THE DAILY CLIPS

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News, commentary, and opinion
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The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
Newsweek
U.S. News & World Report
Business Week
Time
Editorial: ECU handles NCAA violations well

East Carolina University Chancellor Steve Ballard said he was embarrassed last week when the NCAA put the school on probation following several instances of academic fraud involving student-athletes. In an equally understandable response, Director of Athletics Terry Hollard described himself as dumbstruck by the penalty leveled against the university.

And while there is no question that this is a black eye for the school, the handling of this matter and the changes instituted as a result in an effort to discourage additional violations should be commended. Competitive sports teaches players to get up when they are knocked down and to come back stronger, which is exactly what East Carolina intends to do.

School officials announced on Thursday that the NCAA imposed a one-year probation on East Carolina for self-reported violations of academic fraud. The athletes implicated — four members of the baseball team and one women's tennis player — were involved in a scheme by which the tennis
player authored reports and a presentation for the others. All were suspended
indefinitely or dismissed from their teams when the fraud was uncovered.

The young men and women who compete at the university do so under
tremendous scrutiny and intense pressure. Their missteps are made under the
spotlight, while those of their peers who do not play sports might go
unnoticed. There is an expectation that those who play for a university will
uphold the highest standards of conduct, but sometimes they fall short.

When that happens, it falls to the school to construct an appropriate
response. In East Carolina's case, the action was swift and sweeping, with
the student-athletes in question immediately removed from their fields of
play. It reported the violation to the NCAA at once. The school has hired an
additional senior compliance officer and has changed a policy that allowed
student-athletes to work as tutors in the athletics department. It was a
reaction that should serve as a model to other institutions and one that saw
the NCAA reduce the probation length from two years to one.

Management of a Division 1 athletics program is fraught with potential
pitfalls. From university officials to coaches and fans, nobody wants the
types of incidents that tarnish a university's reputation to happen. When they
do, however, leaders must step forward, admit the mistakes and make
appropriate changes. East Carolina should be embarrassed that this occurred,
but can be proud of how it was handled.
City leaders, supporters and the sports community gathered Friday for a “demolition party” for an accessible recreation center inspired by a die-hard Pirate fan and made possible by a popular head football coach.

The new Drew Steele Center will be named for the avid Pirate fan with Down Syndrome. Steele inspired former East Carolina University head football coach Skip Holtz to spearhead a fundraising effort needed to transform the Elm Street Gym into a recreational facility for people with special needs.

The facility is expected to cost more than $1.3 million, officials said Friday afternoon. A date for construction has not been set.

Dozens of people watched as Steele, Holtz and others picked up sledgehammers and took a crack at the side of the gym in a ceremonial gesture marking the beginning of the project.
“This is an exciting day,” said Holtz, who returned to Greenville from Tampa for the event, a charity golf tournament and several public appearances. Holtz, who now coaches at the University of South Florida, led a community effort to raise funding for the project.

“This is six years of hard work to see the fruition of this kind of come to reality,” he said. “That's one of the things that's motivated this whole thing was just Drew's positive spirit and his attitude.

“It's been an emotional day for me,” Holtz said. “It's good to be back in Greenville.”

The City Council last month appropriated $333,449 for the project, which will be pooled with donated dollars and a $500,000 grant from the state Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Higher construction estimates and a need to act before grant money dried up inspired the project's kick-off. Another $228,500 is expected to be needed; city officials said they will pursue grants and other funding sources.

“In the not too distant future, what we currently refer to as the Elm Street Gym we'll begin calling the Drew Steele Center,” said Gary Fenton, recreation and parks director. “A truly accessible facility for all.”

Former city recreation and parks chief Boyd Lee said the effort was among the few projects in the state that were funded for the special-needs population.

“This is a project long overdue,” he said of the effort, first conceived in 2005. “We've been trying to get something like this for many, many years.”

“We're calling this a demolition party,” Mayor Pat Dunn said. “There's a reason for that. We broke ground on this building in 1964. And today we're going to kind of tear up a little bit of it and make it better and have it do some things it hasn't been able to do.”

