

Members of the Brooke High School cheering squad perform a routine during action of the OVAC Cheering Championships on Saturday at WesBanco Arena. The Bruins won the Class AAAA title. Photo by Joel Joseph

Four Cheers for the OVAC

Brooke, Martins Ferry, Wheeling Central, Linsly claim titles

By LISA KENZORA
Staff Writer

Victory is so much sweeter when you know what defeat tastes like.

Both Brooke and Martins Ferry settled for a second-place finish last year in the OVAC Cheerleading Competition.

And both teams came back this year with a hunger and a desire to savor victory once again Saturday at WesBanco Arena.

In the Class AAAA division, Brooke and Wheeling Park have been shuffling around the first-place title for the past three years, while Martins Ferry and St. Clairsville have been trading Class AAA first- and second-place slots since 2004.

This year, the Bruins and the Purple Riders rose to the top.

In Class AA, Wheeling Central had no plans of stepping down, as it earned its 11th straight OVAC title.

Linsly improved on a 2006 third-place finish to capture its first Class A title for the Cadets in 10 years.

Every participating squad had its unique combination of dancing, cheering and tumbling incorporations, but it was the challenging aspects of the routines that separated the teams during the awards.

"The athleticism in the girls is actually phenomenal," Brooke coach Chris Stucin said. "We went into the competition striving for perfection and that's exactly what they did."

"What brought the crowd to their feet was the tumbling passes, the full twists, whips to fulls. It makes them athletes."

Brooke began its routine with every girl pulling off a pike into a standing tuck, but that was only the beginning of the difficult gymnastics and jumps.

Wheeling Park brought an entire squad capable of handsprings followed by tucks and threw many other tumbling passes throughout the 3-minute routine.

Class AAA was just as competitive with many girls being required to do a standing handspring to be on the squad, one of those squads being the 2007 victors — the Purple Riders.

"This is a really sweet victory to regain the crown," Martins Ferry coach Cathie Jones said. "They wanted it so badly, they had the desire to nail it."

The Purple Riders' six seniors have been cheering together since the 7th grade and



"They wanted it so badly. They had the desire to nail it."

Cathie Jones,
Martins Ferry coach

built a strong bond as teammates and friends.

"The seniors wanted to keep everyone as confident as possible," co-captain Megan Jones said. "Words can't describe it."

St. Clairsville performed at a high-level once again but the Riders stopped the the Red Devils from gaining an OVAC Cheerleading repeat win.

Wheeling Central closed its last year in Class AA with a strong performance that earned it a banner that will be displayed with the 14 others in the Maroon Knights gymnasium. Next year, Wheeling Central will be competing in the Class AAA division.

Steubenville Catholic Central was awarded second place.

See, OVAC, Page B3

OVAC

Continued from page B1

After placing sixth two years ago, Linsly still believed it could take the class A competition, and it did.

"We knew that we could get first," Cadets coach Maureen Kerr said. "We had a good routine and the talent and the skill but you never know going into it what to expect. We had a creative routine and the judges liked it."

Paden City couldn't catch

Linsly to grab its 10th A title but earned second place.

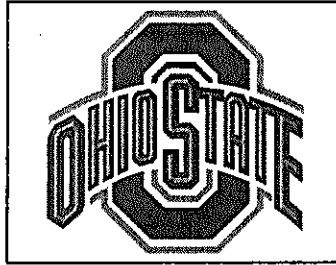
Bishop Donahue (A), Frontier (AA), Indian Creek (AAA) and Buckeye Local (AAAA) all came in third in their respective categories.

Fourth-place finishers were Weirton Madonna (A), Toronto (AA), Magnolia (AAA) and Weir (AAAA).

Union Local was awarded fifth place in AAA.



