

Kindred Spirit

Brentsville's Cara Vollmer will always share the basketball court with her father Frank

» DAVID FAWCETT
dfawcett@insidenova.com

Cara Vollmer watches Brentsville's girls junior varsity basketball team begin warm-ups Dec. 13 when she hears the opening lines to the song "My House" pipe through a loud speaker inside the gym.

Emotions immediately swell up inside of Cara. She is coming undone.

This is so unlike Cara. She doesn't cry in public. And she's heard the song before and never responded this way.

But this time it has triggered an unexpected reaction and she struggles to maintain self-control.

Cara and her father Frank always listened to the 2015 Flo Rida hit together before the start of her own basketball games.

Now the circumstances are different. Frank is not around. He passed away September 20, 2018 at age 48 from complications following his bone marrow transplant.

Cara tries to fill the void the best she can. Up until now, she's maintained a stoic front. But not anymore. Her resolve crumbles as the tears start falling.

Afraid of losing her composure in front of others, Cara rushes to a bathroom stall inside the girls' locker room. Her Brentsville varsity basketball teammate, Kendall Meunier, checks on her before locating Cara's mom, Cindy. Cindy comes in and comforts her daughter. She's never seen Cara this upset about her father's death. Cara, like Frank, internalizes her feelings well.

Finally, someone informs Brentsville head varsity girls basketball coach Eugene Baltimore of Cara's emotional state. Baltimore pulls Cara aside and tells her she is not alone. Her basketball family is by her side. But Baltimore remains concerned and wonders if she is too fragile to play.

Cara waves off the worries. She can handle this. And she does.

Her teammates have an off-night from the field. Cara, though, ramps up her game as the Tigers battle Seton. Cara scores a career-high 24 points, including 15 from the 3-point line, as the Tigers win in overtime 49-47.

Afterward, Cara is spent. She feels good about the victory and is grateful she snapped out of her moment of grief. But she can no longer hide her feelings. They are out in the open. Cindy believes this was a therapeutic moment.

Cara just misses her dad. And that won't ever



DAVID FAWCETT



« Brentsville freshman Cara Vollmer leads the varsity girls basketball team in total 3-pointers.

DAVID FAWCETT | INSIDENOVA

change.

"It was a hard night," Cara said.

Beyond being a doting father, Frank taught Cara the finer points of basketball, especially the art of shooting.

Elbows in. Arm extended upward in a smooth motion so that wrist and elbow are perfectly aligned with the basket.

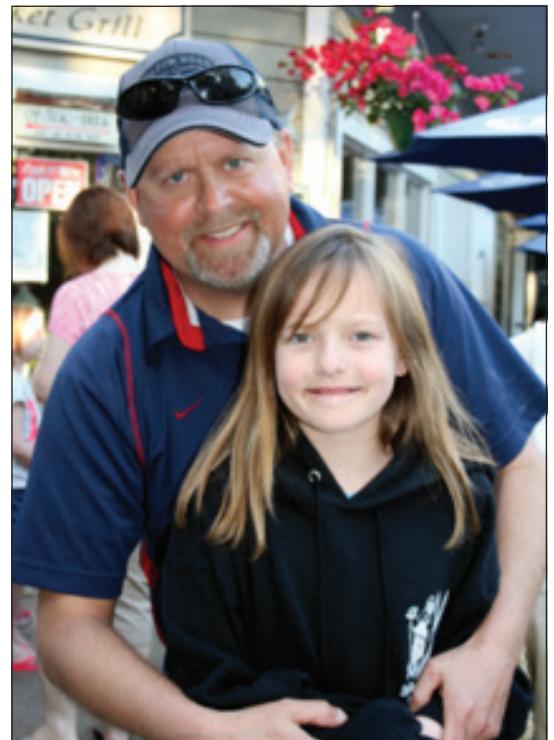
He also encouraged her to play aggressive, to keep her guard up and follow her shot.

Frank had a habit of whistling from the stands to get Cara's attention and remind her to pull her feet closer together. Cindy said the noise was annoying sometimes, but the ploy always worked.

"She'd do it," Cindy said. "He gave her a good foundation."

Softball was her first sport, but basketball soon became her passion and her focus.

Even as Frank grew sicker, Cara kept following his instructions. She became good enough to play for Brentsville's junior varsity as an eighth grader through an arrangement with nearby Nokesville Middle School. Since Nokesville does not have middle-school sports, athletes are allowed to par-



Cara Vollmer and her father Frank. Frank passed away September 20, 2018, at age 48 from complications following his bone marrow transplant.