Contact Jennifer Swartz at jswartz@reflector.com or 252-329-9565.
Dolphin spotted in Tar River

By Jackie Drake, The Daily Reflector

When East Carolina University student Ben McDonald went fishing on Wednesday, he was hoping for catfish — he was not expecting to see the telltale fin of a dolphin break the surface.

McDonald was on the Greenville Town Common fishing in the Tar River when he saw a “huge swirl” in the water.

“I thought maybe it was the wind or current, but a few seconds later my buddy saw it, and there it was,” McDonald said.

What appeared to be a dolphin was swimming about 30 yards from McDonald and was surfacing every five to 10 seconds.

“It was definitely a dolphin,” McDonald said. “It had the nose, the fin, everything. He was huge. He looked almost prehistoric or something. He wasn't the silver gray like you see all the time. He definitely wasn't like Flipper.”

McDonald and his friends followed the aquatic visitor for a time, stopping to capture the scene on video via cellphone along with several others on shore. It swam very close to the surface, according to McDonald.

“He just kept swimming until we couldn't see him anymore,” McDonald said. “He was actually swimming away from the ocean, he kept swimming up the river toward Tarboro.”

It is not unusual for dolphins to enter estuaries or rivers, according to local experts, and they have been spotted as far inland as Aurora and Washington, N.C. This is the first sighting in this area this season.

“It's pretty common for dolphins to come into estuaries where oceans and rivers meet because it's a very active feeding area, but I haven't heard of any this far up the Tar,” said Jeff McKinnon, chair of the department of biology at ECU. “My best guess is it's an Atlantic bottlenose dolphin, they often come in very shallow water.”

“I've been here 20 years, and this is the first I've heard of one here — you see them all the time in the Pamlico Sound,” said ECU associate professor of
biology Joe Luczkovich, who studies marine bioacoustics and food web ecology.

“Almost every summer some dolphins will come into the rivers,” said Tom Stroud, spokesman for the North Carolina Estuarium in Washington. “It all depends on how salty the river is depending on rainfall and wind. Dolphins do need salt water, but they can encounter fresh water for a short time.”

The dolphin was likely following a school of fish and does not appear to be in any immediate distress, though it was unusual that he was alone as dolphins are social creatures that travel in pods, experts said.

“He looked fine as far as how he was swimming,” McDonald said.

“He may hang out a few days, but he will most likely find his way back to the ocean,” Luczkovich said.

Dolphins often eat anadromous fish, like shad and striped bass, that live in the ocean for part of the year and come to fresh water to spawn in the springtime, Stroud said.

“Dolphins usually are pretty clever, they know what they're doing,” Stroud said.

Federal laws protect marine mammals, Luczkovich said, so people must maintain a 500-foot distance.

“If it's not dead, injured or stranded, let it go,” Luczkovich said. “It's OK to watch and observe but they should not be pursued or played with.”

The Tar-Pamlico River is part of the Albemarle-Pamlico estuarine system, the second largest estuary system in the country after the Chesapeake Bay, Stroud said.

“It's not uncommon that you'll get a blending of critters from both ocean and river,” Stroud said.

“It was cool,” said McDonald, a Charlotte native studying communications. “It's something I'll never forget.”

To report a dead, injured or stranded marine mammal, call the NOAA stranding network at 800-853-1964 or the NC Division of Marine Fisheries at 241-5119.

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567.
C.J. Wilson stood on the Ironwood clubhouse steps early Friday afternoon and told a group of attentive listeners the story of his first-ever conversation with Rock Roggeman.

Wilson, who recently won a Super Bowl with the Green Bay Packers, said the former ECU football coach asked Wilson if he loved football. Wilson, then a lanky freshman with the Pirates, responded with a simple yes sir, but the intensity level that Roggeman was known for shined with the ensuing question.

“He said, ‘Do you like collisions, son?’” Wilson recalled. “I said, ‘I don't know. You're scaring me, coach.' And that's how he was from day one until the end.”

