



Photo by Cody Tomer

Wheeling Park cheerleaders perform their championship routine during OVAC Cheering Championships at WesBanco Arena.

Cheer Squad Wins Fifth Straight; BD Champs Again; Magnolia Nabs First

By CODY TOMER
Staff Writer

WHEELING — Four winning traditions continued Saturday at the OVAC Cheering Championships at WesBanco Arena, while one underdog picked up its first OVAC title in school history.

Wheeling Park garnered its fifth consecutive 5-A championship trophy and its eighth OVAC title in the last nine years, while Bishop Donahue won its sixth 1-A championship in a row in the Bishops final year of the program.

St. Clairsville also continued its winning ways by notching a tenth consecutive 4-A championship, while Toronto repeated in 2-A.

The surprise of the day came early on when Magnolia collected its first OVAC championship in school history, knocking off the defending three-time champion Linsly by a narrow 1.15 points.

"I don't think there are any words to describe the elation that we felt now that we won," Magnolia coach Jacqueline Clegg said. "We have never won an OVAC cheering championship in school

history before and it means the world to the girls and to us.

"It was a little scary going in when you know you are the first team to go but we just told the girls to go out and do what they know and just raise the bar and that is exactly what they did."

Magnolia assistant coach Marcie Cline was very thankful to have had the opportunity to witness history with such an amazing group of talented athletes.

"We are so thrilled for them," she said. "It is all about them. They are a great group of kids and we already won before they even got on the court because they are such a great group."

Wheeling Park's focused and explosive group of Patriots used a strong tumbling routine to secure its fifth 5-A title in a row.

"Its exhausting out there," Park coach Shawna Shepherd said. "That first 1:15 is probably the hardest tumbling you will see in the state. It is non-stop and it is gruelling on their bodies.

Please see **Cheer**, Page C3

CHEER

Continued from page C1

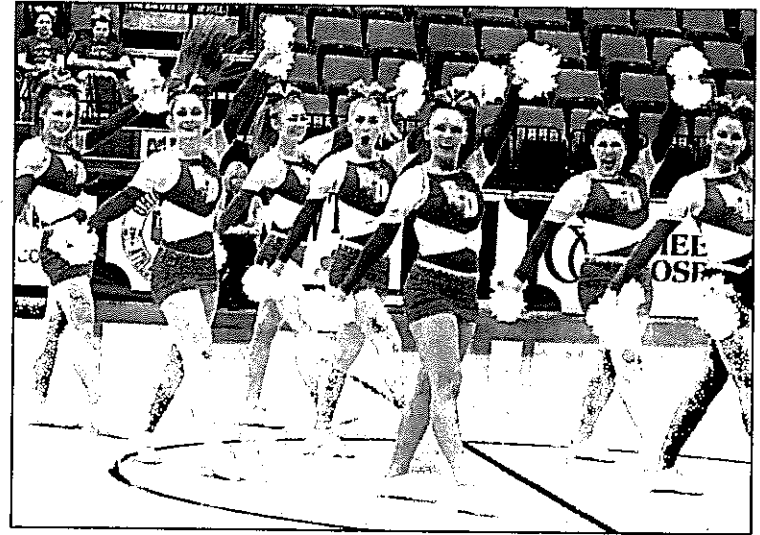
"It's a great team. We only have one senior so we are expecting good things for next year too but I put a lot of pressure on them and they handle it well and practice hard. They do what they need to in and out of the gym and I am very pleased."

Park's lone senior, Abby Hudrlik, has been a part of four OVAC championships and has helped deliver victories in all four appearances.

"It has definitely been interesting," Hudrlik said. "It has been a hard four years but it is very rewarding and I am so thankful to come back this year and win."

Another team that has been a part of the winning traditions of the OVAC cheering competition is Bishop Donahue, which has won six straight years. Perhaps this is the most important of those six years for the Bishops, who are closing their doors at the end of the school year.

"The last couple of weeks have been very emotional for the girls and for myself," Bishops' coach Dana Mele said. "Going out with the season that we have had is a great accomplishment. This cham-



Photos by Cody Tomer

Magnolla, left, and Bishop Donahue perform their championship-winning routines during the OVAC Cheering Championships.

ampionship means a great deal for these girls.

"The talent we have for tumbling for a single A school, along with our jumps can sometimes set you aside from other schools. Everybody works just as hard as the others. However, the tumbling we have really steps it up a little bit."

The most outstanding accomplishment of the afternoon might have come from the Red Devils of

St. Clairsville, who claimed their 10th OVAC title in a row.

"The pressure is on each year," St. Clairsville coach Shawn Tomlan said. "Nobody wants to be the first senior class to lose but they just know what its like to win so they work really hard."

"We have had a lot of injuries this year so we were keeping our fingers crossed to get through the routine and they pulled it off."

The Red Devils did not miss a

beat and put on a flawless performance.

"We work hard on cleaning our routine," Tomlan said. "That is what St. Clairsville is known for. We are not always the strongest at tumbling but we always have a clean routine."

Toronto is putting together a very solid resume, claiming back-to-back 2-A titles, and three of the last five.

"It is all up to them," Toronto

coach Jenna Rampello said. "They come into the gym every single day and work for hours at a time. They leave it all on the floor and they just want it so much that they will do anything to get it."

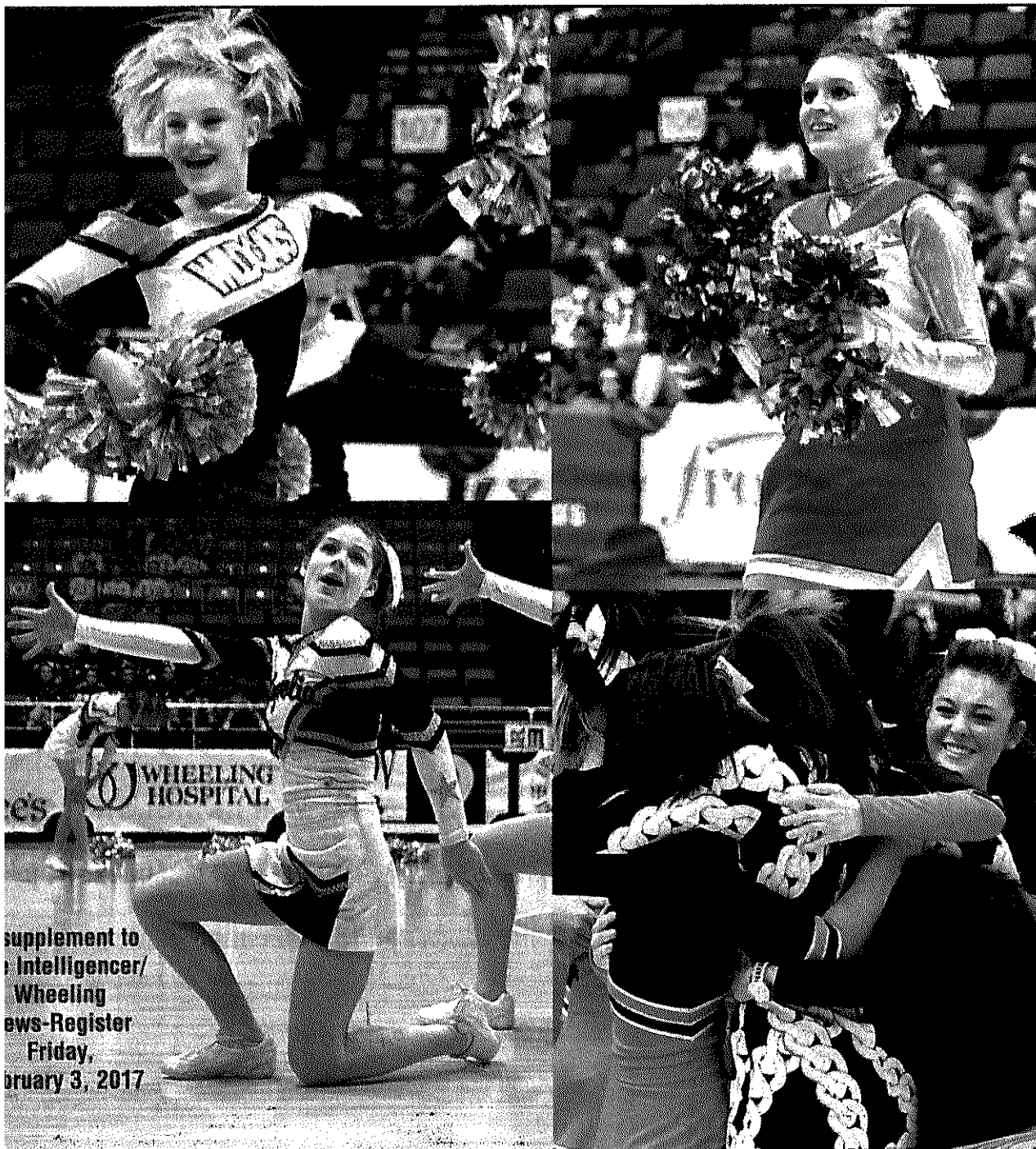
"We have six seniors and are just trying to keep the tradition going. We just want to keep winning more banners. Our underclassmen are awesome and they have so much heart and dedication. Our future is bright at Toronto."

