Play by Play

July 15-17

2011

COVENTRY® COMMONWEALTH GAMES of Virginia

60 sports • 10,000 athletes
Snapshots of the season

✦ J.J. Redick Gives Back
The Orlando Magic guard (below, center) held a joint press conference with Children’s Miracle Network’s Erin Hildreth (left) and the Rev. Bill Lee (right), representing Child Health Investment Partnership, at Hotel Roanoke in June to announce a July 23 celebrity golf tournament to benefit several charities. Redick has established a foundation allowing him to give back to the Roanoke community.

✦ Parade of Athletes
More than 9,000 athletes are expected to compete in the Coventry Commonwealth Games this year, with the marquee weekend scheduled July 15-17 in Roanoke. The parade of athletes is set for July 15 at 7:30 p.m. at the Roanoke Civic Center. For a complete listing of sports competition, see page 11.

✦ Roanoke Valley Golf Hall of Fame Winners
Familiar faces Meredith Swanson (above, left) and Scott Wise (above, right) prevailed in their respective Hall of Fame tournaments in June. Swanson, 20, fired back-to-back 72s to win the 36-hole women’s competition for the fifth time. She finished six shots ahead of 15-year-old Lyndsey Hunnell. Wise’s performance earned him a third HOF title. Wise shot a 54-hole total of 212 to finish one stroke ahead of three players — George Perkovich, Ben Firebaugh and Justin Young.

✦ Tennis champ
Salem senior Patrick O’Keefe (left) capped four glorious years with the Spartans by taking his fourth consecutive Group AA singles championship, becoming the first player to win four VHSL singles titles. O’Keefe, who will play for Radford University next year, also teamed with Will Drougas this spring to take his third consecutive state doubles title. He completed his Salem career with a 95-1 singles record and an 84-5 mark in doubles. Salem won the 2011 Group AA team championship as well.
The Northside High School baseball team ended its season in style — finishing second in the Blue Ridge District tournament, and second in Region III — but the Vikings won the big one, a 4-0 Group AA state championship victory over Tunstall at Radford University June 11.

The Vikings have been riding a crest of athletic achievement in recent times — winning the state in football and softball during the 2009-2010 school year. That same year the boys' basketball team finished 24-3, recording an 18-game winning streak before losing in the state semifinals.

When Northside won the baseball state championship over Tunstall June 11, it marked the school's third state title during the past two years.

Led by No. 1 player Kristin Harter, the Hidden Valley girls won their second consecutive Group AA state tennis title. Harter, a senior, ended her career with six state championships — two each in singles and doubles and the two team trophies, too.

Harter's doubles partner this year was Emily Seibert.

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STOP IN FOOD STORES
Arguments Are One of the Things that Make Baseball a Great Pastime.

Best Hitter? Babe Ruth or Ted Williams? What about Ty Cobb?

Who would you rather start a must-win game? Sandy Koufax or Greg Maddux?

Greatest Cardinal? Stan Musial or Albert Pujols?

When it comes to the top sports mascot of all time, there really isn’t any argument. Ted Giannoulas, aka “The Famous Chicken,” “The San Diego Chicken,” or simply “The Chicken” hatched a career that would open the door for renown mascots like Wally The Green Monster (Red Sox), The Philly Phanatic (Phillies) and the Racing Sausages (Brewers).

In retrospect, I am surprised at the success I’ve been lucky to enjoy in a career which has now spanned five decades,” Giannoulas says. “If anything, a guy in a chicken suit certainly proves that Americans easily have the best sense of humor of any culture, anywhere. This is a great virtue we have.

In existence since 1974, The Chicken is the granddaddy of professional sports mascots.

A member of the first class of the Mascots Hall of Fame, the giant yellow chicken was named by the Padres mascot.

In the generations since, The Chicken has been all over the news. He was involved in a lawsuit with his former employer KGB Radio over rights to the Chicken image. He starred on “The Baseball Bunch” with Johnny Bench. He was even ‘tombstoned’ at Wrextemania by ‘The Undertaker’ (technically, it was Pete Rose rather than Giannoulas wearing the Chicken suit). He appeared in a commercial with Dale Earnhardt.

The San Diego Chicken kept fans of all ages in stitches during his previous Salem visit.

Jr., Peyton Manning and sports television anchor James Brown. The Chicken has visited the White House and entertained kings, but he gets just as big of a kick out of visiting Anytown, USA. He makes about 250 appearances a year.

“It’s immensely enjoyable sampling the different aspects of life throughout the regions of the country,” Giannoulas says. “The Northeast has its acerbic wit and sharp energy, the South [has] its homespun, folksy demeanor; the Midwest has an endearing goodwill, the Mid-South and Texas have a relaxed, broadly casual yet bold spirit. The West Coast has an eclectic mix of cultures and energies and the Northwest a sense of quiet sophistication. The common characteristic is that they all get the joke and love to laugh.”

The Chicken has not visited Salem since the new ballpark opened in 1995. That will change Saturday, Aug. 13 — as a new generation prepares for a foul ball!

The Famous Chicken clucks Where do you find your inspiration?

“My inspiration actually stems from comedians I’ve admired over the years on stage and in films. Those masters range from The Marx Brothers and The Three Stooges to Peter Sellers, Jackie Gleason (very underrated, by the way), Bob Hope, Steve Martin (from his stand-up days), Richard Pryor, Robert Klein and the original “Saturday Night Live” cast. One common trait they all had was to be inventive in their comedic narrative.

“Watching them motivated me to think in broader, humorous terms for the context of the platform (sports) in which I was engaging the audience.”

What mascots do you enjoy that are working today?

“My favorite college mascot who always cracks me up is the Florida Gator, Albert. That goofy alligator suit (which isn’t overly cartoonish) with the large snout, protruding tail and orange turtleneck sweater is classic cool. When he gets worked up over some referee injustice, it’s fun to watch.”

On the pro level, I’ve enjoyed the Kansas City Royals’ ‘Sluggerrr.’ He doesn’t get the attention he should, given he’s not in a major PR media market and that the Royals’ fortunes for many years haven’t brought many highlights on TV. Still, he’s been creative and the mountain lion suit looks as warming as a quasi-Bugs Bunny expression.

What has been your biggest thrill?

“My biggest thrill is still the Grand Hatching ceremony, held at San Diego’s Jack Murphy Stadium, June 29, 1979. I had just been fired by my radio station employers and was starting out on my own as a free-range chicken, debuting a new outfit. A sold-out crowd of 47,000 came out for the ceremony before the Padres game (quite a feat in those days) and all three local TV stations interrupted their broadcasts to televise the Hatchling live.

“The crowd gave me a 10-minute standing ovation and Padre players carried me off the field on their shoulders.”

Sat., Aug. 13

Salem Red Sox vs. Kinston Indians 6:05

The Famous Chicken Appearance
Unexpected sources provide inspiration

Kay, Here’s My Question.

Where in the world would the Roanoke Valley be without Advance Auto Parts?

Forget the fact that those guys in the red shirts and black pants will change your battery in the pouring rain or the freezing cold for nothing. I’m talking about what this company does for people in the valley from a philanthropic standpoint.

Most of you drive by one of Advance’s retail stores on your way to work every single day, but I bet you never dreamed the place that sells your windshield wipers could also take a swipe at wiping out cancer by raising $326,000 in a single day on a golf course.

I recently had the privilege of emceeing the American Cancer Society’s “Swing Fore a Cure” golfing fundraiser that was presented by the folks at Advance for the fourth straight year. Ron Willard’s Water’s Edge show-place in Penhook once again played host to the one-day event that featured Frank Beamer and Virginia Tech golf coach Jay Hardwick, along with 2003 PGA champion Shaun Micheel.

It’s always a pleasure to catch up with Coach Beamer, and it was a thrill not only to talk to Michael, but also to watch him interact with the participants and see first-hand what a gracious, down-to-earth champion he really is. But I must admit, the most fascinating people I met the entire day had nothing to do with sports and appeared to be no different at first glance than you and me.

Advance transported my son, Bryan, and me from Roanoke to the golf course on a helicopter the afternoon of the tournament, and we were joined on the breathtaking 15-minute ride by our pilot and three other gentlemen. It’s pretty tough to carry on a meaningful conversation and get to know someone in a helicopter because of the noise factor, so I wasn’t able to find out anything about the men other than they were researchers from Virginia Tech, who were as fascinated by the view as my son and I were.

But once we landed, I soon found out that these ordinary people have been doing some very extraordinary things when it comes to cancer treatment. All of us are affected by cancer in one way or another, but most of us are also helpless when it comes to doing anything about it.

Not these guys.

Under the leadership of Dr. John Robertson, the Director of the Center for Comparative Oncology at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, the same men who sat beside me on the helicopter are killing cancer cells like crazy by delivering electric pulses to tumors.

