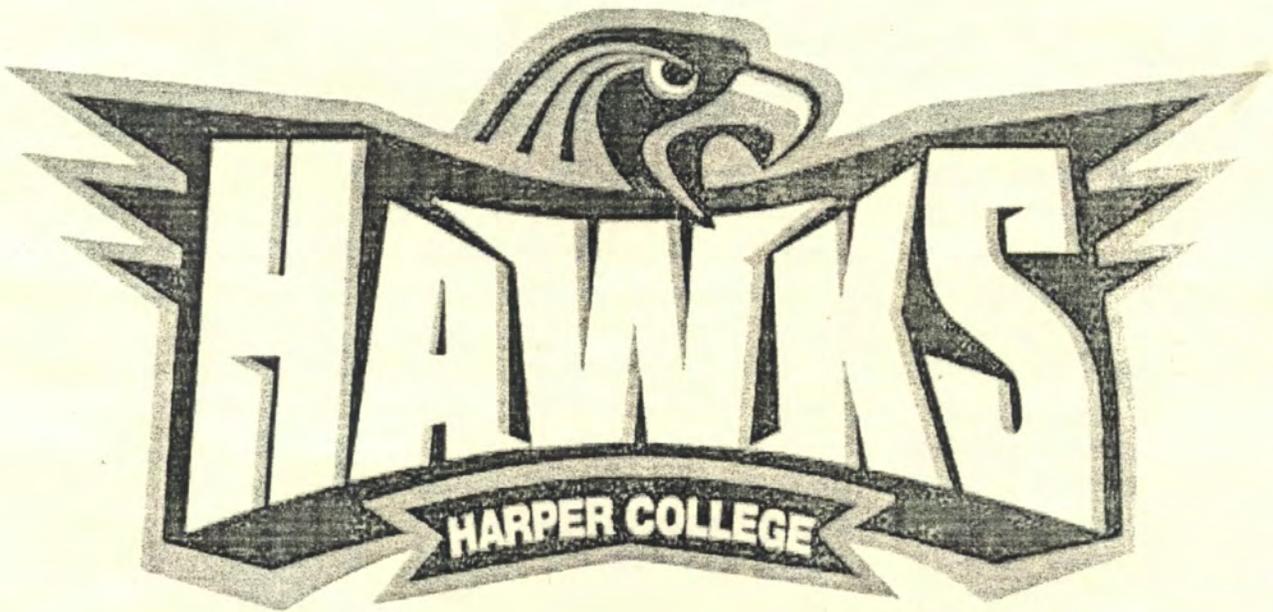


The Challenger

A Publication of the Harper College Honors Program
Summer 2012

Community Athletics

A Glance at the Sports of Harper College



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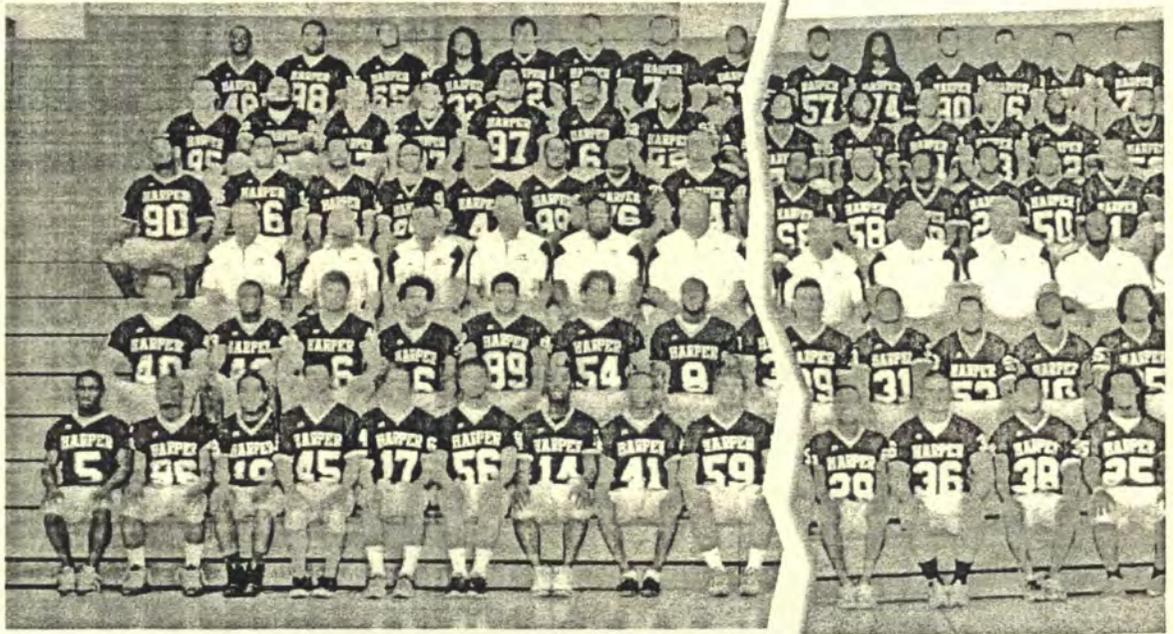
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Community Football

