



Time Out



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Texas, Or Bust

Lady Prospector softball coach Ed Matlosz sent me an e-mail last week that lists his AJHS girls as one of 24 teams that are scheduled to compete in the sixth annual Fox Country Girls Fast Pitch Softball Tournament to be held Feb. 26-28, 2009, in El Paso, Texas.

If you recall, the Lady Prospectors were the only team from Arizona in the 2008 tournament this past February and ended up going 8-1 overall and finished runner-up in a tournament that included teams from Texas, California and New Mexico.

Next February, Tucson Sunnyside would be a second Arizona school in the tournament, that is, if AJHS is allowed to go. Because the school district's budget override was turned down by voters resulting in funding cuts at the high school, Coach Matlosz is concerned his team may not get the opportunity to head back to Texas for a potential rematch with El Paso Chapin High School, who defeated AJHS in the tournament championship game. And that would be a shame.

AJHS Hosts Embry-Riddle Wrestling Camp

By Chuck Baker
The News

Apache Junction High School was the host site of last week's Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University wrestling camp that was conducted by ERAU coaches and wrestlers. Embry-Riddle head coach Ken Ramsey was joined by former ERAU All-Americans Gordo Villaescusa and Nathaniel Augustson, now both assistant coaches, and current wrestler Eli Arismendez, who was a National Qualifier this past college wrestling season.

Embry-Riddle finished a disappointing eighth



Apache Junction High School wrestlers Taylor Hamlin (left) and Rocco Agerone (middle) work on a technique with former Embry-Riddle All-American wrestler Gordo Villaescusa, now a graduate assistant at ERAU

Majors Softball All Stars Pick Up Tourney Win

By Chuck Baker
The News

The Majors Softball All Stars became the second Apache Junction Little League team to earn a victory in its District 7 Tournament when its defeated Red Mountain National 15-6 in a game played this past Monday at Quail Run Park in Mesa.

The 11- and 12-year-old girls from Apache Junction led Red Mountain just 7-6 before scoring eight runs in the fifth inning to ice the win.

Five All Stars from

Apache Junction Little League competed in District 7 tournaments, going a combined 3-17.

The only other All Star team to pick up a tournament win was the Juniors Baseball All Stars of 13 and 14 year olds, who won two tournament games and advanced to the semifinals before losing to Mesa North Central.

In the big win for the Majors Softball All Stars, Christina Duarte pitched four innings of four-hit ball and struck out eight Red Mountain batters to



(at left) The Majors Softball All Star banner hanging on the team's dugout during their District 7 Tournament listed players Courtney Parker, Talon Welk, Jenna Skinner, Taylor Tinkham, Payton Swaim, Christina Duarte, Sky Saathoff, Georgie Stambaugh, Brooklyn Tylicki and Gabriella Mora and coaches Darcy Swaim and Rob Skinner.

get the win. Duarte also had a RBI triple and later walked and scored.

Payton Swaim and Georgie Stambaugh both had a RBI singles, Jenna Skinner walked twice

and scored a pair of runs and Taylor Tinkham, Sky Saathoff, Courtney Parker, Brooklyn Tylicki and Talon Welk all reached base via a walk or hit batsmen and scored.

Skinner also came on and pitched a scoreless fifth inning, allowing just one hit.

The A.J. girls then went

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Softball Majors All Star player Taylor Tinkham leads off for Apache Junction in their District 7 Tournament game against Mountain View played last Wednesday at Quail Run Park in Mesa

Prospectors Split Final Two Summer Games

By Chuck Baker
The News

Picking up victories during Summer practice games usually isn't a high priority for most Apache Junction High School teams. Summer is a time to give some of your younger players the chance to show what they can do. It's a time when coaches may experiment with different lineups, put players in different positions and try just about everyone at pitching.

But for a team that won only one game in the Spring of 2008, lost 15 of 21 games via the run-rule, and has a new head coach, you might think that winning some games during the Summer are important.

First-year AJHS head coach Preston English has never said that winning games in the Summer is important. He's more interested in developing consistency on the playing field, instilling "baseball smarts" in his players, and yes, giving younger players the chance to show what they can do while trying just about everyone at pitching.

And after coming up with one of their better Summer outings in last Tuesday's 9-7 win over the Pro Scout League Academy only to follow that up with a lackluster 18-0 loss on Thursday to

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(above) Nick Saathoff watches a single he hit during last Thursday's Summer practice game;



(at right) Nathan Higginbottom dives head first back to first base during a pickoff attempt in Thursday's game played at Mesa Skyline.

2008 Juniors Baseball All Stars



The Juniors Baseball All Stars from Apache Junction Little League, who won two District 7 Tournament games, included (front row, left to right) Zach Cooper, Jared Kraps, David Sandoval, Brian Drennan and Travis Turner, and (back row, left to right) Coach Jon Thierbach, Blaine O'Brien, Tyler McCullen, John LaChapelle, Sean Weifenbach, Dylan Vanslochteren, Johnathan Converse and Coach Cris Converse (submitted photo)

Apache Junction High School was the host site of last week's Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University wrestling camp conducted by coaches and wrestlers from Embry-Riddle, one of the top NAIA wrestling schools in the country.

at this year's NAIA National Championships after a runner-up finish at Nationals in 2007.

The university, located in Prescott, is typically one of the top wrestling programs each season in the NAIA ranks.

Coach Ramsey just finished his second year at ERAU after 10 years as an assistant wrestling coach at Ohio State University. Also on hand at last week's wrestling camp was Apache Junction High School coach Ed Reed and several of the Prospector wrestlers, learning new wrestling techniques and maneuvers.

For more wrestling camp pictures, see page C-2 of this edition of *The News*.