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# Good deeds

From Staff Reports

Sunday, September 16, 2007

COMMENT PRINT EMAIL

**State Rep. Ben Harbin**, R-Evans, created a legislative study to identify and create opportunities for student athletes with disabilities at a meeting Aug. 20 at the Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation in Warm Springs, Ga.



Special

Children with disabilities played wheelchair basketball at the BlazeSports' 2007 BlazeCamp Georgia event this year.

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Mr. Harbin created the committee after meeting Kurt Lawton, of Grovetown, a wheelchair athlete. Mr. Lawton had to leave Georgia after high school because of a lack of opportunities to compete at the college level. He is attending the University of Arizona on a quad rugby scholarship.

"It is my hope that this committee is the first step in giving athletes like Kurt opportunities comparable to those provided non-disabled Georgia students on the collegiate level," Mr. Harbin said.

The Warm Springs meeting is the first of four scheduled in the state. Future meetings will explore the development of pilot programs, recruitment of athletes and examine nonprofit and private sector support for different collegiate programs. Georgia has lacked collegiate sports for

disabled students since Georgia State University terminated the wheelchair tennis program funded by a grant from the BlazeSports America program.

"BlazeSports Augusta has many talented athletes participating in sports programs like wheelchair basketball and track and field. Most of these athletes hope to some day compete at the collegiate level," said Judie Thompson, director of BlazeSports Augusta. "I appreciate Chairman Harbin taking the lead on such an important state-wide issue because of his compassion for our local athletes."

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From the Monday, September 17, 2007 edition of the Augusta Chronicle

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