

# Athletes become superstitious

by Riddhi Doshi

Everyone has a lucky charm. For some it is a pair of socks, while for others it could be a bracelet. Some athletes have proved that they are different. Before a game everyone does the normal routine—stretching, cheering and making faces at the other team to intimidate them. However, some athletes do a little something extra for good luck and to improve their performance for the game ahead.

Here are a few things that can get any athlete pumped for the competition whether it be a game, meet or match.

“Listen to music. Music is perfect before a game because it can get you pumped up but it can also help relax those nerves,” said sophomore swimmer Laurie Grodziak.

“Warming up is always a must. Run around a little, stretch and shake it out. It will keep your muscles from tensing up which is always a pain when you are in the middle of a game,” said sophomore Rachel Shusset.

The time before a game or even a practice is vital because what the athlete does or does not do can affect their chance of injury. Warming up is important because warm-ups concentrate on the muscles and allow them to stretch and literally ‘warm up’. The aim of warming up is to increase circulation around the body. An athlete should warm up for at least five minutes knowing that it may take about 30 minutes for the muscles to start working to the best of their ability. Wearing more layers of clothing can help the muscles prepare faster. The temperature of the environment an athlete is training in can also affect how

fast it would take to warm up correctly. If the game is taking place outside and the weather is cold, spend a little extra time warming up. Stretches and jogging are the most efficient ways to prepare correctly.

In addition to warming up, Parkland athletes add a few odd routines to their pre-game rituals. Everyone knows that even though winning takes mostly skill, there is a little luck involved. Enter the pre game ritual. It is very possible that these rituals only help the athletes by coincidence. Perhaps it only boosts self-confidence, thus improving the athletes’ games and causing them less nervous. Whatever it is, these rituals seem to be truly working for Parkland’s athletes.

“The sensational feeling of shaved legs enhances your overall performance and leads to some wicked fast swims,” said a past Parkland swimmer. Not shaving until the very last meet is a well-known tradition for the girls swimming and diving team.

“Before a performance I put my skates on my hands and feet and try to go out on the ice like this. This is my way of stretching. I have actually become quite good at this over the years,” said a Parkland figure skater.

“Writing ‘GOAL’ on my arm the night before a soccer game helps me score more goals in the game,” said sophomore soccer player Julia Nagle.

Cheering is something most teams have added to their pre-game rituals. It helps unite the team, get everyone excited and intimidate the other team. So in the end, whether athletes do something totally different before the game or just stretch, keep a positive outlook, be confident and try hard. In the end it will pay off.

# Winter sports take full swing

by Lauren Ranzino

Thank goodness Mother Nature dropped those eight inches of snow on December 19, enabling Blue Mountain and Bear Creek to begin the ski and snowboard season early!

This year, there are a slew of fresh terrain park features and eateries on the slopes. Bear Creek’s newest terrain park features include a 24-foot long, two-inch wide handrail; a 25-foot flat down handrail, a 10-foot adjustable pole jam, a 21-foot handrail and a 10-foot beginner hybrid rail. That is ninety feet of brand new handrail to break in this season.

Rates have stayed reasonably priced: \$32-\$39 on weekdays and \$32-\$48 on weekends for skiing and snowboarding and \$23 on weekdays and \$28 on weekends for snowtubing.

Of course, do not forget the familiar 21 trails and 1,000-foot long tube park that everyone knows and loves.

“This year we have a new outdoor dining shack called The Waffle Hut, which serves authentic Belgium Sugar Waffles with caramelized sugar,” said Mary Shoemaker, Bear Creek’s Marketing Director. Blue Mountain also has plenty to offer. Nightmare, a new double-black diamond slope, and Central Park, the

forth terrain park, are two of the latest attractions on the mountain. Nightmare is over 900 feet long and Central Park has plenty of custom-made stair sets.

Three new outdoor eateries at Blue Mountain include the Slopeside Pub and Grill, the Valley Courtyard and Ray’s Grill on Skis. The Slopeside Pub and Grill is near the Summit Lodge Courtyard, where you can eat a delicious lunch next to an open fire pit. The Valley Courtyard includes Fresh Tracks Java Hut, Philly Grill and Giuseppe Pizza. Ray’s Grill on Skis is located at the top of the mountain right on the slopes so that one can ski right up to the grill without even taking off those bindings!

BigAirBag, a fall cushion, is the newest safety feature. It is literally a huge air bag to skiers and snowboarders to land onto safely while practicing jumps. Once a skier or snowboarder comes off of a jump, they land onto BigAirBag.

Blue Mountain’s rates, like Bear Creek’s, run from \$32-\$35 on weekdays and \$25-\$38 on weekends. So whether doing a nose-press, a backside rodeo or jibbing every object in sight, Blue Mountain and Bear Creek will have plenty to keep you entertained this season.



photos courtesy of Bear Creek

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