

Colorado group skateboarding across the nation



Three friends are on the trip of a lifetime. Sean Knapp (left), Gabby Pantle (center) and Zander Loudon (right), all of Denver, headed out on two skateboards and a bicycle on June 11. They plan to travel to Walton, N.Y. in 50 days.

— Telegram photo by Dana Paxton

By DANA PAXTON
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 Last Saturday, an interesting story rolled into Norton. On June 11, Sean Knapp, Zander Loudon and Gabrielle Pantle, all of Denver, Colo. set out to fulfill a dream, the type of dream others only wish to experience—the freedom of the open road and adventure. They plan on skateboarding 40 miles a day to Sean’s hometown of Walton, N.Y. within 50 days. Saturday, the group rolled into Norton along their trip route. Sean and Zander, both 21, and Gabby, 22, got the idea to skateboard across the United States and are making their dream a reality. Sean and Zander are doing the skateboarding and their only support is from Gabby, who is riding a bike with supplies. The young people explained that they decided to take on the trip to see the country and learn whatever they can from the experience. “I want to see what I can learn and how much I grow from the experience,” Gabby said. “I needed to prove to everyone at home that I could do it.” Sean agreed, but also said the mission is a little more global. “My main purpose for doing this is to see if I really have it in

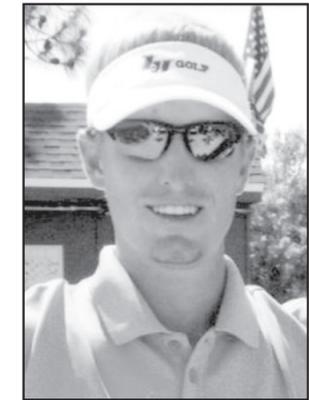
me to complete it,” he said. “We are also doing it for the Lance Armstrong Foundation.” Zander, however, has a precise focus in mind. “I am doing it for the adventure,” he said. A lot of training would be needed to prepare for such a trip and the group did just that. Sean skated five miles every day to Boulder and back to Denver, Zander went to Georgia in May and competed in a 200 mile, three-day skate race and he quit smoking. Gabby, on the other hand, did no training. She quit smoking two days prior to their departure and had not been on a bike since her childhood until the day they took off. Support from family and friends has varied for the group. Sean said his family expected it of him and once Zander’s family and friends saw how into it he was they also expected him to succeed. Gabby’s family has been slower to accept her plan, frequently calling and telling her, “Just call us when you are ready to come home.” Being out on the open road has its risks and they ran into one such risk between Atwood and Oberlin, where they encountered a rattle snake. The heat, wind and storms have also caused them some difficulty. The young adventurers have

been able to finance this trip through their own savvy ways and the kindness of the people they meet along the way. “We count on the kindness of strangers, free food and once in a while a motel room,” Sean said. “Otherwise we go to gas stations and fast food places for food that is still good to eat but being thrown away. We sleep in a tent but once in a while are offered lodging.” They took refuge at the Haven in Norton Saturday night and spent most of the day at McDonald’s waiting for the weather to cool off enough to hit the road again Sunday evening. Upon their arrival in Walton, Zander wants to check out the skate scene, Sean said he planned on building tree houses and getting into four wheeling. Gabby said she wanted to find a job and make enough money to get back home. These three adventurers can be followed on their regularly updated facebook page coast to coast or by checking out their blog, Push Culture. The group offered one last piece of advice to anyone with similar ambitions. “To any potential skateboards out there,” Sean said, “stay safe and get roughy!”

Brands takes second in PGA Collegiate Championship

By DICK BOYD
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 Kyle Brands, a grandson of Maxine and Eugene Wiltfong, Norton, and the late Dorothy and Stanley Brands, Long Island, completed his senior golf season in college with a tremendous finish!

The son of Norton Community High School graduate Beverly (Wiltfong) Brands and husband, Steve, a Northern Valley gradu-



Kyle Brands

ate, Kyle played golf for Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Mo., the last two years and for Pratt Community College the two previous years.

After qualifying with his team this season, he led the Blue Tigers to a runner-up finish in the fifth PGA Minority Collegiate Championships earlier this month on the Wanamaker PGA Golf Course near Port St. Luci, Florida.

Kyle came close to winning the individual championship but also placed runner-up. Virginia Tech edged his team for the title.

“Kyle was in the hunt to win the PGA Minority Tournament,” said his head coach Jerry Coffman. “I know he wanted it badly for himself and also to help the team win.”

What made it even more special was that Kyle was surprised by a few special guests. He was practicing on Friday when out of the corner of his eye he saw some people who looked to be his parents but, then again, it could not be because he wasn’t expecting them.

“I looked over and had to do one of those double-takes as I thought it looked like them but then I kept thinking it can’t be them clear out here in Florida,” he recalled. “But, it was and that made my final collegiate round even more special with them being able to watch it live.”

Kyle grew up in Ottawa and began early on wanting to play golf, even though the game of baseball nearly interfered.

“I was playing a lot of baseball until I got to high school, then

I wanted a change,” he said. “Golf had always been there and it seemed like the right time to pursue it.”

His high school golf play gave him a chance to play at Pratt Community College, which began a roller coaster ride of different coaches during his two-year stint.

“The coach who originally recruited me left and the assistant basketball coach stepped in for my first year,” he said. “I remember us playing that first year on a RV and trailer lot that was pretty much a pasture, so it made things difficult.” His second year at Pratt improved as his third coach came in and was able to help not only with the facility upgrade but also with his game.

“We played my second year at the country club, which was a big improvement,” he said. “Coach Farmer also helped me a lot with my swing and I owe a lot of gratitude to him for that.”

