

The incredible twirling twins

University of Virginia football fans can be forgiven for wondering if they're seeing double during today's half-time show at Scott Stadium.

UVa's Cavalier Marching Band has added a pair of top-ranked twin twirlers to its roster.

Eighteen-year-olds Victoria and Brittany Maiden of Richmond have been twirling batons since the age of 5 and have consistently placed among the best in national competitions.

The Maidens are two of the marching band's three twirlers who perform during the pre-game and half-time shows at all Virginia home games, such as the Cavaliers' game at 3:30 p.m. today against Indiana.

"I don't really like twirlers, unless they're great," said Bill Pease, director of the marching band. "These girls are great. They are the top of the line when it comes to talent."

The Maidens have been dubbed the "Sabre Twins." Audrey Johnson, a UVa student who also grew up in Richmond, is the marching band's "Feature Twirler" for the second consecutive year. The three were longtime teammates as part of the award-winning Royalties Baton Corps of Richmond.

"That team is sort of like Hampton High School for football," Pease said. "It's like, send me more twirlers please!"

The Maidens are two of a dozen Piedmont Virginia Community College students who are members of UVa's marching band. PVCC students have been allowed to try out for UVa's marching band since it was established in 2004.

While students at Lee-Davis High School, the Maiden twins attended a game at Scott Stadium and decided they both wanted to come to Charlottesville for college.

"We came for a game and we fell in love," Brittany said.

"We knew we wanted to go somewhere [for school] together," Victoria added.

"We do everything together," agreed Brittany.

The duo is enrolled in PVCC's liberal studies program and hopes to transfer to UVa next year. Victoria hopes to major in English and go on to work as a TV news anchor. Brittany wants to major in education and eventually teach physical education.

They decided to become twirlers at a young age after seeing a majorette toss and twirl a baton in a parade.

“We were like, ‘Mom, that’s what we want to do,’” Victoria said.

“We picked that over cheerleading,” Brittany said.

Over the last 13 years, the twins have competed separately and in choreographed performances together in national championships. They won the national duet twirling champion title in 2004 and 2007.

Johnson, the band’s head twirler, is a longtime friend.

“The three of us get along together really great,” Brittany said. “We have such a great bond.”