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October 1, 1998

For Immediate Release:

MIDDLE GRADE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL CHEERTEAMS TO COMPETE AT EIU

CHARLESTON -- Eastern Illinois University's Cheerteam is hosting the Cheerteam Classic Competition in November to showcase not only its own abilities, but to let teams from different grade schools and high schools reveal their talents as well.

The Cheerteam Classic Competition will be held from 7:30 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 14, in Lantz Gymnasium. The competition is centered around cheerteams from middle grade school through high school.

Andrew White, adviser to Eastern's Cheerteam, said the competition is a fundraiser for the university group to raise money to go to the National Cheerleading Competition in Florida. The Cheerteam qualified for the Nationals last year, but due to lack of funding, the team was unable to attend the competition.

"It would have cost the team \$12,000 for the whole squad to attend the two-day competition," White said. "This competition is a fundraiser to see if we can get enough money to go to Nationals if we qualify this year."

He said this is the second year for the competition and is expecting around 30 to 40 schools to attend.

"Last year 11 schools were in the competition. This year a lot of grade schools have been calling about it," White said.

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He said the Eastern Cheerteam set up this classic because there was no form of competition for the grade school teams to compete at with other teams in their age group. White said this is a unique way for them to show off their abilities before getting into high school.

"I think this is a good way to show off our Cheerteam as well," he said. "Since we aren't considered an athletic team, we can't recruit, but this way we can see what talent is coming up."

Both sets of Eastern Cheerteams will help with the competition. The Blue Team will be judging the teams in a middle school category and a secondary category for the high school teams. White said the judges will be looking for tight motions, transitions, skills, safety factors and how well they can get the crowd into a cheer. There are a total of 17 categories that will be judged. All the teams will be required to perform a two-and-a-half-minute cheer.

White said while the Blue Team is judging, the Grey Team will be guiding participants around.

Trophies will be awarded to those teams who place either first, second or third in the categories of varsity, junior varsity and middle school/junior high, and all schools in the competition will receive a certificate for participating. White said they also will receive a video copy of all the schools in their division so they can see what other schools in their league are doing.

Registration fees have been set at \$10 per person, and there is no charge for coaches or advisers. Spectators will be charged a \$2 fee at the door. The registration deadline is Nov.6, and registration must be made in advance.

White said he wants people to come to Eastern to enjoy and see its facilities since it is a community/regional school-friendly university.

"We are trying to make this a professional competition so other schools will talk about it and get the word out," he said.

For additional information and/or to register, contact the School of Adult and Continuing Education, Office of Conferences and Non-Credit Programs, at 217-581-5116.