

ECHS students win regional title from a backpack project



Mia Hale and Micah Swim, students at Estill County High, collected 172 backpacks and 168 blanks for foster children in Estill and surrounding counties as part of their region-winning project for FCCLA.

Photo by Cathy Dawes

By CATHY DAWES
Estill County Tribune

Two students at the Estill County High School have participated in a project for FCCLA that not only won them a regional title but has also helped foster children in Es-

till and surrounding counties.

Micah Swim and Mia Hale started working on the project called Fostering Hope in November.

Their goal was to collect 150 backpacks and 150 blan-

kets so children entering into the foster care system would have something to call their own.

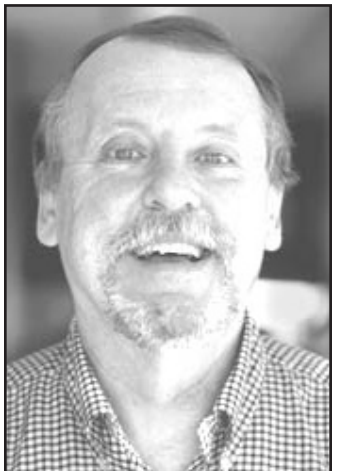
"I know a lot of kids that have been through the foster care system and we wanted to help them," stated Hale.

Part of the project was that Swim and Hale were not allowed to ask for donations for the project but once people in the community found out what they were doing the donations started to pour in. They surpassed their goal

and ended up collecting 172 backpacks and 168 blankets.

The two took their donations to the Department of Child Protective Services where they will be distributed to children in Estill and surrounding counties.

Maci Morris Loved Playing, Living In Italy But Now She's Thankful To Be Home



by Larry Vaught

Having the opportunity to play professional basketball in Italy was an experience that former Kentucky basketball star Maci Morris knew would be unlike anything she had done before.

It started out that way, too. She was leading her team in scoring, getting to see and do new things, and basically just having fun.

Then the coronavirus started spreading throughout Italy.

"I was having a good time. It was nice to go around, explore, see different cities, engage in a different culture. It was just fun playing basketball and having fun again with it," said Morris. "I loved the city of Florence. It was close to my city and me and my roommate had planned to go to some other places before this stuff all hit."

Morris played for USE Scotti Empoli — about an hour from Florence — since early October and was leading the team in scoring (15.5 points) and minutes (31.6) per game. She also had made a team-high 44 3-pointers and was hitting almost 41 percent from the field. Morris was also adding 4.9 rebounds, 2.3 assists and 1.3 steals per game.

She managed to get home to Bell County last week about 24 hours before the travel ban from Europe went into effect. She decided to put herself into a two-week quarantine even though she's not been sick to make sure there's no way she might pass the virus to anyone else.

Her mother, Patti, admitted she got nervous the closer it got to time for her daughter to return home.

"I kept waiting for somebody to jerk the rug out from under her," Patti Morris said. "I try not to worry until stuff happens. I don't sweat things until they happen but I am glad to get her home."

Much of Italy has been under a total lockdown to try and control the spread of the virus. Morris said she was not in the "red zone" that had the most restrictions.

"It had been several weeks since we played a game and they had suspended the season until April 3 and we did not know if we would even play then," Morris said. "Where I was at you could at least walk around but not in a group of people. The grocery stores were open, and some businesses. But everything shut down at 6 (at night).

"All sporting events were cancelled. I was not even allowed in the gym. They locked us out. I could not lift or anything. This is probably the longest break I've had from basketball forever and probably will just not do anything until my two-week quarantine is up."

Morris, a former Kentucky Miss Basketball, is UK's sixth all-time leading scorer with 1,692 points and her 252 3-pointers are second all-time. Her 41 percent 3-point career mark is the best at UK.

Morris is ranked No. 6 on UK women's all-time scoring list with 1,692 points while her 252 career 3s made ranks second all time. She also hit 41.1 percent of her 3-point tries during her Wildcat career, ranking her at the top of Kentucky's all-time list in that category.

She had adjustments to make on and off the court in Italy. Some were as simple as no air conditioning and clothes dryer where she lived. Italians also ate dinner nightly at a much later time than Morris was used to and she had some issues

with the language.

On the basketball court, games were more sporadic. The team had a 15-day break between games in November and an 11-day break in October. Never did the team play more than two games per week.

Morris said playing in a small town made it easier for fans to interact with her. She would get asked if she played basketball on trips to the grocery store and fans would talk to her about basketball.

"But it was nothing like Kentucky fans," Morris said.

Morris isn't sure about her future basketball career. She was an undrafted WNBA free agent who went through training camp with the Washington Mystics last year before getting cut and signing to play in Italy.

"I was playing really well when our season ended," Morris said. "My body felt really good. I was happy with what I was doing."

Would she return to Italy again to play?

"Possibly. I don't know," Morris said. "It depends on a lot of things. Do I get offered another contract or get a contract offer somewhere else? Do I want to keep playing basketball or not? I am just praying and seeing where God leads me when it is time for me to make a decision about my future."

