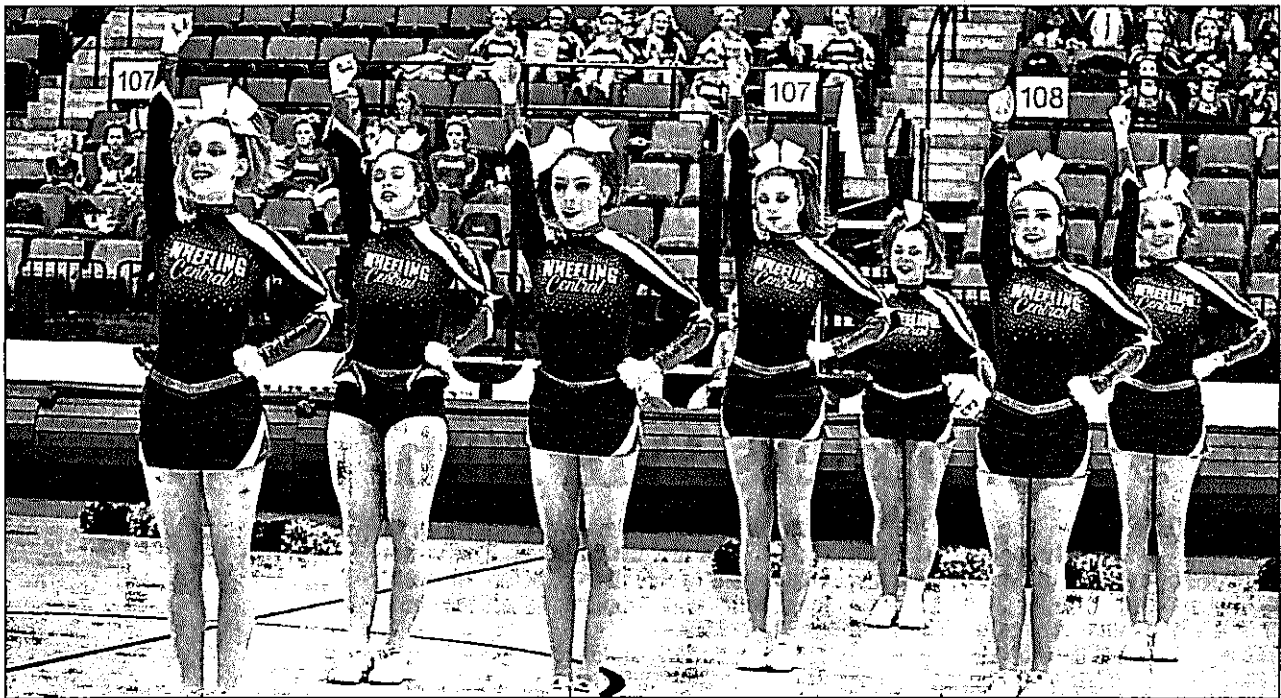


SPORTS

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Park, St. C., Toronto Continue Dominance



Photos by Kyle Lutz

Above: The Wheeling Central cheerleaders perform their championship routine during the OVAC Cheering Championships at WesBanco Arena. Right, Wheeling Park's Morgan Fox does a flip during the Patriots' routine.

Central, Madonna Snap Title Droughts in OVAC Competition

By KYLE LUTZ
Staff Writer

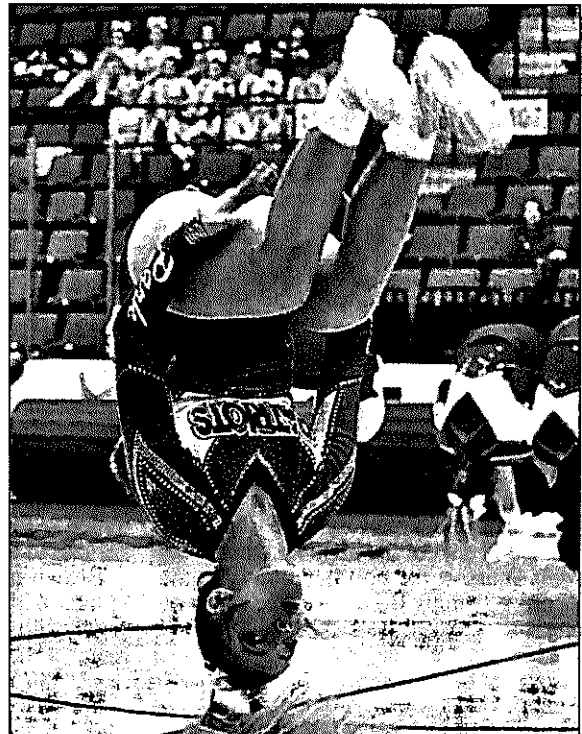
WHEELING — When winning a certain amount of titles in a row, the word dynasty can start to come up. At the OVAC Cheering Championships at WesBanco Arena, three teams put their name into consideration. Wheeling Park captured its sixth consecutive 5A OVAC title and its ninth in the last 10 years. It was also the Patriots' 21st overall OVAC cheering title.

St. Clairsville, which is always a force to be reckoned with, won its 11th straight competition while Toronto tallied a 3-peat.

Two new champions emerged as Wheeling Central captured the 3A division crown, while Madonna won the 1A championship.

It's the first OVAC championship for the Maroon Knights since 2015.

"We couldn't be more excited and happy with the results," Maroon Knights coach Jessica Becker said. "The girls worked very hard all season and it's just a relief when it all pays off."



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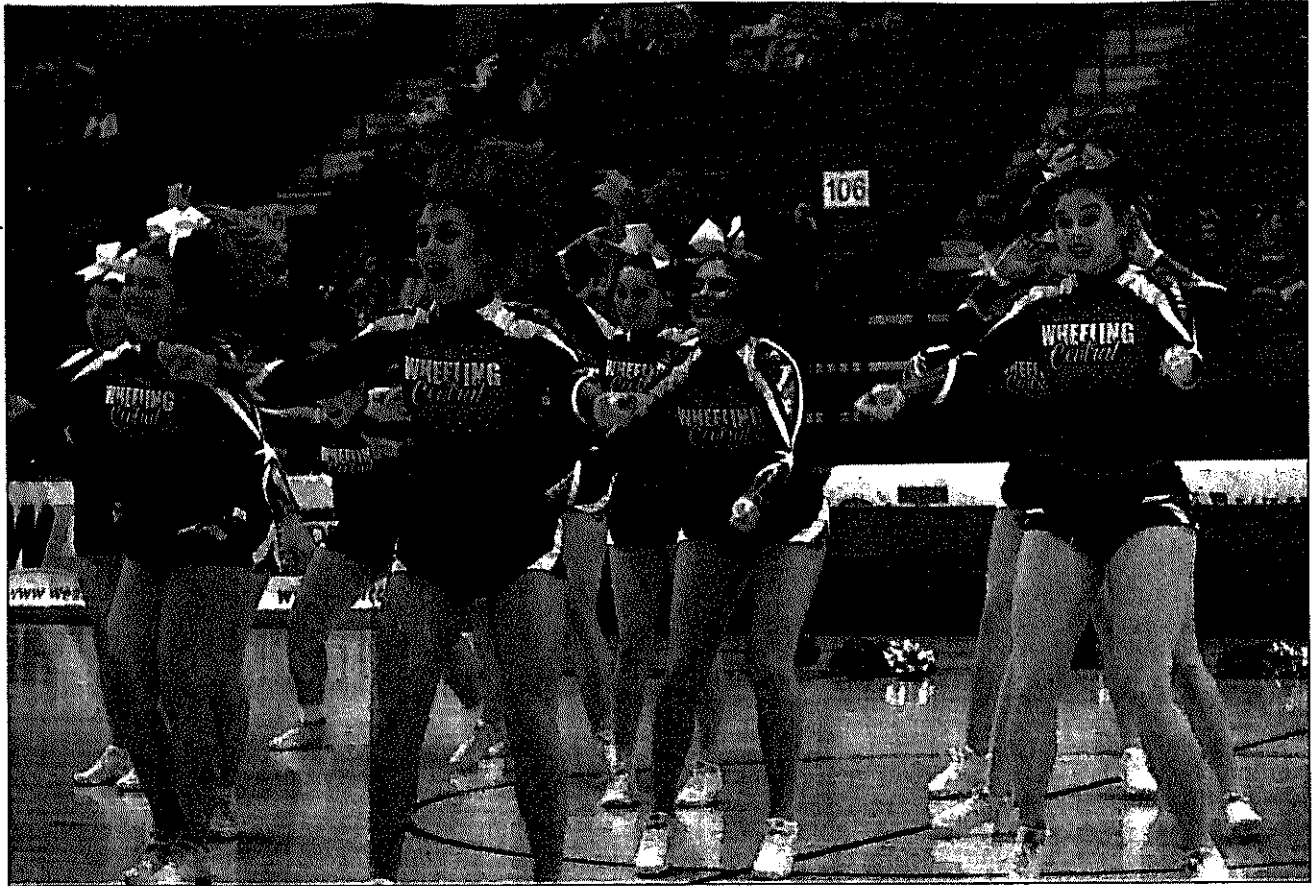
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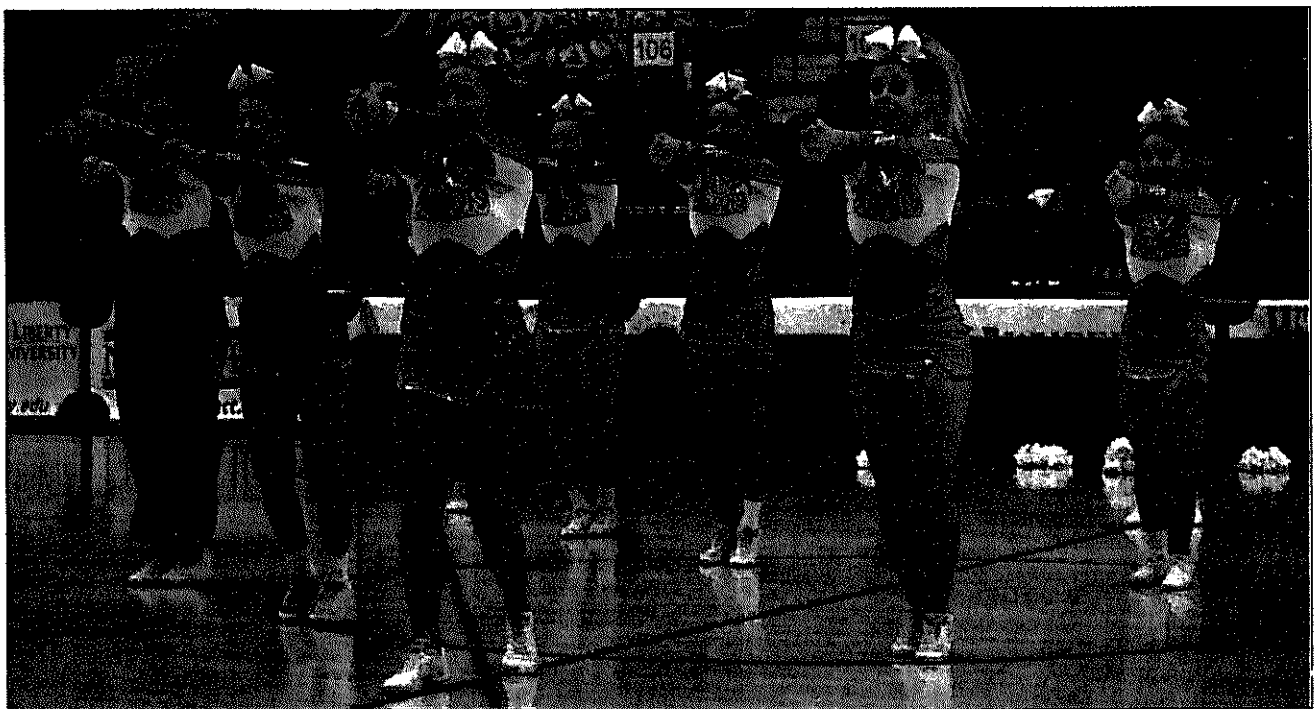
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Photos by KYLE LUTZ

ABOVE, WHEELING CENTRAL cheerleaders perform their championship routine during the OVAC Cheering Championships at WesBanco Arena. **BELOW, WHEELING PARK'S** Morgan Fox does a flip during the Patriots' routine at the OVAC Cheering Championship Saturday.