By Megan Phelps

College football has been an American tradition for the past century. Body painted fans, energized cheerleaders, and game-faced football players have created a reputation for many baccalaureate institutions. Where this picture struggles to succeed is in many community colleges. While speaking with the Harper College President, Dr.



Kenneth Ender, he stated, "Community college football is a legacy that no longer makes sense in a contemporary community college setting." It is an unfortunate thing, the closing of the football team, and allow me to be sympathetic to the football players who no longer get to wear cleats in the muddy grass, hope in a 'Hail Mary,' or jump for an interception. However, I think that a football program has no place at Harper College.

The thrilling experience that football games bring can only be grasped if face-painted fans fill the stands along side moms and dads, grandpas and grandmas. Coty Tyner, a former Harper College fall back for the Harper Hawks football team, stated in an interview, "There definitely needs to be support from everybody.... the whole campus should support [the team]." This would mean that Harper students, like Lisa Licari, should cheer, "GO HAWKS!" at most of the home

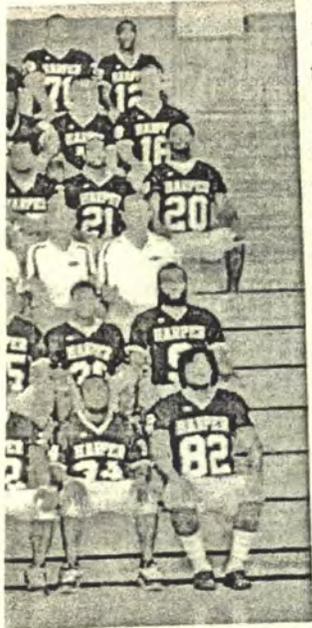
games. However, as Lisa states, "I was not informed of any of their games, nor did I pay attention to their schedule of events or games." In addition to this lack of student awareness, Harper recently released statistics stating that in 2010, there were only six in-district students playing on the Harper College Football team. This means that 93% of Harper's football team consisted of players from outside Harper's district. This produced the concern that the players' much needed support systems were too far away to come to the football games. Without this support base for the football program, what motivated the players to play the game?

Tyner later stated, "[Football gave me the] motivation to know that if I don't do my school work then I don't get to do the thing that I love, which is to play football." Although the enthusiastic fall back may have been motivated to work for that "A,"

his feelings were not fully reciprocated by his other teammates. After hearing from Dr. Ender that a lot of players only went to school during the fall semester so that they could play football, it became clear that this was not a football program built for academic success. When asked for the most influential reason in cutting the football program, Dr. Ender replied, "We were not enabling [the players] to be successful. [At the end of the season] there was no coming out the other side with a credential that you could take into the labor market and do something with your life." If the football program is not correlating with academics, it has no place on campus. Simply put, if the football team isn't driving to the end zone, it has no place on the field.

