

County archery team boasts national's contestant

By David Riley
Managing Editor

For the past couple of years Dannie Bradford has been investing in an area archery team through the 4-H extension office. A reasonably quick return on her investment has one of the team members, Seth Rankin, headed to the national competition in June after placing high enough in regional and state competitions. Bradford cites her early-life experience shooting and not having an avenue to develop her skills as the driver for her development of the program. "I shot some when I was little. My Dad was a big hunter so it was something that I got into but never really



Jasper Journal/David Riley

The 'senior' archery team, from left to right: Tessa Green, Amber Whited, Jamey Talley, Eli Thomasson, Nationals bound Seth Rankin, Dylan Layne and Ryanne Hubbard.

pursued so when I learned that through 4-H you could go through archery I wanted to give these kids the opportu-

nity that I didn't," Bradford said. All 4-H eligible students are invited to participate. Bradford said, "This is my

man, said, "It's fun competing with the other counties [and] seeing new faces every year." However, Green has definitive goals for her archery career in 4-H. "I'd like to go to nationals...I'm almost there, I missed it last year," Green confessed. Bradford explained the team stays busy inside of 4-H and outside for their competitions. "4-H has competitions where they start at the regional level and then if they place high enough they can advance to state and nationals. We also will be attending some 3-D shoots around here, locally, such as Monteaugle/Battlecreek area."

This year, team member Seth Rankin placed in the state competition to be invited to the national 4-H competition. For his part, Rankin is pretty relaxed about the competition. "I'll just go out there for the competition and do my best and see where I place," Rankin said. Rankin does have a little more experience than the

average team member. "I've been shooting for about eight years...my cousins all did it and I got into it with them," Rankin said. Before there was a formal archery team here in Marion County, Rankin took the bull by the horns to compete on his own, but says he favors the team format. "We started doing it ourselves, signing up for the regional shoots and going to them before we had an officer. Last year we got Dannie and then it really improved after that, Rankin continued, "There was only like three of us and now there's like fifteen all together"

Rankin and Bradford will travel to Colorado in June for the week long national competition. Nationals will pit 200 competitors against each other. For any 4-H aged student interested in participating in the archery program, their parents are encouraged to contact Dannie Bradford at the UT/TSU Extension office at (423) 942-2656.

senior competition team because most of these kids have been shooting for awhile and didn't really need a lot of coaching as far as how to shoot. We do have a junior team that has, for the most part, never shot a bow and we teach them everything from start to finish. So they're going to be trying out for the [senior] team in two weeks. But we put word out in schools, word of mouth, we put it on social media...we do anything to reach as many as we can."

For their part, the participants seem to be driven by the competition and social aspects of archery. Tessa Green, soon to be Whitwell fresh-

SEE **ARCHERY** PAGE 3