

FOUR CORNERS YAFL CHEERLEADERS
“Without Cheerleaders it’s Just a Game”



2016
YAFL
New Coaches'
Guide

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM YAFL CHEER:

All registrants will be placed on a cheer squad and assigned to a coach. As a coach, if you have a preference of what YAFL team your squad cheers for, please indicate this on the top of your coaches' application prior to turning it in. Once you receive your list of cheerleaders, it is your responsibility to contact them and inform them of your first practice. It's recommended that you hold your practices at the same location and time as the football team you are cheering for, if the location allows for the practice space. This is due to the facility use agreements that YAFL must have for each practice location. If you choose to practice elsewhere, you will need to fill out a facility use form and get each of your cheerleaders to sign their facility's liability waiver.

YAFL Cheer rules are included in this packet. I strongly advise you to take the time to read through them. It is important for the safety of all participants and the liability of the YAFL organization.

My aspiration is for this organization to grow into more than just a cheerleading opportunity for young kids. Being a part of a cheerleading squad teaches confidence, encourages team work, and builds lasting relationships. I encourage you to get your squads involved in the community, such as volunteering to serve others in food drives, helping at local charities, or mentoring other children. This will build long-lasting bonds that will tie your team together outside of cheerleading. It is up to you, as a coach, to be a role model in this regard. Your cheerleaders will reward your dedication, and you will have a happier, more successful squad.

Although it may seem redundant, please take the time to review this entire guide. There are lots of helpful hints and tricks that will assist your squad in being successful. Thank you for volunteering your time to our youth. Without you, it would not be possible. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at any time! My contact information is also available on the website www.fourcornersyafl.com or www.fourcornersyouthsports.com under the "cheer" tab.

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THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHEERLEADERS

1. Cheerleaders should drink plenty of water rather than sugary or carbonated drinks. Each cheerleader should bring water to all practices and games.
2. Cheerleaders should warm up their muscles and joints before any activity i.e. light jogging and range motion exercises for every joint. Bouncing or jerking motions should be avoided. This can be repeated after working out to cool down.
3. At games, ensure your cheerleaders **are facing the game and are paying attention at all times**. On occasion, a tackle may fall into the “Cheer box” where the cheerleaders are lined up, and this will prevent them from being injured if this should happen.
4. At practice fields, watch out for sprinkler heads, broken glass, etc.
5. Ensure your cheerleaders have a safe, flat surface to practice on.
6. Carry an emergency kit to all games and practices. First aid kits are inexpensive and a good thing to have around. Make sure the first aid kits carry band-aids, antiseptic, and a Ziploc bag to hold ice and for older girls, a feminine napkin.
7. Stunting is NEVER acceptable on the sidelines during the game. This should be reserved for half time when the game is not in play.
8. A maximum of 20 cheerleaders are allowed on each team. There is a limit to help ensure the safety of our girls on the field. Too many girls on the sideline, along with football players, coaches, and chains etc.
9. Please ensure that your “cheer box” containing all cheerleaders is a minimum of 3 feet from the sideline to eliminate chance of injury should a tackle break the sideline plane.

MASCOTS ARE NEVER ALLOWED. NO EXCEPTIONS!!! This is due to insurance policies on the field.

CHEERS & DANCES

You absolutely cannot hire someone to choreograph/teach your team cheers or dances. There are many other resources out there to help you choreograph a dance and come up with cheers. ANY SQUADS CAUGHT PAYING FOR A ROUTINE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE YAFL CHEER PROGRAM.

TUMBLING/GYMNASTICS & JUMPS

1. A responsible, certified and trained adult must supervise any tumbling/gymnastics/jumps performed at practices and games, and must have a background check on file with YAFL. Tumbling is acceptable, but limited to forward/backward rolls, cartwheels (1 and 2 armed), round offs, and front/back walkovers as well as front and back handsprings with certification only. **No aerial tumbling allowed.**
2. Knee drops, seat drops, front drops, and split drops from a jump or airborne position are prohibited. Hands must be properly placed on the floor before knees touch the ground.

2016 YAFL Stunting Overview

(Stunting is defined as any action where both of the Cheerleader's feet leave the ground)

1. **STUNTS ARE ONLY ALLOWED FOR SQUADS WITH STUNT CERTIFIED CHEER COACHES (Violation will result in coach dismissal).** Coaches can receive certification by completing a certification course and submitting their certificate to the YAFL Cheer Board.
2. Stunts must have a back spot at all times.
3. Stunts can only be performed during the halftime performance and picture day.
SIDELINE STUNTS ARE PROHIBITED!!!
4. **STUNTS MAY NOT BE PERFORMED WHEN THE GAME IS IN PLAY OR DURING TIME-OUTS.**
5. All cheerleaders should receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading stunts.

