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Today's News... This Morning

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Thursday, November 14, 2024 Page 1 Athens, Tennessee

Over 600 Tennessee Sober Drivers Face DUI Arrests Amid Testing Backlogs



Body camera footage shows Xavier Gray with his hands raised as Wilson County deputies approach his car. Gray, on his way to work on May 17, 2024, was stopped and later arrested for DUI. Despite showing no signs of alcohol or drug use in subsequent blood tests, Gray was charged based on field sobriety test results and alleged impairment. "I don't even drink," Gray said. "I was scared about losing my license. Driving is my livelihood."

Gray's case is one of hundreds uncovered by *WSMV4 Investigates*, revealing a troubling trend: sober drivers being wrongfully arrested for DUI in Tennessee. Data from the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) shows that from 2017 to 2023, over 31,000 people were arrested for DUI with 0.00% alcohol in their system. However, the data does not specify how many were also drug-free. Due to a backlog in processing toxicology tests, innocent drivers often face severe consequences, including job loss and increased insurance rates, while waiting to clear their names. The TBI acknowledges sober DUI arrests are rare, less than 1% of cases, but with approximately 15,000 DUI arrests annually, this still results in hundreds of wrongful arrests.

Alex Otte, executive director of Mothers Against Drunk Driving in Tennessee, called the situation "tragic" but noted that the focus should remain on preventing impaired driving. Meanwhile, Gray and others question the justice system's impact on innocent lives.

Rep. Lowell Russell of Vonore, is pushing for greater transparency, urging the TBI to release detailed data on DUI arrests and case outcomes. As *WSMV4 Investigates* continues to seek answers, Gray reflects on the ordeal: "It's scary how easily your life can be upended despite doing everything right."

For now, the TBI has promised to work on compiling more comprehensive data, but questions remain about the system's impact on Tennessee's sober drivers. *Source: WSMV.com*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16

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WEATHER FORECAST

Thursday - Rain & Winds up to 30 mph. High 58.
Thurs. Night - Mostly Cloudy. Low 47
Friday - Mostly Sunny. High 76.
Friday Night - Mostly Clear. Low 43.

More Weather at: wxyi.com

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TICKETS \$35
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SILENT AUCTION: 6-7:30 PM
DINNER: 6:30 PM
LIVE AUCTION: 7:30 PM

Heritage School: Sustainable Holiday Crafts
with April Greer Saturday, Dec. 7th @ 11:00 am
Join us for a fun crafts class with April Greer! Learn how to make sustainable holiday crafts using all natural materials like pinecones, twigs, recycled cloth, acorns, and leaves.

Take Your Cooking to the Next Level with Paul Semenoff
Saturday, Dec. 14th @ 11:00
Learn how to make sauces to make your meals fantastic.
Heritage School is \$5 or free for members

Programs sponsored by C. Scott & Muriel S. Mayfield Family Foundation, Tennessee Arts Commission, Hugh M. Wilson Family Foundation, and City of Athens

Hours:
Tuesday - Friday: 10 AM - 5 PM
Saturday: 10 AM - 1 PM
Sunday - Monday: Closed

Admission:
Adults: \$5.00
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Thursday, November 14, 2024

Morning Fax@...Today's News This Morning Page 2

Athens, Tennessee

Obituaries

Edith Marie Adams, 94 of Riceville, TN went to be with the Lord on November 12. No formal services will be held. Companion Funeral Home of Athens and the Cody family are honored to assist the family with these arrangements.

Wanda Louise Bias, 71 of Decatur, passed away Monday, November 4. Graveside service will be held at Walnut Grove Cemetery in Decatur on Thursday, November 14 at 11:30. Good Samaritan Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

◆ This week, *Hope From the Well*, host Julie Tillis invites **Lisa Macon**. *Hope From the Well* is heard every Thursday morning at 8:15 a.m. on WYXI RADIO, AM-1390 & FM-94.5.