CatsIllustrated publisher Justin Rowland says there's no doubt that two of UK's

biggest in-state 2021 recruiting targets are offensive lineman Jager Burton and receiver Dekel Crowds, Frederick Douglas High School teammates.

Burton is a top 250 player nationally and the 6-4, 270-pound lineman has offers from Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State, Oregon, Oklahoma, Texas, Tennessee, West Virginia and others.

"I really think he could be a future NFL player," Rowland said. "I think Kentucky has a good shot. I have heard he really likes UK. He is a very savvy kid. Some guys do not have a plan and are not organized then you have guys like him who are very calculated. He knows the impact of his words and where he might end up."

Crowds left Lexington last year to play his junior season at IMG Academy in Florida but is now back.

"He competed against some of the best defensive backs and receivers daily in practice," Rowland said. "He has been timed sub 4.4 (seconds) in the 40 (yard dash). He has great speed."

"He has to improve his production and route running. He's probably still a bit raw but he has speed you cannot team and that's something most staffs have no trouble gambling on."

He has cut his list of schools to 10: Baylor, Kentucky, Louisville, Ohio State, Virginia Tech, Texas, Michigan, Mississippi, Oklahoma and South Carolina.

Burton even suggested

on Twitter that they could be a "package deal."

Malaki Branham is a 6-5 small forward from St. Vincent-St. Mary (Akron, Ohio), who is one of the top 25 players in the 2021 recruiting class.

He has scholarship offers from Alabama, Iowa, Louisville, Kansas State, Missouri, Ohio State, Purdue, Cincinnati, Marquette, Xavier, Akron and Ohio. He's also been hearing from Michigan and others.

His cousin also happens to be Kentucky freshman receiver Kalil Branham.

"He's the No. 1 recruit in Ohio," the UK receiver said.

What about his cousin playing for John Calipari's Wildcats?

"He wants, too," Kalil Branham said.

Two years after being forced out at Louisville, Rick Pitino is back coaching college basketball at Iona following the resignation of coach Tim Clues for health reasons.

"Rick is a Hall of Fame coach who has won at the highest levels and he is committed to leading our student-athletes and our program to national prominence. He brings passion and energy and shares our desire to build a winning program that will make our community proud," Iona athletics director Matthew Glovaski said.

Pitino has a 647-271 record as a college head coach.

Fiscal Court declares Covid-19 emergency

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The fiscal court voted to advertise for bids for materials and equipment requested by Estill Emergency Management and will be paid for with CSEPP funds.

The first bid was for upfitting trailers and placing decals on the equipment. A second bid was to purchase traffic control equipment and supplies, including cones, barrels, different barricades "to direct people in and around," said Lucas Barnes, Deputy Director of EMA.

A third bid will refresh the current EMA building on Broadway. Barnes said that as buildings age, work must be done. One of the projects will be re-sealing the blacktop on the parking lot.

The final bid will be to purchase rugged laptops for Estill County EMS and fire employees.

Chad Smith reported jail statistics to the fiscal court. The county is scheduled to receive \$1,687.72 for reimbursement in January and \$1,857.29 in February for transporting inmates charged with felonies.

Smith said there were 87 new arrests in January and 101 in February.

Local Police activity report

Derek Tipton, 31, of James Street, Irvine was arrested by Officer King on March 5 on an Estill District Court warrant. The warrant says that Tipton failed to pay a fine of \$85.00. He had been found guilty in 2018 of no registration plates and failure of owner to maintain required insurance.

Latasha Walters, 31, of Lilly Ferry Road, Irvine was served with a criminal summons by Deputy Brad Smith to appear in Estill District Court on a charge of unlawful transaction with a minor, third

degree. Three people were arrested March 4 in the parking lot of Stop and Shop by Deputy Smith.

He was investigating a report that several people were shooting up in the parking lot.

All three were charged with public intoxication. They were identified as **Lorri S. Mays**, 48, homeless; **James K. Perkins**, 34, of Clear Creek Road, Irvine; and **Harley R. Tipton**, 30, of Richmond.

Irvine Officer Stewart Morris assisted Smith at the scene.

Cindy Ballard, 36, of Clear Creek Road, Irvine was charged by Deputy Smith on March 3 with operating on a suspended or revoked license.

Deputy Smith served a criminal summons from Estill Circuit Court on Stephanie S. Abney, 29, of Broadway.

An Estill District bench warrant was served by Smith on **James R. Collins**, 38, of Picnic Hill Road, Irvine. The warrant says Collins failed to appear in court after being found guilty in 2017 of first degree assault. No

bail was set.

Kenneth G. Collins, 52, of McKee Road, Irvine was served on March 2 by Deputy Smith with a Madison Circuit court bench warrant. It says he failed to appear on charges of theft by unlawful taking or disposition and contempt of court. His bail was set at \$414.40.

The deputy also served an Estill District Court warrant on Collins. This warrant says that Collins failed to appear in 2019 on a charge of operating on a suspended or revoked license.