



Bands & 2020 Cheerleaders

THE NESHOPA DEMOCRAT

Neshoba cheerleaders ready for state competition

By **DUNCAN DENT**
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For the Neshoba Central cheer squad, this is the busy part of the season. Football and Basketball overlap and with all that they still have to find time to practice for the State cheer competition in Jackson on Dec. 12.

Nikki Morrow, Neshoba Central Cheer Coach, takes her sixth year at the helm of Neshoba Central High School cheer. She has 18 girls this year from grades nine through twelve and led by six seniors.

"I really rely on my seniors for their leadership role. I look at all of them as captains. They really lead our team as we work toward the same goal and remain a close-knit group."

Natalie Verry, one of Morrow's seniors and a sixth year veteran of Neshoba Central Cheer, said that the team has given her an opportunity to make new friends and compete. It helps that she enjoys almost every aspect of cheer from regular practices, to sporting events to competitions.

"I really like the opportunity to cheer on the Rockets and represent our school," She put it succinctly.

After December they will prepare for a national competition in Dallas in January. They took third place at the same competition last season.

"I hope we can be successful like that or more again this year," Morrow said. "Our group is devoted and proud and

gives one hundred percent."

For many girls, the Dallas trip is one of the biggest they have taken in their life. Verry took her first trip to the city last year. She said the city was "very pretty." The competition was a mixture of nerves and excitement.

"It was nerve-racking but fun," Verry said. "There were so many teams we did not know what to expect."

When they called out the Neshoba Central Cheer squad for third, she said she and her teammates were over the moon.

"It was just the best feeling ever," Verry said. "We look forward to going back and competing again."



Members of the Neshoba Central Cheerleading squad are, seated left to right, Courtney Stephens, Kaila Rangel, Natalie Verry, Payton Dorman, Piper Fulton, Mallory Chunn, and Lexxi Carter (Middle) Ericka Coats, Mary Lee Williams, Katie Denton, Blair Whittle (Back) Meredith Burrage, Baylor Coggins, Alicia Greenlee, Sierra Anderson, Hattie Hicks, Lilli Cumberland, and Marley Bell.

Rockets band adapts to changes during the season

By **DUNCAN DENT**
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The Pandemic really threw a wrench in the Big Blue Band's plans this season after the state high school activity association nixed the band competition season, but band director Daniel Wade said his kids rose right to the occasion.

"It has been a different kind of year," Wade said. "I am proud of our kids. They decided not to fold, not to quit and I think we had a good season in the process. Our band really grew both in musical skill and maturity this year."

Wade has 130 students in the marching band this year led by 21 seniors. They have been able to put together a halftime show. It is a scaled-back version of Wade's original idea, a show called "Fly" based on a Childs view of aviation.

"We really didn't get a chance to finish the show but I think it really turned out well," Wade said. "We had some success putting on the show we were able to put together. Our kids handled it really well. They did their best and we are



The Neshoba Central High School band was unable to compete this season due to COVID-19.

pleased how things are going." Throughout the football season, the NCHS band played

in the stands and at halftime. Though all competitions were concealed they hosted an exhibi-

tion event at the school in October. Now that football has come to an end Friday night,

the band looks ahead to the Christmas parade as their last performance of the season.

Next semester Wade expects to do full concert and indoor band seasons.

Good luck to all bands and cheerleaders!



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Members of the Choctaw Central High School drum line perform on the sidelines of a football game this year. They did not march this season due to COVID-19.

Choctaw cheerleaders, band persevere

By STEVE SWOGETINSKY
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Nothing was set in stone for the cheerleaders and band members at Choctaw Central High School as far as the 2020 football season was concerned.

The season started late because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Summer practices for the band and cheerleaders were limited because of the dread disease. And even after the season started, games were canceled because of COVID-19.

But even so, the band and cheerleaders were always ready on Friday nights to support the Warriors.

“We used eight cheerleaders this year,” Cheerleader

sponsor Renata Ben said. “We kept the ones from last year’s team. With the pandemic, we couldn’t order uniforms or have everything ready on time. So, we said we were going to do what we did last year and move on from there.”

Skye Bell and Asia York were co-head cheerleaders.

“We only had a few practices outside,” Ben said. “Then we had the girls do virtual practices to learn new cheers,

“We only had six games. I suggested we only do home games. That helped us avoid the girls having to be on the bus. There were only so many people who could be on the bus and we didn’t want to keep families from getting to go and

see their kids play. We didn’t want to take their space.”

The group was quarantined once during the season because of precautions.

“The best thing about that was it was an away game so we didn’t miss a game,” Ben said.

The band was directed Elter Wilson. The band had limited practices because of the COVID-19 pandemic and only performed during home games.

“It was hard this year,” Wilson said. “We didn’t march this year because of the pandemic. We did a drum line in the stands but that was about it.”



Members of the Choctaw Central High School’s Cheerleading squad don masks on the sidelines of a football game.

Leake Academy cheerleaders have busy season

By STEVE SWOGETINSKY
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The Leake Academy cheerleaders had a busy season that lasted a few weeks longer than others seasons.

The Leake Academy football team played for the state championship were with them throughout the season. The Rebels defeated Adams County Christian School 10-0 last Thursday in the MAIS Class 5A state championship game that was played at Jackson Academy.

With the threat of pandemic COVID-19, the cheerleaders have managed to stay healthy and performed each under first year cheerleader sponsor Molly Breazeale.