Community News You Can Use

- Athens Community Theatre (ACT) will present *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson on Nov. 21 at 7 pm, Nov. 23 at 2 and 7 pm, and Nov. 24 at 2 and 7 pm, at the Sue E. Trotter Black Box Theater in Athens. Tickets are on sale and prices range from \$17 to \$22 including fees. Patrons are encouraged to purchase tickets early at the link [HERE](#)
- No Trash November is a month to raise awareness about not littering our beautiful state. On Sat., Nov. 16, from 9 to 11:30 a.m., The UT Extension - McMinn County will be picking up litter in Veterans Park and downtown Athens. Supplies for cleanup will be available. Join the effort to Keep McMinn Beautiful! Call Sara Smith and sign up at (423)745-2852 or email: ssmit226@utk.edu

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Thursday, November 14, 2024

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Athens, Tennessee

Elks Lodge "Hoop Shoot" Free Throw Contest Sends Six to District Competition

The Athens Elks Lodge #1927 hosted its annual "Hoop Shoot" Free Throw Contest on Saturday, November 9, at Athens City Middle School. The event, featuring nine girls and 18 boys from seven local schools, determined winners in three age categories: 8-9, 10-11, and 12-13. Each participant attempted 25 free throws, with the top scorer in each group advancing to the District competition on December 15 at Rocky Top Sports World in Gatlinburg.

This year's winners are Neyland Roberts (Boys 8-9) and Makenna Harris (Girls 10-11) from Rogers Creek Elementary, Analeigh Price (Girls 8-9) from Meigs North Elementary, Reid Holden (Boys 10-11) from Englewood Elementary, Cayden Phillips (Boys 12-13) from Athens City Middle, and Demi Jo Pennington (Girls 12-13) from Riceville Elementary.

Pictured (from left) are Athens Elks Lodge #1927 Hoop Shoot Coordinator Steve Walker with 2024 local Hoop Shoot winners Demi Jo Pennington, Makenna Harris, Analeigh Price, Neyland Roberts, Reid Holden, Cayden Phillips, and Athens Elks Lodge #1927 Hoop Shoot Coordinator Sandy Walker.



Photo Credit: Kristin Schrader

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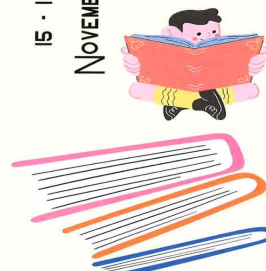
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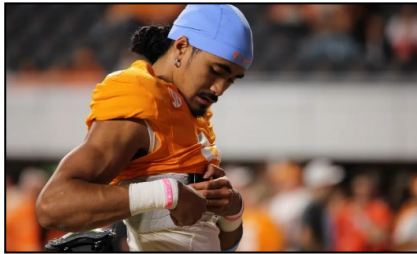
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Thursday, November 14, 2024 Morning Fax®...Today's News This Morning Page 4 Athens, Tennessee

Iamaleava's Status Uncertain as UT Prepares for Pivotal Clash with Georgia



Tennessee quarterback Nico Iamaleava remains in concussion protocol but has shown promising progress in practice ahead of Saturday's crucial matchup against No. 12 Georgia. Coach Josh Heupel addressed Iamaleava's status during Wednesday's SEC coaches teleconference, expressing cautious optimism while emphasizing that official updates will come via the SEC's student-athlete availability report, released Wednesday evening and updated daily through game day.

Iamaleava sustained the injury during last weekend's 33-14 victory over Mississippi State and did not return after halftime. Tennessee (8-1, 5-1 SEC) needs its redshirt freshman quarterback, who has hit his stride in recent games, completing 65% of his passes for 1,879 yards, 11 touchdowns, and four interceptions this season.

The stakes couldn't be higher as a win would keep Tennessee in control of its playoff destiny and SEC title aspirations, while a loss could derail those ambitions. For Georgia (7-2, 5-2 SEC), the game offers a chance to claw back into playoff contention. Georgia coach Kirby Smart said he's preparing as if Iamaleava will play unless officially ruled out.

If Iamaleava is sidelined, backup Gaston Moore, a fifth-year senior and seasoned veteran of Heupel's offense, would start. Moore has limited experience, completing 16 of 25 passes for 201 yards, two touchdowns, and two interceptions this season. Freshman Jake Merklinger, the No. 3 quarterback, could also see action if needed.

The SEC availability report will be closely monitored, with final updates due 90 minutes before Saturday's 7:30 p.m. ET kickoff in Athens, Georgia. This transparency is key as the Vols prepare for one of their most significant games of the season.

Source: Knoxville News Sentinel // Photo Credit: Dan Harralson, Vols Wire

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HOPE FROM THE WELL

HOSTED BY: **JULIE TILLIS**

THURSDAYS AT 8:15 AM

"If you have Jesus in your life, you will always have hope."