“The tumors can’t handle this type of electricity and it kills them,” says Dr. Robertson. “We’ve been doing this for three years and the results are very promising.”

Robertson, who is known affectionately as “Dr. Bob,” spearheads this cutting-edge cancer research and is the driving force behind these efforts thanks largely to his immense passion and ability to motivate.

In many ways, he’s a head coach of a young all-star team.

“When we say something is promising, it’s just like what Coach Beamer says in that we’re a team, we all have a position, we all play hard and we always play to win,” he says. “The difference is that if we don’t win, some patient is going to die and that’s always on our mind.”

The sports analogies may seem somewhat clichéd, but for Robertson and his team of neurosurgeons and biomedical engineers, they are right on target when it comes to the work they’re doing.

“We learn from our defeats, we change our strategies, we keep putting more people out in the field and we keep playing hard,” says Dr. Robertson.

That’s great news for the American Cancer Society, Advance, and the company’s former CEO, Garnett Smith, and his wife, Patsy. Smith retired in 2000 after Patsy was first diagnosed with cancer. She’s been fighting it ever since and is currently in her fifth battle with the disease. That’s why when she spoke to the crowd that evening she didn’t speak of finding a cure, but instead said she said she looked forward to the day when the disease was “completely eradicated.”

“Mrs. Smith and I are of the same mind to do that, and to us the only tumor that we understand is a dead one,” Dr. Robertson says.

The folks at Advance support that vision, as well, and they surprised the Smiths by making a corporate donation in the amount of $50,000 to the American Cancer Society during the conclusion of this year’s festivities.

As always, the Smiths were humbled by the gesture, but others like Micheel, who lost his mother to lung cancer last October, and Dr. Robertson, were simply inspired. Dr. Bob has seen his grandparents, his parents and a number of personal pets succumb to cancer. His wife had the disease last year and he also had a tumor removed from his neck two years ago.

“This work is just something that I think I’m supposed to do,” he says. “I’ve been blessed by being in a place where I can generate energy and make this happen. I don’t think I’m particularly bright, but I am very stubborn and my role is to make this happen and never accept defeat.”

Spoken like a true coach.
Schools using their heads on protection

There has been a change in football in the last five years, and it’s for the better. People are learning more about the effects concussions have on athletes immediately and in the long term.

There was a time when coaches wouldn’t let players consume water during practice. The theory was it made them soft. For some reason inducing extreme thirst and dehydration was considered a method of toughening a player. Then people realized how ridiculous that was and, at least 20 years ago, an emphasis was placed on keeping players hydrated.

In the last four or five years the new concern is concussions, and it’s probably 50 years too late. But to be honest, brain research is still cutting-edge and it has taken a while to catch up. What we’re learning is alarming.

The good news is we’re learning ways to combat the problem.

“See what you hit.” This has been the mantra of coaches for decades. Spearing was a legal tackling technique until the early 1970s. William Byrd coach Jeff Highfill remembers those days. He played for Eddie Joyce at Andrew Lewis High School and said he was knocked out twice.

“I probably had a concussion or two, but I didn’t have a headache the next day. That was the big test then, and since I didn’t have a headache I played the next day,” Highfill says.

Now concussion awareness is a point of emphasis for coaches, trainers and officials.

“Kids don’t want to come out of games,” says Highfill. “Thank God for the trainers. If she says a kid isn’t going to play, he isn’t going back in the game.”

Cave Spring head football coach Tim Fulton, who played for the Knights three decades ago, says coaches have changed over the years, most of them pushing the helmet tackle.

“We removed the head from tackling quite some time ago,” Fulton says. “We keep going with teaching proper techniques. That’s the big thing in tackling.”

The media is publicizing the consequences of concussions to the point that no sports fan or player can reasonably claim ignorance on the topic. (Play by Play ran a cover story on the subject in March, for example.) The contradictory statement of glorifying a big hit, often borderline legal and occasionally causing concussions, is also shown with fanfare, however.

Players are still chasing the big hit. In fact, in certain areas players are intentionally playing with loose chin straps so their helmets will fly off upon heavy impact. The intent is for the contact to appear all the more spectacular.

It’s like smoking — all the surgeon general warnings in the world don’t get through to some people.

Some of the best research in the country, it turns out, has been conducted at Virginia Tech.

A study at the Tech College of Engineering, directed by professor Stefan Duma, rated football helmets based on biomedical impact data. The results have had coaches and athletic departments taking notice.

“We reacted the same way as everybody else,” Fulton says. “If you have a helmet out there that appears to test out better, try to use it.”

Fulton said the lowest rated helmets were pulled out of use at Cave Spring, including the Riddell VSR4, which is one of the most common helmets used when it was on the market. As some helmets are replaced every year, better, safer models will be purchased. He says the Riddell Revolution, which rated 4-STAR, have been the replacement helmets for the past few years. The school still has models made by other brands, but they are also highly rated.

The Tech study rated helmets on a STAR rating that appears to mimic a movie critic’s scale, but STAR is an acronym for Summation of Tests for the Analysis of Risk value. While the Riddell Revolution Speed rated 5-STAR (the only helmet to rate a five), the difference between 4- and 5-STAR is relatively small, according to the report. The lower end was where significant risk was incurred by poorly rated helmets.

After the findings came out, Tech pulled all its VSR4s out of service and several NFL teams are following suit.

Stephen Magenbauer, head football coach at Salem High School and a former player whose career was curtailed by injury, says his program has been using the new Riddell and Schutt DNA Pro+, both highly rated.

“Nearly every helmet in our program is one of the higher-rated ones. We have some VSR4s, but they haven’t been on a player in a while,” Magenbauer says. “When we got them we didn’t know the difference.”

Magenbauer says Salem replaces 12-15 helmets a year, buying mostly the Schutt brand, but with a few Riddell Revolution IQ models in there because “you can’t fit every kid into a Schutt or a Riddell.”

Magenbauer says teaching proper technique so that it’s a habit is important.

“We haven’t had many concussions, thankfully,” he says. “If players are worried about that or thinking about it, they’re not going to be playing loose. We teach the proper technique so they can play and not have to worry about it as they’re playing the game. That makes them tentative and can lead to more injuries.”

When the emphasis on helmet contact first gained traction, the reason was to avoid spinal cord injuries. While that is still a matter of vital importance, concussion awareness has come to the forefront of attention in recent years.

At Craig County, coach Mark McPherson says he buys six or seven new helmets a year. For a program with 40-50 players at all levels, they don’t get too old before being replaced.

“We’ve got the Riddell Revolutions,” McPherson says. “When I saw that study I was glad to see they rated so high. That’s one of the things my administration has really been supportive of — getting good, quality helmets.”

The study disproved any notion that price buys protection. The Schutt helmets are among the lowest cost but highest rated. They are more than $30 cheaper than the lowest rated helmet on the market, the Adams A2000.

Football will always be a sport where the helmets are necessary because there is contact to the head. Figuring out how to reduce the risk of concussions is important to every coach. As evidence, consider the study Tech put out — every coach read it and heeded its findings, and that’s a good sign for football players in this area.
Kevin Bacon’s got nuthin’ on this story

EVEN THOUGH THE CURRENT United States population exceeds 311 million, every now and then something happens that makes you think we’re all very much connected. This is one of those stories.

Some readers may know the name Jim Bradley, a former Roanoker who passed away in his late 70s in Tallahassee last October. Bradley’s obituary in the Tallahassee Democrat reveals that he was a graduate of Roanoke’s Jefferson High School and Roanoke College (1954) and a combat veteran of the Korean War.

Then again, you might not remember the name. He moved away from this area in 1965, seldom to return. But stay with me on this.

Bradley went to work for Roanoke’s WSLS-TV, Channel 10, in 1954, the early days of television. (The station signed on the air Dec. 11, 1952.) During his 11-year employment there, he distinguished himself as a producer and director, including work with the Miss Virginia Pageant and the award-winning “Spotlight on Youth,” a Roanoke show that was recognized by McCall’s magazine.

Bradley had a keen interest in sports — he helped run early broadcasts of Virginia Tech basketball and football and also served as a United States Tennis Association official, later working Florida State tennis matches.

Fifty years ago, during the summer of 1961, WSLS broadcast a sandlot baseball championship game. Hard to imagine, isn’t it? The details of the event are rather murky, but it clearly was an important game of one of the earliest broadcasts of its type anywhere. Producer Bradley had the foresight to have all the 11- and 12-year-old players involved sign the ball, along with the announcer, WSLS news director Joe Moffitt. Now this was a good while ago; consider that Barack Obama hadn’t yet been born.

Four years later, Bradley moved to Waterloo, Iowa, to work for Black Hawk Broadcasting, the company he retired from several decades later.