• Titles

Continued from Page E1

Wheeling Park also had to overcome a little bit of adversity as one of its cheerleaders was in the hospital this week. So, the Patriots changed their routine Wednesday. On its way to capture yet another title, it looked as though Wheeling Park had been practicing the performance since the beginning of the year.

"They've really come together this last week with injuries and with one of the kids being in the hospital, I couldn't be happier with their performance," Wheeling Park coach Shawna Shepherd said.

"They adapted really well to the changes we had to make. They all stepped up when they needed to and we just wanted to put it on the floor for our cheerleader that wasn't able to compete because of illness."

St. Clairsville has been the top of its class for the past decade and it started a new one the same way, in winning fashion. However, when one wins year in and year out, a target is put on your back and the competition doesn't get any easier. Red Devils coach Shawn Tomlan noted how nervous her girls were in the stands before they had to compete.

"It feels good, but we're very nervous when we came out," Tomlan said. "You never know what's going to happen. We never expect anything because of the talent is really difficult when you come over here. There's a lot of really good cheerleaders. But they work hard. They work hard to get those victories."

Another winning tradition that has continued is Toronto as it won its third OVAC title in a row, but first under coach Samantha Provenzano. It's also the eighth overall title for the Red Knights.

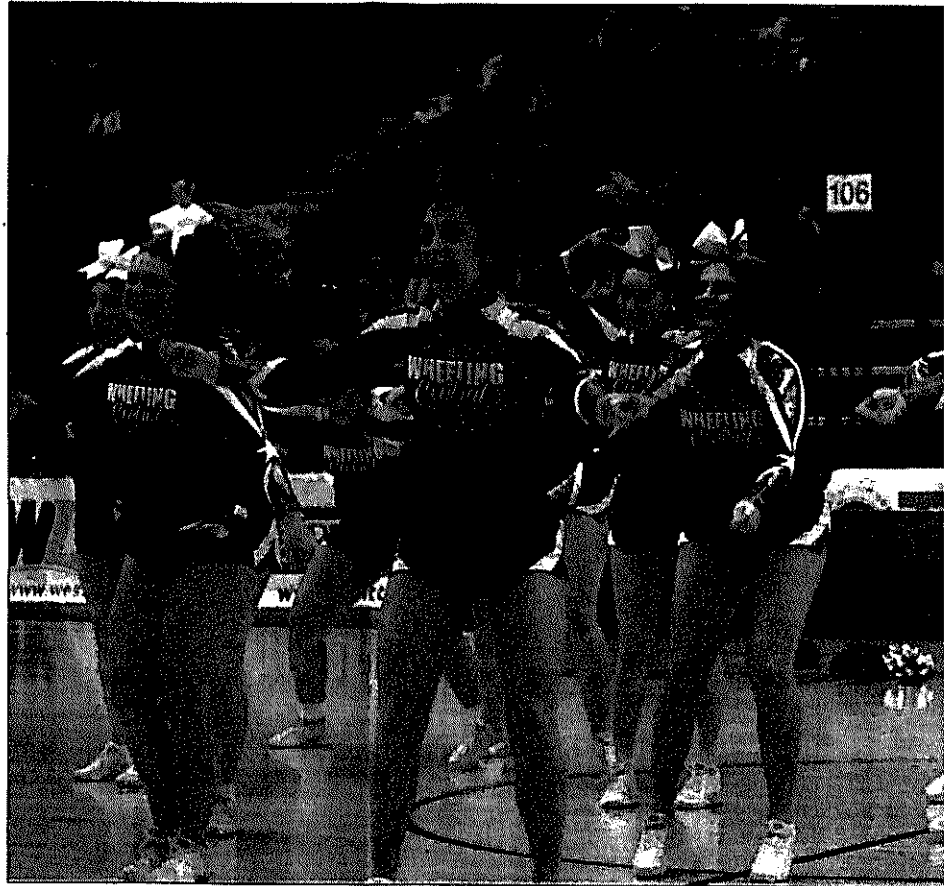
"I am so proud of these girls," Provenzano said. "This is our goal for the entire year and they worked so hard for this goal and they achieved it. I could not be more proud of them."

"It's unbelievable. I'm just so proud and so thankful to be a part of this program. It's just a great feeling."

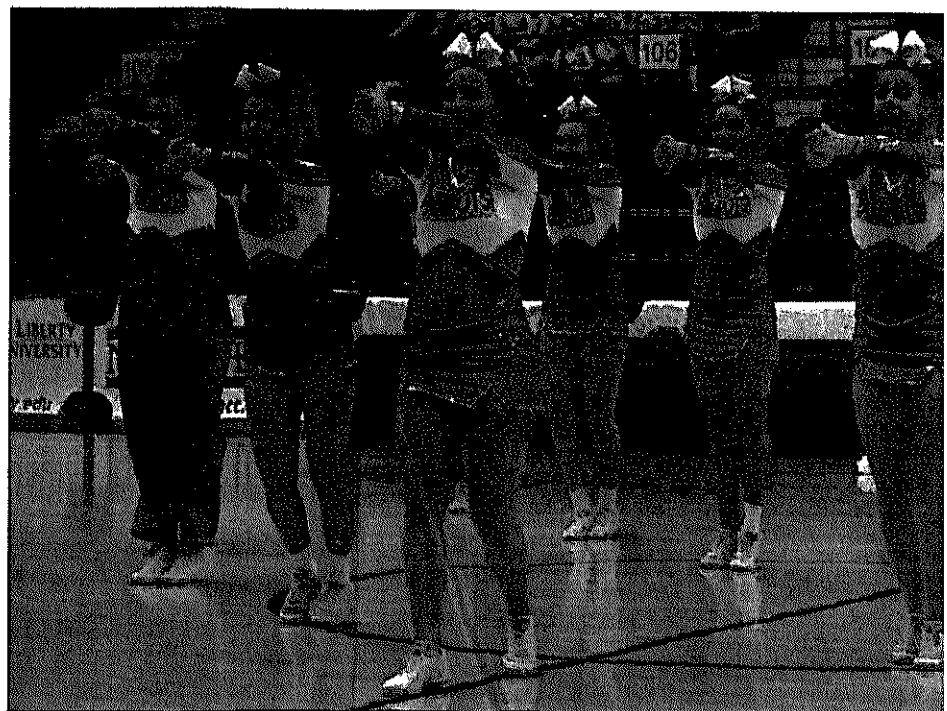
In the 1A division, Madonna captured its first OVAC title since 2006. The Blue Dons, however were unsure about how they would finish as some of the cheerleaders witnessed some mistakes on video of their routine. But no matter where they would have finished, coach Maria Canella would have been proud of her team. In the end, all of Madonna's hard work paid off.

"Every time they go out on the floor, as long as they give 100 percent, we're happy," Canella said. "They were a little hard on themselves. They saw some flaws when they watched the video. We told them, 'As long as you give it all, we don't care where you place. We came out on top and we couldn't be any happier."

"We won in '03 when my daughter was on this squad and to come with this group of girls is very special. I'm really proud."



ABOVE, WHEELING CENTRAL cheerleaders perform their championship routine at the OVAC Championships at WesBanco Arena. BELOW, WHEELING PARK'S cheerleaders perform during the Patriots' routine at the OVAC Cheering Championship Saturday.



DOMINANCE

Continued from page B1

Wheeling Central had to overcome a little misstep during its routine as during the cheer, two letters got mixed around for their sign as it tried to spell out 'Central'. However, the girls had short memories and kept their composure and in the end, the mistake did not matter.

"There was an unfortunate mixup with our signs," Becker said. "But the girls kept going, kept a smile on their face, laughed it off and we're just happy it worked out in the end."

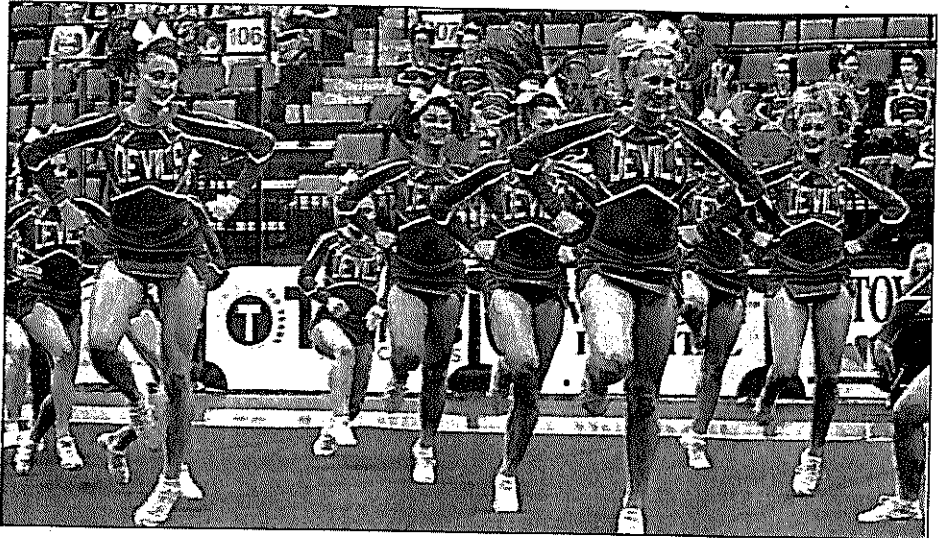
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The St. Clairsville cheerleaders perform their championship routine during the OVAC Cheering Championships at WesBanco Arena.

Photo by Kyle Lutz

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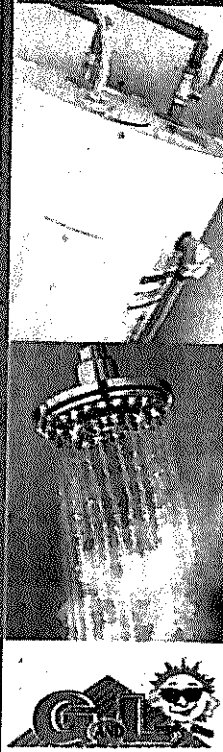
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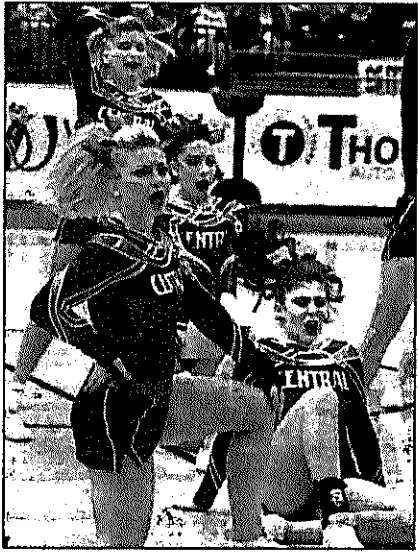


2018 OVAC

CHEERLEADING

Saturday, February 3, 2018 WesBanco Arena

CHAMPIONSHIPS



A supplement to The Intelligencer
and Wheeling News-Register
Thursday,
February 1, 2018

2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Stories compiled by Kyle Lutz and Cody Tomer, Sports Writers

Bellaire Big Reds Head coach: Ann Arno

Unfortunately for Bellaire, it will not be competing in the OVAC Cheering Championships this year. Due to extenuating circumstances, the Big Reds will perform an exhibition only prior to the start of the competition at WesBanco Arena on Feb 3.

