

Pike Area Youth Athletic League (PAYAL) Cheerleading Rules & Regulations

- I. Coaches
 - A. Before any volunteer can coach, he/she must meet the PA Act 153 Clearance requirements, complete the approved “USA Cheer- Coaching Young Athletes” certification and submit a coaching biography (All Head and Assistant Coaches).
 - B. All coaches must also complete an approved concussion course, “USA Cheer-CrashCourse Concussion Training”.
 - C. It is each coach’s responsibility to follow and uphold all of the rules, regulations and bylaws set forth. Failure to do so may result in suspension or removal from any and all coaching duties.
 - D. Coaches are expected to fulfill all the duties and responsibilities set forth by the PAYAL Board. This includes attending all clinics, practices, games and other PAYAL functions connected with coaching. A coach who fails to fulfill these responsibilities (i.e., excessive absences) may face disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the PAYAL Board.
- II. Sportsmanship
 - A. All participants, including coaches and parents, should conduct themselves in a respectful manner.
 - B. All cheerleaders should show respect for themselves, their teammates, their opponents, the coaches on both sides, and for the referees, judges, and other officials.
- III. Age Requirements (Football Cheer ONLY)
 - A. Flag (Pee Wee): 4, 5, 6 or 7 years old.
 - B. Juniors: 7, 8, 9 or 10 years old.
 - C. Seniors: 10, 11 or 12 years old; If a participant turns 13 years old after the season begins and is not on a school team, he/she may participate.
- IV. General Rules
 - A. PAYAL Cheerleading will follow “USA Cheer Youth Rec Sideline Rules” and USA Cheer/NFHS safety guidelines.
 - B. Since there is no national standard set for youth recreational cheerleading, PAYAL may decide to modify the safety guidelines set forth through UCA Cheer and/or the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). These modifications must be approved by the PAYAL Board.
- V. Cheers/Stunting/Tumbling/Dance
 - A. Cheers
 1. All cheers/sidelines must be approved by the Cheer Coordinator/Commissioner and/or the PAYAL Board.
 2. Any cheer/sideline not approved may not be performed.
 3. Any motions that may be construed as sexual or explicit in nature are not permitted.
 - B. Stunting
 1. Before a squad/team is permitted to stunt, all coaches from that squad must attend a clinic where he/she will learn/review safety rules, proper

spotting technique and stunt progressions. A clinic will be held at least once a year, either during the preseason or at the beginning of the season.

2. If a coach does not attend this clinic, the squad may not perform any stunts during the season.
3. No basket tosses of any kind are permitted.

C. Tumbling

1. Participants should not try new tumbling without proper spotting by a coach (spotting for tumbling will be taught at the coaches clinic).
2. It is the coach's responsibility to evaluate a participant's ability to complete a tumbling/gymnastics skill. Proper progression through skills should be completed before a participant is allowed to attempt a new element.

D. Dance

1. All music must be approved by the Cheer Coordinator/Commissioner and/or the PAYAL Board.
2. Any motions that may be construed as sexual or explicit in nature are not permitted.

- E. Miscellaneous- No props (except pom poms, signs and megaphones) are to be used. This restriction includes mini trampolines and spring boards. Glitter may be used on signs only if laminated or sealed.

VI. Practices

A. Attire

1. Cheerleaders must come to practice in appropriate athletic wear. This includes, but is not limited to, a t-shirt or tank top, shorts or athletic pants and cheer sneakers (NO SANDALS or FLIP FLOPS). Cheerleaders should not wear jeans, dresses or any other clothing with buckles, belts, hoods or zippers. If a cheerleader comes to practice in clothing or shoes which create a safety issue, he/she will NOT be able to participate in practice.
2. No jewelry is allowed, except medical or religious tags/medallions. Any and all body piercings must be removed, including earrings. This is especially important if a squad is stunting.
3. Hair must be pulled back away from the face and up off the neck/shoulders.
4. Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept short, near the end of the fingers.
5. Glitter that does not adhere to the hair, face or body is not permitted.

B. Attendance

1. All cheerleaders must attend practices prior to cheering in a game.
2. All cheerleaders should have sufficient knowledge of material in order to cheer at games ("Game Ready").
3. Each cheerleader must attend a minimum of one half of the practice sessions or they are ineligible to participate in their next scheduled game.

Cheerleader eligibility due to practice attendance and/or participation will be determined at the discretion of the head coach.

VII. Games

A. Attire

1. All cheerleaders must wear the approved uniform for every game (shell/top, skirt, crop/bodysuit, briefs, socks, cheer sneakers & bow).
2. Each coach will decide what appropriate cold weather apparel may be worn by the squad (leggings, sweatpants, jackets, sweatshirts- NO HOODS). Each squad must look uniform in their appearance.
3. Hair must be pulled back away from the face and up off the neck/shoulders.
4. Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept short, near the end of the fingers.
5. Glitter that does not adhere to the hair, face or body is not permitted.

B. Attendance

1. All cheerleaders are expected to attend and cheer at EVERY game, regardless of the weather. PAYAL cheerleaders will cheer in rain and snow. If football is being played, cheerleaders will be cheering. If a squad does not cheer for a game, disciplinary action may be taken against the coach, as deemed appropriate by the Cheer Commissioner and the PAYAL Board.
2. A cheerleader's absence from a game, except for sudden illness, must be approved by the coach in advance of the game.
3. Absence from a game without a coach's prior knowledge may result in suspension from the squad.

C. Halftime Routine

1. All squads must perform a halftime routine. Routine and music must be approved by the Cheer Commissioner. At least a portion of the halftime routine must be performed by the third game of the season.
2. Routines for all divisions are limited to 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Routines should consist of a dance and a cheer. Visiting team performs first.

D. Game Breaks

1. Cheerleaders may not be allowed to leave the sideline during a game unless it is an emergency and a coach has given permission. This includes leaving to go to the bathroom.
2. Halftime breaks are allowed once all of the squads have performed their halftime routines. Cheerleaders MUST return to the sideline, READY TO CHEER, before the end of the half. If a cheerleader is not ready to cheer at the beginning of the 3rd quarter, he/she may be required to sit and not participate for a period of time deemed appropriate by the coach. Cheerleaders will be cheering when the game resumes after halftime.
3. Cheerleaders may not eat on the sideline during the game, including candy and chewing gum.

- VIII. Competition Cheerleading (See also "PAYAL Competition Cheerleading Constitution")
- A. A cheerleader must be an active participant during the regular, recreation season in order to try out for competition cheerleading.
 - B. Tryouts for competition squad will be held each year. Participation the previous year does not guarantee a position on the current year's roster. Each cheerleader will be evaluated on set criteria.
 - C. Competition squads will be determined by age according to UCA guidelines.