

## Arkansas State spirit squads headed to compete in the national championships

### Both the A-State cheer and dance teams will compete in Daytona, Florida

REBECCA ROBINSON  
SPORTS EDITOR

The Arkansas State cheer and dance teams headed to Daytona, Florida Tuesday to compete in the National Cheer Association and National Dance Alliance College Nationals Championship. Head coach and director of spirit programs Paige Pauley has been preparing the teams for nationals since the game-day season ended. The cheer and dance team attends football, men and women's basketball and volleyball games. Cheer team member Apple Dennie is from Sherwood, Arkansas and is a fifth year senior who graduated in December and is working on her masters degree while also gearing up for competition with her teammates. The cheer team maintains a strict practice schedule. "During game-day season we practice Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and then we have a workout but the past month we've practiced every single day," Dennie said. "Maybe not Friday and Saturday but we practiced yesterday (Sunday) so we've pretty much been going almost seven days a week." Dennie has been on the team since 2016 and has watched the program grow within her time on the team. The cheer team received sixth place at NCA College Nationals in 2019 after their 30 year absence from the competition. "I have a lot of pride in the program and what's being put on the floor being able to compete with people you love, it's just so rewarding," Dennie said. The Red Wolves cheer team spends a lot of time together due to the amount of practice and events they attend together. This year the team has grown stronger on their physical

skills like tumbling and stunts. "Outside of physical skills, we've had a very resilient team," Dennie said. "We've had multiple people get switched in and out because of injuries, or they've been quarantined or whatever's going on outside of cheer. I think that is a strength within itself." The NCA College Nationals Cheer Championship has teams from all around the nation competing against top universities in hopes of taking home the golden trophy. Both teams had their last practice in Jonesboro Monday night. The teams will have preliminaries on Thursday in Daytona. "This program specifically is very family oriented. To be able to do that with people you didn't even know months ago and now they are people you literally trust with your life it's so worth it," Dennie said. Dennie's teammate, senior Matthew Rasmussen, has been doing cheerleading since his sophomore year of high school. Rasmussen is from Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. On top of competing in cheerleading in high school he also participated in wrestling. "This is the only sport I've done at this level, of course, but it's amazing when you go out there and you see all the people," Rasmussen said. "It'll be different this year because there won't be as many people in the audience at nationals. I know a lot of people don't have the opportunity to do something like this, so I don't want to waste my opportunity." In gearing up for nationals, both teams had a showcase at the Jonesboro High School gymnasium. Members of the community and fans of the two teams could attend in person or virtually. The gymnasium was filled right at capacity and had 80 people who joined virtually. The showcase ended with both

