JULY 2020

# LAKE COUNTRY STATIS



**MULTI-TALENTED REAGAN FOLK** 





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#### LAKE COUNTRY UNITED FC Player Profile



#### **KYLEJORDAN** BEASLEY

Height: 5'9 Weight: 135 lbs. GPA: 4.06

My name is Kyle Beasley and I am 16 years old. I am a rising Junior at Lake Oconee Academy. I play defensive midfielder for Lake Country United F.C. 04 Elite Boys Team. I started playing soccer when I was four years old and I have been in love with the sport ever since. For me, soccer is my safe space. I play soccer because it relaxes me and it allows me to forget everything going on in the world and focus on what I love. Up until my freshman year, everything I knew about soccer came from YouTube, middle school coaches, and recreation soccer leagues. Freshman year was my first year of club soccer. I started my club soccer career at M.A.Y.S.A. (Madison Area Youth Soccer Association). While I was playing for them Coach Tim Gilbert, from LCUFC, invited me to attend some pick up soccer

games. There I met many of the LCUFC players and I had a lot of fun. When it was over, I knew that was an environment that I had to be a part of. The brotherhood, love, respect, and work ethic that all the guys share is second to none. At the end of the season I joined Lake Country United. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

As I stated earlier, I play soccer because I love it, but that is not the only reason. Everyone has something or someone that motivates them to push and keep going every day. For me, that someone is my mom. My mom has sacrificed and continues to sacrifice countless things so that I can have a great life. Something that I will never forget that my mom did for me was on my 11th birthday; not only did my mom surprise me with a pool party, but also a better life. While I was at a friend's house that day, my mom was hard at work, moving our things out of our house and into a new one in Greensboro, GA. My mom moved away from all of her friends and everything that was familiar to her so that I could have an amazing education and opportunities that I might not have access to elsewhere. To this day it still amazes me. That is just one of countless amazing things that my mom has done for me. For her, I will always be grateful. This is why I work really hard in school and soccer so that one day I can give my mom an even better life so she will never have to worry again. So you could definitely say that my mom is my hero.

When I am not training or working, I enjoy hanging out with friends, going on the lake, and watching Netflix and YouTube.



#### **Publication Team**

Publisher: Cathy Clark Content Coordinator: Joe Choynski Designer: Katie Lawrence Photography: jCollins Photography

#### Advertising

Contact: Cathy Clark Email: cclark@bestversionmedia.com Phone: 404-580-6656

#### Feedback/Ideas/Submissions:

Have feedback, ideas or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 1st of the previous month. Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas, and photos to: cclark@bestversionmedia.com.

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#### **Content Submission Deadlines**

Content Due	Edition Date
October 10	November
November 10	December
December 10	January
lanuary 10	February
ebruary 10	March
March 10	April
April 10	May
May 10	June
lune10	July
luly 10	August
August 10	September
September 10	October

## IN THE SUMMERTIME WHEN THE WEATHER IS HOT YOU CAN STRETCH RIGHT UP AND TOUCH THE SKY ...

~ Mungo Jerry, In the Summertime



CATHY CLARK

It might be hard to be as optimistic as ol' Mungo Jerry given the headlines of the past few months...the sky doesn't always look so "touchable." But it's at least starting to look a little closer!...

The businesses of the Lake Country have been able to survive thanks to the generosity and communal spirit of its residents...and Lake Country Sports is no different. We know many of our sponsors have had it tough the past few months, but they've all been unwavering in their continued support of our magazine. The word "hero" may be thrown around a little too loosely these days, but believe me — to the LCS team, these people are indeed heroes! We literally could not do it without them.

In fact, not only have we managed to keep all of our sponsors on board through this stretch of rocky road, we're ecstatic to announce that we've actually expanded the roster! Lake Country Sports is immensely proud to add Twisted Pine Woodworks and

Engraving and Boat Works to the team. Both companies are top grade in their respective fields, and represent the qualities we think best represent this community at large: talented, dedicated, professional...and, of course, huge sports fans! So give them a call, we know you'll be glad you did.

The immediate future of high school sports is uncertain, but we're fortunate to have such committed recreation departments in our backyards; check out the camps and events planned for the coming month — they're fantastic outlets for the frustrated student athlete in your home. And also, please give Marc Davenport's article on the Lake Country United soccer club a good read; it's an inspiring piece about just how deep sporting passions run in the Lake Country, and how resilient these participants are in keeping their athletic dreams alive.