Wilson, former Pirate football coach Skip Holtz and many others shared similar stories Friday at Ironwood Country Club as the inaugural Coach Rock Roggeman Cancer Research Golf Classic was held in honor of
Roggeman, who succumbed to non-Hodgkin's lymphoma last June after a yearlong battle.

Friday's event benefitted the Leo Jenkins Coach Rock Roggeman Cancer Research Fund as part of ECU's Department of Oncology.

Holtz, a dear friend of Roggeman's who led ECU to consecutive Conference USA championships in 2008 and 2009 before leaving for South Florida, said he had a speaking engagement scheduled in Florida for Friday, but he quickly shuffled his plans so he and his wife could be in Greenville.

The former Pirate coach arrived in town Friday morning and was planning on leaving this morning.

“We're all here today so that we, in some way shape or form, can make a difference,” Holtz said. “It's great to be back in Greenville and it's great to sit here and relive so many great memories about a great man in Rock Roggeman.”

Roggeman joined Holtz's staff at ECU in December 2004 and stepped away from the program Sept. 28, 2009. He was a defensive assistant and directly coached Wilson and Jay Ross, who were both a part of Friday's ceremony.

Former ECU punter and current New York Giant Matt Dodge was also at the event.

Holtz, Wilson and Ross each addressed the crowd and shared some of their fondest memories of Roggeman.

Wilson said he cried like a baby when he heard the news of Roggeman's death, and Ross said he was devastated.

“He taught us all how to be men,” Ross said. “I will never forget that and I'll teach that to my own kids.”

Contact Ronnie Woodward at rwoodward@reflector.com or 252-329-9592.
Program promotes lifelong learning

By Ginger Livingston, The Daily Reflector

A program that encourages the 50-plus set to continue their education without the expense and hassle of college courses begins today.

The Lifelong Learning Program kicks off at 1 p.m. with Elliott Engel, a scholar, performer and storyteller, who will present “A Light History of the English Language.”

The registration for the free event begins at 12:30 p.m. in the Murphy Center next to Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium.

Lifelong Learning offers adults 50 and older learning opportunities in a relaxed atmosphere that doesn't involve entrance requirements, exams or grades, organizers said.

Following Engel's presentation, program organizers will preview the program's upcoming summer trips and fall class schedule, said Ron Kemp, chairman of the program's advisory panel.

“We hope you won't just come to a class but you'll meet people, find a common interest and find new activities,” Kemp said.

“Learning for learning's sake is what it is all about,” he said.

Future participants are encouraged to become program members by paying $35. The membership period extends from June 1 until Aug. 31, 2012.

Membership entitles participants to some free classes, discounts to arts and cultural events at East Carolina University, the services of Joyner Library, book store and cafes and other perks.

Non-members will have to pay higher fees to participate in classes and trips.

Following Saturday's program, the next learning program is June 11, a trip to the Bentonville Civil War battleground; June 21, a trip exploring Jack Kerouac's time in Rocky Mount; June 30, Pilobolus and More at the American Dance Festival, Duke University; and July 20, a tour of the N.C. Museum of Art.

Call 328-9198 or visit www.llp.ecu.edu to register for the June trips.
Classes begin in August. More than 40 courses and educational activities ranging from art studies, computers and technology and weaving will be offered along with programming about activity and aging, care-giving and long-term planning.

“It's been a long time coming, but one thing we can say is we have done our homework,” Kemp said.

“We're offering a lot more classes than most programs start with.”
Helene Reilly, a family nurse practitioner in the Department of Cardiovascular Sciences, has been named the best in her field for 2011 at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its medical group practice, ECU Physicians.

Reilly, a nurse for 39 years, has worked at ECU for eight years. She works in the cardiovascular imaging unit at the East Carolina Heart Institute at ECU, where she sees patients, supervises cardiac stress testing and manages other nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

“It's very humbling, but it's also nice to be honored for something I love so much,” said Reilly, who was named one of the state's Great 100 Nurses in 2003. “I can never see myself retiring because I enjoy my job and I enjoy my patients.”

