

The Patriot

Powderpuff 2005 Edition

A Patriot Special Issue

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Powderpuff tradition still alive in 2005

Bethany Messick '06

Washington Township is known for its school spirit and traditions like the Spirit Parade, Homecoming, and Mr. Washington Township; but one of the most unique traditions is Powder Puff. It is the one day that senior and junior girls get to duke it out on the field like the boys do, and the boys get to have a cheer off like the girls do.

Before the game all the girls report to the 11/12 auditorium to be reminded of the rules. While the girls are in there, the "powder puff cheerleaders" run around to get the girls pumped up. Then a little screaming match begins between the seniors and juniors to get them fired up for one last time. At game time, the girls run on to the field as the boys cheer them on. The game starts at 6:00 and because of the number of players involved is usually 5 periods

long. The entire game is very competitive and exhilarating.

Although the name of the game is Powder Puff, it is everything but a dainty game. These girls scream, yell, kick, push, and tackle even though it is supposed to be flag football. There are certainly no girly-girls involved in this game.

Preparation for the big game is taken very seriously. There is a long week of mandatory practices that include going over plays, doing drills, and running a little bit to get in shape. During this week of practices, the girls don't only use their energy during practices, but they hang signs, show their spirit, and mildly trash talk to the opposing team. The week is meant to pump up the team and create excitement throughout the school.

The girls aren't the only ones that get wrapped up in the game. The boys are also involved in intensive

mandatory practices. They have to put a routine together, learn their cheers, and practice their stunts in a short amount of time. The boys also go around the school showing their senior or junior pride by trash talking and chanting down the hallways. The whole week is truly exhausting.

The day of the game is an amazing sight. The girls wear homemade t-shirts to show their team pride, and the guys walk around in their cheerleading tights, short shorts, or pleaded skirts. Everyone is charged with energy and anticipation.

The game itself is remarkable. So many proud parents come to watch their sons dress up in skirts and strut their stuff, and watch their daughters kick some butt on the field. The entire game is intense and passionate.

The day after the game you would think that everyone would be drained of energy and team spirit, but at Washington Township that isn't

the case. The winning team usually sports their jerseys once more around the school to rub the win in the other team's face.

Even though the tradition of Powder Puff is taken very seriously, everything is done with good sportsmanship and tact.

A Decade of Powderpuff Winners

1995-Seniors

1996-Seniors

1997-Seniors

1998-Juniors

1999-Seniors became the first class to win the game twice.

2000-Seniors

2001-Seniors

2002-Seniors

2003-Juniors

2004-First tie in Powderpuff history.

Powderpuff: Is the fix in?

Mark Natale '06

Nothing is quite as sexy as a conspiracy. From JFK to Watergate, the Black Sox to BALCO, conspiracy theories have become a staple of Americana. For the past few years, WTHS has even been able to boast of it's very own, one challenging the integrity of our finest tradition - Powderpuff Football.

Is the game rigged? Does the administration want to see the seniors win? Those questions rise every November, but until now the answer has been avoided. Maybe it was simply ignorance, or maybe it was the mystique of Mr. Bollendorf conferring with refs, that stopped us from seeing the obvious, and realizing that there is NO FIX.

The murmurs of a fix are nothing new, as the myth stretches back to the early days of Powderpuff. Back in its infancy, Powderpuff was an after school game that had to be over at 4:15, roster spots were limited, and players were chosen from both sides.

"Even back then, people complained about the selection process, saying that only certain people were picked because the seniors

had to win," said Mr. Bob Gorski, a long time Powderpuff coach.

As the game evolved into the blockbuster event it is today, the senior dominance followed. But it is no fix or shady officiating that has caused the trend.

"The seniors have already been into the game, they are familiar with the concept, and they come out with a mission to win the game," explained Gorski. The increased drive and experience prove to be an uplifting combination for the elder class.

"At senior practice, we are able to learn a lot more, and we already learned so much last year. Our plays are better, we start out farther ahead, and we have all that knowledge from junior year," explained Chelsea Winkelspecht, a senior quarterback.

The irony is that the main piece of evidence dispelling any officiating bias did not come in a senior victory. Many current Township upperclassman remember the last time the seniors lost in the November 2003 game. In the closing moments of a heavily contested match, the seniors handed off to the left, and scored what seemed to be the game winning touchdown.