SUBMITTED

VOLLMER » PAGE 16

Astros invite Scrubb to spring training



The Dodgers traded Andre Scrubb to the Astros in July. TULSA

» DAVID FAWCETT
dfawcett@insidenova.com

Hylton High School graduate Andre Scrubb is one of 19 non-roster invitees who will attend Houston Astros' major-league spring training. He is one of nine pitchers on that list.

The Astros will begin spring training with 59 players (31 pitchers, 28 position players). That total includes 40 players on the 40-man roster.

Astros pitchers and catchers are scheduled to arrive Feb. 13. The first full team workout is Feb. 17.

The Dodgers traded Scrubb to Houston in July for Tyler White. For the season, the right-hander went 6-1 with a 2.78 ERA with 76 strikeouts in 41 games.

Scrubb's 90-plus mph fastball, and his curveball impressed the

Astros.

Kevin Goldstein, special assistant to the general manager and player personnel for the Astros, said Scrubb's 6-4, 265-pound frame impressed Houston as well.

"We liked Andre because he is a power arm with a physical presence on the mound and a history of missing bats out of the bullpen," Goldstein said. "In addition to his mid-90s fastball, we liked his curveball which features considerable break. In terms of Andre's future development, he will need to cut down on walks moving forward."

After Los Angeles selected Scrubb in the eighth round of the 2016 Major League Baseball First-Year Draft out of High Point University, he quickly developed into

a prospect for the Dodgers. He's been named to two all-star games at the Single-A and Double-A levels and has a career record of 21-6 and a 2.37 ERA in 116 games.

LOCALS IN THE FRONTIER LEAGUE

The Lake Erie Crushers of the independent Frontier League traded Woodbridge graduate Logan Farrar to the Schaumburg Boomers Jan. 18 for outfielder Dylan Jones.

Farrar hit .308 with three homers in 20 games last season for Lake Erie.

Battlefield graduate Jett Manning signed Dec. 19 with the Sussex County Minors. And the Crushers exercised their 2020 contract option on Battlefield graduate Steven Kraft.

VOLLMER » FROM PAGE 15

participate in athletics at Brentsville.

And now she's a key player as a freshman this season on the Tigers' varsity.

"She knows where to be and she shoots with confidence," Baltimore said.

Cara is part of the Tigers' youth movement that has helped the team to an 14-3 start. Brentsville only has one senior on its nine-player-roster. Six sophomores and two freshmen fill out the other eight slots.

Cara switches between starter and reserve, but always gets plenty of minutes on the court.

"Last year I told her she can't play nervous or scared," Baltimore said. "And she has done that. She has no fear. She's not intimidated."

She leads the Tigers in 3-pointers (35) and most interesting nickname. She goes by Bob.

Cara first went by "Bob" in kindergarten when she asked her teacher to call her that name. Cindy doesn't know why Cara picked Bob, but she stopped it and made sure everyone called her daughter by her proper name.

But "Bob" resurfaced after Cindy shared the story with one of Cara's fellow freshman teammates, Alden Yergey. The name stuck this time.

Some of Brentsville coaches yell out her given name during a game, but others use Bob. Cara prefers the latter.

"When she hears Bob, she knows you are talking to her," Cindy said.

Cara doesn't talk much about her dad. But she thinks about him constantly. Frank's life is a testament to perseverance.

A sports enthusiast both as a coach and a participant, Frank received a heart transplant when he was 21. He remained healthy until 2017 when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

The treatment for that illness required him to receive a bone marrow transplant. His oldest son Christian, now a junior at James Madison University, was the donor. In May of 2018, the family went to a hospital in Boston for the transplant. It was the only place in the country that had successfully performed this procedure on someone who also had a heart transplant.

Frank returned home in August so the kids could get ready for the upcoming school year, but he did not improve and passed away the following month.

In his absence, Cara finds different ways to honor her father.

She changed her uniform number to 13 while playing for Brentsville's junior varsity basketball team. Frank wore that same number. In her first game played on Nov. 13, she scored 13 points.

Cara isn't heavy into numerology, but the connection was too obvious to ignore.

"He's definitely here," Cara recalls feeling after that game.

Cara also wears a necklace with her father's thumb print on it. She must remove the necklace by tip-off, but everyone honors Cara's one request.

"Don't make her do it before she has to," Cindy said.

Not in their house or anywhere else.

David Fawcett is the sports editor of InsideNoVa. Reach him at dfawcett@insidenova.com



Cara Vollmer first began playing for Brentsville as an eighth grader on the junior varsity basketball team.

