

VHS Cheerleading Revived

By Scott Laird

It's been about five years since Vernonia High School had a Cheerleading Squad, but a new coach, some enthusiastic team members and a new attitude are helping revive the Vernonia Cheerleaders this summer. It surely comes at the right time.

"We want to show our teams that people are rooting for them," said Sophia Ostrander, a sophomore member of the new squad.

"We need more spirit right now - in our schools and in our community" said Kristina Halverson, another member of the squad.

New coach Cassandra Ashby has her new team excited about being cheerleaders in Vernonia. "It's all I think about right now," said Ostrander. "I stayed up all night with my friends, talking about cheerleading," added Halverson. The team will be practicing once a week all summer to get ready for the fall season."

Coach Ashby is trying to instill a sense of pride and respect in the fourteen team members. "I want to give young girls in this community something to look up to," said Ashby, who recently moved to Vernonia with her young family. "I am having all team members sign a contract that clearly spells out how they will conduct themselves whenever they are wearing their uniforms or the school name. I want them to know they are part of team and a representative of Vernonia everywhere they go."

Ashby was a Varsity Cheerleader and All Star in Banks, and she recently served as an assistant coach and then the head coach for the Banks High School Squad. She has lots of plans for developing a quality program and a strong team for Vernonia.

"I want people to realize that cheerleading is truly a sport," said Ashby. "We are planning to have all our team members attend gymnastics camp once a week for four months which should really improve our program by giving the girls better skills. We are training to develop three stunt teams so the girls can do much more athletic moves than just lead cheers. We are planning to hold a camp for younger girls in the community and start developing skills and interest at a young age, just like they do with Little Guy Football and Little League Baseball. And I want to get the team members to coach and work with the younger girls to help build commitment in the community."

The team will also make their presence felt inside and outside the school by decorating sports team members' lockers on game days, marching in parades, and sending out get well cards to local community members who are ill.

The team held tryouts this spring, and all fourteen girls who stayed through the tryouts made the team. "I told everyone that I needed to see that they were practicing what I was teaching and really trying to improve," said Ashby.

Because of funding shortages in the school athletic programs, cheerleading will be a "pay to play" sport which means squad members have to buy their own equipment. That totaled up to almost \$800 for each team member. That cost included summer camp gear such as matching tee shirts, warm up uniforms, shoes, undershell, outer uniform, spandex, poms, team bag, and gymnastics camp enrollment. The team will be out in the community looking for sponsors and contributions. They are offering opportunities to sponsor the team from \$50 to \$350 levels. The team needs to raise money quickly as it will take six weeks to get their uniforms once they are ordered.

The girls recently held a successful car wash and a can drive to raise funds. They have scheduled a Pedicure fund raiser on July 13th at the Vernonia Scout Cabin from 10:00AM to 7:00 PM. Cost is \$15. You can schedule a pedicure with any of the Cheerleaders on the squad.

"We want to show the school and community we are here to stay," said Ashby. "We have received so much support from Principal Underwood, Athletic Director Jarman and other faculty members and other community members."

"We know what we need to do," said Ostrander. "We know if enough girls really put their heart into this, we can make this a success."



New Vernonia cheerleaders Liz Poulin, Laura Keiser, Kaytee Burghard, Sarah Miller, Nicki Thompson, Kim Allen, and Kelsey Brown practice their stunt routines.

VHS Spring Sports Report

With the ending of the spring sports season, the athletic programs for the 2007-08 year have come to a close. There were varying degrees of success for each of the five programs that finished in the latter part of May.

In Equestrian, four all-league athletes represented the Vernonia team at State: Brianna Carr, Mackenzie Tarkalson, Jamie Benes, and Bryan Benes. These four athletes competed on the drill team at Redmond in the state competition. The equestrian season started in December and actually went through two seasons-- winter and spring--winding up their competition in May. At the awards dessert held Wednesday May 28th, several student athletes were honored. The most improved awards went to Chantel Szlavich and Alee Chadek. The most valuable went to freshman Brianna Carr. Jaime Benes received the most inspirational award while Marissa Clement and Bryan Benes received four-year plaques. These student athletes not only work hard to keep themselves in shape but also must look after their horses, making the sport of equestrian doubly hard on them ensuring that they and their animals are well cared. Their new coach, Diane Benes, has been very busy this year arranging transportation and arenas for practice. In spite of this she cannot say enough good things about this year's group of student athletes and believes they were a joy to coach.