DI7 OVAC

CHEERLEADING

Saturday, February 4, 2017
WesBanco Arena

CHAMPIONSHIPS



Supplement to
The Wheeling
News-Register
Friday,
February 3, 2017

2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHI

Tucks, turns, twists and triumphant tears. All will be on display Saturday during the annual Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Cheerleading Championships at WesBanco Arena.

Hundreds of hours of practice will be on display during the event, as 24 teams of young ladies perform their routines for the judges. All of last year's champions — Bishop Donahue, Class 1A; Toronto, Class 2A; The Linsly School, Class 3A; St. Clairsville, Class 4A; and Wheeling Park, Class 5A, return to defend their crowns.

The event starts at 9 a.m., and also will feature special performances by several schools. At 9:05 a.m., Wheeling Park's junior varsity will start the day with a special performance. At 11:25 a.m., Wheeling Middle School will perform following the Class 5A competition, and at 12:40 p.m. Triadelphia Middle School will perform prior to the Class 1A start.

Finally, at 2:15 p.m., St. Clairsville Middle School will perform just prior to the event's end with the awarding of champions in the Class 1A and 5A divisions.

2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Saturday, Feb. 4, 2017
WesBanco Arena

24 teams competing
for crowns in five divisions

9:10 a.m.: 3A Competition
10:20 a.m.: 2A Competition
11:10 a.m.: 5A Competition
11:45 a.m.: Awards, 3A, 2A, 5A
12:45 p.m.: 1A Competition
1:45 p.m.: 4A Competition
2:25 p.m.: Awards, 1A, 5A

Barnesville	p. 3	Indian Creek	p. 13	Shadyside	p.
Bellaire	p. 4	John Marshall	p. 11	Shenandoah	p.
Bishop Donahue	p. 14	Linsly	p. 5	Steubenville	p.
Bridgeport	p. 7	Magnolia	p. 3	Toronto	p.
Cameron	p. 9	Martins Ferry	p. 6	Union Local	p.
Central Catholic	p. 10	Oak Glen	p. 19	Weir	p.
Crestview	p. 6	Paden City	p. 15	Weirton Madonna	p.
Harrison Central	p. 17	St. Clairsville	p. 18	Wheeling Park	p.

Stories compiled by Cody Tomer, Sports Writer

2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Magnolia Blue Eagles Head coach: Jacquie Clegg

Magnolia head coach Jacquie Clegg will be in her first year with the program and is assisted by veteran Marcie Cline. Cline has been a proud Blue Eagle for 10 years and together, the Magnolia team is in good hands.

Clegg has been coaching cheerleading for the last six years in Virginia so she has plenty of experience and she proved that by coaching the Blue Eagles to a third-place finish in the regionals this year.

"I was definitely excited to go from last year to a third-place finish this year," Clegg said. "It just really made me proud with the progress they have made since last year. We have a wonderful group of kids and I just can't say enough about them."

Choreographer Joey Takacs has also been heavily involved with the progress the Blue Eagles have made in the last year and will have them prepared for the competition on Feb. 4 at WesBanco Arena.

"We want a routine with energy and excitement that will engage the crowd and judges," Clegg said. "We are a determined group. We know we are up against



good schools but our kids will do their homework and they have been practicing with energy.

"We have a tight knit group of girls who are motivated. They will stay and continue to work after practice, they are goal-oriented and they even act like a team when they aren't cheering. When somebody gets down, they are always there to bring them back up. They are very skilled athletes who work extremely hard."

Making up the Blue Eagles competition club are seniors Kristen Massey, Alayna Cline, Bailey Estep, Camryn Clegg, Tylar Seckman and Jordan Delaney; juniors Via

Anderson, McKenzie Ash and Kay Stewart; sophomore Jaidan Headley; and freshmen Paige Brill, Kayna Anderson, Liza Clegg, Zoey Jenkins, Kort Henderson and Haley Feldmeier.

Magnolia has never won OVACs and Clegg, Cline and her squad are excited for the opportunity to change the history of Magnolia cheering.

"We have never won the OVAC championship before," Clegg said. "But we do have the same goal to change that. We have 17 amazing kids on this team and I like having 17 kids of my own and they each bring something special to the table

Barnesville Shamrocks Head coach: Kelsey Leach

For the first time in a long time, the Barnesville Shamrocks' cheering team finished third at the OVAC Championship last year and will be looking to build on that performance this year.

Headed by first-year coach Kelsey Leach, the Shamrocks will attempt to place first with a very exciting routine.

"We have a very fun, action packed routine this year," Leach said.

"We have more tumbling than we had in the past, so we are excited to add a new element to the routine."

Choreographers for Barnesville are Kelsey Leach and Ayla Dombroski, while Leach has no assistant coaches on the

team. "I have been the coach for all three years this season," Leach said.

Leach and Dombroski are also coaches for football, basketball and OVAC. Leach and Ayla Dombroski are our choreographers and they have been a pleasure to work with. They bring a competitive spirit into practice and are always pushing the girls to achieve their



Making up the Barnesville competition team for the OVAC Championship are seniors Sydney Baum, Brianna Leach, Jenna Grear and Ashley Brown; juniors Cara Singleton, Hannah Burkhart, Kiley Ciroli and Morgan Burghy; and the lone sophomore Heaven Farnsworth, with no fresh-

men on the roster.

"All of the girls are very passionate about this sport," Leach said.

"They have pushed themselves during practice and have given me their all, year round. I am very proud of them and no matter what the results are, they are No. 1 in my book."

2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Bellaire Big Reds

Head coach: Ann Arno

Two seasons ago, the Big Reds finished third in the OVAC Cheering Championships and last year, they earned runner-up honors in the 3-A division.

Perhaps Bellaire will continue to improve its positioning at the end and go to the No. 1 spot on Feb. 4.

The Big Reds are led into competition by second-year head coach Ann Arno, who has also been the assistant coach for the Bellaire cross country and track teams for the last six years.

Arno's 12-girl squad is made up of five seniors and seven juniors. The seniors include Makenna Berka, Ashlie Conner, Megan McCarthy, Sailor Myers and Rylie Purteman, while the juniors consist of Alexis Bell, Hannah 'Aquila, Emily Doty, Alexandria Sweet, Lexi Thomas, Dawnell Ticarich and Lilliana Yocum.

"This team is a very close-knit group who supports and fosters each other's growth without hesitation," Arno said. "They are such a very coachable group of athletes who work hard and put in the necessary time to reach their potential



and I am very proud of their ability to work together from the weight room to the gym floor to achieve their goals."

Choreographer Joey Takacs has put together a routine for the Big Reds that they hope will get the crowd excited and

earn them an OVAC title.

"Joey has given us a fun, energetic routine that allows the girls to show their individual talents," Arno said. "I am very excited to see what they can do with this routine."

Shenandoah Zeps

Head coach: April Giesey

Not only will the Shenandoah Zeps be taking part in the OVAC Cheering Championship at WesBanco Arena on Feb. 4, but they will also be making the trip to the International Competition at Disney in March, after winning a bid.

With such an important trip ahead for the Zeps, that changes their outlook a little bit for the OVAC championships.

"Our goal for the OVAC competition is to stay healthy," Zeps coach April Giesey said. "That way we can compete at the International Competition at Disney in March."

Shenandoah has not been a regular participant in the OVAC contest over the last few years. In fact, last year was the first time Shenandoah has taken part in the OVACs in several years.

Giesey is in her second year as the Shenandoah head coach, after spending the two years prior as the junior high coach.

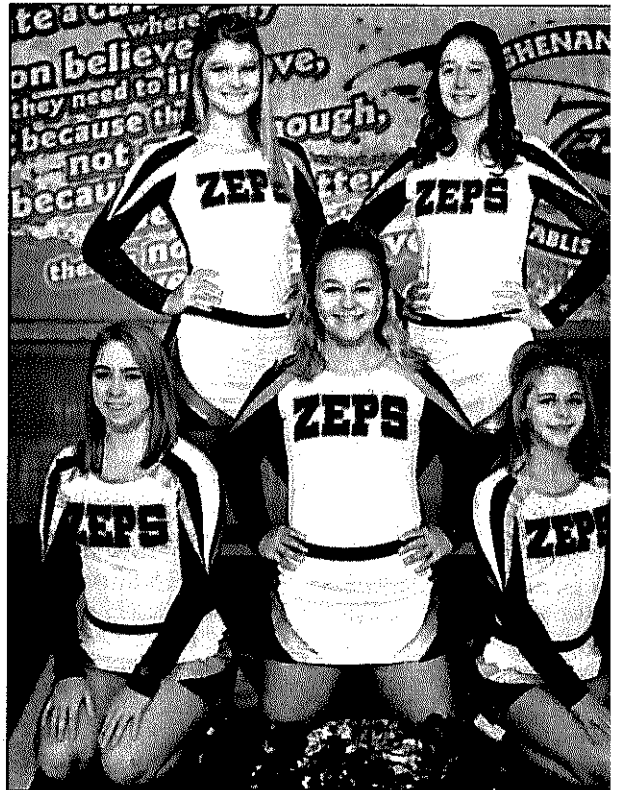
Giesey's assistant is Jennifer Frye.

