

# Cheers all round for Michael

## Teenage cheerleader has plenty to shout about when representing UK

A FORMER teenage rugby and American football player has the world at his feet after being selected to represent the UK — at cheerleading.

Michael McMahon, 18, from Heapey, has leapt into contention for world honours after making the mixed team of UK Allstars.

The team will travel to Tokyo in November to compete for the World Cup of cheerleading, the premier event in the sport.

Competitive cheerleading is growing in popularity with more and more boys taking up the sport, which involves plenty of stunts and is almost akin to gymnastics.

Michael, a student at Runshaw College, has the perfect comeback for anyone who teases him about his hobby.

"A lot of my mates take the mickey out of me spending my time cheerleading. But they soon go quiet when I show them pictures of the girls I work with every week," he said.

Michael started out as a cheerleader during his time as a pupil at St Michael's High School, Chorley, when he joined the local team, Chorley Warriors.

He is now a member of Blackpool Scorpions, who are the current British champions and ranked third in Europe after a championship held in Sweden

By Chris Gee

last year.

As well cheerleading, Michael enjoys rugby and athletics, particularly sprinting, in which he has represented Wigan Harriers and both the Lancashire and North West of England Squads.

He has also played American football, where the cheerleaders are to be found on the other side of the touchline.

He said: "I have been cheerleading for around three years and thoroughly enjoy it.

"As a sprinter, I was training four and five nights week, but the physical effort and fitness needed for this is even tougher.

"I also hope to become a PE teacher and would love to introduce the sport to more people.

"It takes a lot of practice and discipline to get to the top level but the reward of being selected to go to Japan is fantastic.

"We will spend a week in Tokyo and use the facilities built for the recent Junior Olympics, I can't wait."

Following his selection for the UK Allstars, Michael will practice with the national squad once a month at the Velodrome in Manchester.

His preparation also involves training in Chorley at Whittle-le-Woods' Next Generation gym and with the Scorpions in Blackpool.



JUMP TO IT: Michael McMahon who is representing the UK in cheerleading