

# Borovillelins win seventh straight state title

Being categorized as a senior may come off as derogatory to some. The Borovillelins take it as a nod to their experience. The Midstate volleyball team, which features locals Franklin Fisher and Tommy Myers, recently won their seventh straight title in the 50+ division of the Tennessee Senior Olympics. The Brovilleilins, who draw their name from a mash-up of their hometowns of Franklin, Murfreesboro and McMinnville, finished a perfect 8-0, despite competing against players younger than they are. "Most of our players would actually be eligible to play in the 60+ division," said Fisher, the longtime volleyball

coach at WCHS who retired with the most wins in program history in 2013. "It's a great bunch of guys who still love to go out and play. Everybody has a real love for the game." Fisher has played for several years with the Borovillelins, which also includes Mike Vesely, Steve Freeman, Jim Horenkamp, Keith Vaughn and Charlie Woodard. Myers joined this year and was effective working as an outside hitter, barely missing a beat from his playing days with Fisher. "Tommy and I played travel volleyball back in the '80s. We've also had years playing on and off in the local co-ed leagues," said Fisher. "He really contributed to our success."



The Borovillelins, which features two local volleyball players, won the 50-plus division in the Tennessee Senior Olympics. Members of the team are, from left, Mike Vesely, Steve Freeman, Jim Horenkamp, Tommy Myers, Franklin Fisher, Keith Vaughn and Charlie Woodard.

The Borovillelins breezed through round-robin play, then were able to stay perfect

through a double-elimination tournament to take the title. The victory qualified the team for nationals next year, which will be held in Albuquerque, N.M. The team is leaving open the possibility of attending nationals, even getting encouragement to go from Kevin Moore – a McMinnville resident who was part of the state championship team in the 55+ division.

If the team made the trip, its ability to compete will be based on a group who has bonded over the years into a fierce group. "There are really no stars out on squad. We have a great group of guys who communicate really well," said Fisher. "I'm the luckiest guy around because some great players let me tag along and be a part of the fun."

Fisher makes his presence known on the defensive side, where he's still able to cover the net while also providing quick hands on the back row for digs. If he has it his way, Fisher will be playing in every age group the Senior Olympics will offer. "I think volleyball is a sport you can play forever. It's fun for all ages," he said.

# Puzzlemania

PUZZLES ON PAGE 6A

## solutions

### CELEBRITY CIPHER

"I love just how beautiful Vancouver is. I mean, everywhere you look it's just mountains and ocean." — Emma Bell

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## Sports Spotlight

Continued from page 1B

Three years later, youth coaches are wondering when the tournaments will come. While polling all 22 coaches in boys and girls leagues ages 7 and up, one compliment was nearly universal. Everybody loves the fields at McMinnville Civic Center. "We have the best fields around," said Aaron Gudat, coach of Aaron's Heat and Air who also helps with

Team Tennessee, a travel team based out of Knoxville. "These are the best fields in Tennessee," added Charlie Adams, who also coaches in the league and on the week-ends for travel ball. Don McBee, a longtime league commissioner when the youth leagues were run by the Warren County Youth Baseball and Softball Association, wishes the improvements would've been made even sooner. "When we ran the leagues, the fields were covered with ankle-deep sand. We have really nice fields now," said McBee. "You wonder what would have happened if we had that kind of facility back then?" And yet, many of the local coaches who have travel teams don't get to be the defacto home team in weekend tournaments. McMinnville Civic Center hasn't seen a flood of weekend tournaments, especially youth tournaments. A USSSA baseball tournament was held last summer, as well as an SEAA slow-pitch tournament for youth girls. Parks and Recreation director Scott McCord estimates 15 weekend tournaments are held each year, almost all men's slow-pitch softball or adult co-ed softball. Athletic director Terry Beard, hired in February 2016, offered an explanation on why tournaments haven't flocked to town. "We have been told we have the nicest fields teams have played on, but the biggest complaint we got from directors is they can't make money off the gate," said Beard. "The director said, 'If this was fenced in, I'd have tournaments here all the time.'" One director charged a \$200 gate fee to teams in lieu of charging daily admission, something Beard believes can make up the difference for organizers. Nick Hollis, a longtime travel coach who has taken local teams to sev-

eral states for tournaments, has heard the same in his dealing with tournament directors. "There isn't a good way to collect gate fees. Tournament directors make their money from gate fees," said Hollis. "Without our facility being enclosed, they can't effectively control a gate. "We also lack accommodations locally. We don't have the hotels to house 30-plus teams." Property tax relief is currently under consideration in attempts to attract a new hotel to Warren County, a \$10 million development proposed to go on Sparta Street. Parks and Recreation officials said they haven't considered a fence to enclose the parks. "I don't know if it would fit our park. Would you want to see a fence surrounding our fields?" asked McCord. "When I came here and I saw the layout, I knew we had something special here. You go to other parks and they're concrete and clovers. People come here and you hear several times, 'You have trees.'" McCord mentioned at one state tournament, the city gated the area and provided employees to collect gate fees – an all-hands-on-deck move that may not be feasible on multiple occasions, nor an assurance people won't circumvent the gates due to the many access points to the fields. City officials have reached out to directors to bring in more tournaments, as well as considered holding their own tournaments. All options are still on the table, aside from fencing the area. "I wouldn't want to see a fence around this place. We have a swimming pool, tennis courts and Jungle Jym," said Beard. "We're about to have a skate park. We have a lot of things that separate us from the average concrete jungle."



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