However, the play was quickly waved dead as the ref's called the senior running back out of bounds. Viewed in slow motion (thanks to the Monthly Rewind Archives), it is extremely difficult to tell whether or not the senior stepped out of bounds. The difficulty is increased when a ref has to make the call in real time.

So now the question arises. If the game had been fixed for the seniors, why would the ref make the tough call? Wouldn't he have turned a blind eye to the possible infraction, and rule the play a touchdown? Instead, the call locked a junior victory, and erased any thoughts of a fix.

But yet, the desire for a conspiracy remains.

Almost simultaneously as the juniors stormed the field in 2003, new accusations began. Stories emerged claiming that every 4 years, the game is fixed for a junior victory. Again, this was a shallow accusation formed by the attraction of a conspiracy. Once again through simple research, this myth was proven to be false.

I was able to get results of every game since 1992 (thanks again to the

Rewind Archives, as well as the class council yearbook collection), and can assure you, there is no pattern. The first junior victory came in 1998, a full 5 years before they would emerge victorious again. The seniors also won in 1999, the year the juniors would have had to win to prove the conspiracy. So once again, we find ourselves again with an unfulfilled theory.

So when the smoke clears and the game is over late Tuesday night, the outcome will have been decided purely by the players on the field. There is no fix, no conspiracy, no underlying plan to assure a senior victory.

Mr Gorski puts it best: "You can't deny talent. A talented group of girls come in from other sports, and they'll be able to play. It doesn't matter what grade they are."

**Powderpuff
Tuesday at 6:00pm.
Be there!**

Seniors looking to display talent

Rob Czyzewicz '06 & Will Haight '06

The word anticipation doesn't begin to describe the feeling of Powderpuff for the Senior class of 2006. And with a game that is so filled with tradition, it is the Senior girls that plan to prove that last year's tie against the now graduated girls was a far cry of what these girls are truly capable of.

"Everyone is taking it more serious this year, and the intensity is much higher. We feel better now this year because we are more experienced and we know what to expect," said Colleen Montgomery '06, a special teams player.

In addition to the girls being serious and confident, head coach Mr. Bob Gorski is supremely adamant in his preparation and he believes that the girls are ready to emerge in victory.

"I know how important this game is to the seniors, this being their last Powderpuff game. I just want them to concentrate, and put the silliness aside so that when practice happens, they work hard. Their fun will come on game night" said Gorski.

According to Gorski, more than 250 girls came to the first meeting very excited about the prospects of playing in the game for the second time. Most of the girls think that in addition to feeling the urge to win, they must realize that they are also

on the field to experience something different and to have a good time.

"It means a lot to us. It's a chance to be together with all of our friends and bond with each other before we leave at the end of the year" said Trish Herring '06. "It's a fun game, but at the same time, it's really important to us".

There seem to be various advantages that the Senior side in general possesses. It appears obvious that the senior class is as school spirited as this school has ever witnessed. In fact, they plan to use that added energy and their extra year of experience to their advantage when the ball is kicked off Tuesday night.

"The Seniors are different from the Seniors last year because I think we have more spirit, and our cheerleaders will dominate this year as they did last year, and we feel really strong and unbeatable this year", said Montgomery.

Gorski finds that the extra year strongly helps the seniors to better understand the game, and to get the proverbial leg up on their opponents.

"I think the biggest thing that gives the Seniors the leg up is that they have all of the hype of the Powder puff game over with; they had that last year as juniors", he began. "Now, it's more of a business and they have more of a purpose. They understand the concept, and there's not as much nerves. I think the



Matt Kienzle '06/ Patriot Staff

Seniors pause during practice to strategize.

Juniors go through the hype and the silliness and that may affect the way they play".

Gorski had a different plan for practice than Mr. Andy Holmes, the Junior head coach. Holmes decided to go with a full team practice every day that the Juniors were on the field. Gorski, on the other hand, decided to practice only the skill positions for the first two days, and then bring the rest of the squad out later in the week.

"What I have found is that it gives the coaches time to isolate the players, to see who they are, and to

see where they could be positioned. It's important to see where they could be potentially matched up so we can just marry up the offensive line to the skilled players" said Gorski.