“The ball,” as it’s now known, remained in Bradley’s possession, although it was not prominently displayed. Son Wilmer Bradley — who goes by Bill — tells me that he “had no interest in it and knew none of the names on the ball.” In his dad’s final days, however, they had a conversation about it.

“I considered it an artifact from the past,” the son says. “All I needed was more junk in the house. It was Dad’s and he gave it to me, but it didn’t seem to be a highly treasured item. I stared at the ball one morning while cleaning off my shelves and glanced at the trash can. I almost tossed it in the can. I don’t know why I didn’t.”

Bill Bradley was an athlete of some repute. He played for a University of Iowa football team that appeared in the 1982 Rose Bowl. “I wasn’t a senator or a Rhodes Scholar and I didn’t go to Princeton,” he jokes. He is intelligent and well-educated, however. Today he is an Atlanta-based anesthesiologist. As he was on call last Thanksgiving weekend, some six weeks after his father’s death, he was unable to accompany his family to Iowa to celebrate the holiday.

A surgeon friend, Dr. Rich Olson, invited him to share Thanksgiving at a local country club, where the fellow diners included Dr. James Benson, a retired Marine Corps colonel and president of Riverside Military Academy in Gainesville, an Atlanta suburb near Lake Lanier.

Rich Olson’s oldest son, Andrew, just completed his senior year at Riverside. During dinner Bill Bradley was introduced to Benson, who coincidentally happened to spend his formative years in Roanoke, a fact that Rich Olson mentioned. (Benson graduated from William Fleming High School in 1961. There’s that year again.) Bill Bradley sent Benson the ball and Benson looked it over; he knew and/or coached many of the names, including current Roanoke resident Jerry English.

Bill then sent Jerry the ball. Jerry thought I might find the story interesting. He e-mailed the right guy.

There are many familiar sports names inscribed — starting with Richard McGeorge, who later played nine NFL seasons with the Green Bay Packers. There’s Woody Deans, two-time state champion Patrick Henry basketball coach whose name now adorns the school’s court. There are PH sports hall-of-famers Phil Bushkar, Bobby Slaughter and Wayne Dodson. There’s Jim Bowden, who is known around here as a rugby legend.

And then, of course, among the almost 20 other names, there’s English, whose six degrees of separation fame tie him to ‘most every local sports person I’ve ever heard of. I’m not exaggerating.

Let’s see. Jerry English coached Northside basketball for six seasons. He was the Hollins AD in the late 1980s. He served as color man for Jim Carroll’s basketball radio broadcasts for decades. His work is integral to the Roanoke Valley Golf Hall of Fame annual scholarships.

Jerry says he doesn’t remember signing the ball. But it’s no surprise that Jerry knows Col. Benson, who knows Andrew Olson, whose father Rich is a friend of Bill Bradley, the anesthesiologist whose father Jim produced the first televised sandlot baseball game in Roanoke in 1961. That’s six, isn’t it?

In the meantime, another ball has surfaced among Jim Bradley’s possessions — one with no signatures. It’s only inscription refers to the last out of the 1961 Roanoke sandlot baseball championship.

“The saga continues,” Bill Bradley says. On a tangent, you’ve no doubt noticed the work of one of Play by Play’s new writers, Bo Lucas. Bo’s fine piece on golfer Jake Mondy begins on page 9. When Bo and I were talking about possible story ideas recently, he mentioned one possibility might be his Appalachian State college housemate from the late 1960s.... The name? Jerry English.

Letters

Byrd girls were strong a decade ago, too
Dear Editor,
I enjoyed Dan Vance’s article on William Byrd’s current soccer coach Russell Dishman (“Dishing it out,” June 6 issue). However, Byrd does have some history of having strong female soccer teams. In 2000, 2001 and 2002, Byrd was very competitive in the old Blue Ridge District, with great matches against Salem and Blacksburg. The 2002 team went all the way to the VHSL championship held at Radford University. They lost to Potomac Falls, I think.
Two of the seniors went on to play on the college level. Tiffany Gruschow got an offer from Longwood and Mandi Pietrzky, the goalie, got an offer from Emory & Henry. There were 12 seniors on that ‘02 team and 11 went on to four-year colleges and one to Virginia Western. Great group of ladies! My daughter, Julia McConnell, was one of them. I’m sure those girls are pulling for coach Dishman!

Bill McConnell
Vinton

Junk is a relative term
Dear Editor,
I really enjoy Mike Ashley’s stories. In reading Mike’s article about sports junk (June 6 column), I laughed and remembered some of my junk. I have several Andrew Lewis football programs from the 1970s. In my class of 1977 (the last class) we had just three players who weighed over 200 pounds. (Not to mention we only dressed 31).
I have many cassette tapes of broadcasts in a cardboard box. Can’t let them go. Figure somebody might want a copy one day.
Mike says “my junk is better than yours.” It brought back memories of a “Sanford and Son” episode from the late ’70s. Fred hated his next-door neighbor, junk dealer Julio. He said to his son, “Lamont, we gotta get rid of Julio.”

“Why?” Lamont asked.

“Because his junk is making our junk look like junk.”

Keep up the great work.

Ron Myers
Salem
RED SOX ROUND-UP

No days off for Salem catcher Dan Butler

by Gene Marrano

T he first half of the season didn’t end with the same promise it held at the start for the Salem Red Sox, as a deep slump cost them any shot at a pennant. Catcher Dan Butler did his part however, leading the team in RBI (50) and tying for the lead in home runs with nine.

Butler, who hit .250 in the first half, was also named to the Carolina League All-Star team that squared off with its California League counterpart.

Signed as a free agent by the Boston Red Sox in 2009, Butler played for the University of Arizona. The Phoenix native has spent portions of the last three seasons in Salem, along with stints in Lowell and Greenville. Butler also had a cup of coffee at Triple-A Pawtucket last season when injuries necessitated his call-up.

Learning to work with the pitching staff and “being more vocal” as a leader have been at the top of Butler’s to-do list. Building trust with the Sox pitchers, making sure they are confident in the game he calls, is paramount. As a hitter it’s been all about consistency at the plate and making better contact.

Butler, 24, hit .327 for Low-A Greenville in 2010 before coming up to Salem for the last month-plus of the season. He figures his power stroke will come. “I’m not really focused on that,” he says.

The Sox tailspin toward the end of the first half (an 11-31 streak following a 20-7 start) meant the team had to remember “what was working before,” says Butler. In handling a pitching staff that may have lost some confidence, the goal was to “slow the game down a little bit, making sure they are not trying to do too much. I’m just relaying them information they already know. Sometimes [the game] just speeds up on them.”

Butler believes that slumps often start with one unfortunate turn of events. “Then it just snowballs on you. That’s baseball. You really never know what it’s going to be like. That’s why you play the game [every day].” He still believes the Red Sox have enough talent to win in the second half and appreciates how the organization moves players up and down to plug holes in the lineup.

Butler has always been a catcher and “still shake me off but that’s fine, a trust factor [with pitchers].” They know I’m a catcher.” He believes being in the game mentally on every pitch. “I could not play the outfield; I would probably just lie down. I’d be bored,” he chuckles.

There seems to be a paucity of top-level catchers in the major leagues at the moment, something Butler recognizes. “It’s hard to name five catchers right now. Catchers come and go; it’s hard to keep them healthy [for] 162 games.”

Butler has allowed himself to think about making it to Fenway Park, catching for the big club. “You try to vision it [and] reach for that point,” he says.

Can’t get enough of the Salem Red Sox on the radio side? Besides the play-by-play carried on WFIR 960 AM, media veteran Dave Ross has resurfaced with a weekly roundup show on ESPN Radio 1240 AM. The 10 a.m. Saturday program, “This Week In Minor League Baseball — the Salem Red Sox Report,” features 10 minutes each on the Red Sox and the Lynchburg Hillcats, both part of ESPN in Virginia’s coverage area.

Butler and Sox third baseman Kolbrin Vitek were early guests on the show. Hillcat play-by-play announcer Eric Wilson handles the Lynchburg segment.

Ross was with WDLR for more than 12 years before the independent TV station went belly-up a year ago.

While with WDLR Ross hosted a weekly show, “All About Sports,” and did play-by-play for high school and college games. In the past year Ross has called high school football and basketball games for 1240 AM; he also hosted weekly programs covering basketball and lacrosse and contributes a weekly sports roundup feature heard on Fox 910 AM.

Then there are his duties as the new president of the Roanoke Valley Sports Club. Ross has secured former Salem and Pittsburgh catcher Ed Ott for the October meeting. Ross recently learned that Ott lives in Forest. “He was on that ‘79 [World Series-winning Pittsburgh] team,” notes Ross, who also worked for the local Fox television outlet and for WSLS-10 as a sports anchor previously.

