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WVU women's soccer: Mountaineer soccer camp welcomes area girls

By Taylor Kennedy tkennedy@hdmediallc.com Jul 9, 2024 Updated 17 mins ago 2 min to read



West Virginia University women's soccer players give instruction during a girls soccer camp at Shawnee Park, Monday, July 8, 2024, in Dunbar. KENNY KEMP | Gazette-Mail

Members of the WVU women's soccer team put on their coaching caps for area girls on Monday at the Shawnee Sports Complex.

The camp was free for elementary and middle school players to learn more about the sport they love. More than 100 young soccer players participated in the camp conducted by the Country Roads Trust.

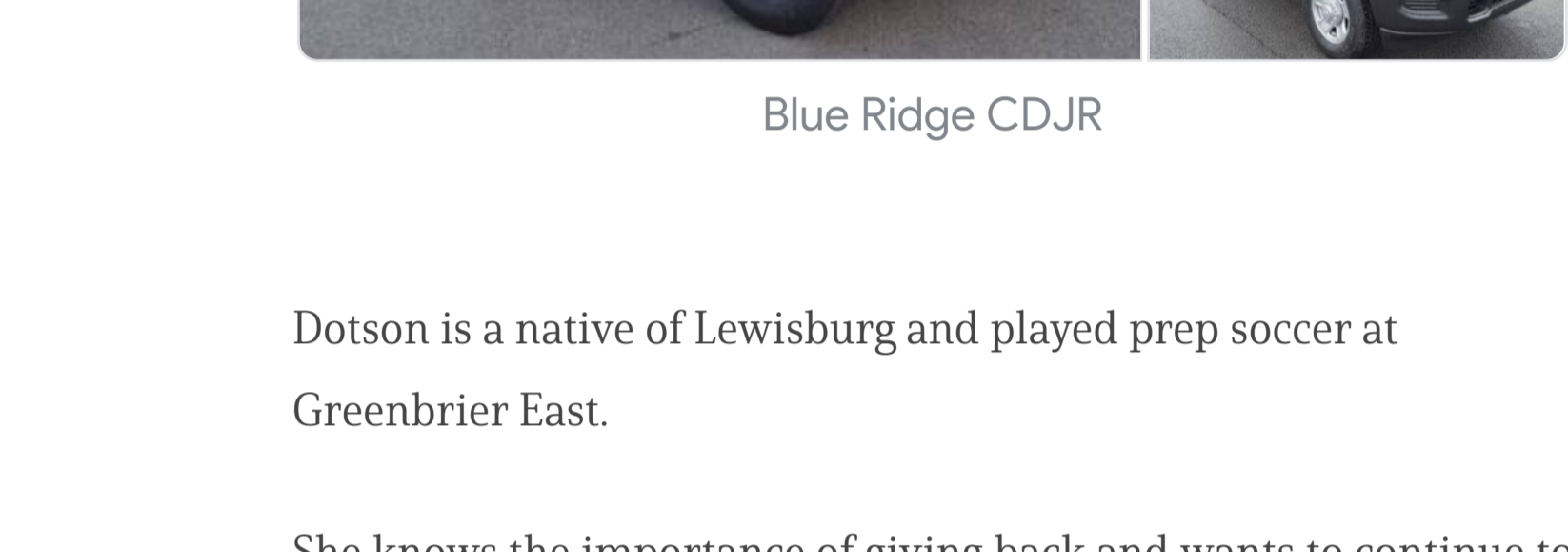


The West Virginia University Women's Soccer team hosted a youth girls soccer camp at the Shawnee Sports Complex in Dunbar on July 8, 2024. SEAN McCALLISTER | Gazette-Mail

The young athletes were able to work hands-on with Mountaineer soccer players while having fun on a hot day.

It was also a great opportunity for the college athletes to give back to the state of West Virginia.

