

# MALONEY: STRIKE UP THE BANDS!

## School to host first competition next month

By Dan Ivers

Record-Journal staff



Maloney Band Director,  
Brian Cyr, oversees a  
practice session.

MERIDEN - For more than two years, Ed Gaughran has been honing his saxophone skills in Maloney High School's marching band, helping to pump up school spirit at football games and pep rallies. Next month, however, Gaughran and the rest of the band will step into a new role as the main attraction at the school's first-ever band competition.

Nine other high schools, including Southington, Lyman Hall, Sheehan, Cheshire and Middletown, will compete against the Spartan band at the "Halftime All the Time" competition, which is scheduled for Sept. 18 at Falcon Field on Westfield Road

"A lot of the groups really don't know how hard we work. I think this is really going to show it off," said the 16-year-old Gaughran, who also helps conduct the band's percussion section.

Large competitions are nothing new for other area schools with thriving band programs, and school band director Brian Cyr said the 100 players at Maloney usually compete in around six each fall.

"This isn't just something that goes along with athletic events. We've been looking forward to doing this for a while," he said.

**With lack of a suitable venue the school was never able host a competition before. City athletic teams began using the new artificial turf field - a renovated Falcon Field - two years ago.**

**"That's definitely the thing that has changed that made it happen."**

**"It's a great thing that we wanted to bring to Meriden but up until Falcon Field was built we just couldn't do it," Cyr said.**

The competition will consist of 15-minute halftime style performances by each band.

They will be scored by six judges on elements such as musicianship, physical movement and color guard performance.

Other schools participating will be Norwich Free Academy, Bethel High School, Fitch High School of Groton and Oakmont Regional High School of Charlemont, Mass.

Cyr said cross-town rival Platt High School's marching band was invited to the event, but does not generally participate in competitions. Platt's band director could not be reached Tuesday for comment.

Lyman Hall band director Dean Dellavecchia said the band has benefited greatly since his school began hosting competitions around five years ago.

"What I've noticed with the kids is it gives them a sense of pride," he said. "It turns what's normally just a concert program into a whole community-wide event."

Cyr said about 800 students from the 10 schools will be participating, and that he hopes turnout will match that of other area competitions, which often attract up to 2,000 people.

"Every time I talk to parents, they're just awestruck at the size and magnitude of the events. You just wouldn't think that marching band would have that big of a following," he said.

Donata Lupacchino, a drum major entering her senior year at Maloney, said the band is anxious to showcase its skills in front of a hometown crowd..

**"It's a great feeling. I don't even know how to describe it," she said. "I've been counting down the days."**