Shenandoah's choreographer is Erika McDaniel of the Ohio Valley All Stars in Parkersburg, W.Va.

McDaniel has put together a routine that has the Zeps and their coaching staff excited and working around the clock to prepare for.

"Our OVAC routine has a nice cheer and dance segment," Giesey said. "These girls have been working extremely hard, and they never quit."

The Shenandoah OVAC cheering competition squad consists of Erica Cantwell, Cheyenne Giesey, Savannah Giesey, Allison Dixon and Kaileigh Ramage.



2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Linsly Cadets Head coach: Kylie Harris

Linsly has won three consecutive OVAC titles and are aiming for a fourth with new head coach Kylie Harris at the helm.

In her first year taking over the program that is on a very successful run, there must be a pressure that comes with the job.

"There is always pressure," Harris said. "But I want to see that it doesn't matter to the coach is because they are good enough to win their own, no matter what." The belief that Harris has in her team is even more admirable because of the fact Cadets are a much younger team than they were a season ago.

"This is a totally different team," Harris said. "We are a young team but they have definitely shown that it doesn't matter."

Last year's coach, Megan Mosman, is helping out with

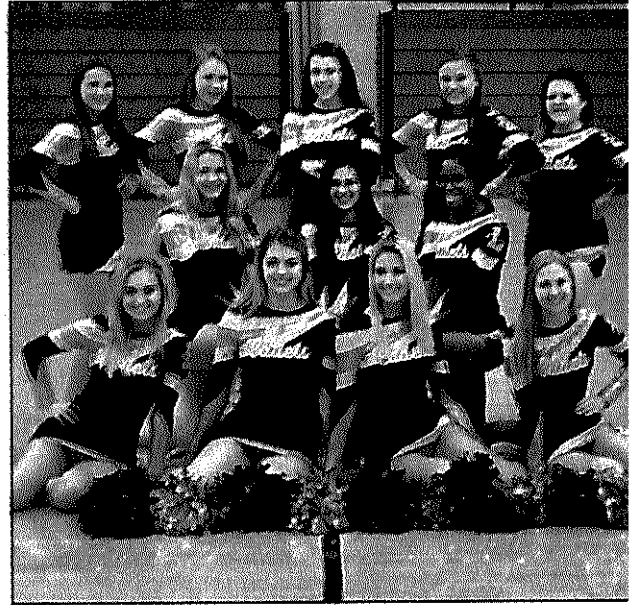
the team's squad, along with photographer Joey Takacs, who has put together the OVAC routine.

"Our routine has a lot of personality," Harris said. "The girls get to show that they are sassy and they have a lot of fun with it."

The OVAC has changed its music rules this year, so that there is no copyrighted songs allowed during the routines, so each team must provide its own sound.

"We got to make our own music this year," Harris said. "We have thrown in different things in the music to make it our own. You won't hear anything else like it."

There are no seniors on this year's roster. The 14-girl competition squad consists of juniors Alexis Storch, Gabby Harden, Savannah White, Shay Theaker and Ugo Onwuka; sophomores Maria Mosman, Gabby Grant and



Lizzie Stern; and freshmen Isabel Falbo, Ally Carson, Bristol Bertram, Lindsay Lenz, Jazzlyn Gummer and Abby Berhalter.

The Linsly cheerleaders are talented but it might be their personality that makes them

such a unique group of girls. "Linsly is known to not be a full tumbling squad," Harris said.

"But the girls are so entertaining that they show they don't need to be able to do 10 tucks in a row to win

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2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Crestview Rebels

Head coach:

Amie Cope

Welcome to the OVAC Crestview High school!

The Rebels of Crestview joined the OVAC in December and were invited to participate in the competition and are now marking on their first ever cheering competition in school history.

"We are excited to take part in this competition," Crestview coach Amie Cope said. "We have been very thankful for all of the encouragement from the tournament director in this new endeavor for our school." Cope was named the high school coach for Crestview during basketball season and also the middle school cheer coach for volleyball and basketball.

"I have coached our youth program for almost four years," Cope said. "I was an assistant this past football season, and I am looking forward to moving into the head coaching role next football season as well."

Cope is coaching the Rebels without assistant coaches or choreographers, the routine was put together by the



Rebels themselves.

"The team members took it upon themselves to make up our routine," Cope said. "Since this is our school's first competition, we are simply hoping to put together a respectable routine. Our routine consists of a cheer, chant and dance. We only have one tumbler on our team, so we hope to highlight our dancing."

The Crestview cheer team includes Mckalie Stickney, Kayla Butts, Elizabeth Farmer, Madison Dallies, Abigail Whaley,

Sara Kauffman, Leigha Anders, Sheridan Ball, Lily Marr, Allison Bell and Alexa Bregar.

"We are anxious to see the other schools compete and learn how we need to grow a team," Cope said.

"The girls have taken a great deal of pride in coming up with and practicing their routine in the past several weeks. We are looking forward to meeting the other schools in the OVAC and forging new relationships."

Martins Ferry

Purple Riders

Head coach:

Breanna Beck

There are two first-year coaches at the school in Martins Ferry.

Head coach Breanna Beck, along with assistant coach Lisa Kapiskosky, might be competing in their first 3-A OVAC championship, but they are ready to take the challenge with a motivated squad.

"We consider ourselves fortunate to have such a great group of girls to work with in this first year," Beck said.

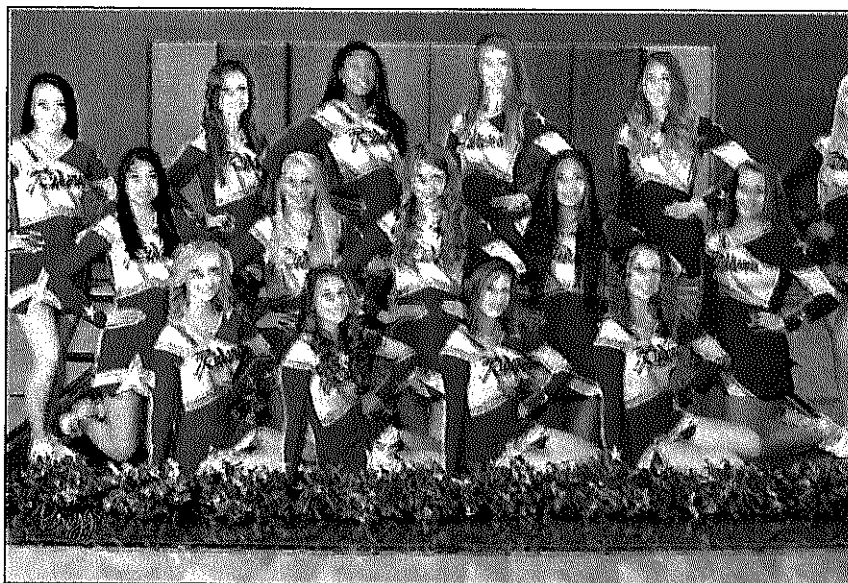
"The girls have been working really hard this year and they are determined to take the No. 1 spot. The determination and will to win is what will make the girls stand out this year."

The Purple Riders' choreographers are Shannon Dombroski and Ayla Stewart.

"Shannon and Ayla have designed a pace routine that highlights the cheerleaders' skills and talent," Beck said.

"The girls are all individually talented, hard working and with the combination of the two, we can maximize our team's potential."

Competing this year for the Purple Riders' 14-girl squad are seniors Megan



Edwards, Kaitlen Hood, Samaira Jones, Zoe Marling and Carly McKeegan; juniors Sami Eimer and Rebecca Gasaway; sophomores Bailey Barries, Alyssa Brady and Erica Doyle; and freshmen Kayana Jones, Kara Kapiskosky, Ravyn Richardson and Jessica Roberts.

As the Purple Riders take center stage at the WesBanco Arena on Feb. 4, all of the hard

work they have put in will be showcased, especially the work of the five seniors, Beck couldn't be happier with how the team has prepared for this moment in their careers.

"I am very proud of how hard this team has been working," Beck said.

"I greatly appreciate all of the efforts."

2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Bridgeport Bulldogs

Head coach:

Mallory Cooper

Bridgeport head coach Mallory Cooper and assistant coach Chelsey Strain are excited about what the Bulldogs will be bringing to the table for the 2017 OVAC Spring Championships at Wheeling's Sabanco Arena.

"Our routine this year is energetic and catching," Strain said. "It's filled with difficulty and originality."

"It's not your typical 'Bridgeport' time."