BILL KAMENJAR | FOR INSIDENOVA

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL LEADERS

(THROUGH JAN. 28)

BOYS				
SCORING	School	Games	Points	Average
Coretez Lewis	John Paul	17	375	22.1
Ethan Wilson	Osborn Park	18	371	20.6
Hayden James	Heritage Christian	9	182	20.2
DJ Slaughter	John Paul	17	321	18.9
John Paul Vander Woude	Seton	19	349	18.4
Adric Howe	Colgan	17	295	17.4
Nathan Arrington	Hylton	17	294	17.3
Andrew Nguyen	Seton	18	305	17.0
Trevor Bounds	Battlefield	19	313	16.5
Tazir Smith	Colgan	18	268	14.9
Jordan Radford	Battlefield	19	277	14.6
Tyrell Harris	Potomac	17	246	14.5
Cory Wilson	Gar-Field	18	256	14.2
Kyle Honore	Potomac	18	226	12.6
Zack Blue	Patriot	18	225	12.5
Courtenay Houston	Hylton	18	219	12.2
Jaden McKenzie	Stonewall	17	203	12.0
Kenneth Clark	Forest Park	16	190	11.9
Shane Feden	Woodbridge	18	213	11.8
Brysen Boots	Manassas Park	15	176	11.7
Michael Cooper	Woodbridge	18	205	11.4
Jack Vander Woude	Seton	19	211	11.1
Manny Ojo	Osborn	13	141	10.9
Chance Hollingsworth	Osborn	14	146	10.4
Justice Dixon	Freedom	11	111	10.1
Kelby Garnett	Hylton	18	181	10.1
3-POINTERS	School	Games	Total	Average
John Paul Vander Woude	Seton	19	59	3.1
Ethan Wilson	Osborn Park	18	46	2.6
Andrew Nguyen	Seton	18	42	2.3
Anthony Jackson	Potomac	13	29	2.2
Trevor Bounds	Battlefield	19	40	2.1
Brysen Boots	Manassas Park	15	31	2.1
Kyle Honore	Potomac	18	36	2.0
Jack Vander Woude	Seton	19	38	2.0
Jace Garza	Manassas Park	14	26	1.9
Noah Wheatley	Colgan	17	31	1.8

Zack Blue	Patriot	18	30	1.7
Manny Ojo	Osborn	13	20	1.5
Tyler Smith	Forest Park	18	26	1.5
DJ Slaughter	John Paul	17	24	1.4
Jerome Warrick	Gar-Field	19	26	1.4
Shane Feden	Woodbridge	18	24	1.3
Josh Newland	Osborn	14	18	1.3
Courtenay Houston	Hylton	18	23	1.3
GIRLS				
SCORING	School	Games	Points	Average
Hannah Williams	Stonewall	18	410	22.8
Alyssa Andrews	Colgan	17	363	21.4
Celebria Peacock	Freedom	13	233	17.9
Kat Jenks	Battlefield	19	329	17.3
Alden Yergey	Brentsville	17	262	15.4
Mary Pennefather	Seton	14	210	15.0
Naytavia Lipscomb	Potomac	18	250	13.9
Kennedy Fuller	Colgan	17	229	13.5
Gabby Garrison	Brentsville	17	213	12.5
Jo Raflo	Osborn Park	19	231	12.2
Amiyana Williams	Osborn	13	145	11.2
Norah Burgess	Seton	14	156	11.2
Angel Jones	Forest Park	15	161	10.7
Elena Bertrand	Patriot	18	189	10.5
Lauren Palmateer	Forest Park	14	140	10.0
Caitlin Blackman	Patriot	18	180	10.0
3-POINTERS	School	Games	Total	Average
Mary Pennefather	Seton	14	39	2.8
Jo Raflo	Osborn Park	19	46	2.4
Lauren Palmateer	Forest Park	14	32	2.3
Kat Jenks	Battlefield	19	41	2.2
Cara Vollmer	Brentsville	17	35	2.1
Josie Rodas	Colgan	17	33	2.0
Alden Yergey	Brentsville	17	32	1.9
Norah Burgess	Seton	14	21	1.5
Gabby Garrison	Brentsville	17	25	1.5
Ana Umana	Stonewall	15	22	1.5
Victoria Rodgers	Seton	14	20	1.4
Emma Hickey	Seton	14	20	1.4
Hannah Williams	Stonewall	18	25	1.4
Maryan Yusaf	Stonewall	18	25	1.4

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL STANDINGS

(THROUGH JAN. 28)