I don't know about you...but pretty much everything I've written above screams 'America' to me: generosity, dedication, professionalism, resiliency — and sports! Lots of sports!



Happy Birthday, America! cathy clark







#### NEW COACHES at PCHS!

**Putnam County High School** wishes to welcome the following new coaches:

> Taylor Fernandes **Head Softball**

La'Patrick Marshall **Head Boys Basketball** 

> Mike Phiel **Head Baseball**

Jackson Williamson Asst. Football

#### **Durhamtown Off Road Park** Announces July Events



**Durhamtown Jeepin' in July** Saturday, July 11 8am -Sunday, July 12, 6pm Two days of Jeepin, with the trails open ALL NIGHT. Time to wheel the creek crawl and all the obstacles at NIGHT! Trail side / overland camping is available as well. Come

out and stay for the weekend. CASH PRIZE \$1000 for the fastest rig on the obstacle

#### **Durhamtown Family MX Series Summer Fun Run**

Saturday, 11 July 2020 from 07:00-17:30 EDT

Join Durhamtown for a fun day of sunshine, snow cones and racing hosted by Team Sketchy Racing! Racing is \$30 for the first class and \$25 for each additional class. There is a \$10 entry fee per person including the racer. Ages 8 and under are free. CASH ONLY. Pro Mx registration ends at 8:30am on race day with the riders meeting at that time at the red barn then practice and racing starting at 9:00am. They will NOT be having the night time peewee races on this race date. Race orders are not created until after registration is closed.

Durhamtown Off Road Park is located at 2350 Randolph Church Rd, Union Point. For more information, call 706-622-4108 or visit their website at durhamtown.com.



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## The Multi-talented Reagan Folk

By Joe Choynski Photos contributed by Sara Folk

Finding an activity in life that you both truly enjoy and excel at is no mean feat; some people take years to find their "calling," and others never do. We celebrate those that discover their talents early in life, knowing that it can help provide a path towards fulfillment, both internally and externally.

But what if it's not just one activity? What if it's two? If dedication is critical to success, surely a decision has to be made on where to marshall one's resources...so which path does one follow? If a person really wants to excel at either...it's impossible to do both, right?

Not according to Reagan Folk, it's not.

A highly successful dual-sport freshman at Morgan County High School, Reagan somehow manages to win awards and accolades in both golf and volleyball, while maintaining a straight-A grade average. "It's difficult being a successful student athlete, let alone being a successful dual-sport student athlete," says mom Sara. "She's often rushing from one sport practice to another on the same day, doing homework and studying in the car on the way to and from practices...followed by late dinners and late nights at home, completing the homework that didn't get finished in the car...she really pushes herself."

It's a drive that's reflected in Reagan's philosophy on competition: "Don't ever walk away from competition knowing you didn't give 100% effort." Her conviction in those words is evident in not just the long list of victories she's achieved in both sports, but her sparkling academic record as well; she's currently ranked 9th in her class, excels in advanced math and science, and is a member of the National Junior Honor Society.

For such an obviously motivated and active person, Reagan surprisingly describes herself as "typically pretty easy-going." "I'm a hard worker," she explains, "but I also like to be silly and have fun. I give it my everything when I practice, but then I also enjoy downtime with my family after long days of competing."

And it's through her close family connectivity that the seeds of her athletic career were planted. "I tried lots of different sports and activities growing up," recounts Reagan. "None really stuck until my dad put a golf club in my hand when I was 7 years old, and my golf game just grew from there. My mom played volleyball, and we thought it would be a fun team sport for me to play in addition to golf. One is more individually-focused, and the other more teamoriented, but golf and volleyball complement each other very well."

LAKE COUNTRY SPORTS

Though she's just entering high school this coming fall, Reagan already has an impressive amount of experience in both sports. She's played on the school golf team for the past three years, and individual tournament golf for the past seven; on the volleyball side of the ledger, she's played on a club team for three years, and two years on her school team.