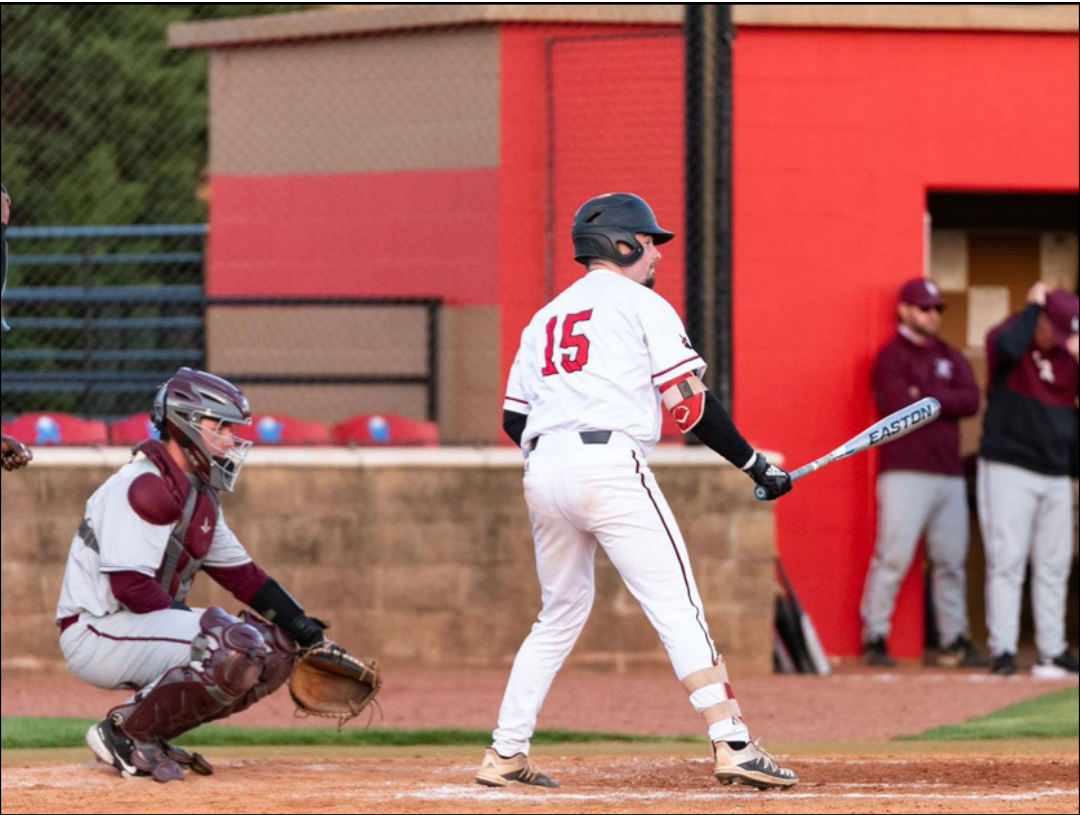


Hannah Risker | Photo Editor  
The Arkansas State cheer team received sixth place at the NCA College Nationals the last time they competed in 2019 after their 30 year absence.

teams getting standing ovations. The dance team will be taking two routines to competition this year including a Pom and Jazz routine. The Red Wolf dance team made school history in 2017 being the first squad to make it to nationals finals. "I have always been a really competitive person especially in group aspects. I get stage fright really bad when doing things by myself," Dennie said. "The aspect of putting something out there that represents something larger than me I really love." On top of working towards

competitions and attending several events throughout the year both teams maintained over a 3.0 average GPA for the fall semester. With three A-State cheerleaders and three Red Wolves dancers with a 4.0. Pauley coaches both A-State spirit teams. She graduated from University of Missouri. Pauley was a member of the nationals team for four years and a captain her senior year. The University of Missouri cheerleading squad placed fourth overall at the 2012 NCA College nationals which is the best in Mizzou Cheer history. Pauley has also worked for the past 11 years as a Universal Cheerleaders Association instructor. In 2020 the Varsity Spirit announced they were canceling all scheduled events which included the NCA and NDA collegiate Cheer and Dance National Championships. This will be the first time both teams' sophomores and freshmen will compete at this competition unlike some of the senior cheer team members like Dennie and Rasmussen. "The new recruits in the last

two years, just cause last year we didn't get to actually compete, so we haven't been able to display the freshman from last year, which are sophomores now," Rasmussen said. "They're just such good tumblers. I've been working on my tumbling forever and I can't imagine. I don't know how some of them do it. I feel like tumbling is our biggest strength right now." Both teams are scheduled to compete in Daytona at the Ocean center Wednesday through Saturday. Fans will be able to watch the teams Live on Varsity TV.



## A-State beats rival the Little Rock Trojans

### The baseball team is now on a four game winning streak

REBECCA ROBINSON  
SPORTS EDITOR

The Arkansas State baseball team wins all three games in a three-game conference against the Little Rock Trojans. This gives A-State their fourth consecutive win. The Red Wolves baseball team is now 3-3 in conference games and 8-14 overall. The Red Wolves baseball teams first game was played on Thursday night at 6 p.m. Between A-State pitching well and Drew Tipton leading the team with four hits, A-State beat the Trojans in a final score of 10-2. Trojans pitcher, Aaron Funk, was awarded Preseason Sun Belt Conference pitcher of the year but A-State still managed to get in three runs and five hits over him. Liam

Hicks scored the Red Wolves two points. Ben Klutts, Tyler Duncan, Jaylon Deshazier and Sky-Lar Culver all scored one point. Tipton also was able to get in a triple-base run starting off the sixth inning. Following the momentum of the first game the Red Wolves got in another win with a final score of 4-0 clinching the series. Hicks hit a home-run after sending the ball over the ballpark wall in the right center field. Hicks on top of his home run also scored again for A-State. Duncan and Deshazier also scored a point each for A-State. This is the first time A-State has shut out a Sun Belt Conference opponent since May 13, 2017 which was against Georgia Southern. This is also the first shutout against the Trojans since 2014. The third and final game A-State played in ended in a 10-6 win for the Red Wolves. This makes A-State's first conference sweep since 2019. Tipton, Duncan, Deshazier, Culver, Blake McCutchen, Toler, and Garret Olson all scored for Arkansas State. The team's game against Central Arkansas that was scheduled for Tuesday was postponed without any announcements yet of rescheduling. The baseball team will be back in action when they travel to Lafayette, Louisiana for a three-game SBC conference series starting on Friday at 6 p.m. Louisiana is currently 5-1 in conference games and is coming off a 5 game winning streak. The first two games between the Red Wolves and the Ragin' Cajuns will be broadcasted on ESPN+.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF A-STATE ATHLETICS  
Number 15 Liam Hicks hit a home run in the second game against the Trojans. A-State swept the Little Rock Trojans in a three-game conference series. This is Arkansas State's first conference sweep since 2019