leave it up to the fami-



Photo by Chris Morris
Susannah Allen, a junior at Liberty High School, participates in a protest Thursday outside the Bedford County School Board meeting.

lies. Leave it up to their choice whether or not they are comfortable with their son or daughter participating in school sports. That's what this should be about, not a bunch of Brainiacs sitting around this table telling families what's best for them. That needs to be their choice, not ours."

Shortly after, the board agreed to have middle school, JV and varsity sports.

That decision put the ball in the court of the county's athletic directors.

It's up to them to determine weekly if their teams will be playing and how they are going to make the games available online to the parents and fans of Liberty, Jefferson Forest and Staunton River.

"We will be offering free live streaming for all our games on campus," said Jedd Zaring, athletic director at JF. "Planning for this is underway."

Schools are looking into the Pixellot streaming systems and if that system is not installed in time for the start of games, the county plans to stream games over YouTube with its own cameras.

"There has been discussions between Bedford County Public Schools and the NFHS Network to participate in their Pixellot program, which is a streaming service somewhat like YouTubeTV that is subscription based," said Josh Smallwood, the AD at Staunton River. "We hope to have this in place very

soon for our fans."

Lori Mattson, Liberty High's AD, also gave the Pixellot system high marks.

"We have an amazing opportunity that will provide a first-class viewing experience for our families that unfortunately won't be able to be at the games in person," she said. "We are in the planning stages ... but thanks to amazing people in this county, our families will not miss a game until the county is able to get the cameras up and running with NFHS Pixellot."

But these measures may be moot if games cannot be played.

See **SPORTS 2B**

VHSL lifts mask ruling

High school athletes not required to wear masks during games

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

Four days after issuing an order that high school athletes in most sports must wear a mask during competitions and practice, the Virginia High School League reversed course Monday and rescinded the directive.

Originally, the VHSL said it was following Virginia Department of Health and American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines recommending masks be worn nearly 100 percent of the time during games and practices with the exception of cheerleading, gymnastics, wrestling and swimming.

However, after a closer reading of Gov. Ralph Northam's Executive Order 72, the VHSL determined the order didn't need to be so restrictive.

"On December 10, the VHSL announced that it 'is requiring each school to follow the recommendations of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)' that students and coaches wear masks while participating in sports," according to a news release issued Monday by the VHSL.

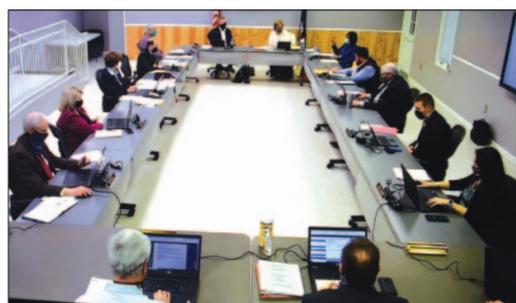
"This requirement was issued in response to information that the Governor's Requirement to Wear Face Coverings would include such a provision. However, EO 72 when issued stated that Face Coverings requirements "do not apply to ... individuals exercising or using exercise equipment."

Accordingly, the VHSL rescinded its "requirement" that face coverings be worn during training and competition and is reissuing its guidance to conform with the intent of EO 72 that face masks are "strongly encouraged" but not required.

Each school may continue to exercise its discretion and judgment as to safety steps within its athletics programs as it pertains to face coverings, the release said.

"VHSL apologizes for any confusion created by its original release," said VHSL Executive Director, Dr. John W. "Billy" Haun. "We ask the public to understand that it is the first mission of VHSL to make sure that athletics are conducted in a safe and healthy environment, and it was that desire that motivated the original decision."

In its release last week, the VHSL said "During times of substantial COVID-19 activity VDH strongly advises athletes to wear masks at all times during group training, competi-



Screenshot
The Bedford County School Board discusses allowing sports in public schools during its Thursday meeting.



Photo by Chris Morris
Jefferson Forest basketball players Joseph Peters (far left) and Tyson Gage (middle) join with Susannah Allen during Thursday's protest.

See **MASKS 2B**

Short takes

Liberty sets 3-point record – Liberty seniors Ashtyn Baker and Emily Lytle played leading roles in the Lady Flames' record-breaking 85-60 victory over Carson-Newman.

