

ALEDO

Competive cheer program coming to local gym

Teams forming now for fall competition

By Phil Major
The Community News

Competitive cheerleading is coming to Aledo.

Impact Gymnastics is offering the all-star cheerleading program, which begins with tryouts April 19, May 10 and July 19 for teams forming for next fall's competitions.

Coach Eric Collard, who has coached competitive cheerleading in the area for 15 years, said he hopes to form three teams initially.

A team can range from 20 to 32 members, and the competitors are divided into both age and skill-level groups.

In competition, a competitive cheer team performs a two and a half minute routine before the judges. The routine is carefully choreographed to include the elements of acrobatics, stunts, jumps and dancing.

Difficulty of the routines increases as the age and skill levels rise.

Competitive cheerleading has become more prominent in recent years with the broadcasting of the high school and collegiate national championships.

Collard noted that most high schools do not have competitive cheerleading squads. He could think of only a few in the Metroplex.

But many girls who participate on their school cheerleading squads additionally join competitive teams, which are usually sponsored by gyms, such as Impact.

Skill levels range from one, begin-

ner, to five, advanced. Age levels are youth, eight and younger; junior, 8-14; and senior, 12-18.

There will also be an opportunity for 3-5 year olds to take part in show teams, which give exhibitions at contests but do not perform competitively.

Local and area competitions start up around November, and then advance to regional, state and national contests through the spring.

Collard thinks Aledo will be a good area for the sport, and there are already many young ladies who compete, but drive to other areas.

"They have the type of atmosphere here where you can have a winning program," he said. "I'm excited about it."

Impact will be only the second Parker County gym to offer the program, with the next closest in southwest Fort Worth.

Collard said being on a competitive cheerleading team usually involves about seven hours of practice per week. In addition, those who make a team can use the gym facilities to work on their skills individually.

Competitive cheerleading can lead to opportunities such as college scholarships, Collard noted.

Down the road, Collard hopes to see the program expanded for young men.

While male college cheerleaders are prevalent, it is a female-dominated arena at the high school level.

Collard does work with the Aledo High School cheerleading squads, helping them prepare for their annual cheer camps.



PHIL MAJOR/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Eric Collard spots a gymnast at Impact Gymnastics, which will soon begin offering a competitive cheerleading program.

BASEBALL

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Durant induced a comeback to the mound, but rather than throw home, he wheeled and fired to second. The relay to first was not in time and Heights had scored again. This allowed the Jackets' power hitter to come to the plate with runners on. He did not miss his opportunity either as he drove a deep triple to left center putting Aledo in a 4-0 hole. For the remainder of the contest, Aledo never advanced a runner past first base to threaten a comeback. Heights put the game away with two more in the seventh to bring the final score to 6-0. With the defeat, Aledo dropped into third behind Heights and the Granbury Pirates who remain tied for first.

At South Hills Tuesday, the Cats finally broke the drought in the fourth. Wade Raburn led off with a single and stole second. Dakota Durant skied a pop-up on the infield that fell between three fielders. With runners on base, the South Hills pitcher became rattled and issued consecutive walks to Luke Glover, Tyson Mauser, and Taco Anderson giving Aledo a 2-0 lead. With runs on the board, the Cats seemed to relax and take charge in the fifth.

Connor Duer started things with a single. Pinch runner, Bailey Turner, stole second and while stealing third raced home on an overthrow. Three walks loaded the bases for Luke Glover who responded with a towering fly to left. A spectacular grab at the wall allowed Durant to tag and score the second run of the inning. Tyson Mauser came through with a two out double to left that plated two runs setting up Taco Anderson who lined a two out RBI single. Wade Raburn was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded to bring the score to 8-0.

Cole Clanton got the complete game 9-0 win on two hits.

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FORE-WARD TO REGION!

Congratulations to the Aledo Boys' and Girls' golf teams on winning district, and good luck at the Regional Tournament in Abilene!

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