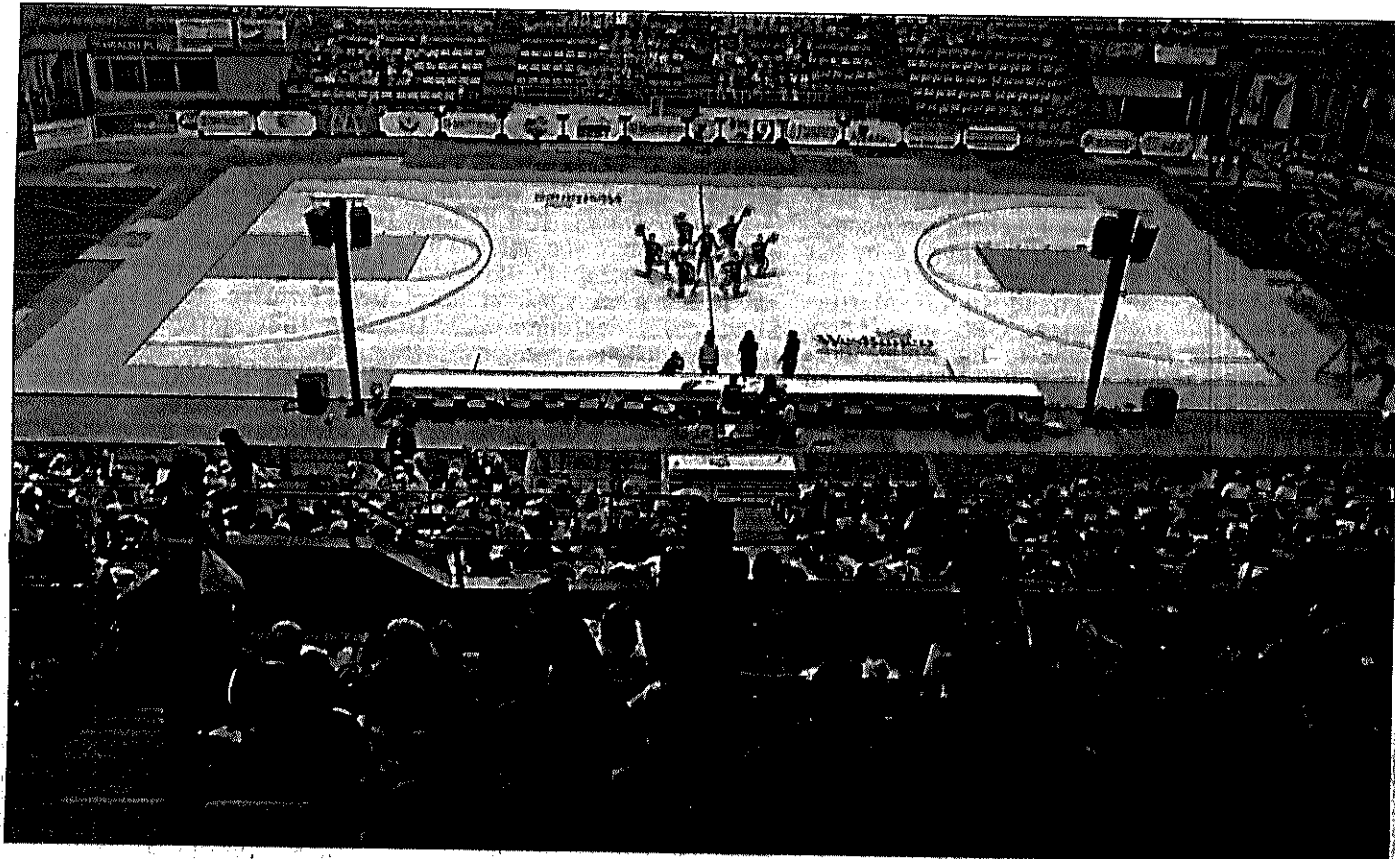


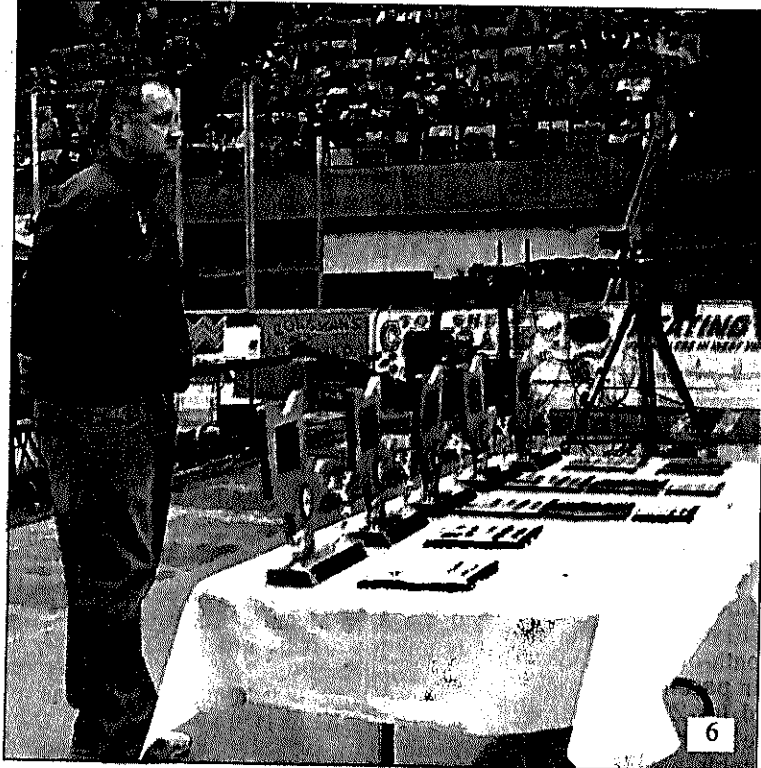
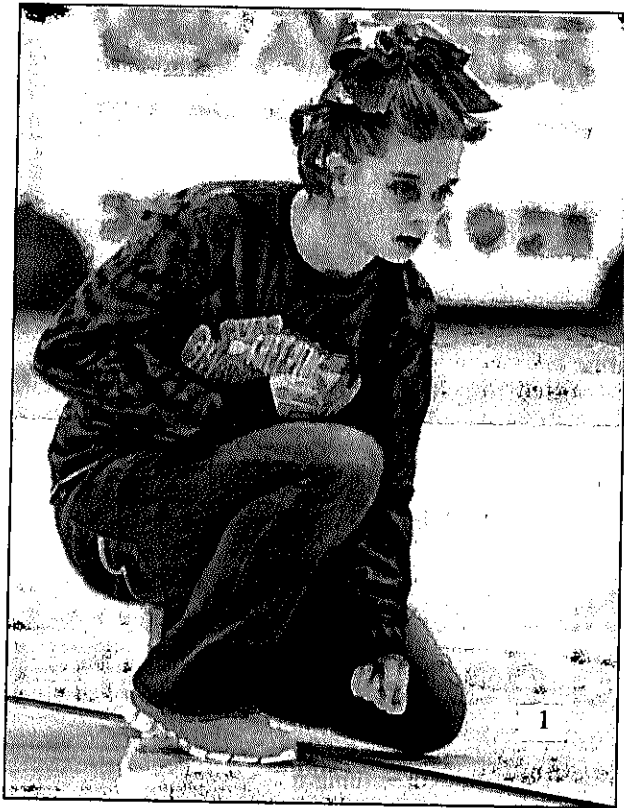
Sunday, February 12, 2012



The 21st Annual OVAC Cheering Championships were held last Saturday at WesBanco Arena and while there is not enough room on the page to cover all the teams and support staff that make the event possible, this photo essay is a brief overview of the competition, both on the floor and behind the scenes. Above is the Bridgeport squad during the 3A warm ups. The 1A warm ups for cheerleaders begin at 8:10 a.m. but after most cheered at basketball games on Friday night, the competitors get little sleep as they begin their day with hair and make up, some starting at 4 a.m.