BOYS		
CARDINAL	District	Overall
Potomac	8-1	15-3
Hylton	6-3	8-10
Woodbridge	5-3	10-8
Forest Park	5-4	10-8
Colgan	4-4	10-8
Freedom	2-6	4-13
Gar-Field	0-9	2-17
CEDAR RUN	District	Overall
Patriot	6-1	14-4
John Champe	5-2	13-5
Battlefield	4-3	11-8
Osborn	2-5	5-14
Stonewall	2-5	6-12
Osborn Park	2-5	8-10
CLASS 3 NORTHWESTERN	District	Overall
George Mason	6-1	9-7
Central-Wood	5-1	14-1
Skyline	4-3	12-5
William Monroe	4-3	9-7
Manassas Park	3-4	7-8
Warren County	2-5	5-12
Brentsville	0-7	3-13
OTHERS	District	Overall
John Paul	n/a	8-9
Seton	8-1	13-6
Heritage Christian	3-1	4-5
GIRLS		
CARDINAL	District	Overall
Forest Park	8-1	11-6
Woodbridge	6-2	8-7
Colgan	6-2	12-5
Potomac	5-4	8-11
Freedom	3-5	3-11
Hylton	2-7	3-15
Gar-Field	0-9	0-16
CEDAR RUN	District	Overall
Osborn Park	7-0	14-5
Stonewall	5-2	12-6
Patriot	4-3	9-9
Battlefield	3-4	8-11
John Champe	2-5	6-11
Osborn	0-7	9-9
CLASS 3 NORTHWESTERN	District	Overall
William Monroe	7-0	14-2
George Mason	6-1	10-7
Brentsville	5-2	14-3
Central-Wood	3-3	5-10
Skyline	2-5	5-11
Warren County	1-6	2-15
Manassas Park	0-7	0-16
OTHERS	District	Overall
John Paul	0-0	11-5
Seton	4-0	11-3

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL SCHEDULES

JAN. 31 - FEB. 7

FRIDAY, JAN. 31

BOYS

- » William Monroe at Brentsville, 7 p.m.
- » Patriot at Stonewall Jackson, 7:30 p.m.
- » Central-Woodstock at Manassas Park, 7:30 p.m.
- » Gar-Field at Colgan, 7:30 p.m.
- » Potomac at Freedom, 7:30 p.m.
- » Forest Park at Woodbridge, 7:30 p.m.
- » John Champe at Osborn Park, 7:30 p.m.
- » Osborn at Battlefield, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS

- » William Monroe at Brentsville, 6 p.m.
- » Trinity Episcopal at John Paul, 6:30 p.m.
- » Osborn at Battlefield, 6 p.m.
- » John Champe at Osborn Park, 6 p.m.
- » Potomac at Freedom, 6 p.m.
- » Colgan at Gar-Field, 7:30 p.m.
- » Stonewall at Patriot, 7:30 p.m.
- » Woodbridge at Forest Park, 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, FEB. 1

BOYS



- » Freedom at Petersburg, 6 p.m.

TUESDAY, FEB. 4

BOYS

- » St. Christopher's at John Paul the Great, 6:30 p.m.
- » John Champe at Osborn, 7 p.m.
- » Brentsville at George Mason, 7 p.m.
- » Forest Park at Freedom, 7:30 p.m.
- » Manassas Park at William Monroe, 7:30 p.m.
- » Woodbridge at Hylton, 7:30 p.m.
- » Patriot at Osborn Park, 7:30 p.m.
- » Colgan at Potomac, 7:30 p.m.
- » Battlefield at Stonewall Jackson, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS

- » Seton at John Paul, 6 p.m.
- » Forest Park at Freedom, 6 p.m.
- » George Mason at Brentsville, 7:30 p.m.
- » Battlefield at Stonewall Jackson, 7:30 p.m.
- » Osborn at John Champe, 7 p.m.

- » Potomac at Colgan, 7:30 p.m.
- » Osborn Park at Patriot, 7:30 p.m.
- » Hylton at Woodbridge, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 5

BOYS

- » Brentsville at Fauquier, 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEB. 7

BOYS

- » Manassas Park at Woodberry Forest, 6 p.m.
- » Warren County at Brentsville, 7 p.m.
- » Colgan at Forest Park, 7:30 p.m.
- » Osborn at Osborn Park, 7:30 p.m.
- » Battlefield at Patriot, 7:30 p.m.
- » Gar-Field at Hylton, 7:30 p.m.
- » Stonewall at John Champe, 7:30 p.m.

GIRLS

- » Woodbridge at Freedom, 6 p.m.
- » Stonewall at John Champe, 6 p.m.
- » Colgan at Forest Park, 6 p.m.
- » Battlefield at Patriot, 6 p.m.
- » Osborn at Osborn Park, 6 p.m.
- » Gar-Field at Hylton, 6 p.m.
- » Brentsville at Warren County 7:30 p.m.

MILESTONE REACHED

Battlefield's Kat Jenks became the third girls basketball player to reach 1,000 career points Monday.

