

Lewiston tops Bangor for ‘A’ state title

BY PETE WARNER
BDN STAFF

BANGOR — Lewiston High School is perennially the standard by which all Maine cheerleading teams are judged.

On Saturday morning, the Blue Devils demonstrated why with an efficient performance to capture the Class A cheering state championship at the Cross Insurance Center.

“It puts a lot of pressure on us, but all we think about is winning,” Lewiston senior Taylor Hopkins said of the expectations placed on the program, which won its second straight state title and its fifth in the last six years.

“We worked really hard for this. We went for an undefeated season and that’s what we were planning for,” she added.

Lewiston piled up 90.8 points to surpass runner-up Bangor, which scored 82.1 points. Noble of North Berwick took third place (78.5), while Gorham (78.1) and Marshwood of South Berwick (77.0) rounded out the top five.

Placing Nos. 6-10 were Thornton Academy of Saco (76.3), Brewer (75.6), Oxford Hills of South Paris (75.4), Sanford (67.7) and Windham (67.5), respectively.

It was the ninth state championship for Lewiston, which placed 20 competitors on the mat.

“We went through a lot of

changes this year and I definitely feel like the eyes were on us to see if we were still going to be that program that everybody talks about,” said first-year head coach Lysa Laverdiere. “They lived up to it. They worked so hard for it every, single day.”

Lewiston rode the experience of its seven seniors: Kerrianna Asselin, Olivia Bergeron, Hopkins, Sierra Melanson, Meagan Murphy, Amber Smith and Gemma Smith.

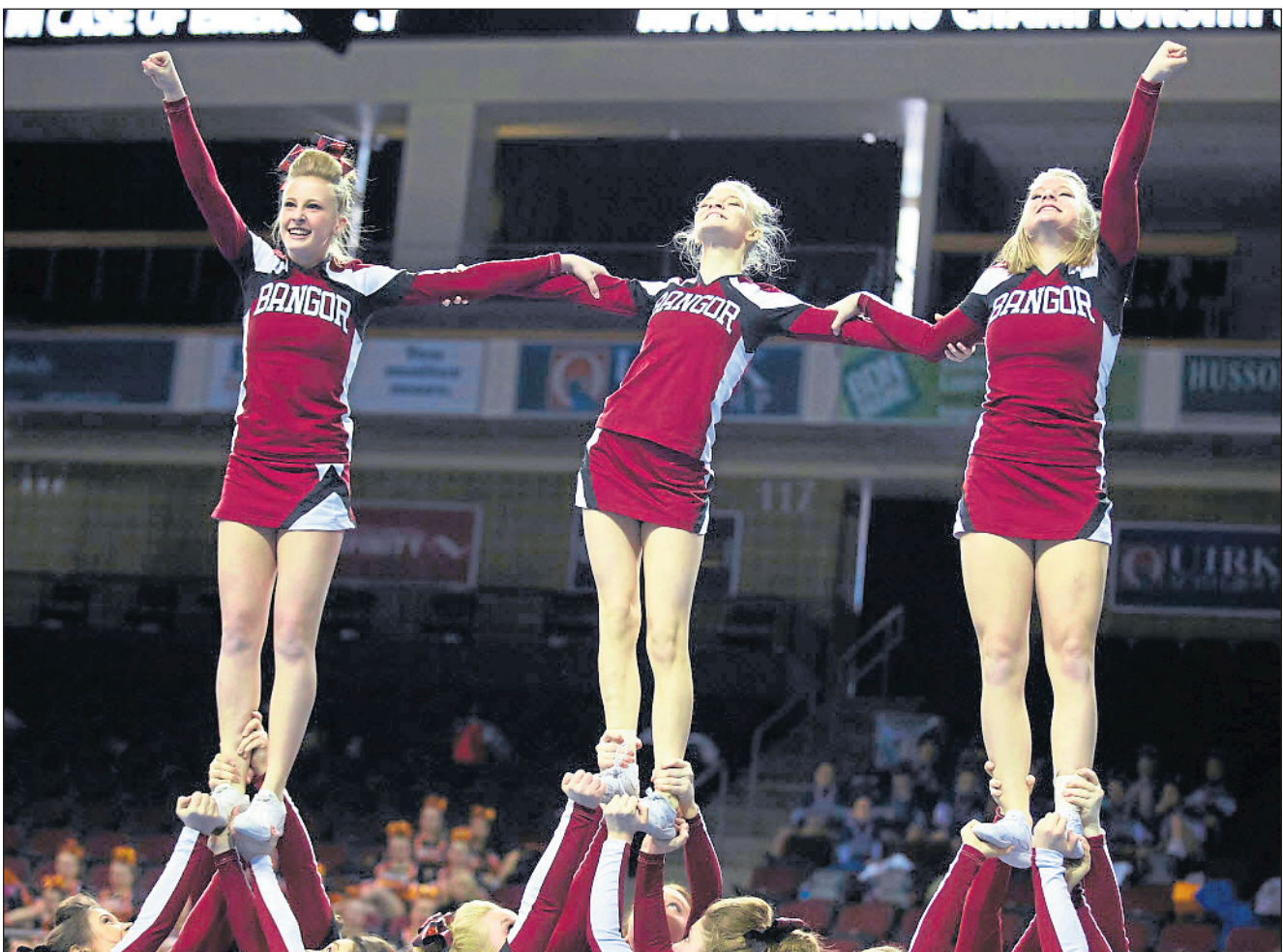
The Blue Devils churned out a variety of impressive skills and rock-solid stunts. They also showed off crisp tumbling and had their vocal crowd and other cheerleaders clapping throughout.