The Sports Club kicks off the new season with Virginia assistant football coach Scott Wachenheim (Salem Civic Center, July 27), and Virginia Tech assistant Shane Beamer — Frank’s son — on Aug. 1 at Hidden Valley Country Club.

Safe to say, Ross is keeping busy despite his unplanned exit from the television airwaves. “I’ve got to do something — I just can’t sit around,” says one of the most familiar sports figures in the Roanoke Valley.
Special chromosome?

Jake Mondy’s exceptional golf and life skills can be traced to his lineage

by Bo Lucas

Jake Mondy has a strong passion for golf. He also has exceptional golf talent to show for his dedication and hard work. The 2011 Blacksburg High School graduate will attend Auburn University on a golf scholarship this coming fall. That’s quite an accolade for this local golfer’s far-reaching accomplishments. He selected Auburn over offers from NCAA Division I notables Louisville, Vanderbilt, Virginia, VCU and Virginia Tech.

The Auburn Tigers of the Southeastern Conference have a prominent golf program that SuperScholar collegiate evaluation service ranks among the 10 best in the United States.

Auburn’s renowned golf alumni include PGA Tour players Buddy Gardner and Jason Dufner. Gardner, class of 1977, played both the Nike Tour and the PGA Tour. He played in all four of golf’s major championships, his best finish in them was a sixth-place tie in the 1985 PGA. Dufner, class of 2000, has competed in more than 100 PGA Tour events and won over $6 million in prize money, according to the official PGA Tour Web site, www.pgatour.com/r/players/.

In addition to the quality of the golf program at Auburn and the school’s distinctive academic opportunities, Mondy was attracted by the Alabama climate where it’s warm enough to play golf year-round. He also liked the small town appeal, similar to his current environment. Like Blacksburg, Auburn, Ala., is in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Nearby Chewacla State Park offers mountain scenery and recreational activities similar to those that he currently enjoys. Mondy likes the outdoors and the opportunity to connect with nature.

Mondy is well-grounded with sagacity regarding his pending state of affairs. Aided by valuable input from his family, he has carefully analyzed the academic potential of his collegiate career. Jake’s ultimate goal is to play golf for a living. “I hope to make a living at something that I love to do,” he says.

He is well aware of the opportunities and the intense competition that he faces in this pursuit. There are various mini tours where a successful competitor can make a reasonable living. The potential of making it to the PGA Tour is a realistic possibility for the very best of this group. As previously noted, some of his Auburn predecessors have indeed made it on the tour. He is on the right track. But Mondy knows that even the best-case scenario is a temporary journey into the world of professional sports. Someday he will have to rely on more than his golf skills. Mondy will be prepared for that day, whenever it comes.

In the state championship all four years at BHS and was delighted to put together this winning performance.

Mondy had played on state championship teams during his freshman and sophomore years at BHS. His junior year the Bruins finished second in the team competition. He managed to put together a remarkable high school career, winning a gratifying combination of individual and team titles — in the district, region and state.

The epic battle between Jake Mondy and Nick Tremps of Jamestown for the most recent state championship was not decided until the final hole.

Playing in the same foursome, Mondy and Tremps both posted phenomenal 9-under-par 63s on the first day. Mondy scorched the front nine with a 29. Tremps made up ground on the back by finishing in 31. Playing head-to-head on the final day, neither player could establish a clear lead. On the par-3 15th hole Mondy hit a poor tee shot that bounced across the bridge into an unplayable lie. Tremps also had trouble in the rough after missing the green.

Mondy took a penalty drop and then hit a shot that his dad, David Mondy, called the best that he “had ever seen” to get up-and-down for a bogey. Tremps was not able to save par and they walked to the 16th tee tied for the lead.

Mondy birdied the par-5 17th to win the championship.

See MONDY, Page 15
CHELSEA KELLEY HAD AT least heard of the Lowe’s Senior CLASS Award before this year.

Growing up in the Cave Spring area of Roanoke County, she re-membered going online and vot-ing for J.J. Redick in 2006, and later for Virginia Tech softball star Angela Tincher (James River) in 2008, for the national award.

This spring, Kelley was logging on every afternoon in her Radford University softball study hall with her teammates and voting for her-self as one of the handful of final-ists.

“I’ll admit I wasn’t sure what it was really all about until this year,” Kelley says.

Now the recent RU grad is an expert on the honor, joining Redick and Tincher as winners of the Roanoke Valley CLASS winner since 2006.

The Lowe’s acronym “CLASS” stands for Celebrating Loyalty and Achievement for Staying in School, and focuses on great achievement in competition, the class-room and in the community. Kelley, a 2007 Cave Spring graduate, is the first softball winner from a non-BCS school, winning the overall award and also, improbably capt-uring the online fan vote for the trophy, a part of the criteria.

Up against other softball players from schools like Florida, Georgia, Arizona, Michigan, Georgia Tech, Washington and Illinois, the pitcher from Radford prevailed despite having nowhere near the alumni or fan base of those other programs.

Her mother, Robyn, can take a bow now, too, after mounting a multimedia campaign through e-mail, Facebook and just good old word of mouth. “I think she let everyone in Roanoke know,” says Kelley with a laugh. “She was all about Facebook and getting peo-ple involved.”

Dean thought the popular vote reflected just how popular Kelley was with those that had met her. “That shows the incredible impact she has had on the people she has come in contact with,” he says.

Kelley has had quite an impact on Radford softball, too, helping Dean take the program to unpar-alleled heights in recent years — three Big South regular season championships, and the school’s first two tournament titles in 2009 and 2010. The Highlanders reached the NCAA Regional Final in 2010, before bowing to Georgia.
### 2011 Coventry Commonwealth Games of Virginia

#### SPORTS AT A GLANCE

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Greenbrier Classic prepares for its encore

As the first anniversary of the Greenbrier Classic approaches at the end of this month, excitement abounds at the White Sulphur Springs resort.

From the Ryder Cup in 1979, to the LPGA Solheim Cup in 1994, to the PGA’s Champion Tour from 1985-87, The Greenbrier has defined championship golf. The course, The Old White, has been host to the greatest golfers in the world, including Sam Snead, Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson, the current pro emeritus. This year’s PGA tournament will be held July 25-31, as part of the FedEx Cup Series.

On the surface it would seem the likelihood of surpassing the success of last year’s extravaganza is virtually impossible.

That is, until you learn the word “impossible” is not in the vocabulary of Greenbrier owner Jim Justice and members of the Greenbrier Classic tournament committee, headed by Tim McNeely.

The 2010 event was a masterpiece, with the West Virginia posh resort serving as the backdrop. Many of the most talented golfers on the PGA Tour converged on The Old White to compete for the winner’s purse of over $1 million. Concerts that featured Reba McEntire, Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood brought tens of thousands of fans to nearby Lewisburg. And, in the end, the tournament played out like a Hollywood script when Australian Stuart Appleby rolled in an 11-foot putt on the 18th green for his winning score of 14-18 under. Firmers will bring higher scores on The Old White. However, if it rains and the greens soften, these players will shoot darts,” the winner of one U.S. Open, two Masters and five British Opens added.

While The Old White, closed on June 1 as preparations for the show began.

“We start with tent vendors, then scaffolding and electricians,” Saeger commented. “It’s 6-8 weeks of non-stop preparation. There will be 60 vendors before it’s over. It’s like building a city in eight weeks. We want to be the best event on tour. Jim Justice gives us every opportunity and all the tools to do just that.”

As in 2010, over 2,200 volunteers will be on hand to cover everything from yardage-calculating lasers to the logistics of moving the large number of daily spectators.

This past winter, the Classic announced country music superstars Tim McGraw and Keith Urban would appear in the 2011 concert series. In May, Justice hit another home run by adding Grammy-winning and high-energy performers The Black Eyed Peas as the Friday night headliner. At the same time in May, it was announced that Phil Mickelson and Watson would join the field for 2011.

Putting on a PGA Tour event is no small undertaking. In April, I sat down with assistant tournament director Monte Ortel and tour operations manager Ernest Saeger to get a better understanding of the project.

“Last year’s tournament presented huge challenges,” Ortel told me. “It was a first-year event, and we had a short time to prepare for an event of this magnitude. There were a lot of 20-hour days. In the end, The Greenbrier was very proud of everything.”

As for Appleby’s dramatic finish, Ortel added, “You can’t script that. It had a ripple-effect in giving us exposure.”

In May, The Old White officially became part of The Players Club (TPC) network of clubs. “We are delighted to enter into this agreement with the PGA Tour and the TPC Network, two of the most respected brands in all of sports,” Justice said. “I am confident that The Old White TPC will regain its position as one of the most iconic golf layouts in the world and help restore The Greenbrier to its original glory as one of the most exclusive resorts on the globe.”

