



*From left to right Amy Simmons, Josh Hernandez, and Rise Rugby coach, Andy Burton.*

### **Wheelchair Rugby Comes to Central Texas**

**By Amy Simmons, Contribution by Kytinna Soto**

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My fellow Colemanites, I'm at it again. Over the past 8 years since my car accident that left me paralyzed from the bottom of my rib cage down, many of you ask me what I'm up to next. Well, I want to share another piece of my life with spinal cord injury with you. In these 8 years I have been able to participate in many different sports as well as be a peer mentor for individuals with newer spinal cord injuries. A little over a year ago, I was introduced to Josh Hernandez, a high school student and football player from Brownwood who sustained a very similar injury as mine. He and I have become friends and I invited him to come participate in a program called Rise Adventures that I was involved in while living in North Texas. Josh immediately fell in love with wheelchair rugby. A passion that he and I both now share.

For those of you wondering... Rugby? How? Well it is simple...Quad Rugby is a simple game with complex strategies for playing both offense and defense. It is played with volleyball on a basketball-size court with goal lines marked by cones and a lined-off "key" area.

The object of the game is to score a goal (1 point) by crossing the goal line with possession of the ball while the opposing team is defending that goal. The team with the most points when time runs out wins.

Quad Rugby is a full contact sport, but no personal contact is allowed: Slapping, hitting, punching, gouging out eyes, biting off ears, etc. is not allowed and penalties are enforced, usually requiring time in the penalty box.

Quad Rugby can only officially be played by quadriplegics, but through Rise, paraplegics can play also (Josh and I are both considered paraplegics.) Josh and I want to provide everyone in our communities with the opportunities to better understand just how much people with disabilities can accomplish and how much life there is left to live after spinal cord injury. We want to invite the community to come out on Jan. 2nd at 3:00 p.m. at the Brownwood High School Warren Gym to watch me, Amy, and my friends from the North Texas Cowboys and Rise Adventures play against Josh and his friends and coaches from the Brownwood Lion football team. Donations are requested but not required to attend, but all proceeds raised will go to help the North Texas Cowboys team afford to travel to other cities like Brownwood for the opportunity to play against more teams and to help make more people aware of all that people with disabilities are capable of accomplishing.

Rugby Scrimmage at Brown-wood High School Gym January 2nd at 3:00 p.m. in the Warren Gym at Brownwood High School.

Cost is donations only (All donations will go to help the North Texas Cowboys grow and travel to more games).

Local players are Amy Simmons, Josh Hernandez, Pickle Burlison, Levi Westerman, Pops Delapaz, Alex Elizondo, Coach Wilson, Rylie Cason, and other Brownwood Lion football players.