BILL KAMENJAR | FOR INSIDENOVA

The right balance

Hylton graduate Travon McMillian keeps all his options open

» DAVID FAWCETT
dfawcett@insidenova.com

Travon McMillian likes having a plan in place rather than shooting from the hip. It's how he operates, but even more so right now as he balances his football aspirations with the reality of every-day living.

While understanding he might never get another shot at the NFL, the Hylton High School graduate refuses to relinquish that dream yet either.



DAVID FAWCETT

That's why McMillian is ready on a moment's notice to work out. If the schedule allows and he spots an open space outside, he pops his trunk and removes the cones and ladders so he can stay in shape in case an NFL team comes calling.

The flipside, though, is McMillian is also ready for life beyond football if his playing days are over. Knowing he needed to start this next phase without delay, McMillian has put his finance degree from Virginia Tech to good use by working as a financial analyst the last five months.

The dual strategy works. For now, he can pursue one opportunity without sacrificing the other by being pragmatic and hopeful at the same time.

"I've always tried to prepare myself if football ends," McMillian said.

A year ago, McMillian figured he had more time to hold off thinking about a job outside of football.

After rushing for over 1,000 yards in his one season at the University of Colorado as a graduate student, McMillian signed with the Pittsburgh Steelers as an undrafted rookie free



Travon McMillian hopes for another NFL shot. But if not, he's content working as a financial analyst. PITTSBURGH STEELERS

agent. The Steelers needed running backs and showed increased interest in him after his pro day when he ran a 4.47 40 and bench pressed 22 times.

The Steelers were the first NFL team to contact him about signing as a free agent. And McMillian agreed to terms just a few minutes before Indianapolis called.

At training camp, Pittsburgh head coach Mike Tomlin brought McMillian in front of the team and complimented him on some of his runs. But for all his momentary highlights, McMillian played sparingly during the preseason and was cut.

Afterward, Tomlin told McMillian the best way for him to make a team was through special teams, something

he was capable of, but was never asked to do in college.

"I did everything I could, but when you are getting three to four reps at practice you can't show what you can do when everyone else is getting 28 to 30," McMillian said of his experience in the Steelers' training camp.

McMillian said the XFL wanted to include him in their draft. But he declined. If he was going to receive another look from an NFL team, he wanted to stay healthy rather than wearing his body down.

Before the coronavirus shut things down, McMillian helped train high school football players as part of Kevin Johnson's staff. Johnson tutored McMillian in high school and McMillian

likes to work with players who were once in his position as highly recruited college prospects.

He has plenty to offer. He signed with Virginia Tech after a prolific career at Hylton. As a dual-threat quarterback he threw for 1,466 yards and ran for 1,668 yards and 23 touchdowns his senior season in earning all-state honors. He finished his career as Hylton's second all-time leading rusher with 3,802 yards.

The Hokies converted McMillian to running back in college and made him their featured ball carrier in 2015. As a red-shirt freshman, McMillian responded by rushing for 1,043 yards in becoming the first Virginia Tech running back to top the 1,000-yard rushing mark since David Wilson in 2011. McMillian was a third-team all-ACC pick by the media and won the VaSID's offensive rookie of the year award.

But after Frank Beamer retired as head coach following the 2015 season, McMillian's production dropped under new head coach Justin Fuente. With Fuente's system rotating running backs, McMillian rushed for 671 yards in 2016 and 439 in 2017.

Feeling like there was no place for him on the football team anymore, McMillian graduated from Virginia Tech and signed with Colorado, where he rushed for 1,009 yards in 2018.

Based on his experiences, McMillian enjoys sharing with up-and-coming players what to look for, whether in recruiting or from a defensive scheme. No matter what happens, this much is true: McMillian will never totally let go of the game.

"It's always going to be a part of me," McMillian said.

David Fawcett is the sports editor for InsideNoVa. Reach him at dfawcett@insidenova.com

LOCAL BRIEFS

RIGNEY TAKEN FOURTH OVERALL

Another pro lacrosse draft and another first-round selection for Patriot graduate Thomas Rigney.

Ten days after the Denver Outlaws picked the Army defenseman with the No. 5 overall pick in the Major League Lacrosse Draft, the Chrome Lacrosse Club took Rigney with the fourth overall pick May 13 in the Premier League Lacrosse Draft.



THOMAS RIGNEY

A senior at West Point, Rigney was a team captain and an honorable mention all-American selection during a 2020 season shortened because of the coronavirus pandemic. West Point's graduation ceremony is June 13 with President Trump delivering the commencement address.

Rigney, a starter since his junior season, was a second-team all-Patriot League selection in 2019.

Instead of having a full season, the seven-team PLL has announced it will hold a 20-game, two-week tournament without fans July 25-Aug. 9.

