

SPORTS



Chad Mentzer keeps an eye on the ball during a City of Shelton adult coed recreation softball game July 9 at Callanan Park in Shelton. Mentzer, along with his wife, Sara, and daughter, Mykiah, compete for Camco in league play. *Journal photo by Justin Johnson*

Family tradition

Competitive Mentzer family shines in City of Shelton softball league

By Justin Johnson
justin@masoncounty.com

Family ties run deep in the City of Shelton's adult coed recreational softball league, but few run as deep as those of the Mentzer family.

Led by their hard-hitting patriarch, Chad, the Mentzers call the annual summer league their favorite time of the year.

"I have love for the game, and I've been waiting a long time to play with my kids," said Chad, who manages Camco — named for Camco, Inc., a supplier of cedar products in Shelton that many of the team's players work for. "Love playing with my wife and friends."

On this year's version of the squad, Chad joins his wife, Sara, and daughter Mykiah in the nine-team league, which plays four days a week at Callanan Park. Another daughter, Hailey — a Class of 2020 Shelton High School graduate, has played on the team in the past and is on this year's roster.

"We're on cloud nine this time of the year," Sara said. "Hitting the field with our favorite people. Nothing is better. We love this game. It's our life."

Chad is a left-handed power hitter who routinely belts home runs over the park's 25-foot tall, 200-foot deep fence from the third spot in the order. Mykiah, who joined the team for the first time during Camco's run to the city league championship game, bats second, and Sara usually bats fifth in the lineup.

"I love playing with my family," said Mykiah, a Shelton High School student. "I get very competitive. I get it from my dad. It sucks sometimes because we all get a little too competitive. Being able to play with my parents and their team ... I'm excited to carry it on for him."

A graduate of Shelton High School where he played baseball for the Highclimbers, Chad has played in the city's recreational league for 19 seasons, beginning in 2002.

"The best thing about being competitive is you have a chance to win it all, but it hurts to lose it in the end," Chad said. "I'd rather be competitive or not, but if I play competitive, I wanna win."

While she hasn't played this season, Hailey is on the team's roster, meaning she could join in later in

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FAR POST

Coronavirus cases surge again, putting sports in jeopardy



By JUSTIN JOHNSON

Despite a crushing surge of coronavirus cases in Florida during the past few weeks, professional sports in the United States have started to resume in the Sunshine State.

Major League Soccer's MLS is Back tournament began July 8 at ESPN's Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World in Orlando, and the NBA and WNBA are preparing to play be-

ginning at the end of next week.

All three leagues are in a bubble, with daily or every-other-day testing, among other safety procedures.

I spent some time watching several matches during the weekend, including the entire Real Salt Lake-Colorado Rapids match Sunday night.

It was oddly comforting and for a couple of hours felt like the

world was back to normal.

It's not, and it's not going to be for a long time.

Last week, the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association — our state's governing body over high school sports and activities — announced that the beginning of fall sports season was being pushed back from mid-August to Sept. 7 (Sept. 5 for football).

It might just be delaying the inevitable.

On Monday, the state Department of Health announced 1,100 new cases of coronavirus statewide. While, much of the growth is on the eastern side of the state, it's not all there. Case counts are going up everywhere, including right here in Mason County,

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Left to right, Camco's Chad Mentzer, Kris Felix and Mykiah Mentzer exchange high-fives after Chad scores on an inside-the-park home run during a June 9 City of Shelton adult coed recreational league softball game at Callanan Park in Shelton. BELOW LEFT: Sara Mentzer, Chad's wife, swings for the ball. BELOW RIGHT: Mykiah waits for a pitch. Journal photos by Justin Johnson

Family: For Mentzers playing together a 'blessing not many get'

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the season.

For her part, Hailey said playing with family can be hard sometimes.

"You just want to make your family and team proud and when you have an off day, you might take it more personally," said Hailey, who missed out on her senior season of fastpitch at Shelton after the season was

canceled by the pandemic. "I enjoy it (playing with family) because I feel more comfortable and can have those off days and they still love me. Playing with family is a blessing not many get. I'm thankful."

Sara said both her and Chad are very competitive people, and it doesn't matter what it is.

"It could be who writes the best or a simple game

of cards," Sara said. "We're usually yelling or giving mean looks."

Sara added that Chad has always tried to instill into his kids to try their best, no matter the situation.

"These kids love to impress their dad since T-ball to soccer games when they were little or even to bragging about their grades," Sara said. "It's a great life, I tell ya."

City of Shelton adult coed recreational softball league standings (As of July 14)

	W	L	Pct.	RF	RA	Diff.
Essential Ballers	3	1	0.750	45	30	15
Fuddpuckers	3	1	0.750	47	33	13
Wasted Talent	2	1	0.667	38	25	13
Camco	1	1	0.500	32	28	4
Steph's Espresso	1	1	0.500	32	17	15
Flyers 3.0	1	1	0.500	19	34	-15
Bat Intentions	1	2	0.333	31	46	-15
Help Wanted	0	2	0.000	28	37	-9
Stacey Trainwreckers	0	2	0.000	7	33	-26

July 8 results

Steph's Espresso 23, Flyers 3.0 7

Bat Intentions 15, Help Wanted 5

July 9 results

Fuddpuckers 13, Stacey Trainwreckers 5

Camco 22, Help Wanted 15

July 13 results

Fuddpuckers 13, Bat Intentions 8

Flyers 3.0 12, Wasted Talent 11

July 14 results

Essential Ballers 13, Camco 10

Essential Ballers 12, Bat Intentions 11