“Our difficulty is quite a lot higher than others, but we also have great bonds between our cheerleaders. We work very well together,” Hopkins said.

Lewiston’s squad includes juniors Morgan Allen, Kaitlyn Beckwith, Hailee Ingerson, Alison Porter and Tawni Zamrock; sophomores Maggie Bel-leau, Jenna Burton, Jordan Girouard, Maraeka Merchant and Madelyne Regner; and freshmen Megan Gaudette, Sydney Hill, Nicholas Roy, Shelby Rucker and Marissa Larock.

Bangor, which also finished second behind Lewiston at the North regional, continued its success with an outstanding effort.

“It’s definitely the best that they have performed



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Bangor High School cheerleaders show off their skills at the Class A state cheerleading championship at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on Saturday.

that routine this year, so they saved their best performance for the biggest day of the year,” said Kate Robichaud, who is the Rams’ co-coach with Stephanie Crane.

“We’ve overcome a lot of things,” said Bangor junior

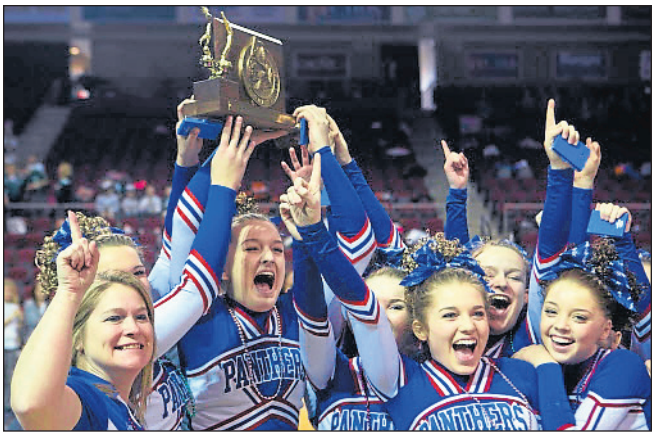
Jordyn Sumner. “Some people had injuries and we’ve been able to work past those and work as a team. It was just amazing.”

Bangor’s team members are: seniors Allison Dionne, Olivia Quinn and Jessica

Winkler; juniors Shayna Coombs, Brianna Roach, Jade Noddin, Ashley Ouellette, Sumner, Ellie Babbedge and Jillian Henderson; sophomores Abbi Merrill, Hope Ouellette, Sammy McNaughton, Olivia Heans-

ler; and Kenzie Crichton, and freshmen Chloe Woodward and Alainna Roach.

“This is my first year cheering on varsity for my senior year, so it was awesome getting second place for states,” Winkler said.



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Central Aroostook celebrates winning the Class D state cheerleading championship at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on Saturday.

Panthers

Continued from Page B4

“The result was amazing, but it was not our best performance,” Allen said. “Today, the stunts that never went wrong kind of went wrong.”

The Panthers had one early pyramid come unglued and another formation included a fall. The girls were undeterred.

“I saw it out of the corner of my eye and I was like, keep going, keep going, everything is going to be OK,” said Gil-

len, who was ill before the competition.

“Even though you want to just break down and cry, you’ve just got to keep pushing,” she added.

Anchored by seniors Sheratin Kelly, Dayna Collins, Victoria Brewer, Noelle Bailey and Gillen, Central Aroostook came out on top. The team also features juniors Emilee Durost, Halee Rusby and Sarah Gerritsen, sophomores Taia Tilley, Holly O’Leary, Lillian Mahan, Michaela Pelletier, Chloe Wheeler and Keara McCrum, and freshmen Jillian Tweedie and Olivia Pelletier.

Allen pointed to the girls’ ability to keep smiling throughout the routine as a reflection of their positive attitude.

“(The key) is everyone stepping up and being a team,” she said. “It’s everybody being supportive of each other.”

It was the school’s 12th cheerleading state title.

“I am so excited,” Gillen said. “It is such a sigh of relief to be able to say I got three state championships in my high school career. I’ll remember this day for ever and ever.”

Runner-up Penobscot

Valley closed out its season with another well-rounded routine. Coach Heidi Sullivan’s squad executed a nice sequence of jumps early on and clicked on some up-and-down lifting action in one of its pyramid sequences.