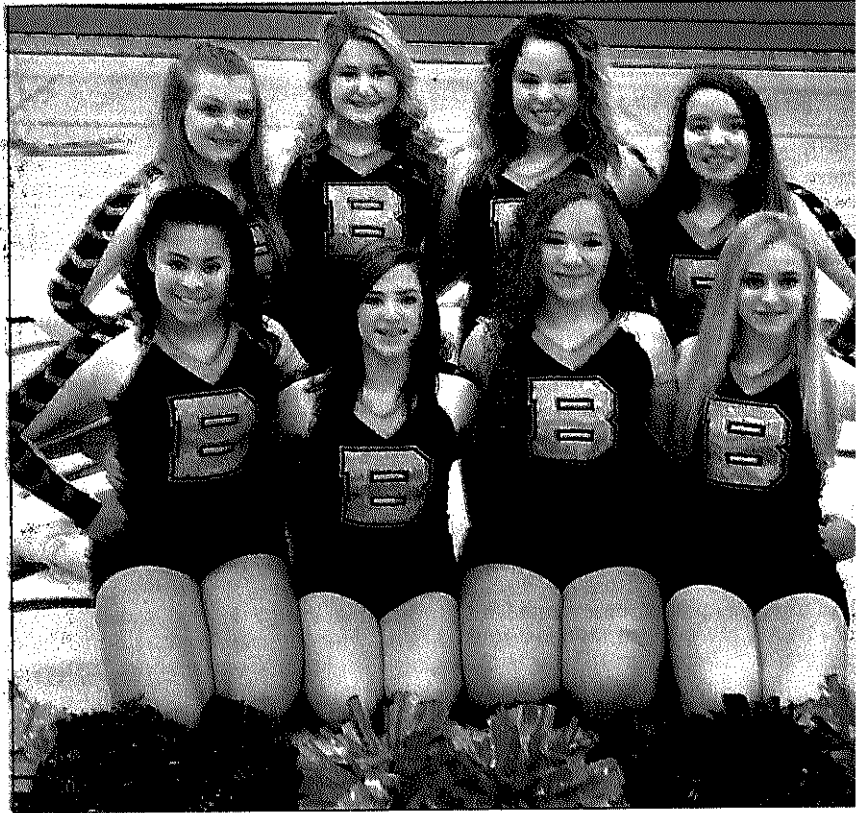
Strain is a veteran of guiding athletes through the rigors of OVAC competition.

"I coached St. John for two years," she said. "Both years, they placed second in OVACs. This is my second year at Bridgeport."

The Bulldogs have seven girls competing with two alternates.

Bridgeport's squad consists of senior mine Rogers, juniors Vetra Foster, Bryjane Williams, Mackenzie Hammer and Kayla Kuri, and freshmen Kira Roman and Danielle Bradac.

Sophomore Ayana Green and freshman Katie McConn are the alternates.





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2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Shadyside Tigers

Head coach:

Melanie Haswell

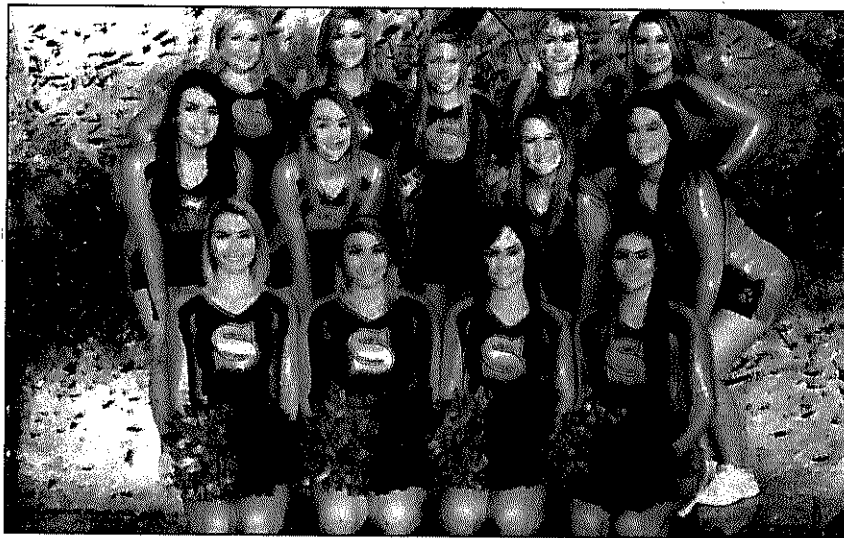
The Shadyside Tigers are coming off a superb OVAC competition last season as the runner-ups of the AA division and their head coach Melanie Haswell, who has coached cheering for 28 years, is excited to compete this year with a new routine on Feb. 4 at the Banco Arena in front of what would be a packed house.

Our cheerleaders have worked very hard this season in hopes of a positive outcome in the upcoming OVAC competition," Haswell said. "We feel that this OVAC routine has the difficulty and teamwork to be, once again, a competitive routine."

The Tigers' routine is choreographed by Megan Caruso.

Shadyside has placed in a number of places for A Cure events in the last four years, while advancing to the state championships in the last two seasons where they have placed in the top four 11 years.

This is a great bunch of girls," Haswell said. "They are hard working, dedicated and resilient. They have never



given up and they always strive to be the best."

Making up the 13-girl squad for the OVAC championships are seniors Alexa Coggins, Pami Contraguero, Lyndsey Howell and Sidney Wolgemuth; no juniors are on the this year's team; sophomores Tori Bumba, Desirae Harris, Victoria Haswell and Tara Palmer; and freshmen Christa Beery, Abbie Bommer, Olivia Carpenter, Bailey

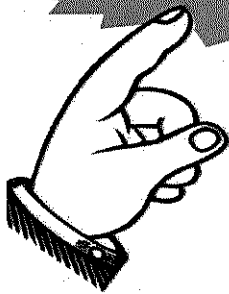
Hughes and Hallie Knollinger.

"It is a long season," Haswell said. "They start in June and continue through March. You have to be fully dedicated and truly love cheering and I would like to thank my 13 girls for making this such a memorable, relaxing and entertaining season."

"I would also like to wish my freshmen seniors the best of luck in their future after graduation."

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2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cameron Dragons Head coach: Bethany Scott

Cameron cheerleading coach Bethany Scott has been an assistant head coach for years and is now in her second year as a member of the Dragons. She has two volunteer coaches who are both very close to

her mother, Missy Ross, and her sister, Maddie Ross, are both along for the ride with Scott and she couldn't be expected to have them.

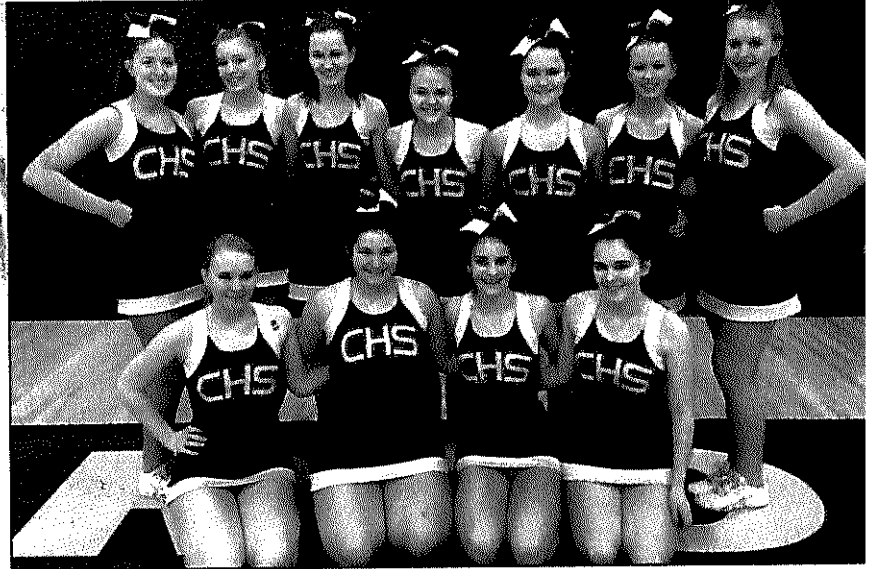
Maddie and Missy both did the dance. Scott said. "They run the Ariettes dance studio on 88, while Morgan Miller is the main assistant and she did the cheer. It's a team effort for all of us."

One of the Cameron coaches are choreographers, so the routine for the OVAC championship should be put together very

fast with a tempo with a lot of tumbling," Scott said. "There are a lot of short, small routines instead of one long big one."

Four years ago, the Dragons placed fourth in the OVAC competition for their best place in school history.

"We have a pretty new squad this



year," Scott said.

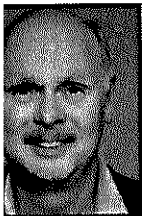
"We have a lot of new girls and had a lot of girls that played basketball and decided not to come out this year. We are a new squad going to the OVACs and if we can get through a clean routine, then I'll be pretty happy."

The Dragons are led by captain Ashley Ruza and co-captain Caitlin McCurdy,

while Layne Neely, Mariah Blalock, Breanna Pekula, Carson Howard, Taylor Beresford, Breana Boggs, Kenzie Ross, Sarah Norris and Paige Butler round out the squad.

"It is fun like always," Scott said.

"I have a good time with all of my girls. They are a fun group of girls and we have fun but they also work really hard."



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Club sports include Hockey, Boys' Lacrosse and Girls' Lacrosse.

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consecutive State
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2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Central Catholic Maroon Knights Head coach: Jessica Becker

Wheeling Central has been very successful in its cheering program, especially of late.

