

Ex Dallas Maverick Ray Johnston fights Leukemia, HDNet features his story

By April MacIntyre Apr 16, 2010, 7:30 GMT



While the documentary chronicles the band's journey, the true focus and backdrop is the behind-the-scenes story of the band's leader, Ray Johnston, and his battle with leukemia. Image courtesy of HDNet / AP

Basketball fans will appreciate a new documentary on HDNet that chronicles a hard journey for player Ray Johnston.

After nearly a year on the road with Johnston, HDNet is proud to present the upcoming documentary series "Ray Johnston [Band](#): Road Diaries," premiering Sunday, April 25 at 8:00 pm ET.

The eight-part series follows Ray, a cancer survivor and former Dallas Maverick point guard, as he and his [band](#) travel across the country trying to make it in the music business.

While the documentary chronicles the band's journey, the true focus and backdrop is the behind-the-scenes story of the band's leader, Ray Johnston, and his battle with leukemia.



Johnston, a walk-on at the University of Alabama, was a 24 year-old loan officer with Mavericks season tickets when he was discovered by a scout at the 2004 Hoop-it-Up tournament in Dallas.

Johnston's talent won him a spot on the Mavericks' summer league team, making him teammates alongside Josh Howard and Devin Harris - but

then his life would change forever.

A bump on the shin from a pickup game led to surgery - and a coma. All because of the leukemia no one knew he had – a rare form of the disease known as acute promyelocytic leukemia.

During this battle with this deadly disease, Johnston would be shocked back to life, twice. His lungs collapsed, five days apart, with an irregular heartbeat in between. His kidneys failed twice and blood clots in his brain led to seizures.

While still battling leukemia, Johnston is relentlessly pursuing a new dream, traveling across Texas and the Southwest trying to find success with “Ray Johnston Band.”

The talent of Ray’s bandmates is un-matched, with some of the members having toured or recorded with Herbie [Hancock](#), Kayne West, Eryka Badu, and Kirk Franklin. Also, some of the band’s performances have been fundraisers for The Ryan Gibson [Foundation](#) or TRGF. TRGF (www.trgf.org) is a Dallas-based non-profit organization that supports leukemia research throughout the U.S.

Ryan Gibson, like Ray Johnston, had a passion for finding a cure for leukemia. Now, through his travels with the band, Ray has been spreading the word about the importance of leukemia research as well as raising funds for TRGF.