WORLD
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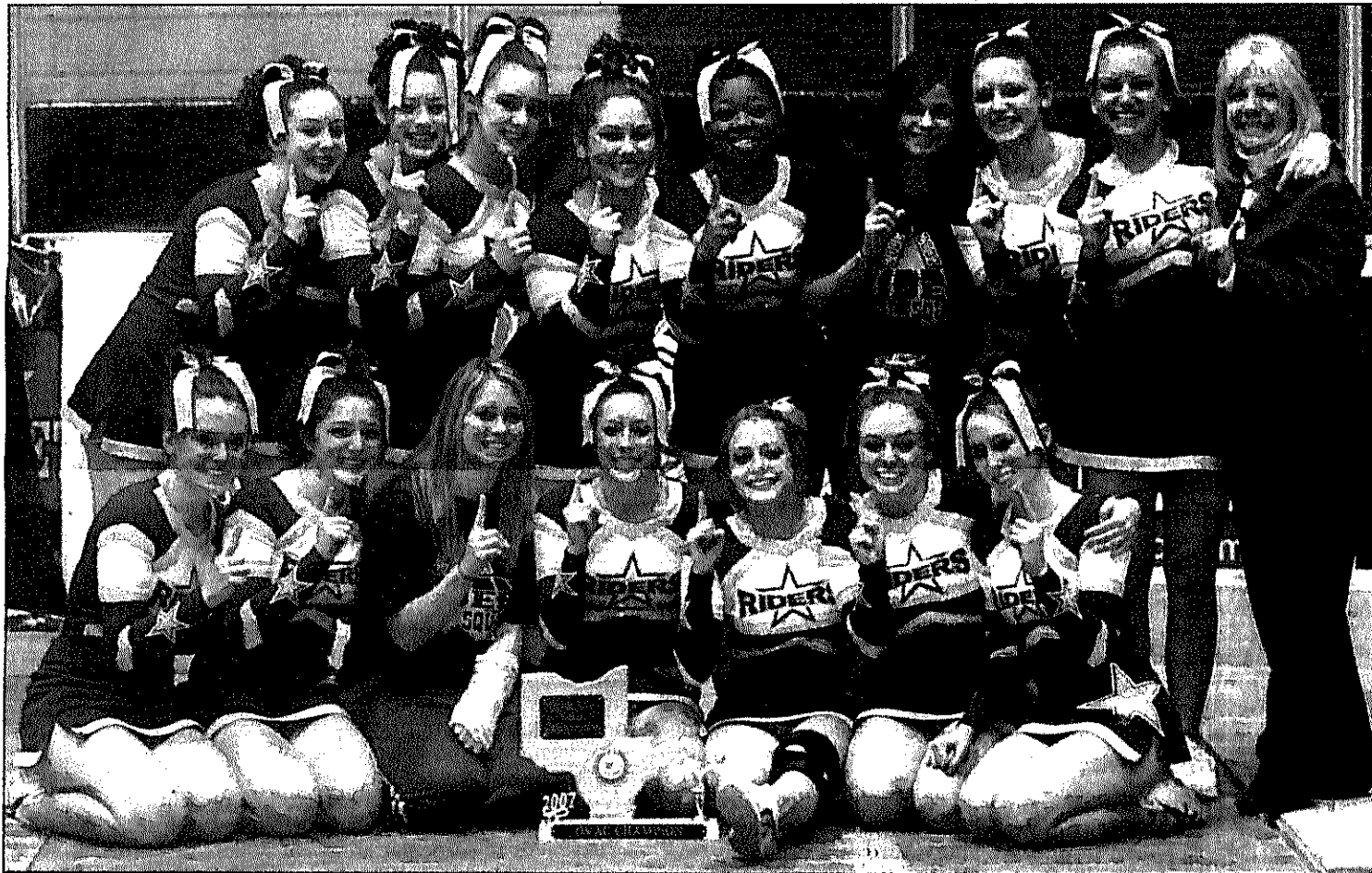