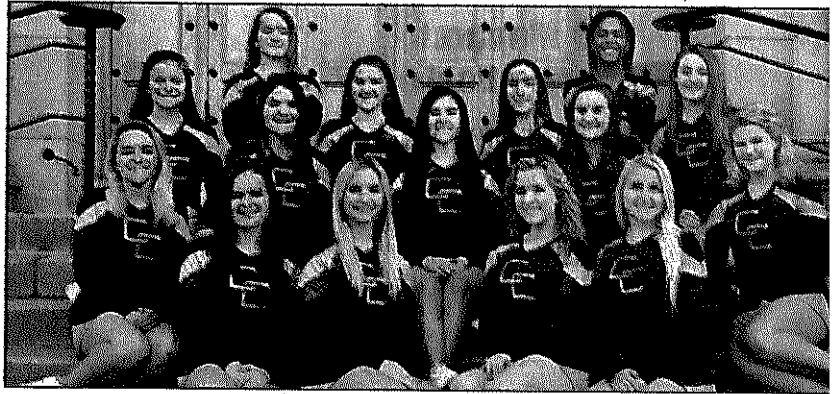
The Maroon Knights have won 16 OVAC cheering championships in their school's history and are coming off of a 2016 season in which they garnered state runner-up honors after claiming the region 1-A title and claiming first place at the George Washington High School cheer competition.

Leading the Knights to such a successful run has been head coach Jessica Becker, who is in her 13th season as a head coach in the OVAC and her 11th at the helm of Wheeling Central.

Becker was named the WVSSAC Cheer Coach of the Year in 2014 and with the help of assistant coach Corey Pietranton, the Knights are eyeing a 17th OVAC championship.

Pietranton is in her 17th year at Wheeling Central.

"We were blessed with much success in 2016," Becker said. "We are looking for-



ward to ending our competition season strong at WesBanco Arena on Feb. 4."

A 13-girl squad will have 11 competitors in the OVAC competition with senior captains Cassidy Sansone and Bailey Wear paving the way for the Knights.

Other seniors who will embark on an OVAC title are Mattie Hayes and Hannah Mozingo, with lone junior Carly Pajak, and the only sophomore being Kaylee Miller, while a strong freshman class of seven, includes Lane Bibey, Maddie Dobson, Meliyah Gayton, Aubrey Gossett, Elizabeth Howard, Leah Weimer and Jordan Caldwell, who is an alternate.

"This year's team is a very special

group of girls," Becker said. "They are led by four incredible seniors. It has been a pleasure to watch them take our underclassmen under their wing and them the 'Wheeling Central Way.'

"The team has really bonded from the start and I truly believe that has been the root of our success this season."

The Maroon Knights' routine has been choreographed by Josh Wolfe, who has put together an exciting dance.

"Wheeling Central's 2017 OVAC routine is jam packed with excitement," Becker said. "Audiences will be wowed by the synchronized tumbling, energetic and fast-paced dance."

Toronto Red Knights Head coach: Jenna Rampello

Not only has Toronto had success at the A level as it comes off an OVAC championship victory a season ago, but it also claimed four titles in the single A dating back to 2008.

First-year head coach Jenna Rampello is a part of that success as she graduated in 2011 from Toronto. In fact, she won an OVAC Championship in all four years that she was in high school.

Her head coach might have had something to do with that.

Joey Takacs, who is now her assistant coach and choreographer, coached Rampello in high school and now the duo back together again.

"I was coached by my assistant, Joey," Rampello said. "You could say that we are a dynamic duo coaching our girls this year."

Takacs is also the choreographer for many other teams taking part in the OVAC championship.

Takacs is brilliant when it comes to putting together routines, and you can bet he has worked his magic for his Red Knights.



"Our routine this year is very eye catching," Rampello said. "We have a lot of different choreography Takacs put into this routine." "Our music is different as well. We went with a different music producer and he made the mix about the team. We are very satisfied and excited to showcase this routine that is very flashy and exciting to watch."

The Toronto roster consists of Madison Sapp, Ashlyn Suppa, Madison Zdinak, Jenna Leasure, Khloey Stock, Kiara

Smith, Hollie Robinson, Johna Meghan Rawson, Hannah Parker, Autumn Saner, Kara Eltringham and Jaz Glenn.

"We tell our girls no matter what happens, as long as you go on that floor give it everything you got and you'll be proud of that floor with no regrets, then that's the only thing we can ask for," the head coach said. "If they go out there and sell that routine like we know they can, then they are already winners to us."

2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

John Marshall Monarchs lead coach: Marcie Robbins

in Marshall, cheering Marcie Robbins is in her season at the school and 8th as the head coach of Monarchs.

Robbins and the Monarchs are lining off a stellar third-place finish at the OVAC Cheerleading Championships in Wheeling, along with a fifth-place finish at regionals.

They were great accomplishments, but the Monarchs are going to achieve even higher for the upcoming OVAC Cheerleading Championships at WesBanco Arena on Saturday, Feb. 4.

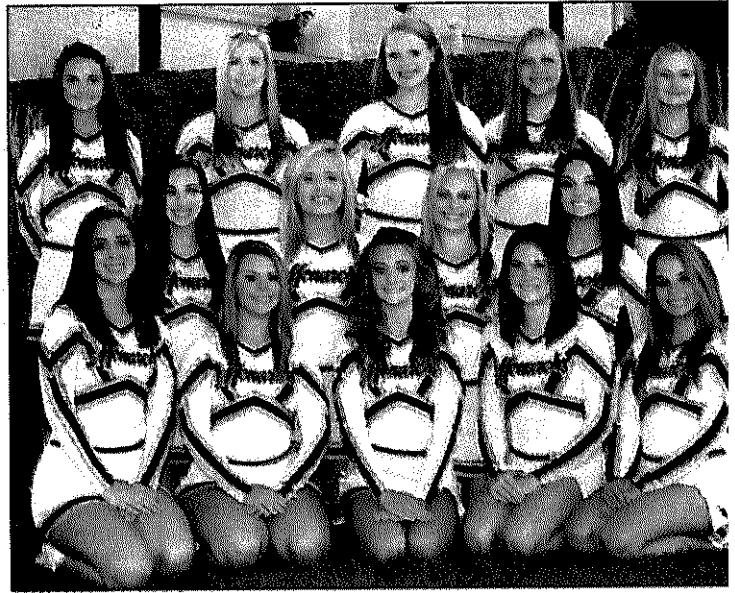
The 14-girl squad consisting of seven seniors, two juniors, one sophomore and six freshmen is up for the challenge, led by captain Abbey Bauer and fellow seniors Alexia Wills and Jourdin Shockey.

Along with juniors Lia Callahan and Aubree Sims; the lone sophomore

Madison Estep; and freshmen Elizabeth Carman, Ashlee Kendzierski, Emilee Kettler, Maggie Klug, Ava Polinski and Makayla Shockey.

"This team is special because of their determination," Robbins said. "They've worked really hard to get ready for OVACs. It has taken a lot of conditioning to help them have the endurance to do this routine and it has definitely paid off."

The Monarchs haven't even needed a choreographer for the past two seasons, as Robbins has put together the routines both years for her squad and she is looking forward to watching her team perform in front of a packed house at WesBanco Arena.



"This year's routine is packed with a lot of tumbling and the dances are really fun to watch," Robbins said. "I've had a lot of fun watching this routine come together and I am very excited to watch these girls show everyone what

they're made of at OVACs." The Monarchs will soon get their chance to prove to everyone that they are even better than they were a season ago. Helping alongside Robbins are assistant coach Kelly Simms and Dee Wills.



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2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Wheeling Park Patriots Head coach: Shawna Shepherd

The Wheeling Park cheering squad has been untouchable in the last four years.

The Patriots have won four OVAC championships in a row, while claiming the W.Va. Class AAA state titles as well.

Creating the winning atmosphere at Wheeling Park has been 12-year head coach Shawna Shepherd, who has clear-made an impact on the program.

"All of my teams have been awesome coaches," Shepherd said. "Especially the three teams that have won state championships."

Just this past December, the Patriots turned home from the state competition as champions and now Shepherd and her squad are focused on bringing a fifth OVAC championship back to the hills of Wheeling Park.

"Our state championship is in December but it is only stunting," the Patriots coach said. "We have a short amount of time to change to the OVAC title, which is a cheering, dancing and stunting format."



"It is a quick turnaround and a lot of people have counted this team out after losing six seniors last year but our freshmen have stepped up and have done everything that we have asked of them. Everyone has also maintained very good G.P.A.s."

The Patriots only have one senior and also have the first boy on the roster in Shepherd's 12 years as the coach.

Braden Cox is the lone boy on the roster, along with Jess Anguis, Alexa Crebs, Natalie Fischer, Morgan Fox, Abby Hudrlik, Alex Knight, Kyla

Leigh, Meghan Murphy, Mike Pasquale, Shayla Raab, Bria Spiga, Abby Skrzypek, Abbie Vernon, Ashley Wiethe and Aubrey Wiethe.


Choreographer Brian Faulkner created a routine that will showcase of the Patriots' talents.

"We are very strong at tumbling that will be showcased," Shepherd said. "We have cute dance sections and the kids are very talented so we push them to their very best. We expect to put on a show and perform the high level stunts we can do."

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Club sports include Hockey, Boys' Lacrosse and Girls' Lacrosse.



2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Indian Creek Redskins Head coach: Gina Giuliani

The last few years have been challenging for Indian Creek cheerleading at the OVAC competition.

They have participated at both the 4-A and 5-A levels, which makes it difficult to list certain opponents.

"We have been up and down," Redskins coach Gina Giuliani said. "We fluctuate between 4-A and 5-A and it is not the same competition."

