



Cheerleading Ideas & Suggestions

The guidelines set forth in these notes are basic ideas and fundamentals which should assist you in your cheerleading coaching experience. Please do not expect your girls to be able to perform as if they are college or even high school cheerleaders. If they can convey a positive attitude directed toward team spirit and sportsmanship, we will have accomplished our goals.

Cheerleading is a sport based upon the idea of leading and organizing your crowd in cheers and chants. Cheers that are traditional or simpler in nature lend themselves to greater crowd response and participation due to their ease of understanding. Seventy-five percent of a cheerleading squad's time on the field should be spent creating support for their team. This action will involve the use of sidelines and chants along with the help of a few traditional cheers in which the crowd can participate. The other twenty-five percent of the time should be spent entertaining the crowd through more difficult and acrobatic cheers. This tactic will be most appropriate during time outs, quarter breaks, pre-game, and halftime.

When cheering for football, the field is very large and the play moves up and down the field, sometimes at a turtle's pace. At certain times during the game, you will be cheering at one end of the field while the teams are playing at the other end, rendering your squad ineffective. During these instances, if you have a large squad, splitting the squad in half and taking one half to where the action is proves to be very aggressive and motivational.

The crowd will sometimes help you out during highly emotional periods and start up very positive cheers that you will join in and yell. However, be aware of any negative cheers that are started. If you hear one beginning, you should start your most traditional and crowd-pleasing chants in order to help drown out the crowd's negative cheer. This is a very important part of controlling your crowd since a cheerleader's main job entails the promotion of sportsmanship and team spirit.

Sportsmanship is the ability to accept defeat without complaint, victory without bragging, and to treat your opponents with fairness and courtesy. "It's how you play the game that counts, not whether you win or lose."

Remember, SPORTSMANSHIP is contagious. If the cheerleaders encourage it, the fans will quickly pick it up and respond in the same way.

Before the game

If you are the home team, welcome the visiting cheerleaders and coordinate the cheering. Decide who is to have the first yell at the quarters.

- **Example:** Visitors have the 1st and 3rd quarters while home has 2nd and 4th quarters. Pre-game is also an opportune time to use your cheerleading squad's introduction yell.

During the game

Your cheers should always "build up" your team. Do not try to drown out the signals of the quarterbacks, and never lead a yell when either team is in a huddle. Give a short or one-word yell as your team leaves the huddle, and then maintain silence.

What if an opponent is injured

If an opponent becomes injured, give him a round of applause. Show admiration for the way he/she played, not for the fact that he/she must leave the game.

- **Tip:** Wait until the player is on his feet to begin yelling. If you do not know his name, cheer for him by number.

Halftime

Go over and lead a yell for your opponent's cheering section, and they in turn can lead one for your audience.

Please view an athletic contest as something that is supposed to be fun and not as a matter of life and death. Win or lose, you and the people on the other side of the field should still be on friendly terms after the game. If you are not, you are taking the game too seriously. Do not ridicule anything or anyone, but learn to recognize a good-natured, competitive spirit.

The purpose of cheerleading is not to "steal the show" from the team, but rather to keep your team's supporters alert, responsive, and in good humor.

You cannot make the fans yell. They go to the games because they want to encourage their team. However, unorganized yelling is not as effective as well-planned cheers. You don't have to make the fans yell, but just direct them in what to say and when.

Follow the game and relate your cheers to the action. For longer yells, announce the cheers a play early. Cheers should be fast enough to be peppy, but slow enough so words are understood and not jumbled together.

Motions

Motions are a very important part of a cheerleader's repertoire. When properly choreographed and precisely performed, motions will help your squad work with and lead the crowd more effectively. Consider using the following motions to enhance your squad's performance:

Hand Motions

- Buckets - (most popular) - fist, palm down
- Candlesticks - fist, palm to the front
- Blades - open hand with fingers in line and close together

Jumps

Jumps have been associated with cheerleading since its earliest beginnings. Through the 60's and 70's, jumps became very elaborate using a long-winded approach with various body positions. Jumps used today have become much more concise using a small prep with emphasis on height and extension. Jumps may be categorized as follows:

- Tuck Jump (most basic) - using a small prep, you would then jump and pull your knees into a tuck position with arms up or in a "V" motion.
- Spread Eagle - spread your feet as far apart as possible keeping your legs straight; you want to bring a point to your toes and face your knees to the front.
- Herkie - after you leave the ground, extend one leg out to the front and slightly to the side, the other leg should be bent and pulled to the side of the body; arms may hit any motion desired.
- Toe Touch - once you are in the air, spread your feet apart as far as you can keeping your legs straight with your knees facing upward; arms will usually hit a "T" position.

Kicks

Kicks are just as important as jumps to the extent they convey motivation and excitement. If some of your cheerleaders have a problem getting their jumps off the ground, you might emphasize the use of kicks instead. When performing a kick, the arms can be placed into a high "V" motion for punctuation.

Kids, Incorporated thanks you for your time, efforts and participation.