As the U.S. Women’s Gymnastics Team won medal after medal during the 2012 Summer Olympics, it was no surprise that the tumbling hype skyrocketed this year.

While attention surrounding the national team may have quieted down, East Freshmen and Reserve cheerleaders have only just begun using their gymnastics abilities to enhance their sport.

Freshmen cheerleaders Allison Langan and Katie Josiah began tumbling in elementary school and continue to participate in competitive cheer and dance outside of East. Both believe that being an experienced tumbler has its advantages.

“If you don’t know a cheer, you can go tumble instead,” said Langan. “It makes things a lot easier.”

Josiah agreed. “It really helps because in tumbling you learn a lot of the aspects of cheer,” she said, which goes to show that an experienced gymnast is already ahead of the game.

Another obvious bonus comes with the crowd response.

“Our tumbling routines get the fans more excited for games,” said Reserve cheerleader Nicole Selzer, a freshman who also tumbles for her team.

“We can incorporate them into our dances and cheers, and it just makes things more interesting,” said Reserve sophomore Freya Puxted, highlighting how the acrobatics spice up otherwise typical routines.

The added variety is important as the squads cheer at multiple athletic events each week, and it keeps the cheerleaders on their toes.

Josiah also recognizes the inventive aspects. “We get to be creative with it,” she said. “Our coaches let us choreograph our own routines every once in awhile.”

Several members have even considered taking classes in tumbling to improve the squads’ presentation and skill level in years to come.

In the end, whether amplifying school spirit or incorporating a little creativity into games, the Freshmen and Reserve cheerleaders have proven that you don’t have to be a national athlete to bring thrilling performances to the world of cheerleading.