



Thumb Area Football League

Cheerleading Coaches Handbook

This handbook includes the responsibilities and obligations of all cheer coaches of the Thumb Area Football League (TAFI). It is the responsibility of each cheer directory & coach to read the information in this guide thoroughly and abide by its policies.

Cheer Philosophy

The Thumb Area Football League has offered cheerleading since 2005. We have achieved our goal to enhance the local community youth football teams by adding a strong and supportive cheerleading program which in turn gives the “complete” football experience.

Introducing cheerleading at an early age encourages our youth to learn not only the basic fundamentals of cheerleading and teamwork, but also discipline, cooperation and sportsmanship.

The TAFL will provide every athlete an environment in which a child can achieve athletic success which in turn lays a foundation of success in life as well. Success is only achieved when 100% of effort is given to the team from our coaches and our athletes in all practices & performances.

Coaches Responsibility

TAFL seeks positive coaches that will teach life skills and values through the sport of cheer. Through each coaches dedication and discipline, they will pass on those same qualities to the cheerleaders they instruct.

Coaches must educate themselves in the sport of cheerleading to be able to communicate confidently to athletes, parents and the public. It is expected that each coach has the most up to date knowledge of the skills they are teaching. Personal appearance, dress and conduct should always be exemplary.

Every TAFL coach is a role model and leader to its parents, athletes and community. You must strive to assist each athlete to achieve their personal best. The top priority to be taught is **sportsmanship**, win or lose. To gain respect, respect must be given with fairness and unprejudiced to all athletes, parents and community members.

Each coach is responsible for the supervision of every athlete at all times.

As a coach of TAFL your professionalism and position will be under constant watch. Your actions and/ or statements should always reflect confidence and respect for TAFL.

DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

Discipline must be maintained fairly and with consistence. Use Discipline on a case by case basis. NO violent/abusive behavior physical or verbal will be tolerated by any athlete or coach.

Should disciplinary infractions occur the following guidelines should be used:

- ✓ No physical discipline is allowed
- ✓ 1st offense will result in 10 minute sit out of practice
- ✓ 2nd offense of any kind 20 minutes out of practice
- ✓ 3rd offense of any kind athlete will be sat of practice entire & a meeting with parents will be set up

ABSENCE POLICIES

(These rules apply to all games/performances and practices for athletes)

Excused absences include:

(To obtain and excused Absence you must pre-request approval from your athletes cheer coach. This should be done in writing, but may require verbal confirmation.)

- A. Illness to a team member and/or immediate family member, which require travel and/or attention.
- B. Death in the immediate family and or funeral.
- C. Required school obligation (ex: School play, band concert, science fair, etc.)
- D. Extracurricular activities such as other sports or clubs, etc. are not discouraged, but come under strict scrutiny when they conflict with practices, performances or games. We will make every attempt to work with a cheer team member on this issue, with the understanding that we must balance the cheer team's needs and goals with any absences. The cheer team member must understand that, in many cases, there will be a conflict that will inevitably lead to a difficult choice between the activity and continuing as a participant in this program.
- E. Important family events and or vacations, when appropriate. (Please take into consideration competitions, performances, and practice when scheduling family-related activities).
- F. Preplanned doctor/dentist appointments
- G. Injured team members **must be at practice** even if they are unable to participate.
- H. Injured team members are required to supply a written Doctor's Note outlining the nature of the injury and the steps for rehabilitation and the time frame necessary for proper rehabilitation. Practices can be modified on an individual basis to promote the proper rehabilitation procedure outlined by a doctor.
- I. **No** athlete will be allowed back to practice without a doctor's written release.
 - i. Any medication prescribed for illness or injury must be taken into consideration of the practice and performance environment. Your doctor must communicate any medication that potentially hinders athletic performance, as it pertains to this activity, to the coaching staff in writing.
- J. Team members exhibiting illness due to fever, vomiting and/or contagious ailments must stay home.

Examples of unexcused absences include:

(Unexcused Absences are given two warnings throughout the year. The third offense will result in meeting with the community league director and parents of the athlete.)

- A. Absences not called in with in 24 hours that are due to illness or emergency and could not merit a pre requested excused absence.
- B. Any absence not given to a coach in writing or verbally confirmed with in 7 days of absence. All absence requests must be approved to be considered excused.
- C. When an athlete does not attend practice after an injury
- D. Removal from practice for inappropriate attire or non removal of piercing
- E. Late arrival to practice, performance or game with out prior notice to coach

ALL UNEXCUSED ABSENCES OR TARDINESS WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION TO BE TAKEN AS STATED ABOVE!!

TEAM MEMBERSHIP

1. Each community director will decide how teams are designated.
2. Schedules need to be approved by the TAFL Cheerleading Director. Schedule dates may need to be revised if scheduling conflicts occur.
3. Teams can be divided by age or divisions.
4. There will be a maximum of 24 members to a team. For every team over 12 members there should be an assistant coach added for supervision and instruction.

