



TOKYO



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Henry Clay squad ties for first place in cheerleading competition in Japan

BY SUSAN WHITE

HERALD-LEADER EDUCATION WRITER

Last night — Japanese time — the Henry Clay High School cheerleaders tied for first place in a competition sponsored by the Universal Cheerleaders Association.

The 18 girls on the squad were so excited about their win that they stayed up all night, said their coach, Donna Robinson.

Robinson couldn't sleep either. "It's been the peak of my coaching career, without a doubt," she said yesterday from a Tokyo hotel. "Even before we won, the trip was worth it. . . . The cultural exchange has been unreal."

The girls learned to drink green tea and eat raw fish, Robinson said.

They experienced Japanese prices: \$21 for a hamburger and fries at the Tokyo branch of The Hard Rock Cafe. They learned that one of the world's largest cities, Tokyo, is clean and safe, that the Japanese people are "very kind."

"Nobody has been homesick," Robinson said. "Even before we won they were saying, 'Thank you for bringing us.'"

Of the 10 U.S. and 31 Japanese teams that competed before the crowd of about 10,000, only six U.S. teams made the 15-team finals.

As the Henry Clay squad waited for its turn, the girls watched three U.S. teams have falls during their routines.

"I told the girls, 'Now you're defending our nation. Put on your

battle tennie shoes and win one for America,'" Robinson said.

Henry Clay tied for first with an elite Japanese team, which has given demonstrations in the United States. When the win was announced, the girls were showered with chocolate and scarves and banners. The Japanese coaches showered Robinson with praise: "Every one came running to me, saying 'Your girls are so wonderful.'"

Back home in Lexington, the cheerleaders' parents are planning a more homey celebration.

The team will fly into Louisville 10 p.m. Saturday, then go to Perkins Family Restaurant on Richmond Road for a pancake feast.

山頭大祈禱執行
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Peerleaders prove perseverance p



Herald-Leader/Ron Garrison

of Henry Clay cheerleading squad show off championship trophy, banner.

By Catherine Chi
Herald-Leader staff w

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Turn

Something to cheer about



Coach Donna Robinson and some of the Henry Clay cheerleaders arriving at Blue Grass Airport. Herald-Leader/Ron Garr

Henry Clay can cheer, 'We're No. 1'

By Tom McCord

Herald-Leader education writer

After a season of tumblers, flips and cheers, Laura Combs called her mom just before midnight Sunday from a pay phone in Orlando, Fla., and told her something they had both been waiting to hear all year:

Laura, 16, and 13 other girls from Henry Clay High School in Lexington had just won their team's second consecutive national cheerleading championship, topping 124 other big-school varsity squads.

"I could barely understand her on the phone," Laura's mother, Cynthia Combs, said yesterday. They were an awfully thrilled bunch of girls."

Kentucky squads swept this year's varsity

'The thing my girls do best is they execute. A lot of kids get there and fall.'

— coach Donna Jean Robinson

honors in the National Cheerleader Association's annual championship, which had teams from across the country.

Barren County High School from Glasgow won the small-school varsity division, and cheerleaders from Cumberland County High School in Burkesville took seventh among the small schools.

A team from Morton Junior High School in

Lexington took second place in its division. Lexington Bryan Station High School also competed.

Henry Clay, coached the last four years by Donna Jean Robinson, won the competition in 1984, and won it again last year.

"We felt like the judges expected a lot because of that," said Amy Liebermann, 16, a Henry Clay sophomore. "But we knew our routine was flawless."

Still, Miss Liebermann said, when only two teams were left on the convention hall floor Sunday night, "I thought it was going to be close. It was really praying."

(Turn to HENRY, back page)

DANA NEWSOME CORBETT, D.M.D.
540 EAST MAIN STREET
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY 40508
(606) 252-0314

February 24, 2004

**RE: National Coach of the year recommendation:
Donna Robinson**

Dear Chairperson for the nominating committee:

Donna Robinson "Ms. Rob" was my high school cheerleading coach at Henry Clay High School from 1985 thru 1988. In those 3 years we were awarded National Champions twice and runner-up the third year. We also held 3 State championship titles. Donna Robinson definitely has a winning record.

High school girls turn to Ms. Rob for guidance during a difficult transitional time of life. High school eludes young women to parental disobedience, peer pressure, sexual curiosity and mischief. For me, Ms. Rob became my focus. Seeking independence away from my parents, I became oriented toward a cheerleading regimen that defined success and discipline. She provides her cheerleaders a shoulder to lean on and an ear to listen to all the confusion girls experience in high school. More importantly, she is a strong role model to young women. Ms. Rob has such a contagious competitive "fireball" spirit. You want to compete and do well under her leadership. Not only does she capture the drive of her team but our hearts as well.

Through Ms. Rob and her devotion her squads win while having fun. Many of her cheerleaders go on to achieve college, doctorate and postdoctoral degrees. Donna Robinson sets the stage for building confident, independent and strong mothers, teachers, doctors, dentists, bankers and attorneys.

Sincerely,



Dana Newsome Corbett DMD

October 20, 2003

Donna Robinson
Henry Clay High School
3501 Indian Summer Trail
Lexington, KY 40509

Dear Donna:

It is my pleasure to notify you that you have been nominated for the **2004 National Cheerleading Coach of the Year Award (NCOY)**. You have come highly recommended and nominated by American Cheerleader Magazine. The Cheer Ltd. corporation presents the NCOY award annually to the top cheerleading coaches in the country.

Cheer Ltd. and the NCC Advisory Board established the **National Cheerleading Coach of the Year** award in 1990 to promote recognition of the outstanding cheerleading coaches in the nation. Nominations are solicited from principals and athletic directors and reviewed by the NCC National Selection Board. Finalists will be notified on March 29, 2004.

Presentation of finalist awards and announcement of the **2004 National Cheerleading Coach of the Year** will be made at the **2004 National Cheer Conference**, formerly known as the *National Cheerleading Coaches Conference*, to be held May 20-23, 2004 on the campus of Methodist College in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Please note the enclosed NCOY comprehensive Nominee Packet. This has detailed information about the next steps that you will need to take. You will also find *NCOY Procedure Sheets* and *NCOY Information Form* in this packet. Please read all pages carefully and begin work on your requirements right away. Although the deadlines are generous, you will be surprised how quickly the time will pass. **All nomination packets must be postmarked and sent to Cheer Ltd. Headquarters no later than February 27, 2004.**

Congratulations again on your nomination! It is obvious that your colleagues and your superiors appreciate your contributions to the sport of cheerleading. I really look forward to receiving your portfolio! Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions concerning your nomination or your portfolio.

Sincerely yours,

Scotti Marshburn

Scotti Marshburn
NCC Program Director