STROMAN ANNOUNCES COLLEGE CHOICE FRIDAY

To celebrate his 17th birthday, Patriot High School junior Jalen Stroman will announce Friday his college destination. Stroman narrowed his selections to Virginia Tech, Virginia and Duke.

Stroman's older brother Greg, a 2014 Stonewall Jackson High School graduate, was an all-ACC cornerback at Virginia Tech and a 2018 seventh-round pick by the Washington Redskins. In keeping with family tradition, Greg's three finalists out of high school were also Virginia Tech, Virginia and Duke.

A three-year starter, the 6-foot-1,

190-pound Stroman displayed his versatility on both sides of the ball in helping lead the Pioneers to a 10-2 record in 2019. He punted and returned kicks, while playing wide receiver and safety. He was first-team all-Cedar Run District on defense and second-team all-district on offense.

NO PWSL SEASON

The Prince William Swim League announced May 12 it has cancelled its 2020 season due to the coronavirus outbreak.

The seven-week season was scheduled to run from June 13 to Aug. 1. The league, which has fielded teams since 1973, is broken down into eight divisions with three teams each.

» BY DAVID FAWCETT
dfawcett@insidenova.com

The Virginia High School League's Executive Committee voted 34-1 Monday to delay the start of the 2020-21 high school sports season by implementing a compressed high school sports scheduling plan that would run as of now from Dec. 28-June 26.

The schedule would begin with the winter sports season, starting in late December, followed by the traditional fall sports season and ending with the spring sports season. The dates for each season are based on current Phase 3 information and guidance. Those dates could change if the guidance changes.

"The dates that you see right now might not be the dates that are etched in stone," said VHSL executive director Billy Haun. "There could be some adjustments as we move forward. If we were to move beyond Phase III or move backwards from Phase III, the Virginia High School League would have to look at a different plan and how the difference in the data affects us."

Monday's vote means that high school football and other fall sports would be played March 1 to May 1 with practices beginning Feb. 15.

The revamped schedule was the third model Haun presented to the executive committee July 15 for the upcoming school year and the one that was expected to draw the most support.

Under the compressed schedule format, each sport would play 60 percent of its typically allotted regular-season games. Depending on the postseason format, more regular season games can be added if the postseason is reduced.

The VHSL will meet Aug. 24 to present a postseason format to the executive committee. The executive committee will then vote on a final proposal Aug. 31. Un-



The Virginia public high school sports season is scheduled to begin in December.

BILL KAMENJAR | FOR INSIDENOVA

Going forward

VHSL adopts compressed 2020-21 sports schedule

der the model approved Monday, football state playoffs would finish May 1, a week later than the other fall sports' seasons.

Once the state playoff schedule is set, then schools can begin scheduling backwards the makeup of regionals and regular-season matchups.

With the condensed schedule in place under the current guidelines, member schools must determine the number of district games allowed and whether there is room for non-district games, including ones with rivals or ones that are part of an invitational tournament.

The overlap of schedules for each season could also impact multi-sport athletes, forcing them to choose one sport

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SEASON » PAGE 17

Changes made to VHSL 2020-21 sports schedules

	Sport	Original start date	State final date	New season dates
Fall	Football	Aug. 28	Dec. 12	March 1-May 1
	Volleyball	Aug. 24	Nov. 20-22	March 1-May 1
	Cross Country (Boys/Girls)	Aug. 26	Nov. 13-14	March 1-May 1
	Golf (Co-ed)	Aug. 3	Oct. 12-13	March 1-May 1
	Cheerleading	Aug. 26	Nov. 7	March 1-May 1
	Field hockey	Aug. 24	Nov. 13-14	March 1-May 1
Winter	Basketball(B/G)	Nov. 30	March 11-13	Dec. 28-Feb. 20
	Wrestling	Nov. 30	Feb. 19-20	Dec. 28-Feb. 20
	Swimming (B/G)	Nov. 30	Feb. 18-20	Dec. 28-Feb. 20
	Indoor track (B/G)	Nov. 30	Feb. 26-27	Dec. 28-Feb. 20
	Gymnastics	Nov. 30	Feb. 19-20	Dec. 28-Feb. 20
Spring	Baseball/Softball	March 15	June 11-12	April 26-June 26
	Track and field (B/G)	March 15	May 29	April 26-June 26
	Soccer (B/G)	March 15	June 11-12	April 26-June 26
	Lacrosse (B/G)	March 15	June 12	April 26-June 26
	Tennis (B/G)	March 15	June 10-12	April 26-June 26

AJ Shepard's taxing weekend

Summer baseball travel is nothing new for AJ Shepard or his family.

As a member of the nationally renowned Canes Baseball organization for the last four years, Shepard routinely competes at showcase tournaments primarily on the East Coast. Sometimes he'll fly to events, other times drive. Sometimes the tournaments are spread out on the calendar. Others require a quick turnaround.