Reilly, a native of New York, received a nursing diploma from St. John's Hospital, a bachelor's degree from Mercy College in New York and a master's degree from ECU.
“Helene is one of the most dedicated, thorough and accurate individuals I have ever worked with,” Paula Barnhill, imaging manager at the heart institute, wrote in a nomination letter.

She described Reilly as a patient advocate who “exhibits many of the qualities that are essential for great leaders in health care.”

In addition to her nursing duties, Reilly spoke at this year's Wear Red for Women event at ECU. She also teaches electrocardiogram classes to family nurse practitioner and physician assistant students at ECU and is an advanced cardiac life support instructor.

Reilly said she encourages new nurses to never stop learning, enjoy and listen to their patients, find a mentor and don't be afraid to ask questions.

She also sets a healthful lifestyle example for co-workers and patients, having completed seven half-marathons in the past two years. At first, she just wanted to finish, but now she wants to better her previous time in each event.

“It's about like nursing,” she said of distance running. “People are supportive. Even if you're the last person, they still cheer you on.”

Reilly has three children and five grandchildren.
Students selected for Moldin scholarships

ECU News Services

Two rising juniors at East Carolina University are the recipients of the 2011-12 Moldin scholarship, which provides $2,000 annually for selected students in chemistry or biology.

Recipients are Sarah Howell Kinsley of Greenville, a chemistry major with a minor in biology and Hispanic studies, and Quan Nguyen of Los Angeles, Calif., a dual biology and chemistry major.

The scholarship requires a minimum 2.5 GPA and demonstrated financial need, and is renewable for the recipient's senior year.

Kinsley received the scholarship in 2010-11 and was selected for renewal for 2011-12.

“It feels great to be rewarded for my hard work,” she said. “I am excited to be able to only work one job next semester and be able to focus more on my last two semesters as an undergraduate.”

A graduate of South Central High School, Kinsley is a chemistry tutor with the ECU Pirate Tutoring Center, an ECU Relay for Life participant and a member of the Student Pirate Club. She has been selected for the ECU Chancellor's List, Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, Golden Key National Honor Society and the National Society of Collegiate Scholars.

Nguyen begins his junior year this fall. He is a member of the Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society and the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and an active participant with the pre-dental honor society, Delta Delta Sigma. He volunteers frequently at the N.C. Missions of Mercy dental clinics and tutors high school-level math and science students.

“I feel amazing to have been chosen for this scholarship,” Nguyen said. “I know it's a prestigious honor, and I can not wait to uphold that honor in a true pirate fashion.”

The scholarship was established in 2006 by ECU alumni Richard and Nancy Moldin of Wilmington. Richard Moldin, an employee of Metrics in Greenville, earned a bachelor of science and master of science in chemistry...
from ECU in 1970 and 1973, respectively. He earned a master of business administration from ECU in 1976. Nancy Moldin is a 1973 ECU graduate with a bachelor of music degree in music education.

**ECU students win top Zenith Awards**

Two ECU students took top honors at the 2011 Zenith Awards, a nationally recognized public relations competition for undergraduate journalism and strategic communications students.

The two students, Kyle Walker and Richard Peterson, won first place and honorable mention awards in the electronic media category.

“Both Kyle and Richard have done fantastic work during their time at ECU,” said Paul Isom, ECU's director of student media. “They've grown as students and media practitioners and I'm happy to see them honored this way.”

Walker, an ECU junior double majoring in communication and music, produced a news story called “A Mercury Rising Crime.” The story examined the relationship between criminal activities increasing as the temperature increases.

Peterson, a spring 2011 graduate, produced a video called “2011 ECU Football Schedule Promo,” which is a musical montage with video highlights and the upcoming ECU Pirates football schedule.

To be eligible for the competition, the students were required to create their project either as part of a class or internship. Both students work with ECU Campus 31 television station. Within the electronic media category, students from across the country submitted web sites, blogs, podcasts, videos, electronic press kits and public service announcements.