The American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators (AACCA), provides an easy online safety course to certify coaches in stunting. For a small fee you can take the test online and safely begin using stunting with your cheerleaders.
****Please make sure to print a copy of your certification and provide it to the YAFL Cheer Coordinator to keep on file. ****

UNACCEPTABLE Stunting/Tumbling:

NO Basket Tosses

NO Twisting into or out of a Stunt

NO Tic Tocs (Switching from one leg to another)

NO Free-falling

NO Arm Flips

ALL Stunts must ALWAYS have a back spot, and the back spot must have both hands on the flyer at all times **without exception.**

We want to thank you for making a difference in a child's life. Always know that there are many resources out there including the YAFL Board, YAFL Cheer Coordinator, and YAFL Coaches. If you ever need us, we are only a phone call or email away!

CHEER COACHING-101

It's official. You filled out the paperwork and went through the background check. You are now a 2016 YAFL Cheer Coach. Now what?

It may seem overwhelming to determine how to proceed, especially being a "first time" coach. Unfortunately, there is no "official" cheerleading guide that will help you become a great leader and cheer coach, but you have access to many resources both internal and external.

The things that will truly make you a great coach will come from within you and from your own experiences. Having once been a first-time coach myself, I know the anticipation and anxiety associated with this moment. I'm happy to help you create a "preface" as you build your personal guide to coaching. It is necessary to realize that you are about to impact the lives of many children far beyond the chants, cheers and techniques that you will teach them. You will become a mentor and role model to children. They will learn to trust and believe in your abilities, talents and decisions. They will take on traits they see and admire in you. You may hear them repeat things you say to them or see them mimic your actions as they talk to their friends. As a coach, you are a public figure and open to scrutiny at all times.

It is important that you live and breathe "The Golden Rule" – "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". It is crucial that you only do and say things you are comfortable with your young impressionable team members repeating and mimicking. It is imperative that you show them the same respect you would like to receive. Children truly learn what they live. As a coach, you become a part of that life. From you, they will learn how to work as a team, how to always try and give their best, and how to not think as "me" but as "we". They should learn how to trust their peers, how to perform in front of a crowd, how to represent an entire team and community and so much more. You are making a difference in their lives, and you want that difference to be one that helps them learn and grow as athletes and as people.

*****One of the biggest challenges YAFL Cheer Coaches face is the varying levels of experience they will find on their team at the beginning of each season. There are no tryouts. You may have some young cheerleaders that have never cheered a day in their lives and others that have cheered for YAFL and in school since they could first walk. It is up to you to determine what the levels are at the beginning and to make a plan to help everyone learn, grow and succeed during the season.*****

At your very first practice find out what their experiences are. If they are returning cheerleaders, let them tell you the things they liked and disliked about their prior season(s). Listen to what they have to say, but make sure it stays on learning and growing rather than just becoming a complaint session. Ask them how they would improve on the things they did disliked. They'll appreciate the opportunity for input.

If you are coaching an older squad, ask the whole team what their goals are for themselves and as a team. What do they want to learn? Where do they want the team to go? What are some things they would like to see the team accomplish? After listening to your squad, take some time to tell them what your goals are, what your experiences are, and what you hope to learn and accomplish throughout the season. Let them know what your expectations are. Make sure they are clearly understand the rules and regulations you will have regarding practices and performing. Before moving on, clarify any confusion they may have. Make sure to explain your coaching and life philosophies regarding effort, giving their best, winning and losing, etc).

As you sit with your team to discuss goals, experiences and expectations, you will find that the kids on the team are cheering for many different reasons. Their explanations give an insight as to what their attitudes will be. It is up to you to take the initial reason and either built upon it or transform it into a more appropriate motivation. Cheering because a parent told her to, is not the healthiest reason, but it is up to the coach to show that cheering can offer so much more.

You must allow your passion for the activity to shine through. Let them feed off your energy, dedication and drive. Let them see your excitement and feel your joy in their successes. Allow them to see your disappointment but make sure it is always followed with the belief that “we’ll do better next time”. Make sure your cheerleaders know that the place or trophy size doesn’t matter. It is how they feel as they come off the field or floor. If you make cheering a challenge filled with excitement and satisfaction, you will help create new reasons why these cheerleaders want to cheer long after the season is over. (Who knows, someday they may coach your children or grandchildren!) The goal has always been to teach routines they will see in their minds and feel in their hearts every time they hear that song and to teach lessons they will carry with them long after they have left you. **Give them a new reason to cheer!**

NETWORK, NETWORK, NETWORK

When you are a new coach, there is nothing worse than feeling alone. You should take the time to network with other coaches even if they are technically the opposition. You will be surprised at how much you can learn and how connected you will feel when you have someone to talk to, to bounce ideas off, etc.