Whatever the scenario, Shepard knows the drill. That's life on the travel-team circuit.

But this summer presented a different challenge for the 16-year-old Patriot High School catcher. Instead of entering the travel schedule with a full complement of games already under his belt from the spring, Shepard feels his body playing catchup.

Before the Canes began tournament play June 15, Shepard had competed in one scrimmage with his former high school Osbourn Park before the coronavirus outbreak cancelled the rest of

the spring sports season in mid-March. That's a long time in between games.

And while Shepard stayed in shape by conducting workouts at home and at a nearby field with other players, it was impossible to field an actual contest, let alone one right after the other.

No surprise, then, that Shepard was dragging a bit two weekends ago when he played in two tournaments over 10 days. His teams won both, but the tight time frame required nearly non-stop competition and a late-night eight-hour drive from Atlanta to Lynchburg to get from one tournament to the other.

Suffice to say, Shepard took off his first day home to collect himself.

"I was definitely a lot more tired," said Shepard. "Without high school baseball, I'm still getting back into things. I'm not



DAVID FAWCETT



Patriot's AJ Shepard is feeling the toll of no high school spring sports season. SUBMITTED

used to it. It's a mental drain."

Shepard's whirlwind started July 10 with his Canes 16U team attending the WWBA National Championships in Atlanta. The

Canes advanced to the July 17 final, which delayed his arrival for his next commitment: the North's Commonwealth Games opener that same day in Lynchburg.

Shepard and North head coach Mike Covington knew beforehand this was a possibility. But the Indiana commitment had no plan to back out. Once Shepard accepted Covington's invitation to play for the North, he kept his word.

After the Canes captured the title, Shepard briefly celebrated with his teammates, changed clothes and began the long drive to Lynchburg with his mother Jen at the wheel.

Jen is accustomed to these types of trips to the point that sometimes they blur all together. In keeping with a tradition that first began with her oldest son Jack's baseball career, she buys a few boxes of Hot Tamales beforehand for an extra boost of energy and then heads to the next destination.

On this night, the two broke up the monotony by listening to music and talking while making at least two stops for gas and food. Shepard offered to help, but Jen

SHEPARD » PAGE 17

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS SEASON
>> FROM PAGE 16

over another.

Current social distancing guidelines will impact transportation as well as attendance at sporting events.

One executive committee member asked about the possibility of allowing golf and cross country to compete in the fall since they are considered a "low-risk sport" or switched to the spring because of more suitable weather conditions.

SHEPARD >> FROM PAGE 16

gladly did all the driving. For her, this was part of the deal. It's not an everyday thing and there are limits to how far the family can stretch its schedule. But this was not one of those times.

"It was a neat opportunity for him to participate in [the Commonwealth Games] that focused on Virginia," Jen Shepard said. "I love supporting my son chasing his passion. As long as it's within reason, we'll do it."

Shepard and his mom checked into their Lynchburg hotel at 2 a.m. Saturday before Shepard got to the field later that morning for a 9:30 game. Shepard felt good for the first game, but lagged during his next two that day as the adrenaline began to wear off. That night, he slept well.

On July 19, Shepard played a key role in helping the North rally to an 8-3 win

But others expressed concerns about such a move in part because of the risk involved if the state goes back to Phase II in the fall and no sports are permitted to play. Equity concerns also factored into keeping fall sports in the same season.

The VHSL allowed schools to hold out-of-season workouts starting June 15. And it also suspended the July-August 2020 dead period so that out-of-season practices can continue.

But before out-of-season practices

can take place, schools must submit health plans to the Virginia Department of Education detailing how they will comply with strategies to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus in accordance with policies established by the Virginia Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Prince William County, Manassas City and Manassas Park school systems have not been approved yet to start out-of-season workouts.

over the East for the championship. With Shepard contributing an RBI single, the North scored all its runs in the bottom of the fifth to capture its 10th gold medal in 11 years.

"He really showed a lot of toughness," Covington said.

With so much uncertainty caused by the coronavirus, Shepard thought at one point he'd never play even baseball during the summer. There was too much risk.

He still prepared the best he could. Refusing to take any time off, even for the beach, Shepard structured a workout schedule that he diligently stuck with as everything remained up in the air.

Many times, Colgan pitcher and Virginia Tech commitment Ryan Kennedy joined Shepard for workouts. Other times, the two got together with two of Shepard's neighbors, Osbourn Park graduate and current UVA pitcher

Kyle Whitten and Patriot graduate Will Balkin, at a nearby park.

The sessions helped Shepard stay as sharp as possible, but it wasn't the same as competing on a regular basis to work on timing and rhythm.

