

Gentlemen long a feature of Goldthwaite cheer

**Kylee Sutherland
Goldthwaite Eagle**

Goldthwaite High School athletics are ever changing.

With seniors leaving and new freshmen coming into the athletic program, nothing is ever the same. The same applies for GHS's cheer squad.

This year's Varsity Cheer squad has changed drastically from what is considered the "norm" here in Goldthwaite. The squad consists of not just one, but two boys with sophomore Lane Dowell as a cheerleader and freshman Wyatt Adams as the mascot.

According to Goldthwaite High School's yearbooks, Dowell is the first male cheerleader in Goldthwaite. Yet, before Goldthwaite had a cheerleading team, there was a pep squad. And in multiple years throughout the 1950s and 60s there were boys on the pep squad.

There are a few differences between a pep squad and cheer squad, but the heart of both teams is the same. A pep squad cheers and chants, but doesn't tumble, jump, perform routines and stunts, or travel to competitions like a cheer squad.

Adams is not the first male mascot, with James Bird taking that title in 1943.

Either way, both boys are contributing to Goldthwaite High School's history as they cheer and compete for GHS.

The Old and The New

Dowell became interested in cheering through tumbling classes.

"Well, I've tumbled since I was 9, so I thought cheer would help me do better," Dowell said. "I wanted to do it."

And being a mascot in high school runs in Adams' family.

"My mom was a mascot in college and in high school," Adams said. "I felt like it would be a good idea for me to be one, too."

The girls on the squad have no qualms about guys being on the team.

"I feel like it changed up the game. Of course, we've had to be more modest around each other and we can't change on the bus," Co-Captain and senior Kaity Boese said. "And Lane has to change up stuff in dances and cheers so it's not so feminine. But it also let the guys know that cheer is a sport and it's hard work."

Freshman Ellie Petersen has cheered with Dowell before on the middle school cheer squad, and she was just as excited

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Anna Evelina and Biviana Martinez

GHS Band Drum Majors

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