Dr. Ender's twin brother is the president of a community college in Michigan, which also had a football program until two months ago. When asked for the

reason of its closing, Dr. Ender said that low grade point averages were one of the many factors. Maybe Dr. Ender's twin brother was, "Not enabling [his players] to be successful [through the football program]," much like Dr. Ender himself, who also explained, "We just couldn't maintain a



program that didn't have success attached to it from an academic [standpoint]." If players are not getting good grades, their institutions are not setting them up for success by allowing their football program to continue.

This may be easier for certain players to grasp than others. For those that are still asking why, Dr. Ender would recommend that they, instead, ask themselves, "How can I make this institution work for me?"



Within Our Walls

By Nicole Misisic

I was not aware that Harper College had an intramural program. When I asked a couple of my classmates if they knew that there were intramurals on campus, both of them shook their heads no. "I'm so involved on campus, and even I didn't know that [intramurals] existed," one admitted.

For a while I assumed that students weren't

knowledgeable of intramurals due to a lack of advertisement. Then I came across the pamphlets sprouting from the plastic organizer on the wall in the Wellness and Human Performance Office, the weekly schedule of events pinned to the bulletin board outside of the gymnasium, and the webpage announcing the Welcome Week Pool Tournament. There is also

an email distribution list that informs students of upcoming events in addition to the quiet advertisement for intramurals that draws a small crowd.

Cliff Brown, Head Baseball Coach and Community Activities Coordinator, explains

that the nature of a two-year community college makes programming around the needs and interests of students very difficult. Brown said, "The biggest challenge is timing. It is hard to maintain set programs because people come here in the morning and then go to work. We also have people coming in the evening after work."

Another reason for the low numbers is that, unlike four-year universities, "We just don't have that captive audience looking for things to do." Brown said, "We haven't set up leagues because we don't have enough interest."

According to Brown, there are cases where someone shows interest in planning an intramural activity but later backs out either because of an obliga-



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tion or because that person loses the motivation to follow through. Brown stated, "People are kind of fired up for stuff, but then they have other commitments, like work and family."

Although these circumstances impose difficult limits on the intramural programs, Brown is not discouraged. He experiments with new ideas to see what works and what doesn't. "This is kind of a learning process for me too," he said.

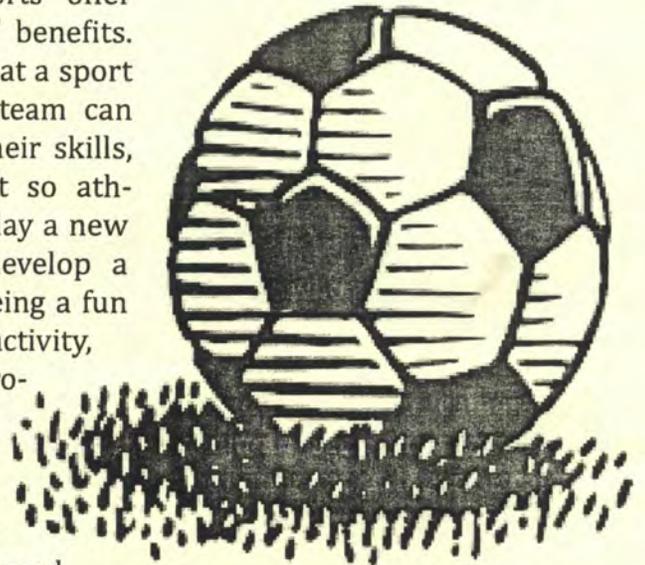
Basketball is the most popular intramural sport, with an average of twenty participants. Between twenty-five and thirty people play intramurals daily. Comparing these figures to the number of students attending Harper College, this appears to be a poor turnout.