The Senior girls will look to feed off of the energy of the crowd and the cheerleaders to assist them in playing a solid game. With the preparation that they have gone through in the past week, both the players and the coaching staff feel as though they are ready to ride off into the sunset with the extravagant feeling of victory.

Seniors in action

Photos by Matt Kienzle '06



Girls take break to ponder the next play.



Girls walk off field after long practice.



Running backs hope to break through line on Tuesday.



Quarterbacks loosen up arms.



Homecoming queen puts down crown to practice.

Junior girls playing for upset

Tori Gilbert '07

In a school of 3000 + students, it may appear hard to develop a common interest that everyone relates to. And yet, year after year, the WTHS Junior and Senior classes come together behind one passion: Powder Puff. The annual Junior vs. Senior football game, where the typical roles are reversed and girls get to play on the team and the cheerleading squad consists of boys, has proven yet again to bring the classes together amongst themselves, and reignite the rivalry between the classes of the 11/12 building.

The Class of '07 is not one that can easily bond, with over 700 students in the class. Many students have complained recently of disunion; faced with a senior class that is bursting with spirit and energy, many juniors have felt discouraged as to their class ever coming together. Yet Powder Puff is proving to be the event that will unite the class.

Over 300 junior girls have banded together to form the football team, and more than 50 boys joined the cheerleading squad. Even those students not directly involved in the event have expressed their enthusiasm and their support for their class.

Lauren Erskine '07, exclaims, "I'm still into it! I'm not playing, but it looks fun and I do support the team." Lauren Kienzle '07, echoes the sentiments of class spirit and unity.

"I think it'll really bring a lot of people together. Because we're such a big class, we don't tend to have something in common to worth



Mike Jones '06/The Patriot

Junior girls practicing for the big game.

together for. This is it, and I think a lot of people will get to meet someone they might not have otherwise, through either being on the team or cheerleading."

The first Junior Powder Puff meeting was held almost three weeks ago, and it was there that the coaching squad was introduced.

Mr. Mike Dempsey, Mr. Michael Blaylok, Mr. Dave Casey, and Coach Shane Snyder have come together along with 9/10 secretaries Lynda Smith and Diane Harland to form the supporting coaching staff; the position of head coach has been filled by Core science teacher Mr. Andy Holmes, who is replacing former coach Mr. Jeff Walters.

Holmes has been helping coach the team for the past two to three years, and is thrilled to be able to

continue the Powder Puff tradition. In recent years this traditional game has fallen to the wayside in many schools, and he says it is wonderful to see our high school continue the fun experience. Very excited for the first practice, he was pleased with the turnout of players.

"More than 300 girls came to the first meeting" he said.

With no apprehensions concerning the short amount of time he has to prepare the girls, he says, "The girls are so willing to learn, and pick up so much in one week, that we will be ready. The seniors are in for some stiff competition."

He wants to be clear, "The game is not fixed...technically, the Junior class really did win last year. It was just...overlooked. The Juniors this year have a great chance of winning,

with the combination of the talent of the girls and the tricks up our sleeves, the seniors are in for a tough fight."

Most importantly, though, Holmes proclaims, "This is fun! I hope there is not intimidation, no fighting, that students remember this is a game and to use good sportsmanship...It would be a shame for it to be ruined by students who forget that."

He went on to say, "Powder Puff is a fun night, I am privileged to be a part of it, and I can't wait to see those girls out on the field. Every year, they go out and prove to everyone that yes, they are smart and athletic, but they're tough too."

Mr. Holmes enthusiastically supports the other component of the night, too- the boy cheerleaders.

"Well," he laughs "they slightly scare me. They greatly impress me too."

It looks like it will be the enthusiasm of the class that will truly carry the team to victory.

"I'm stoked. The Seniors are going down", exclaims Laura Dixon '07.

The girls appreciate the opportunity for fun they have been presented with, "I'm mostly excited about game night, and for the practices. It's going to be awesome being on the field for once instead of in the stands," exclaims Allie Daniels '07.

A great game and stiff competition is ensured, and the Junior girls are prepared to bring their best to the field.

Junior preparation for Powderpuff

Photos by Mike Jones '06



Working on pass coverage.



The girls are all smiles after practice.



Juniors practicing hard for Tuesday's game.

Cheerleaders bring energy to game

Steve Dunn '06

As the juniors and seniors deck out the 11-12 wing lavishly in their respective colors of blue and red, the guys of both grades will be ready as ever to step into girls' shoes and once again impress Washington Township as Powderpuff cheerleaders.