“It was a little different,” Breazeale said. “Everyone always wore their masks and we practiced outside. But it was worth the extra effort.”

The Leake Academy cheerleaders practiced twice a week as a group to get ready for pep



Pictured are front row, left to right, McKinley Allen, Morgan Evans, Lakin Rushing, Mabry Mayfield (Middle) Laney Palokas, Maddy Little, Alix Withers, Carlyn Vaughn, Sydney Sisson (Back) Anna Elise Breazeale, Meredith Adams, and Addy Lea Page.

rallied and then game day.

Members of the cheerleading squad are McKinley Allen, Morgan Evans, Lakin Rushing,


Mabry Mayfield, Laney Palokas, Maddy Little, Alix Withers, Carlyn Vaughn, Sydney Sisson, Anna Elise Breazeale, Meredith Adams and Addy Lea Page.

There were 12 members for the high school.




Neshoba Central High School Dance

Members of the Neshoba Central Dance team are, front row from left, Molly Kuntz, Madison McDaniel, Kaleigh Swearingen, Lauren Chamblee, Maggie Lee Griffis, Skyler Manues (Middle) Elli Huffman, Emily Duran, Ella Windham, Maggie Stovall, Layla Loper, Lauren Gwen Posey, Anna Beth Kilgore (Back) Gracie Ingram, Faith Shumaker, Mary Kate Moran, Abby Windham, and Aubrey Everett.




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Members of the Philadelphia High School Cheerleading squad are, front row from left, Emily Booker, T'Kenzley Moore, Danajah Willis, Kara Daly, Paris Hantzis, Kaiya Tucker, Carleigh Edwards, Hailey Donald, Aerial Burnside, Pashae Roberson, Zariyah Jackson, Makayla Evans (Back) Markasia Dupree, Maggie Taylor, Zoe'Jones, Jazzmine Crouther, Emma Taylor, Prentaijah Holley, Rayleigh Parkison, Genesis Osby, Lakyia Houston, and Mary Ellen Booker.

Philadelphia cheerleaders, band prepared during season

By STEVE SWOGETINSKY
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The 2020 football season was unlike any other for the band and cheerleaders at Philadelphia High School.

The groups prepared to perform on Friday nights but there was always the question of whether or not there would be a football.

The season was shortened to begin with and didn't start until the beginning of Septem-

ber. And the Tornados were quarantined for two weeks because of the COVID-19. But like the football players, the band members and cheerleaders were prepared to preform each Friday, regardless.

Philadelphia High School alumnus Courtney Bounds was in her first year as cheerleader sponsor. She cheered at Philadelphia from the seventh grade until her senior year. Shee went to college at Meridian Community College, East

Central Community College and finished at Mississippi State University-Meridian. She joined the Philadelphia staff in January and teaches high school biology.

"It has been challenging," Bounds said. "We had to get a late start because of the COVID-19. Because of the rules, we weren't able to start until June."

Now that the season is over, the cheerleading squad with be going to competition in De-

cember.

"Our girls treat each other like family," Bounds said. "It is a huge squad for a 2A school. They have cheered together for a long time."

Members of the Philadelphia cheerleading squad are Emily Booker, T'Kenzley Moore, Danajah Willis, Kara Daly, Paris Hantzis, Kaiya Tucker, Carleigh Edwards, Hailey Donald, Aerial Burnside, Pashae Roberson, Zariyah Jackson, Makayla Evans,

Markasia Dupree, Maggie Taylor, Zoe'Jones, Jazzmine Crouther, Emma Taylor, Prentaijah Holley, Rayleigh Parkison, Genesis Osby, Lakyia Houston and Mary Ellen Booker.

The Philadelphia High School band has grown to 50 members under the direction of Mr. Wayne Ben. The theme for the season was The Motown Sounds. The songs they played included "I want you back," "Papa Was a Rolling Stone,"

and "Get Ready,"

The was no contest this year because of the COVID-19.

"It was different in the classroom because we had to space ourselves six feet apart," said Ben. "But out of doors, it was about the same. The kids worked hard and performed well."

Zoe Jones was the drum major. The roster for the band was unavailable.

Union High School marching band wraps up successful year

By STEVE SWOGETINSKY
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The Union High School march band wrapped up another outstanding year under the direction of Adam and Katie De Venney.

Things were different this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But the Union band took precautions and moved on,

"Everything about the 2020

has been a little challenging," Adam De Vinney said. "We had to rethink how we approach things and do some things differently."

The band practiced twice a week during the summer and after school. We had to be a little more flexible."

The band played the music from the Sherlock Holmes movies.

They didn't have contest this year because of the



The Union High School band takes the field to perform during halftime.

COVID-19. The band put on a community showcase.

"We had a fun year," De Vinney. "This is the first time

we had a community showcase for the first time. We may

start doing that every year."

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Leake Academy Cheer and Dance Teams



Cheer team

On the front row, from left to right is McKinley Allen, Morgan Evans, Lakin Rushing and Mabry Mayfield. On the back row, from left to right is Meredith Adams, Maddy Little, Caryln Vaughn, Laney Palokas, Alix Withers, Sydney Sisson, Addy Lea Page and Anna Elise Breazeale.



Dance team

From left to right, Georgia Claire Rudolph, Madison Beckham, Emily Boyd and Sydney Evans.

