



James Kelley / The Tombstone Epitaph

Tombstone junior center fielder Hayley Stites just started playing softball three years ago but has developed into a team leader for the Yellow Jackets.

Softball player finds her groove

By Yasmin Gomez
The Tombstone Epitaph

"The Sandlot," if you have never seen the movie, is about a young boy named Scotty Smalls who moves to a new neighborhood and wants to learn to play baseball.

From the beginning, you can tell that Smalls isn't one of the most talented players, but with bonding from the neighborhood stud, Benny "The Jet" Rodriguez, Smalls finds friends and becomes one of the best players in the sandlot.

Tombstone High School softball coach Eddie Valenzuela has his own Scotty Smalls in varsity player Haley Stites.

Stites started her softball career at Tombstone three years ago hardly knowing a thing about the game.

She's a junior now and a standout player.

Valenzuela said that Stites has definitely improved since he first started coaching her at Tombstone last year.

"This year she is one of our best hitters," he said after Stites went 3-4 with 2 RBI in last Monday's home game against St. Gregory.

Up next

THS Softball
4 p.m. April 23 - Bisbee
10 a.m. April 26 - @ Valley Union
4 p.m. April 28 - St. David
4 p.m. April 29 - @ Patagonia

Valenzuela said Stites is the type of player who gets frustrated when she can't do something well.

"I remember the time when we were practicing crow hops during practice and Haley was not getting it down too well," said Valenzuela, who has coached the team two of Stites' three years.

A crow hop is a leap forward that gives an outfielder enough momentum to make a long throw from the outfield to the infield.

"The next day Haley came to practice excited because she worked all night to get a crow hop down and I couldn't help but laugh cause she actually got it and I was really happy for her," he said.

Stites, who also plays basketball, started playing sports

in high school as a way to make friends. Her family is sports oriented: She has an older sister who ran cross-country and two younger brothers who play football and baseball.

She also played volleyball and ran track in elementary school.

Stites is sitting on a 3.72 GPA, which can get her a pretty good academic scholarship to many colleges. So far, she hasn't applied anywhere but is interested in The University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University and St. John's College. She said she would like to study sports medicine.

"She has a whole other season to go and she can become a great athlete," Valenzuela said. "It wouldn't surprise me if she pursued it after high school."

Valenzuela said Stites has come a long way. He doesn't refer to anyone on his team as leaders or stars, but he said Stites has leadership qualities.

"She has a strong knowledge of the game, and recognizes situations offensively and defensively," Valenzuela said. "She is a very encouraging teammate."

Gonzalez, Dahl spearhead THS rout

By Joey Callahan
The Tombstone Epitaph

The Tombstone High baseball team beat San Miguel 14-4 Monday night in Tucson behind an 8 RBI performance from Chris Gonzalez and a complete game from Dillon Dahl.

In the top of the first inning, Gonzalez hit a two-run homerun.

The game was played at Kino Sports Complex, the former spring training home of the Arizona Diamondbacks and Chicago White Sox. The field has deep fences measuring 340 feet down the left field line and expanding to 402 feet to

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4 p.m. April 22 - Benson

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dead center.

"It's a big park," Tombstone Coach James Milligan said after the game. "He's like this big," — Milligan motioned towards his abdomen, describing Gonzalez who stands 5-foot 6. "You'd never think he could hit it out, but his hands are so fast. He's got some of the fastest hands I've seen since I've been coaching here."

To prove the home run was no fluke, Gonzalez narrowly missed another in his next at-bat, launching a ball that bounced high off of the warning track and over the fence for a ground rule double with the bases loaded.

Gonzalez added another single later, finishing three-for-three with two walks and provided more than enough offense

for starting pitcher Dillon Dahl.

Dahl was dominant, striking out 10 in a six-inning complete game, going the distance for the third time in his last three starts.

He allowed just four hits and one earned run, Dahl struck out the side on 10 pitches in the third inning.

"Dahl [is] our most consistent pitcher and he took care of business," Milligan said.

Left fielder Will Braswell and first baseman Harrison Heeren each had two hits, two steals and an RBI.

The win was the fourth straight for the Yellow Jackets (10-9-1).

Sports Schedule

THS Tennis

3 p.m. April 17 - Lourdes Catholic

3 p.m. April 22 - @Wilcox

THS Track & Field

8 a.m. April 18 - @ Mario Castro Invitational (U of A)

3 p.m. April 23 - @ Southern Arizona Championship (Marana Mt. View)

3 p.m. April 29 - @ Southeastern Arizona Final Qualifier (Benson)