The Times Leader

Sunday, February 4, 2007

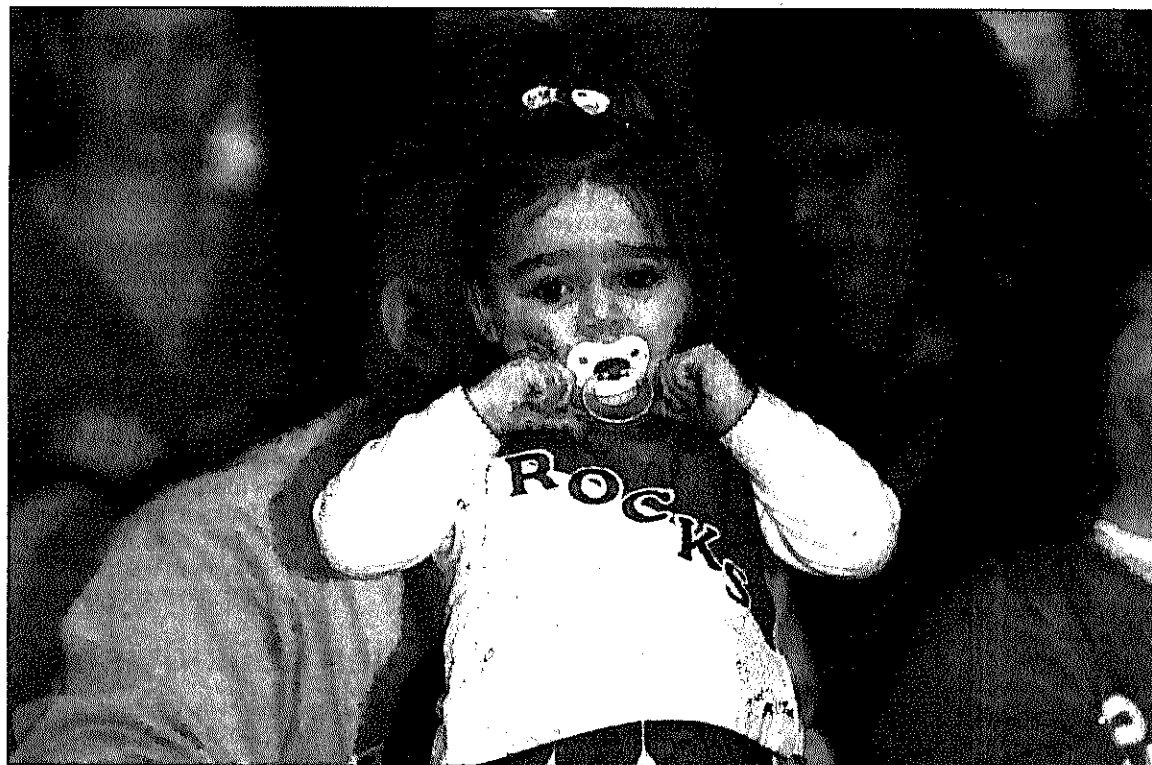
The Voice of Eastern Ohio

Purple Riders win OVAC cheerleading crown



CHEERING THEIR way to victory in the OVAC 3-A cheerleading competition Saturday at WesBanco Arena were girls from Martins Ferry High School. The squad, above, celebrates as it displays its award. The other winners were Brooke, Wheeling Central and Linsly. At right, 1-year-old Alivia Campbell of Barnesville cheers on the Sharfrock cheerleaders. See related photos on page C8.