"We will be performing a cheer only prior to the start of the official OVAC competition," third-year coach Ann Arno said.

"We have foregone performing a dance routine and being involved in the

judging process this year due to unforeseen circumstances and injuries. We hope to return next year to compete and wish luck to all competing this year."

Alexis Bell, Hannah D'Aquila, Dawnell Ticarich, Tearyannye Willis and Aleyna Zwack will be performing for the Big Reds at the competition this year. Also on the team are Lexus Monogioudis, Zoe Bizzari, Lilliana Yocum, Emily Doty, Maci Crozier, Niesa Rice, Abbie Gianangeli, Tiffany Hoffman, Alex Street and Ashley Speece.



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Good Luck to Linsly, Wheeling Central & Wheeling Park!

St. Clairsville Red Devils Head coach: Shawn Tomlan

It has been a decade of dominance for the St. Clairsville cheerleading team. The Red Devils completed a major milestone last year at the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Cheering Championships when they won their 10th straight competition.

St. Clairsville, under the leadership of veteran coach Shawn Tomlan will look to continue its winning streak on Feb. 3 at WesBanco Arena.

"That one was a big one for us," Tomlan said about winning its 10th title in a row.

"It's scary because it's a tough place to be defending champions. I get more nervous every year. It's great to win, but this year, we got to bring it."

Tomlan is in her 17th year as coach for the Red Devils. AJ Blankenship, will serve as choreogra-

pher.

"OVACs changed their format a little bit this year by using crowd cheers signs," Tomlan said. It's a different type than we have ever done. There's a lot of talent out there. Other schools are getting better and tougher."

The Red Devils squad includes Alyssa Baire, Emily Baire, Elaina Baker, Marisa Fellin, Rachel Francis, Ashley Greenwood, Macey Gross, Caton Kadylak, Alexi Kindler, Mallory Marconi, Hailey McCort, Paige McGlothlin, Jade Myers, Abbey Perzanowski, Kadence Shaw, Alexa Shields, Rachel Sorge and Emily Wilson.

"Our goal is to always hope that we can win," Tomlan said. That's our goal to get first and try to continue the tradition."



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2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Wheeling Park Patriots

Head coach: Shawna Shepherd

It's hard to find a team more established in the OVAC cheering competition than Wheeling Park.

The Patriots have an OVAC-leading 20 championships in their history and have won five in a row and eight of the last nine titles.

"We really enjoy OVAC's," Park coach Shawna Shepherd said. "After a competitive season in West Virginia, it's nice to keep the kids going in a fun competition with a different routine."

The Park success spilled over into regionals this year as it claimed top honors for the first time in the last 20 years, before placing third at state.

"Regardless of what place we finished in, I was very proud of the team and how they handled themselves," Shepherd said. "It was a learning experience."

This year's squad is made up of Jess Angius, Alyssa Brady, Jessyca Brady, Braden Cox, Alexa Crebs, Morgan Fox, Alex Knight, Kyla

Leigh, Kamryn Miller, Meghan Murphy, Kenedi Pasquale, Abby Skrzypek, Bria Spigarelli, Ashley Wieth and Aubrey Wieth.

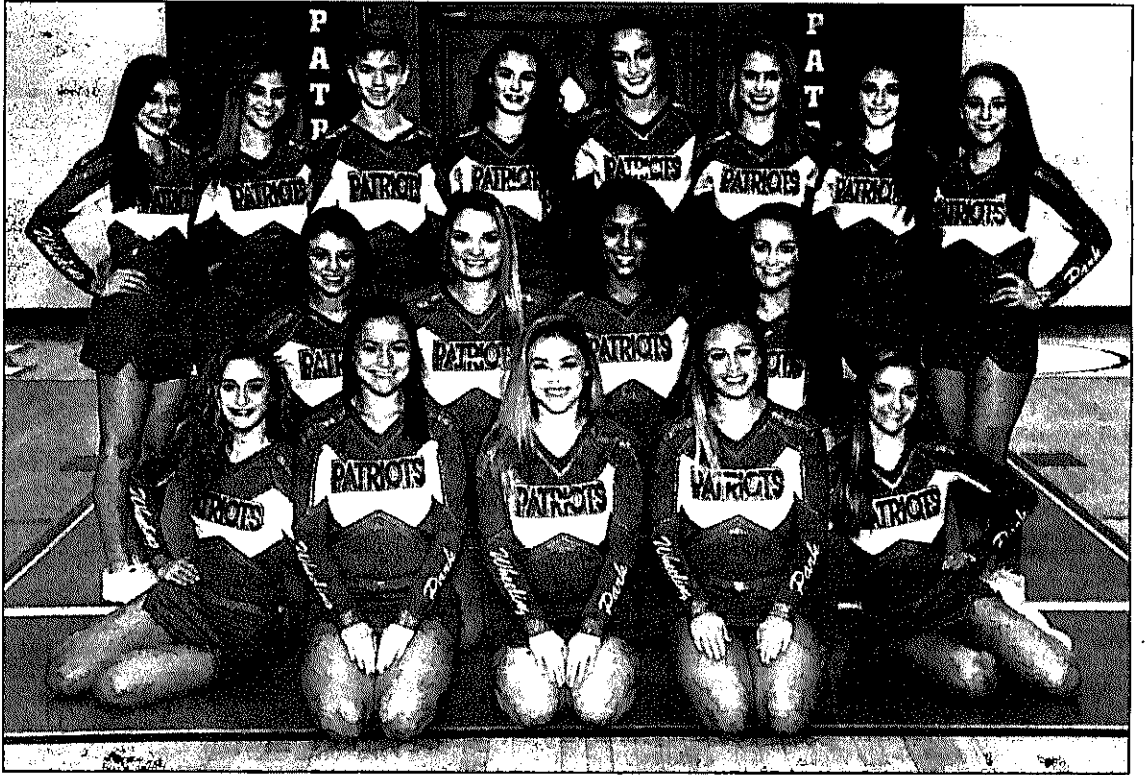
"We have a lot of self motivation in our kids," Shepherd said. "We have three seniors, who have won three state titles and three OVAC titles. They are a very accomplished group of kids in our school."

"It's a good group, they work hard and they are very determined."

Joining Shepherd are assistant coaches Dana Mele, who led Bishop Donahue to an OVAC title last year, along with Kristi Taylor.

Brian Faulkner handles choreographer duties for the Patriots.

"We will be doing what we usually do," Shepherd said. "We'll start off with a lot of tumbling and we'll go into a crowd cheer, which will be new for us. Then, a lot of dance in the second half. It's a combination of things that kids are familiar with and things they aren't familiar with."



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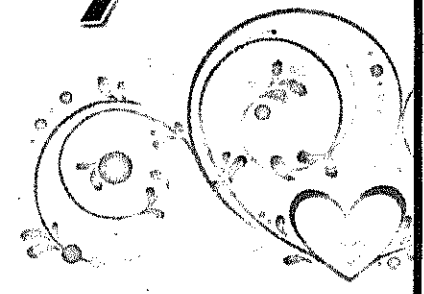
Girls' sports offered are Basketball, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Golf, Soccer, Softball, Swimming, Tennis, Track and Volleyball.

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

GOOD LUCK
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2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Central Catholic Maroon Knights Head coach: Jessica Becker

It certainly has been a successful season for the Wheeling Central cheerleading team. In November, the Maroon Knights won their second consecutive WVSSAC Region 1, Single A competition title in November. That followed with a trip to the state championships in December where they placed third.

Wheeling Central will continue to see if their success plays out when it competes in the OVAC Cheering Championships on Feb. 3 at WesBanco Arena.

"Wheeling Central will bring a fast paced, high energy routine that is jam-packed with tumbling," Maroon Knights coach Jessica Becker said. "Adding the crowd participation component has forced us to step out of our comfort zone, but we're making the most of it and having fun."

Becker is in her 14th season at the helm as head coach for Wheeling Central while Corey Pietranton is the assistant coach. Josh Wolfe

serves as choreographer.

Last year at the OVAC Championships, the Maroon Knights placed second. This year will be a little different, but Becker and her squad are ready to compete.

"We have moved up a division this year (from Class 2A to 3A). It will be exciting to face some new teams in our quest for the title," Becker said.

The Maroon Knights have a strong nucleus as 16 cheerleaders are on the roster.

Olivia Carte, Melissa O'Kelley, Carly Pajak and Morgan Petchar are the seniors while Danielle Ferrera is the lone junior.

Lane Bibey, Aubrey Gossett, Elizabeth Howard, Christine Smith and Leah Weimer are the sophomores. Rounding out the roster are freshmen Andrea Figaretti, Kayla Irwin, Hailey McCallen, Adriana Schellhase and Grace Wear.

Sophomore Meliyah Gayton will serve as an alternate.



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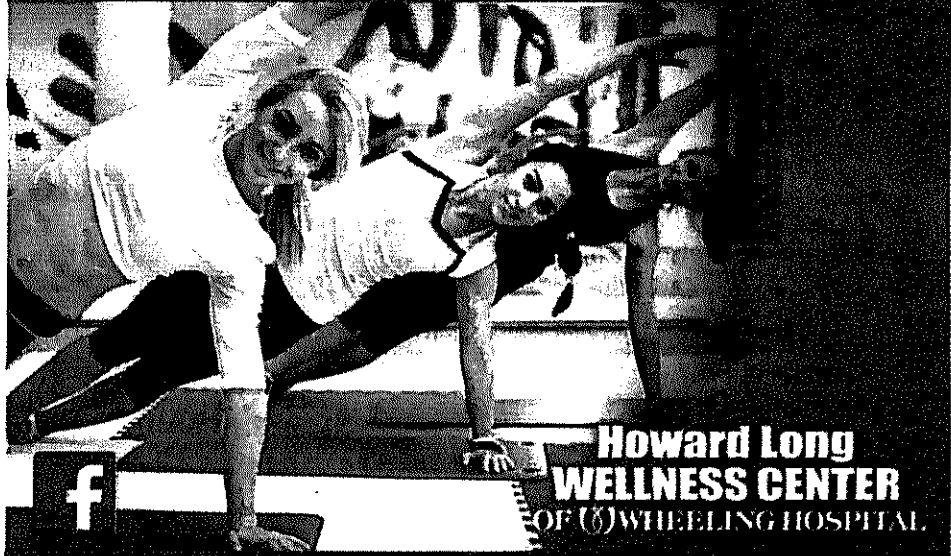


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2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

John Marshall Monarchs Head coach: Marcie Robbins

Marcie Robbins is in her ninth season as coach for John Marshall. In the past two years, the Monarchs kept improving their placement at the OVAC Championship in Class 5A. Two years ago, Robbins' squad placed third while in 2016, the Monarchs secured second. During the regional tournament, John Marshall finished in fifth place.

"We were very excited," Robbins said. "The girls were very proud to be at that position and it proved that they worked so hard to do so well."

Robbins has double the duties as she also serves as John Marshall's choreographer. With twice the work, comes twice the responsibilities, but that's something that Robbins enjoys: a challenge.