This year, Indian Creek will be joining the 5-A division, after taking part in the 4-A division last year.

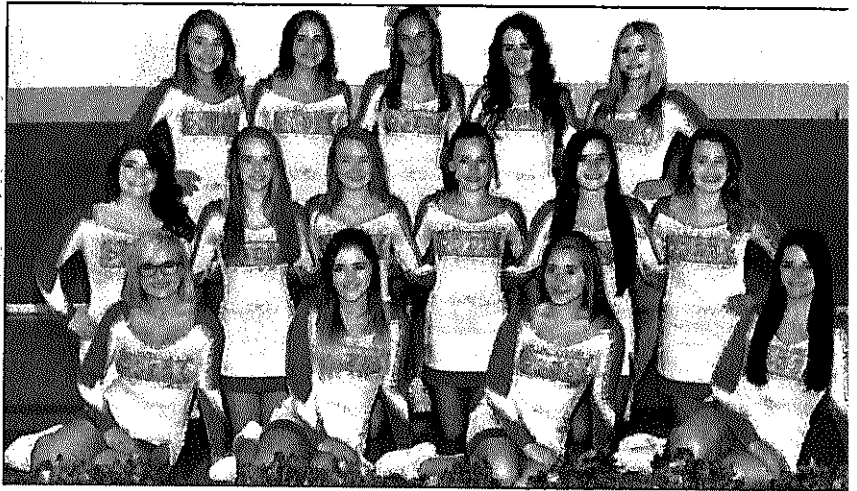
With the competition being so hard to prepare for, Giuliani has a unique mindset going into the OVAC Championship.

"We are very optimistic," Giuliani said. "Our mindset is that we are just competing against ourselves because the competition has been inconsistent. We just need to focus on ourselves."

It's been hard since there are different expectations from Ohio but we will challenge ourselves."

Assisting Giuliani in her fifth year as varsity coach is Lisa Sithen, while Mike Sanders does the choreography for the Redskins.

"Our routine is exciting," Giuliani said.



"It's something new and different than our usual routine."

There is another challenge for the Redskins this year, along with the rest of the OVAC. New music. There are no copyrighted songs allowed, which could make it much more difficult for teams to decide on music.

"It has been a challenge with the music," Giuliani said. "I tried to get it done early since I had enough time so they have been practicing the routine all season."

Taking the floor at OVACs for Indian

Creek are Shayna Davis, Julia Holm, Paige Hiderbrand, Madison Houder, Leeanna Leone, Kelsey Lewis, Martine Rees, Jessica Shimon, Cheyenne Shriver, Tiffany Taylor, Miah Thompson, Savannah Tilton, Adriana Trice, and Christa Young.

"I have been saying this for a couple years now but it is true," Giuliani said. "We have 11 juniors and it is interesting having that many girls in one class."

"They are all great and they show up and work at practice."



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Wheeling News-Register

2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Bishop Donahue Bishops Head coach: Dana Mele

Season ago, Bishop Donahue captured its fifth consecutive OVAC cheer-championship and finished as the state A state runner-up in 2015.

As hard as it would be for the Bishops to lose those accolades, they brought home a Single A state championship to Mechen in 2016 and are looking for a sixth OVAC title in a row.

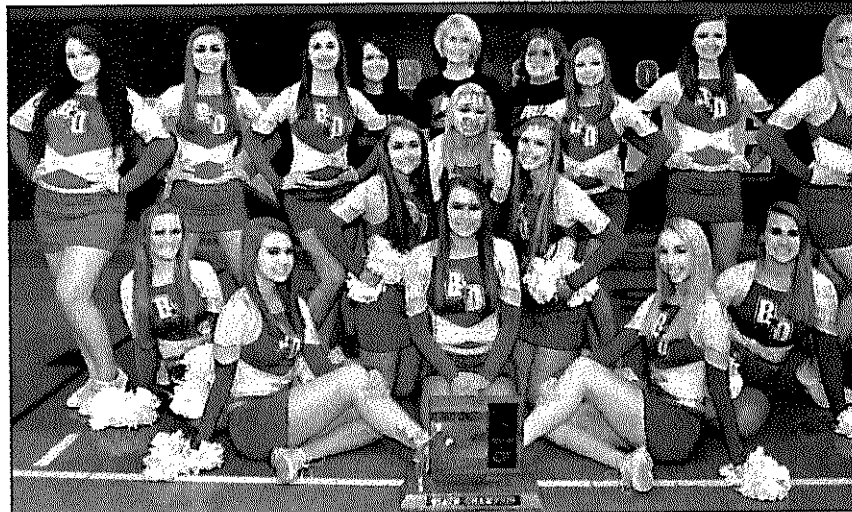
Headed by sixth-year coach Dana Mele, who has been with the program for 13 years, the Bishops have the experience and a family-like bond that could help them that sixth straight title.

"Overall, we have more experience," Mele said.

"They have a taste of getting down to business and they are encouraged and more confident."

"I have known some of these girls since the grade school level and they are a great group of kids. It is a long season they have really gotten along well."

The 13-girl, tight-knit group consists of seniors Josie Bonar, Madyson Kellar, Jennifer Richmond, Elizabeth Smith and Amber Stout; juniors Lauren Bonar, Coline Brannan, Melissa O'Kelley



and Madison Wiedebusch; sophomores Danielle Ferrera and Naila Thomsen; and freshmen Sadie Neuman and Christine Smith.

"Our seniors want to win their fourth OVAC title in their careers," Mele said.

"Since practice started in August until now, we have put more on the court and we want to bring our 'A' game. They are a hard-working bunch of girls and I am very fortunate for the talent we have on

the team and we never take anything for granted."

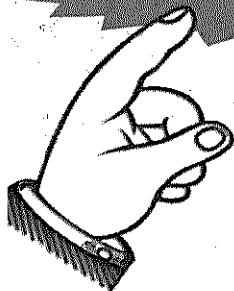
Assistant coaches for Mele are Katrina Bonar and Bethani Tweedell while Joey Takacs handles the choreography.

"This year's routine is packed with multiple tumbling passes and very creative and energetic pom dance," Mele said.

"I always tell the girls one more time and leave it all out on the floor."

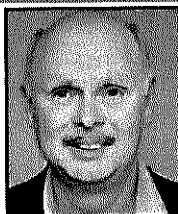
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2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Paden City Wildcats Head coach: Hannah Shreve

In the case of the Paden City cheering squad entering the OVAC Cheering Championships, it may not be the size of the team, but the heart of the team.

The Wildcats only have eight girls, with more siblings on the team than seniors.

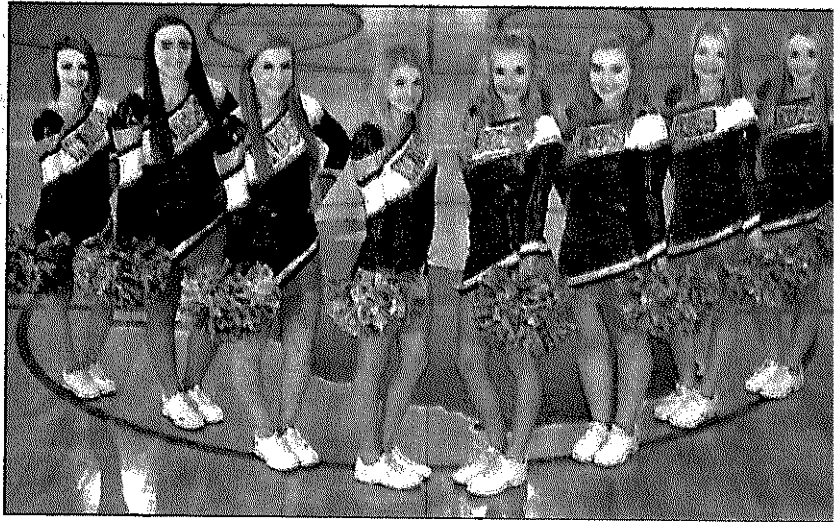
The only senior on this year's team is Allie Arnett, while juniors include Malayna Heasley, Jenna Arnett, Kacie Artwig, Kameron McClain and Malayna Price; the lone sophomore is Paige Leonard; and the lone freshman is Savannah Price, with Caitlin Stewart serving as an alternate.

"Our OVAC squad is small this year," Paden City coach Hannah Shreve said.

The squad includes two sets of sisters (Kallie and Jenna Arnett; and Malayna and Savannah Price), which makes it very interesting at practice sometimes.

The talented junior class provides the experience for Paden City with five girls that could even prove to be something to look forward to for next year as well.

Kim Hizer serves as the assistant



coach for Paden City.

In every cheerleading club, there is usually a close friendship among teammates. That is especially true with a team as small as the Wildcats.

"Coach Hizer and I are so lucky to have such a great group of young ladies to coach," Shreve said. "The girls are all very close in friendship, even outside of cheerleading activities and they support

each other in everything."

The Wildcats have been putting in time in practice and behind the scenes that they can impress at WesB Arena.

"They have been working very hard to improve their tumbling skills this year," Shreve said.

"I am excited to see how they compete."

Weirton Madonna

Head coach: Jennifer Barnabei

It has been a positive year for Madonna cheerleading and head coach Jennifer Barnabei, who is in her second year at the program.

