

# Texas AllStar Cheer & Dance Policies & Procedures

## Tradition & Sportsmanship

TAC's traditional cheer is "Taken by force, the storm has begun, National Champs there can be only one, TEXAS." All of our TAC family takes pride and joins in our cheer when the various TAC Teams perform. Another TAC traditional chat is "perfection is attainable, but first you must believe!" TAC stresses this attitude with all of its students. Before going on the floor to compete or at the end of each practice, TAC students repeat the chat.

### **Behavior**

Sportsmanship and team unity are very important to our organization. Please be courteous and considerate to all teams and athletes. This includes other all-star programs and other TAC teams.

Please don't speak negatively about any person, decision, or result. This includes "cheering" or showing excitement for other teams' mistakes as well as posts on the Internet and message boards! We, at TAC, strive to teach our students respect and good sportsmanship.

Please note that profanity, abusive language, and inappropriate photos or behavior are not allowed. This includes the Internet, emails, Facebook pages, etc. Even away from the gym, any inappropriate behavior by our students or parents can have a negative impact upon our gym, TAC family, students and TAC's reputation. Therefore, anyone who behaves in an inappropriate manner (in or out of the gym) may be asked to leave our program.

## How teams are selected

### **Age Divisions**

With the tremendous growth of all-star cheerleading over the last 2 decades, there arose a need for the industry to adopt standard divisions and levels. Prior to this, different competitions had all different regulations for how teams were to be divided and different rules for stunting and tumbling. Coaches would have to change the routines from week to week just to meet the various requirements of the competition they were going to attend that weekend.

The United States All-Star Federation (USASF) was created to help standardize the industry. The USASF took ideas from industry leaders from the competition companies (NCA, UCA, ACA, CheerSport, etc) and from respected all-star gym owners and came up with a logical system of determining the various divisions and levels. These standards have been adopted by the vast majority of competitions.

Teams are typically broken down in 4 different ways: age, level, total number of athletes, and number of males. All the all-star divisions are now determined purely by age. What grade you are in (or even if you are still in school) has absolutely no bearing on eligibility. To avoid an athlete's eligibility changing during the year, there is a cutoff date. How old you are on AUGUST 31 will determine your "competition age" for that entire season. In other words, if you are 14 on August 31, you compete as a "14 year old" for that entire season, even if you turn 15 on September 1.

### **Levels**

There are currently 6 competition levels. The "level" refers to the type and difficulty of stunts, pyramids, tosses, and tumbling that a team is allowed to perform in their competition routine. They are numbered from 1 to 6, in increasing difficulty. (Level 6 is rarely used and is exclusive to older students, college-aged athletes and beyond. For all practical purposes, Level 5 represents the highest difficulty level in which most gyms will field teams.) The level is determined solely by the coaching staff.

There has been a steady upward trend within the levels over the past few years. The best teams at every level are MUCH stronger now than they used to be. A team that would have easily won a Level 4 division a couple of years ago could be below average at that level now. To achieve high scores, the vast majority of

the athletes on a team must be able to do all the hardest skills allowed at their level with great technique. This essentially means that the standards for determining when an athlete will move “up” a level are much higher than they have been in the past.

### ***Size of Team & Number of Males***

Teams are also divided, at some age levels and divisions, by the number of athletes on the team. Typically, 20 or fewer athletes are a “small” team and 21-36 is a “large” team. Also, at some age or ability levels, there are further divisions between teams based upon how many males are on the team. At the senior age level, typically 1-4 males are “small” coed, 5-12 or more is “semi-limited” coed, and 13+ is “large”. At the junior age level, 1 or more males would be “coed”. At youth age and below (and at Level 2 and below), there is no distinction made for gender. At some competitions, depending on the number of teams competing at the event, some divisions may be combined together. There are strict guidelines put forth by the USASF which dictate when and how these divisions may be combined.

### ***Roster Selection***

Rosters for our TAC teams are designed, as best we can, to give each team an equal chance for success within their division. Much like other sports, a variety of skills, abilities, and even body types are necessary to give teams the best opportunity to place highly at competitions. We try to match up the athletes as best as we can, but please remember that maturity, physical stature, stunting, pyramids, jumps, dance, motions, and age are huge factors as well. It is simply not feasible (or desirable) for every team to have exactly matched identical athletes. Some will be stronger tumblers than others. Some will help us out with stunts more than others. Every athlete is on a team for a reason - please trust the staff. This season we are working harder than ever to push every athlete to improve their skills, even if it means working on skills that are above what is allowed in routines at their team’s current level.

