

TOP STORIES

more>>

Broadneck High seniors twirl flaming batons

SHARE IDEAS

By THERESA WINSLOW, Staff Writer

Published 09/29/11

- [ShareThis](#)
- [Comment](#)
- [Email This](#)
- [Get Email Alerts!](#)



Joshua McKerrow - The Capital

Breanne Rowe and Devan Hare twirl flaming batons at Broadneck High School football games, and also compete on twirling teams. Both are seniors. They each have won numerous awards and would like to twirl in college. They also hope take part in the Olympics, if the sport is included in the Games.

Soot doesn't come off easily.

Just ask Devan Hare and Breanne Rowe, two Broadneck High School seniors who have the smudge marks on their arms to prove it from twirling flaming batons.

What they don't have, thankfully, are burns, because the girls are champion twirlers. They feel the heat and hear the sizzle, but like a hand passing over a candle's flame, they move so quickly they don't get injured. Of course, all this is contingent upon grabbing the batons in the correct place. Their countless hours of practice undoubtedly helps.

"We were freaking out the first time," said Devan, 16. "But I've gotten used to (the flaming batons). It really doesn't hurt if you grab it for a second."

Each end of a fire baton is soaked in kerosene for four minutes before it's lit. The girls' mothers typically assist with the prep work, toting a steel case with the batons and a gas can.

Find Us On Facebook

HometownAnnapolis.com
 Like 3,463

AP VIDEO

more>>



Devan and Breanne perform in sequined costumes with the band at halftime at Broadneck football games. "They're great girls (and) extremely talented," said Matt Heist, the school's band director. "It adds to the whole school atmosphere."

They twirl regular batons on the field, but are restricted to the track for their fire routine.

They also twirl regular batons at basketball games to recorded music.

"When you hear the (crowd) cheer, it's a rush," Breanne said. "It makes you dance around."

The girls are the only two twirlers at county high schools. Breanne's mother, Colleen, who twirled when she was growing up and still coaches, said the sport used to be more popular because there were fewer athletics for girls. Now, twirling competes with field hockey, lacrosse and other activities.

SHARE IDEAS

This isn't to say twirling doesn't involve rigorous exercise. Breanne and Devan's routine combines dancing and gymnastics with baton mastery. Their moves involve complicated contortions, cartwheels, throws and jumps - all while keeping a baton, or multiple batons spinning.

They enjoy the challenges and the performance aspect of twirling. "I like to show people what I can do," Breanne said.

The girls have also made a lot of friends in the sport over the years.

"I don't know what I'd do if I didn't twirl," Devan said.

Revolving relationship

Both girls are ranked as elite twirlers, and have won national championships along with a slew of other awards. They compete with groups outside of school - Breanne for Syndication Baton Club and Devan for the Wheaton Dance Twirl Team. They travel all over country for events, and Breanne has even gone to Norway and Ireland for world contests. Devan is trying to raise money for an April twirling competition in Switzerland.

Her coach, Anne Kennedy, said she's a force with the baton.

"She definitely grabs your eye and pulls you in," said Kennedy, who also coaches twirlers at the University of Maryland.

She said Devan couples beautiful and technically-perfect bodywork with superb twirling. She's particularly adept at rolling the baton, the coach said. "She handles the baton on rolls better than just about anybody I've ever dealt with," Kennedy said.

Sandi Rios, coach of Syndication, which is based in Maryland and California, was equally complimentary of Breanne. "She's really able to put the whole artistry of twirling - body and baton - into a performance," Rios said. "She has a great competitive spirit."

Both girls hope to twirl in college and, if it becomes an Olympic sport, compete on that level as well. They said it's not hard to put in all the practice, which can be upward of 24 hours a week, because they enjoy every aspect of the sport.

Breanne spends so much time with her batons she names them.

"I need to know which one's which," she said.

Her current crop includes Henry and Simon and a third named after a friend. There also used to be Jonathan, but he wore out. "He died," she quipped. "We had a bad breakup. I don't know where he is."

These are regular batons, and as she explained, the plastic ends erode after a lot of hard twirling. She doesn't name her fire batons, whose ends are covered in a black gauze-like wrap. "They all kind of look the same," she said.

Devan prefers to keep all her batons nameless. She began twirling at age 5 after seeing some twirlers at her brother's soccer game.

Breanne began as a toddler. "I was just kind of born with a baton in my hand," she said.

SHARE IDEAS

Copyright © Capital Gazette Communications LLC, 2011.
See our [Privacy Policy and Terms of Use](#)

YOUR COMMENTS

[REGISTER](#) . [POST](#)

[RULES OF PARTICIPATION](#)

If you encounter other problems, please email nlundskow@capitalgazette.com and include your name, username, and any errors or messages that are displayed. The more information you can provide, the better able we will be to assist you.

In order to post or vote on a comment, you must be signed in with a hometownannapolis account.

Take a look at a summary of [Commenting Guidelines](#).

LOGIN TO POST A COMMENT

If you encounter other problems, please email nlundskow@capitalgazette.com and include your name, username, and any errors or messages that are displayed. The more information you can provide, the better able we will be to assist you.

Username:

Password:

Login

[Forgot your username?](#) [Forgot your password?](#) [Create an account](#)

Search HometownAnnapolis.com

Google™ Custom Search

Search