BE A PARENT ADVOCATE

You will always have people that like or dislike your philosophies, style and coaching methods. It is not possible to please everyone; however, you need parents to know that you are essentially an extension of them when their children are with you. Meet with your cheer parents at the first practice and let them know what your expectations and requirements for the season are going to be. Ask returning parents what they did and did not like from previous years. You will learn so much listening to parents, and they will respect and encourage you more if they know you are their advocate and have respect for what they say and feel.

Encourage parental involvement in fundraising, bringing snacks, and supporting their cheerleader. Make sure you keep them informed, and help them to feel they are part of the team while still helping them maintain a distance. Keep open lines of communication.

Consider producing a packet and include all necessary information, such as game/practice schedules, fundraising events, team contact information, snack days etc. This will help them feel involved and informed.

Do your best to keep track of what has been distributed and call cheerleaders who have not received the information. One suggested method to keep track of who receives information is to label the items with each cheerleader's name in advance. Once you have distributed them to all in attendance, you will have the items leftover for those not in attendance, and you can contact them in a different manner.

Another alternative is to plan a Cheer parent meeting. Remember to meet with your parents early in your season, and as often as you can. Keep the line of communication open with your cheer parents. Do not depend on your cheerleaders to give messages to their parents. Put it in writing and hand it out. Make use of a team parent(s) to telephone the rest of the parents with important information.

When you have younger cheerleaders on your squad, you will likely have parents who will want to stay and observe your practices. Do your best to welcome them but also set ground rules. For some parents, it is often hard to leave their child in the hands of a stranger (you). As they learn to trust you and your skills, they will feel more comfortable and not spend every second scrutinizing your practices. When you meet a parent whether at practice or out in the community, give them some positive feedback about their child. Parents love to hear about their children from you and are often anxious to know how they are doing but may be hesitant to ask.

GET TO KNOW YOUR CHEERLEADERS

Many coaches base the success of their season solely on the number of trophies they accumulate. Experienced, good coaches will tell you that there are other aspects of coaching that are much more important. Building strong relationships with your cheerleaders is equally important to a successful season and a successful career as a coach. It takes more than basic sports knowledge to develop a solid coaching strategy. Of course, knowledge of fundamental cheerleading techniques is necessary, but good coaching is so much more.

Since there is no exact formula for success, coaches can have a hard time determining the best leadership style for their teams. As stated earlier, getting to know your cheerleaders is one very important step in this process. In order to get your cheerleaders to perform as a team, you must first understand what motivates each of them. The tactics that may motivate one cheerleader may not work on another cheerleader. Some cheerleaders need a challenge in order to meet a goal. They may need individualized, specific directions about the job that you want them to perform. Other cheerleaders may only perform well if they are given the freedom to discover the proper method of their own. The differences can be frustrating. Outside sources such as parents or previous coaches can be of assistance as they can provide pertinent information regarding the work habits and personal style of that child.

Once you get to know both the strengths and weaknesses of each cheerleader, you can take the next step in successful coaching, which is to create a plan of action for the team as a

whole. Once you have formulated your plan for the team, you can also work on motivation. Motivation should come from within the team as well as from you as the coach.

BE EDUCATED AND BE AN EDUCATOR

As much as you want your team members to learn and grow as cheerleaders, you also need to be willing to learn and grow as a coach of cheerleading/dance. Take every opportunity you are given to arm yourself with knowledge, literature and experience, whether it be at our summer cheer/coaches' clinic, or simply during a conversation with a fellow coach. The more you know, the better coach you will be for your team. If they see how dedicated you are to growing and evolving, they will be willing to do the same.

There is a very fine line between being a coach and a friend. Your cheerleaders need someone they can respect, admire and emulate as they search to find who they are and where they belong in life. You can have fun with them and play with them, but you need to separate yourself as the "coach and educator". They will know that you love and care for them based on your dedication, devotion, hard work and passion to making their experience wonderful and successful. Show them by your actions that you are someone they can count on, but make sure they know that you are also someone they need to listen to and respect. Although respect should always be earned, there is a certain amount that comes with simply being a coach. They will get so much more from you as a coach who cares rather than a friend who coaches.