The duo combined for eight of Liberty's team-record 14 3-pointers, while Lytle knocked down her 27th consecutive free throw without a miss, setting a new program record.

Liberty improves to 3-3 on the season, remaining unbeaten at Liberty Arena with a 3-0 home mark.

Wood Brothers awarded FIA Heritage Cup – For 70 years Wood Brothers Racing has excelled in – and transformed – the world of motorsports.

As the longest tenured team in NASCAR history, the Wood Brothers have compiled a literal Hall of Fame resume both on and off the track.

For their accomplishments across seven decades, Wood Brothers Racing has been named the 2020 recipient of the FIA Founding Members Club Heritage Cup.

The award is presented to an individual, institution, entity or object in recognition of exceptional or outstanding achievement within or contribution to the historic vehicle world.

"It truly is an honor to win this award," said Eddie Wood, Wood Brothers Racing president and co-owner, and son of team founder Glen Wood. "The fact that it's a worldwide honor makes it even more special. We're mainly known in American motorsports, but this is much bigger than that."

NASCAR announces start times and networks for 2021 – NASCAR, in collaboration with FOX Sports and NBC Sports, announced the 2021 race start times and networks for the NASCAR Cup Series, NASCAR Xfinity Series and NASCAR Camping World Truck Series seasons.

Twenty-three total races will air on FOX and NBC this year, a two-race increase over 2020. Eleven of those will air on FOX, including the first seven Cup Series races of the season beginning with the Daytona 500 (Sunday,

Feb. 14, 2:30 p.m.). The first premier series race on dirt since 1970 will also air live on FOX when the Cup Series rolls into Bristol Motor Speedway (Sunday, March 28, 3:30 p.m. ET).

Another 12 races will air on NBC, including the debut of the Cup Series at Road America (Sunday, July 4, 2:30 p.m.). The Cup Series Championship from Phoenix Raceway (Sunday, Nov. 7, 3 p.m.) highlights five NASCAR Cup Series playoff races airing on NBC.

Five Xfinity Series tilts will air live on broadcast television in 2021, highlighted by the series' first visit of the season to Talladega Superspeedway (Saturday, Apr. 24, 4 p.m., FOX) and three consecutive playoff races: the Charlotte Roval (Saturday, Oct. 9, 3 p.m., NBC), Texas Motor Speedway (Saturday, Oct. 16, 3 p.m., NBC) and Kansas Speedway (Saturday, Oct. 23, 3 p.m., NBC).

Martinsville Speedway will host a pair of primetime events in the spring with both the Xfinity Series (Apr. 9, 8 p.m., FS1) and Cup Series (Apr. 10, 7:30 p.m., FS1) taking the green flag under the lights on consecutive evenings.

Fralins endow UVa football coach position – The University of Virginia's department of athletics and the Virginia Athletics Foundation (VAF) announced a commitment of \$5 million from Cynthia and Heywood Fralin to endow the head football coach's position.

This is the first commitment following a matching gift program recently created by the athletics department and the VAF to encourage gifts to endow each of the football coaching positions and the director of athletics position.

LU's Symons is Broyles Award nominee – Liberty's defensive coordinator Scott Symons, who is in his second year leading the Flames' defensive effort, has been named a nominee for the 2020 Broyles Award. The award honors college football's top assistant coaches.

The 56 nominees in this year's class were selected from approximately 1,270 assistant coaches representing 127 Division I programs across the country.



Photo by Chris Morris

Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy's Kierra Smith (left) battles for position with Roanoke Valley Christian's Apsen King on Monday at RVCS.

Ospreys split pair with Roanoke Valley

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

The Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy basketball teams went 1-1 Monday against Roanoke Valley Christian School with the Ospreys' boys squad claiming a 51-26 win over the Eagles and the girls falling 55-29.

With the win, the SMLCA boys improved to 2-0 on the season, including a season-opening win over Southwest Virginia Homeschoolers last week.

Cole Webster led the Ospreys on Monday with 24 points and 8 rebounds. Mason Neighbors added 11 points and 9 rebounds while Ben Roberson had 9 points and Sam Smith posted 9 rebounds.

"The defense played really well throughout the game," said SMLCA coach Mike Greathouse.