“Sweeping the electronic media category is a major accomplishment,” said Isom. “Add in some of the winners in other categories — UNC-Chapel Hill, Oklahoma and Arizona State, among others — makes the win even more exciting and impressive.”

The 2011 Zenith Awards, which had the largest number of submissions in its history, were presented during a virtual ceremony April 29.

To view the award-winning videos, visit http://www.youtube.com/user/Campus31 or www.ecu.edu/campus31. For more information, contact Cara Friez, ECU Student Affairs videographer and Campus 31 advisor at 737-1104.
Black Alumni Chapter announces honors

The Black Alumni Chapter of the East Carolina Alumni Association recently announced honors for six individuals and one student organization.

The recognition highlights African American alumni, students or student groups that have achieved significant professional success or demonstrated exceptional leadership and service in the ECU community.

This year's honorees are:

Dr. Shelia G. Bunch '76 of Greenville, director of ECU's School of Social Work in the College of Human Ecology.

James D. Corbett '85 of Greenville, founder and pastor of Community Christian Church and Community Christian Academy.

Derval Hamilton of Hickory, a junior exercise physiology major and lieutenant governor of ECU's Circle K International.

Vonta Leach '10 of Houston, a fullback for the Houston Texans and avid philanthropist in his hometown area of Robeson County.

Mike Moseley '80 of Kinston, a retired director of the N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services who spent more than 35 years serving the State of North Carolina in various administrative roles.

Brenda Myrick '92 of Greenville, an administrator of Operative Services at Pitt County Memorial Hospital and a former chair of the East Carolina Alumni Association.

Eta Nu Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity — established at East Carolina in 1971 — the first African American fraternity on the campus.

Paul J. Clifford, president and chief executive officer of the East Carolina Alumni Association, noted that the honorees were recognized for “significant and lasting contributions made to the East Carolina community. “Our university has been advanced and enriched by their sacrifices, accomplishments, service and leadership. They serve as an example to the Pirate Nation,” Clifford said.

For additional information, contact Jennifer Watson, assistant director for Alumni Communications, at 328-4902, Jennifer.Watson@Pirate.Alumni.com, or call the East Carolina Alumni Association at 800-ECU-GRAD.
Band director taught much more than music

BY ELIZABETH SHESTAK - CORRESPONDENT

As a young high school band director in the 1950s, Donald B. Adcock offered music lessons all summer to anyone interested in learning an instrument. An accomplished jazz flautist teaching in a 5,000-person ranching community in Deming, N.M., he offered these lessons every day, coaching individuals for upward of an hour - for free.

For Eugene Narmour, this generous offer would prove life changing. The summer after eighth grade, Adcock taught Narmour the trombone Monday through Friday - lessons that sparked a career in music for Narmour, who is now a music professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Adcock died this month at age 85, and Narmour, 71, is mourning the life of a man who taught him much more than music.

This seems to be the sentiment with most who knew Adcock.

His wife of 54 years, Betty Adcock, met her husband in Deming while accompanying a friend home from a boarding school in Texas.

During their courtship he repeatedly made the 700-mile drive to visit her, she said, and the two married when she was a year into college.

On their first date they discovered a mutual love of poetry, and on his final day at Hospice of Wake County, following a battle with pneumonia, she would read some favorite poems to him.
Betty Adcock would become a distinguished poet herself, teaching at universities around the country. Among the many things she learned from her husband, appreciating music was at the top of the list. "We had classical in the mornings and jazz in the evenings," she said.

Adcock was born in Durham, where his family owned a restaurant, Adcock's, famous for its Brunswick stew.

For a child of the Depression, instruments were not easy to come by. But his father had bought a flute, and taught himself to play, as a younger man. So the flute was what was available to Adcock if he wanted to learn an instrument.

"He loved the flute with all his soul," his wife said. "It was perfect for him."

The flute would accompany Adcock to warships during his two tours of duty with the U.S. Navy, where he would play in the Navy band.

His first tour came straight out of high school on the USS Indiana during World War II. The second came during the Korean War.