Although there will be subtle changes to The Old White, The Greenbrier staff will not overreact to concerns about the course being too easy last year. “The pros like to shoot birdies and low rounds,” Ortel noted. “The Old White has its own challenges. Most importantly, it lays out well for spectators; and, spectators enjoyed seeing the golfers succeed.”

“We’ve reseeded and will have 18 new greens,” Saeger said. “There have been adjustments to several of the tee boxes and we’ve added around 240 yards to the course’s length. We wanted to keep The Old White’s tradition of design.”

Watson, whom I had the pleasure of joining for lunch in June, predicted the course will play tougher this year. He estimated a winning score of 14-18 under. Firmers will bring higher scores on The Old White. However, if it rains and the greens soften, these players will shoot darts,” the winner of one U.S. Open, two Masters and five British Opens added.

While The Old White, closed since last year to prepare for the 2011 event, looked serene the last week of April, that quickly changed on June 1 as preparations for the show began.

“We start with tent vendors, then scaffolding and electricians,” Saeger commented. “It’s 6-8 weeks of non-stop preparation. There will be 60 vendors before it’s over. It’s like building a city in eight weeks. We want to be the best event on tour. Jim Justice gives us every opportunity and all the tools to do just that.”

As in 2010, over 2,200 volunteers will be on hand to cover everything from yardage-calculating lasers to the logistics of moving the large number of daily spectators. McNeely spends hours talking to tour operations and values the community support offered.

Also in 2011, First Tee Roanoke Valley, along with First Tee West Virginia, will participate in Tuesday’s Youth Day, with a 3-hour scramble, luncheon and clinic with the pros. “The First Tee is as positive as can be,” Justice told me during a June interview at media day. “It’s all about ethics and morality. The game of golf teaches honor and gives opportunities to our youth.”

Last year, numerous pros said word on the positive Greenbrier experience would spread quickly to players who skipped the Classic. McNeely conducted extensive player recruiting, one of the keys to getting Mickelson. “Jim talked to a lot of players about coming with their families in order to enjoy what The Greenbrier has to offer,” Ortel said.

“We want the Greenbrier Classic to be an unforgettable experience for players and spectators alike,” he added. “One that you can’t find anywhere else. The Greenbrier is special. We want people to go back home and talk about coming here.”

At the end of June, Justice said ticket sales were well ahead of last year, when the week’s attendance exceeded 178,000. “We can only take so many people; so when they’re (the tickets) gone, they’re gone.”

Justice also announced on media day that beginning in 2012, the Greenbrier Classic will move to the week of July 4th. “It was a perfect move,” Justice noted.

“We are America’s resort, and will be playing on July 4th.”

The 2011 Greenbrier Classic looks to be, like a well-played seven iron, all over the flag.
Can this Basketball Jones fix Radford?

by Mike Ashley

R OBERT LINEBURG IS enough of a Radford-lifer to be seriously pinned by the state of the Highlanders’ basketball program.

A Radford native, Lineburg played for the Highlanders and returned in 2007 as the athletic director. He just presided over the worst season in school history, RU dropping to 5-24, and going through an embarrassing NCAA investigation that has yet to be resolved.

Into that situation, arguably the worst any Radford coach has inherited since Chuck Taylor started from scratch in 1974, enters Mike Jones, a personable 46-year-old with a great résumé, and big plans.

“I don’t flinch at the challenges that are presented,” Jones said when he was named coach June 14. “We are going to make this a successful program. We’re going to build on the traditions that are already here and lay our own footprints. We don’t expect to be perfect, but I can guarantee you that we are not going to embarrass the University. We’re going to do everything we can to bring pride to Radford University.”

Jones said he wore a pair of socks with a hole in them that day to remind him that he’s not perfect. Humble to a fault, Jones seems like a good fit to fix the mess at Radford. And his new $190,000 salary should be enough to buy new socks.

The Highlanders may avoid serious trouble for a series of secondary NCAA infractions because they have separated from four-year coach Brad Greenberg, who famously took the team to the 2009 Big South title and the NCAA Tournament.

But Greenberg’s tenure was largely unsuccessful and has left the once squeaky-clean program with a black eye. In 37 seasons of competition, RU has had only nine winning campaigns but six of them have come in the last nine years under Greenberg (two) and Byron Samuels (four).

“We needed to hire a person that’s going to do it the right way and work hard, and work to make Radford basketball great,” said Lineburg. “I’m confident that Mike is that guy. He has a contact base in our geographic footprint and we’re going to recruit the Commonwealth very hard. I think traditionally Radford’s best players have come from the Mid-Atlantic. I think we have to get back to that.”

Lineburg was one of the people Jones was talking about when he talked about things he liked about his new job. “When I started to research about him, the more I found out, the more I liked,” said Jones. “There are so many people here at Radford that have either grown up here and stayed here or grown up here and gone away for a little while and come back. That speaks to the type of community this is, and it’s a place I wanted to live and be a part of, and have my family be a part of.”

Jones becomes the seventh coach in Highlander history, and like nearly all the others, he has strong coaching roots in the Commonwealth. Most famously and recently, Jones was a key cog in Virginia Commonwealth’s shocking 28-win season and Final Four run last year.

He was at VCU for three years. He helped bring in the couple of the top recruiting classes in school history and he developed a reputation as a details-oriented people-person, who has been called “the architect” of that team’s defense. Colonial Athletic Association blogger and Roanoke native Michael Litos was covering the Rams at the San Antonio Regional against Kansas when he noticed how Jones’ hard work translated.

Litos, sitting behind the VCU bench, reported that Jones was up yelling out every Kansas offensive play as soon as the ball crossed half court, telling his players where to over-play, whom to back off of, and whom to hedge around screens, part of a strategy that totally thwarted the Jayhawks and in the end sent the Rams to the Final Four.

Litos wrote that national media "created the plausible storyline" that Kansas had only two days to prepare for VCU so the Rams were able to "sneak up" on the Jayhawks. "So why then, was Jones (and the rest of the staff) able to prepare to the level of knowing every play Kansas would run, given identical time constraints?"

But what sold Lineburg as much as the x’s and o’s was Jones himself.

"His character is second to none and he has a tremendous ability to develop strong relationships with student-athletes, coaches, fans, high school coaches and the like," said VCU coach Shaka Smart. "Radford just hired a tremendous young basketball coach and more importantly an unbelievable person."

Litos ended his blog about Jones with this anecdote: “I cannot help but to remember seeing Jones help his son with homework on the plane ride home from San Antonio. The Highlanders got that kind of a man.”

Litos said he was struck that while Jones could have been joining the party on the plane after the biggest win in school history, he chose something more important in that moment, time with his son. “He pays attention to the important things,” Litos later said. “He’s very good at compartmentalizing what is important for that moment. He’s a very good moment person. He’s just a good man.”

Prior to VCU, Jones was at Georgia for six seasons with Dennis Felton, one of his mentors. Jones was part of a big postseason run, there, too, sixth-seeded Georgia winning four games in three days to win a tornado-interrupted SEC Tournament title in 2008. Rivals.com named Jones one of the nation’s top recruiters in 2005.

Before joining the Bulldogs, Jones worked for John Beilein at Richmond from 2000-2002, and at West Virginia the following season, where he recruited Radford High School star Darris Nichols to the Mountaineers program.

Nichols was in attendance at the RU press conference announcing Jones’ hiring.

Litos spoke to the type of community that’s going to do it the right way, and work to make Radford basketball great.”

A graduate of Paint Branch High School in Burtonsville, Md., Jones stayed close to home when he went to college, attending Howard University in Washington, D.C., where he majored in zoology and was a four-year starter for the Bison. Working at an animal testing facility in Washington after graduation in 1996, he began coaching basketball at Sidwell Friends School at night, discovering he was barking up the wrong vocational tree.

"Once I started coaching that team, I knew right then," said Jones. “You can feel the difference between a job and a career.”

Jones took an assistant’s job at Howard in 1994, married his college sweetheart, Sharon, and never looked back. By 1997, he had moved on to Furman, and then came back to Virginia to join Beilein’s staff, helping the Spiders to a pair of 20-win seasons and three straight NIT berths.

Jones grew up on basketball. His father, Jimmy, was a star guard in the old ABA in New Orleans, Memphis and Utah. In 1974, the Washington Bullets signed him and Mike grew up in Silver Spring, Md. A torn ACL ended Jimmy’s career in 1977. Mike liked soccer and baseball, too, and didn’t focus on basketball until high school.

Lineburg lauded his background and said, “He’s going to bring an exciting end-to-end style.”
‘Prep school’ takes on new meaning
Area basketball players are following Luke Hancock’s example

by Gene Marrano

THERE HAVE BEEN OTHERS who went the same route before, but Luke Hancock’s decision to play postgraduate school basketball for a year (2008-09) after finishing Hidden Valley High School seems to have touched off a trend of sorts.