BE A BENEVOLENT LEADER

If you are teaching pre-teen and teen girls, you will most certainly run into "attitudes". It is a given with this age group as they test their independence and begin a process of learning their identities. Be a "benevolent" leader. Always be willing to listen to their ideas and apply them whenever you can, but make sure they understand they need to respect your decisions. They will come to learn with the dedication, effort and passion you put into them, you are not going to steer them wrong. If you give them your heart, let them see your passion, give them respect and show them your dedication, you are sure to see the same in return. There is nothing more challenging and rewarding than being a coach! **ENJOY THE CHEER SEASON** **And don't feel bad if a situation results in making your entire team run laps to get rid of attitudes!!!** They need this structure.

HOW TO PLAN AN EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

In order to have an effective practice, you must be organized and set goals for the practice. The **quantity of practice time is not nearly as important as the quality of practice time**. Here are some tips to help you set up your practice:

1. Give parents and cheerleaders a practice schedule, include the dates and times at least two weeks in advance and stick to it. It's recommended to hold at least two, one hour practices a week.
2. An effective practice is one where your cheerleaders progress in skills, learn something new or just practice cleaning up their skills.
3. An effective practice is an upbeat practice that goes by so fast that it is over before they know it. Don't give your team time to argue, fight or get bored.

4. Have a variety of activities for each practice. Incorporate all aspects of cheerleading, e.g. jumps, cheers, chants and tumbling. Practices can become long, boring and tiresome if you work on the same activity for two hours. Change gears often.
5. Inform your squad they must wear practice clothes. This means shorts, sweats, t-shirts (but not baggy) and athletic shoes. No jeans, sandals, Skechers or anything else they are unable to move in should be allowed.
6. Inform your squad and parents that everyone should be at all practices and on time. If they cannot make it, advise them to call you or an assistant personally prior to the start of the session.
7. Inform your squad that there will be no chewing gum, eating candy or wearing jewelry. Small stud earrings are the only exception except for competition where they are not allowed.
8. At practice fields, watch out for sprinkler heads, broken glass, etc. Ensure your cheerleaders have a safe flat surface to practice on.
9. Use a Cheer Down to refocus attention back to you. Cheer downs also help memorization of technique by providing single word commands from you.
10. Practicing Voices: the football fields we will be at do not have sound systems. Cheerleaders will have to use their voices. To make their voice carry, they should take deep breaths and use their stomach muscles to help power their words. They should never use their throat muscles to cheer. They should learn to project their normal voice from their diaphragm, keep their voice excited and bring the tone of their voice up at the end of each line.
11. Practicing Facial Expressions: nobody wants to follow cheerleaders who look bored, disinterested or angry. On the other hand, cheerleaders who display super facials are fun to watch and follow, so have your cheerleaders practice with a smile on their faces until it becomes second nature.
12. Practicing Cheers and Chants: there are several things you can do to make it easy. Before you begin teaching, go over the basic motions that make up every cheer and chant. First show the cheer/chant, so everyone knows what to expect. Listen for the tempo of the cheer/chant, and go over the words, clapping your hands to keep the tempo. Make sure everyone knows what words to emphasize.
13. Practicing Arm Motions: teach the motions in increments, for example, one verse at a time. Say the words that go with each motion. Go slow. Cheerleaders should say the words while they are learning the motions. It will help them remember. Pay attention to arm placement. Be sure wrists are straight, thumbs are tucked around fists and that “donut holes” are facing the right direction. When performing arm motions, keep them tight, stiff and placed slightly in front of your body. Watch for broken wrists and bent elbows. Go over the whole cheer/chant over and over and over. Repetition is the only way to teach!!!
14. Practicing Jumps: Flexibility is very important in order to properly execute most jumps to avoid injury. Proper warm-up and stretching exercises should be conducted before practicing any jumps. A jump has a beginning, middle and an end. Always begin jumps with a “prep” or approach. Keep the back straight, legs straight and toes pointed. Cheerleaders land on the balls of their feet. They should keep their heads upright with chin up. This makes them look confident. They should point their toes and land on both feet at the same time. Backs should be straight during the jump and their legs brought up to their arms. Arms should not be brought down to their legs. It can cause them to lean forward and make their jump appear lower.

15. Lining Up Cheerleaders: the best way to line up the squad is with larger girls in the back and smaller in the front. Be strategic when lining up your cheerleaders. It is also a good idea to practice sidelines in the game formation, so everyone becomes comfortable. The standard sideline procedure is to have one person start the cheer/chant, and have the rest of the squad join in clapping. The second time through, the motions begin. Don't forget to yell "last time" or give a cue prior to final round of that cheer/chant.