In an attempt to get more students involved in intramurals, Brown established many new programs in his two years as the

coordinator of the Intramurals Program. Some of these include volleyball, flag football, dodge ball, and floor hockey. Director of Student Activities Michael Nejman, who has overseen the program for ten years, acknowledged Brown's efforts, stating, "My hat's off to Cliff. He tries to provide everyone new opportunities."

Intramural sports offer students a variety of benefits. Those who are skilled at a sport but didn't make the team can practice to improve their skills, and those who aren't so athletic get a chance to play a new sport and perhaps develop a new hobby. Besides being a fun and healthy physical activity, intramurals are also productive in releasing stress, breaking up a long day of classes, and getting friends together. Brown observed,

"Those who are committed come every day. You see the same faces over and over, which is good, building up that camaraderie." Nejman sees this camaraderie building on a bigger scale. He stated, "I think all student activities and intramurals help build community, because the biggest challenge for a community college is building community."



I Am Harper Proud - Are You?

By Kristina Shkaruba

A poll conducted by *The Challenger* shows that only 18% of students surveyed knew of at least one national title won by the Harper Hawks. According to the National Junior College Athletic Association, William Rainey Harper College athletic teams have earned a total of 12 national championship titles. These titles include: Wrestling in 1994, 2001, 2006, 2010; Men's Division III Outdoor Track and Field in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011; Football in 2003, 2004, 2008; Women's Division III Track and Field in 2011. The Athletic de-

partment currently offers six women's sports and six men's sports.

I challenge you to take a walk down the hallway of building M and on the Harper College sports fields to see why the Athletic Department deserves your respect and support. What you will find are hardworking individuals who play their hearts out for the same reasons that over 40,000 students attend Harper College.

Harper College maintains a strict non-scholarship athletic department that is populated

by outstanding individuals, and it seamlessly aligns its mission with the mission of Harper College: "a comprehensive community college dedicated to providing excellent education at an affordable cost, promoting personal growth, enriching the local community and meeting the challenges of a global society." The benefit of having a non-scholarship team is twofold: the athlete's principal desire to play is due to love for the sport, and the coach's principal concern is for the individual athlete's success, be it on the field or off.

Doug Spiwak, Harper College Athletic Director, describes what he refers to as the purity of sport: "In a community college, [sports] are a beautiful thing, because the athletes that come here are not on scholarship. They come here because they chose to." One must agree that purity, as it pertains to sports is an impressive quality in the midst of a culture that is filled with athletes who are focused on money and plagued by scandal.

A former Harper Hawk and three times All-American, wrestler, Luke Roth (Lockport,) is a man whose most impressive quality is his sincere gratitude for the second chance that he received from Harper College. Roth, a "reverse" transfer from Northern Illinois University, swears that his only support after he was asked to leave NIU came from Dan Loprieno, the Harper College Wrestling Coach. Roth now wrestles on a full ride scholarship at a four-year, division II University, after receiving an Associates degree, while aiding the Harper College Wrestling team in attaining the national championship title last year. He stated, "[Loprieno] saved my life. He changed my whole life." Previously struggling with academics at NIU, Roth received a 4.0 during his first semester at his new school.

"It's not in lieu of your education that you do sports, for instance you're not an athlete or you're a student, you are a student athlete," Doug Spiwak explains. If there were an underlining theme to the entire interview with Spiwak, ironically, it would not be athletics, it would be the

critical balance between academics and sports and how this balance attributes to an athlete's success. What impresses Spiwak is an athlete with noteworthy academic achievement.

Current Harper College baseball players Ryan Busse (Hersey), Tyler Tureck (Barrington) and Scott Plaza (Prospect) agree that their grades have gotten better at Harper College. Busse states, "Good academic performance does rub off on us, because [the coaches] talk to us about it all the time."

This leads us into the main goal of the Athletic Department according to Doug Spiwak: "To have every athlete graduate, earn a certificate, or be eligible to transfer to the next level." After speaking with a multiple athletes, who play for various teams on the campus, I have found that this goal is being accomplished, given that they all have already or plan to graduate with an associates degree from Harper.

