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## 2024 Homecoming Pep Rally: Samford Lawn swarmed with school spirit



Auburn University Cheerleaders perform at the 2024 Auburn Homecoming Pep Rally on Sept. 13th, 2024.

Photo by [Christine Pham | Photographer](#) | The Auburn Plainsman

By [Ella Walton | Newsletter Editor](#)

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With Auburn's Homecoming game against New Mexico taking place today, this week has been one laden with preparation and festivities.

Following Auburn University's Homecoming Parade on Friday, Sept. 13, the Auburn community and university students alike migrated to Samford Lawn for the annual pep rally. At 6:35 p.m., the last parade float's disappearance segued into a performance by the Auburn University Marching Band, cheer team, Tiger Paws and flagline.

Grace Crim, who currently serves as Miss Auburn, was joined by Joe Bellardo, Auburn's Big Man on Campus, in emceeding this year's pep rally. The pair began by expressing gratitude to the community, Auburn Advancement and Auburn's University Program Council.

The top five Miss Homecoming candidates were then invited to the stage. Each candidate shared a bit about themselves and their campaign, ending with their favorite Auburn tradition.

Bobby Woodard, Auburn's senior vice president for Student Affairs, expressed his love for the Homecoming tradition and extended gratitude towards the community, students and faculty.

"My family and I got here ten years ago, and Auburn opened up their family to my family — we've been a part of this family ever since we got here, and we love it," Woodard said.

Auburn's mic-man, Ben Timm, and cheerleading team followed behind Woodard and led fervent fans in practicing cheers. A lively buzz of "Bodda getta, bodda getta, bodda getta, bah" broke out across the crowd before Auburn's band once again serenaded listeners on Samford Lawn.

Ron Anders Jr., Auburn's mayor and former Auburn University mic-man, followed by taking the stage.

"I hope everyone has a great time this weekend. I certainly want to thank our marching band — I don't know who's got a better marching band in the United States than Auburn's marching band," Anders declared.

The pep rally concluded at approximately 6:55 p.m., just as it began to rain. Bellardo encouraged the crowd to stick around for a performance by local country-rock band Trotline.

For Abby Ledbetter and Lexie Mapes, members of Auburn University's Marching Band Flagline, this was their second season performing at the Homecoming Pep Rally. The pair agreed they felt more comfortable in their performance when comparing it to freshman year.

"I felt a whole lot more confident in what I was doing," Ledbetter said.

Mapes personally enjoys pep rallies because she gets to perform for miniature Auburn fans.

"My favorite thing is seeing all the little boys and girls that dress up as band members, flagline, majorettes, cheerleaders — they're so adorable, and I can just envision them doing this in their future as well," Mapes said.

While the pep rally was filled with many alumni and seasoned pep rally-goers, it was a treat for first-timers to experience.

"We sit in games and stuff and you can hear [the Auburn University Marching Band], but you can't always get the full effect. So, you know, to be this close and hear everything was really good, and it impressed me that much more," said Kaleigh Backstrom, who graduated pre-vet and is now at Auburn's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Auburn University’s Homecoming Pep Rally yet again served as a way to instill excitement for today's game and serve as a reminder that the Auburn community will always welcome its Tigers home.

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