Of course, along with the playing comes

training — a lot of it. "I work out with a personal trainer a couple times a week," explains Reagan. "Most of the exercises focus on core strength, which is important in both golf and volleyball. I try to get to the golf course at least a couple times a week to practice. During volleyball season, we train 2-3 days a week, usually running drills. And even

Between the two disciplines, there are obviously a number of instructors, coaches and trainers that have assisted Reagan

when I'm at home, I practice volleyball

with my sister in the driveway."

particular person that she credits with her success. "My dad has always been my main coach," she grins. "I appreciate that he always believes in me, no matter what. He's always willing to give up his time to

about each sport? "Other than winning

I compete in tournament golf with

some players that have disabilities,

strength and determination.

is hitting the perfect shot," she reflects.

"It doesn't happen often because it's so

difficult to do, but there's no feeling like it.

My favorite part of volleyball is being part

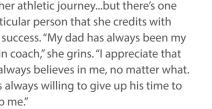
of a team and working together to win; my

teammates are always there to encourage

me when I need it."

to continue golf after and I've come to really admire their

> hard work and determination, Reagan is excelling in her academics and both sports." He smiles proudly. "We couldn't be more proud of her, and are excited to see what her future brings!"



So what does she enjoy, in particular, a tournament, my favorite part of golf

on her athletic journey...but there's one

And Reagan has found her athletic pursuits to be rewarding far beyond the gratification of competition. "I compete in tournament golf with some players that have disabilities, and I've come to really admire their strength and determination. Golf is the hardest game to play — and for these girls to overcome their challenges and be great competitive players is inspirational to me."

#### Reagan is already planning graduation; she's not sure what college she'd like to play for, but she'd prefer to stay in the Southeast, where she's close to home — and her strongest fan base. "We do all we can to support her," says dad Ryan. "Through her









## A Quick Overview of Reagan Folk's Athletic Career(s)

#### Golf

Started playing tournament golf at 8 years old

First hole-in-one at age 13

Earned 2019 Player of the Year, Girls 12-14, on the Southeastern Junior Golf Tour (SJGT), and has won numerous other awards and accolades over the years

Home course is Cuscowilla

Elite Junior at The Reynolds Kingdom of Golf

Played middle school golf in 6th and 7th grade

Invited to play on the high school golf team as an 8th grader for the 2019-2020 school year

Scores from her most recent rounds of golf: 79, 78, 80 and 75

#### Volleyball

Starting Libero on her club team the past 3 years

Starting Libero on her middle school team the past 2 years

Helped lead her middle school team to be the 2019 Regional Champions, beating out Athens Academy, Oconee County and Malcolm Bridge

Part of the middle school team that earned spots in the 2018 and 2019 State Championships

Will be trying out for the Morgan County High School volleyball team this fall

You can watch her golf and volleyball videos on her YouTube channel - http://bit.ly/rafytc.

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#### CONGRATULATIONS

#### PAUL STOKES

PUTNAM COUNTY SCHOOLS ATHLETIC DIRECTO



Congratulations to Paul Stokes, Putnam County High School Athletic Director, for being named Athletic Director of the Year for Region 8-AA by the Georgia Athletic Directors Association! Well earned, Coach Stokes!

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## TANNER Signs with Johnson U.



By Doug Connelly, Morgan County High School Athletic Director Photo credit: Jason McBay, Coach at Morgan County High School

Congratulations to Morgan County High School softball team catcher Maeson Tanner on signing with Johnson University! Lake Country Sports!

### **Summer Horse Camp**



#### Northwest Georgia Championship White Anchor Equestrian Summer Horse Camp

Monday, July 13, through Thursday, July 16. The camp will start at 9:00am and end at 2:00pm each day. Kids will have the opportunity to engage with the horses by learning about them and riding them! PLEASE BRING A LUNCH. Snacks and water will be provided! Ages 6-13, \$275 per session.

White Anchor Equestrian is located at 1091 Prospect Rd, Madison, Georgia. For more information, call Erin at 678.634.1521, or search "White Anchor Equestrian" on Facebook!



#### JOSH RINGER

GATEWOOD GATORS FOOTBALL

Compiled by Joe Choynski Photos contributed by Dawn Nash Sinclair

to the championship, but because of what it meant to our kids and for our community. It was the culmination so much hard work, belief, and willpower. When a team comes together, magic can happen.