GEARING UP FOR YOUR FIRST GAME

Your first football game will be coming up shortly, and you want to start off the season right. Inform your newcomers on game procedures. Their first game can be both intimidating and exciting. Be clear on everything right down to who starts the sideline cheers, who yells "last time," when it should be called, and how to stand. You can also give your squad a "heads up" as to what sideline cheer is coming up by whispering it down the lines. Mostly, just try to get into the swing of things. The crowd probably won't notice any mistakes you make. Keep cheers simple. You will have plenty of chances to "WOW" the crowd later in the season when everyone is more comfortable. Cheer loud and proud!

WHAT A TYPICAL SATURDAY GAME LOOKS LIKE

Arrive at the game field at least 30 minutes to an hour before game time. There are times that your scheduled game may start early. Arriving early gives your cheerleaders the time to stretch and warm up. Identify your side of the field. Along with time to warm up, arriving early allows you to claim your sideline location before spectators arrive. Sideline location for cheerleaders will usually be at least three feet from the sideline and at the 50 yard line.

Before the game starts, line up your squad on the sideline and be ready to cheer. At halftime, if your squad has a routine, the visiting team will always perform first so make sure you communicate with the opposing teams' squad. Halftime performances are performed center field at the 50 yard line.

A break-through banner may be held up by the parents and cheerleaders for your football team when they enter the field at the beginning of the game. You can also wait until the end of the game to hold up your banner.

WHEN TO CHEER AND WHEN NOT TO CHEER

One of the main responsibilities of a cheerleader is to promote team spirit and good sportsmanship! Your goal should be to involve the fans in your enthusiasm, but it is also important to know when it is appropriate to cheer. As cheerleaders, your squad should be role models that lead the crowd in a positive way, show respect for the other team's players and fans, and always display proper cheer etiquette. Starting a cheer at an inappropriate time can be annoying and rude to players, and even cause the crowd to turn against you and become angered with cheerleaders.

When to cheer:

- ❖ When your team comes onto the field.
- ❖ When your team is playing, time-outs are called, and during half-time or quarters.

- ❖ When your team has made an exceptional play or drive. (It is also important to recognize an exceptional play by either team.)
- ❖ When a player is leaving or coming into the game
- ❖ When an injured player gets up.
- ❖ When your team is on the offense or defense. Pick an appropriate cheer.
- ❖ When the game is close in score.
- ❖ When your team scores.
- ❖ When it is half- time.
- ❖ When the other squad is performing during half-time, pay attention and applaud at the end of their routine. Whether they did an awesome job or not, it is important that you clap for them and tell them they did a GREAT JOB!

When not to cheer:

- ❖ Never cheer when a player on either team is hurt or injured. When a player on either team is injured, your squad should kneel down on one knee. There should be absolutely no talking or giggling during this time, and when the player rises, you should clap.
- ❖ When your team commits a foul against the other team or is penalized.
- ❖ When your team makes a mistake.
- ❖ When signals are being called by the players or football coaches. On occasion in a close game situation, the crowd can get very loud. Be aware of your football coach calling plays to the players. The players may not be able to hear their coach.
- ❖ When the coaches are in front of the cheerleading box calling out plays.
- ❖ When either team is in a huddle. Respect both teams.

Other Points to Remember

You should know the difference between when your team is offense or defense.

Cheerleaders are at the game to support the players; therefore, it is extremely important for the cheerleaders to know a little about the game. If you are not as familiar with football as you would like to be, ask a football team parent or father to help you. Always make sure to show tact if your team is ahead and act gracefully if they are behind. Cheerleading should be a positive experience. Set a good example. Always act with integrity, fairness and leadership qualities for which cheerleaders are known.

I acknowledge that I have received, read, understand and agree to abide by all of the information supplied to me in the 2016 YAFL New Coaches' Guide.

Signature

Circle One: Head Coach or Assistant Coach

Date

Print Name

Season

Team/Division

Stretching

Exercises



1. Neck Flexion/Extension Stretch
(forward, then back)



2. Neck Lateral Flexion Stretch
(one side, then the other)



3. Latissimus Dorsi and Posterior Deltoid Stretch
(link hands, push elbows together)



4. Triceps Stretch
(pull elbow across and down)



5. Shoulder Rotator Stretch
(using towel, pull up with the top arm, then down with the other)



6. Pectoral Stretch at 90° and 120°
(use a doorway or post)



7. Bicep Stretch
(hands apart)



8. Supraspinatus Stretch
(keep elbow parallel to ground)



9. Wrist Extensor Stretch
(tilt head to opposite side, keep elbow straight)



10. Thoracic Extension Stretch
(reach forward with arms, push chest towards floor, arch back down, backside behind knees)



