

# BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE

// Band experiences historic success at competition but rule changes keep group from advancing to state level

Players flood the field while the crowd stands stock-still silent. Strips of black and white highlighted in gold decorate the green artificial grass, creating straight lines across the field. As the intercom blared throughout the SAC, a shot of adrenaline went through drum majors Ann Coltrane and Jack Touchstone. With hundreds of eyes on the band, seniors Coltrane and Touchstone felt the nerves of the band rise.

"It was very nerve-wracking," Coltrane said. "But we were all confident. We knew that we were going to at least get a ranking."

Even though the band was confident as the Area Band Competition drew near, there were some minor setbacks the band faced.

"There were times where we didn't really set off all together anymore. We couldn't work together as a unit. We weren't getting anything done," Touchstone said. "We were coming up to

contest and we couldn't finish the show the way we intended to. That was a really big breaking point for both the band and the band directors. It was shocking."

Despite the fact that the band had problems with marching and playing amongst the new members, the band pulled together to motivate each other. Encouragement from band directors Tom Tomczuk, Curt Bushaw and Porfirio Diaz, led the students to yearn for meeting their full potential.

"Mr. Tomczuk would always ask the band, 'Is that the best you can do?'" Coltrane said. "He would ask us that because deep down he knew the best that we could do."

With the countless hours put into practicing for the area competition, the band was more than confident about their playing, ranking second in their division right behind Coronado High School. The ranking surprised, yet pleased all the band

members.

"The most rewarding part to me this year was receiving the ranking we got as alternate of going to state (competition)," Coltrane said. "We actually succeeded because we could have gone to state but they changed the rules this advancing year."

The new rules allow only one band to advance to the state competition, but in the past, El Dorado would have made it to the next level even with a second-place finish. Only five points behind Coronado, the Aztecs were named the alternate band to attend the state competition. Even though the marching troupe didn't advance, all band members found pride in the fact that they scored so closely to their competition and are determined to score even higher next year.

// Briana Garcia

**PINK POWER.** While leading the band onto the football field to perform, drum majors Ann Coltrane and Jackie Touchstone wear pink gloves in support of Breast Cancer Awareness month. As a tradition, the band wore pink face paint and drumsticks. "We wanted to make that performance really great," Coltrane said. "We wanted those who have lost a loved one to breast cancer or who do have breast cancer to listen to a great performance." *Photo by Melyssa Caro.*



**FEEL THE BEAT.** In celebration of the new free breakfast program, junior David Moreno, senior Anthony Hamlin, junior Aaron Garcia and sophomore Christopher Mendez play drum line cadences in front of the cafeteria. After remarks by Principal Nora Paugh, the drummers enjoyed their own free breakfast. "When the drum line gets into it, everyone gets into it," Garcia said. "It's kind of like a feedback. We give them energy and then they give it back to us." *Photo by Dominic Hernandez.*



**ROSE OF APPRECIATION.** Rose of thanks in her hand for her parents, senior Julia Martinez walks off the field in celebration of her Senior Night. Martinez was welcomed with hugs and tears of happiness from her mother and father. "I handed my parents a rose," Martinez said. "It was to show them my appreciation for taking me to practice and supporting me." *Photo by Princesleah Aguilera.*



**FOCUSED.** Concentration set on her sound and the drum majors, junior Antonia Taylor plays alongside the band in front of area judges for her final marching competition. Taylor marched off the field sad to know it was the last marching competition of the year. "I was thinking about every mark I had to make," Taylor said. "Not just for my benefit but so that the band could look its best and try to make first place." *Photo by Briana Garcia.*



**BITTERSWEET FEELINGS.** With gifts and hugs, senior Julian Zamora greets his parents after leaving his marching shoes on the field after the final Senior Night show. "Since I knew it was my last night marching, the show was a bittersweet moment," Zamora said. "I was happy that it was our last time performing, but I was also sad because I knew I was never going to be able to march again." *Photo by Princesleah Aguilera.*

## LEAVING BEHIND A LEGACY

As a tradition, all senior members of the band leave their marching shoes on the field during their Senior Night. Senior members rarely need to be reminded of the ritual because of its popularity. "When we leave our shoes on the marching field, it means to leave your mark on the field," senior Ann Coltrane said. "You'll always have your presence there. It made me want to cry because I didn't want to leave the field yet, but it was time to move on." *Photo by Kimberly Gibson.*

**LAST TIME ON THE FIELD.** In celebration of his Senior Night, drum line section leader Armando Torres leaves his marching shoes on the field and accepts a rose from a band booster. After receiving his rose, Torres greeted his parents and became tearful as happy memories of his years with the band came to mind. "I got really emotional because that was the last night I'll ever march with El Dorado," Torres said. "Leaving my shoes on the marching field was like tradition, and I feel like I left my mark on the field and I'm ready to pass down my position." *Photo by Kimberly Gibson.*