#### What team do you coach?

I am a Football and Track coach at Gatewood Schools

#### How long have you been coaching and what is your background?

I have been coaching football and track for 8 years. I played football in high school and also played semiprofessional football in Valdosta, Ga.

#### What things the team does in training that are keys to their success?

I think that the biggest thing we do that breeds success is that our kids buy in to what we are doing. You would be surprised how infectious it can be. They have seen the process and they know what it takes to win. Winning breeds winning. Our students and coaches know that it takes hard work, not just talent to win championships. We prepare every day, whether it is on the practice field, breaking down game film, or in the weight room. "The separation is in the preparation"

#### Describe your proudest coaching moment.

Winning a championship is a moment that has no comparison. I have been blessed to be a part of 3 state championships, there is nothing like it! There are other moments though that make you every bit as proud as a coach. Our community coming together to send us off each time we went to the championship game blew me away every time. Masses of people lining the streets of Eatonton just to show their support and love. Players making big plays in big moments. A player that has worked so hard all season making a play exactly when we need it. Those are the moments. Not just the wins. The progress. That is what we are all about. We had a player that was a first year guy, he had never played before but he worked his tail off. He went from being a sideline guy, to scoring touchdown in the state championship. It doesn't get any better.

#### Name a person who inspired you to play/coach this sport.

Marvin Barton: my high school defensive coordinator. He was a man that looked to pull the best out of every player. Someone who didn't let you make excuses. He pushed you to strive for greatness, and not settle. He knew that there was more that he was teaching you than just football.

#### Please describe most memorable games/tournaments/championships your team has won.

We had amazing years in 2018 and 2019. We won back to back football championships and a track championship. However, the memory that comes to mind happened in 2016. We were playing Deerfield-Winsor at home, in the Swamp, for the Semifinal. They had scored to take the lead and we had driven to about midfield. Time was running low, and we began our 2 minute offense. Many did not give us a chance to win the game. On paper, we were not the better team, but we were a scrappy, hungry young team. Our kids fought for every inch of that game, and with time running out. We completed a pass, by an act of God, and walked into the end zone. It is still to this day, one of the most thrilling and emotional wins I have been a part of. Not just because it sent us

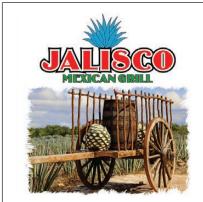
#### Anything else you'd like to add:

I have been so blessed to have a wife and family that supports my career. Coaching takes up a lot of time. You dedicate your life to helping and pouring into student-athletes, at the coast of your own family. My wife is a super hero and I don't know how any of this would be possible without her.

#### What legacy do you hope to leave as a coach?

The legacy I hope to leave is a legacy of relationships. I hope our players learn character and integrity from us. To do the right thing, regardless of the cost. Football teaches you many things. It teaches you how to deal with adversity. To work together to accomplish a common goal. That everyone has a role that they must play, and so much more. Our staff's goal is to not just win football games but to develop men of character. Football is not just about football. I hope my legacy is players that go on to be great husbands and fathers one day.





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#### North Georgia Junior Golf Announces July Events

#### **Northwest Georgia Championship**

Meadow Lakes Golf Course, Cedartown, GA

1st Annual Northwest Georgia Championship. Event is open to ANY junior golfer. Age Divisions are based on players' age as of January 1st, 2020. \*\*High School Seniors -- any graduating seniors are eligible to enter as long as he/she has not yet enrolled in Fall 2020 college classes.

#### Hard Labor Creek Summer Shootout

The Creek at Hard Labor, Rutledge, GA

This is a JR GOLF SCOREBOARD-Ranked Event (ONLY IF JGS WILL RESUME ACCEPTING RESULTS). This is also a GLOBAL JUNIOR GOLF RANKINGS Event -- they WILL ACCEPT results regardless. Boys 14-15 & 16-18 fields are COMBINED for rankings reporting for both services. Entry Deadline: Jul. 13, 9am.

#### MIDDLE GEORGIA SUMMER SHOOTOUT

Green Acres Golf & Recreation, Dexter, GA Jul. 18

This event is OPEN to ANY Junior Golfer, including recently-graduated high school seniors. Players DO NOT need to be NGJG Members to register. We especially invite those juniors living in Central and South Georgia to register and compete in a real, first-class tournament experience.

