



# The NOODLE

Open up and say AHHHH!!!

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#### Florida Youth Council

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The Florida Youth Council is a program of The Family Café

## Welcome To The Noodle!

This is the January 2015 edition of *The Noodle*, written and published by The Florida Youth Council (FYC). In this issue of *The Noodle*, members of The Council were asked to write about which sport or sports team they enjoying watching the most during the winter months. This topic let members

share their thoughts on all things sports. Members wrote about the Olympics and different sports teams across the state of Florida. The FYC members truly hope you will take a few minutes out of your busy schedule to read their articles and enjoy their thoughts and opinions in this January 2015 edition of *The Noodle*.

## Watching Sports in the Wintertime

*By Derek Carraway*

Well, if you are a sports fan I'm sure there are certain parts of the year you enjoy watching your favorite sport and rooting for your favorite team, no matter the level of competition. For me, that actually runs from August through the end of March. As for the winter months (let's say December and January) specifically though, there are a couple I like to follow. During this time, I enjoy watching/following the college football post-season (the bowl games and now the new playoff system) and the start of the college basketball season. To me, nothing beats it. In both instances you get a smorgasbord of excellent matchups that you would never get to see otherwise and a lot of the time there is an interesting back-story of some kind about one of



the teams or someone on the team. This is also the time of year that the best of upsets can happen and often times it does happen. I will especially enjoy watching the college football post-season this winter though, because, not to brag, but my favorite team to watch is putting a 29 game win streak on the line as they enter this year's post-season. It should be good. All of this is why I like watching these two sports during the winter season. It gives you something else to look forward to this time of year in addition to Christmas holidays. I would say that the two complement each other well.

## Winter Olympics All The Way

*By Alex Brown*

When I think of winter sports my mind immediately goes to the winter Olympics. I have many great memories of watching the Winter Olympics, but what really makes them special is that they are not on all the time. There is not a television channel dedicated to curling or skiing or snowmobile racing. I really enjoy the excitement around learning and understanding what a good shot is in curling or what a good time is in the down hill slalom.

One my favorite Winter Olympic sports is a relatively new one. It is snowmobile racing. Let me start by saying this is as much of a sport as NASCAR is, and I know a lot of people question whether NASCAR is a sport. With that being said, I really enjoy seeing the racers whip their snowmobiles around the snow track. The best part however is when they over jumps and do tricks. The last Olympics even had an event dedicated to just doing tricks on a snowmobile. The winner of that event did a backflip with his snowmobile. That was really cool.

Another favorite event of mine is the biathlon. This event combines cross-country skiing and target practice. What competitors do is ski long distance up and down hill, then pull into a spot and use an air rifle to knock down targets. For each miss there is a penalty loop of 1000 yards. There are three laps with shooting taking place standing up, on one knee, and prone. This is very exciting to watch. There is so much pressure not only to ski well, but to not miss the targets. I have always enjoyed watching this event.

The last event that I look forward to watching is the speed skating. I love this sport because of the intensity, especially at the shorter distances. All of the competitors are bumping into one another and there is so much speed.

Some of the events are over in less than a minute and that is part of why I enjoy it. There is not the time commitment of the other events.

For me there is no better winter sporting event than the Winter Olympics. I can always get my fix of football and basketball, but only once every four years can I get my fix of speed skating. I don't know if I would care as much if their sports were on all the time, but I do very much enjoy watching every four years.



## Tampa Bay Rays

*By Christina Waldron*

When I was nine years old, I had the chance to train with the Rays at their first ever spring training camp at Al Lang Stadium in Saint Petersburg, Florida. I asked my heart surgeon if I could wait a week to have my open heart surgery so I could attend the training camp. While I was at the training camp, I got a ball signed by Fred McGriff. I will always treasure the ball as a souvenir. I have had a lot of favorite players and they traded them to other teams. In 2008, the Rays went to the playoffs and the World Series. In 2010, they also went to the playoffs. They currently play at Tropicana Field. They asked the city of Saint Petersburg council if they could look at other places for a stadium and they just voted no. The Rays are looking for a new place to build a stadium.

# JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

## All In

*By Dakota Smoot*

Even though the Jags have never won a Super Bowl, or been to one, I find it easy to cheer for them because I know how it feels to be looked down on. I have three reasons why I like the Jacksonville Jaguars. First of all, the players give back to the community. They care for the people around them, and they are less selfish each year. Second, they donate stuff to kids with special needs. The team cares a lot about kids. Last, they have donated tickets to the games in the past. Any way you look at it, they are awesome and caring. Like any good team the Jags have to start losing before they can win. It's just common sense! So in times like this, I have one thing to say: I'm all in. Let's go Jags!



## Soccer: A Winter Sport

*By Shevie Barnes*

My family is from the small island, which used to be British owned, called Saint Kitts. The weather there is typical of most islands: sun, surf, and sand. My parents grew up there and came to the United States in hopes of finding better for their families. Winter sports were never really a part of their life, and neither has it been a huge part of mine. However, when asked "What is your favorite sport to watch in the winter?" I immediately thought: soccer. I am sure that soccer isn't the typical winter sport you can find on TV around winter time, but being in FL makes seeing soccer in January uncomfortable, but not hard. My dad became the coach of my younger brothers' team. It became somewhat of a family tradition to sit out with our blankets, hats, coats, chairs, and hot chocolate to watch the game. I remember watching all the younger siblings as the parents cheered on their sons. I remember dramatically shouting for the goalie to stop the ball. We took turns on which family was going to provide the snacks. With hot chocolate and blankets and we would all snuggle to cheer on our team. Come to think of it, lots of memories were made there, and I wouldn't trade it for a snowy Christmas. Florida Christmases have their perks too. I am sure in some ways it reminds my parents of home.



## Be The Thunder

*By Whitney Harris*

I went to college in St. Petersburg, FL. When it's too cold to go to the beach, college students have to find other forms of entertainment. For myself, it was hockey. Though hockey in Florida seems strange to some people, I have come to look forward to it each year!

The Tampa Bay Lightning play in downtown Tampa, and back then their student tickets were only \$15. Going to the games quickly became one of my favorite things to do. It was cheap, fun, and lasted more than an hour. By going to the games, I learned more about the rules and the players. By the end of that first season, I could confidently shout out at the team and tell them what I thought they did wrong.

When I lived in Colorado for almost two years, it was very hard for me to like the Colorado Avalanche. It just wasn't the same. The Lightning was the team that opened my eyes to the sport (not to mention I already owned two Lightning jerseys). Now I'm back in Florida and couldn't be happier to root on my team! Go Bolts!



## How Do I Become Part of The Florida Youth Council?

The Florida Youth Council is a group of youth (between the ages of 15 and 17) and emerging leaders (between the ages of 18 and 30) with disabilities or special health care needs that live in Florida.

The Florida Youth Council is all about getting youth and emerging leaders involved in self-advocacy, peer mentoring and other activities that will improve the quality of life for youth and emerging leaders with disabilities in Florida. The program empowers youth and emerging leaders to decide what issues are important to their generation, to express those issues in their state and local communities, and to develop strategies to solve them.

We are seeking a group of enthusiastic, motivated youth and emerging leaders to participate. If you would like to take a leadership role in advocating for youth and emerging leaders in Florida, please visit The Florida Youth Council website at [www.floridayouthcouncil.com](http://www.floridayouthcouncil.com). The program is open to application year round. We hope to hear from you soon!