Marching toward success

Yutan's marching band competes in two parades

by Jada Reed

When people think of fall activities, they usually think of football, volleyball or softball, but fall is also marching band season.

Marching band has features similar to those of concert band, except the band isn't judged only on the quality of its playing but also on the quality of its marching.

"The concept of marching band is that you should sound like you're sitting and playing while marching," 5-12 grade band director Nate Capron said. "There are some techniques that we do, like a roll step, that you do with your foot to make sure that your upper body doesn't shake or move while you play."

Because the students have to walk while playing, this means they can't have their music in front of them.

"In band, you'll generally have a stand in front of you and you're practicing for a concert or some kind of program," freshman flute player Ksenia Bradford said. "However, in marching band, we had to memorize our piece, 'Crunch Time', and that was definitely a big challenge."

Another challenge is adjusting to the change in clothing.

"In marching band, we have to wear a full set of uniform, and it's overalls, a jacket, along with a feathery hat and tied shoes that are very uncomfortable," Bradford said.

Since there are different aspects from concert band to marching band, the members have to make sure they prepare themselves before they compete.

"To prepare ourselves before a marching band competition, we warm up and talk about [the parade], which helps me so I'm not as nervous when playing," sophomore trumpet player Lily Morris said.

Yutan's marching band practiced to compete at two competitions: the AppleJack Parade in Nebraska City and the Waverly Parade in Waverly.

"I definitely liked the AppleJack Parade because the amount of people there was insane, and there were rows and rows of people on the sidelines watching," Bradford said. "It's not the same people altogether, but there's more as you move on [in the parade]."

These competitions are physically challenging to the members because of the hardships they have to push through in order to be successful.

"The most challenging part of marching band is definitely having to walk around a mile every time for the parades. It's definitely a lot, especially in 90-degree weather, and it's really grueling," Bradford said.

Besides the weather, marching takes a lot of talent.

"It takes athleticism to play while marching since the band players use air to play their instruments, and marching for a mile can make it more challenging to keep the air supply they need to play their instruments well," Capron said.

To overcome these challenges and succeed, the experienced band members advise the new band members to work on making as few mistakes as possible.

"Some advice I would give students who are going to be doing marching band is to pay attention to the small things and make sure you're doing everything the right way because if you don't, everything will be messed up," junior trumpet player Carson Hollst said.

The mistakes they make can also be learning experiences.

"You're learning how to persevere with your hardships," Bradford said. "If you mess up, you learn to just improv, keep going, pretend nothing's wrong."

Capron was proud of how the students worked through those hardships this year.

"Improving our marching overall throughout the season and getting Excellent ratings [at the competitions] are the biggest successes we've had," Capron said.

For the students, it wasn't just about a rating; it was also about enjoying their time with fellow band members.

"My favorite part of marching band was probably the bus rides to and from the activities because I had some great conversations. In general, marching band was a really fun experience," Bradford said.

Because of the benefits, Hollst encourages students to join marching band even though it can be challenging at times.

"I would encourage other students to join marching band because you get to hang out with your friends and it's enjoyable to do," Hollst said.