

making history

Band earns first ever trip to state

Cramped in a room filled with sweaty palms, weak stomachs, and irking anxiety, band director Ken Ringel could do nothing but stare at the ground. After placing 10th in finals, he thought this would be the end of Royal Pride's journey to state.

Then they announced McKinney, and everything became a blur. For the first time in history, we were state-bound.

"To be honest, I thought there was no way we could go from 10th to high enough," Ringel said. "I didn't let anyone know, but I was pretty pouty inside. A few years ago, when we missed state by a tenth of a point, I was thinking of how I talked to the band then, and how it was kind of the same now. I was kind of preparing to help the band through disappointment."

But, McKinney High School defied the odds.

"They named the first band, which was Waxahachie," Ringel

"We were a family. We all got emotional together. We all cried together. We all sweat together."

said. "And then they said McKinney. I sat up real straight, in shock. I mean, I can still remember that feeling. I just freaked out. I don't really remember what happened or what was said, because my mind was just like 'oh my god we're going to state; we're going to state.'"

Drum major and junior Mia Hayes said Area retreat was her favorite part of the season. "For the past two years, we've been working to achieve something like this," Mia said. "Finally being able to is really neat. Standing on the field, with the two other people that have helped us get this far, and hearing our name be called was a huge honor."

Throughout the season, junior Shuva Gautam discovered a lot about herself, and the rest of the band.

"It brought us all together," Shuva said. "We were a family. We all got emotional together. We all cried together. We all sweat together. We went through the hard work and we all knew what it took. At times, I questioned my decisions and why I was putting in so much time and effort, but at the end, all of it paid off."

She wasn't nervous during the show.

"I was so into what I was doing, there was no need to feel nervous," Shuva said. "My mind was huge technical hodge podge— all the drills, all the positioning, where we were supposed to look. Getting the crowd's reaction motivated me to put in extra effort to hype them up. I wanted to prove people that think band is lame

wrong. I wanted to make them really appreciate what we do."

Senior Taylor Peabody felt the complete opposite.

"I was nervous the whole time," Taylor said. "The tunnel was like the calm before the storm. We had all worked so hard to get to that level, and I knew all the practice would pay off."

For freshman Bridget Kozlowski, it was a new experience.

"I thought it would be hard and difficult, but as it progressed, it became a routine," Bridget said. "The theme was on fire. I didn't think marching would be for me, but now I am more willing to do new things. Even though we didn't make it to finals at state, placing 12th was really great. We did the best we could, and I look forward to next year."

Ringel didn't know 'On Fire' would be this successful.

"It took a really long time, and we went through several things before we found the right one," Ringel said. "In fact, it was one Saturday, by myself, at my house when I decided— this is what we're going to do. I just came up with it. It all clicked. There was a connection between Firebird by Stravinsky and Kingfishers Catch Fire by John Mackey, who based his piece on the original Firebird. After that, it was a matter of finding some pretty slow music that worked well."

He wouldn't change anything.

"I do not regret anything," Ringel said. "We did it right. We did it our way. Every step of the way was a part of the process. For me, it was eight years in the making. It was blood, sweat, and tears for years, and I wouldn't take anything back."

The band can compete for state again next year.

"There was a sliver of hope that we would make it to state," Shuva said. "It's never happened before. I really didn't think we'd be that band that made it. But now, in the future, I believe we can do anything. I'm hyped for next year. It's going to be incredible."

Even though this was Ringel's last year writing drill, he looks forward to competing next year in 6A.

"It was such a ground break year for the school and the district," Ringel said. "Bands are very different from year to year, but this year's kids were very determined from the very beginning. They kept their eye on the prize, and they wouldn't take no for an answer. We were the first band to make it to state. I will never forget it. Even if we go again, or if it happens again, the first one's always the one you remember."

by Udani Satarasinghe



In carry position, freshman Jacob Harsch, senior Rachel Wasson, and junior Caroline Ringel stand at attention as they wait to start the show. They perform under the direction of Caroline's father and band director, Ken Ringel. "Marching mellophone was great and it's something I'll always remember," Caroline said. "I love colorguard, and I want to try something new."

Ulises Velez



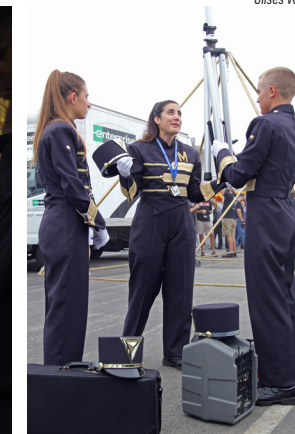
Ulises Velez



Ulises Velez



Chelsea Salinas



Chelsea Salinas

the sendoff:

STATE BOUND

Before they departed for San Antonio, the Royal Pride Band was congratulated by Mr. Gordon Butler. Students, teachers and parents were outside of the band hall waiting to cheer and clap for the band as they boarded the buses. "I didn't think many people followed what band was doing," sophomore Ishaan Hattangady said. "I was really surprised and happy to see them out there supporting and encouraging us."



photos by Ulises Velez

walk out

With the Marquettes, cheerleaders, family and friends cheering her on, junior Meredith Bakke heads to the bus with the Royal Pride Band. Students and the community were encouraged to attend the send off in recognition of the band's hard work. "It made me really happy and it made me see going to state as more of a celebration," Bakke said. "It was nice seeing the whole community of people at our school there for us because it really shows that people noticed our achievement."

set the stage

Before prelims junior Mia Hayes, senior Brittany Garza and junior Trey Jeter set up the metronome for warm up. Two of the drum majors were juniors. "It's funny because we didn't really know each other last year," Garza said. "I can't imagine going through this without them because they are seriously the greatest people ever."

link together

At the Alamo Dome, freshmen Samantha Greyson, Ben Runyan, Hannah Freeman and Marielle Sanchez lock pinkies as they listen to the results. Only ten out of 31 bands moved onto finals. "I was excited because I was sure we were making finals but turns out we didn't," Hannah said. "It was all good though because it was fun and we gave it our all."