Photo by Chris Morris

Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy coach Amana Beverly draws up a play during a timeout Monday against Roanoke Valley Christian School.

"We're still trying to find rhythm on the offensive end."

In the girls game, the Lady Ospreys (0-2) started strong and hung with the Eagles for much of the first quarter, but they went cold in the second quarter

and could never get back into the game.

Rose Duncombe led SMLCA with 9 points and 4 rebounds. Paris Williamson chipped in with six points and Alexis Teter finished with 5 points.

Masks: From Page 1B

tion, and on the sidelines. There is strong evidence to show that mask use prevents the spread of COVID-19. We also know that participating in sports has both physical and psychological health benefits. Risks from the virus can be decreased if athletes, coaches, officials, and spectators follow public health guidelines.

Additionally, if wearing a mask makes participation in sports difficult, it is advisable not to participate in sports at this time.

The reversal wasn't that surprising to Staunton River Athletic Director Josh Smallwood.

"I've quickly learned to not be surprised by anything and to expect ongoing clarification," he said. "Many of our documents are considered living documents and

change can be expected."

Across the state, the directive last week was met with mixed reactions.

"I totally support wearing a mask for the bus ride and the warmup," Ocean Lakes track coach Mike Nestor said in a story published by the Daily Press. "However, it would not be a good idea for a mile or 2-mile race, especially indoors, where the air is already so dry."

"I am very surprised at the updated mandate," Lakeland basketball coach Clint Wright said in the same story. "Notably, we don't make the rules, we abide by them. My heart goes out to the student/athletes who have to deal with this additional equipment. It will hinder performance, communication and the overall quality of the game."

Sports: From Page 1B

Currently, Bedford County is in the red of the Virginia Department of Health school metrics map. The counties surrounding Bedford are also red. In fact, on the latest map, all but five counties in the state are red. Public school basketball teams across the state are supposed to begin playing Dec. 21.

"For Dec. 21 games, that decision would be made sometime before the game," Zaring said. "A decision as to lead time -- 24 hours, 48 hours, 1 week -- hasn't been made yet. The Seminole District is probably going to move the December games back to start after Winter Break. They are trying to help BCPS as much as possible to get our games played."

Smallwood is taking a similar stance. "I will meet every Monday with our principal to review the applicable data and determine the status of our games for the week," he said.

No matter when games begin, the nearly 2,000 athletes in Bedford County schools from 6th grade to 12th grade, are happy they will be playing. It's been almost 300 days since there has been competition between public schools in the state.

Jefferson Forest basketball players Tyson Gage and Joseph Peters were among a dozen or so athletes who were demonstrating outside the school board meeting Thursday. The group wanted to "make their voice heard" before the board's decision. During the meeting, the demonstrators could be heard chanting, "We want sports! We want sports!"

"We're really hoping for a season, obviously," said Gage, standing along with Peters. "Especially now that we're seniors. One last season. We've been waiting for this year for a long time. It's very important to us, for sure."

Added Peters: "For me and Tyson, this is our way to college."

Liberty track athlete Susannah Allen,

who was also among the demonstrators, echoed her peers at JF.

"I'm a junior this year and I'm looking at going to school and college for track," said Allen, a pole vaulter. "I'm trying to get a track scholarship. I need this junior year for colleges to look at and I definitely think it can happen with social distancing and wearing a mask."

"I'm hoping (the board) support us. I'm thinking positively."

It worked. But it wasn't all good news. Families of the athletes will not be able to attend their games and it is disappointing many mothers and fathers.

"I am a mother of four, all four of my children participate or participated in sports activities," said Forest resident Jane Morris. "It proved to be an integral part of their growing up and was essential to their social and physical wellbeing. I am not happy about the 'no spectator' rule, as I am the parent of a senior wrestler, and have only missed one of his competitions since he was 5 years old."

"If that's what will allow them to compete, I'm all for it. It's all about the kids. They have and will continue to abide by any restrictions put in place to be able to participate in sports. We all understand the virus can be serious to some and are willing to take any and all precautions to ensure their participation in sports doesn't result in the spread of it."

She's not alone. "My parents definitely want to be at the games," Peters said.

"Mine as well," chimed in Gage. Allen said it wasn't the best situation, but was pleased that there will be competition again.