His education was woven between these two wars. He earned a bachelor's degree from East Carolina University, then sandwiched his second tour between semesters, earning his doctorate in music education at Columbia University.

After marrying Betty, Adcock was able to move closer to home with a teaching position in Rockingham, where the couple welcomed a daughter, Sylvia Adcock.

22 years at NCSU

They eventually settled in Raleigh when Donald Adcock became the band director at N.C. State University in 1970. He held the position for 22 years.

He loved conducting marching bands, his wife said, and when the position became open at NCSU, it was a perfect opportunity. He also taught courses in music appreciation and history.

For countless students, Adcock became a mentor, someone who never seemed to run out of time or energy, who was always enthusiastic and encouraging. For many, his influence went well beyond the confines of the practice room - or in Adcock's case, the football field or basketball court.

His stage band entertained crowds at Reynolds Coliseum with far more than pep tunes and fight songs.

Adcock treated the marching band, orchestra, symphonic band and stage band as he would musicians at a conservatory program - expecting the best, drilling his charges repeatedly until it was done correctly.

And he was regarded as eternally patient and supportive, Narmour recalls.
"He was both friendly and fun to be around but he was extremely principled and very strict," Narmour said. "He had very high standards. He didn't let you get away with anything."

Throughout his career he taught privately, but when rheumatoid arthritis made conducting, and eventually performing too painful, Adcock had to retire and his private lessons became a key focus.

He did not mourn this diagnosis too heavily.

"Every time he lost something, he replaced it," his wife said. In addition to stepping up his private student lessons, he became an avid bird-watcher.

"My dad was fun," Sylvia Adcock said. "He was fun to be with."

Although she does not share his music talents (a year of oboe lessons made that clear), it did not get in the way of a relationship filled with humor, road trips and a constant trading of novels.

**Improvising jazz and life**

Donald Adcock frequented Quail Ridge Books & Music, which would lead him to the Jazz Loft Project, an effort supported by the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University to document and preserve the work done by photographer and jazz enthusiast Eugene Smith.

Local writer Sam Stephenson, who wrote a book about the project, worked at the Raleigh bookstore in the 1990s, and played jazz music over the store's speakers. He recruited Adcock as a consultant after hearing him time and again identify not only what jazz piece was playing at Quail Ridge, but which musician was striking the keys or blowing the horn.

"Don knew every musician and every tune. He knew them by ear, and we needed that because the Jazz Loft Project was a detective story at core," Stephenson said.

Over the course of their friendship, Adcock sent Stephenson countless jazz recordings. Anytime he found something new, he had to share it.

Narmour also cherishes his collection of tapes sent by his old friend.

Narmour is dedicating his next book to Adcock and will give a eulogy at a memorial service this month.

"He liked to improvise life," Narmour said.

A jazz musician to the core.
'Discovery Trip' teaches college students about life as a teacher

Raeford, N.C. — Aspiring teachers at North Carolina colleges spent a week touring public schools across the state, getting a firsthand look at their future careers.

Meredith College student Kayla Smith's decision to be a teacher has never been in doubt.

"I don't remember choosing to be a teacher. I just always knew I'm going to be a teacher," Smith said.

Visiting working teachers and their classes, though, gave her the chance "to really see where our students are going to be coming from, the environment they have, how they're shaped and molded, and what we have to do to cater to those students," Smith said.

The Discovery Trip packed rising sophomores from 16 colleges and universities onto 11 school buses and sent them on visits to multiple public schools.

"It's really eye-opening," East Carolina University student Cole Merricks said. "It really broadens your horizons to see what's actually going on in North Carolina."

Bus No. 6 began its road trip in Vance County, then motored to rural Jones County, with a population of 10,000, then to East Hoke Middle School in Hoke County and finally to Caldwell County in the foothills. In addition to schools, students toured local industries, such as the Burlington Industries plant in Hoke County.

Each school system tried to put its best foot forward.

"Our goal is, when they graduate in three years, we hope they will come back to Hoke County Schools and teach, because we deserve quality teachers in the classroom," said Patricia Hollinsworth, a spokeswoman for Hoke County Schools.
These future students are also confronting a career in school systems grappling with budget cuts.