11. Lateral Flexion Stretch
(one side, then the other, push pelvis across as you bend)



12. Lumbar Extension and Abdominal Stretch
(be gentle if sore)



13. Lumbar Flexion Stretch
(be gentle if sore)



14. Lumbar Rotation Stretch
(rotate legs one side, then the other side, draw in and brace stomach muscles at the same time, breathe)



15. Hamstring Stretch
(straighten leg)
i. with foot pointed
ii. with foot pulled back towards the knee



16. Hamstring Stretch
(commence with knee slightly bent, then push knee straight as tension allows, push chest towards foot)



17. Adductor Stretch
(push down with elbows on knees very gently, keep back straight)



18. Gluteal Stretch
(pull knee and lower leg towards opposite shoulder)



19. Gluteal and Lumbar Rotation Stretch
(keep pelvis on floor)



21. Quadriceps Stretch



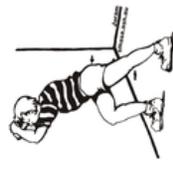
22. Adductor Stretch
(keep foot pointing forward, lunge sideways on bent knee, keep back straight)



23. Hip Flexor Stretch
(keep back straight, tuck bottom under, lunge forward on front leg)



24. Tensor Fascia Stretch
(continue to push bottom forward, whilst pushing hip to the side)



25. Gastrocnemius Stretch
(keep knee straight and heel down, feet facing forward)



Beginning Stance
Feet together, hands down by the side in blades



Clasp
Hands clasped, elbows in.



Low Touchdown
Arms extended straight down parallel to each other.



Bow and Arrow
One arm extended to side with other arm bent at elbow in a half "T" motion.



Touchdown
Arms extending straight and parallel to each other.



Overhead Clasp
Arms are straight, above the head in a clasp and slightly in front of the face.



Low "V"
Arms extending down forming "V"



Box Motion
Both arms up in a 90 degree angle, elbows at shoulder height.



Muscle Man
Both arms up a 90 degree angle from a "T" motion.



Side Lunge
Lead leg bent with knee over ankle, back leg straight, feet perpendicular to each other.



"L"
Left- Left arm extended to the left with the right arm extended in a punch motion.
Right- Right arm extended to the right with the left arm extended in a punch motion.



Diagonals
Right- Right arm extended in a high "V" and the left arm extended in a low "V"
Left- Left arm extended in a high "V" and the right arm extended in a low "V"



Punch
Right arm extended straight up, left arm on hip.



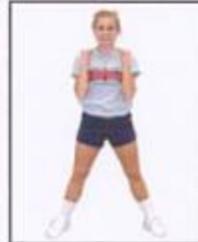
"T"
Both arms extended straight out to the side and parallel to the ground.



Half "T"
Both arms parallel to the ground and bent at the elbows, fist into shoulders.



Front Lunge
Lead leg bent with knee over head in a clasp and slightly in ankle, back leg straight, feet perpendicular to each other.



Tabletop
Arms bent at elbow, fists in front of shoulders.



High "V"
Arms extending up, forming a "V".

BASIC CHEERLEADING FORMATIONS for 10

A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



L



Jumps!



Spirit Tuck

*Bring knees to chest
*Keep knees together



Spread Eagle

*Keep knees forward
*Keep a straight body without piking



Double Hook

*Hook both legs same direction
*Keep shoulders square



Herkie

*Bent knee faces down
*Keep knee on straight leg facing upward



Toe Touch

*Keep head and chest up
*Pull legs to arms
*Reach for instep, not toes



Side Hurdler

*Bent knee faces crowd
*Sit in hurdler position in the air



Front Hurdler

*Bring straight leg up to chest
*Start with feet together at the same time



Double Nine

*Arm and legs in same T position
*Bring legs to arms
*Keep head up



Pike

*Keep head up
*Pull legs to arms
*Keep legs in arms

Team Building Games

by Pam Headridge

Team "bonding" is a very important process that will help to ensure a close-knit team. A strong cheer squad becomes one in purpose and desire, Encouragement is very important in team bonding. If team members try to motivate one another, everyone will try harder to accomplish team objectives. Teambuilding games are a fun way to develop cohesiveness. They tear down walls in communications, provide avenues that encourage discussion, and increase productivity. Team building takes time but the end results are well worth the extra time. It is an ongoing process that boosts commitment. Here are some games and exercises to do with your squad to build a unified group.