"Our cheerleading program has had a fantastic year," Barnabei said. "At region in the fall, our competition squad had a very positive experience."

There are 13 girls on the OVAC competition squad but more than 20 cheerleaders getting the crowd hyped at the basketball games and they are hoping to get the crowd on its feet on Feb. 4 at the Banco Arena for the OVAC cheering competition.

"We are proud that our program continues to grow," Barnabei said. "The girls are all looking forward to performing their OVACs competition routine in a few short weeks."

Choreographer Joey Takacs has been working hard to create a routine that best the Blue Dons and Barnabei couldn't be happier with how it has turned out.

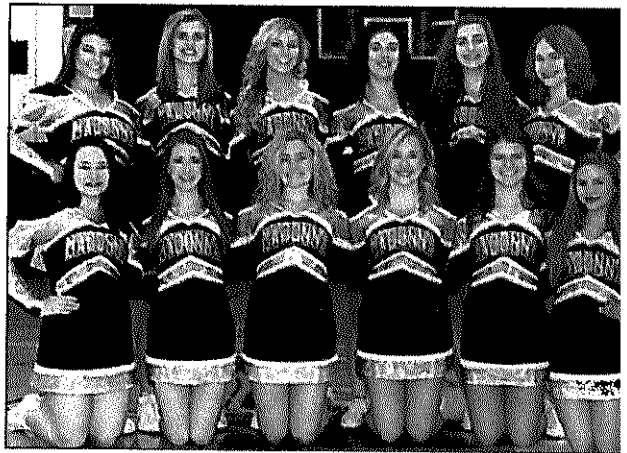
"Our routine is upbeat and energetic," Barnabei coach said.

The choreography is both challenging and fun and it truly reflects the awesome

personality of our team. Our OVAC routine combines a variety of creative dances, strong tumbling passes and exciting jump sequences. It is sure to be a routine that will get the crowd enthused and eager to watch."

The 13-girl team ready to impress consists of seniors Mallory Santoro and Alexa Kessel; juniors Miah LeFever, Emily Rovira, Tomi Pavan and Allie Morrocco; sophomores Alyssa Gobleck, Abby Nickerson, Alex Backel and Elle Greco; and freshmen Rachel Miller, Lexus Melnyk and Sabrina Sauer.

"We are extremely proud of our cheerleaders for all of their hard work leading up to competition," Barnabei said. "Our cheerleaders are dedicated to doing their best day in and day out at practice. They consistently work together to achieve their



goals and to exceed our expectations.

"It has been a pleasure for us to work with our team grow and improve throughout the year and we feel confident the girls showcase both their strong cheerleading skills and their school pride."

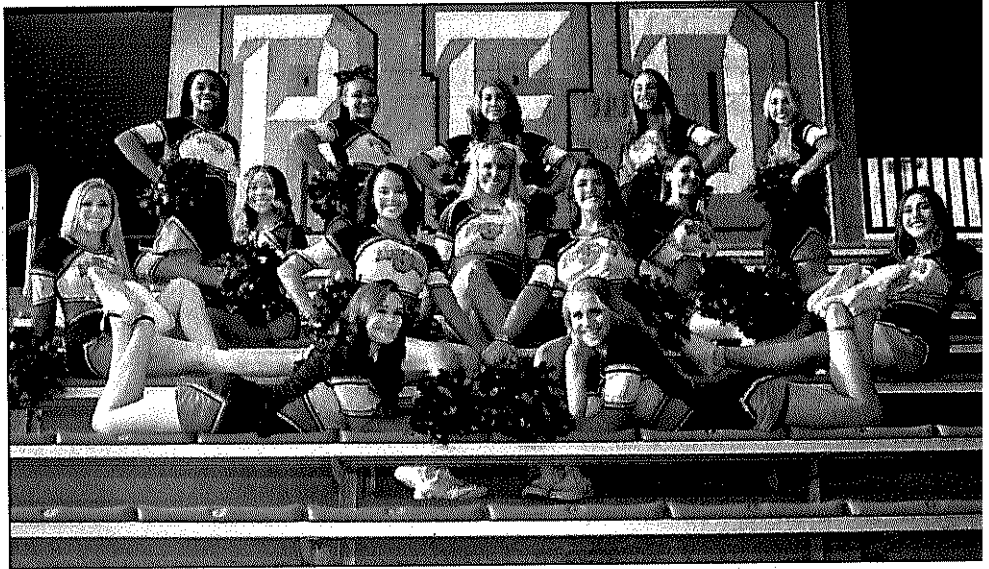
Barnabei spent her years at Weirton as the cheering coach at Pea Ridge High in Pa., while running many cheerleading clinics for youth programs, where she choreographed halftime routines with youth cheering squads.

Barnabei is assisted by Dani Weimerskirch.

2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Steubenville Big Red Head coach: Kelly Lancia

With-year head coach Kelly Lancia and the Steubenville cheering team worked hard to improve their routine since it last performed at the Mason County Fair and will be ready to show it off at the OVAC Championship on Feb. 4 at Banco Arena. "We have tweaked sections to make it cleaner and more eye-catching," Lancia



ripple effects are what truly make our routine stand out. It filled with "catch-on" tumbling, a unique cheer and a new added pom-pom dance that should bring excitement to the floor." Miranda Treglia and Carolissa Reese are also helping Lancia lead the team into OVACs. The squad consists of seniors Kylee Orr, Jordie Ferguson, Launastasis,

Kira Newburn, Mallory Mettenberger, Lauren Ferrell and Gillian Haught; lone junior Jalen Byrom; sophomores Haleigh Feist, T'kayla Kelley, Gabby Lulla; and freshmen Jazzmin Jett, Jillian Swinsinski and Mia Pierro.

"This group of girls is very hard-working and truly makes the most of their time at practice," Lancia said.

"Any task that they are given, even

last-minute changes, they always step up and remember every new detail."

After all of the hard work, decisions and changes that the Big Red cheer team has made to the routine, Lancia and the coaching staff are excited to see the results.

"We are very proud of them," Lancia said. "We are thrilled to show off our fresh and polished routine."



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2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Harrison Central Huskies

Head coach: Sunnie Ruble

Harrison Central is led by first-year coach Sunnie Ruble but she has already led the Huskies cheering squad to recent success.

The Huskies claimed second place in the small varsity non-mount division at Baker Heights, along with claiming the Pacific Tumbling Award.

In the offseason, Ruble finds the time to travel to work with other high school coaches on aspects such as motion technique, stunts and jumps and after getting her first year as a head cheerleader tucked under her belt, she is only learning more that she will be able to teach to younger and upcoming cheerleaders.

As for her own team, the Huskies are made up of nine girls that include seniors Baillie Ray and Cierra Frye; juniors Eli Carter and Reanne Brooks; sophomores Alivia Frye and Sara Bethel; and freshmen Kaylee Elliott, Kenna Mizer and Sage Brown.

"They're a great group of athletes," Ruble said. "They are able to think really, come into practice with an open mind and get things done."

Weir Red Riders

Head coach: Nicolette Hill

Weir has earned runner-up honors at OVACs for the past two seasons, along with a second-place finish at the regional tournament and will attempt a run at their successful showing behind first-year coach Nicolette Hill.

Hill has already started to take off from where the Red Riders were a season ago when they placed first this year at the regional tournament, an improvement from last year's result.

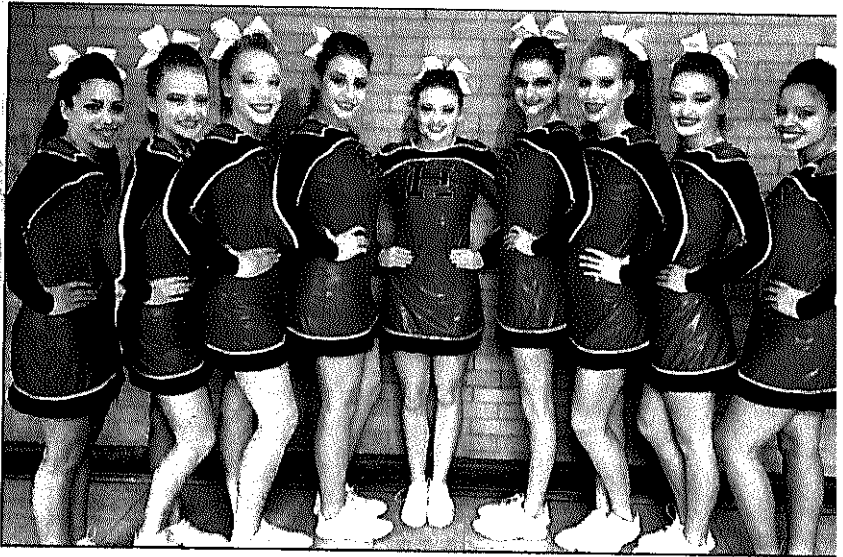
Claiming the top spot at regionals was the first time Weir had accomplished the feat since 2009.

Following the early success for Hill at the helm, she will focus her attention on the OVAC cheering competition.

Joe Takacs is the choreographer for the Red Riders and has found a routine that Hill is looking forward to seeing on Feb. 4 at WesBanco Arena.