After seeing what Hargrave did for the ex-Titan — sharpening his game to the point where he received a number of Division I college scholarship offers — other local high school players are now poised to follow suit.

Coming out of Hidden Valley, where he played on a team that regularly contended for a state championship, Hancock received feelers from D-III, non-scholarship schools only. That’s when he headed for Hargrave Military Academy, coached at the time by Kevin Keatts, who had won a national championship at the postgraduate (pre-college) level previously.

A year of high-level competition did wonders for Hancock, who landed at George Mason, a D-I school only a few years removed from a celebrated Final Four appearance. As a sophomore this past season he burst on the national scene by helping his team to its first NCAA Tournament. When head coach Jim Larranaga left for Miami this spring, Hancock also decided to take his talents elsewhere.

He landed at Louisville, where he must sit out a year but will learn from one of the best — coach Rick Pitino.

Here’s a bonus: Keatts was recently named an assistant coach for the Cardinals, providing Hancock with a comfort zone as he joins the Big East Conference. Having Keatts around “definitely helps out,” says Hancock. Quite a jump for a kid who was most likely would have played a few miles from home at Roanoke College before Hargrave came into the picture.

The mental and physical toughness acquired there “was big for me both ways. When you see these guys that are bigger and more athletic than you it’s intimidating. I asked myself ‘could I do this in college?’ “The answer is yes, of course, as evidenced by his time at George Mason, where Hancock became a starter last season. “You get better when you go to Hargrave.”

He’s spoken to other Hidden Valley players that are making their way to the school now, hoping to follow his example.

His advice? “Work every day; show up early, stay late. It ten. Steve Myers says, “It used to be a gimme” that a lot of local high school basketball stars were bound for the Division III Old Dominion Athletic Conference.

That’s no longer necessarily the case. “Noah started [the trend] and Luke really exploded it. That’s really gotten the interest up. I think it’s great idea.” Myers credits his son with helping to attract more Roanoke Valley high school products to Hargrave.

Prep school is an investment, says Myers. It may cost $25,000 or more for that one year, but that expense can be parlayed into a D-I or D-II ride. “It’s an option that a lot of kids in this area are taking [now].”

There also is some scholarship money available from postgraduate schools, Steve Myers says. Chad Myers coached as an assistant under Keatts for three years (where he spent extra time working with Hancock) and was director of basketball operations for the Radford University men’s basketball team for the past two seasons under former head coach Brad Greenberg. “I think it will help me being back in prep school, since I’ve been on the other side,” Chad says.

Now he’s the man in charge: “I’m 29 years old and I get a chance to be a head coach. I’m very excited,” says Chad, a former 3-point specialist at Shepherd (W.Va.) College.

Chad Myers says the postgraduate route is just the ticket for Roanoke Valley area players who may not show up on the college radar otherwise. “It’s kind of sad…that there’s not a huge AAU team in Roanoke that travels around and plays everywhere. There’s a lot of talent that gets missed in the area.”

It’s easier for college coaches and scouts to evaluate players when the competition is at the highest level, according to Chad.

Thirty-three Hargrave players received Division I offers in the three years he helped coach them. Now Chad hopes to raise the profile for Massanutten, which doesn’t have the same reputation that a Hargrave or a Fork Union does in the postgraduate school world. “They brought me here because they think I have the blue print from Hargrave,” says Chad, who attributes Keatts’ move to Louisville as a major reason why Hancock is going there.

Prep schools have few restrictions as to when they can start coaching players — unlike high schools, which are bound by strict VHSL guidelines. “I start practice on the first day of school and get them every day for two hours,” Chad says. That doesn’t include the two-hour daily scrimmages.

“The competition every day makes people better [but] you just don’t walk in the door and become a better player. You have to make the most of those opportunities.”

William Fleming head coach Mickey Hardy, who has been trying to place one of his players at a prep school this summer, also sounds a warning note: “It can be a good idea. It depends on what the person wants to do. I don’t think it’s for everybody.”

Now here comes the University of Louisville for Hancock. “[Hargrave] put me on the map with a lot of schools,” Hancock says gratefully. After meeting with Pitino and touring the Cardinals’ facilities (including a new basketball arena), making the move...
go 1-up on Tremps. The championship came down to the final hole. Both players had been under par virtually the entire tournament. They both played like true champions, all the while displaying great respect for one another and for the game. After both players failed to convert their birdie attempts on the par-4 18th, the championship belonged to Mondy.

The Jamestown team posted a VHSL-record 575 to win the team championship. Blacksburg came in third.

After Mondy’s victory he had a wonderful encounter with his dad. Their embrace at the completion of the match meant much more than any casual observer could know. This was the culmination of an exceptional journey involving the entire Mondy family. Another one of their major milestones had been achieved. Others almost certainly will follow.

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But Dave didn’t allow his boys to frolic around the golf course all day. He had developed a business that required serious work to maintain. Dave had opened the New River Junction in nearby McCoy. This operation on the banks of the New River offered camping, fishing and tubing on the Big Falls section of the river. His dedication to quality and some strict safety regulations helped make this venture quite popular.

The entire Mondy family pitched in. The Mondy boys had their own responsibilities at the Junction. They cut grass, weeded, maintained the equipment, assisted customers and performed various other tasks. When their work was done, then they had time for golf. This unique and highly successful approach is now paying high dividends in many facets of the Mondys’ lives.

Kelley recently accepted the Lowe’s Award from Paul Brown (left) and Troy Woodson ESPN2 broadcast of the Florida-Arizona State game.

Kelley wants to be a physical therapist, and she has already been accepted into the acclaimed doctoral program at Radford. She even looks back at her major ankle injury her freshman year and the shoulder problems her last two years as on-the-job training.

“It has been very positive for me in that I was interning last year when I had surgery,” she says. “I was going through a lot of things that patients I was helping were going through. That insight helped.”

Kelley hopes to specialize in spinal injuries or work in training athletes rehabbing from major injuries. She likes the motivation they have to get back into action, and again, it’s something she knows about.

And has the hardware to prove it.

From Page 18

Fonder, Summerlin’s former coach, trains the older daughters. Shannon’s mother, Marcia Barry, who moved from California to Roanoke in recent years, coaches Caroline. Barry is a strong swimmer in her own right; she held a masters’ world record just a few years ago and has been ranked first in multiple events. Summerlin swims with his mother-in-law several times a week.

Shannon coaches the Virginia Gators and swims in meets during the summer at Roanoke Country Club, where Summerlin is also an integral part of the program.

Both Dan and Shannon competed as triathletes in 2010. The Bath County Triathlon featured a 600-yard swim, a 15-mile bike ride and 5-kilometer run. Ryan Day’s time of 1:05:58 was not quite two minutes ahead of Summerlin, the runner-up. Shannon won the women’s race in 1:09:23.

What’s in store for the Summerlins next?

Dan plans to swim in the Masters Nationals in Greensboro in April in the 50-yard freestyle, 100-yard freestyle and the 100-yard butterfly. He says he is thinking about swimming in the 200 individual medley there, but will have to see how it goes.

“Dan had character,” Louis Tudor says. “That was his strongest point. The fact that he had been small in stature and grew later in life helped him reap success. I saw his heart and his integrity. He had the desire to win and the work ethic. I knew that Dan would go on to achieve great things. There was no doubt in my mind. A lot of kids have heart and no talent or vice versa. Dan had the entire package.”

From Page 9

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Kelley From Page 10

that really helped because you have to put in the extra work as a pitcher. I focused on helping the young pitchers with their pitches and getting them mentally ready. I stepped back and took that role.”

Her perseverance played a part in her getting the award, as did her cumulative 3.94 grade point average, and the fact she graduated summa cum laude with a degree in sports medicine.

Kelley was recently named Big South Scholar-Athlete of the Year. She is also a member of RU’s Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, has represented the school at leadership conferences and is involved in several charitable activities, including Special Olympics and the Ronald McDonald House.

Part of winning the softball award included a trip to the Women’s College World Series in Oklahoma, City, Okla., and accepting the trophy on the field at ASA Hall of Fame Stadium during the national championship game. After both players failed to convert their birdie attempts on the par-4 18th, the championship belonged to Mondy.