PRACTICE AREAS

1. Surface need to be safe and/ or padded. Surfaces allowed: gym floors, mats, grass, etc.) Surfaces not allowed: concrete, driveways, gravel, etc)
2. Space must allow for physical conditioning and stunting; if stunting adequate ceiling height is required.

STUNTING & SKILLS

PROHIBITED STUNTS

Any stunt that leaves the central axis of its bases (ex: shoot through, star outs)

Suspended Rolls

Basket Tosses of any kind

Single Base: Extension/One Legged Extension

Any Flair to cradle from extended level

Single Twist cradle from extended level

Double Twist cradle

PROHIBITED SKILLS

Shush nova

Drops (all skills performed must land supported by hands or feet first)

Dive Rolls

Stunting safety Guidelines

- ❖ All athletes must be supervised during all official functions by a qualified director/coach.
- ❖ Coaches must require proficiency before skill progression. Coaches must consider the athlete, group, and team skill levels with regard to proper performance level placement.
- ❖ All stunts and skills must be taught in proper sequence. Cheerleaders must master a stunt/skill in practice before they can perform it at a game or competition.
- ❖ Novice stunts/skills should be mastered prior to attempting intermediate level and intermediate level mastered prior to advanced level skills.
- ❖ All teams, gyms, coaches and directors must have an emergency response plan in the event of an injury or medical emergency.
- ❖ Athletes and coaches may not be under the influence of over-the-counter or prescribed medications while participating in a practice or performance that would hinder the ability to execute a skill or routine safely.
- ❖ No athlete should perform if they have suffered an injury that has been directed by a doctor not to participate. Athlete should only be allowed to returned to activity when a doctor's note is present releasing that athlete
- ❖ Athletes must always practice and perform on an appropriate surface
- ❖ Jewelry of any kind including but not limited to ear, nose, tongue, belly button and facial rings, clear plastic Jewelry, bracelets, necklaces and pins on uniforms are not allowed. (Exception: medical ID tags/bracelets, and uniform rhinestones. Rhinestones are not allowed when adhered to the skin as opposed to a uniform. Temporary tattoos are also allowed.)
- ❖ No candy or gum chewing at any time

Spotting Position & Technique

Back Spot

*Responsible for back of stunt and head and neck of the flyer

*Assisting support to flyer

*Must stay in contact with flyer at all times

*Keeps all eyes on flyer at all times

*Be prepared for the unexpected

*Be aware of flyers body positions at all times and flyer's correct alignment

*NEVER STAND UNDER THE STUNT

*Proper spotting techniques should be taught and used in new and experienced stunting

ALL STUNTS REQUIRE A SPOTTER!!

FRONT SPOT

- *If using a front spot ~ they are responsible for the front of the stunt area
- *Support all stunts from bases wrist area. Help lift and keep balance.
- *Be aware of flyers body positions at all times and flyer's correct alignment
- *NEVER STAND UNDER THE STUNT

EXTRA SPOTTERS

- *Use whenever learning new skills or stunts. When using new bases, spots or flyers for any skill or stunt
- *Position extra spotters in the back and front "QUARTERS" of the stunt (those are the 4 outer corners of the stunt between all the stunt positions)
- *Hands should be up and ready for the unexpected
- *DO NOT STEP INTO THE WAY OF A SPOT OR BASE ~ only assist stunt group if needed to catch flyer

TEAM LEVELS

**** ALL JUMPS ALLOWED FOR ALL LEVELS**

NOVICE

- May perform two legged shoulder (elevator) level stunts
- No one legged stunts allowed at this level
- Pyramid main flyer may perform extension. Main flyer must be braced arm to arm by 2 shoulder level stunts on each side.
- May perform straight ride cradle
- SKILLS ALLOWED: Forward Roll, Backward Roll, Cartwheel, Handstand

INTERMEDIATE

- May perform extended level two legged stunts
- May perform one legged stunts below elevator level
- Pyramids main flyer may perform shoulder level one legged stunt. Main flyer must be braced arm to arm by 2 shoulder level stunts on each side.
- May perform log roll release move
- SKILLS ALLOWED: front limber, front & back walkover, round off, single backhand spring (running and standing)

ADVANCED

- May perform ½ twist load ins to two legged stunt (elevator or extension level)
- May perform 1 one legged stunt at elevator level
- May perform single twist cradle from elevator level stunts
- May perform reload and retake release move transitions
- Pyramid main flyer may perform extended one legged stunt. Main flyer must be braced arm to arm by 2 shoulder level stunts on each side.
- SKILLS ALLOWED: multiple back handspring and round off backhand spring and tucks.