Jeremy's happy tale update

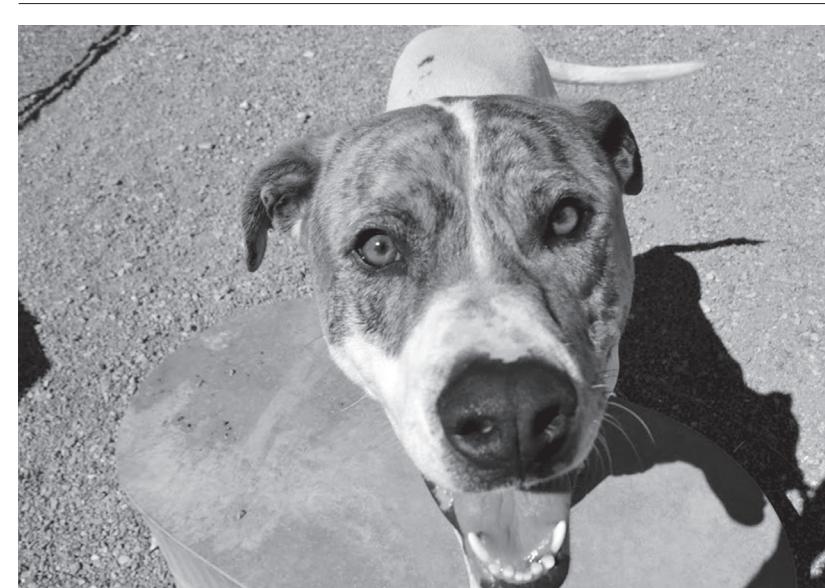
Warren Noonan adopted Jeremy from the Tombstone Small Animal Pet Shelter on March 12. This is Jeremy's "Happy Tale," the story that seals the deal on his adoption.

"The dog formally named Jeremy is now named, and responds to, 'Jake,' an old wolf's name from '97 who befriended me when I first moved out here. On arriving home, Jake was given an open back door (I was unloading groceries and such) and finally went inside. He immediately 'marked' a large chair in my house, and ran outside when I told him no. Soon he marked a sheet covering a leather sofa, again I told him no. On the way out he

marked my jacket out on my back porch, which was on a chair back. I cleaned the chair, gathered the sheet and coat, presented them to him, told him no more, and showed him I was putting them in the washer. Later I found that he had vomited a huge amount in the back seat of my truck, which was well protected, and he had covered it up with a pillow and 30-pack of beer, which was done with quite some effort on his part.

Since then he has not marked, or misbehaved in any way, in the house, or anywhere else. He runs about three miles to my one mile (walking) every morning, and his muscle density is slowly getting

firmer. He is very protective, sleeps in a dog bed next to me, as well as the now well-protected chair/ottoman, but does dangerously chase trucks as they leave my property. I have a harness and he'll heel and walk next to me while he wears it. He's a treat beggar, always wants some of my dinner, but does listen well to cease when told. Never have to raise my voice. He isn't afraid of my noisy vacuum, which is strange. I hope I am not spoiling him. Will snake train him when the weather warms. He now loves to go for a ride in the truck. Thank you for the interest. And NO, ya can't have him back!!!!" — Warren Noonan



Anthony Victor Reyes / The Tombstone Epitaph

Jeremy has found his forever home after being adopted from Tombstone Small Animal Pet Shelter.

Area tourism offers wine, rocks and ruins

By David Weissman
The Tombstone Epitaph

Tombstone is the primary tourism town of the region, but there are plenty of other attractions for visitors to see on their way to and from town.

One of the most well-known tourist sites in Cochise County is Kartchner Caverns State Park, located on Arizona State Route 90. The rock formations and caverns comprise a popular natural history site, and there are campsites on the state park premises.

Nearby Sierra Vista, the largest town in the region with a population of about 45,000, hosts frequent cultural events such as the Arizona Folklore Preserve's

series of Western music shows being held in April. The group is hosting shows on April 19 and April 20, from April 26 to April 27 and on the weekend of April 12 and April 13.

Bisbee will also be home to a musical show on April 12 and April 13, this one a chamber music event. That weekend is a busy one in Cochise County, as there will also be the 5th Annual Copper City Classic Vintage Baseball Tournament held in Bisbee.

Sonoita, a small town on Arizona State Route 82 on the way to Tombstone, is well known for its wineries and is a popular destination for wine lovers visiting Southern Arizona, as well as a stop for visitors on their way to

Tombstone.

Sonoita will be hosting a horse show on May 9, and Sonoita Vineyards, located in nearby Elgin, is holding a wine festival April 26 which will include wine tastings, pairings, and a tour of the vineyard and winery.

Nature lovers might want to visit Sierra Vista, the self-proclaimed "Hummingbird Capital of the U.S." this month for the 14th Annual Fiesta de las Aves, a birding festival organized by the Southern Arizona Bird Observatory and held April 29 through April 30. The festival includes birding tours, hummingbird banding and river walks.

The Southern Arizona Bird Observatory also holds hummingbird banding events every Saturday this month.

Benson, more than just a convenient stop for gas on the way to Tombstone, also features events for history and nature enthusiasts; in nearby Dragoon is the Amerind Foundation, an archeological museum and research center specializing in the early inhabitants of the region.

This museum hosts a number of intensive historical and biological tours throughout the year, including a tour of the Sky Island mountain ranges from April 30 to May 5 and a tour of ancestral Pueblo sites from May 17 to May 23.



Photo courtesy of Flying Leap Vineyards