"It's definitely a lot more work but I enjoy doing it," Robbins said. "We placed pretty well last year and the girls like having some input on the routines. I enjoy it. It's challenging but rewarding at the same time."

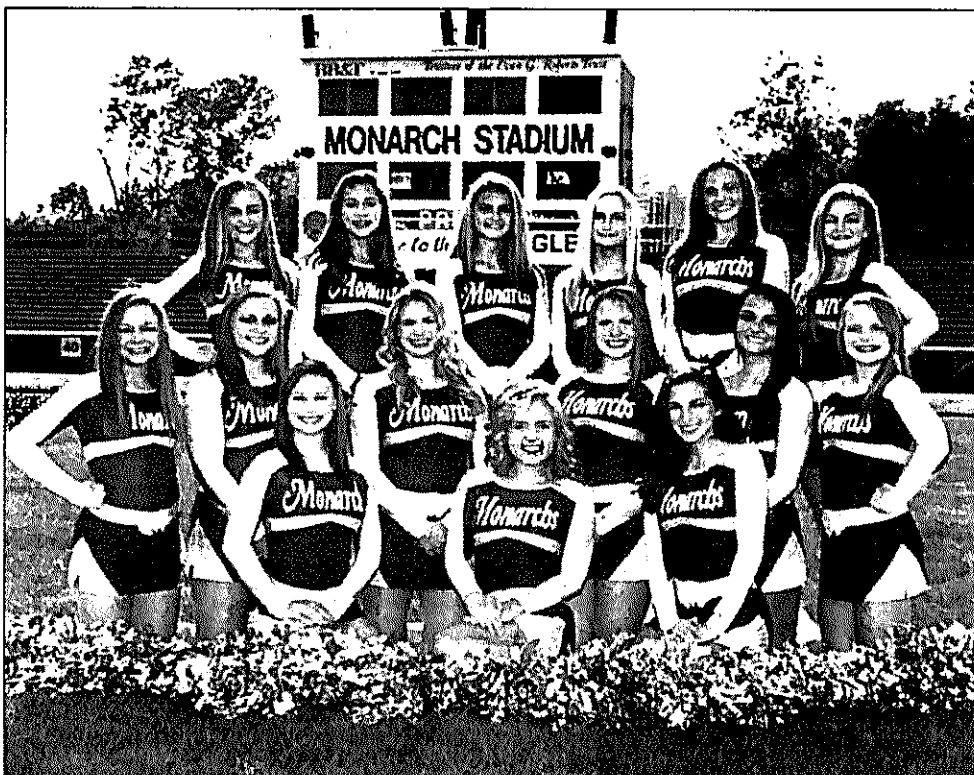
John Marshall along with the other West Virginia schools will have to make adjustments this year as the a requirement for the

schools is to do a sideline cheer to get the crowd involved. Ohio schools normally do this during competition, but as for West Virginia schools, it's not of the norm.

"The whole first half of the cheer is a lot of tumbling," Robbins said. It's exhausting to watch sometimes. The girls have a lot of fun at the end. The cheer is in the middle and the end is more tumbling and there is dance. The girls have fun with two dances because that's where they show their personalities a little more."

The Monarchs consist of Madison Estep, Aubree Williams (Captain), Claudia Callahan, Mercedes Neuman, Elizabeth Carman, Emilee Kettler, Ava Polinski, Mikayla Shockey, Brooklyn Bell, Avery James, Kiley Ward, Ashlee Kendzierski, Maggie Klug, Haleigh Henderson and Kealyn McCordle. Rabecca Lemasters will serve as an alternate.

"I think that i have just as strong of a team this year as I did last year," Robbins said. "We have the same goal and maybe hope to pull out the win. We have tough competition but my girls are working hard." Robbins is assisted by Kelly Simms.



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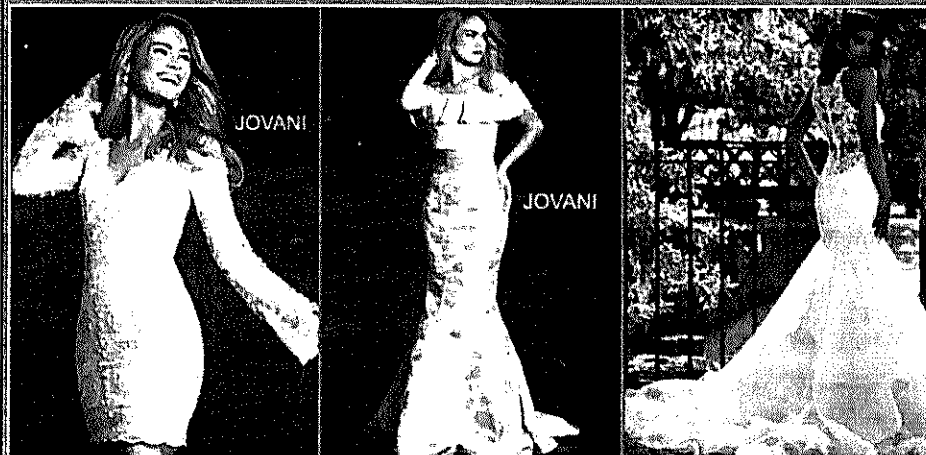
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2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Bridgeport Bulldogs Head coach: Chelsey Strain

It would be hard to find a head coach who has enjoyed her first year at the helm more than Bridgeport coach Chelsey Strain.

She is gearing up to coach the Bulldogs in her first OVAC competition and she has savored the growing process of her team. "As a first-year head coach, I've really enjoyed my time with the girls," Strain said. "Watching each of the girls set goals and work to achieve those goals has been very rewarding to be a part of. I have enjoyed every minute of it."

The nine Bulldogs taking the floor representing Bridgeport will be Danielle Bradac, Vetra Foster, Kira Herman, Kayla Kuri, Katie McConn, Julia Starkey, Addyson, Terek, Mary Jane Williams and Sammy Wojcik.

Joining Strain in the preparation for OVAC's is choreographer Brian Faulkner, who has put together a unique routine this year.

"This year's routine is a different tone than what we are used to," Strain said. "We're very excited for the changes. Our routine is filled with collegiate aspects

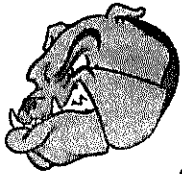
due to the format change.

"The routine includes upbeat songs that the crowd should enjoy."

A season ago, Bridgeport finished third in division 2A and Strain would like to keep her squad in that top three.

"My expectations for the squad this year would be for the girls to stay within the top three," Strain said. "I would also like for each girl to set and reach personal goals."

"I expect the girls to give 110 percent at all times during the entire competition season."



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Linsly Cadets Head coach: Kylie Harris

The Cadets are making a big switch this year.

A season ago, Linsly competed in the 3A division in the OVAC championships and fared very well, but this year it will drop down to the 2A class, where it should be considered one of the favorites.

"Although we are moving down to the 2A division from 3A, I have very high expectations for this squad," Linsly coach Kylie Harris said. "We have so much

talent this year and more difficult passes than we have in past years."

In last year's competition, the Cadets earned runner-up honors in the 3A division.

"The girls are determined to get their winning title back," Harris said. "That shows with their dedication during practice."

"Our routine this year is fast, exciting and has a lot of variety. The girls get so excited performing it at practice and just have so much fun."

"I hope that all of the visuals that

have been put into the routine excite the judges and the crowd."

Linsly's squad includes Alexis Storch, Gabby Harden, Shay Theaker, Alaire Vota, Maria Mosman, Lizzie Stern, Tayler Ewart, Madison Doughty, Isabel Falbo, Bristol Bertram, Ally Carson, Lindsay Lenz, Sydney Glessner, Bella Giovengo and Sophia Gretchen.

Serving as the Cadets' choreographer is Megan Caruso, while Sami Forney coaches alongside Harris as the assistant coach.



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2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Barnesville Shamrocks Head coach: Brittany Gallagher

It has been an exciting year for Barnesville first-year head coach Brittany Gallagher.

OVAC's are coming up, followed by regionals on Feb. 11 and states on March 3 and the squad has been working around the clock to strongly represent the Shamrocks.

"It has been crazy," Gallagher said. "Things are starting to calm down now but we have been working really hard."

"Our girls are willing to pick up any time to practice that we can get."

"We have even practiced in the lobby of our school. The girls have been doing a great job of working around crazy schedules."

Practice has been very im-

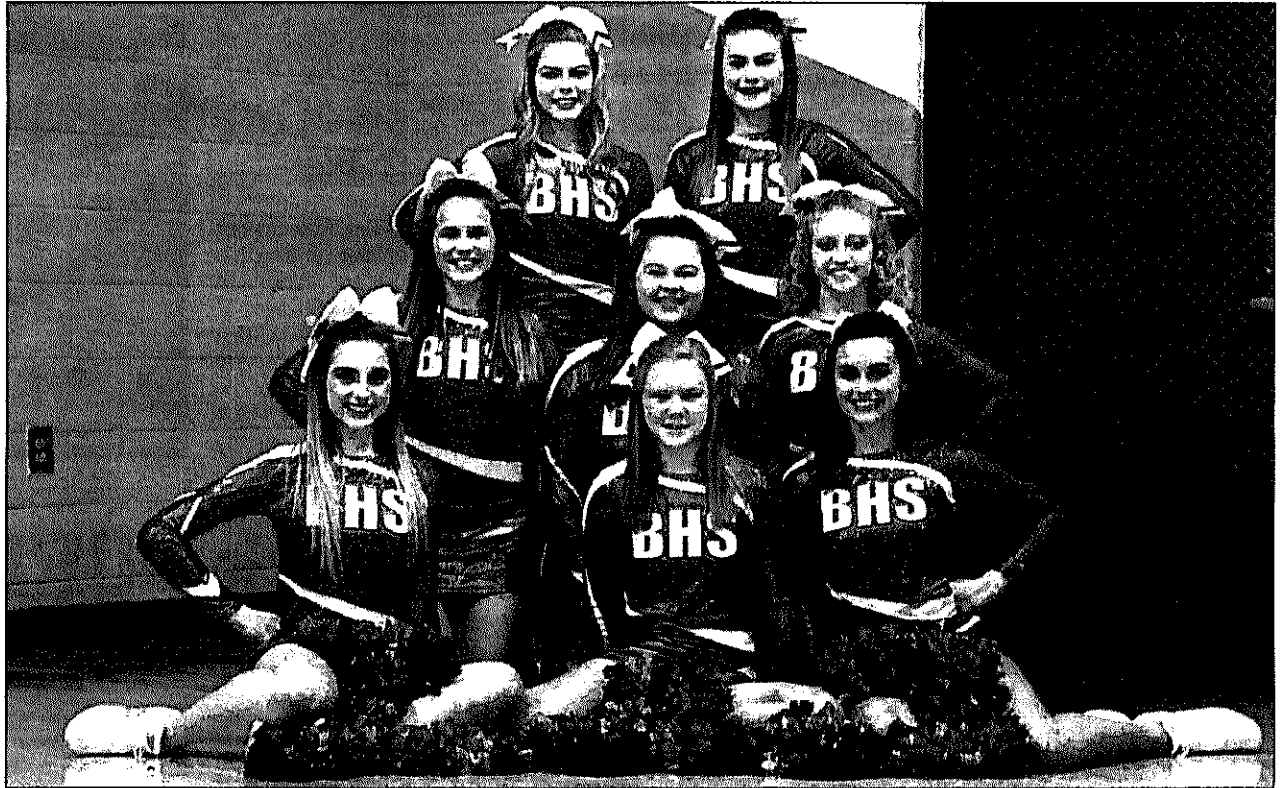
portant this year for the Shamrocks as they are aiming to switch things up at the OVAC competition.