T-L Photo/MIKE PALMER

OVAC Cheering Championships

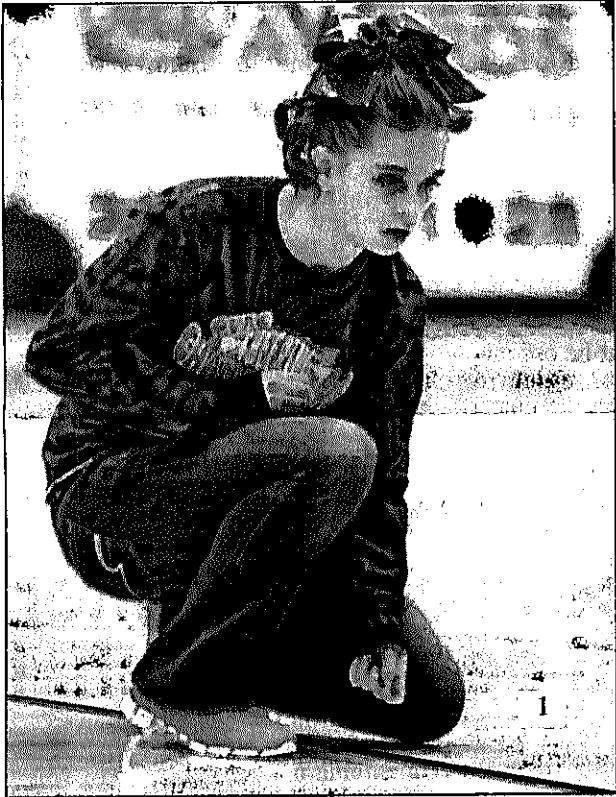




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OVAC Cheering Championships



1: Kayley Miller has volunteered for the last 10 years as 'hair pin girl' checking the competition floor after each squad for hazards left behind. This was her last year as she moves into high school competing for Wheeling Park. 2: St. Clairsville fans donned crowns as they supported the Red Devils cheering squad. 3: A tradition of the competition is the squads claiming floor space to await the awards presentations in circular formations. 4: A tough job for any competition is officiating or judging, the panel seated at the table and one back judge communicating by walkie-talkie take on the often thankless task. 5: Todd Peyton, OVAC Sportswear Consultant is the official 'T-shirt Man' for OVAC events, seen here with employee and Bellaire resident Ryan Feller providing commemorative shirts for a crowd that seems to never get any smaller as the day progresses. 6: Corey Murphy, President of the OVAC awaits the judges decision to pass out the coveted cheerleading trophies. 7: Competition viewed from the floor level gives a different perspective as the Martins Ferry cheerleading squad takes to flight during their 3A performance.

T-L Photos/MIKE PALMER

That's one for the thumb

• St. C. earns 5th OVAC cheering title in a row

By MIKE PALMER
Times Leader Staff Writer

WHEELING - The 21st Annual OVAC Cheering Championships were held Saturday at WesBanco Arena and as promised the new fifth division added some drama to the competition. In the morning session Bishop Donahue won the single A crown, Linsly won the AA title and in AAA the trophy went to Tyler Consolidated.

After the break St. Clairsville would overcome some performance errors to claim its fifth championship in a row in AAAA, and in AAAAA, it would be Brooke reclaiming the title after watching runner-up Wheeling Park take home the OVAC title in the past three years.

In single A the story was St. John Central's cheerleading squad missing the title by a 0.05 margin. The Irish fielded just five cheerleaders compared to a dozen cheering for the Bishops.

"I was very happy with our performance. I do not think the decision was because of our squad size," said St. John cheerleading coach Mallory Cooper. "I