Relay Lock Race- Each person selects a partner. They stand back to back and lock arms by the elbows while holding their own stomach with their hands. The coach gives the instruction to get from one side of the gym to the other. Don't give them specific instructions on how to get to the finish line other than they can't let go of their stomachs. This causes creativity and laughter.

Shoe Game – Have everyone take off their shoes and put them in a pile in the middle of the room. Mix the shoes up. Divide the cheerleaders into 2 groups. See which group can find their shoes and put them on first. When they have their shoes on the team done first must sit on the floor.

Truths and a Lie - Each team member writes 2 true facts and one lie on a card. The coach collects the cards and reads them aloud. The rest of the squad tries to guess who it is and which fact is the lie.

Sculpting - Give your squad different supplies such as newspaper, scissors, construction paper, glitter, straws, tape, string, etc. and tell them to create a sculpture that represents their school's spirit. Have them explain the significance. If the school's spirit is low, use this opportunity to discuss how they can improve their school's spirit.

Trust Fall- Cheerleaders sit in a close circle with their legs straight and arms out. One cheerleader stands in the center of the circle. She should have everyone's feet around her ankles. The girl in the center squeezes all her muscles and is very tight. She falls to the side and the other cheerleaders catch her and push her back and forth in the circle. Let all members be the one in the center.

To Be Or Knot To Be – You need an even number of students, ideally no larger than twelve. Form a circle facing each other (the difficulty of the activity increases, the greater the number of students in the group). Students close their eyes and reach across the circle with their right hand to grasp the right hand of another student. They should pretend that they are shaking hands - but hold on! With eyes open, have each student reach across the circle with their left hand and grasp the left hand of a different student. No student should be holding both hands of the same person. Now, without letting go, have the students untangle themselves. The result should be a circle of intertwined circles, or one large circle.

Cheerleader Tic-Tac-Toe- You need nine chairs set up in three rows. Divide the squad into X's and O's. Just like in regular tic-tac-toe, the X's and O's alternate, except they sit in the chairs instead of drawing it out on paper. Ask questions about the rules of football, basketball or any sport. The cheerleaders must raise her hand to answer. If she is right, then she sits in one of the chairs. The first team to get three in a row, diagonally, vertically or horizontally, wins.

Ball of String - While standing in a circle; pass a ball of string from one member to another. The rules are only the person with the string can talk. After everyone has had their turn to speak and share their feelings, there will be a web of string. This web illustrates the interconnected nature of group process. Everything they do and say affects the team. Now toss a balloon in the middle and have them try to keep it. They are not allowed to touch it. This symbolizes "teamwork".

Back to Back- Divide into partners with one person left over in the middle. You need one person to be the "caller". The call will yell directions telling the partners to line up "back to back", "foot to foot", "elbow to elbow", "shoulder to shoulder" and so on. When the caller yells "people to people", everyone must find a new partner. The one left over is now in the middle. This is a form of people musical chairs.

Line Up - Divide the group into 2. Each team will compete against each other to see who can get the challenge done faster. Challenges could be" line up according to birthdays, alphabetically by first name or last name, age, etc. Try the same challenges without talking.

Machinery - Divide the group into teams (3 or more teams). Assign each group to build a certain machine with their own bodies such as a toaster, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, lawn mower, television, etc. Give them time to work it out. Then they build the machine and the other teams guess what it is.

Self-Disclosure Introductions (this is great for new teams) - Ask each team member to state her name and attach an adjective that not only describes a dominant characteristic but also starts with the person's first name. Examples: Serious Susie, Nice Natalie, and Loving Lauren.

Amnesia Game - A participant is identified as suffering from amnesia. That person needs to pretend not to know anything about the past. The rest of the group tells some things that help the amnesia victim to remember and to become the same person as before. The amnesia person can ask questions to gain more insight. Some questions could be "What would I do in a certain case", "What is my favorite saying"

P E E R -O - Make up bingo cards with nothing in the squares. Hand out one to each cheerleader. Every person has a cheerleader sign in a square. Each person can only sign a cheerleader's card once unless you do not have enough cheerleaders to fill all the squares of one bingo card. You want to have a different name in each block. Put all the names in a container. The coach draws out a name and that cheerleader must stand up and tell something about himself or herself. The rest of the cheerleaders block out the name. The first cheerleader to get "bingo" or "peer-o" wins.

Name Crostics - Give a piece of paper to every cheerleader and ask them to write their name in the middle of the paper about a half an inch high. When given the signal, the cheerleaders should move around the room, attaching their names to their name if the letters fit (like a crossword puzzle). The person who is able to attach the most names is the winner.