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Here is a summary of 2011 college baseball and softball statistics for those players we were able to trace to area high schools.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>W-L</th>
<th>APP</th>
<th>GS</th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>IP</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>R</th>
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<th>BB</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jacob McMillan</td>
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<td>Ferrum</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.761</td>
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| Brandon Checklette, Jr. | RHP     | Ferrum                          | 6.35| 1-0 | 16 | 0  | 17.0| 21 | 14 | 12 | 14 | 5  | 0   | 1   | .318 | 0   | 0   | 0  |
| Caleb Dorten, Jr.      | LHP      | Ferrum                          | 33.33| 12 | 25 | 25 | 60.0| 86 | 55 | 51 | 26 | 18 | 2   | 2   | 247 | 348 | 8   | 1  |
| Mike Williams, Sr.     | RHP      | Ferrum                          | 7.50| 1-1 | 9  | 1  | 12.0| 14 | 9  | 5  | 11 | 10 | 3   | 3   | 3   | .333 | 3   | 3   | 0  |
| Zach Helgeson, Jr.     | RHP      | Ferrum                          | 54.54| 20 | 11 | 11 | 50.0| 65 | 50 | 48 | 34 | 24 | 2   | 2   | 27  | 192 | 8   | 6   | 54 |

| Michael Blanchard, Sr. | RHP     | Hampden-Sydney                  | 7.65| 3-4 | 13 | 12 | 60.0| 86 | 55 | 51 | 18 | 13 | 3   | 2   | 176 | 295 | 1.000|
| Luke Feldenzer, Jr.    | SS       | Hampden-Sydney                  | 2-1 | 4   | 25 | 2  | 0.0 | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  |

| Trent Cundiff, Jr.     | RHP      | James Madison                   | 7.53| 1-2 | 24 | 0  | 28.2| 20 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 5   | 2   | 2   | 112 | 339 | 3   | 0  |
| Luke Munson, Jr.       | LHP      | James Madison                   | 11.34| 1-1 | 14 | 5  | 16.2| 26 | 21 | 19 | 15 | 4   | 1   | 1   | 71  | .352 | 3   | 0  |

| Brandon Garrett, Jr.   | OF       | Lynchburg                       | 12-5| 16  | 115| 4  | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  |
| Jon Michael Zimmerman, Jr. | SS     | Lynchburg                       | 28-16| 44  | 114| 7  | 1   | 0  | 0  | 4  | 0  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  |

| Brett Mollenhauer, Jr. | OF       | Radford                         | 56-56| 215 | 223| 23 | 48  | 6  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 20  | 4   | 1   | 2   | 269 | 5   | 9  |
| Benjamin Amos, Jr.     | OF       | Radford                         | 65-56| 215 | 223| 23 | 48  | 6  | 1  | 1  | 0  | 20  | 4   | 1   | 2   | 269 | 110 | 9   |
| Dalton Lipes, Jr.      | OF       | Roanoke                         | 33-30| 90  | 278| 12 | 25  | 3  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 3   | 10  | 17  | .394 | 1   | 32  | 67  |
| Mark Wimmer, Sophomore | P/UTL    | Roanoke                         | 5.36| 3-2 | 13 | 6  | 0   | 0  | 40.1| 44  | 29 | 24  | 15 | 9   | 2   | 160 | 275 | 5   | 10  |
| Shaan Garrett, Jr.     | IF       | Roanoke                         | 9-4 | 17  | 118| 2  | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | .186 | 0   | 0   | 8   | .186 | 1-1  | 7   | 7   |
| Jacob Clifton, Jr.     | LHP      | Roanoke                         | 35-35| 128 | 305| 17 | 39  | 14 | 0  | 3  | 25 | .482| 10  | 5   | 16  | .378 | 6-1  | 119 | 50  | 9   |
| Jacob McMillan, Jr.    | LHP      | Roanoke                         | 35-35| 128 | 305| 17 | 39  | 14 | 0  | 3  | 25 | .482| 10  | 5   | 16  | .378 | 6-1  | 119 | 50  | 13  |

| Taylor Jones, Sophomore| SS       | UVa-Wise                        | 13-11| 34  | 176| 6  | 2   | 0  | 0  | 3  | .235| 0   | 0  | 11  | .176 | 0   | 8   | 16  | 7   |
| Brandon Fisher, Sr.    | OF       | Virginia Tech                   | 5.57| 1-0 | 21 | 0  | 0   | 0  | 21.0| 24 | 13 | 13  | 10  | 3   | 1   | 82  | 300 | 1   | 2   |

| Brandon Lower, Jr.     | IF       | Virginia Tech                   | 5-0 | 6   | 167| 0  | 1   | 0  | 0  | 0  | .167| 1   | 0   | .286| 0   | 0   | 1   | 0   | 0   | 0  |
Others on baseball rosters without published statistics
Ferrum: Ben Adkins, Freshman RHP from Franklin County; Hampden-Sydney: Adam Stidham, Freshman RHP from William Byrd; Radford: Camden Hodge, Freshman IF from Hidden Valley; Lynchburg: Nick Ferguson, Sophomore P from Hidden Valley

Local women playing softball in college

<table>
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<tr>
<th>VMI</th>
<th>Alan Watts, Junior</th>
<th>ERA</th>
<th>W-L</th>
<th>APP</th>
<th>GS</th>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>.275</td>
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Lefty Flora, Senior
OF from Northside
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 9-0 4 .000 0 0 0 0 0 .000 1 1 1 .333 0-0 0 0 .000

Others on softball rosters without published statistics
Charleston
Megan Lombard, Junior
SS from Hidden Valley
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 58-58 191 .330 30 63 13 1 8 33 .534 17 9 26 .410 0-1 82 105 20 .903

Concord
Tamara Smith, Sophomore
RHP/2B from Northside
ERA W-L APP GS CG SV IP H R ER BB SO 2B 3B HR AB B/Avg WP HBP BK 33-32 84 .262 10 22 5 0 0 17 .321 5 1 15 .311 4-4 23 63 4 .956

Eolon
Hannah Shelton, Senior
OF from Hidden Valley
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 39-23 65 .262 22 17 1 1 0 3 .308 3 0 11 .294 6-8 20 2 0 1.000

Emory & Henry
Jamie Price, Junior
3B/1B from Salem
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 22-20 42 .310 8 13 5 0 1 11 .500 2 6 .341 1-2 23 2 1 .962

Guilford
Sarah Cutright, Sophomore
C/IF from Hidden Valley
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 36-36 105 .362 25 38 9 1 1 25 .495 10 0 14 .434 4-5 167 12 3 .984

Liberty
Jenny Law, Junior
OF from Franklin County
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 60-60 197 .279 29 55 9 0 2 32 .355 9 1 22 .308 4-4 43 4 2 .959

Mary Washington
Katherine Preseren, Sophomore
UTL from Hidden Valley
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 23-19 46 .283 8 13 1 0 0 6 .304 4 2 12 .358 0-5 5 0 0 1.000

Radford
Chelsea Kelley, Senior
LHP from Cave Spring
ERA W-L APP GS CG SV IP H R ER BB SO 2B 3B HR AB B/Avg WP HBP BK 3.47 6-8 27 17 2 2 84.2 92 51 42 24 35 12 1 13 336 274 2 10 0

Meredith Moore, Junior
DP/C from Cave Spring
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 47-42 101 .208 10 18 1 0 0 13 .278 5 0 12 .298 0-0 0 0 0 .000

Randolph
Julie Helton, Freshman
1B from Glenvar
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 39-39 110 .273 20 30 7 0 1 20 .364 13 0 22 .347 1-2 276 13 3 .990

Roanoke
Abbie Rexrode, Junior
RHP from James River
ERA W-L APP GS CG SV IP H R ER BB SO 2B 3B HR AB B/Avg WP HBP BK 2.58 9-1 22 10 5 1 70.4 64 30 26 18 78 6 0 6 268 .239 6 6 0

Jaci Clark, Senior
OF from Cave Spring
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 23-7 11 .455 6 5 0 0 0 1 .455 1 0 0 .500 2-3 3 0 0 1.000

Gabby Moss, Senior
OF from Salem
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 14-4 18 .006 2 1 0 0 0 1 .006 1 0 5 .105 0-0 7 5 1 .923

Alea Bier, Sophomore
OF from Cave Spring
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 29-28 71 .338 27 24 1 0 0 14 .352 12 3 12 .453 5-5 46 42 6 .936

Virginia Tech
Sarah Ashby, Sophomore
OF from William Byrd
GP-GS AB BA R H 2B 3B HR RBI Slg% BB HBP SO %SB-ATT PO A E Fld% 45-1 9 .000 17 0 0 0 0 0 .000 2 0 2 .182 14-15 0 0 0 .000

Charts by Donna Earwood
Research by Christian Moody

Others on softball rosters without published statistics
Bluefield: Megan Carr, Freshman P/OF from Salem; Bluefield State: Lindsey Cuba, Freshman 1B/OF from Lord Botetourt; Ferrum: Jessica Franklin, Freshman IF from Franklin County

Notice someone missing? With a list of this magnitude, we may have overlooked players who hail from the Roanoke Valley. Please e-mail any additions to us at jmonty@cox.net and we will gladly publish them in an upcoming issue.
Summerlin practices law swimmingly

by Susan M. Ayers

At the law firm Woods Rogers, Dan Summerlin III is a principal with more than 13 years’ experience practicing in the areas of environmental law, white collar crime and labor and employment law.