The most common confusion or misconception from parents and athletes relates to tumbling ability. Proper technique is more crucial now than ever to achieve high scores. Simply being able to complete a skill without falling is no longer the standard. You must perform the trick with perfection or nearly perfect form and be able to do it consistently, on a spring floor, under pressure, in nearly any scenario. Many athletes and parents greatly overestimate the ability and form of the athlete against this standard. A parent’s version of “my child has a layout” can often be dramatically different from the coaching staff’s and this can lead to confusion about team placement.

The second most common confusion comes from dramatically overestimating the importance of tumbling compared to other factors. As mentioned already, there are many factors that go into determining the best spot for an athlete, not just how well they can tumble.

Please note that no athlete has an absolute guarantee of a roster spot on a particular team. The coaching staff reserves the right, at any time, without notice, to change the rosters of the teams by adding, rearranging, or removing athletes to or from teams for a performance or a practice. However, we attempt to make roster changes as infrequent and with as much warning as possible. Athletes may be removed from our program at any time for reasons which may include but are not limited to: attitude problems, absences and/or tardies, talent level, lack of improvement, lack of financial responsibility, fitness level of an athlete, and personality conflicts between athletes, coaches, parents, or anyone else involved in our program. There will be no refunds of tuition given after removal from a team.

Please also note that no athlete has a right to any particular role or location in a routine. Coaches change formations and stunt groups for a variety of reasons, many of which have nothing to do with the relative ability of the athletes in question. Many times the flow of choreography or formations dictate the need for changes to be made. While you are always free to ask the coaches (at appropriate times) to explain any of their decisions, making demands or threats regarding placement in routines are never successful and may result in the immediate dismissal of the athlete from the program.

## **Facility / Practices**

### ***Gym Rules***

Please be extremely careful in the parking lot. Drive very slowly and carefully as there are children and lots of activity in and around the area. Please avoid stopping anywhere other than an actual parking space for lengthy periods of time. Please do not block traffic or park in the fire lane.

Please do not bring any valuables to the facility. TAC is not responsible for any theft or damage to personal property or unattended items.

No food or drink may be brought in from the outside! All trash should be placed in receptacles provided. All food or drink bought from the vending machines must remain in the viewing area. Parties or special events require advance permission from the staff. Please do not bring cupcakes, ice cream, etc. as "special treats" into the gym without first running it by a coach. Please try to avoid bringing outside trash from your car to put in our trash cans. We want to keep the facility as clean as possible. If you feel that the restrooms or any other area of the facility needs attention, please notify one of the coaches. Athletes should not chew gum or wear any jewelry.

### **Viewing Area**

All parents should remain in the viewing area during practices. Please refrain from "coaching" or otherwise distracting athletes or coaches during practices. If parents wish to bring younger siblings to watch, please make sure they are under your constant supervision and are not being excessively noisy or distracting to other spectators or anyone in the gym.

Except for rare exceptions, only athletes and coaches are allowed past the viewing area. For the safety of everyone involved, please remain in the viewing area and do NOT allow small children to play anywhere on or beyond the viewing area. Small children waiting in the viewing area must be within arm's reach of their parent or guardian.

Parents who are excessively negative, derogatory, loud, overbearing, or distracting may be asked to leave the gym. We at TAC know that most parents just want to enjoy watching their children. If you have a problem or concern, please speak to one of the coaches. Complaining to other parents cannot solve your problem, nor can we **solve them if we do not know about them**. If you respect us enough to allow us to play a large role in your child's life, please respect us enough to know that we have your child's best interest at heart. Decisions that are made in regards to your child's training, level and team are made in what we feel will best help your child be successful. TAC reserves the right to close the viewing area at any time. We will typically close the viewing area as we get closer to our major competitions. This provides a quieter, more focused atmosphere for practices.

### **Practices**

Practices are incredibly important and will be where our students learn new skills and their competitive routines. While we try to give as much notice as possible of any practice schedule changes, practices may be added or canceled at any time.

It is your responsibility to wear the appropriate practice wear to every practice. Athletes in incorrect clothing / colors make it much more difficult for the coaches to visually evaluate choreography, formations, and other skills. Any additional clothing items (sweats, long pants, etc.), cell phones, school bags, or gym bags must be taken into the gym and stored on the concrete floor or in the lockers provided. Please do not bring these items onto or around the spring floors.

Cell phones must be turned off when practice starts and remain off throughout the practice.