Human Scavenger Hunt - Divide your cheerleaders into teams. Give each team a list of questions to answer. The first team to finish, wins. Examples of questions are
Name 2 people on the cheer squad who has the same first and last initial.
Name a group of people on the squad whose ages add up to 46.
Who is the person on the squad that lives closest to the high school?
Name group of three people who all have different colored eyes.
Name 2 people who have a birthday in the same month.
When is the coach's birthday?
When is the AD's birthday?

All Aboard -Take a large sheet and spread it on the floor. Have all the students stand on the sheet together. Once they have done this fold the sheet to make it smaller. Again, have all the students get on the sheet. Continue this process. Eventually, the sheet will be so small that the students will need to use a great deal of cooperation, teamwork, and ingenuity to get the whole class on the sheet without anyone falling out/off the sheet.

Team Talk - Communication is another key to team unity. Part of communicating is getting to know your teammates, their opinions, concerns and aspirations for the team. Here is a great list of topics to use for learning about each other. Sit in a circle and have a leader ask a question. Allow each team member to answer the question until everyone has participated. Then continue with the next question.
When did you first know that you wanted to try out for this team?
What do your parents say about you being on the team?
Veteran members: What past team member did you most respect and why?
New team members: What do you think your most important job is as a first year member?
What is one or two words that students in your school use to describe your team? What words do you want them to use?
What do you think you'll remember about your team 10 years from now?
Veteran members: What one piece of advice would you give to the new members if they want to have the most positive team experience?
New members: What help or encouragement do you need from the veterans to be a successful team member?
What one thing can you do consistently to show your dedication to the team?

Minefield - Have group discuss things that are detrimental to functioning as a group. For each characteristic/action, throw an object into the playing space, the "minefield." Have group choose partners. One partner is blindfolded at one end of field. The non-blindfolded partners stand at the opposite end of the field and try to talk their partners through the minefield without running into any of the obstacles.

Human Dragon - Divide your team into 4 teams of 6-8 individuals. You can have odd numbers or vary the length of the "dragon" depending on the skill, size and ability of your athletes. Each team designates the "head" person and the "tail" section of the Human Dragon. All other team members fill in behind the head of the dragon by holding on to the person in front of them at the waist. The goal of the activity is to have the head of each dragon attempt to tag the tail of any other dragon team. Only heads of the dragon can do the tagging because all other team members must remain connected (with two hands) to their teammates. Players attempt to avoid having their team's tail be tagged and skillfully attempt to shield their tail from other dragons on the prowl.

Create A Monster- Make a monster that walks with both hands and feet on the ground. The monster must have one less arm than the number on the squad and one more foot. Once the monster is created, it has to move five feet and make a sound.

Encouragement- Have a piece of paper for every team member on the squad with one name on each page. The team sits in a circle. Everyone has 30 seconds to write one positive thing on each team member's sheet (30 seconds per sheet, then pass them). At the end, each girl goes home with a sheet with many encouraging

statements. A variation of this game is to have each team member have her own paper taped to her back.

Toxic River- Everyone is on one side. You measure a space about 5 feet and call it a toxic river. You want the whole squad to cross as fast as they can. They aren't allowed to cross the toxic river without special pair of boots and there is only one pair of boots. Each person can use the boots only once. The boots cannot be tossed over the river. Each person has to personally give the boots to the next person and if they touch the toxic waste without the boots, the team must start over. Hint: Carrying people over is the key.

Human Letters -Divide the squad into groups of 4 to 5 people. The coach calls out a letter. Each group has to spell out the letter on the ground with their bodies. The group to get the letter the fastest, or the most accurate, wins. Keep score.

Rock-Paper-Scissors Tag – Form two groups. During each turn, a team must decide whether they are “rock, paper, or scissors”. The teams face each other, and on the count of three shows either rock, paper, scissors. The one who wins chases the other team. If the chased team member gets caught before they reach a designated home base, she becomes part of the other team.

Pass the Body – Every lies on the floor in one straight line with heads together with legs and body extending out to the side. They extend their arms up and a person will lie on top of the hands. Group passes the body down the line.

Bonding Quotes - Assign different cheerleaders to bring in bonding quote or word for each week. At the end of each practice, have each cheerleader explain how she applied that quote or word to practice.

Samples:

All the talent in the world doesn't mean a thing without your teammates

The only place success comes before work is in the dictionary.

You have no control over what the other guy does. You only have control over what you do.

The best inspiration is not to outdo others, but to outdo ourselves.

Think big, believe big, act big, and the results will be big"