

## Alabama Ramps Up Its Sports Concussion Efforts

by Joseph D. Ackerson, Ph.D.  
Chair, Alabama Sports Concussion Taskforce

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 300,000 sports-related concussions are officially reported each year. However, most mild concussions go unreported, so that number may be a huge under-estimate. Wes Rutland-Brown, an epidemiologist with the CDC, has estimated the number of unidentified sports concussions between 750,000 and 2.25 million.

The Alabama Sports Concussion Taskforce (ASCT) was created in 2007 as a committee of the Alabama Head Injury Taskforce to address the growing problem of Sports Related Concussions (SRC) in Alabama. The members of the ASCT represent healthcare providers, athletes, families, school systems, state agencies, researchers, and policy makers. We have solicited input from all levels of athletic endeavor including both recreational and competitive sports from youth through college.

The ASCT has identified three main areas of focus:

- 1) Education and public awareness for athletes, families, healthcare providers, coaches, schools, and the general public,
- 2) Clinical guidelines for concussion identification and management, including important return to play decisions, and
- 3) Legislative and policy making endeavors to positively impact the systems of care for athletes and their families.

Of course none of this is possible without the ability to fund important efforts and initiatives. Thanks to the efforts of the Alabama Head Injury Foundation and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, we have been the recipient of some grant monies designed to further the aims of the ASCT.

Enabled by these grants, we have accomplished a number of important goals in the past six months. The ASCT has become a clearing house for free, expert



information for anyone working in this area. We conducted a workshop for the Alabama Association of Certified Athletic Trainers and provided important presentation-ready information which our members have used at the Alabama Statewide Coaches meeting as well as other venues. We consulted with the Medical Advisory Board for the Alabama High School Athletic Association who recently updated their policies to require training in concussion recognition and management for all high school coaches. With the assistance of Alabama State Representative Paul DeMarco we were able to pass legislation empowering our committee to "study the status of sports-related concussions in Alabama and urging all state agencies and private organizations to participate in the study resulting in strategic plans to address the identification and appropriate treatment of such injuries."

While many colleges and some high schools have Certified Athletic Trainers or physicians available to help assess and manage SRC, the same is not true for all middle schools or youth sports. We encourage everyone to learn to recognize the symptoms and signs of concussion and to act to ensure that any athlete that experiences a concussion is cleared by a qualified physician prior to returning to play.

# Inverness Tennis Tournament Celebrates 15th Year



Top left - Charlie Priest, Executive Director of AHIF and Jerry Nixon, Tennis Pro at Inverness Racquet Club; Top right - Ronnie and Deane Giles; Middle left - Pam and Phil Bradford; Middle right - Tiffany and Carlton Horne; Below - Ken and Ann Horne

In 1985, several families in the Inverness Country Club community came together to support Carlton Horne and his family when he sustained a traumatic brain injury. The Inverness Tennis Tournament became a fundraising event and, today, some of these same friends continue to play tennis to raise funds for AHIF - helping many other survivors of TBI.

Thank you to both the General and Finance Committee members: Rick and Char Bonsack, Ashley Booth, Pamela Bradford, Bennie Bumpers, Tim Dobson,

Martha Douglas, Martha Faulkner, Mark Gallivan, Deane and Ronnie Giles, Ann and Ken Horne, Jim and Cindy Kiel, Sandy Koplun (AHIF), Janet Massey (AHIF), Buddy McDaniel, Jerry Nixon, Charlie Priest (AHIF), Robert Rourke, Tery Sherer, Susan Smith, Herman Thrash, Vicki Vickers and Jack Woodard.

Charles Priest, executive director of AHIF, presented a plaque to Inverness tennis pro, Jerry Nixon, in recognition of the club's invaluable support of the annual tennis event.

## Tennis Tournament Results

Congratulations to the tournament stars!

### Women's C

Winners: Julie Hix & Sissy Barrett

Finalists: Amy Riley & Cindy Guyton

### Men's C

Winners: Carlton Horne & Tim Clower

### Women's B

Winners: Pam Morton & Maissa Ospina

Finalists: Deane Giles & Linda Hodges

### Men's B

Winners: David Kallus & Andrew Kallus

Finalists: Tracey Thomson & Derek Harper

### Women's A

Winners: Sue Cook & Jennifer Wilson

Finalists: Martha Douglas & Beth Conwell

### Men's A

Winners: Mike Hughes & Arnaldo Alcaino

Finalists: Miller Sproull & Dave Roberts

### Mixed A

Winners: Jennifer Wilson & Ray Deloteus

Finalists: Martha Douglas & Mark Kiel

### Mixed B

Winners: Lisa Roberts & Mike Seremet

Finalists: Lynn Randall & Vivian Wells

## Alabama Lifespan Respite Resource Network

AHIF is participating in a newly formed state-wide network called the Alabama Lifespan Respite Resource Network. This network provides:

- ~ Information on respite from a database of over 100 respite resources in Alabama
- ~ Assistance in finding respite services in your area of the state
- ~ Public Awareness about respite
- ~ Advocacy for funding respite

### For more information:

Alabama Lifespan Respite Resource Network  
1521 East 9th Street  
Anniston, AL 36207  
Phone: 256-237-3683 or 866-737-8252  
Email: ALABAMARESPITE@aol.com  
Website: www.alabamarespite.org

## SUMMER CAMP 2010



# Jimmy League Memorial Bream Rodeo

Celebrating 10 Years of Fish, Fun & Funds

For ten years, the friends and family of Jimmy League have been honoring his memory with a fishing tournament benefiting AHIF.