"We love giving back," WVU midfielder/defender Emma Dotson said. "I didn't have the opportunity in one of these camps. It's really big for me to try to give back to my community. I played here lots of times and won a lot of games on these fields. I always like to lead with that as my fun fact too that I used to be here and be someone just like [them]."



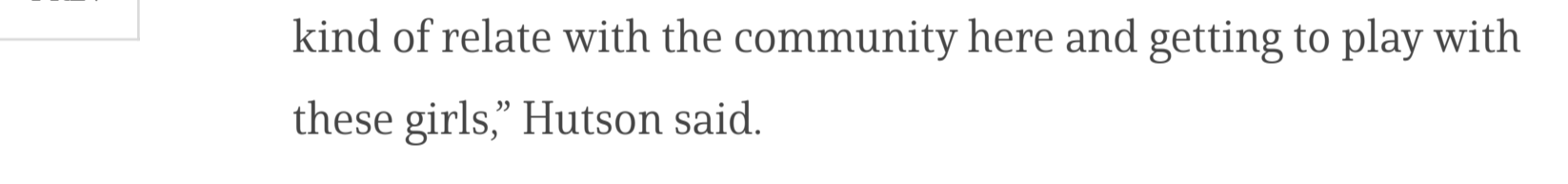
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Dotson is a native of Lewisburg and played prep soccer at Greenbrier East.

She knows the importance of giving back and wants to continue to do so in her home state.

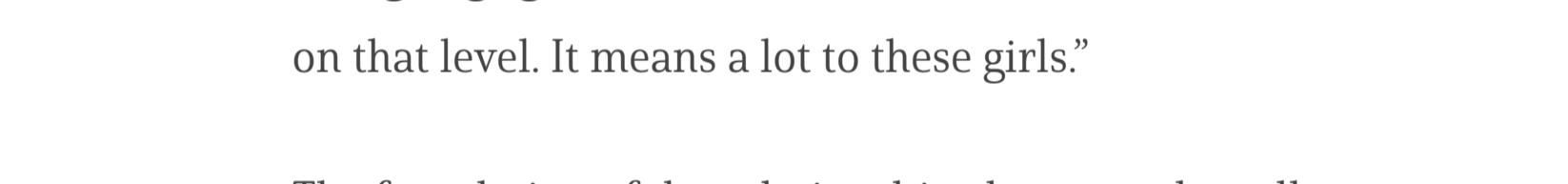
"I love just giving back to the youth," Dotson said. "I know there's some people that travel to see me and my teammates [play]. It's rewarding for us to give back and advise."

Diversified Energy and Encova Insurance were the top sponsors for the event.



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Hannah Hutson, Diversified Energy's manager of community and government relations, like Dotson, sees how valuable it is for youths to learn from the top athletes in the state.

"It's great to see our biggest university in the state coming down to kind of relate with the community here and getting to play with these girls," Hutson said.

"I grew up playing soccer, and it was always really fun when the college-age girls would come down and try to teach us how to play on that level. It means a lot to these girls."

The foundation of the relationships between the college soccer players and younger athletes leads to a potential reconnection during a WVU regular season game, which Dotson has experienced.

She said that it's refreshing starting a relationship at a camp then seeing many of those faces in Morgantown.

"When we're out here and connecting with these girls, we get them to come to our games," Dotson said. "We see them again and it's a familiar face. We have a lot of them that know us by name now. I never had anything like this. So, seeing someone like myself would have been cool at a young age. Some of the athletes now that are older than me and I think of them like a superstar."

Hutson was happy seeing the enjoyment on the young players' faces, despite it being a hot day on the turf.

"The biggest takeaway today is to see these girls who came out, despite the heat," Hutson said. "[The young girls were] very excited to see people that they admire get to teach them and getting down on their level and entertain them."

The Mountaineer women's soccer team will begin their season at 7 p.m. Aug. 15 at Dick Dlesk Soccer Stadium in a matchup against Delaware.



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