***PARENTS: Withholding a child from practice (or competition) should never be used as a form of punishment. You are not only punishing your child, but every other team member, coach, and parent on that team.***

We will do our best to work with extracurricular activities. However, if the coach of the extracurricular activity refuses to work with us, you may have to make a choice.

### **Attendance**

As parent/guardian of your child, it is your responsibility to alert coaching staff if you feel your child may not be at full capability to practice. This includes but is not limited to sickness and/or injury. If you feel your child cannot continue to participate in a practice for any reason alert a staff member immediately.

Part-time jobs, dances, concerts, banquets, long distance driving, family reunions, weddings, recitals, school/church socials, and any other non-school-related activities are unexcused. Only school activities which directly result in a grade are excused. If an emergency or special occasion occurs, please contact your coach as soon as possible to inform him/her of your situation.

Please be on time to pick your athlete up after practice.

### **Classes**

The class program at TAC is designed to help each athlete excel on his/her individual skills. With an

emphasis on proper progression and technique, our goal is to have athletes perform skills with good form and confidence. Class schedules are available in the office or online.

### **Private Lessons**

Our coaches schedule their own lessons. Rates and availability vary, and coaches may schedule up to 3 individuals at a time unless requested otherwise. Please check with the coach of your choice to set up a private lesson. All compensation for private lessons should be given directly to the coach. Any communication about the changes or cancellations should be handled directly with the coach. We strongly recommend that every athlete participate in either tumbling classes or private lessons. While we will spend a portion of our team practices on individual skills, athletes will progress much more quickly if they are also getting instruction outside of their actual practice time. Athletes that are in need of a little extra practice will need to take private lessons. This is not only for your child's best interest, but the best interest of the team. We are only as strong as our weakest link!

## **Competitions**

### **Scoring of Teams**

While the scoring process is often similar at the various events we attend, there is no single standard scoring system. Every event we attend has the option of using a different set of criteria for their scores and rankings. They will also have different sets of deductions and even relative weighting of the various elements. On top of that, they will use different scales so that the same routine could score an 8.6 one week, an 87.5 the next, and even a 468 a week later. This can make it difficult for parents, athletes, and even coaches at times to fully explain or understand the results. In general, team scores are a combination of several factors. Some are fairly obvious, like tumbling/stunting difficulty, timing on jumps, etc. However, some are much more technical and are NOT obvious to the "untrained" eye. These include scores for transitions between elements, tumbling technique, variety and precision of formations, etc. Also, there are purely subjective categories like "overall impression" and choreography. Very often, a team that is the "crowd favorite" will have a high level of difficulty or entertaining music, but not necessarily score the highest. There are "panel judges" whose score sheets combine to produce a "raw score". Unlike other sports like gymnastics, this is NOT simply a factor of adding up the various skill elements in a routine. This score includes subjective factors and evaluation of technique. There are usually a separate set of "deduction" judges who look for obvious mistakes and rule violations. They will then give deductions that are taken off of the "raw score" to produce a team's "final score." Very often, mistakes will hurt your raw score AND cause deductions to be taken, essentially penalizing the team twice for the same mistakes. Fair or not, this is simply a part of the sport.

### **Competition Day**

Please show up looking clean and presentable. Leave all valuables at home or with your own parents. Unless specifically told otherwise by coaches, athletes should be dressed in their black T-shirt, red shorts (girls: with black briefs underneath), white no-show socks, and white shoes. All undergarments (including sports tops for girls and tanks for the guys) should match the color of the uniform. (This means there is less chance that it will be noticeable during a routine.) Absolutely, NO visible hair wraps, or colored nail polish. Clear polish, American or French manicures are fine. Nails should be maintained at an athletic, short length. No jewelry is allowed at any time BEFORE OR DURING a competition. Jewelry includes, but is not limited to: earrings, belly button rings, "other" piercings, necklaces, wristbands, rings, or anklets. Besides being a safety hazard, this could result in our teams being severely penalized by the judges. Teams have even been penalized for athletes accidentally leaving a hair tie around their wrist. This would almost certainly drop a team down several positions in the rankings. How cute your ear or belly button looks is not more important than whether your team gets 1st or 5th. Please plan any piercings around the fact that you will NOT be allowed to wear jewelry, spacers, or anything similar on competition day. "But it might grow back together" is NOT an acceptable reason to risk penalizing your entire team. When in uniform, sleeves should remain down, and skirts and tops should be zipped and buttoned. If you have any part of your uniform on, it must be worn completely and properly. **Female athletes are never allowed to walk around with their uniform skirt unbuttoned. PARENTS - PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOUR CHILD HAS HER MAKE ON COMPLETE WITH LIPSTICK BEFORE YOUR CHILD GOES BACK FOR**

## **WARM UPS**

### **Awards Ceremonies**

All athletes must be present and must be in full uniform for his or her team's awards ceremony (Please make sure your athlete always has a black T-shirt and red shorts. This will be acceptable if your athlete does not have their uniform). All athletes are expected to display a high level of sportsmanship, applaud for every team, and to congratulate all winners.

