

Competition cheering "dynasty has just begun"

BY LALITHA KUNDURU

New this year, the competitive cheerleading squad began its practices in August and hopes to win competitions and have a productive season. The first year will be full of learning and hard work, but the squad is, nevertheless, hoping for success.

"Our goals are to do the best we can and to become as good as we can," senior Lessie Scott said.

The squad is hoping that their hard work will pay off during the four to five competitions in which they will compete between August and late February or early March. Based on the performance of a routine and factors such as time constraints, the judges decide the placement of each squad. In the January state championships, the team will compete against other squads in the 1A division. The NCSSM squad is in the small varsity category and consists of ten seniors and three juniors.

The seniors tried out to join the squad in the spring, and the juniors tried out during the first week of school.

"During tryouts [we did]... stunting, tumbling, cheering, dancing and jumps so that our coach had a chance to gauge everyone's ability," senior Stephanie Schumaker said. "In the end we put together a team of people with various strengths and we've been able to pull together really well."

Just like any other sport, competitive cheerleading takes up much time during the week. Practices, generally two to three hours long and occurring three or four times per week, involve conditioning as well as stunts.

"Occasionally, we run a lap around the school before practice," Schumaker said. "We work on tumbling and spend time working on various stunts in three different stunt groups, sometimes combining them to form pyramids."

The intensity and length of practices increased during the week before the first competition, which occurred on Nov. 11 at NC State. They gave it their best and placed fourth overall.

However, there is uncertainty over the rechartering of the squad next year.



Photo courtesy of Stephanie Schumaker

Meghan Dwyer, Chrissy Jusino, Stephanie Schumaker and Katie Rossitch cheer at their Nov. 11 competition at NC State, the first competition of the year.

"I'm not quite sure if I see it happening again next year. The administration has given us so little to work with and expects us to come back with trophies," said senior Morgan Taylor, captain of the squad.

Nevertheless, the girls are optimistic about this year and hope to bring home the state championship trophy. They are improving from their practices and having a lot of fun while doing it.

"The squad works really well together," Scott said. "Everyone encourages everyone else and helps others out as much as they can. We have improved greatly and we are still improving."

Sprains, tears plague sports teams

Athletic injuries pose challenges for coaches, players

BY AMY BRYSON

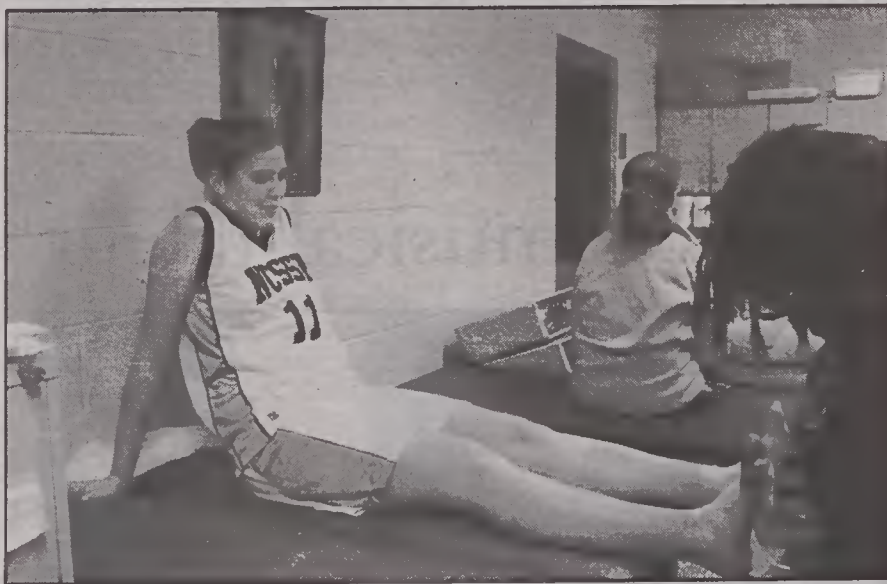


Photo by Luis Zapata

Meghan McCann has her ankle taped by one of the intern athletic trainers before a basketball game.

While coming down from a block during warm-ups for the third round of the state playoffs, varsity volleyball senior Lisa Pepin rolled her ankle. Instead of allowing the injury to bench her for the game, Pepin spent thirty minutes in the training room and returned to the court.

"Thomas [Michell] was amazing," Pepin said. "He iced it and wrapped it and had me playing a half hour later. He is my hero."

While the Unicorns have dominated on the court and fields, the wear and tear of the season has sent a large number of student athletes with a variety of injuries to see athletic trainer Thomas Michell.

"Injuries happen," Michell said. "This year has not been more or less. I would say [for the fall seasons] the volleyball team had the most injuries and the soccer team faced the major injuries. For winter, basketball has already started off the season with major injuries."

Junior soccer player Kenneth Addison was injured 30 minutes into the first day of tryouts when he collided with another player during a 50-50 ball drill. After an MRI and x-ray at Triangle Orthopedic he found out he had fractured his femur and strained his MCL, putting him out for six weeks. This and numerous other injuries gave the soccer team a challenge throughout the season.

"It has definitely hurt us," Addison said. "I came back in and I thought we would get the flow back. Then another person was injured and we

had to adjust. Even at the end of the season, coach was still trying to figure out where to put people. With fewer injuries our team could have been more cohesive."

While the varsity volleyball team did not lose players to injuries this year, Pepin agreed with Michell that they had the most injuries.

"There was a lot of small stuff," she said. "I would go into the training room and there would be my team getting fixed by [Michell]. We probably demolished the school's tape supply with a lot of thumb wrapping and ankle taping."

During an IM ultimate game, senior basketball player Andrew Amolegbe severely sprained his shooting hand thumb, putting him out for the first few weeks of the season. Varsity men's basketball coach Brian Gonyeau feels the men's basketball team has had their share of injuries in the two years he has coached.

"Last year during the second game of the year, Emanuel Bryant had a season ending knee injury," he said. "Halfway through, Xavier Blount had a foot injury and then three fourths of the way through Tate Rogers had an ankle injury. This year, junior Will Haus tore his ACL the first week of tryouts."

While an injury is a negative for an individual player, Gonyeau looks at the positive influence it has on the rest of the team.

"When injuries happen, it is a positive thing because it makes the rest of the team step up," he said. "The rest of the team accepts the greater challenge."

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