#### **UGA Major: ATHENS FORD CLASSIC**

University of Georgia Golf Course, Athens, GA

This event is our 2nd MAJOR which awards higher-weighted Player-of-Year Points to Tour Members than a standard 2-day event. Players can expect an enhanced set-up from a typical 2-day event. Any Player that wins all 3 MAJOR events in his/her age division in a calendar year ("Grand Slam") will earn an Automatic Exemption into the NGJG Tour Championship in November.



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#### **ATHLETE**

#### of the MONTH

#### **SUMMER ABRAMSON**

LAKE OCONEE ACADEMY

Compiled by Joe Choynski





#### You were nominated for being awesome! How does that make you feel?

Being nominated for this feature feels great, I have known other amazing athletes who have been featured, and being seen as the same caliber as them really amazes me.

#### Where do you go to school/where do you work?

I go to Lake Oconee Academy in Greensboro, Georgia.

#### What do you like to do outside of your sport?

Outside of sports I'm involved in a lot of other activities:

Student Government - this group helps plan events for our school (ex. dances) and hosts service projects. This year we did a school supply drive for the Boys and Girls club.

BETA Club - this group does service projects year round( ex. Rivers Alive, Can Food drive)

FTC Robotics - I am the captain of our school's robotics team. Our team builds, designs, and codes robots for a competition to combat different obstacles and other teams.

Civil Air Patrol - I am a Cadet Airman in CAP, and this group allows me to explore different aeronautical and aerospace fields. By the time I graduate I will hopefully have a private pilot's licenses through this program.

Flute - I play the flute in our school's Symphonic Band and Jazz band. I also play on my own and practice different songs for private flute concerts through my flute teacher.

I recently started a service project called The Digital Smiles Project; basically I'm connecting seniors at the Glen with students, since they can't see their families during COVID.

...But outside of all of my activities I really like to go to the school's tennis and soccer matches to support my friends. I also enjoy drawing and painting, especially during quarantine.

#### When you close your eyes and dream about your future, what does that look like?

I imagine my future to be in a challenging STEM field where I get to make a difference, in some fashion, through the innovation of new technology. Specifically I don't exactly know what I'll be doing but, I think it's somewhere in between designing roller coasters or sending rockets to mars.

#### Ask someone in your family to pick one word to describe you. Who did you pick and what word did they use?

I picked my mom because she knows me best and she picked competitive because no matter if it is a field or a classroom I give 110%.

#### As an athlete, what is a rule you live by?

As an athlete I live by the rule of determination. As a pitcher, it's hard going through full games that don't seem to have the best outcome, but you have to push through that because your team is counting on you. I believe that if a player shows determination in any sense, whether giving it their all at practice or stealing home, they will not only improve their game individually, but they also improve their team.

#### How would you describe your personality?

My personality is very diligent, I always strive to work hard in all that I do, but when I let loose I like to crack jokes and make the people around me happy.

#### What is your favorite snack food?

My favorite snack food is popcorn, we always have it in the house and it's great for movie night.

#### Favorite pregame song to listen to?

My favorite pregame song to listen to is Burn The House Down by AJR. The beat really gives me a good tempo that gets me to focus.

#### Do you have a pregame ritual you always do?

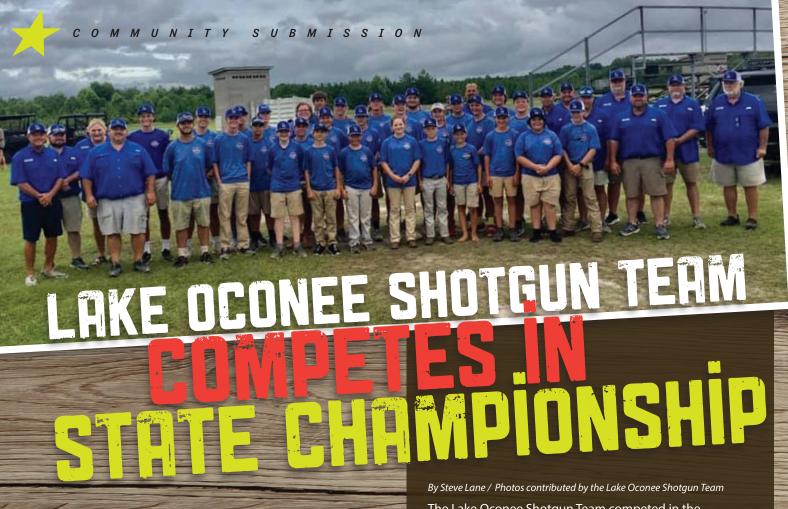
Before all of my games I always put on my bow and sunglasses. On the teams I play on I we always have a team huddle which really gets my mind focused.

