

Island Sports

Cheerleading squad gets lift from four island girls

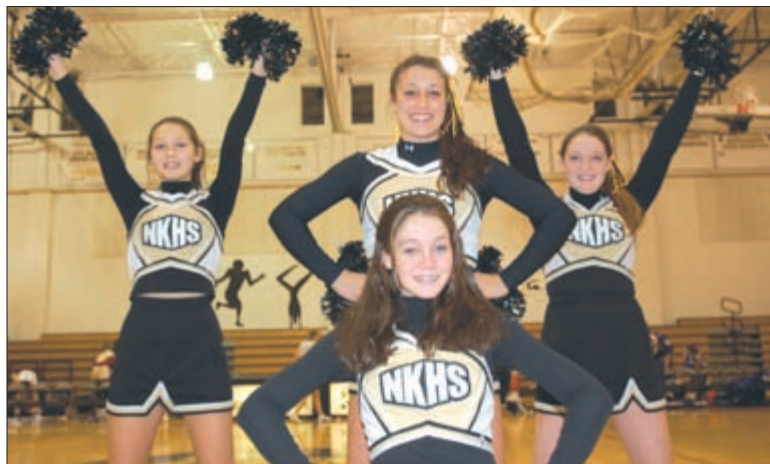
By Stephanie Heelan Cotsonas

Cheerleading is not what it used to be. Cheerleaders are no longer just fixtures on the sidelines. They may not even attend the games if there are conflicts with their own competition schedules.

This is the first season that high school cheerleading has been recognized as a sport by the Rhode Island Interscholastic League (RIIL). Competition cheerleading is an official winter sport with a complete season of weekend competitions and its own set of interscholastic rules and regulations.

The North Kingstown High School competition cheerleading squad attends and cheers at all Friday night home games for the boys' and girls' varsity basketball teams and in this agreement worked out with the athletic director, competitions take priority over the games.

Head Coach Courtney Kelley, who has two assistant coaches, is pleased with the RIIL recognition. "It is good for us because we are now at the same level as



The Rhode Island Interscholastic League officially recognized cheerleading as an interscholastic sport this year. Jamestown has four representatives on the North Kingstown team. They are Alyson Doyle, at front, and from left at back, Morgan Piela, senior captain Abby Durand and Morgan Lopes. Photo by Adrienne Downing

every other sport and we have to follow certain rules, which is a good thing."

North also cheers at the Special Olympics and participates in an after-school program at Forest Park School. The squad will cheer at special high school events, such as playoff games. "Two years ago, right after we competed in our state meet we

sized that all the girls have their strengths. "Like every other sport, we have a mix. We have our flyers who are the top girls in the air, we have our bases and our back spots, we have tumblers and then we have girls who are really good jumpers or dancers."

One of the senior captains is Durand, who Kelley praised saying, "She is a back spot and when there is a girl in the air she is always the person behind them. Abby is very strong and is really good at teaching the younger girls. Even though she only does one position she knows all of the other positions and she can tell a flyer or base what to do. She is very talented and sweet and the underclassmen look up to her because she is very approachable," the coach said.

Balancing Friday night games with Saturday competitions can be time consuming, but the squad uses the games as dress rehearsals for the next day. Durand said the Friday games are fun and like a reward for working hard all week. "It is good to try and do our skills at a game in front of the crowd as practice for the competition, but it is so different in a competition."

Jamestown resident and freshman Aly Doyle said, "I like both, but the basketball games are easier and more fun. The competitions are so nerve-racking, but they are exhilarating." The other two islanders on the team are freshmen Morgan Lopes and Morgan Piela.

Durand said, "There is a lot more pressure during competition season," especially when considering the countdown to state championships. "There are a lot of injuries and everyone is competitive," the senior added.

North's biggest challenge this season has been girls being out because of illness. All 20 squad members compete in every routine, including pyramids, so, "when girls are out sick we don't have replacements or subs, so getting the team together is a problem. When that girl comes back you hope you can make up the lost time. You can't just throw a new girl in a new position," Kelley said.

North is only midway through their season. They have two competitions this weekend followed by the NK Cheerleading Invitational on Feb. 17 and states on March 8.

went directly to the boys' basketball state championship," said islander Abby Durand.

The Skippers have competed in four of their 11 competitions this season, and have consistently placed in the middle of the pack. Kelley is happy but said, "That was okay at the beginning of the season but we should be doing better than that by now."

North has a young team with only four seniors on the 20-member squad. Kelley empha-

Cal Ripken league registration underway

Registration has begun for the 2008 season of Cal Ripken Baseball in Jamestown.

The deadline to register for the Major League, ages 9 to 12, is March 24 and April 4 is the deadline for the Minor League, ages 7 to 11. No one will be allowed to register after those dates.

To register, visit the web site at www.jamestownri.com/baseball.

Download the form, fill it out and send the form and payment to: Art Spivack, 25 Lawn Ave., Jamestown, RI 02835.

For more information, call Steve Cirella at 423-1425.

Anyone wishing to be a head coach or assistant coach must register with Cirella before the start of the season. A criminal background check is required for all coaches.

Achievement award nominees sought

The University of Rhode Island seeks nominees for its Distinguished Achievement Awards.

The awards program honors alumni and friends of the University who have brought distinction to themselves and the University through their professional achievements, outstanding leadership and/or community service.

The deadline for nominations is Feb. 29. The ceremony will be held Saturday, Oct. 18, at the Providence Westin Hotel.

Award recipients are selected by a committee of representatives from colleges, the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, the Division of University Advancement, the Department of Athletics, the Alumni Association and the graduate and undergraduate student body.

For further information and to download a nomination form visit <http://advance.uri.edu/alumni/awards/>.

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