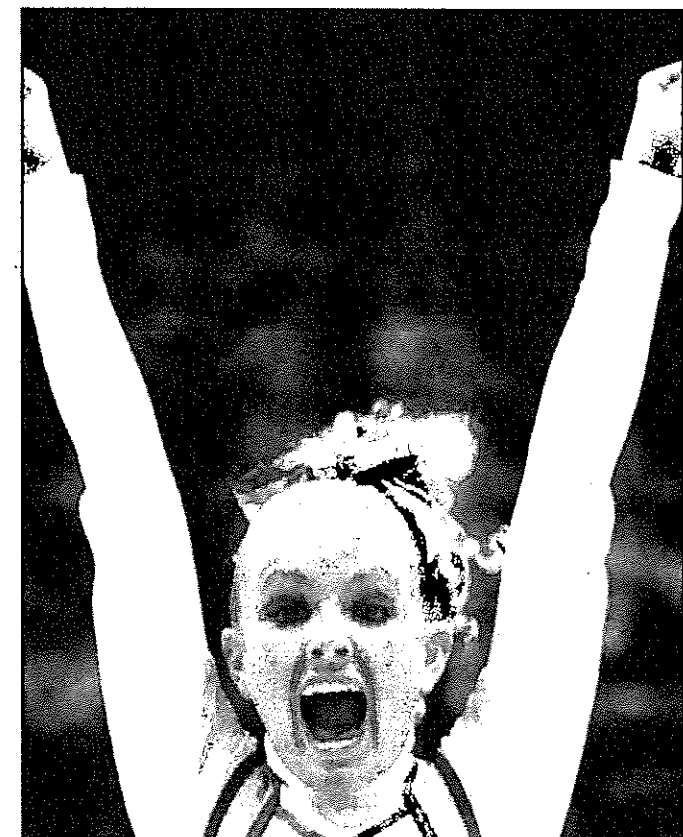
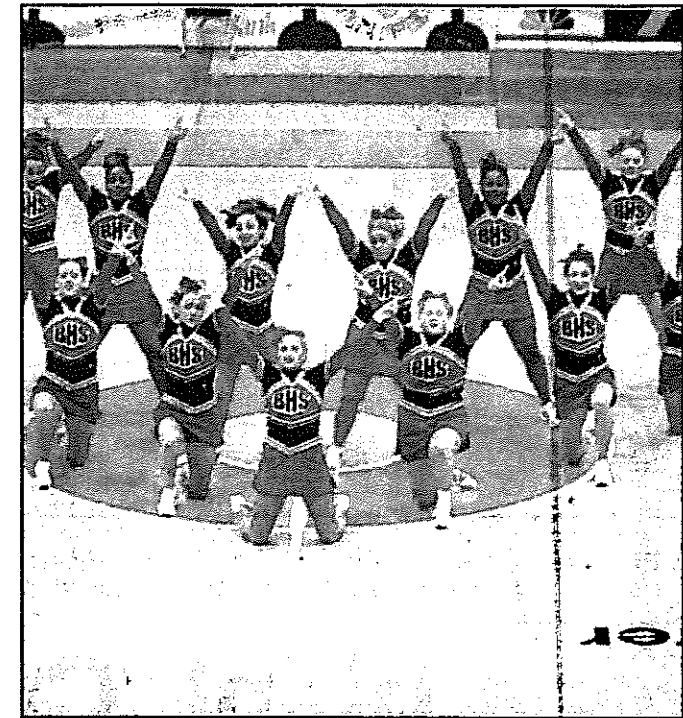
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OVAC EXTRA

Sunday, February 4, 2007



ABOVE: Barnesville performs during the 2-A competition of the OVAC Cheering Competition Saturday.
TOP RIGHT: Bellaire closes out its routine during the 3-A competition of the OVAC Cheering Competition Saturday.
AT LEFT: St. Clairsville takes the floor to begin its performance at the OVAC Cheering competition Saturday.



ABOVE: Barnesville performs during the 2-A competition of the OVAC Cheerleading Competition Saturday.

TOP RIGHT: Bellaire closes out its routine during the 3-A competition of the OVAC Cheerleading Competition Saturday.

AT LEFT: St. Clairsville takes the floor to begin its performance at the OVAC Cheerleading competition Saturday.