#### What is the best piece of advice you received from a coach or mentor?

The best piece of advice I've got from a coach is "don't care and just have fun". When I pitch I put a lot of pressure on myself and I get distracted and it affects my pitching, but when I just pitch and forget about the game around me everything just falls into place.

#### Describe a mistake you made while competing and how you overcame it.

Last season I broke three bones in my face because of a softball pitch, so now it's harder to hit pitches that are closer to me. I'm still working through this problem, but I've got a lot of time in quarantine to fix it, and that's what I've been doing three days a week at the indoor softball facility.



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The Lake Oconee Shotgun Team competed in the Georgia State SCTP Championships June 5-7 at Forest City Gun Club.

Sporting Clays awards were given out Saturday night. Four of our senior team members were awarded the Seth Stapleton Memorial Scholarship at the Georgia State SCTP Championships. Ray Stapleton distributed the scholarships to Hank Hall, Baylor Garland, Riley Downs, and Marshall Johnston.

Seth was a special member of the Lake Oconee Shotgun Team. His parents, Ray and Angela, are dedicated to honoring Seth's memory each year with the scholarships. These four boys are great examples of Seth's hard work.

There is an annual fundraiser shoot in Seth's honor each Fall at Old Hudson Plantation. Please call for information. The event is for a great cause, and a great time is had by all.



#### SQUAD AWARDS INCLUDED:

#### Rookie 2nd place:

Carson Lingle, Owen Spivey, Davis Downs

#### IE 3rd place:

Wyatt Sims, Evan Dowd, Drew Urrutia

#### IA 3rd place:

Noah Human, Blake Daniels, Drake Tingler

#### JV 2nd place:

Mason Jackson, Jesse Lewis, Drew Maddox

#### INDIVIDUAL AWARDS INCLUDED:

**Rookie 2nd place:** Carson Lingle

IE 3rd place: Wyatt Sims

JV 2nd place: Mason Jackson

**Collegiate 3rd place:** Graham Eubanks **Sporting Clays All State B team:** Riley Downs and Marshall Johnston







#### MCHS, GMC win 2019-2020

Cooperative Spirit Sportsmanship Awards



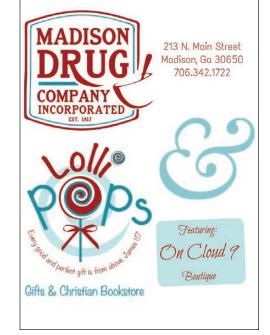
GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION





#### By Joe Choynski

Georgia's Electric Membership Cooperatives (EMCs) are proud sponsors of the Georgia High School Association Cooperative Spirit Sportsmanship Award, and in announcing the 56 GHSAmember high schools that will receive this year's award, two lake area schools were included - Morgan County High School (Class 3A, Region 8), and Georgia Military College (Class A, Region 7). The award honors schools that demonstrated impeccable sportsmanship during the 2019-2020 school year. "Congratulations to all of the region winners of the GHSA Cooperative Spirit Sportsmanship Award for 2019-2020," said Dr. Robin Hines, GHSA executive director. "It is an honor for these membe schools to be selected by their regions for this award. The characteristics of good sportsmanship are critical to the development of our young people as they transition into productive adults. The GHSA applauds our schools on this accomplishment and appreciates Georgia's EMCs for their support of this outstanding recognition program."



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## LAKE COUNTRY UNITED FC: SEASON UPDATE

By Marc Davenport, Freelance Reporter/Writer

During these trying times over the past few months, I wanted to share a positive story about a group of young people right here in Lake Country. As a freelance writer/journalist that primarily focuses on sports related and human interest stories throughout Central Georgia. sometimes I simply report a story with very little to no opinion included. Other times I share stories that let the reader form their own conclusions. I rarely provide my own opinions and commentaries. However, there are exceptions...

