

Alabama Students Bring Home National Archery Championships

Ashville Middle School Team and Breitling Elementary Student Take National Titles



Katie Rappuhn

The Ashville Middle School Archery Team recently brought home top honors in the National Archery in the Schools (NASP) Championship held in Louisville, Ky. The students scored 3,350 out of a possible 3,600 points and placed first out of 65 middle school teams. Ashville qualified for the national championship when they won the middle school state title in Birmingham earlier this year.

While Alabama schools have done well in past national championships, Ashville Middle School is the first team to win this prestigious event. Coach Jeremy Cox is excited and proud of their efforts. Nathan Owens and Stephanie Whisenant of Ashville Middle School each finished second in their respective division as individuals.

This is also the first year that an individual from Alabama finished in first place within their respective age division. Katie Rappuhn, a fifth grader from Breitling Elementary in Grand Bay, Ala. shot a 283 out of a possible 300 points to take first place among all female elementary participants. Her team from Breitling placed 17th out of 56 elementary school teams competing.

A total of 12 schools representing Alabama competed at the championship. More than 4,500 students from 35 states and one Canadian province were represented at this year's national tournament. Scoring for the championship is based on Olympic style, target archery in three divisions – elementary, middle and high school. Competition included team and individual levels. NASP archery is a co-gender sport with every team required to contain boys and girls.



Ashville Middle School Archery Team

The NASP was founded in Kentucky in 2002 and has since spread around the country. The program was introduced in Alabama in 2003, and approximately 157 Alabama schools participate in the NASP program. In Alabama, the NASP is a joint venture between the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and the Alabama Department of Education.

The program promotes participation in the lifelong sport of archery as part of a school's physical education course and after-school programs. The NASP program can also be included as a unit or activity in the Lifelong Individualized Fitness Education (LIFE) course as part of the Alabama Course of Study. The program meets the criteria of one credit for physical education required for high school graduation.

State Superintendent Dr. Joe Morton praised the students for their success. "I congratulate these dedicated students for bringing home Alabama's first National

Archery in the Schools Championship and for their commitment and hard work," he said. "Archery in the Schools offers students a sport and competition away from the traditional sports arena. Students also benefit from learning a sport that can be carried into adulthood for a lifetime physical activity. The Alabama Department of Education is proud to be a partner in this program that gives students an experience that makes them feel better about themselves, about physical education, and about school."

"Congratulations to the winners of the archery competition," said Dr. Jack Hataway, Chronic Disease director with the Alabama Department of Public Health. "For those who participate in it, archery contributes positively to mental and physical health. Archery requires the use of many muscles as well as mental concentration to focus on targets. It represents a good way to enjoy a healthy lifestyle." **■**