

SIDELINES

Early Bird Basketball

Fort Bragg's Early Bird Basketball Tournament will be held Nov. 17 through 19 at various post facilities.

The tournament is open to all military and government ID card holders ages 18 and older.

Deadline for team entries and entry fees are due by noon on Nov. 16 at the Sports Office in building 4-2843, fifth floor of Wing B on Normandy Street.

For more information, call the Sports Office at 396-1217.

Unit Intramural Basketball Program

The Unit Intramural Basketball Program will begin Nov. 20 and will be conducted at various post facilities.

This program is open exclusively to active duty personnel assigned and/or attached to Fort Bragg.

Deadline for team entries is Friday but those registering after that deadline and prior to Dec. 9 will be accommodated, however, may play an abbreviated league schedule.

To enter, teams must submit an entry form and team roster to the staff of their unit's supporting physical fitness center.

Soccer players needed

Bragg United F.C. is recruiting new players and assistant coaches.

Those interested should contact David Kelley at 717-3363 or Anthony Recinos at 578-8597.

Wrestling events

The Fayetteville-Cumberland County Parks and Recreation is accepting registrations for youth wrestling at all recreation centers now through Nov. 12.

Registration costs \$20 for children ages 5 through 12.

For more information, call 433-1396.

Adult, Youth Basketball Clinic

Fayetteville-Cumberland County Parks and Recreation will hold the adult and youth basketball officials' clinic for the winter athletic season starting Dec. 16 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Kiwanis Recreation Center on Devers Street.

Those interested in becoming an official can contact James Parker at 433-1392 or 257-1729 or Fred Clark at 988-1563.

All American Trail closed

Fort Bragg's All American Trail is closed for deer hunting season and will re-open Jan. 2, 2007.

For more information, call 396-5979.

Submit Sports Items

Readers participating or competing in sporting events, or who have children participating in sports-related activities, can E-mail the Paraglide Sports editor at braggparaglide@conus.army.mil and tell us about your sporting event.

Bragg Soldier wins silver medal

by Sgt. David Foley

Paraglide

When Marguerite Hunter joined the Army as a transportation specialist on April 13, 2004, to satisfy her desire to serve her country, she had no idea what her enlistment would bring.

Hunter completed basic training, advanced individual training and was stationed at Fort Bragg, where she found herself preparing for deployment to Iraq in November of that same year.

Once she arrived in Iraq, Hunter was attached to the 29th Brigade Combat Team, a unit comprised mostly of Samoans and Hawaiians. During their down time, Hunter and her comrades would organize volleyball games, which happened to be one of her favorite pastimes.

As a division-one volleyball player for Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. and at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, Hunter renewed her love affair with the sport she hadn't played in more than six years.

"I played a lot with them, and that's what motivated me to look into the Army's exceptional athlete program when I got back," Hunter said.

Once Hunter redeployed, she contacted Steve Johnson, the athletic director for Fort Bragg.

Johnson arranged for Hunter to attend the Armed Forces Volleyball Tournament at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., on April 24 where representatives and scouts watched her play in the college-style games.

After the last game of the tournament, Hunter was one of the 12 players selected from all four services to compete on Team USA.

Hunter then had a new team, new coaches and a new budget.

From there, Hunter and her teammates abandoned their division-one tactics and began practicing for Olympic-level competition, setting their sights on international success.

Bringing home a medal in the Conseil International Du Sports Militaire competition would not be easy, but would be necessary.

"The USA had a lot of pressure to bring home a medal because congress was about to stop funding the program," Hunter said. "But we were playing against 10 countries and some of them brought their Olympic teams. It was a very humbling experience."

As a 30-year-old mother of four playing against many younger ath-



photos courtesy of Marguerite Hunter

Marguerite Hunter, left, and fellow teammates exchange gifts before the start of the Canada - USA game.

letes, Hunter knew she was in need of additional training to ensure the U.S. brought home a medal.

Hunter also needed to learn to play as a Libero (a defensive specialist), a position that didn't exist when she was playing in college.

As the team's Libero, Hunter would not be able to rotate out of the game like the other players, so she had to be in top physical condition. Despite having practices that ran longer than those she had in college, Hunter stayed late and continued to hone her skills for the games.

"At 30 years old, coaching is where I would normally be, so having a chance to play was unbelievable," hunter said. "Words can't express what it was like playing for the U.S. Team."

China, Korea, Canada and Germany all brought their Olympic teams to the match at Fort Huachuca, which was the first time the games have been played in the United States.

On the court, the competition was intense, but off the court, the games lived up to their motto: Friendship through sports.

The teams exchanged gifts before every match and had dinner together on several occasions.

"Having dinner with the other teams was awesome," Hunter said. "As an athlete it didn't feel like we were in the armed services, and it was amazing seeing China and Korea sitting at the same table."

Hunter said there was a delicate balance of aggression on the court because everyone wanted to win, but no one wanted to offend the players on the other teams.

"It was very competitive, but we were a little more cautious," Hunter

said. "We had to work a little harder on building friendships because of the situation in the world."

Comparing the CISM games to her college days, Hunter said there was a major difference in attitude.

"In college, we had rivalries and we were out there to kick butt, but with the USA, we were a little more conservative with the attitude," Hunter said. "There was no cockiness. We didn't want to make a bad impression."

Hunter and her teammates attacked the court during the competition and secured a silver medal for the USA, taking second to China who won the gold with their three-time Olympic champions.

With the volleyball tournament behind her, Hunter hung up her jersey and went back to work.

Hunter is now training for her second deployment and said she is proud to represent her country as both a soldier and an athlete.

Hunter will spend one year in Iraq and have one week after she returns to the United States to in-process before she goes to West Point to begin training for the 2007 games in India.

During her upcoming deployment, she will not have access to the same facilities she has at Fort Bragg, so she plans to continue her training through footwork, wind sprints and watching videos of her competitors.

While Hunter has aspirations of playing again after her deployment, she said her dream would have remained a fantasy if not for the support she got from her chain of command.

For anyone to be involved in the All Army Sports Program, the Soldier's chain of command needs to



Spc. Marguerite Hunter joined the Army in April 2004, deployed to Iraq and became a member of the American Armed Services Volleyball team in April 2006.

release them from duty for whatever time is needed, and Hunter said her noncommissioned officer in charge played a major role in her success.

Master Sgt. Andre Brown, 264th Corps Support Battalion, operations sergeant, said he didn't have a problem helping Hunter get released for the tryouts because she was such an outstanding Soldier.

"I didn't want to hold her back," Brown said. "I wanted her to have every opportunity the Army could offer."

"(Hunter) is the type of Soldier who is always happy and comes to work looking for work to do," he said. "She is always looking for challenges, and has the attitude that she can do anything. If you give her the ball, she will take it and run with it."

For more information about the All Army Sports Program, call the Fort Bragg Sports Center at 396-1217.



The women's starting USA Volleyball Team huddles up during the Holland and USA game at the 2006 Conseil International Du Sports Militaire competition.