

**Title:** The power of persistence — inside the Eminence majorette team

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**Photo 1:**

**Credit:** JONAH MANGRUM//USED WITH PERMISSION

**Caption:** T'Nya Bolden (12) struck a pose in the stands among the marching band. The majorette's focused yet vibrant energy helps set the tone for the band as the two groups collaborate to create a dynamic game-day atmosphere.



**Photo 2:**

**Credit:** KALICE WOODS//USED WITH PERMISSION

**Caption:** Lainey Willingham (9) poses for the camera at a football game. Eminence performs at every football game, boosting crowd energy from the bleachers while showcasing their precision and skill.

**Pop Quote:** “There are going to be moments where things are difficult, but you have to grow, you have to be persistent, you have to be resilient, you have to have grit, and you can’t give up. If it’s hard, let it be hard, but still push through it anyway.” - Coach Kaneshia Moore

**Word count:** 707

Fringe, sequins and fearless energy blur as the Eminence majorettes transform an ordinary high school football game into a full-blown spectacle. Living up to their name with every perfectly

timed step, they are more than just dancers; they are leaders who set the standard for their school's spirit.

According to Raniyah Lomax (12), being a majorette brings a level of adrenaline that only Friday Night Lights can deliver. It is a unique experience, and capturing the depth of it requires a personal definition.

"I would describe [being a majorette] as exciting, and you get a thrill out of dancing," Lomax said. "You know, just being in front of a crowd, feeling their energy and just giving it your all." Lomax is the team's captain and leads the girls alongside Commander Kennede Taylor (12). For Lomax, growth is an important factor in her mindset for the sport.

"I would say [my favorite part about being a majorette] is the performances because you get to see how much your practice has paid off," Lomax said.

Months of rehearsal culminate in an astonishing experience. But the payoff is more than just a clean routine; it is a rush of nervous excitement that comes with every move.

"At first it'll be a little nerve-racking because you'll be thinking 'Oh my God everyone's looking at me, what are they thinking?'" Taylor said. "But after a while, [the anxiety] pumps me up. I'd be like 'Yup its a whole bunch of people watching, let me give it my all.'"

In addition to their hard work and performance on the field, the team also emphasises their profound bond, one that extends beyond mere friendship.

"We all are like sisters basically," Taylor said.

The majorettes' success, from their powerful performances to their close-knit bond, did not happen by accident. It was a product of hours of practice put in by the girls and their coach. Dr. Kanessa Moore, who has 30 years of dance experience under her belt, coaches the team. For Moore, the best part about coaching the team is seeing her vision come to life.

"Everything about Eminence is like my brain baby," Moore said. "Everything about who they are, it's a vision that I had. And so, to see them so gracefully bring that vision to life has been really enjoyable."

The passion Coach Moore has for her team is rooted in her coaching philosophy, which guides every practice and performance. It is a message of mental toughness and perseverance that she instills in her dancers as she prepares them for their future, both in and out of dance.

"There are going to be moments where things are difficult, but you have to grow, you have to be persistent, you have to be resilient, you have to have grit and you can't give up," Moore said. "If it's hard, let it be hard, but still push through it anyway."

Moore's ideology of resilience and grit is a lesson that her dancers will carry with them far beyond the football field. For Lomax, the message has already begun to shape her perspective on life.

"I feel like this year, being a majorette, it has prepared me for hardships later in life," Lomax said. "Like, don't give up. Even when things are not going right, you just still try your best." Being a majorette is not without challenge. With such a diverse audience, a major hurdle for the team is a lack of appreciation and grasp from some observers.

“[Some people] kind of don’t understand us as far as faculty and parents, I would say,” Taylor said. “Because a lot of people don’t want a majorette team. Some people feel like the kind of dancing we do is inappropriate. We have to fight for this...we want to be understood.”

The team's growth and success are a testament to their perseverance, a skill that every prospective dancer needs. For any student considering trying out for Eminence, Moore’s advice goes right to the heart of what it means to be a majorette.

“I say nothing beats a fail but a try, and if it’s something that you’re interested in doing, go after it, even if it doesn’t work out for you the first time,” Moore said.