The passion and pride for the Harper Hawks that Doug Spiwak radiates is nothing less than contagious as he speaks of what he believes to be the last piece of the puzzle: "If I come one day and those stands are packed, look over, because I will be smiling."

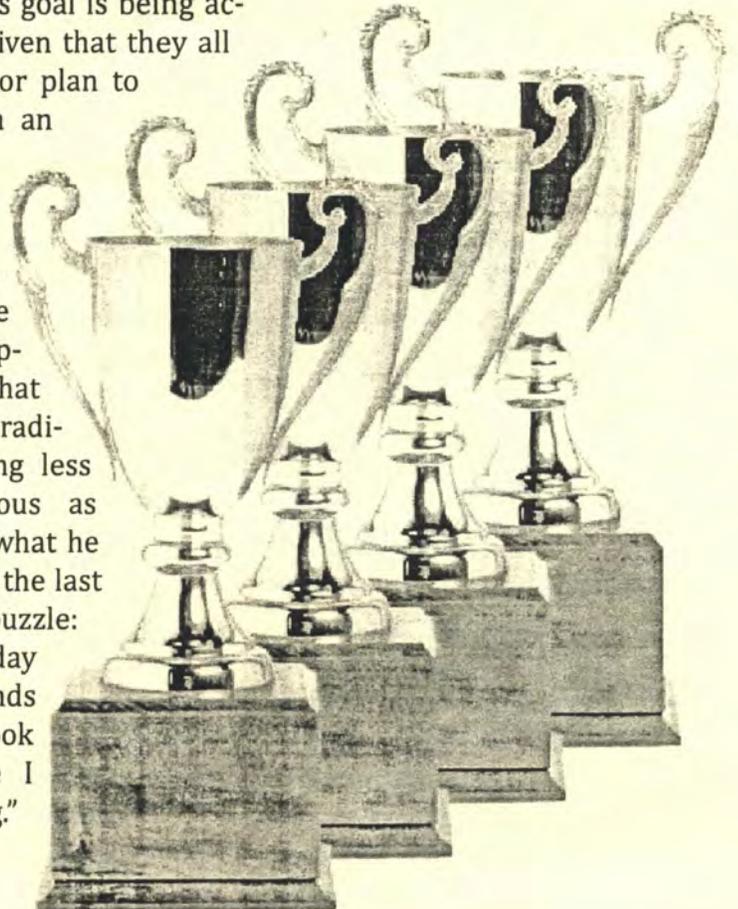
Harper's National Championship Titles:

WRESTLING

*MEN'S TRACK
AND FIELD*

FOOTBALL

*WOMEN'S
TRACK AND
FIELD*



More Than Just Pom Poms

By Ana Barajas

This past December, Harper College President, Dr. Kenneth L. Ender, announced the discontinuing of the football team. This posed the question, "How will the dance team be effected by this?" While we typically think of dancers as artists, we should remember that they are also athletes who represent and serve Harper College. As Pom and Dance Team coach Kym Banner stated, "No matter what, we are supporting the school because we are the spirit of the school."

This spirit is exemplified in the performances of the Pom and Dance team. The students choreograph all of their own performances and shows. These choreographies range in style from ballet to jazz, and from hip-hop to ballroom dance; the moves allow the dancers to incorporate their own styles and abilities. Any Harper College student can join the Pom and Dance team, creating a rather diverse group of dancers.

Along with cheering for the football and basketball teams, the dance team also cheers for student activities, spirit rallies, the Heart Association, and the Breast Cancer Awareness Association. I was impressed to hear that the Pom and Dance Team cheer for free to raise money for organizations and associations within the community. One of these events is the Palatine Bowl

Charity Football Game, which raises money for the Northwest Special Recreation Association; sponsored by the Lavelle Law Firm. In this game, Palatine Policemen and Firemen face off against a team of doctors, lawyers, and bankers. During this event, the ladies of the Pom and Dance Team teach the children their dance routine.



