



Monday, September 10, 2001

OU dance team wins Spirit Camp competition

By **Jeff Samoray**, *OU Web Writer*

Images, Oakland University's Dance Team, won its third consecutive Universal Dance Association College Spirit Camp competition, held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee August 8-11. The team currently is ranked No. 2 in Division I.

At the Spirit Camp competition, each of the 10 teams were judged on a two-minute routine that was assembled during the camp. The teams were evaluated on choreography, formations, synchronization, crowd appeal and their smiles.

"You can't just keep a frozen smile on your face," said OU junior and Images co-captain Erin Shea. "You have to look like you're enjoying it."

The team received its No. 2 ranking after finishing second at the 2001 National Dance Team Championships, which took place in January at Disney's Wide World of Sports Complex in Orlando, Fla. The team's performance will be featured in a taped broadcast on **ESPN2** Sunday, October 14, from 2 to 3 p.m.

The team choreographed a special routine for the Spirit Camp competition, with input from all 20 team members, said Shea, a nursing major.

"The hardest thing is getting a dance together that everyone can do, yet still impresses the judges," Shea said. "We added more technical things to our routine, like leaps, turns and high intensity jumps that flowed with the dance."

Images creates original routines by melding a variety of dance styles to stand out from other teams. "What we do is unique," Shea said.

"We do what we can do best rather than what everyone else is looking for. Other teams are trying to dance like the music videos. We do our own style. We're really good at funk and hip-hop dancing. Some teams just stick to one style, but we do jazz, hip-hop, funk or pom (stiff, precise movements). We pick some good music and come up with routines that the crowd likes to see."

The team's biggest event of the year is the National Championships, for which it will spend at least two months preparing an original routine. The 2002 Championships are January 11-12 in Orlando. In the past, the team has developed its competition routine with professional choreographer and dancer Cris Judd, known for his association with singer Jennifer Lopez.

"I think we'll do really well at Nationals," Shea said. "We have a lot of new talented girls on the team and we know what we need to work on. We created our first impression for the judges this year at the spirit camp, and there was a lot of pressure to be impressive. We need to work on our fitness. We're fit as human beings, but as dancers you can never be too fit. Beyond that, we need to learn new skills and techniques so we can go to Orlando and do something fresh and impressive as a team."

Images regularly performs short routines during halftime and official time outs at **OU basketball** games. They also perform publicly and provide community services.

The team also helps sales staff at the **OU Bookstore** and area Kohl's stores, has car washes to raise funds for uniforms and camp outfits, helps sell season tickets to OU basketball games and has taught a summer dance camp to kids ages 7-12 at St. Dennis Catholic Church in Royal Oak.

SUMMARY

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