

Out front

Drum major struts stuff for marching Tar Heels

By KIMBERLY KLEMAN

He has worked perhaps harder than any football player for this weekend's game, putting in about 16 hours of practice time a week.

This, in fact, has been his routine for the past three years. It is one that has paid off; he has actively participated in more games than any of the players.

Yet when Harvey Leavitt puts on his blue and white uniform to face N.C. State, he won't be planning to play football. As drum major he will head the other participants in the game—more than 200 Tar Heel band members—onto Kenan field to perform.

"When the band comes out on the field they're proud and I'm proud of them," Leavitt said. "You can tell they're in it for the fun. I like to take time out to watch the crowd's reaction to them."

Though the senior drum major works with the band all week distributing charts to squad leaders and teaching pregame and halftime shows and basic maneuvers to freshmen, his most enjoyable work comes on Saturdays.

"Then, all I do is get the band on the field, start the numbers and... show off," he said. "I get a really big thrill standing in front of the band and watching it come together."

With three years of experience, Leavitt said he feels comfortable leading the band.

"It would be hard to make a mistake at a game; I don't do very much," he said. "Even if I did, the band would go along with it. The mistake wouldn't show. The only maneuver I could see causing problems is the script 'Heels' we do. Now that has great potential for a mistake," he said.

Neither is he nervous or self-conscious in front of the football crowd at the stadium.

"I have no illusions of grandeur when I'm in front of the fans," he said. "I have too much responsibility to worry about the crowd."

This, however, was not always the case.

"The first time I performed with the band I was conscious of Kenan's crowd. I was awed,"

he said. "In high school maybe a couple of thousand will show up for the games. Here, it's 50,000."

Granted, Saturday afternoons are exciting for Leavitt and for all band members, for that



Tar Heel drum major Leavitt leads the Saturday halftime parade

matter. But considering the inconveniences, you have to wonder why he's stuck with it.

Leavitt's suit, for instance, is made of 100 percent wool. If you thought you were hot at games in your sundresses and summer suits, you can only imagine how he feels.

He's certainly not drum major to get choice seating. We have terrible seats—they're in the front row," he said. "If I want to see highlights of the game I have to watch the Dick Crum Show."

There is no academic incentive to be in the band. For one hour's credit, a typical band member practices for seven or eight hours per week, not including game time. Leavitt works 14 to 16 hours weekly.

"I guess I'm in the band because I just couldn't give it up. I've been in band since I was in sixth grade, and I was drum major in high school," he said. "You know, you'll meet more people in band than in any organization on campus."

The senior also cites his school spirit as a reason he's kept his position. "I'm definitely, definitely school-spirited," he said. "The band is not in it for the band. Our No. 1 job is to support the athletic team; then, it's to entertain."

In both roles, the band is dedicated. This year, for example, nine straight football weekends are scheduled, only one of which the band won't march in.

"It's always a thrill when someone says something about our halftime show," Leavitt said. "The suggestions and feedback are reinforcing. If no one ever said anything we wouldn't know what type of things to plan."

Leavitt said he had no specific plans after he graduates this spring with a degree in business. There is no doubt, however, that next year he will return to Kenan Stadium for the football games—as a spectator for the first time. W

Kimberly Kleman is a staff writer for The Daily Tar Heel.



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