In golf, coach Rod Devine honored three athletes with Jacob Alf and Calvin Barnes being named Most Improved and freshman Paul Whiteman being named Most Valuable. Thirteen athletes finished the season for the Vernonia Loggers golf team; this is about the same number we have carried in the past. Coach Devine was happy with the prospects for the upcoming years because eleven out of the thirteen athletes are underclassmen.

Softball had a new coaching staff this year but continued their winning ways. They finished fourth in the league and made the league play-offs. Unfortunately, they bowed out of the league tournament early with a first round loss to Warrenton. This team was a young team and the future looks very bright. The team was loaded with sophomores, and their talent showed through by having three sophomores and one junior named to the all-league team. Selected to the first team all league were Karly DeWitt and Bonnie Birkmaier while the second team all-league honors went to Souvanny Miller and Brittney Paden. Outstanding seniors that played for the Lady Loggers were Tarra Johnston, Jennifer Castro and Lindsey Shaw. At the awards dessert, sophomore Souvanny Miller was named the team's Most Valuable Player and senior Jenifer Castro was named the most inspirational. Breonna Maldonado was selected as the team's most improved player for this year. Adrian East was the starting pitcher most of the season for the team and turned in some bright moments on the mound. Coach Dahlstrom was very impressed with the girls' level of play given the fact they were loaded with so many underclassmen. If these girls continue to play and practice hard, there is no telling what they can accomplish in the next few years. They will be a team to watch in the future. They finished with nineteen girls on the roster and sixteen of them will be back for next year's team.

The Logger Track and field team was impressive this year with the most number of athletes involved in all of spring sports and sending the most number of athletes to State since this year's wrestling team. The track team finished the season with thirty-four athletes. Leading the Loggers this year for most of the season was the short relay team consisting of: Blake Moeller, Justin Caputo, Mat Krause and Shelby Grittman. The relay team qualified for State but with one change in the line-up. At the district meet Justin Caputo pulled a hamstring in his heat of the 100 meters and had to be replaced on the team. Tommy Carr stepped up and did the job which helped qualify the relay team to state. In the end, junior speedster Blake Moeller, the team's anchor man, had to pass several opponents to get the team in position to go to state. Blake also qualified for state in the 200 meters and just missed going in the 100 meters.

The team consists of both boys and girls, and junior Samantha Lee represented the girls at State. Samantha qualified in the high jump event placing second in the district meet. The all-league athletes consisting of Blake Moeller, who placed 7th in state in the 200 meters, Shelby Grittman, Matt Krause, Tommy Carr, and Samantha Lee did an excellent job of representing Vernonia in the biggest meet of the year. Blake was an all-state athlete as well as all-league by placing in the 200 meters. There was a very close finish to this race with only four tenths of a second separating the third place finisher from the 7th place position.

At the awards dessert the team awards went to: Freshmen Nora Hieronimus and Shelby Grittman for Best First Year. The Most Inspirational awards went to Benni Scheytt and Megan Hieronimus. Most improved award went to Justin Caputo, and the Most Valuable and Most Dedicated awards went to Blake Moeller and Michael Calhoun. Michael finished his senior year as co-captain and an excellent leader on the team. Michael has worked hard on the track team for four years and was also awarded his four-year plaque for finishing four years as a letterman on the team.

Coach Brown was very happy with this year's team and is looking forward to the upcoming years as most of these athletes were underclassmen and will be back next year.

The baseball started with twenty-two athletes and because of various reasons ended with fifteen. Despite the low numbers, the Loggers still ended in fourth place in league and qualified for the league play-offs. The team placed four athletes on the all-league selections: Alex Lende as an honorable mention player and senior Cody Davis as a second team all-league player. Jeramey Lende and Byron Schorzman were named to the all-league first team and Jeramey was also named to the all-state team. Taylor Smith was named the team's most improved player and the coach's award went to Tim Brown for his unselfish play and teamwork. Because of his versatility and hard work, Byron Schorzman was named the most valuable player on the team. Four-year plaques went to Cody Davis and Jeramey Lende for finishing their senior season with four varsity letters in baseball. There were seven seniors on this year's team and each of them were starters at some time during the year. They were: Kevin Cook, Matt Baldwin, Caleb Stevens, Jake Thompson, Cody Davis, Ty Traylor, and Jeramey Lende. Those seniors will be missed and leave several openings to be filled by underclassmen.

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