"We started fresh," Hill said. "Our girls are very talented tumblers. We are strong in tumbling and running tumbling."

Every girl on the team has been trained in dance school since they were little and I am excited to see them flourish and incorporate more of that into



As the crowd watches the Huskies inside of WesBanco Arena on Saturday, Feb. 4, it will realize just how hard the team has been working on perfecting its routine.

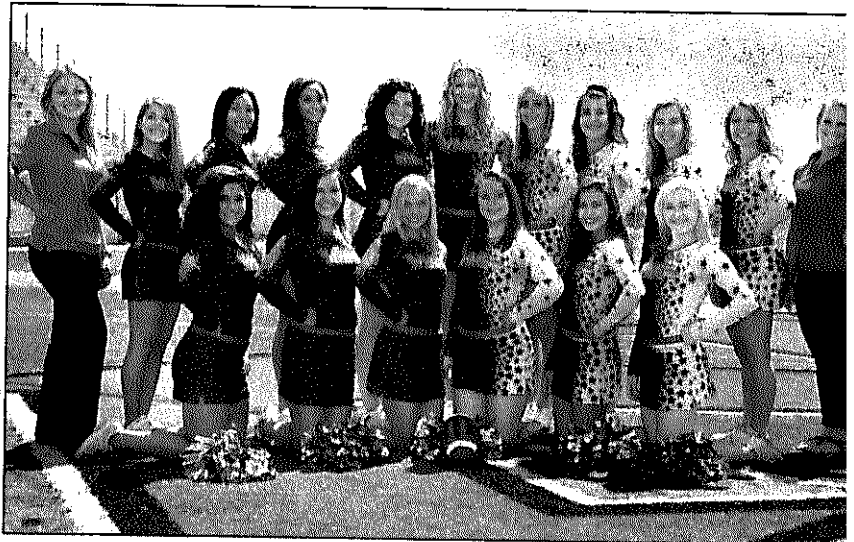
"This year's OVAC routine has a lot of movement with clear transitions and sharp, clean motions," Ruble said.

"The work ethic that all of these girls have is truly remarkable. Rarely does

anyone complain about doing it full for the fifth time, conditioning or if I owe me laps.

"They just know it will make it better so they don't argue it."

Assisting Ruble in her first full year as a varsity cheering head coach is senior varsity coach Latonya Smith, along with choreographer and tumbling instructor Shane Sanders.



our routine."

The Weir squad consists of Amelia Adams, Sarah Bodrog, Kaleigh Cowden, Alayna Dagenhardt, Gianna DeVecchis, Lexus Ficca, Caroline Fodor, Macey Gump, McKenna Holt, Myranda Jensen, Isabella Kirlangitis, Kali Potock, Mackenzie Rusinovich, Makaila Taylor and Allina Varner.

This year's Riders team has plenty of

personality but also knows when it is time to get to work.

"They are such a fun group of girls to be around," Hill said of her squad. "They are very talented but they also work very hard. They are always striving to achieve more."

"They have all been together since they were little, they are always hanging out and they are just a very close knit group."

2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

St. Clairsville Red Devils Head coach: Shawn Tomlan

Success has turned into a tradition for the St. Clairsville cheering team as of late, especially in the OVAC Cheering Championships at WesBanco Arena. The Red Devils have claimed nine OVAC titles in a row and are aiming for a consecutive championship. Adding the defending champions is head coach Shawn Tomlan, who is assisted by Cathy Wolfe, while Cassidy is at the helm of the junior high school. St. Clairsville has won 12 total OVAC championships in school history. Tomlan credits two talented choreographers for the success.

Christian Faulkner was the choreographer for St. Clairsville from 2001 until just recently, when A.J. Blankenship took over the duties. Blankenship has spent time as an Ohio State cheerleader and a judge at OHSSA state competition.

"We are fortunate that we have had two amazing choreographers," Tomlan said. "I think that they have been a huge part in making us so successful."

This year, the St. Clairsville routine should be one that gets the fans on their



feet. "We have put together a fun and exciting routine this year. We were concerned with the new music rules that our routine was not going to be very entertaining but we hope the audience thinks it's great."

Performing this routine for the Red Devils will be the 17-girl competition squad consisting of seniors Jennifer Mazgaj and Cassidy Wolfe; juniors Caton Kadylak, Paige McGlothlin and Jessica

Waggle; sophomores Emily Baire, Mad Kleinendorst, Hailey McCort and Alex Shields; and freshmen Elaina Bak Madelyn Conaway, Ashley Greenwo Alexi Kindler, Mallory Marconi, J. Myers, Sophia Smith and Rachel Sorge.

"We have been dealing with so many injuries and the flu this year," Tomlan said. "We have been just trying to find a few hours to practice between all of the basketball games."

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2017 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oak Glen Golden Bears

**Head coach:
Debbie Fish**

Debbie Fish is in her fifth year as the Oak Glen cheering coach and she believes that entering the OVAC cheerleading competition on Feb. 4 that her team's strong point could be tumbling.

"We have a fast routine with a lot of tumbling," Fish said. "In fact, we have a lot of difficult tumbling this year but this year's team has worked really hard to improve their tumbling."

The reward for delivering such more difficult tumbles at the OVAC could be great for Fish's eight-girl team.

The Oak Glen OVAC squad consists of Sierra Ankert, Tori Ignat, Charly Benson, Lauren Mahan, Jennifer Weltner, Alexandra Archett, Melena Mueller and Katelyn Jackson.



Union Local Jets Head coach: Stephanie Jendrusik

Stephanie Jendrusik is in her 14th season as cheering coach of the Union Local Jets and her four seniors are hoping to repeat an accomplishment they achieved in middle school, but at a higher level.

"Our four seniors were part of the junior high team that won the junior high OVACs," Jendrusik said.

Last year we took runner-up and we never give up hope we will win the 4-A title, defending our runner-up position is important to us as well."

Attempting to win the 4-A title for the Jets are Jordan Benson, Bailee Perlman, Anna Mayhugh, Courtney Ks, Alyssa Morris, Alyssa Trison, Gauge Costello, Kameron Crum, Laekynn Cole and Alexis Neidert.

Joining Jendrusik as the assistant coach is Amy Latham, while Ayla Stewart performs choreography duties, assisted by Shannon Dombroski.

"The routine is fast," Jendrusik said. "Our choreographers mixed current dance techniques with some old school 80s style moves and also incorporated some ballet into our routine. It showcases our main tumbling passes in the beginning portion of the dance and continues throughout the routine with synchronized passes as well as standing tumbling."

"The cheer portion of the routine, like most OVAC cheers, tells a story. Its very original and to the point and the girls have very sharp and clean motions."

As for Jendrusik's goal

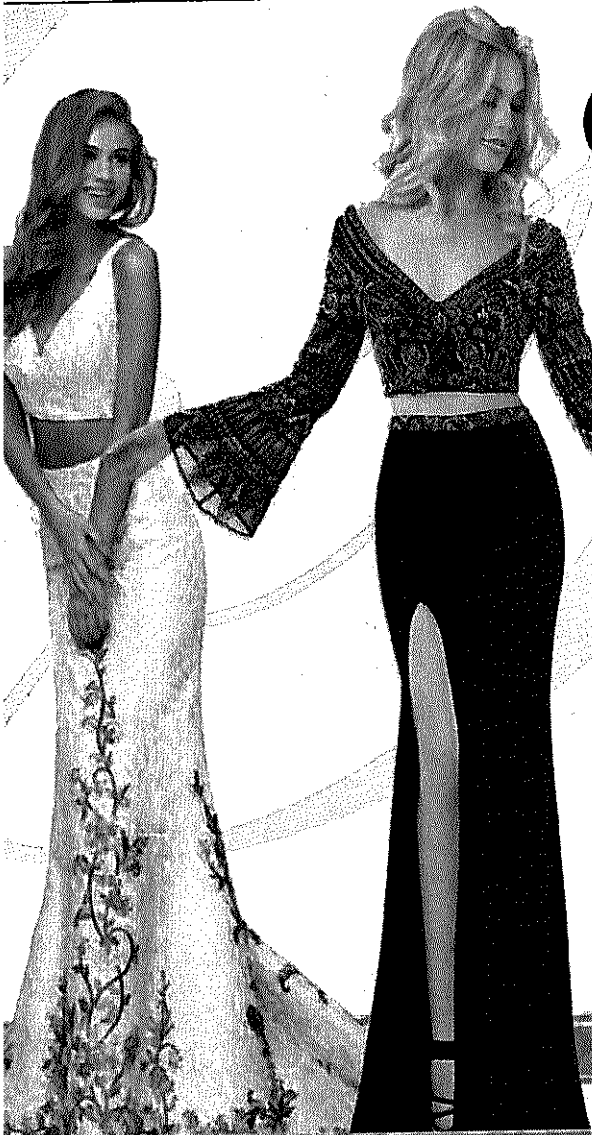


heading into the OVAC Championship on Feb. 4 at WesBanco Arena, she just wants her team to leave it all on the floor and learn from the experience.

"As a coach, my goal for the team is that they can walk

away from this competition knowing that they gave 100 percent and are satisfied they performed to the best of their ability.

"I want them to learn the outcome of hard work and dedication as well."



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