



**THE FC HIGHLANDER BAND** marches onto the football field before their performance at the parent show on Aug. 8.

## FC band marches into competitive season

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Cheers flood the ears of fans as well as the band and guard members as the drums finish their warmup.

Each year, the marching band performs a brand new show that has its own story to tell. When each season begins, the band previews their new show to friends and family at the yearly “parent show.” This year, the band showcased their 2019 show “SynchroniCITY” in August and has been adding on to their show a little bit each

week.

“The parent show is always sort of a preview for our show, and usually only parents and friends come to watch it. This year, we performed the parent show in uniforms, which I was pretty excited for. The football games are always more disciplined than the parent shows, but the first one this year was really fun after our pregame and half-time performances,” said junior Liz Morgan.

The band has been hard at work to prepare for the tough season ahead of them. According to band director Harold Yankey, they have been working on the little details to prepare.

“They’ve been learning music, they’ve been training to be proficient marchers, they’ve been learning drill, they’ve been getting stronger,” said Yankey. “They’ve been spending lots of hours to do the basics well, so that when they get to go perform, they can just worry about [that].”

Although practices are the same almost every day, Yankey and assistant band director Briston Hatchell have been pushing band members to learn more and more of the show to prepare for competitions each weekend.

“We’re trying to add the rest of the show [before FC’s

Invitational], so that we’re performing as much as we can for our contest and hopefully be done by that time,” said Yankey. “It’s not a whole lot different other than the fact that we’re learning new stuff.”

The marching band’s season has already been eventful. For the past two weekends, they have played in two football game performances and participated in invitational competitions at Columbus North High School and Lawrence Central High School. Tonight, they will perform at the football game against Jeffersonville, and tomorrow, they will perform at the Louisville Bands of America

(BOA) Regional Competition.

With the Louisville BOA being inactive since 2014, none of the current band students have ever performed at this competition.

“I think it’s going to be a really tough show, much tougher than it has been in the past. It’s been three or four really good groups and then a lot of other groups, so it’s going to be much more competitive. If we make finals, that’ll put a real feather in our cap,” said Yankey. “It’s different in that you’re competing against groups that you’ve never heard of. It might be a really, really good [band] from Arkansas, and that’s different than bands you’re

very familiar with.”

Before this year, the band went to the Indianapolis Super-Regional BOA competition at Lucas Oil Stadium.

“At BOA competitions, everyone there is very devoted to marching band. You can see amazing bands that you wouldn’t see anywhere else. BOA is also a very different experience because it feels like you are transported to another world and everything outside of marching band doesn’t exist anymore. The Lucas Oil Stadium is a very unique place that seems to produce the best memories,” said junior Avery Stephens, the color guard soloist.

For sophomore Christiano Corwin-Reyes, who plays baritone in marching band, BOA competitions are more challenging, but much more fun, than other competitions.

“BOA has a lot more bands than regular competitions, and you’re also performing in front of really, really experienced people,” said Corwin-Reyes. “You’re also playing on a humongous football field that you have never marched on before, and it just makes it more difficult, but more fun.”

Students who are past their first year of marching band have the opportunity to look back and reflect on how band has changed since their freshman or first year of marching band. Corwin-Reyes has only done one year of band prior to this season, but he can already see the differences between his two years.

“The way band [has]

changed from freshman year is that you kind of know what you’re doing the moment it starts,” said Corwin-Reyes. “It’s very nice to be able to teach younger members and to give them a great experience and show them what it’s like to be a Highlander.”

All students in marching band, old and new, have their own personal experiences

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**Liz Morgan**  
 junior

when it comes to band. Each experience leads to new and diverse expectations and feelings for the performances to come.

“My expectations for BOA and Grand Nats are pretty different than they were for the first competition. Although our first completion went pretty well in my opinion, there is a lot we still need to work on before the band as a whole will be confident enough to perform well in the Grand Nats, and even BOA. If we’re confident, I will expect success,” said Morgan.

Most freshmen are brand new to marching band, with the exception of very few kids who marched in eighth grade. For freshman Gavin DeBrunner, every aspect

is new and different, and he is excited to compete.

“I am most looking forward to the competitions; I enjoy competing against other bands. I’ve been told it brings people closer as a band family,” said DeBrunner.

Everyone in the audience sees what the bands do on the football field and during the pre-performance warm-ups.

However, competitions are not just about the performance and the awards.

“My favorite thing about competitions is probably the bus rides and just having fun. Performing is great, but it’s really spending all day and night with your friends and messing around that makes the band just that much more fun,” said Morgan.

Another activity that the band participates in before and during performances is what they call “sectionals.” Before every performance, whether it be a football game or a serious competition, each section groups together and discusses their

goals, follow through with their specific section’s traditions, and get hyped for the show.

“Sectionals are a time where you feel so close to your section and [you] can share anything. Getting ready for a performance is such an adrenaline rush. It’s something you’ll never feel anywhere else,” said senior Hadya Mourcy.


For band students and directors alike, there are a lot of things to think about and focus on when it comes to practices and performances.

“I’m really looking forward to see how the competition season progresses and how our band does. Competition season is always my favorite part of the year because it’s what you spend the first couple months practicing for. It feels great to perform the show on the field for people to enjoy,” said Morgan.

This year,

Yankey wants people at FC to know that the band program is spreading out and going to bigger competitions. Over the next few weeks, SynchroniCITY will play out in front of thousands of new audience members and will continue to showcase new experiences to those who see it.

“Band is stretching out and being a little bit more national. When we go to Grand National Finals; that’s a different experience than any other student activity [has], in that it’s truly national. We’re kind of the epicenter, in Indianapolis, of marching band. It’s where a lot of the championships take place,” said Yankey. “If people came and saw the scope of what it really is, and how big the band is, how big a deal it is, how many people go see it, how they overtake Indianapolis, I think they’d really be impressed because it’s truly a national activity.”



### Upcoming Band Performances

- Jeffersonville Football Game- tonight at FC
- Louisville BOA- tomorrow at Cardinal Stadium
- FC Invitational- Sept. 28 at FC
- Bedford North Lawrence Football Game and Senior Night- Oct. 11 at FC
- ISSMA Open Class Contest- Oct. 12 at Jasper High School

**Sam Haney/The Bagpiper**