His accolades are many. Summerlin was selected in 2010 to Virginia Rising Stars, the state’s up-and-coming attorneys and as a Legal Elite by his peers in Virginia Business magazine. He was named to the Super Lawyer list in 2009 and 2010. Super Lawyers magazine names attorneys in each state who are chosen by their peers and through independent research.

Out of the office, the 39-year-old is a champion swimmer who has been swimming for 33 years and continues to enjoy remarkable success.

“Swimming is a sport that tends to reward hard work. It’s just you and the clock,” says Summerlin. “There are goals and objectives that you can work toward. It’s a great lifelong sport.”

Summerlin began swimming at age 6 in recreational league competitions. “Then a new coach came along, I had to work harder. My first year with him, I did a lot better. He is a great motivator. He believes there are no shortcuts to swimming or anything. It’s not an easy program to follow.”

Summerlin attended North Cross School. The school did not have a swim team until his senior year, but Summerlin immersed himself in the Virginia Gators program, which Fonder coached. During the school week, he practiced at LancerLot in Vinton three mornings from 5-6:45 a.m. and every afternoon from 4-7 p.m. He also practiced every Saturday.

Summerlin recalls local restaurateur and swimming aficionado Louis Tudor coming to some of the Gators practices and swimming with them. Tudor’s brother John, like Louis a former collegiate swimming star, would also sometimes swim with them. “That made it a lot of fun,” says Summerlin, smiling.

In the late 1980s, Summerlin was 14 years and Louis Tudor was 30. Tudor had swum four years for the University of North Carolina and was very good in the 50-meter sprint races. Tudor continued to swim competitively after college with much success. UNC, Florida and Virginia offered Summerlin a full scholarship. He went with the Tar Heels.

It was during his freshman year that he met Shannon, also a freshman and the woman that he would later marry. Men and women trained together but swam separately at meets. The women won the ACC all four years of Shannon’s tenure.

“One of my greatest swimming moments was in 1992 when I made the Olympic trials in Indianapolis,” Summerlin recalls. “I placed 21st or 22nd. It was fun to be a part of it.”

Summerlin won several individual titles at the ACC Championships in the early 1990s and during his career he participated in 11 conference-winning relays.

In national competition, Summerlin placed as high as 10th individually; he was part of a relay that placed fourth. “[The NCAA is] a really hard meet to make,” he says. “It was great to have that experience. You have to meet a certain time standard to go to NCAA. Just because you win at ACC doesn’t mean you can go to NCAA.”

When Summerlin left Chapel Hill, he held the school record in the 100-yard freestyle with a time of 44.26. Seventeen years later, his time stands fourth. He also had the fastest 400-yard Individual Medley time of 3:50.91. Today, that ranks third.

Summerlin received his undergraduate degree in history; Shannon’s major was psychology. He enrolled at the College of William & Mary Law School in the fall of 1994 while Shannon attended graduate school there and served as assistant coach for the women’s swimming team.

Summerlin swam once at an intramural swim meet during his second year of law school, he remembers. His time in the 50-yard freestyle (21.1) broke the school’s intramural record.

He began working at Woods Rogers the summer after his second year of law school. In 1997, after passing the bar exam and marrying Shannon, he joined the firm full time.

Summerlin continues to swim competitively. In 2007, at the age of 34, he placed first in three recorded individual swims for the Virginia Masters Swim Team (VMST) in the 30-34 age group. His 50-yard freestyle time of :20.93 and his 100-yard freestyle time of :46.43 were not far off what he was turning in more than a decade before at North Carolina.

He and Shannon swim in a relay for VMST with a couple that they knew well from UNC and who now live in Roanoke, Chris and Jenny John. Summerlin and Chris had been college roommates and team co-captains their senior year. Jenny and Shannon had been co-captains of the women’s team.

Summerlin has practiced law since 1997. He has been recognized by several publications for his expertise.
Tattoos, treys, tradition and other stuff

Please hold your applause until the end; it’s the annual spring-cleaning column where I round up all the Post-it notes and napkins I’ve scribbled on — and clean my desk of stuff I’ve been ruminating over the last couple of months.

I got too much so let’s just jump right in:

- I was surprised that Ohio State let Jim Tressel go. He was so vested in the program.
- I thought the big revelation out of the Terrelle Pryor “loans car scandal” was that some Columbus auto dealership pretty much admitted they had the worst service department in the history of the world.
- My Richmond sources tell me William Fleming product Troy Daniels could be the next big thing at VCU. A rising junior, he’ll work into a bigger role this season if he can keep knocking down 3-pointers and build up the rest of his game.

Hitting 3s is still a Roanoke-area legacy. A scan of the NCAA record book shows that three of the top nine most prolific 3-point shooters in college history hail from within a 50-mile radius of Play by Play corporate headquarters — J.J. Redick, Curtis Staples and Doug Day. Add Stephen Curry if you want, since his parents met in Blacksburg.

- I remember when I was a young, obnoxious sort — I’m not young anymore, by the way — I took great pride in Virginia hoops history. I’m still feeling that way thanks to Virginia Commonwealth’s NCAA rampage. Why, it’s the biggest thing since George Mason made a similar run five years ago. The state of Virginia is to Final Four Cinderellas what Texas Tavern is to expedient local late night food.

And you can throw in the 1984 Cavaliers on that Cinderella list, too — Terry Holland taking the ‘Hoos, sans Ralph Sampson (like TT without the Cheesy Western), to the center of the Big Dance floor. And speaking of Sampson, this is the state that’s produced Big Ralph, Moses Malone, Alonzo Mourning and J.R. Reid among blue-chip big men. If you don’t like Reid on that list, trade him in for late-bloomer David Robinson.

And that’s just centers.

We also have a major Division I national champion, Allan Bristow leading the Hokies to the 1973 NIT, back when that was a big deal. Tech won four games by five points, including the title victory over Notre Dame when Bobby Stevens beat the buzzer in overtime and provided one of my favorite sports memories.

Oh, and we had Roanoke College winning a national title back then, too (1972), and Julius “Dr. J.” Erving playing professionally for the old Virginia Squires before more famously making house calls in New York, New Jersey and Philadelphia.

- More recently — just a few weeks ago — Radford finished No. 1 in NCAA Jousting per its fabulous You Tube rain delay appearance. Sadly, there is no jousting title game. I blame the BCS.
- I miss “Macho Man” Randy Savage, YVEEAAAAHHH.
- Posters hanging in my bedroom in the late ‘70s: Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, the Farrah poster, The Who, John McEnroe and Roger Staubach. How about you? Post your bedroom posters on the Play by Play Facebook page. By the way, I took down the Frankenstein blacklight poster (mid-‘70s) because it just wasn’t cool anymore.
- I’m okay with the NFL labor “strike.” I picked up DeMaurice Smith in my NFL Lockout Fantasy Draft.
- To the casual fan — and pay attention here, NFL and NBA: thanks to its 1994 labor strike, baseball now has more casual fans than passionate ones and the Boston Red Sox have lost their special place in our culture. Previously a bastion of stoic strength in the face of fickle fortune, Boston now has won a couple of titles, just like a bunch of other franchises.
- Not to fret, the Chicago Cubs are still special in an “Awww, bless their hearts” sort of way.

I laugh at all the angst over Major League realignment and what that could mean in scheduling, for the DH rule, for how many times ESPN can show us Red Sox-Yankees games. Like tradition matters a rat’s patootie to baseball’s leadership. Please also see steroids-ruined record book.

By the way, the Pittsburgh Pirates, who used to mean a lot more around these parts when their farm team played in Salem, set a professional sports franchise record last season with their 18th consecutive losing season. Guess they put all their effort into the Steelers at the confluence of the three rivers.

(Sports was the reason I first knew what “confluence” meant. Before, I thought it was when criminals had a lot of say in what you did.)

- If I were in a college fantasy football league, I might lie, cheat and steal to get Virginia Tech’s David Wilson this fall.
- Oh, and for everyone that says it’s a tall order replacing ACC Player of the Year Tyrod Taylor at quarterback, hey, Logan Thomas is 6-feet, 6-inches tall for Rodney Peete’s sake.

- Isn’t it time for Roanoke to get another shot at pro hockey?
- I figured out why I couldn’t root for the Heat this year. They’re metaphorically those guys — older, better players — that would sit out the first pick-up game at the playground so they could put together a team that stayed on the court and whupped up on the rest of us all afternoon.

They pulled up in their fancy cars (back in my day that meant a Challenger or a Duster or something like that) as I rolled in on my Schwinn chair watching sports (and making notes).

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