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Former pro football player and war hero visit golf tournament



David Williams (left) stands with Chris Langston and his son Kendale Langston (holding the Gator helmet). Terri Biede, the lady in the photo, bought the Gator helmet during the silent auction part of this fundraiser at Chiefland Golf and Country Club. She donated it to Chris Langston and his son Kendale Langston, because the family's house burned down just weeks ago -- with all of their Gator memorabilia. Williams is a former player with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, who is known for helping veterans and the active members of the military. Chris Langston was injured while on active duty in a war zone fighting as a member of the United States Marine Corps.

SEE THE WHOLE Story and Photos, By Haley J. Weeks

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LEVY COUNTY -- On Saturday (Aug. 4), a special event took place at Chiefland Golf and Country Club, and among the honored guests were a former pro football player and a local war hero.

With the help of Bronson alumni and local supporters, Jimmy Jones and the Bronson Quarterback Club organized the Eagle Quarterback Club Golf Tournament with the goal of raising money to support the Bronson High School Eagles football program.

Registration was set to begin at 7:45 a.m., but by 7:15 there was a large group of golfers anxiously awaiting to start the tournament.

Many local business owners, officials, former students, teachers and collegiate baseball players from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University competed in a foursome. Teams each took their pictures and chose their

(from left) Jimmy Jones, Chris Langston and David Williams are seen here with Langston's service dog Kup, from K9s for Warriors.

team names before their tournament meeting. Teams were very creative with names such as Stegall's Eagles (for the head baseball coach at Embry-Riddle), Emerald City, Bad News Bears and Chili Dippers. After a brief introduction of sponsors and rule explanation, the stampede of golfers drove off to their assigned holes and teed off at 8:30 a.m.

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The winning foursome of Jimmy Willis (holding trophy), Jamie Carlisle, Stephen Byrd and Richard Hudson pose with the trophy with Bronson Eagles Head Varsity Football Coach in the middle.

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While the golfers were out on the course, Jones introduced David Williams to the Bronson coaching staff and players.

Williams played for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 1986. He generously donated an autographed football to the boosters that was placed on the raffle table to raise money.

He was one of the many integral parts in making this tournament happen. Williams helps many people.

Along with getting to meet former pro football player Williams, the tournament members had the humbling experience of meeting a true American hero -- Chris Langston.

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Langston is a graduate of Chiefland High School.

Langston was a member of the United States Marine Corps, when he was wounded while serving overseas. The tournament provided an amazing opportunity to give back to him because he, like many of the golfers that were in attendance, served in the United States military with pride and honor.

Langston has been through the worst of the worst in a war zone, and his touching story is one to inspire people of all ages. Things happen in civilian life to cause grief as well.

A few weeks ago, the house he has lived in for 11 years in Starke was destroyed by fire. Veterans and other individuals and organizations have helped him start working to overcome this disaster.

Serving this wounded warrior, too, is his service dog Kup, from K9s for Warriors.

Once the final team returned to the clubhouse, scorecards were collected and the golfers were given their last chance to place a bid on the raffle items that were up for grabs.

These items included a University of Florida Football helmet, a Florida Gator football jersey and a gift card basket to name a few. The golfers were also served lunch, that was expertly prepared by Brian Simpkins Sr., father of former BHS Football player Mickey Beauchamp, who is the president of the booster club and husband to Cheryl Beauchamp, Bronson Elementary School's principal.

During this time, the football players thanked the golfers with door prizes. Many golfers were touched by what the community was doing for the Bronson football team and some expressed that this should be an event that happens more often, and for other sports as well.

Bronson Middle High School Principal Tim McCarthy had a chance to speak and introduce himself to the community, as did Eagles Head Varsity Football Coach Seth Stebbins, whose son Kyle Stebbins took part in the tournament.

Other members of the coaching staff include Jim Roundtree, Micah Herron and George Dean – who introduced themselves to the community as well.

After Cheryl OSteen, teacher and avid member of the booster club, finished tallying up the scorecards, the winner was determined.

Jimmy Willis, Jamie Carlisle, Stephen Byrd and Richard Hudson took home the trophy, presented by Jones and the football team. The winning golfers had a score 14 under par.

This fundraiser brought in more than \$9,000!

PUBLISHER'S NOTE: Haley Weeks is a junior at Bronson High School this year. She has been invited to be a contributor to *HardisonInk.com* when school starts.

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