

# Cheshire band wins 5th title

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CHESHIRE - The term "dynasty" isn't used in reference to high school marching band competitions, but if it were, the Cheshire High School Marching Ram Band would be on the list.

The 76-member band won the U. S. Scholastic Band Association Northern States Group 3 title on Nov. 1 in Allentown, Pa., beating 10 other schools from four states, including Westhill High School from Stamford. The title is the fifth USSBA title that Ram Band has since John Kuhner became band director at the school, but the first since 2006.

"What a way to end the season," Kuhner said. Kuhner said the smaller size of this year's band - most of the titles his students have won in previous years were with 100 or more people - made this year's championship especially sweet.

"There are more challenges in terms of working smart and making what you've got sound as full as possible," he said. "But I think this year that we came up with the best product we've had in my nine years here." This year's field show was called "Buggin'Out," and focused on different insects at a picnic.

The show started with band members as "ants" emerging from a larger-than-life anthill. Other props included huge flowers, giant picnic baskets and six-foot-butterfly wings worn by members of the color guard, Kuhner said.

"It took over an hour just to load up the props after every show," he said.

Before winning the USSBA Northern States' title, the Ram Band was both Connecticut and New England champion in Group 3 for the competition circuit.

Derek Suarez, a senior trumpet player with the band, said winning the Northern State title "was nice way to finish off the year." "But my section and everyone in the band worked really hard to get to that point and I'm really proud of that," Suarez said. "That really means more to me than winning." The band has one more post season competition left: The Musical Arts Conference Championship on Saturday at Bridgeport Central High School on Saturday.

Cheshire won the Group 4 MAC title last year. The MAC is made up largely of Fairfield County schools.

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*Matt Volpe, left, and Kyle Rizzo perform in the Cheshire High Marching Ram Band.*