That's why these summer tournaments fill the void in multiple ways.

Facing top-flight talent every time out, they help him regain what he missed out on during the spring. They make him feel more comfortable with the precautions in place to combat the coronavirus. And most of all he's playing.

That's life on the travel-team circuit now.

"It was a great dose of normal," Jen Shepard said. "Baseball is such a part of our lives."

David Fawcett is the sports editor for InsideNoVa/Prince William. Reach him at dfawcett@insidenova.com

LOCAL BRIEFS

UNITY REED HAS NEW MASCOT

Unity Reed High School (formerly Stonewall Jackson) will go by the Lions. The name was selected based on a survey handed out to Unity Reed students and staff. The Prince William County School Board has approved the change.

The Manassas school's former mascot was the Raiders. The school's color schemes (Cardinal red and Vegas gold) will remain the same. Unity Reed is in the process of creating a new logo.

Stonewall Jackson was renamed Unity Reed in honor of Arthur Reed, a long-time security assistant at the school. The name change was officially approved June 29 by the Prince William County School Board.

Superintendent Steve Walts recommended renaming Stonewall Jackson high school and middle schools in early June.

SCRUBB REACHES MAJORS

Hylton High School graduate Andre Scrubb made his Major League Baseball pitching debut Tuesday night as a member of the Houston Astros.

Facing his former organization, Scrubb pitched 3.2 innings in relief. He gave up no earned runs, struck out two and walked three in the Astros' 5-2 loss to the visiting Los Angeles Dodgers.

Scrubb replaced Joe Biagini on the Astros' 30-man roster Tuesday after Biagini went on the injured list with shoulder soreness.



Contact us today to place your ad!
 703-303-8713



WESLEY FINANCIAL GROUP, LLC

Timeshare Cancellation

Get your free information kit and see if you qualify:

888-670-0602

REACH VIRGINIA AD NETWORK

WE'RE HERE TO HELP YOUR BUSINESS OPEN

REACH OVER 1.5 MILLION Virginia Readers Weekly

Advertising Solutions starting at \$300

Contact this paper or Landon Clark - landonc@vpa.net to get started today.

American Standard Walk-In Tubs

WALK-IN BATHTUB SALE!

SAVE \$1,500

FREE! Savings Include an American Standard Right Height Toilet FREE! (\$500 Value)

AS SEEN ON TV

- Backed by American Standard's 140 years of experience
- Ultra low entry for easy entering & exiting
- Patented Quick Drain® Technology
- Lifetime Warranty on the bath AND installation, INCLUDING labor backed by American Standard
- 44 Hydrotherapy jets for an invigorating massage

Limited Time Offer! Call Today!

877-691-5591

Or visit: www.walkintubinfo.com/vapa

Orange County Public Schools
 Orange County, Virginia

SEEKING TO FILL THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

Instructional Specialist
 Teacher - Gifted & Talented • Teacher - Middle School Math
 Teacher - Grade 1 • Teacher - Special Education

The Orange County School Board does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, race, color, national origin, disability, religion, ancestry, age, marital status, pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, disability, status as a veteran, genetic information or any other characteristics protected by law in its employment practices or educational program and activities. Compliance inquiries should be directed to the Director of Human Resources, 200 Dailey Drive, Orange, VA 22960 or by phone at 540-661-4550.

Candidates must apply at www.ocss-va.org

LeafFilter GUTTER PROTECTION

INSTALLS ON NEW & EXISTING GUTTERS

BEFORE LeafFilter **AFTER LeafFilter**

MADE IN THE USA ACCREDITED BUSINESS LIFETIME WARRANTY A COMPANY OF ALHS

15% OFF AND! **10% OFF** + **5% OFF**

YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE* SENIOR & MILITARY DISCOUNTS TO THE FIRST 50 CALLERS!**

Promo Number: 285

CALL US TODAY FOR A FREE ESTIMATE **1-877-614-6667**

Mon-Thurs: 8am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 8am-5pm, Sun: 2pm-8pm EST

*For those who qualify. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. ** Offer valid at estimate only. CSLB# 1035795 DOPL #10783658-5501 License# 7656 License# 50145 License# 41354 License# 99338 License# 128344 License# 218294 License# 603 233 977 License# 2102212986 License# 2106212946 License# 2705132153A License# LEAFFNW822JZ License# WV056912 License# WC-29998-H17 Nassau HIC License# H01067000 Registration# 176447 Registration# HIC.0649905 Registration# C127229 Registration# C127230 Registration# 366920918 Registration# PC6475 Registration# IR731804 Registration# 13VH09953900 Registration# PA069383 Suffolk HIC License# 52229-H