"I think the best hope is we'll be able to play, there just won't be spectators," she said. "That sucks, but if we can still play and that's how it is, then I'm fine with that."

Hokies to keep Fuente as coach

By ALEX SEATS
CBS Sports

Justin Fuente is likely coming off the hot seat and returning to Blacksburg next season. As of Monday, multiple sources are reporting that Virginia Tech plans to retain Fuente as their head football coach.

On Monday evening, Virginia Tech announced a Tuesday news conference regarding football topics. Fuente was listed among the staff available during the Early Signing Day media opportunity.

Fuente arrived in Blacksburg after turning around Memphis (2012-15). After going 7-15 in his first two years, Fuente led the Tigers to a 10-3 record in his third season, including a Miami Beach Bowl win over BYU. The following season Memphis went 9-3 without a bowl appearance.

Before the Memphis gig, Fuente had gained recognition for his success as the offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach at TCU, working with future NFL starting quarterback Andy Dalton in a stretch that saw the Horned Frogs complete a pair of undefeated regular-seasons and notch a Rose Bowl win vs. Wisconsin on New Year's Day 2011.

In his first season at Virginia Tech, Fuente was named the 2016 ACC Coach of the Year after he led the Hokies to a 9-3 regular-season record and a trip to the ACC Championship. The Hokies finished 10-4 following a 35-24 Belk Bowl victory over Arkansas.

The Hokies finished the 2020 campaign 5-6, 5-5 in the ACC, following a 33-15 win over rival Virginia to reclaim the Commonwealth Cup.

Cleveland dropping 'Indians' name

By ANTHONY CASTROVINCE
MLB.com

After several months of discussion sparked by the death of George Floyd and a national reckoning over race and colonialism, the Cleveland Indians have decided to change their name.

Team owner Paul Dolan confirmed the decision on Monday, following a process that involved conversations with fans, players, local and national Native American groups, Cleveland civic leaders, corporate sponsors and leading Native American researchers.

"Our role is to unite the community," Dolan told MLB.com. "There is a credible number of people in this community who are upset by our name, are hurt by our name, and there is no reason for our franchise to bear a name that is divisive."

The decision follows a similar move by the NFL's Washington Football Team. Unlike the Washington Football Team, however, Cleveland's baseball team will continue to be known as the Indians - the name it has carried since 1915.

The earliest a new name will be used is 2022, but the team has not set a firm date. Dolan did not confirm any of the replacement names or concepts being discussed internally, but he did make it clear that the team will not make its informal nickname - the Tribe - its new team name.

"It's not going to be a half-step away from the Indians," Dolan said. "We will not have a Native American-themed name."

Native American groups and others have long protested the use of Indigenous names and symbols by professional and amateur sports teams. Cleveland removed the conten-

tious Chief Wahoo logo from its caps and jerseys prior to the 2019 season, though the team still owns the rights to that logo and has continued to sell merchandise bearing the logo.

Dolan said Monday that, as part of the conversation about the nickname, the team has decided to donate all profits from the sale of Chief Wahoo merchandise to causes that support the Native American community.

In July, shortly after Washington's decision to change its name was revealed, Dolan released a statement that Cleveland would review "the best path forward with our team name."

Prior to that statement, Dolan's public stance at the time of the Chief Wahoo decision was that the team name itself did not need to be addressed. But the events of 2020 compelled Dolan and the organization at large to re-evaluate.

"The biggest change was what's happened this year, starting with George Floyd's death and the recognition that our world has changed," Dolan said. "For me, that raised the question of whether we should continue using a name like Indians in this new world and what lies ahead for us. That wasn't the decision, it was merely the decision to answer the question. We went to answer the question by talking to a wide array of local and national groups. We spoke to our whole community, in one way or another. I think the answer was pretty clear that, while so many of us who have grown up with the name and thought of it as nothing more than the name of our team and that it did not intend to have a negative impact on anybody, in particular Native Americans, it was having a negative impact on those folks."

