

RALLY'round the CATS

Student-created group works to get the crowd going at UC games

By Jathan Fink
The News Record

Rally Cats hosted the second Bearcat Bash of the year, a student tailgate party held on McMicken Commons, at the UC vs. Miami game last Saturday.

Live music, free food and games like corn hole and football, drew students to the event, which started at 1 p.m. and lasted until game time.

Nate Brown, a former Rally Cats president, said, "the focus of the Rally Cats is on promoting school spirit and pride in the university."

The Rally Cats, in collaboration with the Programs and Activities Council, began hosting these events last year to encourage students to attend sporting events on campus, according to Brown.

"When I first came to UC," Brown said, "I was disappointed that there were no tailgate parties. But at UC there are no large parking lots, so a real tailgate party would have been difficult."

Brown said that while current Rally Cats president Nate Smith was still a freshman, he organized a pep rally before the Crosstown Shootout and three hundred students attended.

According to Brown, the following year, the Rally Cats went to other groups to see what else students wanted, and the result was the evolution of Smith's pep rally into the Bearcat Bash.

"Last year, there were only two of these events, but we still drew 1,300 students by giving away free food and other giveaways," Smith said. "This year, we hope to beat those numbers by hosting a total of seven of these pre-game events."

The Bearcat Gladiators is another event that the Rally Cats

"I was disappointed that there were no tailgate parties."

— Nate Brown, former Rally Cats president



Danh Vu/The News Record

See Rally, Page 6

Students toss cornhole bags before the game at the Bearcat Bash.

Rally,

continued from Page 3

have initiated in recent years.

"We started this event primarily because we wanted freshmen to recognize the Rally Cats as more than just a group of cheering fans," Smith said.

The event is a spin-off of the old *American Gladiators* television show. Last Wednesday, the event took place on Sheakley Lawn in Varsity Village.

Festivities before the game consisted of UC baseball players standing on a raised platform and hurling black stress balls at participants as they tried to make it through an obstacle course which consisted of barrels, padded pillars and various sports balls.

"There are two ways to win," said Bill Brash, vice-president of internal affairs for Rally Cats. "Get one ball in the net or make it through the obstacle course without being hit."

Students who participated were entered in a raffle for various gift certificates from Ben and

"The players hope to get them out to cheer at their games in the spring."

— Bill Brash, VP of internal affairs for Rally Cats

Jerry's, Aeropostale and the UC Pride shop, Brash said.

"The baseball players were happy to get involved because they realize that it forms a connection between the athletes and the students," Brash said. "The players hope to get them out to cheer at their games in the spring."

Brown said that his presidency last year was challenging, in part because the board was very young.

"Almost none of our board members had any leadership experience," Brown said. "Plus we were trying many new things, such as hosting the Bearcat Bash and Bearcat Gladiators, as well as creating a homecoming float."

Despite the challenges, the Rally Cats were successful in reaching many of their objectives, Brown said.

According to Brown, one of the reasons the events have been so successful is because Rally Cats was

created by students for students.

"Administration is really starting to realize that students make or break the university," Brown said. "Last year, Rally Cats and other student leaders were even invited to sit in on some of the university committees, so administration could find out what students really want."

Mike Thomas, UC's athletic director and Student Government President, Jerry Tsai, have both held brainstorming sessions about how to keep students at the games, according to Brown.

Even with the support of the athletic department, student government, and university administration, the Bearcat Bash and Bearcat Gladiators continue to be set up primarily by the Rally Cats, an independent student organization, according to Brown.

There are 1,450 students on the Rally Cats roster, with 400 of them having been added just this year.