"We are doing things a little different this year," Gallagher said.

"We have a new form of cheer. We will be using signs to get the crowd more involved in our routine."

Looking to get the crowd on its feet for Barnesville will be Hannah Burkhart, Jennifer Farson, Kiley Ciroti, Hannah Baker, Pazeley Crum, Heaven Farnsworth, Alana Trigg and Olivia Starr.

Taylor Farrabee is serving as Gallagher's assistant coach while Ayla Stewart has put in a lot of time as the Shamrocks' choreographer.



Weir Red Riders Head coach: Nicolette Hill

Recent history shows that Weir will be a force to be reckoned with at this year's OVAC competition.

A year ago, the Red Riders turned in a runner-up finish at OVAC's and in the 2016 regional, they were crowned Class AA Region One champions.

Now, head coach Nicolette Hill is expecting her Red Riders to give the crowd a show to remember.

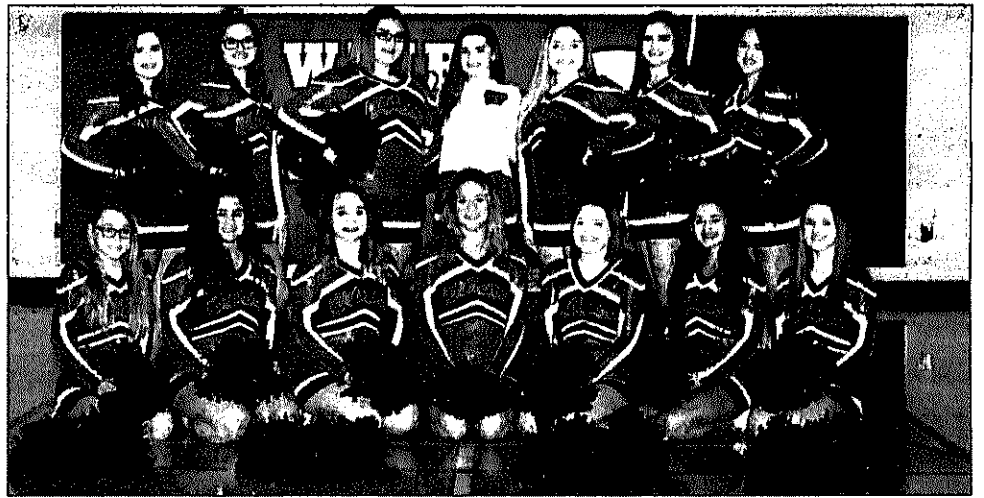
"We hope to represent our high school well by putting on a great show," Hill said.

"I want them to enjoy the competition as a team, give it their all and show great sportsmanship."

The squad consists of Sarah Bodrog, Kaleigh Cowden, Stephanie Crago, Camille Fornwalt, Baylee Fram, Caroline Fodor, Danielle Hvizdak, Myranda Jensen, Mary Lally, Marissa Macaluso, Blaire McUmar, Maggie Rudiger, Mackenzie Rusinovich, Cassie Shrieve and Maya Yobbagy.

Coaching alongside of Hill is assistant Melissa McLain, while Joey Takacs serves as the Red Riders' choreographer and has built a high tempo routine that should get the crowd of WesBanco Arena on its feet.

"Our routine is high energy," Hill said. "It is going to highlight our strengths."



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2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Martins Ferry Purple Riders Head coach: Breanna Beck

Breanna Beck is in her second year as coach for the Martins Ferry cheerleading team, and with that, she will already see some changes coming. Her Purple Riders squad will compete in a different division this year in the OVAC Cheering Championship as Martins Ferry has moved up to 4A in the conference.

Last year, the Purple Riders finished in third place. Beck is excited for the upcoming

competition and expects her team to give it their best.

I expect them to perform to the best of their ability and limit their mistakes, Beck said.

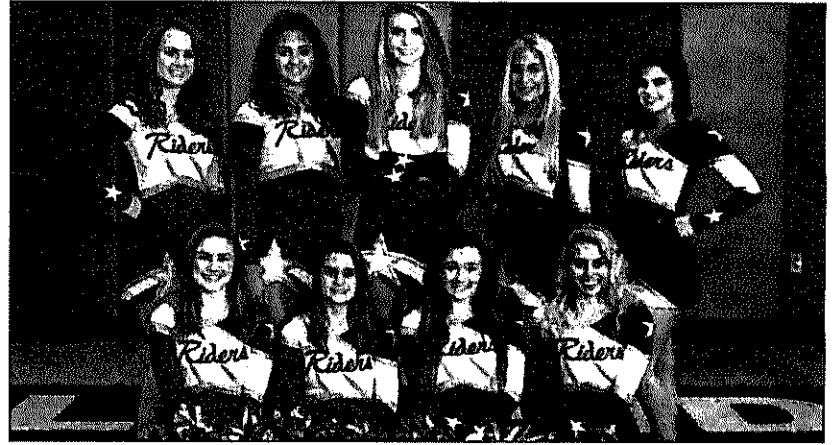
The Purple Riders consist of a squad of 10, nine of which will perform. They include Bailey Barries, Brooke Bender, Erica Doyle, Kayana Jones, Kara Kapiskosky, Helen Koucoumaris, Ravyn Richardson, Jessica Roberts and Sydni Trudo. Sami Eimer will

dress, but not perform due to an injury.

Ayla Stewart is Martins Ferry's choreographer.

Beck believes that Stewart has put together a unique routine that highlights the girls' specialties and is excited for them to perform.

Ayla choreographed a fast paced routine that highlights the girls' skills and talent. This year the routine has a good blend of dance and cheer techniques.



Good Luck PURPLE RIDERS

In the OVAC Cheering Championships on Saturday

From MARTINS FERRY CITY SCHOOLS

Steubenville Big Red Head coach: Stephanie Wineman

Being a first-year head coach can be difficult. However, when one assists for a handful of years and is around the same group, it can make the job a whole lot easier.

That's the position that Steubenville cheerleading coach Stephanie Wineman is in.

I have helped the past five years but this year being head coach is a little different," Wineman said about being a

head coach for the first time. "The pressure is definitely harder. I've coached all of these girls when they were in 7th grade so it's fun to watch them grow in competition cheering."

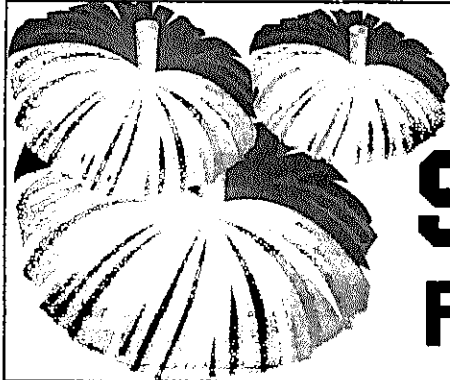
Wineman has the cheerleader mindset as she described the Big Red routine in four adjectives that perfectly depict cheerleading: fun, fast, spirited and exciting.

Her Steubenville squad consists of Mia Pierro, Jalen

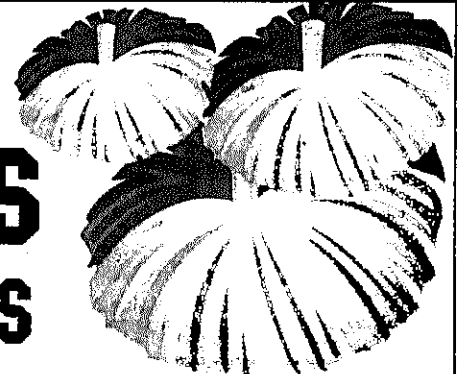
Byrom, Hannah Winkler, Gabrielle Lulla, Zoe Rusnak, Jordan Sarjeant, Rylee Krager, Jillian Swinsinski, Jazzmin Jett and Tia Rubish.

Shane Sanders was the mindset behind Big Red's original routine for summer competitions. The routine has been revised, though to fit the OVAC format.

"We want to deliver a fun, exciting routine to our fans," Wineman said.



GOOD LUCK STEUBENVILLE BIG REDS FROM STEUBENVILLE CITY SCHOOLS



2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Cameron Dragons Head coach: Bethany Scott

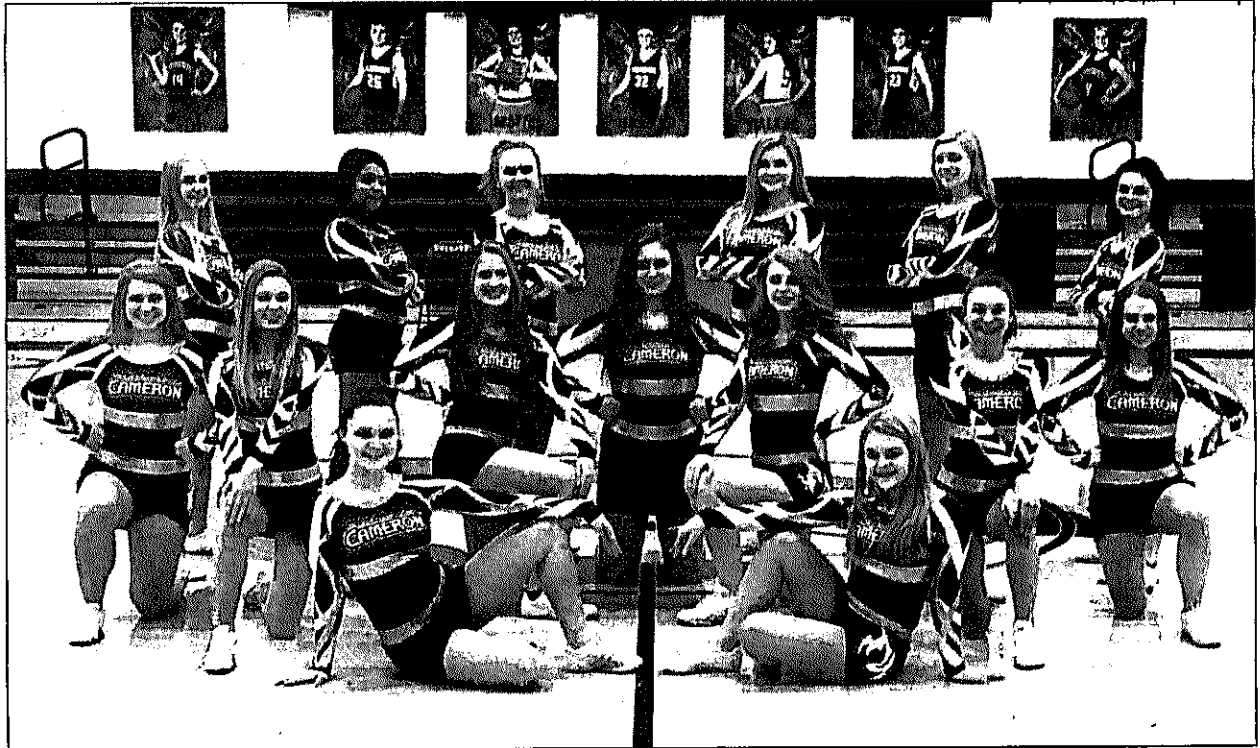
In her third year as coach for Cameron, Bethany Scott will see a few changes for the 2018 OVAC Cheering Championship. First, the Dragons be competing in a different division than last year. With the enrollment, Cameron has dropped from 1A to 1A in the OVAC.