This is a great opportunity, as Vicki Summers, also a coach for the Pom and Dance Team, said, "It's important to incorporate your talents into the community." Andrea Torres, a current Harper dancer, is a perfect example of this. Torres is proud to educate and encourage young Hispanic girls at Juliet Lowe Elementary School by teaching them to dance and cheer. She encourages the girls not to be another statistic! Torres translates cheers from English to Spanish in an effort to help them feel empowered through their culture.

Empowerment is essential for growth. When answering a question about how dance

affects the students' lifestyles, Banner said, "It makes them more whole." What she means is that dance completes a student because it opens the mind, helping with academics. Dance not only embraces technique, but also teaches discipline and hard work. "It's like a job, not just a class...this is real!" Banner said with pride.

Summers also stated, "we offer opportunity." She and Kym motivate the dancers, stressing the importance of confidence and independence. They help dancers use their talents to their potential by advising them on their personal issues as well as

helping them to perfect their dance skills.

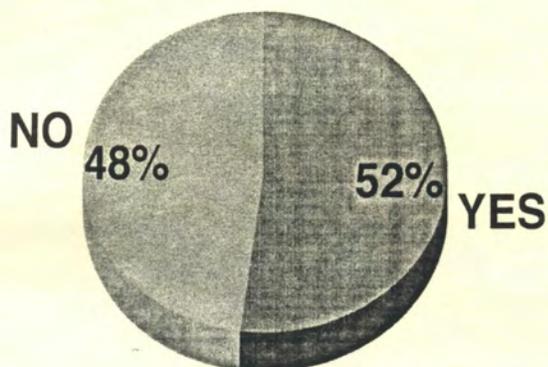
Rajinder Chadha, a dancer on the Pom and Dance Team, said, "Dancing here at Harper helped me gain confidence and the skills that I needed [to improve my everyday life]."

Losing the football team is tragic for many. However, Harper College students who seek to empower and enrich their lives through athletics have an option in the Pom and Dance Team. Being a part of this team will allow students to be active in school and community events, to further develop their minds, and find opportunity and freedom of expression.

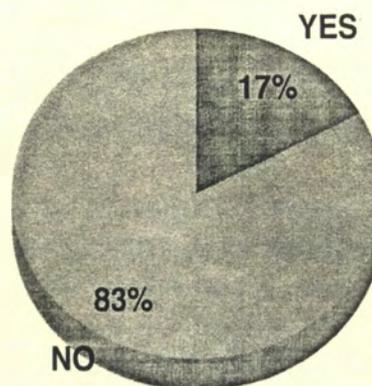
The Voice of Harper

KEY:
■ YES
■ NO

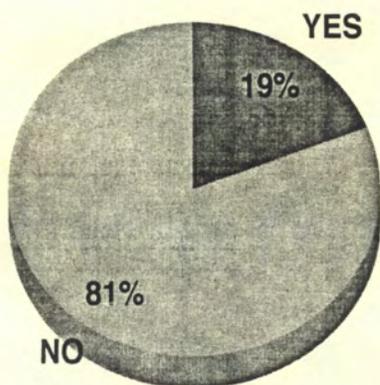
1) Have you heard about intramurals at Harper?



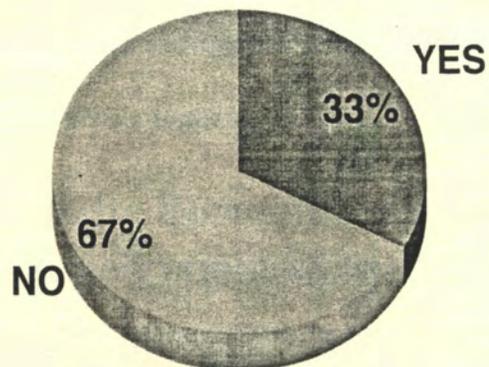
2) Do you know anybody who plays on intramurals at Harper?



3) Have you attended any sporting events at Harper?



4) Can you name any Harper sports teams that have national titles?



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