

# Rounding up sideline spirit

BY LUPE EYDE Staff Writer

The 1994 football season is here, and back with the crowds at the stadium and fans tailgating are, of course, the Gamecock cheerleaders. But wait, before you conjure up images of megaphones and pyramids, keep this in mind - at USC cheerleading is a lot more than Rah! Rah! Siss Boom Bah! At USC these cheerleaders are athletes and cheerleading is their sport, and this year USC's Gamecock cheerleaders hope to continue the tradition of school spirit and nationally renown excellence.

"This is actually one of the most talented teams we ever had," USC Spirit Coach Andrei Grier said. "This year is the first year that I got to chose my own team," said the former USC cheerleader now on his second year as Spirit Coach. "Usually it's very hard to find a team that work well together. They really are a Dream Team."

"A lot of people think this is natural and they don't see we have three hours of practice a day," said cheerleader John Varanelli. "It's a lot of work and a lot of determination but the personal satisfaction is unmatched."

And it's true. Kinn Kinney transferred here from Trinity Valley College



ANDREI GRIER

in Texas just to join the Gamecocks cheerleading team.

"I just wanted to be part of the best," Kinney said. "The cheerleading program is nationally known. For tryout weekend it's a big time privilege to be around."

"It says a lot to be a USC cheerleader," said Marc Billups, another cheerleader. "We're student athletes here at USC."

The cheerleading program has changed a bit this year, said Grier.

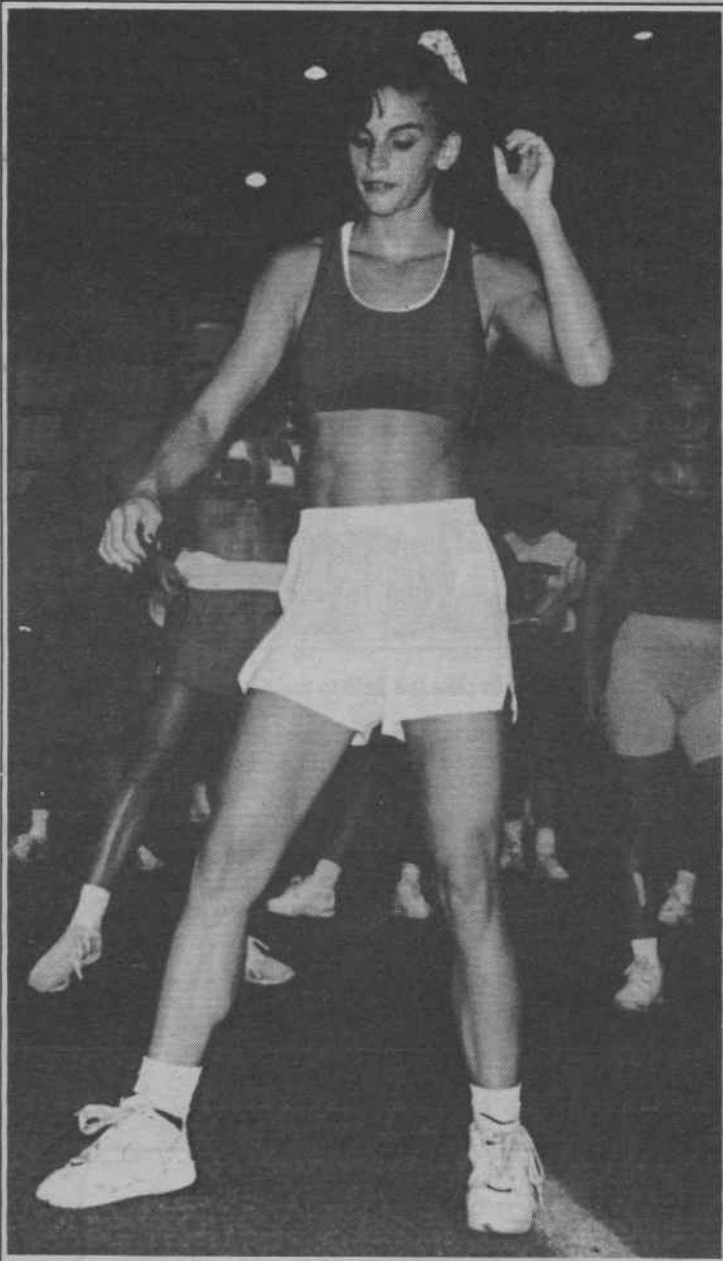
For instance, the Spirit Committee decided not to continue the dance team, the Southern Belles. Instead, the cheerleaders will be doing more entertainment oriented cheering in addition to their stunts and cheers.

"Our main goal is to promote some spirit," said Grier, "To get people to the game. We're putting a lot of emphasis on dance this year. I think that the things that we're going to be doing this year people are going to like. It will be a lot more flashy."

The students trying out for the team this year have a lot to measure up to, for USC's Gamecock cheerleaders took two national titles last year: Partner Stunt and Best Mascot. Tryouts were August 26 and 27, but no decisions have been made yet.

"We usually have a set number we can take," said Grier. "It's usually that number or less. It depends where the break in the talent is."

"Last year we were the favorites to win and fell a little bit short of our goal," said Grier on winning the national championship. "We have always been one of the top 10 in the country. We hope to be potential champs. I think it's attainable and we're a little hungry for that." "I'm really excited," added Grier, "I really am."



CHEER UP: A Gamecock cheerleading hopeful tries out for the nationally-ranked squad.

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