

A Two-Sport Man

By Stefanie Pettit

Muhammad Shamsid-Deen, a defensive back on the Big Sky Conference championship Eagles football team, often wears another uniform during basketball season – that of a cheer squad member.

"I wandered into cheer practice one day and one of the girls asked me if I thought I could toss her in the air," said Muhammad. "I said I thought I could do that. She told me to try it. I did. And I'm still doing it."

Okay, his first motivation, he admitted, was to spend time with a lot of girls, but he found out after a while that he excelled at the athletic elements of cheering and enjoyed developing new moves – like lifting a partner from the ground, tossing her in the air and catching her by her feet. Cheering became his second sport at Eastern.

"I got good at it and enjoyed sparking the crowd," said the senior interdisciplinary studies major from Spanaway, Wash., whose cheer squad high point was at last year's NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament in Kansas City. "Now, *that* was a lot of fun."

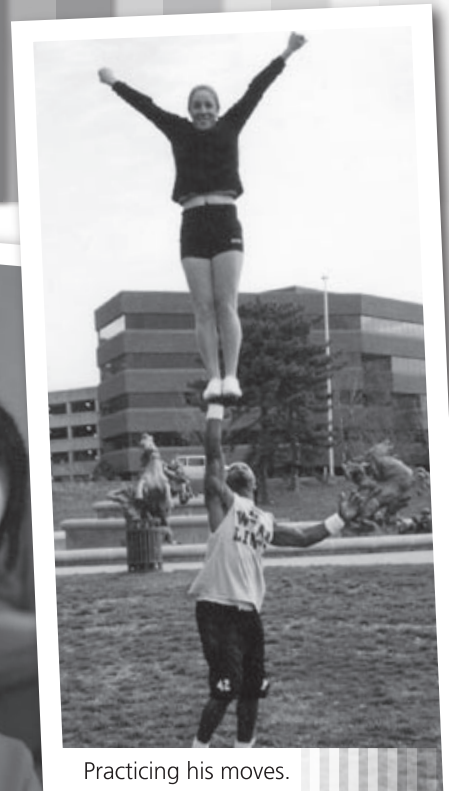
His athletic abilities on the cheer squad have been noticed, so much so that the Universal Cheerleaders Association offered him a tryout for a position with its summer camp programs.

He's had great moments in football, too, like the team's comeback from a 31-10 deficit at the half against Montana State this year to win the game, and with it, the Big Sky Conference championship. Other football memories are, well, kind of interdisciplinary – like during summer football practice when Coach Paul Wulff wanted to teach the new freshmen Eastern's fight song. He called on Muhammad.

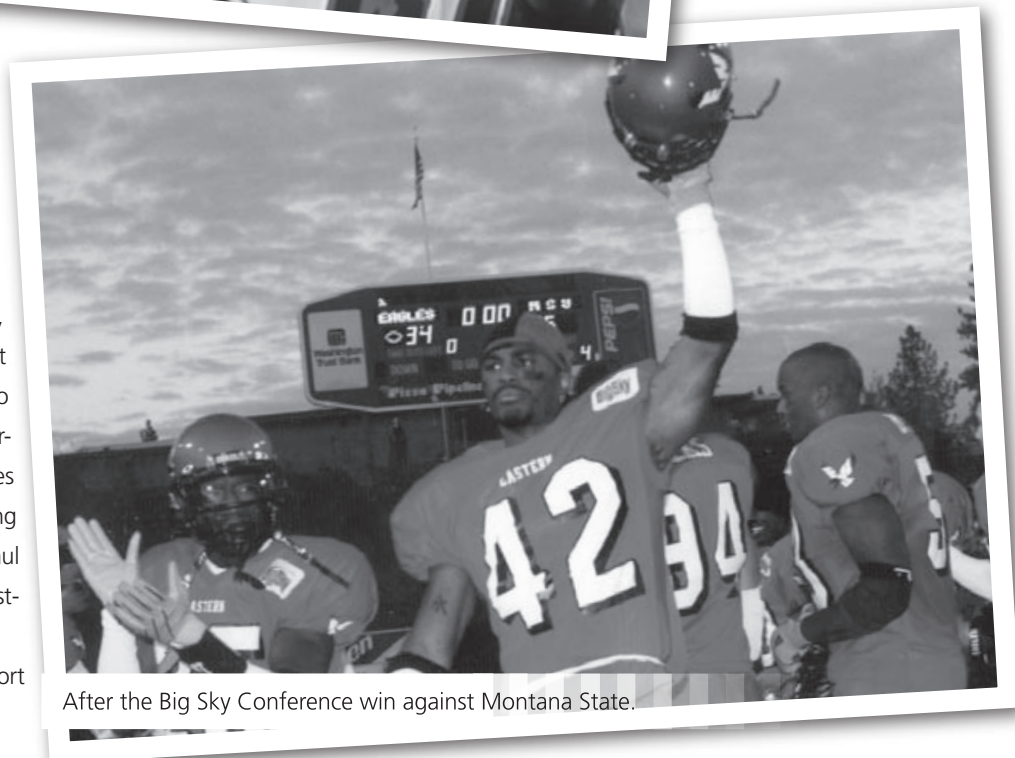
"Coach says I'm just the right two-sport athlete to do that," Muhammad said.



Muhammad in cheer mode.



Practicing his moves.



After the Big Sky Conference win against Montana State.

EWU to Offer Electrical Engineering Degree

This fall, Eastern will begin offering a four-year electrical engineering degree, the first of Washington's public comprehensive universities allowed to do so. Normally the purview of the state's major research universities, the EE degree is a perfect fit within Eastern's new School of Computing and Engineering Sciences.

The school – which opens in fall 2005 in a new \$25 million state-of-the-art facility – houses disciplines in computer science, technology and physics. Its driving philosophy is to marry hardware and software disciplines to produce graduates with the interdisciplinary skills valued in the technology and engineering fields.

The school's combinations and possibilities are very intriguing and further the University's mission as a major driver in the progress of the Inland Northwest, said Dr. Stephen M. Jordan, Eastern's president: "For example, electrical engineering paired with our cyber security offerings in computer science can create the right environment to help jump-start a cyber security industry in our region."



Home of the new School of Computing and Engineering Sciences.



Students gathering election returns Nov. 2.

EWU Houses Election Center on Nov. 2

The Nov. 2 general election produced drama, tension and high expectations for the entire nation – none of it more greatly concentrated than in the Multi-Purpose Room of the EWU Pence Union Building. That's where the Associated Press set up its Western Election Center, and where more than 200 Eastern students worked at banks of computers collecting election returns from 22 states across all American time zones.

"This was our largest center for reporting election results and by far the most important in terms of the results and their political impact," said Ann Joyce, director of the AP Data Center in Spokane. Election results from such battleground states as Ohio, Pennsylvania and Iowa were reported through the Western Election Center at Eastern.

"In addition to the civic and educational experience our students got through participating in the political process this way," said Steve Blewett, director of the EWU Journalism Program, "the kind of visibility it brought to Eastern is very significant.

"Eastern put a wide footprint out into the world for all the people who subscribe to the Associated Press (there are 5,000 radio and TV stations and 1,700 newspapers worldwide served by AP). Additionally, the AP Television Network provided live broadcasts to such outlets as the BBC and even to Beijing from the center."

This was the third time AP set up its Western Election Center at Eastern, first housing it on campus for the 2000 general election and again in 2002.

"We were very pleased to return to Eastern because of the technical expertise they provide, the workable space and the good quality of students we were able to hire to work in the center," Joyce said. "It was a no-brainer to come back to Eastern again."