Thank you to the Host Committee for another great day of family activities, fantastic fishing and generous support:

Will and Christi League, Bryant and Lakin Crump, Bob and Dixie Bailey, Jim and Bonnie Batson, Bryan and Alice Bentley, Blake and Shawn Bentley, Jimmy and Tina Caudle, Hadley and Carrie Coan, Mark and Lakely Craig, Tod and Melissa Dodgen, Chuck and Cecelia Duncan, Mike and Angie Ellis, Peter and Nicole Farrell, Derrick and Camille Gardner, Jim and Heather Green, Wesley and Abi Harden, Steve and Amay Johnson, David and Kathy Lee, Donny and Kate McElvoy, David and Lee Nast, Larry and Alexis Parker, Bill and Shannan Roberts, Bubba and Clare Roby, Kevin and Fleming Sharp, John and Holly Smith, Scott and Susan Swing, and John and Wimberly Watts.



Top left - Master of Ceremonies, Will League; Top right - Christi League with the day's Smallest Fish; Middle - Open Division Champs; Above - Blue Gill Champs; Left - The Future of the Tournament!

## ... My Kids were Not Injured!

Cherisse Freeman of Birmingham is thankful that her children were safely restrained in their car seats provided by the Alabama Head Injury Foundation Car Seats for Kids Program when her car was rear-ended, totally demolishing the vehicle. While she suffered neck and upper body injuries, her children, restrained in their car seats, suffered no injury from this unfortunate event. Ms. Freeman is the first parent to report a car wreck to AHIF where her children were protected by their car seats.

Christen Freeman, three years old and his two year old sister, Yazmine, were fitted in their new car seats at Children's Hospital, a Fitting Station partner, approximately six months prior to their car crash. Their Mom was taught how to adjust and install the seats by a certified safety technician and she faithfully buckled them into the seats every day when she drove them to and from school.



To date, more than 4,300 AHIF car seats have been distributed and fitted at nine Alabama Nationally Certified Child Safety Seat Inspection Centers that partner with AHIF. They are located in Anniston, Birmingham, Huntsville, Montgomery, the Shoals area and Tuscaloosa.

## Alabama Citizen Advocacy Institute

Please join us at our Alabama Citizen Advocacy Institutes\*, a series of public policy and advocacy trainings held in Birmingham, Mobile, Decatur and Montgomery to help you become a more successful advocate. Each series will explore different ways to influence public policies that impact individuals/families with brain injury.

### Who is an Advocate?

If you have ever spoken up for yourself or on behalf of someone else, you are an Advocate! Advocates include a person with a brain injury, or a family member of a person with a brain injury or someone who cares about them.

### Why is Advocacy Important?

Despite past advocacy efforts, many people find that services for people with brain injury and funding for those services is woefully inadequate. In short, people with brain injury are being left behind and denied many supports and services necessary.

Learn how you can turn your personal experiences with traumatic brain injury into a powerful political message. This is the most effective way to promote the changes we so desperately need.

Knowledge is power and our Citizen Advocacy Institutes will help you sharpen your skills in everything from effectively telling your story and understanding the legislative process, to visiting with elected officials.

### Alabama Citizen Advocacy Institutes - Birmingham

#### Location:

**Lakeshore Foundation**  
400 Ridgeway Drive  
Birmingham, AL 35209

#### Dates:

Fridays, February 4, March 4,  
April 1 and May 6, 2011

#### Time:

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

#### How to apply:

Applications are available from [www.ahif.org](http://www.ahif.org), or by calling (205) 823-3818 (Birmingham) or 1-800-433-8002 (statewide).

#### Deadline for submission:

**November 30, 2010**

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## Sports Concussion

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**Concussion symptoms** can be broken down into 4 major areas:

- 1) **Mental** - any change in their usual mental state (feeling woozy, confused, in a fog, disoriented, problems with memory or concentration)
- 2) **Emotional** - change in personality, irritability, nervousness, unexplained or sudden sadness, or extreme moodiness
- 3) **Arousal** - chronic fatigue or lethargy, reduced endurance or tolerance for physical exertion, sleep disturbance
- 4) **Physical** - blurred or double vision, dizziness, problems with balance or coordination, headache, nausea, overly sensitive to light or sound, numbness or tingling.

While many times observers may notice that a player has had a concussion when they fail to get up after a hit or fall, it is important to note that *you do not have to lose consciousness to have had a significant concussion.*



### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

AHIF Volunteers Diane Polito (left) and Paula Crosby (right) staff our display at the “Access-Ability” Festival at McWane Center sponsored by the City of Birmingham to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disability Act.

To become an AHIF volunteer, contact Sandy Koplun at 205-823-3818 or visit our website: [www.AHIF.org](http://www.AHIF.org)