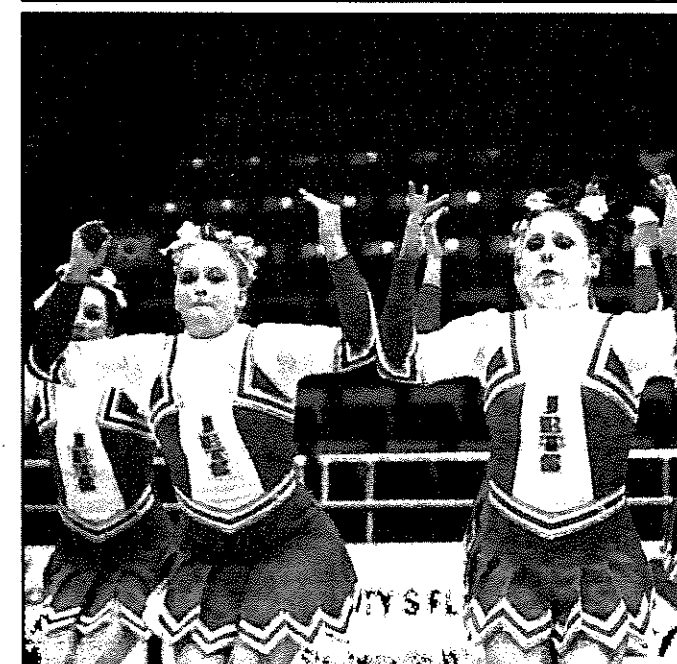
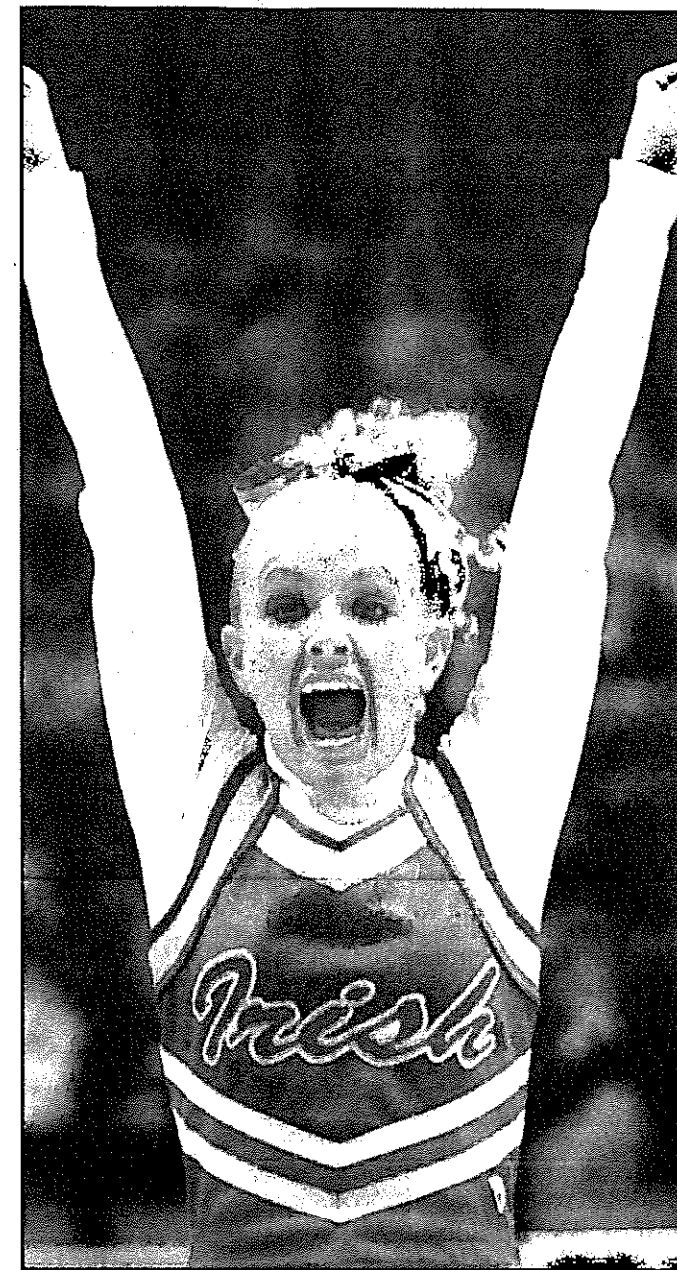
AT RIGHT: A St. John Central cheerleader performs during the 1-A competition Saturday.

BELOW: Linsly celebrates after the announcement that it claimed the OVAC 1-A title.

BELOW RIGHT: Union Local performs during the 3-A competition of the OVAC Cheerleading competition held Saturday.

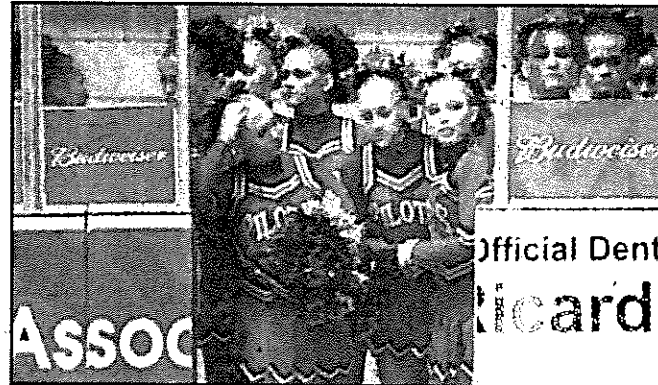
BOTTOM RIGHT: River awaits its announcement to take the floor for the 2-A competition at Saturday's OVAC competition at WesBanco Arena.

