Photos by Wali Pitt

Coach Antwon Mitchell works with the youngest players at a free summer football camp.

Players with the Winston-Salem Ravens Youth Football Program get in the camera.

Summer football camps show the heart of coaches

BY WALI PITT
THE CHRONICLE

The East Winston community has a rich history of giving back to their residents. This is never more evident than with the coaches of the Winston-Salem Ravens Youth Football Program.

The organization is holding free summer camps every week fo regardless of what team they will be playing for in the fall.The only thing needed to participate in this camp is a love for football and the desire to playthe game the right way.

The purpose of the camp is simple: installing proper fundamentals, footwork and safe play in players no matter their age or experience.Anthony McNeil, aka Coach Boomey, told *The Chronicle*, "We're here to teach the kids the fundamentals of football, have fun, safe play and jusIn 2013, USA Football rolled out its "Heads-up football program" as a comprehensive solution tohelp make the game better and safer. This is a concept the coaches at this camp clearly believein as you could hear coaches from every age group yelling out "Heads up, keep your heads up"as they moved through each drill and exercise."

I wanna just teach the youth the right way to play. You know, we get a lot of criticism for noreason, people not wanting to play us, and we're just looking to change the way they see us,"said coach Antwon Mitchell, former Carver High School and North Carolina Central University Football player who has his three sons participating in the camp. "I push them, but you know they got the drive to wanna be good on their own, too."

Antwon Rucker, coach of the Ravens junior pee wee team, stressed the organization's desire to not only teach the kids the game of football but also to help them as they grow individually.

"We're just here to uplift these boys and make sure they learn football, we're here to give back

man, make sure to keep them off the streets and give them something positive to do and help them build on their future."

Players learn the basics of stances in a free summer football camp.

After some stretching, the kids were broken up into age groups where the older kids practicedproper tackling techniques, ran running drills with a parachute and fine tuned their ball recognition skills while the younger kids were focusing on the fundamentals of footwork,learning the 2 and 3-point stances and keeping their heads up coming off the line at the snap ofthe ball.

Michael Jordan, a player on the Ravens team, told *The Chronicle* why he loved football and the Ravens. "I like the hitting and I like the fundamentals," he said.

His teammate Justin Covington quickly interjected, "Touchdowns! celebrations!" to which Michael quickly agreed.

They also sent a message to their opponents, saying to look out for The Ravens and theywould be undefeated this year, and of course they took a moment to "dab on 'em" just tohammer the point home.

Many of the coaches have faced the same struggles in their lives that are awaiting many ofthese kids, and they are determined to share their experiences in an effort to keep these kids onthe right path.

"I made a lot of bad decisions after my youth football career that didn't allow me to continue[playing football]. I just want to stay with the kids and give back as much as I can," said Johnny Webster, or Coach Jew, as he is affectionately known.

"These kids I've been coaching since they were 6-U. They're 10 and 11 years old right now. I'vebeen coaching these kids for a long time, and I have nothing but good things to say about them. They're all special in their own way."

The Winston-Salem Ravens are holding these free camps every Sunday of the summer, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on the fields at Paisley Middle School.

Stay tuned for more stories and videos featuring the Winston-Salem Ravens in the coming issues of *The Chronicle*.

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Submitted photo

Coretta Bigalow and Denise Alston put together a golf outing with 11 of their friends.

Braxton sinks hole in one at the lake

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Anyone that plays the game of golf can vouch for the elusive dream of a hole-in-one. You dream about what your victory dance and reaction will be. And on Saturday, June 24, at Winston Lake Golf Course, Walt Braxton did what many golfers dream about. He had a hole-in-one on the Par 3 #16 at 143 yards.

He was part of a golf outing that Coretta Bigalow and Denise Alston put together with 11 of their friends. The group plays regularly together at various courses throughout the Piedmont.

A foursome with the group, D.D. Adams, Larry Brown, Doug McCorkle and Braxton were preparing for the #16 tee box. Braxton was up first to hit. He pulled a club from his bag and said, "I'm gonna do something a little un-orthodox." Braxton had decided to use his 9 iron verses the usual 8 iron. He struck the ball and his friends began to comment immediately when the ball left the clubface, "Great shot, good looking ball." McCorkle said, "And the crowd is going wild!"

Then a sight that you can only dream about happens. The ball was on line all the way, hit about a foot behind the flag and spun back to the hole.

Shouts of "It's in the hole!" came from everyone.

Braxton did "WOO!" like a Rick Flair the wrestler, several times and strutted about the tee box in his excitement.

He has now defied the odds of 12,500 to 1 to become one of the ones.

— Submited by D.D. Adams

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