

the show. "Our damn roadie gets more play than we do," Chris said, loud enough that Ethan could hear him. The people at the party laughed and Ethan turned bright red.

The other band members, Colt especially, treat Ethan like a kid brother. He was inducted into the band after he got up on stage one night and, as Kenny explained it, "Started dancing around, freaking out head-banging, shaking his crazy afro around and jumping up and down. We were like, 'That was kind of fun, we should make him do stuff.'"

"See Ethan really likes being in a band," Colt said. "He gets really excited about everything, and we get to share that."

"Shut up man, you're ruining my game," Ethan interjected.

"We're Northwest Royale," Colt shot back, grinning. "We don't care about game."

DIEHARD FANS

It was a hot night in July and outside the WOW Hall, the sidewalk was packed with tight knots of people smoking and working hard at looking tough. In the parking lot out back, kids wearing Northwest Royale T-shirts milled around, hoping they'd be able to hear the show through the open back door. In the bar downstairs, the tattooed, pierced crowd downed PBR like water. Two guys were loudly "discussing" something and the volume level in the room was rising like the mercury in a thermometer during the dog days of summer. Upstairs, as the band prepared to play, the crush of the crowd moved to the front of the stage.

"They have hardcore fans," Marshall said. "They always show up wearing their shirts, they buy the merchandise and they



'NO SERIOUSLY, I HAD TO SPOON WITH MY FUCKING MANAGER BECAUSE THERE WASN'T ENOUGH ROOM.' — LEAD SINGER COLT WILLIAMS

drink. The one time I wish I had an extra bouncer and a barricade at the Wetlands is when Northwest Royale plays."

In the end, it comes down to the fans: the teenagers who spend the money they make working at McDonald's on Northwest Royale CDs and T-shirts, the 20-something guys who explode into a mosh pit when the band busts out with the crowd favorite,

"Drinkin' Again," and the metal chicks who "ooh" and scream and throw their bras on-stage when Chris does his boy band songs about licking cream. Whether Northwest Royale goes national or maintains a strong underground cult following, it's the fans who will move them up in the world. And that fan base started in Eugene.

Nielsen said the devotion of Northwest

Royale's fans reminds him of "Floater back in the early days. They were always asking, 'When's the next Floater show?' Now they're asking, 'When's the next Northwest Royale show?'" ★

Northwest Royale
9 pm, Thursday, 8/18
WOW Hall, \$5
northwestroyale.com • wowhall.org

www.SquarePegConcerts.com

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