

Cheerleading is a Man's Job Too!!

By William Pass

Whenever you hear the word cheerleader, what comes to mind? If you are like most people, your thoughts go immediately to an attractive, energetic female. This image of the traditional cheerleader is very misleading.

Winston-Salem State University has been fortunate enough to have at least two male cheerleaders (per season) for the past five years. Most other cheerleading teams in the CIAA are not blessed with

male cheerleaders are as the Rams are. The 1983-84 season features the talents of Roger Johnson and Stacy Goodson. Johnson, a senior, has been cheering since his freshman year. Goodson, on the other hand, is a junior in his second season with the squad. Females on the squad recognized the ability of Johnson, the squad captain, the prior two seasons. They both say cheering is a very serious task that requires a lot of motivation.

While the job description of the males are different from the female role, they must work closely with the females. Such

tasks as being the base on the pyramids, using their deeper voice projection, and assisting in partner stunts. This prompts them to be sometimes looked upon as the "horses of the squad."

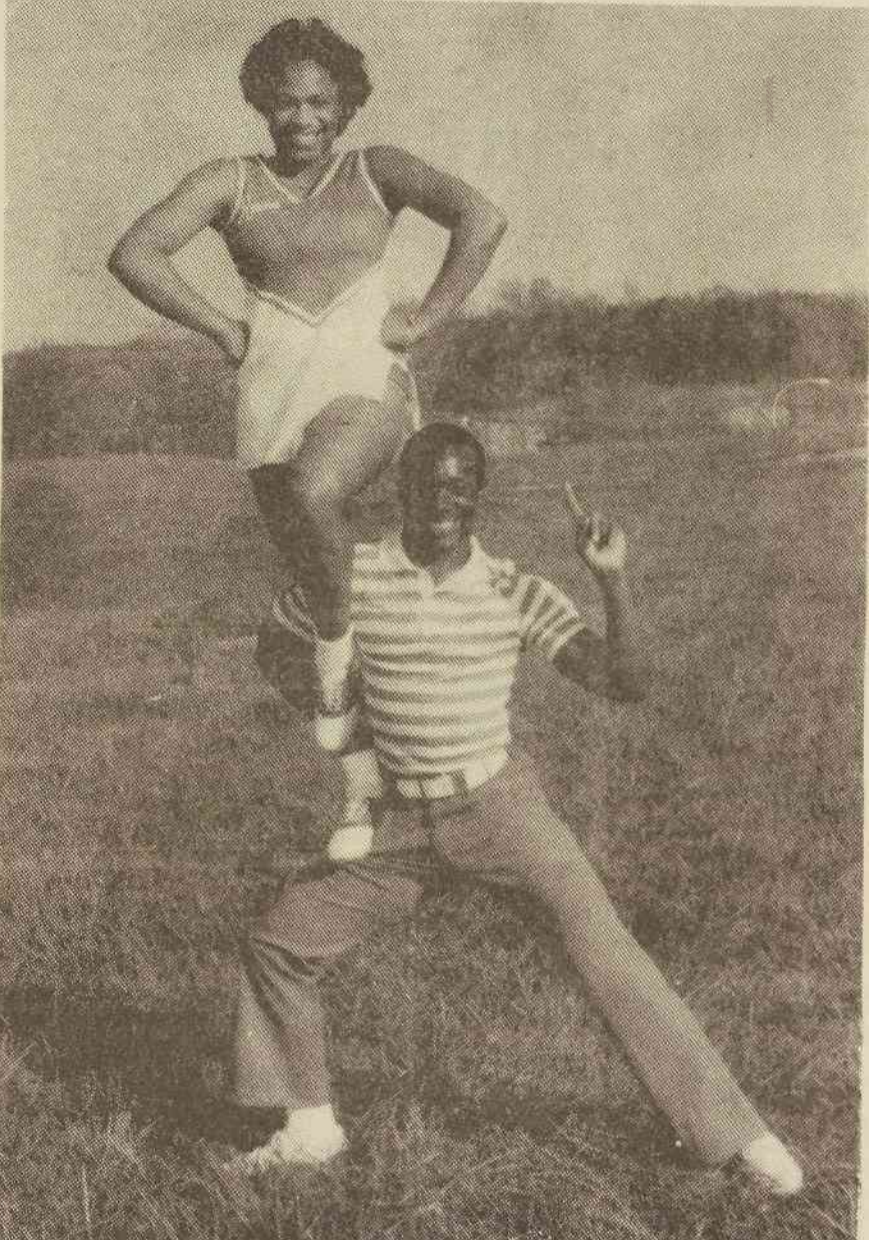
Goodson and Johnson participate with the floor cheers during each game. Performing floor cheers takes very good coordination, and ability to cheer while moving to different formations.

Both Johnson and Goodson say joking and criticism from the fans might discourage people interested in becoming male cheerleaders. "It bothered me when I first started, but after gaining experience it doesn't affect me," says Johnson. "Our presence on the team is greatly appreciated by the females on the squad, so we have a good sense of togetherness." Females on the team include Gail Welch (captain), Linda Myers (co-captain), Marie Alston, Linda Hucks, Carmen Jones, Bonnie Moore, Marsha McDougal, Reba Phillips, Renee Shepherd, and Vera Singletary. Although outnumbered by females on the team, Johnson and Goodson

say they never look at each other as being on a male-female basis, but rather as merely teammates.

The WSSU cheerleading squad consider themselves to be in competition each time they cheer at games with other squads around the CIAA. Ms. Debra Rivers, cheerleader advisor, expects 101% effort from all cheerleaders during practice and games alike. She says motivation and enthusiasm are the two major strong suits the squad has. Their actions on the field plays a big part in motivating the crowd to respond to different sporting events.

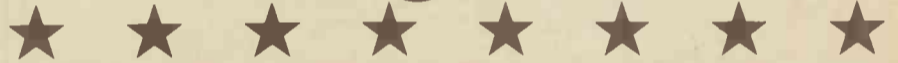
Overall, small black colleges do not have a great percentage of male cheerleaders. Large universities, such as the University of California at Los Angeles, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Ohio State University have equal amount of males compared to females. But cheerleading is becoming a more well-known "sport" across the country and perhaps in the near future, male cheerleading at WSSU and throughout the CIAA could become more prevalent.



Roger Johnson, a 4-year member of the WSSU cheerleading squad shows why he's number one.

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