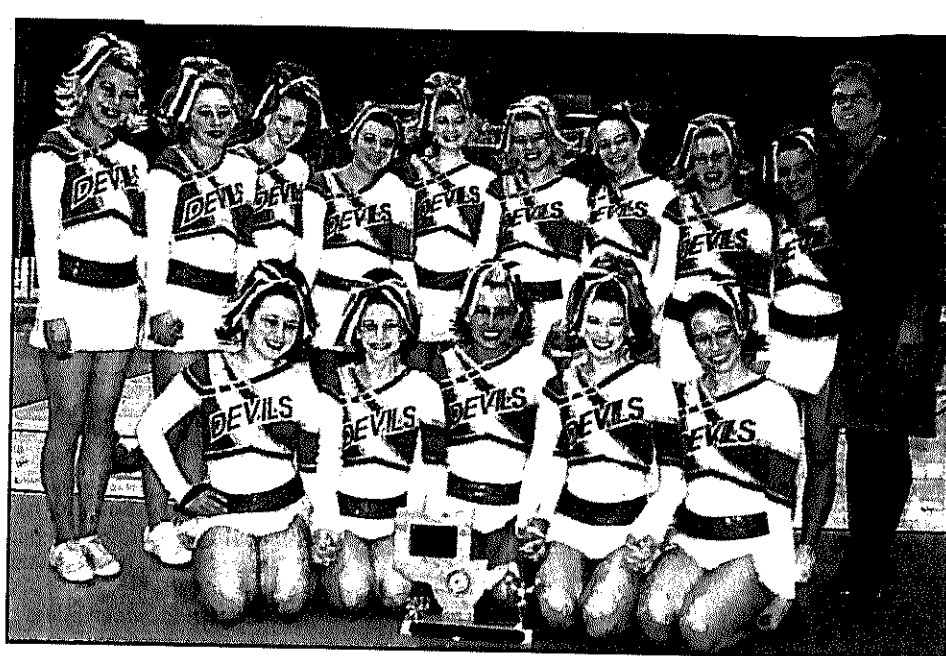
'These girls have continued to work extremely hard for me and we are thrilled to earn a fifth title.'

- Shawn Tomlan
St. C. cheering coach

think it had to do more with crowd participation and a lot of tumbling from the other squad."

The AA field may have been the toughest with five quality squads competing for the title. Steubenville Catholic, Shadyside, Toronto and Wheeling Central all gave performances, which from crowd and squad reaction could have been worthy of the title. In the final standings, it would be less than 50 points separating the Cadets in the top spot from the Tigers in fifth place.

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T-L Photo/MIKE PALMER

ST. CLAIRSVILLE High School's Varsity Cheerleading squad captured a fifth straight OVAC Cheerleading Championship title in class AAAA Saturday at WesBanco Arena in Wheeling. In front, from left, are Meggan Burnett, Shalyn Cameron, Taryne Soukup, Alexis Laurine and Andrea Greenwood. Second row, from left, are Caitlyn Wolfe, Sam Collins, Allison Greenwood, Dakota Woodford, Kylee Laurine, Sarah Zink, Matti Young, Abby Earliwine, Dana Bernard and coach Shawn Tomlan. To view additional photos from this event, visit cu.timesleaderonline.com.

● Cheering

Continued from Page A1

Toronto's routine was a crowd pleaser, but last year's single A champions rated fourth with the judges.

The Crusaders would finish in third place with Wheeling Central garnering runner-up.

In the AAA division Tyler Consolidated was a surprise winner as predictions had Martins Ferry and Magnolia vying for the title. Martins Ferry coach Cathy Reuther admitted her squad was disappointed, but added that the squad had executed the routine better and the OVAC performance was not their best stuff.

Following the break the AAAA division competition got under way and once again following the competition, no squad was confident in their finish. Union Local and Buckeye Local both had excellent crowd reviews, and the defending champion Red Devils had a few miscues.

"We had a dropped pom and a shoe came off, and we lost 20 points in deductions - so we were really afraid that we were not going to get it this year," said St. Clairsville coach Shawn Tomlan. "We had ourselves prepared for a finish other than first place. It was tough competition. We knew Weir was good. Buckeye Local had performed well at the

Buckeye 8. It was nerve-racking."

When it was finally announced that the Red Devils had five-peated winning the trophy, the cheerleaders celebrated on the floor as loud boo arose from the crowd of rival fans in the bleachers.

"I have been here before," said Tomlan. "It was 11 or 12 years ago and we knew it was going to be tough coming back. It is always tough coming back as the defending champions."

Buckeye Local celebrated when their squad was announced as runner-up in AAAA.

"It was just a four-point difference between us and St. C.," said Panthers coach Lynda Piergallini. "I am excited and proud of the girls. They are very excited about the trophy."

