

# Cheerleaders work hard to prepare for football season

By Charles Kornis

Of the Emerald

Next to the players at a Duck football or basketball game, the hardest working bodies there may be those of the cheerleaders.

For the past month these zealots have worked on their routines nine hours a day. As soon as classes start, their practice schedule reduces to five nights a week — three-hour workouts followed by about 40 minutes of pumping and pushing at a fitness club.

The cheerleaders love what they do and worked their green and yellow tails off to get to where they are. Last spring's tryouts were a three-day process in which most candidates performed routines about 15 times before the final selections were made. About 60 women and 12 men tried out.

Under the direction of their advisor, Mike Maulding, the nine women and four men selected started practicing right away and continued through most of June. Practice resumed in early August when the squad traveled to a national cheerleading camp in California.

Maulding, a cheerleader himself in the early 1970s, was part of the frenzy when the Ducks snapped the UCLA basketball team's home-game winning streak at 96. Now in his sixth year as rally advisor, Maulding also works as a teacher and vice principal at a Springfield elementary school.

Maulding said there is a "misconception" about the annual tryouts.

"People feel that old members automatically get their spots back, and that's wrong," he said. "Sometimes it's more of a handicap for an old member than for someone who never tried out before."

"The judging panel expects a lot from people who've worked on the squad before. I've had a lot of people who've been on the squad for two years, tried out and not made it."

Maulding said he would like to see more men trying out next spring. But guys have to realize that cheerleading is an athletic sport, he said.

"Any guy who's your '100 pound weakling' isn't going to make it. Guys have to be coordinated, agile and physically strong."

Tim O'Leary and Frank Reasoner were good enough to make the squad for a second time. Self-described as hyperactive, O'Leary has a background that includes distance running, karate and marching band.

O'Leary sweated through his sophomore year as the Duck mascot.

"You lose about eight pounds a game as the Duck. It's real hot," he said.

Beginning this year, the Duck, played by Joe Giansante, is part of the squad. He now practices and travels with the cheerleaders.

O'Leary said cheerleading is athletic and fun enough not to seem like work. He said he appreciates the benefits of friendship and travel that come with rally.

The squad goes to two or three football road games and the same number of basketball road games.

"The adrenaline is higher on away trips — 40,000 people who don't know you and don't like you," O'Leary said. A sell-out Arizona State homecoming crowd awaits the cheerleaders Nov. 7.

The veterans among this year's women are Vanessa Sykes, Terrell Marshall, Kellie Brust and Kim Kaples.

Cheerleading as a junior and senior wasn't enough for Sykes. Now she's back as a graduate student, and Maulding said it's the first time that ever has happened.

The first-year women are Sara Leatham, Marni Beardsley, Chris Harrington, Robyn Forstrom and Stephanie Angevine. The rookies among the men are Craig Naze and Vance Bowman.

Leatham, who competed nationally for four years in gymnastics, said cheerleading involves the same time commitment as her former sport, but is more demanding at times.

"I equate cheerleading to playing three sports," she said.

As for balancing school and sport, Leatham said, it's takes good juggling skills. In addition to practices, workouts and games, the cheerleaders do a lot of public relations work that includes grand openings of stores, banquets and charity telethons.

As a Duck cheerleader, Marni Beardsley, from Corvallis, is breaking ties with her family's staunch allegiance to OSU.

"Marni's parents are big, big Beaver people," Maulding said. "It's going to be real interesting when she goes to Corvallis to cheer."

Despite their extraordinary input of time and energy, the rally members receive no scholarships, tuition waivers or book money. They're awarded only three credit hours of marching band credit.



Photo by Shu-Shing Chen

Tim O'Leary (left), Vance Bowman (center) and Terrel Marshall lift Chris Harrington in a recent cheerleader practice.

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