

18 An American girl in Scotland

- Host:** Welcome to *School and Sports International*. As you know, we talk to people from different countries about the sports they do. What is normal for you might be unknown to others. Today we are in Scotland, but we are talking about cheerleading in America. With me in the studio is Marie from Los Angeles. Hi, Marie. Why are you in Scotland?
- Marie:** I'm here for a year at a Scottish school. Some things in Scotland are really different to things in America, but it's great. I just need to get used to the Scottish accent and that's getting easier all the time.
- Host:** That's good to hear. What differences have you seen between sports at your school in America and your new Scottish school?
- Marie:** Well, at my school in America, basketball and football, not soccer, are the most popular sports, whereas here, it's hockey and netball for the girls and soccer and rugby for the boys. And there is no cheerleading group at my Scottish school.
- Host:** Why is that?
- Marie:** Cheerleading doesn't seem to be so popular here. It's not really part of the sports culture in Scotland. I'm in my high school's cheerleading team in the US and we take cheerleading very seriously.
- Host:** You mean it's like a real sport?
- Marie:** Yes, it is. When I told my Scottish friends that I was a cheerleader they thought I was just a crazy football fan or that I just like dancing in front of the football boys. They didn't know that it is much more than that.
- Host:** What else do you do apart from 'cheering' people on as the word 'cheerleader' suggests?
- Marie:** Well, we train four times a week and we do gymnastics. You have to be really fit and good at sport to be a cheerleader. We also dance, so you need to have a feeling for the music and be able to move to the rhythm. You also need to be able to move together as a group. Otherwise it doesn't look good.
- Host:** That sounds like a lot of hard work to me.
- Marie:** It is. We also take part in competitions, so we have to train just as hard as football or basketball players. We also do stunts like throwing someone in the air and catching her, we have to practise a lot, so no one gets injured.
- Host:** Would you say that cheerleading is a dangerous sport?
- Marie:** Some of the moves are dangerous, as I just said. Without those more exciting moves, you can't really win a competition. Cheerleading is also a creative activity. We write our own chants and create our own moves, too. It's a lot of fun.
- Host:** I believe you. It sounds like more than what many people think it is. But did you know there is a growing number of cheerleading groups in Europe? There are about 20,000 cheerleaders in Germany alone.
- Marie:** That's great. So maybe I should try and set up a cheerleading group at my Scottish school then?
- Host:** Yeah, why not. Good luck with it and thanks for talking to us today. Enjoy your year in Scotland.