

Barber excited to join Pittsburg State cheer squad



Louisburg senior Avery Barber (left) spent the last four years cheering for the Wildcats and now she is ready to continue her cheer career at Pittsburg State this fall.

While her friends were getting ready for their senior prom, Avery Barber found herself 90 miles away trying to calm her nerves as she prepped for what she hoped would be the start of something special.

Those nerves have since been replaced with a high level of anticipation.

Barber spent that April day trying out for the Pittsburg State University cheerleading team and she got the news she was hoping for – her cheer career is far from over.

The Louisburg senior was informed she will be one of 28 members of the Gorilla cheer squad for 2018-19 season. Barber will cheer on the Gorillas during the football and basketball seasons.

“All throughout high school, I figured it would end here,” Barber said of her cheer career. “Being a part of the squad and how much of a family we have become has been great to see. I think I have really grown as a cheerleader and I didn’t want to stop. I was really excited when I found out that I made

it.”

The tryouts were an anxious time for Barber as she went up against some difficult competition and was asked to do different things than she was used to in high school.



Louisburg senior Avery Barber (top left) will cheer at all the Pitt State football and basketball games next season.

However, Barber quickly made some new friends that helped ease some of those nerves.

“Tryouts were really stressful,” Barber said. “We had to do a cheer and chant and the fight song and tumbling tryout. We did two stunts with someone I chose and someone they chose. I was nervous, but I stunted better than I expected and I just remembered everything that I learned from my last five years.

"I talk to the coaches a lot at open gyms about what I need to work on. I have gotten close with some of the cheerleaders there and they have helped me feel comfortable at the clinics. Once practice starts, it is all about me working hard to be a better cheerleader and better athlete too."

Cheer has been a big part of Barber's life since the sixth grade when she joined the Louisburg FCCJC team, and then cheered two years in middle school before she joined the Wildcat team for all four years of high school.

The idea to move on to Pittsburg State was an easy one for her as she saw what the Gorilla team was accomplishing.

"I have been committed to going to Pitt since I was probably 5-years-old," she said. "Both my parents went there too, so it has always been a big part of my life. Also, Pitt State recently got third at nationals and that just pushed me toward wanting to be on that team."

It is that team aspect that has attracted Barber to continuing her cheer career and she is excited for the challenges that lie ahead.

"It is different in college because you don't do all-girl group stunts, you do partner stunting," Barber said. "Just practicing stunting with boys and working on tumbling is that is something that is required. It is not something I am used to, but I think I will enjoy it."

"I really just enjoy the team aspect of it and how you rely on everyone else to stay in the air, but not only that, but to inspire the crowd and watching the games as well. It is just one big family."