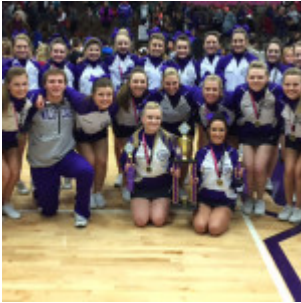


LHS cheerleaders, Jazzy Cats get top rating



Members of the Louisburg High School cheerleading team that won all-squad honors are (front row, from left) Brooklyn Southard, Maddie Holloway; (middle row) Hanna Becker, Gracie Key, Jacob Jensen, Racheal Bellinger, Claire Houchen, Abby Reedy, Avery Aust, Megan Eberhart, Lauren Becker, Lyndon Smith; (back row) Hallie Hutsell, Shaylor Whitham, Allie Drew, Avery Barber, Billy Casebeer, Payton Shaffer, Leia Shaffer, Ashley Stuteville, Kaitlyn Lewer, Kaitlyn Urban, Addie Katzer and Randa Lewis.

BALDWIN CITY – Weeks were spent making sure they were in the right place, they got every move right and every stunt correct.

It meant for some grueling practices to achieve that perfection. All of the hard work seemed to pay off for both the Louisburg High School cheerleading squad and the Jazzy Cats dance team.

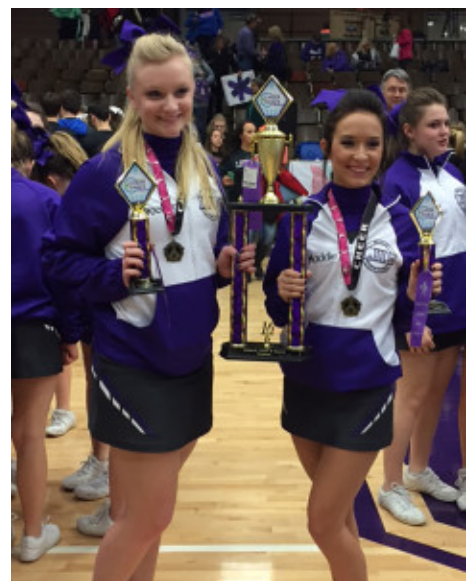
Both teams ventured to the Baldwin Cheer and Dance Festival on Saturday at Baldwin High School and each squad came away with high marks to show for it.

The LHS cheer team received a ‘1’ rating for its all-squad

routine in the high school division. The cheerleaders, which competed against 17 other high schools, were also recognized as one of the judges' top four teams of the competition.

The all-squad team includes Brooklyn Southard, Maddie Holloway, Hallie Hutsell, Shaylor Whitham, Allie Drew, Avery Barber, Billy Casebeer, Payton Shaffer, Leia Shaffer, Ashley Stuteville, Kaitlyn Lewer, Kaitlyn Urban, Addie Katzer, Randa Lewis, Claire Houchen, Hanna Becker, Gracie Key, Jacob Jensen, Racheal Bellinger, Abby Reedy, Avery Aust, Megan Eberhart, Lauren Becker and Lyndon Smith.

They tested out their routine at halftime of the Wildcats' homecoming game on Feb. 5 and got a rousing ovation from the crowd, which was a big help for the competition.



LHS seniors Brooklyn Southard (left) and Maddie Holloway pose with the team trophy and medals following Saturday's competition.

"The cheerleaders were not nervous at all about performing," coach Shannon Aust said. "They actually love it. I think our

confidence came from performing the routine at the homecoming pep rally and halftime of the boys basketball game.

“Getting the routine in front of a crowd a couple of times before competition really boosts their confidence. That and their practice schedule makes them know the routine so well they could do it in their sleep.”

Louisburg wasn't done earning awards from the judges.

The all-squad team also received a specialty award for outstanding stunting, outstanding pyramid, outstanding choreography, outstanding jumps and outstanding cheer technique in the high school division.

Louisburg also had five teams enter the stunt group competition and two groups received a '1' rating.

The team of Southard, Drew, Lewer, Leia Shaffer and Katzer, along with the team of Aust, Urban, Lewis, Hutsell and Lauren Becker each earned top marks.

Holloway, Smith, Houchen, Reedy, along with the team of Key, Eberhard, Jensen, Whitham, Hanna Becker, and another team of Bellinger, Stuteville, Casebeer, Barber and Payton Shaffer each earned a '2' rating.

It has been a long road for the Wildcat cheer group as they have had to deal with adversity, but Saturday's competition made it all worth it.

“We learned our routine last summer and were unable to compete this fall because of injuries,” Aust said. “LHS practices 10 months out of the year only taking April and July off. Our all-squad routine has been practiced since last June but our individual stunt routines were just made about three weeks ago.”

As for the dance team, it encountered some of the same success their cheer counterparts did.

The Jazzy Cats took two routines, along with several individual and small group events to the competition. They received a '1' rating on their first routine and a '3' on their new routine.



Members of the Jazzy Cats are (front row, from left) Lauren Cain, Melia Rice, Kelsey Traffis, Quincy Rice, Bree Christy; (back row) Teagan Myers, Addison Correll, Katie JoRay, Alicia Leitch and Sami Traffis.

Members of the Jazzy Cats are Teagan Myers, Addison Correll, Katie JoRay, Alicia Leatch, Sami Traffis, Lauren Cain, Melia Rice, Kelsey Traffis, Quincy Rice and Bree Christy.

The Jazzy Cats also earned a dance technique special award at the end of the competition. It was a good ending to what has been a hard-working season for the group.

"The competition last weekend was a great culmination of events for the year," Jazzy Cats coach Kassy Miller said. "I am so proud of their hard work and the progress that they have

made since starting on their routines last April. Many don't realize that being on the dance team is a year-round activity. They have definitely grown as a group and are so lucky, to not only dance and compete with the band, but on their own as well.

"They had a great experience at their first dance competition in November, and learned a lot from attending the Baldwin competition last weekend. As a dance coach, there is nothing better than watching them perform in a room full of judges and performers."