

Amanda Furrer is right on target for the Olympics



Lauren Colton / Staff photographer

Amanda Furrer, Mead High School Senior and Olympic rifle shooter, takes aim for a shot.

SARA BLAKELY
Staff Reporter
LEWIS AND CLARK

The sport of rifle shooting is traditionally associated with weekend warriors gunning down game. So when Mead senior Amanda Furrer talks about her success in shooting, it does not take much for a person to be impressed.

Not to say she hasn't accomplished anything. Amanda currently holds six national records, has attended three world cups, and is currently ranked third in the U.S. and thirty-fifth in the world for women. But that's not all: looking at her credentials and aspirations is enough to make you reconsider what you call skilled.

Starting at age seven and competing at age eleven, Amanda was inspired by her dad and her sister to join the sport.

"He used to shoot on a team in the Army ... he got my sister involved in a junior program and being the little sister I am, I had to beat her. So of course I joined the team and every-

thing took off from there."

Nothing like a little sibling rivalry to inspire desire. As Amanda continued to improve, she was able to compete at the Brazilian Pan-American Games, World Cup Munich, and the junior cup in Czech Republic. Earning a bronze medal, tying the first place score in practice, and earning a gold medal in the latter two inspired Amanda to continue practicing two to three hours each day (unless she's at the Olympic Training Center where practices reach four to five hours long).

However, no matter the length, Amanda believes that the key to success is mental toughness.

"Once you get to a high level of shooting, a lot of it is mental. So for training without physical shooting, I do yoga to help improve balance, flexibility, and focus," she said.

In her minimal free time, Amanda loves "to dance and do pretty much anything athletic. I am semi-addicted to the gym and I do yoga as well. Whatever floats my boat at the moment, I am very spontane-

ous," she said.

It is that kind of flexible attitude that allows her to train year-round without getting burned out.

Training is intense. Right now, Amanda is preparing for an NCAA rifle scholarship and plans on attending a university or moving to Colorado Springs to train for the 2008 and 2012 Olympics in the Olympic Training Center.

With such high stakes, Amanda must rely on her passion and precision to succeed, strengths she has inevitably discovered.

"Shooting is an awesome sport to get involved in. I love my U.S. team, my local junior team (Spokane Junior Rifle Team), and all the friends I have made from going to all of the matches," Amanda said. "This sport has opened up so many doors and taken me places I would have never dreamed of going."

So, with the best of luck and lots of hard work, hopefully Amanda will be able to "shoot like a girl!" and fulfill her goals in these upcoming events.

Cheerleading: Is it a sport?

Cheering not exactly super-cerebral or athletic

DANY BOLEN
Staff Reporter
NORTH CENTRAL

Picture this: a group of stereotypical blondes jumping around saying "Yay! Go team, you rock!"

We have all seen it both on television and at our own schools.

How is cheerleading a sport when just about anyone can jump up and down and say "go team?"

It takes no thought or knowledge. No plays are put together. They just go out there and use their 100 word vocabulary... like totally duh!

Things such as "OMG we scored!" or "Yay! Their cheerleaders are ugly" are things you might hear while attending a sporting event which the miniskirted troops control.

You walk through the halls at school and you see the guys drooling over them; girls want to be just like them, but why?

They aren't athletic or super-cerebral. Most of the time their biggest concern is how their hair or makeup looks.

Every once in a while they might consider whether or not they should eat lunch

that day or not.

How that takes any athletic ability or is even considered a sport by some is beyond me.

At the Olympics, do you see any cheerleading competitions? No! That's because it is not a sport.

If the people of the world believed cheerleading was a sport and worthy of Olympic recognition then cheerleaders might just see themselves dancing around yelling on television.

Other than actual sporting events and MTV, there is not anything about cheerleading on television other than "Bring It On," which is a movie that proves my point.

For those who haven't seen one of the three or four there are, they are all pretty much the same.

Blonde captain was like, "OMG, did you hear what happened to that St. Peter's cheerleader?"

Brunette second team says, "Yes! I can't believe she has a zit right before competition! She should stay home until it clears up. I wouldn't have come to school if I was her."

Blonde captain: "Yeah I totally wouldn't either" and so on and so forth.

Guys, here is a question for you. If sports are a "guy thing," then why do you need blonde miniskirted troops there to watch?

You should not be concentrating on the girls, you should be right along side of them actually knowing and understanding what's going on in the game - unlike most of the cheerleaders.

Their one and only concern is looking better and out "go team!"-ing the other team's cheerleaders.

How does any of this have anything to do with being a sport?

None of it does; there isn't one thing about cheerleading that is sportive, other than maybe it does take some leg muscles to jump two inches off the ground. Maybe if you consider yelling athletic you might have a little bit of an argument, but other than that there is nothing about cheerleading that makes it a sport.

Some words of advice for the cheerleaders:

Keep not eating, focus on your looks and yelling "go team!" because it is working in your favor with the guys.

Also don't drop the spirit stick or you just might be in for a life of hell.