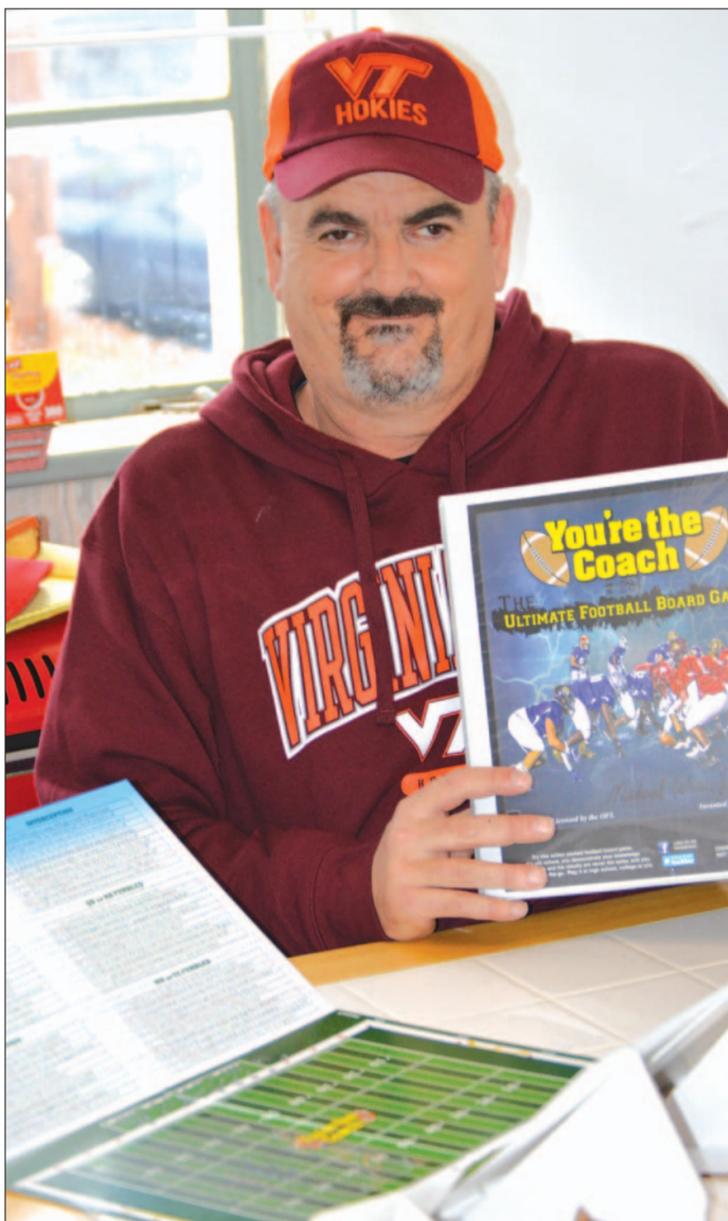


Photo by Chris Morris
Bedford native Michael Wray shows off his football board game "You're the Coach," during a recent stop in his hometown.

Game inventor stays upbeat in digital age

The resurgence of board games because of COVID-19 has given Bedford native Michael Wray hope his football game will catch on

By CHRIS MORRIS
Sports Editor

Sony's Playstation 5 has been pegged as one of the hottest items this upcoming Christmas season.

But Bedford native Michael Wray wants his football-based board game "You're the Coach," to find its way under just as many trees on Christmas morning.

He knows it won't be easy. He's been working for 38 years trying to hit it big with the game with limited success. But board games have made a comeback this year because of the COVID-19 virus and people being forced to spend more time at home. He's hoping to carve out a piece of that market share and expose people to a game that he says offers the realistic feel to an actual football game.

"I've got them on Amazon. I've got them on E-Bay and Etsy. I got a whole list of places (where it is for sale)," he said. "I'm trying to pick up some more local stores. The problem is a lot of places are corporate. And with corporate, there's so much red tape."

"I'm always trying to pick up more and more stores with it and they come from all different parts of the country. There's no set to place to get them. It's like whoever will give me a chance with them, you know."

Wray conceived the game as an 8th-grader at Liberty High School and worked for nearly a decade perfecting it. He said the idea came to him while watching Monday Night Football and holding a pair of dice. He's a full-time semi-truck driver who did a stint in the Navy and was a member of Liberty University's football team in the early 1980s. His parents Michael and Sybil Wray are longtime Bedford residents.