"The other change is the way the cheer is going to be reformed. We have to do the crowd chant instead of a poem cheer," Scott said. "We have to do an actual crowd chant. That's different because West Virginia schools don't usually do that. Almost all schools in the U.S. do that instead of West Virginia. Cameron's team consists of

a full 15-girl squad, something that is also new for the Dragons. They are Kenzie Ross, Breana Boggs, Autumn Gossett, Sarah Norris, Breanna Pekula, Aria Pederson, Paige Butler, Leah Hart, Darbi Pyle, Kiersten Wendt, Jada Henry, Casidy Butler, Katie Bayles, Carson Howard and Kaia Leasure.

"We have a lot of tumbling and have 10 tumblers," Scott said. (The routine) is basically tumbling and transition into a crowd chant. Our routine comes down to a whole lot of tumbling."

Scott is assisted by Morgan Miller and Missy Ross with Ryan Damary as the choreographer.



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2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Conotton Valley Rockets

**Head coach:
Amanda Porter**

The OVAC Cheering Championships at WesBanco Arena will not only feature new routines this year, but also a new team.

Conotton Valley will make the trip to Wheeling to compete for the first time under coach Amanda Porter.

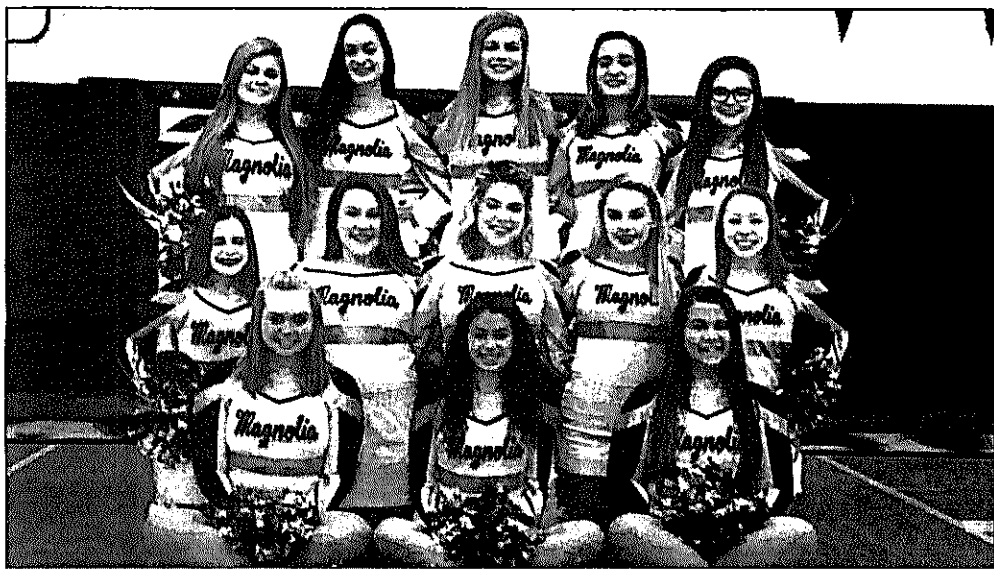
"We expect to do our best and give it everything we have," Porter said. "We are also very excited to see the other schools perform."

Helping out with the routine is Court-

ney Reese, who is serving as choreographer.

"It's very crowd involved and definitely has a lot of intricate choreography," Porter said about Conotton Valley's routine.

Porter's cheering squad consists of Cassidy Best, Mackenzie Romig, Britney Burleson, Kelci Manbeck, Makayla Locker, Skylar Mauge, Alexis Bartholomew, Somer Brown and Tabitha Stuber.



Magnolia Blue Eagles

Head coach: Kayla Adams

Magnolia is heading into the OVAC cheering competition as defending champions for the first time in school history.

Last year's title was a new feeling to the squad, a feeling that first year head coach Kayla Adams and the Blue Eagles hope to duplicate this year.

"My expectations for the girls are that they leave the floor feeling proud and accomplished," Adams said.

"With this being the first year with a crowd cheer within the routine, we hope to have a lot of crowd participation throughout the routine and cheer.

"The weather thus far has taken a lot of practices away from them so the times we were

able to practice, we made sure to take full advantage of so that they feel prepared and hit a clean routine."

The Blue Eagles roster includes MacKenzie Ash, Via Anderson, Kayla Stewart, Aubrey Hall, Haley Feldmeier, Paige Brill, Liza Clegg, Haleigh King, Piper Gaines, Jaidan Headley, Allie Litman, Olivia Mensore and Zoey Jenkins.

"My first year as a coach has been a remarkable experience," Adams said. "I came back to my alma mater where I spent four years cheering on the Blue Eagles and competing in the regional, state and OVAC competitions.

"The fact that I have such a great group of girls to work with, a great assistant coach

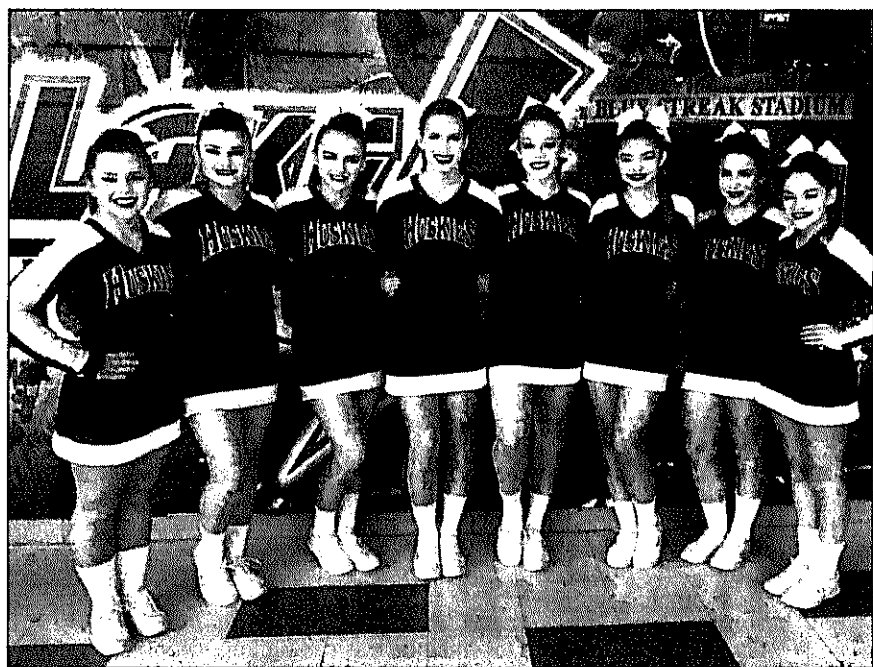
and a supportive school behind me makes the experience that much better.

"I look forward to keep building this program up and coaching girls who care so much for this sport as much as I care about it."

Jacque Clegg is Adams' assistant coach, while Joey Takacs is the Blue Eagles' choreographer.

"With many different talents throughout the team, we tried to incorporate their many skills throughout the routine so each girl adds something special to the routine," Adams said. "Their talents and skills come together to make their routine special and unique."

Magnolia finished fourth at regionals this past fall.



Harrison Central Huskies

**Head coach:
Sunnie Ruble**

For the Harrison Central Cheerleading team, four seemed to be the magic number last year. It was the place they came in at OVAC competition and the Ohio State Cheer Competition.

It was the highest Harrison Central has placed at the state competition.

For second-year coach Sunnie Ruble's squad however, they're ready to take their routine to the next level.

"This year we set a team goal of placing in the top three at all competitions," Ruble said.

"So far we have received at least 3rd

place each time we've competed and we hope to carry this goal into OVAC's as well."

Harrison Central is composed of eight girls including, Kelsi Johnson, Abbi Jozwiak, Kenna Mizer, Sara Bethel, Kaylee Elliott, Bella Zatta, Sage Brown and Lainy Sedgmer.

"Our routine has a great opening with fast motions and transitions. Our cheer has great energy and sign work," Ruble said.

Shane Sanders has been the Harrison Central's choreographer and tumbling instructor for the past two years.

2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Crestview Rebels

Head coach:
Amie Cope

Last year was a special one for Crestview High School. Not only was it the first time the Rebels competed in the OVAC Cheering Championships, but it was the first year, in general that the school was in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference.

With a year under their belt, Rebels coach Amie Cope is excited for her team to compete again.

"It was a huge first step for us and we just hope to keep building from last year," Cope said about competing for the first time last year.

Cope is in her second year as coach for Crestview and has no assistant coaches or choreographers.

The Rebels also had to overcome a little bit of adversity, but Cope is proud of the way her squad remained positive during some rough times.

"With some injuries and involvement in other activities that became a roadblock, we've had

a bit of a set-back," Cope said.

"With that being said, I am extremely proud of the girls remaining. They choreographed the routine and have made multiple changes, but they've stuck with it and gave it their all, and for that I am grateful.

"There are only three girls back from last year's team, so they are young and I'm just hoping for a good first experience for the remaining team members."

Sara Kauffman, Alexa Bregar and Kayla Butts are the returning cheerleaders. Reagan Heater, Kendall Hancox, Meadow Balmat, Shawni Firmstone and Adysin Mercer round out the squad.

Crestview will compete in the 3A division when they make their trip to WesBanco Arena on Feb. 3.

"We have two 45 second dance portions, a small chant, and a yell-back cheer," Cope said about the Rebels' routine.



Indian Creek Redskins

Head coach: Gina Giuliani

Gina Giuliani is in her sixth year as head coach for the Indian Creek cheerleading team and her squad has something new on the schedule this year.

"This year, we are planning to attend regionals/states for the first time and we are greatly looking forward to it," Giuliani said.

But first on the list is another trip to Wheeling for the OVAC Cheering Championships at WesBanco Arena on Feb. 3.

Last year, the Redskins made the jump to 5A from 4A and went back to Winterville with a third place finish. Indian Creek has quite the experience as it has nine seniors on the team. Though, the Redskins are one of the smaller schools in the 5A division, Giuliani expects her girls to give it their all.

"Each year going into OVACs we understand the challenges of being a smaller school in the 5A division, competing against mainly West Virginia schools," Giuliani said. "Due to our situation, we try to simply focus on ourselves. Our goal is to go out on the mat and perform to the best of our

ability while having fun. I want the girls to walk off of the mat and feel proud of themselves and their performance and I think they will do just that this year."

The 16-team roster for the Redskins include Jessica Shimon, Madolyn McDonald, Miah Thompson, Chelsea Connor, Marlana Rees, Cheyenne Shrive, Julia Holman, Paige Hilderbrand, Kelsey Lewis, Addy Trice, LeeAnna Leone, Sydney Skender, Madison Houser, Tiffany Taylor, Dominique DeLucca and Savannah Tilton.

"The dynamics of my team this year are quite interesting with nine seniors on our competition team," Giuliani said. "This has made for a strong year for Indian Creek cheerleading. I am very excited about our routine for OVACs, I feel like it is very high energy and entertaining. I have enjoyed watching the girls step out of their comfort zone this year with our cheer and can't wait to watch them perform."

Shane Sanders is the choreographer for Indian Creek.



