

Black Diamonds heading back to Florida

Following a successful visit earlier this year Black Diamonds cheerleading club have been invited back to the prestigious Summit competition in Orlando, Florida.

The event takes place on 2 and 3 May next year and flights have already been booked for a party of 56 including up to 23 participants.

For Black Diamonds founder Gill Samuel the accepted “bid” is confirmation of a distinguished foray into international competition in 2023.

“By sitting seventh out of 25 teams from around the world on day one we became the first Scottish cheer team to make the finals” said Gill, adding: “On day two every team really upped their game and we finished 10th in a competition where a tenth of a point separated us from 6th.”

The “Summit” is a level below the world championships but gives the Capital squad an opportunity to test themselves against all-comers at a time when cheerleading has received Olympic recognition and is on track to be added to the schedule for Los Angeles in 2028.

Gill said: “There is absolutely no reason why some of our cheerleaders can’t become Olympians, but mostly we are about developing life skills, discipline and being part of a team where a lot of trust is involved given individuals are thrown

into the air.”

To win a “bid” clubs have to qualify from preliminary events and it has maybe helped Black Diamonds that after a period of uncertainty they have settled into premises provided by East Lothian Council at a community learning centre, near Wallyford.

They also continue to operate, to a lesser extent, out of Penicuik and Liberton High School premises and that means full on commitment from the likes of Gill Samuel, assisted by daughter, Natalie.

But the hard part may just be beginning at a club run by Gillian for the past 16 years.

Gill said: “The girls are ecstatic about another opportunity but it will cost about £3,000 per athlete so in addition to fund-raising such as bag packing at supermarkets we are reaching out to sponsors once again.”

Anyone able to assist is asked to contact:

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Black Diamonds had a successful trip to Florida in 2023