Finding their footing

Haley Brase  
_Iowa State University_, hrbrase@iastate.edu

Pei Chi Teh  
_Iowa State University_, peichi96@iastate.edu

Sam Greene  
_Iowa State University_, srgreene@iastate.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos](http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos)

**Recommended Citation**
Available at: [http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol2017/iss1/5](http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/ethos/vol2017/iss1/5)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ethos by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Finding Their Footing
A LOOK AT ISU’S NEW ROCK CLIMBING TEAM
BY HALEY BRASE
DESIGN PEI CHI TEH
PHOTOGRAPHY SAM GREENE
“I started because of the physical activity, I stayed because of the community and friends that I made.”

The rock climbing walls at Iowa State are inspiration for students from the flat corn fields in Iowa.

Cyclone Climbing was formed at Iowa State this semester as an addition to the rock climbing club. The team is for competition and the club is for leisure climbing. Currently, the team has 17 people, and to be on the team, you have to try out.

The coach of Cyclone Climbing, Dane Iverson, started it because people from the rock climbing community wanted the chance to compete against other teams. With him having the most experience, it made sense for him to become the coach.

“Dane and I came up with the idea of starting a team on the walk home from the wall one night sophomore year,” says Morgan Masters, manager and member of the team. “Since then, we’ve tried three times to start a program.”

They finally got things started this semester, but not everyone on the team had years of experience before deciding to try out.

“A friend of mine wouldn’t stop talking about it [rock climbing] and how he wanted me to come try it with him,” says Bryce Bonnstedter, member of the team. “The first couple of times I went over to State Gym with him to climb, I didn’t really do much other than sit there and watch everyone climb. I went a few more times with him, and I started to actually climb and participate, and that’s when I was hooked.”

He bought his first pair of rock climbing shoes over spring break 2016 and went on a few trips to Wisconsin to climb outdoors with his friends this past summer.

“I started rock climbing seven months ago in order to rebuild grip strength after a bicycle accident in which I broke both of my arms and was in casts for several months,” says Morgan Pearson, member of the rock climbing team. “Turns out rock climbing is incredibly fun, and I immediately got addicted to it.”

The team is mostly made up of men, but being one of two women does not faze Pearson.

“I absolutely adore all of the individuals that are part of the team and we all support each other regardless of gender,” Pearson says. “It would be great to have more girls in the future because girls are seriously good climbers too, but never once have I felt out of place. Being competitive, I just enjoy being around climbers that encourage me to improve.”

The team has become a strong, close-knit group because of the support each team member gives one another. When some think they can’t, they believe they can.

“Nothing feels quite as good as all of your close friends cheering you on as you try to do a certain move to finish a route that you have been working on for a while, finally getting it and then everyone celebrating after you finish,” Bonnstedter says. “I started because of the physical activity, I stayed because of the community and friends that I made.”

In rock climbing, there are two disciplines: bouldering and sport climbing.
“In bouldering competitions there will usually be about 50 different routes or ‘problems’ to climb,” Iverson says. “These routes are usually no longer than 20 feet tall and can range from very easy to impossible.”

Finishing the routes is the most important part of bouldering competitions, not how fast the climber’s pace is. The average time given to climbers is three hours to finish the course. The score is figured by the five hardest routes completed.

Sport climbing is more of what you may think of when you think of rock climbing.

“The discipline of sport climbing is very similar except the walls range from 40 to 100 feet tall and are climbed with the help of a rope and harness for protection,” Iverson says. “Instead of needing power, you need endurance to have the strength to do hard movements, even when at the top of the route.”

At practice in Lied Gym or Beyer Hall, the athletes try to focus on their discipline. Rope climbing has nine members and boulder climbing has eight, according to Masters.

“We have access to the functional training room in Beyer on Mondays and Thursdays,” Bonnstetter says. “That is where we go to work out, since it has the tools that we, as climbers, specifically need.”

The boulder practices are Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at Lied Rec center. For rope climbers, it is up to the partner groups to decide when to practice climbing, since there are not designated times for them to practice.

“State [gym] tends to be more top rope oriented and Lied [gym] is more bouldering oriented, even though both State and Lied have bouldering walls,” Pearson said. “It’s fun to compete at other locations though because the variety in climbing and routes makes it even more interesting.”

“We are currently split up in between strength and power training and will swap assignments in a couple of weeks,” Pearson says. “The team will be competing in upcoming competitions, but we haven’t attended a competition as a cohesive unit yet; however, almost all of us have all independently competed at competitions.” Pearson has participated in three competitions, one hosted at ISU and the other two hosted by Climb Iowa in Grimes and has placed first in her division at all three.

Right now, Cyclone Climbing is training, but when they do compete, it will be in the Midwest Collegiate Division run by USA climbing, according to Iverson.

“Climbing has been rapidly gaining popularity over the past year or so amongst the youth and college scene,” Bonnstetter says. It won’t be slowing down anytime soon — the first local event in the Midwest is planned for March of 2017, and Cyclone Climbing will be ready for it.