He's also developed a penchant for public relations. He has a scrap book loaded with clippings about him and his game from papers and publications mostly from Virginia and Missouri, his current home. His story has also been featured in national trucking magazines.

His passion and commitment to his game is evident. He says it has consumed his life so much that he considers trucking his hobby and promoting the game as his full-time gig.

"To me, it's not about the money," he said. "It's about meeting the people and playing the game and hopefully having it in every home in America. It's like the Monopoly of football."

The game retails for \$29.95 and he's



Photo by Chris Morris
Michael Wray poses with his game beside his truck.

sold about 300 of them. He admits it's hard to compete with the digital games that have flooded the market in the last 20 years, but he's confident that the game will catch on. All it takes, he says, is playing it one time.

"When you play this, because your mind is so much stronger than any video game, you can visualize things so realistically that it just draws you in," he said.

He has the proof. He has simulated college and pro games throughout the years and the results were nearly as close as the actual games.

"The national championship last year, I had LSU beating Clemson 37-23 and it was 42-25," he said. "In the Super Bowl, I had the Chiefs winning 37-30 and it was 31-20. That's pretty close. The Patriots beat the Eagles 24-21 in the Super Bowl 34, my score 26-19."

He said he tried to go the digital route with the game, but got "burned."

"I gave somebody some money to make an app out of it, but they got the money and never did anything," he said. "So, I'm working on trying to find somebody else to do it because it's so realistic it ain't even funny. It's really realistic on a lot of the games."

He's hopeful that kids will be put down their game controllers and give his game a chance. He says they can find just as much enjoyment as they can with any game system.

"Believe it or not, the excitement factor is there with the dice roll. That gets their attention," he said. "And it creates interaction because your mind is way stronger than sitting there doing this (mimics using a game controller) with a video game."

UVa nixes bowl bid, closes book on 2020

University of Virginia

CHARLOTTESVILLE – The Virginia athletics department announced recently the Cavalier football program has completed its 2020 season and will decline to participate in any postseason bowl game.

The announcement was made by UVa director of athletics Carla Williams and head football coach Bronco Mendenhall.

At the request of Mendenhall, the program's captains and task unit leaders met with the team Sunday to discuss and make a decision on continuing the season and possibly accepting a bowl invitation.

Under Mendenhall, who is in his fifth season with the Cavaliers, UVa had made three consecutive appearances in postseason bowl games – Military Bowl (2017), Belk Bowl (2018) and Orange Bowl (2019).

Virginia was projected to be a participant in one of the Atlantic Coast Conference's affiliated bowl games this year.

"Unless you live it each and every day, it is impossible to understand the mental, emotional and physical sacrifice these young men have made since their return in July," Williams said. "I am proud of their commitment and their incredible maturity. Our students did everything we asked them to do and they were rewarded with the opportunity to compete in the sport they love when many doubted it could be done. The life lessons gained over the last

nine months will serve them well."

Added Mendenhall: "I told our team I valued their feedback and I wanted this to be their decision."

"Just as we met at the beginning of the year to make the choice to play, this was their choice to end the season at this time. I think it is appropriate for this team."

"They have all grown tremendously from the challenges put before them this year. But now is the time to return to families and loved ones."

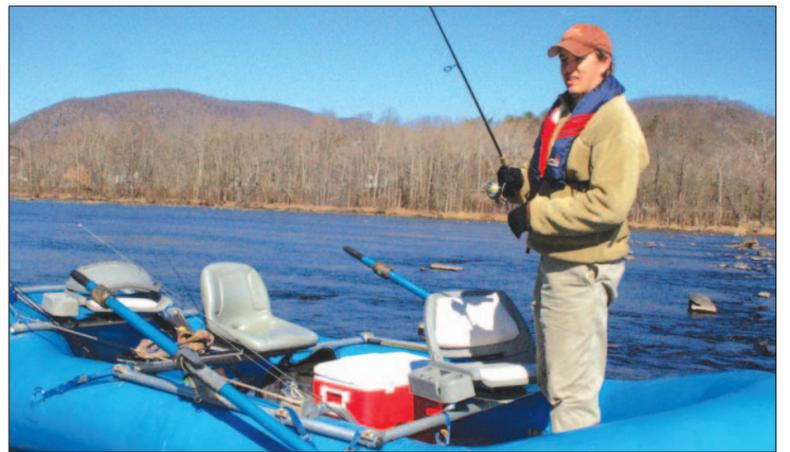
"This team will always be special for how it handled competing during a pandemic. It is one more example of the amazing capacity and leadership of the young men that allow me to coach them every day."