T-L Photos/JOEL JOSEPH





...Emily celebrates after the announcement that it claimed the OVAC 1-A title.
BELOW RIGHT: Union Local performs during the 3-A competition of the OVAC Cheerleading competition held Saturday.
BOTTOM RIGHT: River awaits its announcement to take the floor for the 2-A competition at Saturday's OVAC competition at WesBanco Arena.
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OVAC Cheering Competition on Tap

Park, St.C., Central, Madonna seek repeat

By LISA KENZORA
Staff Writer

Cheerleaders from around the Ohio Valley will file into Wesbanco Arena in Wheeling at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow, but instead of making their way to the sidelines the girls will be taking center stage for the 16th annual OVAC Cheering Competition.

Thirty-five local high schools will be participating in hopes of taking home division titles.

The cheerleaders sometimes practice six days a week for three or four hours a day for a competition that comes down to a 3-minute performance.

The girls not only have to be physically trained for the tumbling passes, dancing precision, synchronization in the cheer and jumps, and dynamics on the floor, but they have to be able to respond to the pressure involved in proving themselves in such a small amount of time.

Since the beginning of OVAC Cheering in 1992, Wheeling Central has won the championship banner a record 14 times, followed by Wheeling Park, which has taken home the title 12 times and is the reigning champion of the AAAA division.

Still, Brooke claimed first place in 2004 and 2005 in the 4-A division, and placed second in 2006. The Bruins are expected to be in the running once again.

"We're trying to build a camaraderie between the girls," Wheeling Park coach Shawna Shepherd said of the Brooke-Wheeling Park rivalry, "but it's great to have good competition because everyone increases their ability and performs to the next level."

"Wheeling Park is pretty well-rounded all over. We can dance, cheer, jump, tumble and we have a pretty jam-packed routine that we want to let others enjoy."

The Patriots are dealing with injuries but Shepherd said the girls are pushing themselves through the pain to be able to perform Saturday.

The Bruins, whose roster includes one senior, four juniors and seven sophomores and freshmen, won first place in the state competition and scored higher than any other squad - regardless of class.

But to get ready for OVACs, the squads must take out any mounts from their competition routine and incorporate other abilities to compete within regulations.

"We had to take building out but we have a lot of talented tumblers," Brooke coach Chris Stucin said. "We have seven girls that combine for 29

full twists in a 3-minute routine. They have a natural talent."

"We practice to our perfection and work and work and that's how we train."

In the AAA competition, St. Clairsville will be defending its championship.



The Red Devils have had their share of obstacles this season, having a series of injuries and illnesses that have caused them to revamp the routine

five or six times.

"We're strong jumpers and good cheerleaders with good motions and a good, strong, exciting routine," coach Shawn Tomlan said. "The girls are trying their hardest but they're feeling the pressure."

Tomlan admits any squad can deal with a difficulty during a routine and it depends on the day for who can pull off the best performance.

Martins Ferry is a strong contender in this division since it is the 2005 champion and took home second place in 2006.

The Purple Riders are led by six seniors who have competed in OVACs since their freshman years, and are excited to have the chance of regaining the crown.

"We are a unit and we compliment each other and they are all talented

girls," Martins Ferry coach Cathie Jones said.

As for the competitiveness, Martins Ferry brings to the AAA competition, Jones said, "Our motions are sharp, tumbling is excellent, we have strong jumps and a true package of a winning team."

Wheeling Central will be looking for its 11th straight victory in the AA division, and with that comes a different kind of pressure.

"They have a reputation to hold up and continue," Wheeling Central coach Erica Holt said of her 13 girls that she describes as having all level of talents, with their greatest strength being their tumbling.

Unlike other competitors, Wheeling Central just began its OVAC routine during Christmas break since their time was invested in the football team's state championship run.