2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

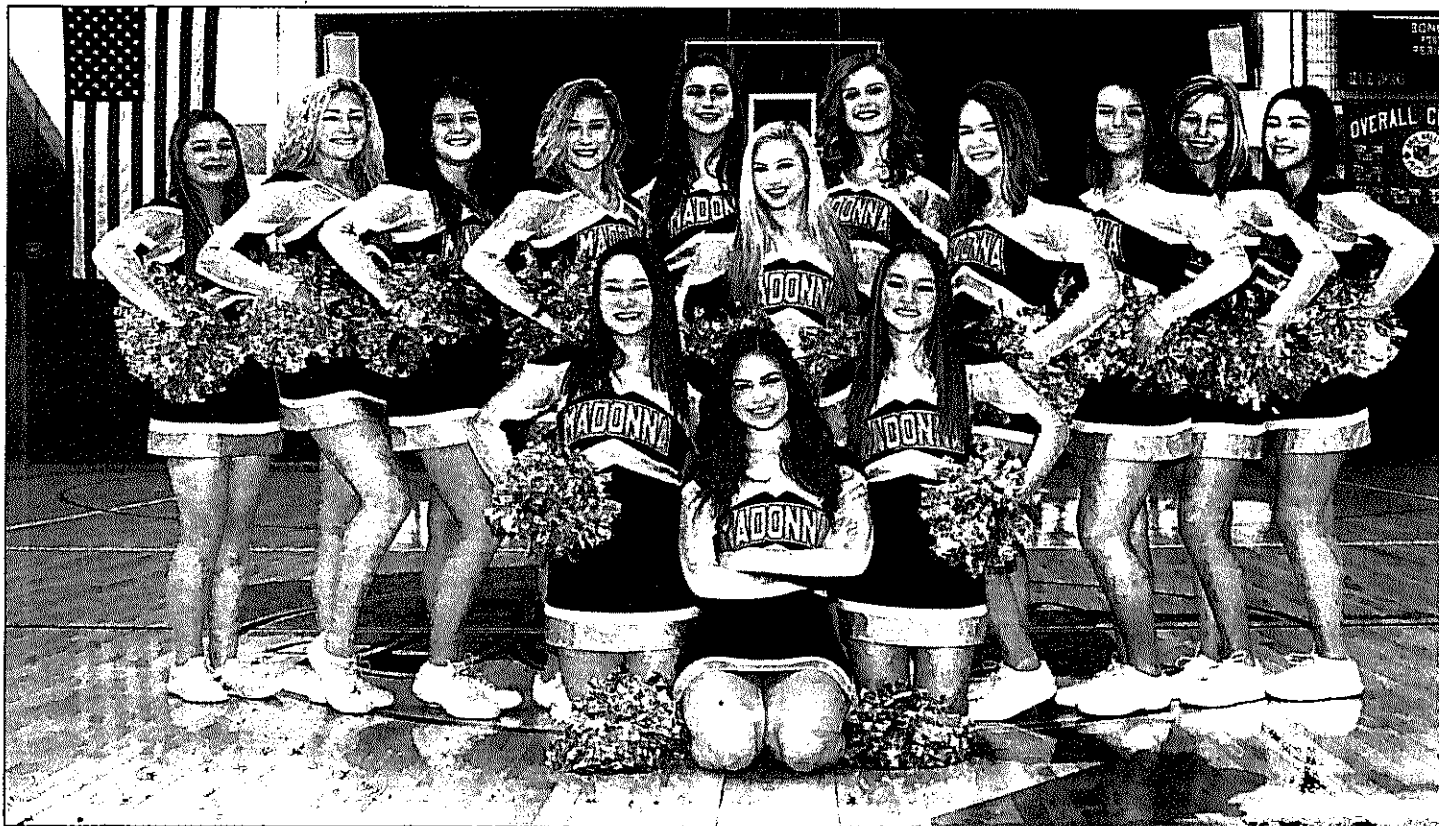
Madonna Blue Dons Head coach: Maria Canella

After placing second at the OVAC Championship a year ago in Class 1A, a veteran Madonna cheerleading team looks to keep climbing the ladder. With Maria Canella taking over the reigns, the first-year coach is excited what her team has in store for the 2018 competition.

"We have four seniors who have lead a strong team and the expectations are that every girl gives 100 percent and we do the very best we can every time we perform," Canella said. "Winning would validate all the practices and strong work ethic. The routine contains tumbling, dancing, crowd participation and provides about three minutes of excitement and fun."

The Blue Dons also have a new choreographer this year in Brian Faulkner.

Madonna's cheerleading team includes Elle Greco, Rachel Miller, Mikayla Sole, Alex Backel, Miranda Sole, Abby Nickerson, Emily Rovira, Mmiah LeFever, Sabrina Sauer, Lexus Melnyk, Allie Morrocco, Tomi Pavan, Madison Costello and Sabrina Alatis.



Monroe Central Seminoles Head coach: Vicki Lohr

Another cheerleading year is underway and for the OVAC Cheering Championships, a crowd will see a new team this year. According to Seminoles coach Vicki Lohr, this is the first time Monroe Central has performed in the competition in at least two years.

Not only is she excited to get out and see what her girls can do, her squad is ready to perform as well.

"They are excited this year because we got a good routine and they are pretty pumped up," "They have a fair chance and a fair opportunity. We think we can place and I think it will be a good experience this year."

Lohr was one of the cheering coaches that was on a committee and talked with other coaches on the committee (about four Ohio and four West Virginia) on how they could get more participation for the competition.

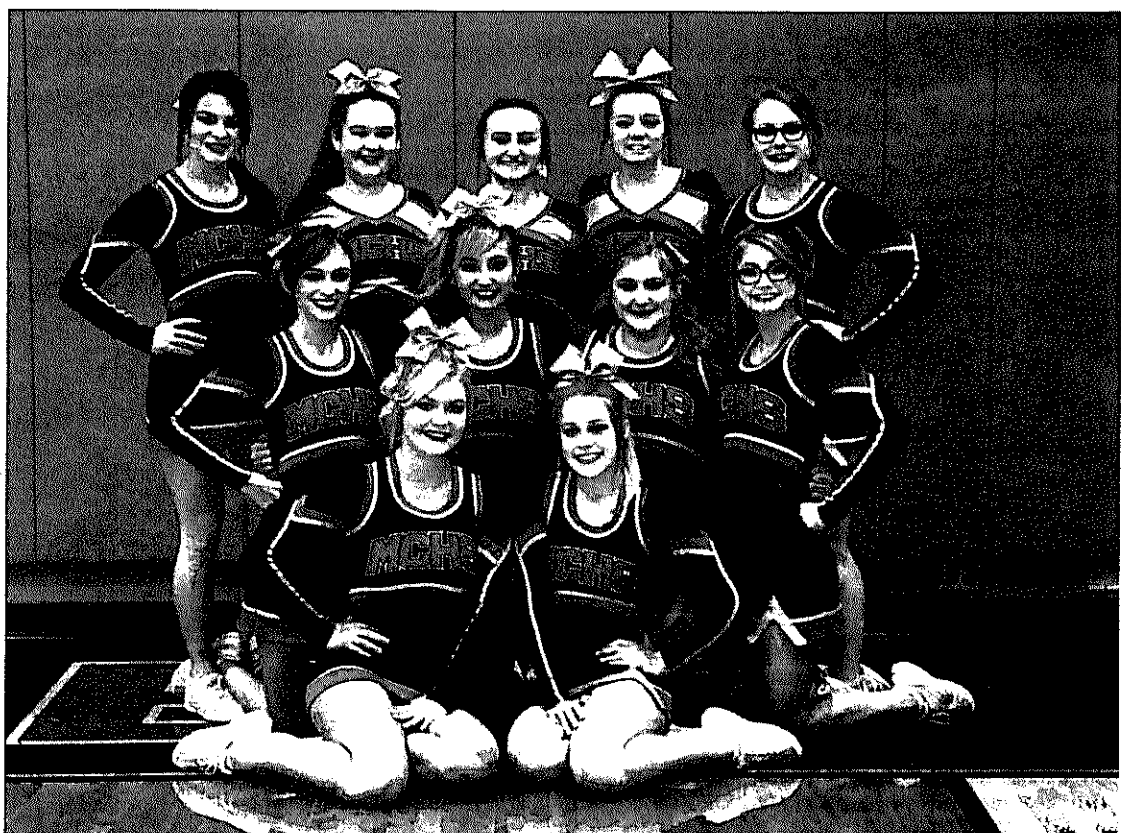
"I have had expectations because I was on the committee and

I want the OVAC to continue and I want the cheerleaders to continue. I don't want to see this go away. This gets them engaged and keeps them out. My expectations are high. The girls have been practicing this routine since November."

While the Seminoles do not have a choreographer this year, their assistant coach is Audrey Lydick. Victoria Price is a volunteer.

"We have our crowd involved cheer and our routine is under three minutes," Lohr said. "Beginning the routine is a dance then crowd cheer. We end with another dance to incorporate what other things have to be in there. It's pretty fast-paced."

Monroe Central consists of 11 cheerleaders that include Kendall Lydick, Breanna Antill, Ashley Langsdorf, Alana Hogue, Heidi Tomlin, Abby Howell, Whitney Young, Stephanie Ogden, Shelby Brewer, Kylie Ward and Chyenne Wilson.



2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Oak Glen Golden Bears Head coach: Debbie Fish

Debbie Fish enters her sixth season as coach of the Oak Glen cheering team and the Golden Bears look to improve and move up the ladder as they compete during the OVAC Cheering Championship at WesBanco Arena on Feb. 3.

The Golden Bears already put in a solid performance at this year's regional competition as they went back to New Cumberland with a sixth place finish.

However, one of the most important aspects that Fish wants her squad to do is enjoy the moment.

"My expectations are for the girls to have fun and hit their routine, tumbling and place," Fish said.

The Golden Bears' squad consists of Kaitlynn Lamp, Kaitlyn Harless, Stephanie Marshall, Lauren Mahan, Krista Smith, Haley Maxwell, Charly Gibson, Melena Mueller, Alyssa Arango, Mallory Kovalcik, Jennifer Weltner and Addyson McSwegin.

Fish is assisted by Erika Mello, Megan Baxter and Katie Foltz. Joey Takacs serves as Oak Glen's choreographer.



Paden City Wildcats Head coach: Asia Richmond

Asia Richmond is in her first year of coaching the Paden City cheering squad.

She takes over a program with nine OVAC titles in program history but her group will be looking to earn in first championship since the 2004 season.

Capturing that title will be no easy task but Richmond is expecting her squad to step up and bring their best efforts.

"It's been pretty fun," Richmond said. "It's been a learning experience but we were able to compete at regionals."

