

'I believe'

Voices echo

Group of spirit leaders encourage fans to rally behind team, see a district game win

- by Jazlyn Angelle

Just after 8:30, with the teams already in battle and the night already sweeping across the stadium, senior Hannah Mardock, the leader of Blue Crew, stood in front of her small group and stomped.

"[This year] my big thing was unity," Mardock said. "I wanted our class and our school to have fun at games. I wanted to enjoy Blue Crew with the people around me. [But at this game,] not many showed up."

After taking in the atmosphere and realizing her small group had to make serious noise to sound like a big crowd, Mardock stomped again, and again. Creating a rhythm and pace for others to follow, Mardock successfully led others to hype up the Tiger's side of the stadium.

When the noise level made it obvious that the fans were behind the players, Mardock got her group on the move.

"We walked past everybody in the audience," Mardock said. "That's always really fun because they know we're about to do the 'I Believe' chant."

Finding their way to the band's section, Mardock set eyes on her next task and crawled up the director's podium.

"I got kind of nervous," Mardock said. "It's funny. Everyone was watching as we climbed, and I didn't want to fall.

Once I got up there, the podium shook, so I thought, 'Oh crap.'"

Feeling her heart pumping with adrenaline and sensing the excitement from the crowd, once steady, Mardock stared into the crowd and blew her horn, making noise until everyone quieted down.

"We looked around to build anticipation," Mardock said.

"People pointed at us, smiled and tried to make us laugh."

Mardock leaned over and said, "Begin on my word."

"I took a breath before beginning to chant, so we could be loud enough for everyone to hear," Mardock said. "In between each word, we took a beat. We wanted the entire stadium to know what exactly they were saying."

Blue Crew captivated the entire stadium, and their noise echoed across the sizeable field.

"While not many showed up, the cheerleaders made it fun when they did the chant with us," Mardock said. "It was the best game for the guys, and it made the night when they won."

At the end of the game, Mardock said everyone went crazy.

"The band jumped, and the Tiger Dancers freaked out," Mardock said. "It was cool to look around and see."

Remembering the previous games, Mardock pointed out a commonality. "Almost every time we chanted," Mardock said, "we won."