"My biggest challenge is to incorporate strengths and get 13 girls to look exactly alike for three minutes," Holt said.

Weirton Madonna won the 2006 Class A crown and has an evenly spread range of freshmen through seniors to bring to the competition.

"Our strength is our tumbling, and our formation as well as how exact we are and their excitement," Weirton Madonna coach Lisa Cusick said.

Although Paden City has a history of Class A success and Bellaire St. John

was the 2005 winner, Cusick said, "we don't try and do what other squads are doing. We do what we know and what we can do and hope to do our best."

Added Stucin: "People don't know how much the girls practice or the drive the cheerleaders have. They don't realize the work they do."

Doors will open to the general public at 8:30 a.m. and the A/AA division will begin at 9:30 a.m. The squads competing in the AAA/AAAA class will take the floor at approximately 1 p.m. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for students.

The schools will compete in the following order. In A class, Cameron will kick off the competition, followed by Conotton Valley, Beallsville, Bridgeport, Valley, Linsly, Bishop Donahue, Shadyside, Paden City, Bellaire St. John and Weirton Madonna.

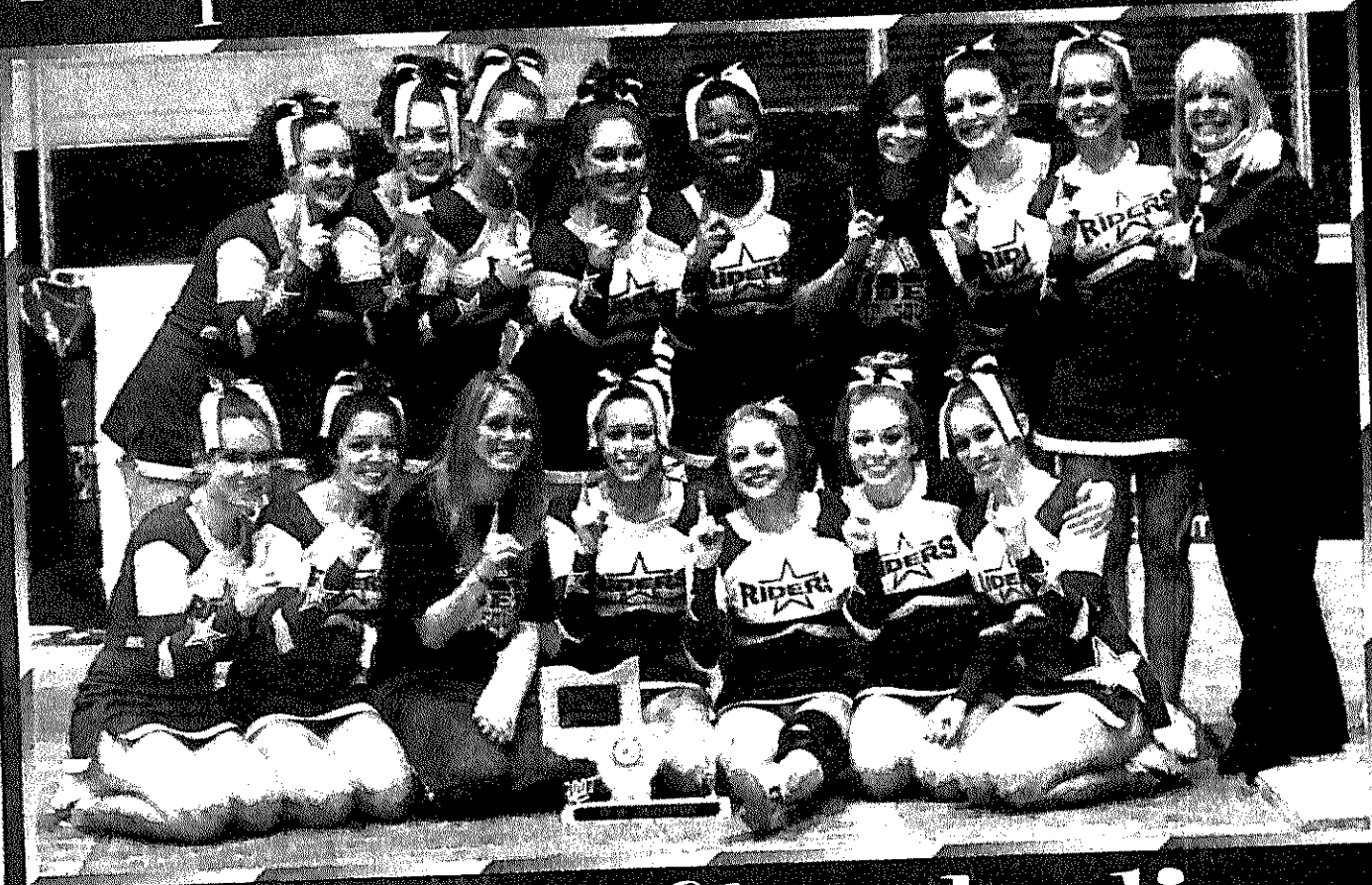
Monroe Central will compete first in the Class AA category, followed by Toronto, Frontier, Barnesville, Steubenville Catholic Central, River, Shenandoah and Wheeling Central.