To date, Virginia is one of just 17 teams to play 10 games this season and not suffer a postponement or cancellation due to COVID-19 issues within its program.

Virginia's student-athletes reported back to Charlottesville on July 5 and have sustained a training program for 23 consecutive weeks. At no point during that time did the program's players have the opportunity to leave Grounds as a group for personal reasons.

During the season, student-athletes' in-person time with immediate family was a limited period of time post-game – while outdoors, wearing masks and practicing social distancing.

Outdoor news



Virginia DWR photo

Bundled in warm clothes and wearing a life jacket, Bruce Ingram does some cold-weather fishing on the James River.

Take proper precautions when boating in cold weather

By BRUCE INGRAM
Virginia DWR

The most dangerous incident of my paddling career occurred on the James River when a friend and I overturned in his canoe.

Earlier, my water temperature gauge had registered 54 degrees and the air temperature 65 degrees. When I fell in, I felt as if a sledge hammer had struck my chest, and my buddy and I struggled to swim to shore – losing most of our gear.

That day, the air and water temperature combined measured 119 degrees – within the danger zone says Stacey Brown, boating safety program manager for the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR).

She adds that although many variables exist concerning when the risk of hypothermia becomes more acute, generally if the air and water temperatures together are 120 degrees or below, wet suits are recommended for paddlers. Another major factor, continues Brown, has to do with the amount of time someone is subject to the cold water and air temperatures.

Especially in cold water conditions, consider going floating and/or fishing with a buddy.

Obviously, one of the most basic acts any paddler can accomplish is to always wear a life jacket.

But in my many decades of floating and wade fishing Virginia's rivers and streams, I would wager that most paddlers I have observed – whatever the season from the dog days of summer to the frigid waters of winter – were not wearing life jackets. Many, in fact, did not even have them in their craft or were just using them as seat cushions.

"Wearing a life jacket is the best way to ensure your trip doesn't end in tragedy," emphasizes Brown. "It would be nice that people think of their life jackets as gear, just like with other sports, rather than required equipment."

Brown offers the following additional recommendations.

- Carry your whistle or other sound producing device in case you do need to summon help.

- Be proficient in re-boarding your canoe, kayak, raft or other craft – especially if you are in a lake or larger river where getting to the shore to re-board

would be difficult. If you end up in the cold water – you start to lose dexterity of movement fairly quickly.

- Paddle with a buddy – not only for more fun – but just in case of emergency.

- Evenly pack your boat to have an even keel (so to speak) – and help mitigate the chances of overturning.

- Let someone on dry land know where you are going and when you plan to return – in other words, share your float plan.

- Check the weather before and during the trip. During the excursion, be aware of changing or increasing winds and/or cloud build up.

- Be honest about your skills – know your limitations. For example, planning a long trip of many miles or hours during unfavorable water temperatures or forecasts could be risky for many floaters.

In the angling realm, there's nothing I would rather do than float and fish the Old Dominion's many outstanding rivers, but I know that my continuing to enjoy this pastime involves making wise decisions. Please consider making these safety tips part of your game plan.

Boating safety surveys shape safety policy

An all-encompassing report on recreational boating activity in the U.S. is giving the U.S. Coast Guard, policymakers and the boating community the ability to shape smart boating safety policy into the future.

Issued last week by the Coast Guard, The National Recreational Boating Safety Survey (NRBSS) looks at boating participation demographics, trends, boat use, at-risk boating populations, boating safety and more. The survey data, captured in 2018, includes all types of on-water activity from canoes, kayaks, rafts and row-boats to sailboats, skiffs, airboats, motorized boats and personal watercraft.

Some notable findings:
Ownership: It is estimated that approximately 25.2 million boats were owned by 14.5 million households in 2018.

Registered/nonregistered boats: There were 11.82 million boats registered in the 50 states and the District of Columbia in 2018.

Boat use: Boats that were operated in 2018 were taken out on the water a total of 471.8 million days.