Last week I was driving through the city of Eatonton [Georgia], as I often do, and was feeling nostalgic for live sports. Let's face it, there have been no live sports in this region since mid-March. As I was driving I noticed several vehicles turning down the road that leads to the recreation center and the soccer fields. This was a change from recent weeks, as there had been no activity at the recreation center throughout most of March, all of April and May. I looked at my watch and it was 5:36pm. I decided to check out what was occurring. As I pulled into the parking lot, I saw several young men carrying coolers and cones and soccer balls from the parking lot toward the soccer field. There were seven or eight players seated on a bench lacing their cleats. Approximately twelve to fifteen players were out on the soccer field kicking soccer balls around together. Several others were taking shots on goal with a goalkeeper attempting to prevent the balls from going in the goal. I saw a soccer coach setting up cones around the field for drills that the players would be put through later

that evening. I parked my car and exited and decided that I would watch. The heat with the humidity was a harsh combination. But, that did not seem to be hampering the players nor coach.

I would learn later that the players were aged 14 – 24. Some were laughing as they kicked the ball with other players. Others looked more serious as they were preparing for a soccer training session. Watching the forty or so players with their coaches over the next ninety minutes, two things were obvious: these players were tremendously talented and likely had been playing together for some time, and these players had a genuine respect for one another.

I learned later that there had been three teams on the field that day, the 04 Elite Boys, the 05 Elite Boys and the newly formed Men's Player Development Team. All three of these teams train regularly together. They are part of Lake Country United FC's (LCUFC) slate of teams preparing for their upcoming 2020 seasons. The 04 and 05 teams compete in Georgia Soccer's Classic 1 divisions (the top level of competitive play in youth soccer in Georgia and the 04 and 05 designation refers to the year in which the players were born). The Men's team is made up of player's age 18 – 24 and is for players seeking to further their soccer career either by attracting the interest of college coaches or professional club coaches.

All three of these teams are coached by the highly successful coaching tandem of Head Coach Tim Gilbert and Assistant Coach Jamey Nichols (Gilbert and Nichols are also to of the Founders of the club and both serve as the club's directors as well). Full disclosure – I have reported on LCUFC before so I was somewhat familiar with the club, a couple of the teams and their prior achievements, 13 Championships since 2015, etc. I was first introduced to LCUFC in

affiliate in Macon, GA). A promotional advertisement came on during the game for the local news that would follow the end of the game I was watching. The promo stated that there would be a report about a soccer event honoring our country's military. So, I when the game ended, I watched the news broadcast and saw the report showing that Lake Country United FC would be hosting there first ever Military Appreciation Day in Eatonton where there would be a full day of soccer games played capped off that night by hosting a game between Georgia Revolution FC and Fort Benning FC. I knew then that I wanted to learn more about this soccer club. Since then, I have attended a few of their matches, interviewed the

October 2019 while I was watching the World Series on WMAZ (the CBS

head coach and reported on some of their successes. I keep up with their social media and have read numerous newspaper articles that have been published about the club and its teams throughout Lake Country. I know that many of these players are the best in this region, a few perhaps are the best in Georgia - at their respective age level. I watched the players train and listened to Coach Tim (as he is known to the players) belt out instructions and provide coaching feedback, and I could not help but admire their commitment. These players were being pushed hard by their coaches and they were all working hard – and it was hot.

At approximately 7:20 I sat back down in my car and then left. I reflected on the events I had been watching earlier at the soccer field. These players choose to focus on their commonalities rather than their differences. They focus on how they are more alike rather than how different they all are. The love of soccer brought these kids together. And that became a building block for relating to one another. As they have spent time together, they have learned that they are more alike than they are different.



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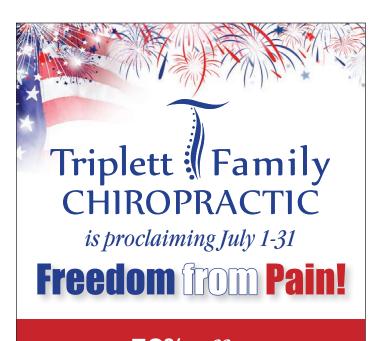
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