"It bothers me right now because of how its affecting the school systems, but hopefully, by the time I'm looking for a job, everything will be better," said Shanae Anderson, a student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

As part of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows scholarship program, the students have agreed to teach at North Carolina public schools for at least four years after graduation.

Ultimately, the college students said, their goal is to help children succeed in the classroom.

Smith said she wants to give them "the right model," just as her teachers gave her.

Reporter: Bryan Mims
Photographer: Jennifer Joyner
Web Editor: Anne Johnson
Hundreds of thousands of high school girls put on cheerleading uniforms each year and thousands more continue on to college, taking their place in a thriving American tradition that has been around for nearly as long as football.

While cheerleading evokes images of pompoms and pleated skirts, it has relied on increasingly athletic feats of grace and strength in recent years. As participants have perfected their basket tosses and pyramids, and mounted ambitious floor routines, a complicated and emotional question has arisen: has cheerleading become a true sport?

For many women, especially those who worked at the forefront of the push for equality in college sports, the answer for a long time was no. They feared that calling it a sport sent the wrong message to women — endorsing an embarrassing holdover from a time when girls in tight-fitting outfits were expected to do little more than yell support for boys. Those women were also skeptical of high schools and universities that counted female cheerleaders as athletes as a way to evade their obligation to provide opportunities for women in more traditional sports, like softball and soccer.

But other women bristled at what felt like an insult. Why should cheerleading not be considered a sport when it required a complex set of technical skills, physical fitness and real guts?
Now, in a development that may settle the debate, two groups are asking the National Collegiate Athletic Association to recognize a new version of cheerleading as an “emerging sport” for women, a precursor to full status as a championship sport. If successful, dozens of athletic programs could begin to fully finance cheerleading teams, recruit scholarship athletes and send them to a national championship.

The implications go beyond giving cheerleading a stamp of legitimacy. If this more athletic form of cheerleading — technically known as competitive cheer — evolves into a sport with rigorous competitions and standards, college athletics programs will be able to count the new teams for the purposes of complying with Title IX, the federal law banning gender discrimination in education.

The development could provide relief to institutions that have struggled to show they are offering enough opportunities for women, who make up 53 percent of students at Division I institutions, but just 46 percent of all athletes.

Several women’s sports advocates now support the idea. “As long as it’s actually operating as a sport, we welcome it into the women’s sports tent,” said Nancy Hogshead-Makar, the senior director of advocacy at the Women’s Sports Foundation. Like gymnastics or figure skating, she said, “this is another aesthetic sport that if done right could provide lots more girls with legitimate sports experiences.”

Yet even as the idea has been met with enthusiasm, a fight has broken out between two groups competing to have their vision approved by the N.C.A.A. Each of the proposals calls for athletic displays that incorporate elements of traditional cheerleading, like flips and pyramids, but the groups differ over how to administer and run the new sport.

One group, USA Cheer, is backed by Varsity Brands, a for-profit company that sells pompons and uniforms and has been running competitions for high school and college cheerleaders for decades. The other group is the National Collegiate Athletics and Tumbling Association, which comprises six universities that have been competing against one another for the last couple of years and have the support of USA Gymnastics.

The effort to get cheerleading declared an emerging sport began in earnest last July after a federal judge ruled that Quinnipiac University’s competitive cheerleading team did not meet Title IX guidelines for being counted as a sport.

The judge, Stefan R. Underhill of the United States District Court in Bridgeport, found that Quinnipiac’s team did not qualify because the team and its participants were not treated the same as other varsity athletes on campus. Athletes were recruited from among the student body, there was no playoff system, and the teams sometimes competed against high school squads.
Both groups say their versions of cheerleading have addressed those concerns, and will eventually allow programs to legitimately count cheerleaders as athletes.

“It’s unique to have in essence a sport being developed out of whole cloth,” said Karen Morrison, who oversees the emerging sport process for the N.C.A.A.

