

Steele Spirit Shines Through Lindsay Mayle

By: Jasmyne Douglas, Schertz Magazine

Donned in a black Steele Knights cheerleading uniform, hair bow, and white tennis shoes; Lindsay Mayle, 21, walks onto the field. This was her biggest venue to date: the 5A Division II State Championship game at the Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas. The lights shone brightly and the stadium roared as Mayle stood on the sidelines with her teammates in front of the 15,092 attendees. Grinning from ear to ear, she cheered, waving her black and silver pompoms joyfully in the air. The fact that Mayle has Down syndrome does not deter her.

“It’s probably the most exciting thing that has ever happened to her,” her mother, Joanna Mayle, said. “By it being so much of a blessing and so exciting to her, it’s even more so for us as a family to be able to see her do something that she has always wanted to do and actually do it on the field as opposed to sitting in the stands. It means the world to us.”

Mayle, a 2008 graduate of Steele High School, and her family have had season tickets to the football games ever since the school had a varsity team. According to her mother, Mayle loved the cheerleaders and would cheer along with them as they sat in the third row. They caught onto her enthusiasm for their cheering right away.

“Whenever I see Lindsay cheering, I can tell that it’s something she really loves doing,” Mayle’s teammate, junior Viktoria Guttenberg, said. “I think seeing her so cheerful all the time helps the whole team keep a more positive and enthusiastic attitude.”

The idea of Mayle joining the cheerleading squad came up after a cheerleader gave her an old set of pompoms at Meet the Knights, an annual pep rally to ring in the varsity sports season.

“It was a real big deal to us,” Joanna said. “I guess they just didn’t realize how much it meant to us until they did that and [the cheerleader’s] mother made the comment; she goes ‘gosh, we should see if we can try to get Lindsay on the field.’ So, she proceeded to talk to the cheer coach, Kristy Lovett, who then went to the administration and they got the ball rolling.”

Mayle’s first game was this year’s season opener against Madison at Lehnhoff Stadium. The team had found an old cheerleading uniform and wanted her to put it on and come out onto the field to cheer with them. Mayle’s teammates called out to her younger brother, junior Matthew Mayle who is a wide receiver on the varsity football team, to get his attention.

“I was just sitting on the bench and I hear someone call my name and normally, I am just so locked in and focused, I never turn and pay attention to what’s going on behind me,” Matthew

said. “I just happened to turn around and it was one of the cheerleaders and she pointed to my sister and I just lost it. I tried to keep my cool and try not to cry during the game, but I held it all in. I’m extremely proud of her. She’s gone through so much and to see her cheer is just a blessing itself.”

With a great out-pouring of community support from the minute she stepped out onto the field, Mayle has showed that she can be just like everyone else.