While the cheerleaders will rally the fans and will again perform after the second quarter, there are, however, a few notable changes in the rules and regulations of this year's cheerleaders however, but fans should expect the same comical, entertaining, and superbly choreographed show as always.

Last year the Cheerleaders of the now senior class concluded their segment by launching two kids into the air to do back flips. This will not be the case this year as such stunts have been prohibited.

But be sure, the cheerleaders responsible for teaching the guys what to do have plans to make this year's show just as exciting, even without airborne flips.

"We're going to be just as good if not better than last year despite these changes," said veteran cheerleader Vince Brindisi '06.

This year's Powderpuff will feature a greater number of cheerleaders than ever before. Traditionally, forms were handed out to be handed in on a designated date on a first come, first serve basis until a total of thirty spots were filled.



Matt Kienzle '06/The Patriot

The cheerleaders practice their routine as they prepare for Tuesday night's showdown.

Many students arrived at school at 5 am and earlier and all the slots were filled by the start of homeroom.

This was not the case this year as interest, particularly among the seniors, skyrocketed and administrators feared numerous students camping out overnight and other related problems.

This year, the cheerleaders handed in their forms the day after they received them after school in the Old Gym while administrators decided what was to be done.

Ultimately, any male who wanted to participate as a Powderpuff cheerleader this year had the opportunity to do so. Only students who received suspensions this year were not allowed. The senior boys

The senior boys, directed by Dana Nelson '06 and Kirsten Bradley '06, practice every day after school until 4:00 in the 11-12 Old Gym. The junior guys practice until the same time in the 11-12 New Gym.

Many consider the cheerleading routines of the Powderpuff boys the highlight of the whole evening, and even with larger numbers and stunt restrictions, this year's cheerleaders will not disappoint.

Come see the star-studded half-time show featuring the cheerleaders.

The Un-scientific Method

The suspense leading up to the annual Powder Puff extravaganza is always at a fever pitch in the weeks leading up to the event. Every junior and senior is absolutely positive their side will win. Well, the WTHS Patriot decided to find out once and for all.

We chose to simulate Powder Puff through as many different areas as possible and consulted the experts for predictions. Here's what we found.

- **Madden 2006** – Seniors 74-Juniors 12: "I'm gonna have to say that whoever puts more points on the board will win." – John Madden
- **NCAA Football 2006** – Seniors 80-Juniors 18: We apologize, Lee Corso's response was muffled as he donned the Minuteman mascot.
- **Miss Cleo** – Seniors 56-Juniors 20: "For my statistical analysis, call me for your FREE tarot reading. Just \$4.95 per minute."
- **Confucius** – Seniors 403-Juniors 23: "Confucius say a gentlemen who is younger will emerge in a cowardly defeat." - Confucius
- **Nostradamus** – Seniors 115-Juniors 31: "Amidst the desolate fog, the elders shall triumph."
- **Ouija Board** – Seniors 79-Juniors 2: Ouija Boards don't say anything.
- **Fortune Cookie** – "A landslide victory begins with the first touchdown.": Unclear for which side it applies but it's probably seniors.
- **Electric Football** – Seniors 62-Juniors 7: Whenever the juniors scored it turned off.

Truly biased staff-predictions on Powderpuff

- Rob Czyzewicz '06* – Seniors 55, Juniors 14; Don't be surprised if the Juniors don't come out for the second half.
- Mike Jones '06* – Seniors 62, Juniors 45; The Seniors may be getting a bit too cocky, but they will prevail after the initial shock.
- Justine Jacobs '06* – Seniors 60, Juniors 37; We all know we're going to win, so it doesn't matter.
- Matt Kienzle '06* – Seniors 115, Juniors 9; They will be so embarrassed, they will not want to play next year.
- Mike Dougherty '06* – Seniors 62, Juniors 32; The Seniors will win big but take the Juniors with the points.
- Mark Natale '06* – Seniors 56, Juniors 14; Juniors outmatched in every facet of the game, and then some.
- Steve Dunn '06* – Seniors 60, Juniors 10; Seniors will romp mercilessly.
- Mr. Jim Evangelisti* – I think we need more Junior editors on this newspaper staff.