The Howlers were represented by seniors Taylore Crawford, Jasmyne Savage, Jennah Stanley and Madison Jenkins, juniors Molly LeBlanc, Tori Watts, Christine Brown, Makenzie Plourde, Lindsay Michaud, Millie Richard, Isaac St. Cyr, Paige Thibodeau and Ariel Rosario, and freshmen Julie Rogers and Carley Junkins.

Old Town

Continued from Page B4

Page-Jackson, whose team had finished third behind Old Town and Hermon at the PVC, Big East and Class B North meets. “We’ve been working hard all season and kind of been coming up just a little bit short and finishing third every time. It finally feels good to be taking home some medals.”

Kennebec Valley Athletic Conference and Class B South champion Medomak Valley of Waldoboro placed a close fourth with 77 points, while Presque Isle (70.2) and John Bapst of Bangor (64.3) were next in the 12-school field.

That Old Town stepped up with a championship-level blend of dance, stunts and tumbling as one of the last teams to step onto the mat was evident by the excited reactions of the performers as well as Coyotes’ coaches Nicole Hogan and Emily Smith.

“We knew this was our last chance so there was no reason to be nervous,” said Julia Van Steenberghe, one of six seniors on the Old Town roster. “We worked so hard for two straight weeks and I think we were prepared. I think we were ready.”



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Ellsworth cheerleaders perform during the Class B state cheerleading championship at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on Saturday. Old Town placed first with 81.3 points. Ellsworth and five-time defending state champion Hermon each finished with 79.9 points but Ellsworth was awarded the runner-up plaque by edging the Hawks in the 10-point technical scores that serve as the first tiebreaker.

Joining Van Steenberghe and Morey on the Old Town roster are classmates Emma Cyr, Kayleigh Bickford, Zoe Swett and Tara Roy, juniors Jordan Merchant, Casey Pratt, Julie Miller and Brianna Hogan, sophomores Lexi Carey, Kaylee Bellavance and Kelsee Steele, and freshmen Melanie Soucy, Faith Watson, Kaili Lupinacci and Lacey Ouellette. Ellsworth wasn’t quite

sure where it would finish after completing its routine.

“I actually was a little nervous because I did mess up a little bit and usually I’m not like that, usually I’m like, ‘I hit it perfect,’” said Page-Jackson. “We walked off the mat a little discouraged and we were kind of accepting whatever we were going to get because our competitors performed amazing. But the judges liked it.”

Also on the Ellsworth squad coached by Melanie Fox and Kathryn Dickens are senior Carlotta Osanna, juniors Piper Hardison, Maddy Harmon, Danielle White and Emily Young, sophomores Belle Albert, Maya McCabe, Molly McCarthy, Lindsay Bland and Hailey McCabe, and freshmen Olivia Robidoux, Kristen Omlor and Gabriella Morse.

Orono

Continued from Page B4

“It was a lot of cleaning up,” said Orono junior Ashley Smith. “But everyone just pulled together as a family. It was amazing to see.”

“But we made sure we stayed humble because it was anybody’s for the taking.”

Joining Smith and Kenney on the Orono roster were juniors Audrey Carroll, Amber Westley, Isabelle Bowie, Chase Bruton, Kaitlyn Kuwik and Hannah Gatchell, sophomores Sydney Stiehl, Tony Manev, Michelle Haverlock, Maddie Marks, Ashley Connole,

Alexus Brown, Emily Innis, Becky Tocci, Riley Bowie and Ally Jones, and freshmen Jordan Bagley, Camille Kohtala and Audrey Smith.

Gage Alley is the assistant coach, with Molly Berry the manager.

“We didn’t have any seniors last year so we knew going into this season that we had a base to start from already, which helped a lot,” said Tuell. “We talked at the very beginning of the season about what we wanted to do, how we wanted to amp up our routine and things we wanted to accomplish this year.”

“And honestly, I have no seniors this year either, so we’ll have to get the gears going and figure out what we want to do for next year.”



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Central puts on a show for the crowd at the Class C cheerleading championship at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on Saturday. The team from Corinth came in third.



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Hermon High School cheerleaders perform a routine at the Class B state cheerleading championship at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on Saturday. Five-time defending state champion Hermon and Ellsworth each finished with 79.9 points but Ellsworth was awarded the runner-up plaque by edging the Hawks in the 10-point technical scores that serve as the first tiebreaker.



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Old Town High School cheerleaders perform at the Class B state cheerleading championship at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on Saturday. Old Town captured its first state crown since 2000, scoring 81.3 points to edge regional rivals Ellsworth and Hermon.



ASHLEY L. CONTI | BDN

Dirigo High School cheerleaders perform at the Class C state cheerleading championship at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on Saturday. Class C South champion Dirigo earned 66 points to finish in second place.