"We understand that in competitions cheering is judged, so the score you receive is somebody's opinion at that point in time," explained Piergallini. "While you know you have to take it seriously, at the same time you cannot take it too seriously, because it is not like track where somebody crosses the finish line first and there is no question of who the winner is."

"The girls have worked

hard to get here and we plan on building on this success," concluded Piergallini.

Union Local took third place honors, followed by Weir.

"Aside from the mistakes, I know we had to cheer really well to make up the points and overcome the deductions," added Tomlan, who took over the Red Devils' program from Joanne Verba who guided the squad to four consecutive titles. "These girls have continued to work extremely hard for me and we are thrilled to earn a fifth title."

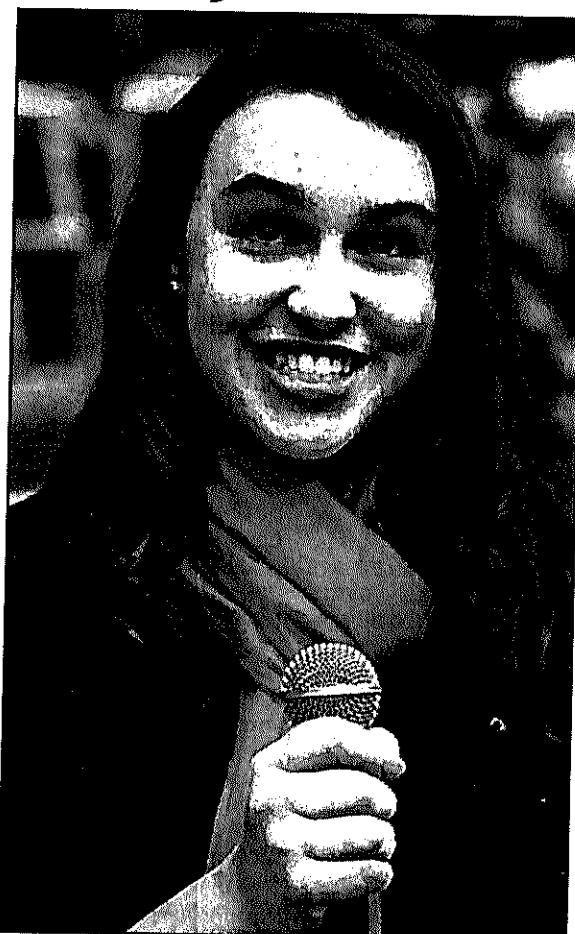
In five A the defending AAAA champion Wheeling Park Patriots were runners-up as Brooke took home the first ever trophy in the new division. Parkersburg South won third place in the big school division.

The four winning Junior OVAC squads also had an opportunity to take to the new hardwood and perform during the competition.

Small middle school winner was Tyler Middle School, medium middle school winner was Union Local, large middle school winner was Triadelphia Middle School, and junior varsity winner was Wheeling Park JV.

Palmer can be reached at mpalmer@timesleaderonline.com.

Healthy Vocals



T-L Photo/MIKE PALMER

UNABLE TO compete in the competition due to injury, the leg brace did not hamper Linsly squad member Cecelia Favada as she sang the National Anthem prior to the start of the 21st Annual OVAC Cheering Championships Saturday at WesBanco Arena. To view more OVAC cheerleading images see cu.timesleaderonline.com.

