

Locals represent rugby in Indy

BY **JEFFERY SIMMONS**
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(McMinnville, Tennessee)

Warren County is continuing to put itself on the map among the rugby community. Five local athletes went to Indianapolis over the weekend, competing with the Tennessee Tristars in the Mid Continent Rugby tournament.

Aiden Cary, Alexis Aramburo, Hayley Hutchins, Emilee Hale and Emily Fufts all made the cut for the Tristars, who saw their varsity team claim the title with a 3-0 record while the JV team finished 2-2. The local representatives were accompanied on the trip by WCHS girls rugby coach George Smartt, who was impressed by the showing from his players.

"They learned a lot of things from some great state coaches," said Smartt. "They're some of the finest kids you'll ever get the chance to meet. They enjoy what they're doing



Five members of the WCHS rugby team played in Indianapolis this weekend for the Tennessee Tristars. Pictured are, from left, Aiden Cary, Alexis Aramburo, coach George Smartt, Hayley Hutchins, Emilee Hale and Emily Fufts.

Photo provided

and they can't wait to bring back what they've learned to the team."

The Mid Continent tournament was the culmination of a three-week process for the

local rugby stars, who had to make the cut to make the trip. All five made two trips to

Nashville and one drive to Memphis a week for practice leading up to the event.

"We had a great set of parents helping out," said Smartt. "Carpools and long trips were needed to make every practice, but our parents made sure everybody made it each day."

The Warren County players got to mix in with one of the state's powerhouse programs. Columbia, last year's state champion, had 16 players in the fold. The quintet held their own, going hard during a strenuous training period.

"The workouts were extensive. They ran 10 100-yard sprints while cycling in push-ups and crunches," said Smartt. "They were motivated. And they're working to bring it to our program as well."

The girls rugby team, which won the state title in 2016, plays its home games at Nunley Stadium and is part of the Middle Tennessee Rugby Conference.

Vrabel expecting growing pains, high expectations

NASHVILLE (AP) — Mike Vrabel has been around the NFL long enough to know that he will have some growing pains as a first-time head coach.

His goal with the Tennessee Titans is pretty basic.

Don't make the same mistake twice.

"There's going to be a lot of things that are going to come up for the first time ...," Vrabel told The AP.

"I'm going to make mistakes. I'm not going to make too many of them hopefully and not make the same mistake twice. And learn from the mistake and be able to ask for advice."

Vrabel seemingly has been destined to be an NFL head coach for years, even during his 14-year career as a linebacker with Pittsburgh, New England and Kansas City.

The only question after Vrabel started coaching first as an assistant at his alma mater at Ohio State and then the NFL's Houston Texans was which team would hire him first.

The Titans had tried men with prior experience as NFL head coaches in Ken Whisenhunt and Mike Mularkey. Whisenhunt was fired in November 2015 with a 3-20 record, while Mularkey was fired in January despite consecutive 9-7 seasons and the franchise's first playoff victory in 14 years.

Controlling owner Amy Adams Strunk and general manager Jon Robinson, who first met Vrabel when both men worked in New England, hired Vrabel five days after firing Mularkey as the team's 19th head coach.

Vrabel filled his coaching

staff with a combination of experience and youth. He convinced Matt LaFleur, who also interviewed for the Titans' head coaching job, to be his offensive coordinator and lured Dean Pees out of retirement to be his defensive coordinator.

Pees, who coached Vrabel in New England, said he always knew Vrabel would be a great coach someday even if he didn't know if it would be in college or the NFL.

"The thing about Mike - he's everything that you expect and want out of a player," Pees said.

"He's tough, he's an over-achiever, he's smart as heck. He's got an incredible work ethic, so when I'm watching him and watching his style of coaching I'm not surprised one bit at any of it to be honest with you."



Post 173 thirsty for wins

Jeffery Simmons photo
Bryan Bynum fires to the plate for Post 173 during Saturday's game against Tuscaloosa's Post 34.

The 15U Post 173 baseball team had a great showing in the Dr Pepper Invitational held at Patrick Ramsey Field over the weekend. The team won two of its three games against teams from Tullahoma, Tuscaloosa and Columbia.

BANANA DAY PRIZE WINNERS

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GAS GRILL

JIMMY HASTON
COOLER

RICHARD MANN
ICE CREAM MAKER

PAUL LOWMAN
6-MONTH SUBSCRIPTION

FAYE TALBERT
3-MONTH SUBSCRIPTION

DOLORES ADCOCK
3-MONTH SUBSCRIPTION

Thanks to everyone who came by the office to enjoy a banana split with us. It was a fun day for all of us.

Southern Standard



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