Kyle was captain of the team his sophomore year and was the only returning player. He was also in a dual-role, as he spent some time as the assistant coach.

“Having the dual-role of coach and player helped a lot with my leadership and work ethic,” he said. “That then led coach Coffman to recruit me and the rest is history.”

Following a 2010 fall season in which he played in only two tournaments, Kyle made a strong statement. He opened the spring competition in Puerto Rico where he tied for the top score on the team, which qualified him for the next tournament. That performance paved the way for a solid spring.

“He was our most consistent spring season golfer,” said coach Coffman. “He provided good leadership this season and gave the other golfers great information on some of the courses as he had been there before.”

Throughout, Kyle relied on family support to keep him inspired to keep playing great golf.

“Being away for four years, my family has been big,” he said.

“They were there with the phone calls when things weren’t going as well and it wasn’t just my parents. My aunts, uncles and grandparents all were there for me and I always feel whatever recognition I get, they deserve a part of it for sure.”

This season also was a change in that he was the only senior on most of the trips, while being joined by three freshmen and a junior.

“The atmosphere was so different this year with the new guys,” he said. “All of them were used to winning in high school and they brought that attitude here. They were focused more on winning as

a team and not as an individual, which really helped this team come together.”

With Kyle joined by those four, the five-some nearly pulled off the national championship.

“Getting the chance to go play on a PGA course is a once in a lifetime opportunity,” he said. “And to also be that close to winning made it even better.”

“It would have been great to have won but I am thankful for getting the chance to play there twice and get the experience,” he said. Kyle also played in the national tournament as a junior and played in two national tournaments while at Pratt Community College.

Coach Coffman liked the fact that Kyle had played in national tournaments before coming to Lincoln, as he ended up playing in a national tournament all four years.

“Having someone that had two years of national tournament experience that could come in and play right away is something you can’t always find,” said coach Coffman.

What does the future hold for Kyle?

“I have a bachelor’s in business so I am looking at a few options there,” he said. “My ideal situation would be to combine both business and golf as a career; ultimately I would like to be a college golf coach some day.”

Coach Coffman is hopeful that Kyle will be able to stay close to Jefferson City for the coming year and possibly help coach the team.

“It would be great if he could stay around as he would be a big asset to the young guys on our

team,” he said.

Before Kyle’s Lincoln playing career fully comes to an end, he will still have a few moments of fame on the Golf Channel this month.

“The Golf Channel did a little thing on the PGA Minority Tournament last year and I was mentioned on there for a little bit, which was pretty neat,” he said. “This year it is set to air on June 29 at 7 p.m. Central Time so hopefully there will be another mention of me on there.”

Persons in this area who have the Sports and Entertainment Package through Nex-Tech will find the Golf Channel on Channel 206.

(Right) Kyle Brands drives the golf ball during his play for Lincoln University in the PGA Minority Collegiate Championships, where he placed runner-up and led his Blue Tiger team to a runner-up finish, as well.



BLUE JAY SPORTS CAMP

JULY 18 THROUGH JULY 21 — GRADES 1-8

- Grades 1-4 Volleyball, 9 a.m.-10 a.m. (Stull Gymnasium)
- Grades 5-8 Volleyball, 10:15 a.m.-noon (Stull Gymnasium)
- Grades 3-5 Football, 9 a.m.-10 a.m. (Practice Football Field)
- Grades 6-8 Football, 10:15 a.m.-noon (Practice Football Field)
- Grades 1-4 Girls Basketball, 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. (East Campus)
- Grades 5-8 Girls Basketball, 2:15 p.m.-4:30 p.m. (East Campus)
- Grades 1-4 Boys Basketball, 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m. (Stull Gymnasium)
- Grades 5-8 Boys Basketball, 2:15 p.m.-4:30 p.m. (Stull Gymnasium)

Volleyball: Kevin Jilka; Football: Lucas Melvin; Girls’ Basketball: Kevin Jilka; Boys’ Basketball: Doug Reusink
Cost: (Volleyball and Girls Basketball)

Grades 1 through 4 One Sport - \$20.00; Two Sports - \$30.00
 Grades 5 through 8 One Sport - \$30.00; Two Sports - 45.00

Cost: (Football and Boys Basketball)

First Session Football or Basketball \$20.00
 First Session Football and Basketball \$30.00
 First Session Football and Second Session Basketball. \$30.00
 Second Session Football or Basketball \$30.00
 Second Session Football and Basketball. \$45.00

Each camper will receive a Blue Jay Sports Camp T-shirt for attending!
 Return the bottom portion of the registration form along with payment to
 Kevin Jilka, 701 North Jones, Norton, Kansas 67654-1211

REGISTRATION IS DUE BY JULY 9 TO INSURE T-SHIRT THE FIRST DAY OF CAMP!

Name: _____ Grade Entering Fall ‘11 _____

Name or Nickname on T-Shirt _____

Shirt Size: Youth Small (6-8); Youth Medium (10-12); Youth Large (14-16)
 Men’s Small (34-36); Men’s Medium (38-40); Men’s Large (42-44)
 Sports: Football (3-5); Football (6-8) Volleyball (1-4); Volleyball (5-8)
 Girls Bball (1-4); Girls Bball (5-8); Boys Bball (1-4); Boys Bball (5-8)

PARENTAL OR GUARDIAN RELEASE: We (I) give permission for the enrollment of _____ in the 2011 Blue Jay Sports Camp.

We (I) hereby release the camp staff from any claim on account of any accidental injury during the time of the camp. _____

(Signature) Please note any physical problems your child has that the staff needs to be aware of _____

The Blue Jay Sports Camp is an individual undertaking and is not sponsored by or affiliated with USD #211

OFFICE HOURS

on Friday the Office will close at

**Monday through Thursday
8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

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