In 1898, a medical student at the University of Minnesota picked up a megaphone and led his football team to victory in a chant widely credited with giving birth to modern-day cheerleading: “Rah, rah, rah! Ski-U-Mah! Hoo-Rah! Hoo-Rah! Varsity! Varsity! Minn-e-so-tah!”

Cheerleading has been a colorful presence on the sidelines of football games ever since. Men did the cheering at first, and they have maintained a presence — in the early 1960s, George W. Bush was the head cheerleader at Phillips Academy in Andover, Mass. But beginning in the 1920s, women joined their ranks, and cheerleading eventually became a mostly female pastime. Around the same time, participants began adding jumps and other acrobatic stunts to their routines.

In the 1980s and 1990s, urged on by the company that would become Varsity Brands, cheerleading became a highly specialized activity. Competitive cheerleading teams popped up in private gyms and on college campuses, and the championships attracted coverage on national television.

But even as cheerleading edged closer to resembling a sport, advocates for gender equity in sports resisted calling cheerleaders athletes.

“Historically, cheerleading has been about supporting athletes, not about being an athlete,” said Barbara Osborne, a scholarship basketball player who graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside in 1982 and who now advises universities on gender-equity issues.

It did not help that some high schools and universities had tried to count standard sideline cheerleaders as athletes as a way to avoid being penalized for failing to deliver opportunities for women in more authentic sports.

“Traditional sideline cheerleading was always one of the places that schools wanted to go, not because they suddenly felt that it was a great way of boosting equity, but because it was as great way of boosting their rosters,” said Lisa Maatz, the director of public policy for the American Association of University Women.

But for women who pursued competitive cheerleading, the lack of recognition felt like disrespect.

“Guess what?” said Valerie Hagedorn, the head cheerleading coach at Adams State College in Colorado, a sideline team that competed in USA Cheer’s competitive format this year. “We don’t throw balls, we throw people. And we catch them.”
The two proposals being considered by the N.C.A.A. share many similarities: the competitions themselves are longer and more standardized than in the past, athletes now wear uniforms more akin to those of volleyball players, and they no longer rally the crowd for another team.

However, they differ in other ways, like how to score the events and how many competitions to stage in any given season. The proposal being advanced by the handful of universities calls the new sport acrobatics and tumbling and uses a scoring system similar to that of gymnastics, with points based on degree of difficulty. The format backed by USA Cheer is called stunt and has a head-to-head format, with the competition divided into quarters.

One important distinction is the size of the teams. The proposal for acrobatics and tumbling, which was submitted to the N.C.A.A. late last year, imagines that an average squad size will number from 32 to 36 athletes, with a maximum of 12 scholarships. The proposal for stunt, which was sent in on Wednesday, envisions a squad of 20 to 30, with a maximum of 24 scholarships.

Six universities competed in the acrobatics and tumbling format this year, while teams from 22 programs competed in the stunt version.

The N.C.A.A.’s emerging sport program, which is aimed at encouraging universities to add new women’s sports, has had a mixed track record. Some sports, like women’s ice hockey, have gone on to become championship sports; others, like archery, have fizzled.

“It’s a bit of a tryout system,” Ms. Morrison said.

The N.C.A.A. committee that vets all emerging sports could decide to present both versions to the general membership, it could select only one, or it could ask the two groups to compromise and submit a unified proposal, Ms. Morrison said.

Even if competitive cheerleading is named an emerging sport, there is no guarantee that it will qualify under Title IX guidelines. The Office for Civil Rights, the federal agency that oversees compliance with the law, has said it presumes that a sport can be counted if it is recognized by the N.C.A.A. But institutions must still treat the team similarly to other varsity athletic teams, including offering comparable financial support and rigorous competition and practice schedules.

Ms. Osborne is still wary of allowing universities to count cheerleaders as athletes, but she said she was intrigued by the idea.

“What we consider sports are things that men have traditionally played,” she said. But she added: “It’s perfectly O.K. for girls to compete in something that is uniquely feminine. I think that we can’t just say that sports exist in ways that men define it.”