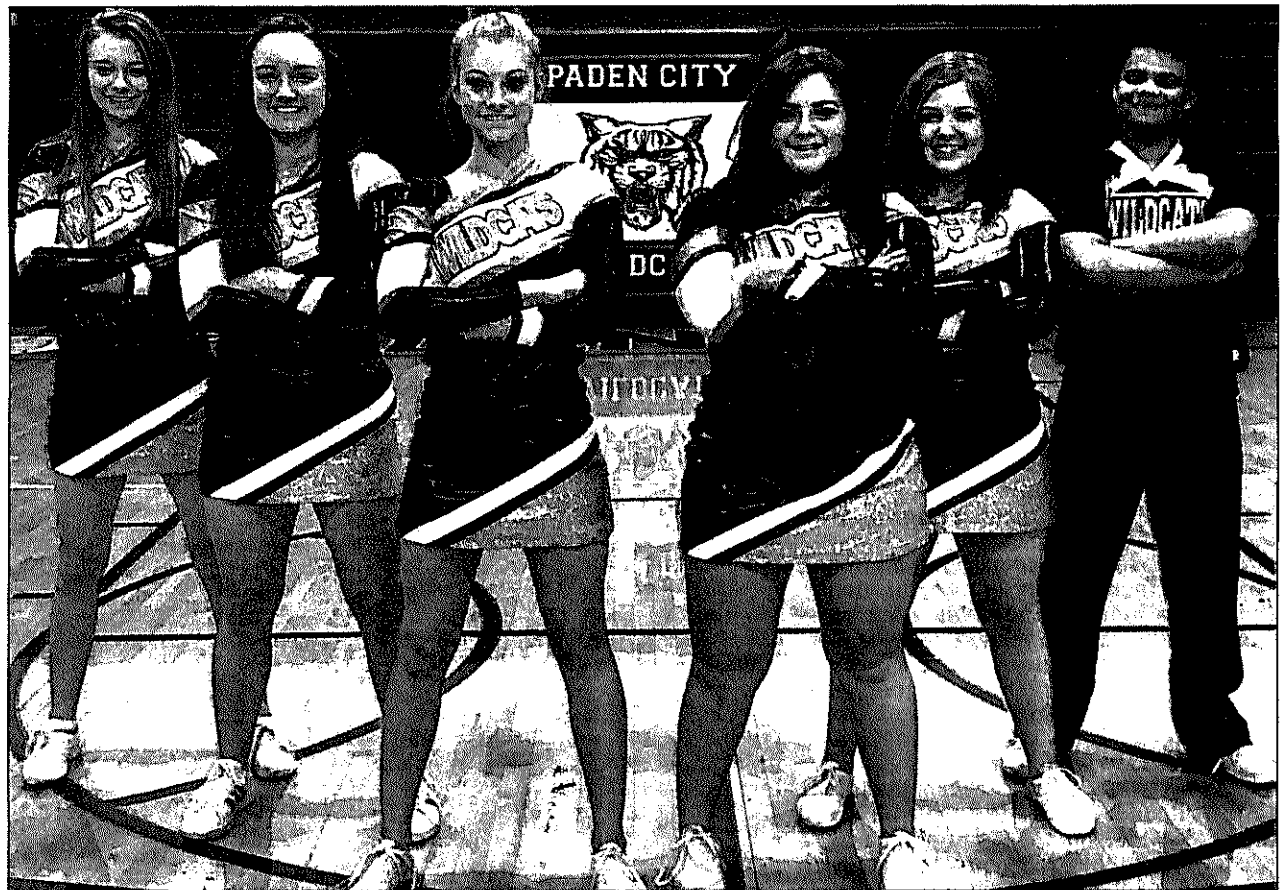
"We started the season with 14 and now we are down to seven but I am just looking for those final seven to compete for one last time and give it everything that they have."

Those seven include seniors Jenna Arnett, Katrina Heasley and Caitlyn Stewart.

Paige Leonard is the lone junior on the team, while the sophomore class consists of Cora Anderson, Isabella Beverlin and Cameron Dennis, who is the only boy on the roster and is excited to show the crowd his skills.

"I am hoping the crowd will enjoy our routine," Richmond said. "Cameron Dennis is the second male cheerleader in school history and we think everyone is going to enjoy watching him."

Kayla Hizer is the Paden City assistant coach while Ryan DeMary has served as the Wildcats' choreographer.



2018 OVAC CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Toronto Red Knights Head coach: Samantha Provenzano

In recent years, Toronto has been very successful when it comes to the OVAC Cheerleading championships. The Red Knights will go for a 3-Peat when they compete in the upcoming competition.

Samantha Provenzano is a first-year coach for her alma mater. She knows all the traditions of what it takes to cheer for such a successful program.

"As a first year coach and having cheered for Toronto myself, I knew coming in that it would require commitment, hard work and dedication," Provenzano said. "That is what it takes to compete at the level we are used to."

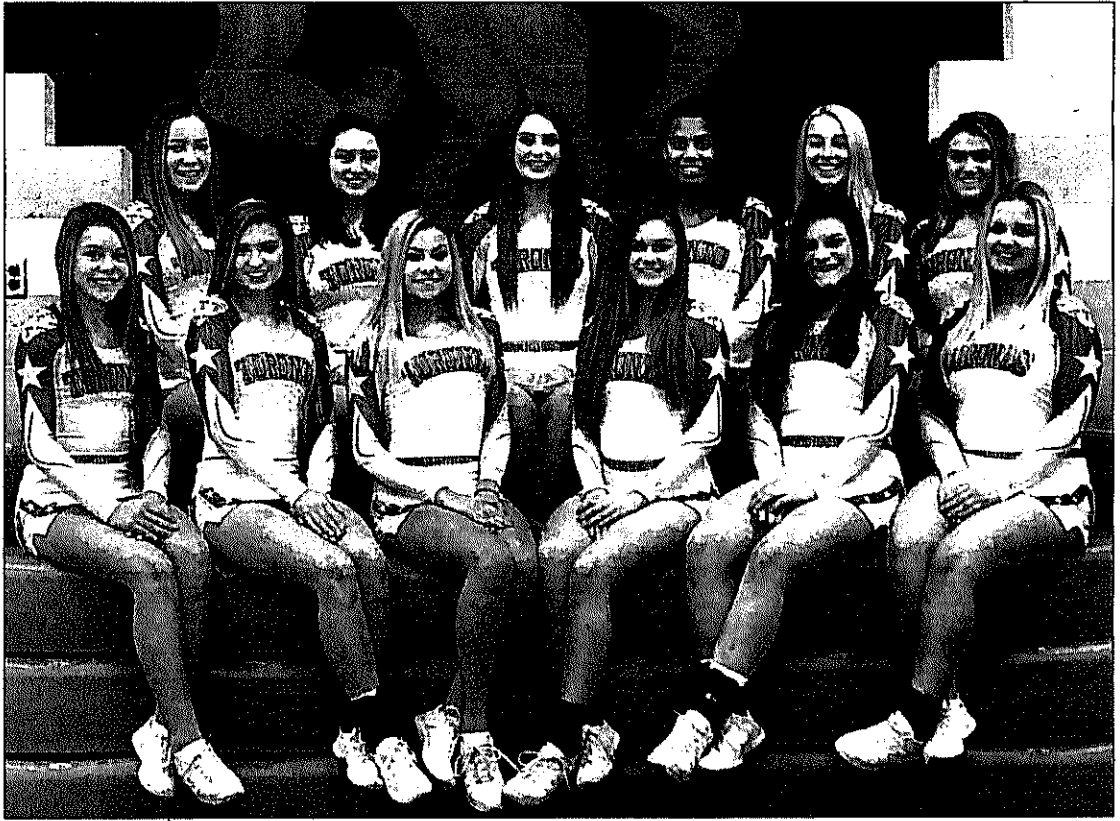
Provenzano is assisted by Natalie Mousourakis while Joey Takacs and Shane Sanders are the choreographers.

Going for three wins in a row is going to be a challenge for the Red

Knights as they will have to get the crowd involved. Crowd involvement is an aspect, according to Provenzano, that the girls are rather new to, but were able to get it down pat.

"Our routine showcases our tumbling talent with a creative opening that is packed with difficulty transitioning into our running tumbling section," Provenzano said. "Our cheer has some sass mixed in with crowd involvement which is something the girls were not used to but picked up very quickly. The second half of the routine is fast with transitions, ripples, tumbling and a creative pom dance that is flashy and exciting."

When you're a part of such a successful program for a long period of time, the expectations are always to go for the gold. For Provenzano, that's the case this year.



Union Local Jets Head coach: Amy Latham

There is a fresh feel to the current Union Local cheering squad. It has a new coach, a new team and a new division in the OVAC.

Amy Latham is in her first year at the helm and the Jets have a youthful energy this year.

"We have a very young team," Latham said. "We only have four girls who competed in OVAC's before. It's a very new team."

A season ago, Union Local turned in a third place finish in the OVAC competition behind head coach Stephanie Jendrusik.

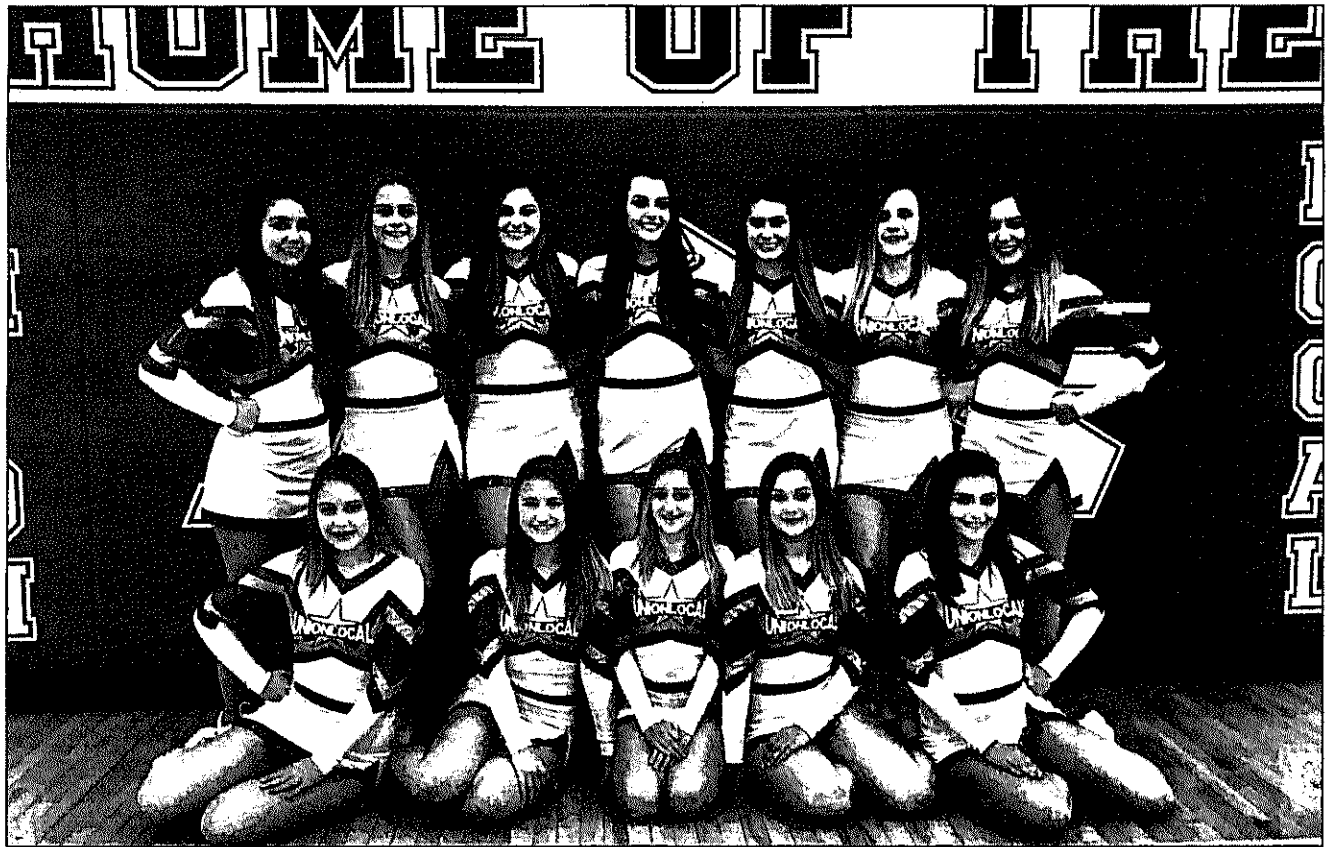
This year, the Jets will look to build off of that success.

"We have a really cute routine this year," Latham said. "We are excited about it. It is one of my favorites that our choreographer has done for us."

"I expect the girls to execute well and do their best in their performances. They have been working really hard and have been practicing since October."

Serving as Union Local's choreographer this year is Ayla Stewart, while Union Local graduate Maddy Stephens serves as the assistant coach.

The Jets' squad consists of Laekynn Little, Jordan Watson, Madisyn Klayko, Alexis Conner, Macie Marinelli, Chasadie Harris, Kylie Taylor, Autumn Crum, Sierra Matthews, Alexis Neidert, Baylee Magnani and Madison Brandon.



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