Cheering is about fierce competition, skill, and athleticism

WHITNEY VELOSKI
Staff Reporter
CENTRAL VALLEY

Everyone knows the debate that cheerleading is not a sport. To me, this debate is a slap in the face.

They say that my fellow cheerleaders and I don't compete. They say that all we do is run around spelling and rhyming in tremendously short skirts (which is another debate in itself) and ten years ago they would have been right. But in recent years cheerleaders have changed their priorities. Not only do we encourage other sports, but we compete against other squads to be named the strongest, bravest, most original and all-around best squad there is.

Just because we don't score goals, throw balls, or tackle our opponents does not mean that we are inferior to the "real athletes." However, these "real athletes" are right about something: cheerleading is not like any other sport.

Unlike other sports, cheerleading is not selfish. Apart from cheering on the same competitors that mock us, we must work together entirely, or people get seriously hurt. We stunt

and throw people in the air, and we do it without helmets, shin-guards, or protective pads. In fact, cheering is the leading cause of sports injuries to women. We perform elements that are just as, if not more difficult than, other sports.

Take for example, a basket toss. This is a skill where the "flier" (the one being thrown) jumps into the hands of the "bases" (the two girls on bottom) as they throw her in the air. At the point in the air where the flier is no longer moving upwards she hits a pose and then "cradles" (when the bases and spotters catch her). The "spotters" assist in the throwing and are the main team members that catch the flier if the stunt should go awry.

So what exactly is it about cheerleading that does not justify it as a sport? Saying that cheering isn't a sport because of the uniform, as some people do, is just silly. Wearing a skirt has nothing to do with that fact that cheerleading is a sport, besides female tennis players wear skirts.

Is it because cheerleading doesn't involve balls? While there are more and more male cheerleaders participating, the answer to that question would have to be no.

There are also many activities that qualify as sports without using balls. Consider wrestling and track, neither one uses a ball as the means of scoring points but each is considered a sport.

It's also a silly point to believe that cheerleading doesn't have rules, a key ingredient of any sport. Cheerleading actually has a very long list of specific rules. For instance, how long the music lasts, the number of rotations in the air that a flier can do and how high a flier can be in the air are all very common and very important rules.

Having said that, I am still at a loss as to why this activity does not qualify. Maybe it is the fact that, unless you are a cheerleader, you have no idea what it takes to be one.

Many athletes throw balls in the air, we throw people. Others have to run across a court, we have to flip and tumble. Some sports only play to the sound of the crowd, we do ours to music, and on top of all of that, we have to look good while doing it.

To answer my own question, there is nothing about cheering that does not make it a sport. Then again, to us cheering is not just a sport, it's a way of life.

Title IX:

Equality vital for teams' successes



MICHELLE DEZHIAN
Lakeside

Title IX states that school sports programs should provide equal opportunities for both girls and boys, including funding.

Every sports program is funded for uniforms, equipment and travel expenses. Equal funding for both boys and girls' teams is rather important for schools to

include in their sports programs. If a boys' team purchases new uniforms, the girls' team shouldn't be denied the opportunity to purchase new uniforms themselves.

Some girls and boys' teams have either the same or similar equipment, so the issue of one team having to deal with more expensive supplies and equipment isn't very likely.

Although schools are not required to provide equal funding for boys' and girls' teams, based on need; equal funding can prevent issues and conflicts concerning equality and fairness. The only time the funding for teams should be a little unequal is if one team earns money themselves, such as holding fund-raisers or receiving sponsorship money. When a team is sponsored and receives money or credit to purchase supplies and equipment, purchasing equipment for the other team isn't necessary, but can be a fair and considerate act.

Jeff Pietz, current head girls' basketball coach for Lakeside High School, was sponsored this past season and received credit to buy basketball equipment, new uniforms and other basketball supplies.

In addition to purchasing new uniforms for his girls' team, he also generously purchased

new supplies and uniforms for the varsity boys' team as well.

Pietz felt it "was necessary to share what I could," and he chose to do this "because I had the opportunity to help another program."

According to Pietz, the funding for both the boys' and girls' teams in the sports program at Lakeside is "pretty equal." Pietz demonstrated equality for the Lakeside basketball program by purchasing new items for all varsity basketball teams.

Inequality in sports funding can affect a team's skills and advancement potential. For example, if a boys' baseball team constructs a batting cage that helps improve their batting skills and the softball team does not have enough money to construct one as well, the girls' softball team has one less way of improving their own batting skills, which would limit their season's success.

A method of making this a more equitable situation would be to schedule both teams to use the same batting cage while taking into consideration their own practice and game schedules.

Funding equally amongst boys' and girls' teams is important. It shows that both girls and boys are equally receiving the best quality uniforms, equipment and other supplies.

Sports teams should not have to worry about whether or not the other team in the program is obtaining more money than what is fair. By ensuring equality within a school sports program, these student athletes will be better prepared to deal with the many challenges they will face once they enter the work force and interact with coworkers. Equality matters.

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