

Oakettes Through the Years

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This past year, the Oakettes changed from their old traditional outfits to new tops and sideline cheers. Don't worry though! Even though many changes are being made, the Oakettes are keeping the team, the skirts and, most importantly, the tams! These changes are definitely pulling the Oakettes out of the 1960's and into 2022, but in a good way.

Since the Oakettes were created, they have changed from



a drill team to more of a competitive dance team. In addition to competitions, the Oakettes participate in football games, basketball games, pep rallies, and parades. You can find them dancing in a variety of costumes, but one thing will remain the same. They will always have the tams and the skirts!



I interviewed one of the past Oakettes coaches, Heather McGowan, and asked her many different questions. These included:

- How many years did you dance for Oak Hills?
- How many years did you coach?
- Approximately how girls have you coached?
- Approximately how many routines have you coached?
- What are some of your favorite traditions with the Oakettes?
- What are your top three favorite moments from coaching?
- How have things evolved over the years?
- What are the biggest changes?
- What do you think of the change from a drill team to more of a dance team?
- If you could give one piece of advice to our current dancers, what would it be?

Here is the information she provided me:

Heather danced for the Delhi Eaglettes for 2 years and the Oakettes for 3. Then, she went on and became one of the coaches for 24 years. She has coached 250+ people and over 50 competition, football, basketball, and pep rally routines. Her teams won state and national championships and participated in many school activities and traditions.

When asked about her favorite tradition, she responded "The traditional plaid tams and kickline will forever be my favorites. I love that they're both still a part of the football season, with a new twist! The mix of old and new proves that Oakettes will

always be classy and timeless!” The new uniforms that have been added to the Oakettes wardrobe helps the team keep a piece of the past while transitioning into 2022.

Heather has many favorite moments as she watched the team transition from a drill team to a dance team. These include: winning national and state titles and the friendships she made along the way. She states that the “sisterhood of Oakettes runs deep and is so special.” The connections that have been made as the team goes from a drill team to a competitive dance team is something that these dancers will never forget.

Heather had first hand experience in this transition. “Watching 50 people move in unison as a drill team was just as impressive as watching a smaller team showcasing their technical skills as a dance team.” Even though many people love the tradition of the kickline and tams, competing at competitions is something that has pulled the Oakettes into 2022. One of the biggest changes is the skill level that the dancers have to achieve to make it on the team. These extremely difficult skills put many people in awe while also watching them perform the kickline.

One piece of advice that Heather gives would be, “Appreciate every single second you spend with your team, even the hard moments. You may not understand it now, but what you are learning as an Oakette is so much more than just dance-the hard work, dedication and commitment you put in now will benefit you time and time again in the future.”

Even though things are changing, the old traditions will forever be in their hearts.