The AAA class will begin with Tyler Consolidated, followed by Meadowbrook, Oak Glen, Magnolia, Indian Creek, Union Local, Bellaire, St. Clairsville and Martins Ferry.

Wheeling Park will lead the AAAA division, followed by John Marshall, Buckeye Local, Edison, Weir, Brooke, East Liverpool and Zanesville.

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OVAC cheerleading competition slated

The 16th annual OVAC Cheering competition will be held on Saturday, Feb. 3 at the Wesbanco Arena, Wheeling. Doors open to the general public at 8:30 a.m. and the A/AA competition begins at 9:30 a.m. Class 3A/4A will follow and begin at approximately 2:00. There will be 35 schools competing this year in four divisions. Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for students. Ticket sales at the Wesbanco arena will begin on Saturday, Jan. 27 at the box office.

The following schools will compete in this order:
 A - Cameron, Conotton Valley, Beallsville, Bridgeport, Valley, Linsly,

Bishop Donahue, Shadyside, Paden City, St. Johns & Madonna.

Monroe Central, Toronto, Frontier, Barnesville, Catholic Central, River, Shenandoah & Wheeling Central

Class 3A - Tyler, Meadowbrook, Oak Glen, Magnolia, Indian Creek, Union Local, Bellaire, St. Clairsville & Martins Ferry.

Class 4A - Wheeling Park, John Marshall, Buckeye Local, Edison, Weir, Brooke, East Liverpool & Zanesville.

Defending Champions are: A - Madonna; 2A - Wheeling Central; 3A - St. Clairsville & 4A - Wheeling Park.



SUNDAY NEWS-REGISTER - Wheeling, W.Va. - Sunday, January 28, 2007

SPC

OVAC Cheering Championships Saturday

Wheeling's WesBanco Arena will host the 16th annual OVAC Cheering Championships Saturday.

Doors open at 8:30 a.m., with the Class AA/A competition starting at 9:30 p.m. The Class AAAA/AAA event will follow at approximately 1 p.m.

The following schools are scheduled to compete:

Class AAAA
 Wheeling Park, John Marshall, Buckeye Local, Edison, Weir, Brooke, East Liverpool, Zanesville.

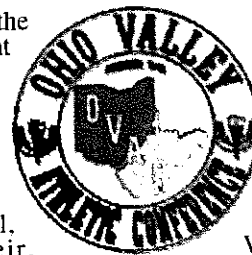
Class AAA
 Tyler Consolidated, Meadowbrook, Oak

Glen, Magnolia, Indian Creek, Union Local, Bellaire, St. Clairsville, Martins Ferry.

Class AA
 Monroe Central, Toronto, Frontier, Barnesville, Steub. Catholic, River, Shenandoah, Wheeling Central.

Class A
 Cameron, Conotton Valley, Beallsville, Bridgeport, Valley, Linsly, Bishop Donahue, Shadyside, Paden City, Bellaire St. John, Weirton Madonna

Tickets are \$6 for adults and \$4 for students. Tickets are available at the WesBanco Arena box office.



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