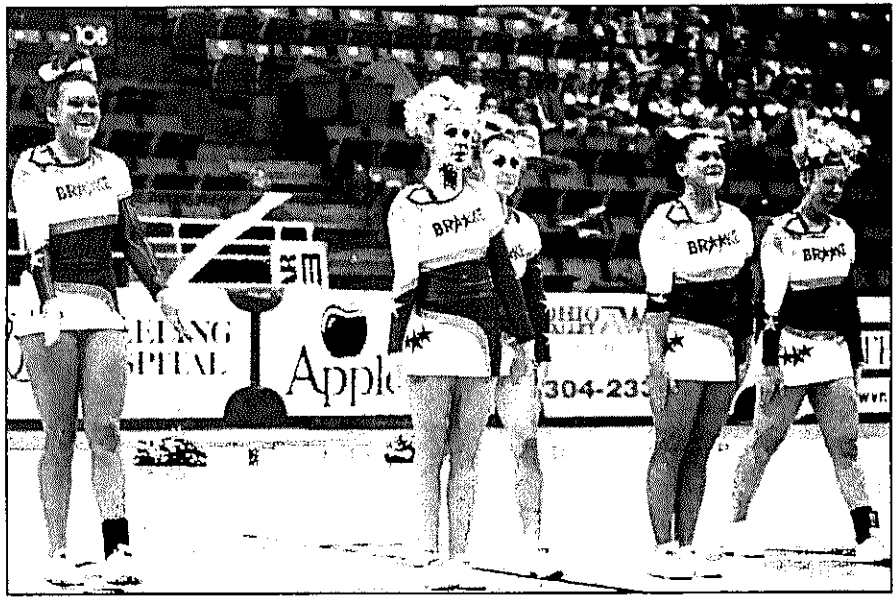


Photo by Mike Palmer

The Brooke Bruins perform their OVAC Class 5-A winning performance Saturday at WesBanco Arena.

Donahue, Linsly, Tyler Consolidated, St. C, Brooke Win Cheer Titles

By MIKE PALMER
For The News-Register

WHEELING — The 21st Annual OVAC Cheering Championships were held Saturday at WesBanco Arena, and as promised, the new fifth division added some drama to the competition.

In the morning session, Bishop Donahue won the 1A crown; Linsly won the 2A title; and the 3A trophy went to Tyler Consolidated.

After the break, St. Clairsville overcame some performance errors to claim its fifth championship in a row in 4A, and in 5A, it was Brooke reclaiming the title after watching runner-up Wheeling Park take it home the past three years.

In 1A, the story was St. John Central's squad missing the title by a 0.05 margin. The Irish fielded just five cheerleaders compared to a dozen for the Bishops.

"I was very happy with our performance," St. John coach Mallory Cooper said. "I do not think the decision was because of our squad size. I think it had to do more with crowd participation and a lot of tumbling from the other squad."

The 2A field may have been the toughest with five quality squads competing. Steubenville Catholic, Shady-side, Toronto and Wheeling Central all gave performances, which from crowd and squad reaction, could have been worthy of the title. In the final standings, it was less than 50 points separating the Cadets in the top spot from the Tigers in fifth place.

Toronto's routine was a crowd pleaser, but last year's single 1A champions rated fourth with the judges.

The Crusaders finished in third place with Wheeling Central garnering runner-up.

In the 3A division, Tyler Consolidated was a surprise winner as predictions had Martins Ferry and Magnolia vying for the title.

Martins Ferry coach Cathy Reuther said her squad was disappointed, but added that it had executed the routine better and the OVAC performance was not its best stuff.

The 4A competition got under way and once again, no squad was confident in its finish. Union Local and Buckeye Local both had excellent crowd reviews, and the defending champion Red Devils had a few miscues.

"We had a dropped pom and a shoe came off, and we lost 20 points in deductions, so we were really afraid that we were not going to get it this year," St. Clairsville coach Shawn

Tomlan said. "We had ourselves prepared for a finish other than first place. It was tough competition. We knew Weir was good. Buckeye Local had performed well at the Buckeye 8. It was nerve-wracking."

When it was finally announced that the Red Devils had won their fifth straight trophy, the cheerleaders celebrated on the floor as loud boos arose from the crowd of rival fans in the bleachers.

"I have been here before," Tomlan said. "It was 11 or 12 years ago and we knew it was going to be tough coming back. It is always tough coming back as the defending champions."

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Cheerleading CHAMPIONSHIP

Saturday, Feb. 4
at WesBanco Arena

Swimming & Diving



CHAMPIONSHIP

January 27-28 at
Steubenville High School

OVAC CORPORATE PARTNERS:



Irish Cheer



T-L Photo/MIKE PALMER

THE ST. JOHN Central Fighting Irish cheerleaders took second place in the 21st Annual OVAC Cheering Championships Class A division Saturday as senior Lacey Dobrovich hams it up for the judges during the competition. To view more OVAC cheerleading images see cu.timesleaderonline.com.