**IMPORTANT:** In the event the team is outscored by another in their division, athletes should make a point to graciously congratulate the other teams in their division. In the event our team has the highest score, athletes will sit with their team and should not celebrate until their name is specifically called. The second-place team deserves their moment of recognition. Immediately celebrating a win when they call the second-place team is considered by many to be in poor taste.

### **Other Competition Reminders**

We do expect every TAC athlete to watch and cheer for other TAC teams at events. This may mean you will often have to arrive earlier or leave later than required for your own performance/awards. Poor sportsmanship by TAC athletes or parents may cause dismissal from the program or other consequences. This includes, but is not limited to, bad-mouthing other teams, athletes, parents, or the judges. The coaches' main priority at competitions is to safely prepare the athletes for their performances. After that, our next priority is to yell for and support our teams as they perform. This unfortunately means that, depending on the schedule, all of a team's coaches may not be able to stand with the teams as their awards are handed out, or, in rare cases (at events with multiple venues) during the performances. We will do everything to get as many of the coaches there, but sometimes it simply is not possible.

## **Financial Information**

### **Uniform / Practice Clothes**

Each team wears the same uniform throughout the entire season. Uniform fittings typically take place during TAC camp. The uniform includes a top, skirt, hot pants (bloomers), and bow for the girls. The uniform includes a top and pants for the boys. TAC requires a 50% deposit in order to start your athlete's order. All deposits are non-refundable and non-transferable. Practice wear typically includes sports bra, spandex, t-shirt/tank and bow. Practice wear distribution typically takes place towards the end of June. As mentioned under the Practice section, athletes are required to wear the assigned practice wear to each practice. Consequences (decided by the coaches) will be enforced for athletes who choose to not follow the practice wear assignments. "Laundry" is not an excuse for wearing the wrong clothing.

### **Tuition Rates**

Along with the time involved, there is a substantial financial obligation to being a part of the TAC program. Please carefully consider the financial commitment involved and read this form in its entirety. By signing below, you agree to comply and be responsible for all financial obligations for your athlete. Once athletes are placed in classes or on teams, the following fees are collected:

Gym Registration Fee (\$45) – This is an annual fee required of all students in classes, private lessons, and on teams. Monthly Tuition (varies by team) – Tuition may or may not include competition fees, choreography, and gym training.

- Show Team \$95.00 (Does not include competition fees)
- AllStar Prep Teams \$200.00
- AllStar Teams \$255.00

Tuition does not fluctuate based on the number or duration of practices in any month. Monthly tuition is due beginning May 1 of the current season through April 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. If an athlete joins after the initial start of the season.

additional fees may be collected to cover their competition costs. We have an “all-inclusive” monthly price that covers practically ALL of the expenses that an athlete would normally incur throughout the year. This price includes: tuition, entry fees for local and national competitions, summer team camp/ activities, choreography, and numerous other expenses. This system makes financial planning much easier for our TAC families. You will know exactly how much will be charged, and when it will happen. As has been the case for the last several years, we anticipate teams going to 3-4 “local” competitions and 2-3 “national” competitions. PLEASE NOTE – additional competitions may be added, but usually adding a competition will be based on the particular team affirmatively voting to attend the additional competition. The tuition continues from May '10 through April '11. Costs for clothing items can vary greatly from customer to customer and as such are not a part of the inclusive rate. (Some athletes may already have all or part of their uniforms already.) Uniforms and other clothing items are paid for separately. Also, any travel expenses (hotels, meals, etc.) are to be covered directly by the athletes and their families.

### Financial Policies

- TAC collects monthly tuition by directly billing your credit or debit card for the amount indicated and your total charges will appear on your monthly credit or debit card statement. Payments are received on the first of each month.
- If an athlete resigns his or her position on a team, written notice must be submitted to the Office no later than 30 days before resigning. Tuition is non-refundable (unless tuition was paid in full May of the current season) and non-transferable. NOTE: If an athlete resigns on or after December 1 of the current season, monthly tuition will continue to be due through auto pay through the end of the season. (At this point, it is difficult to replace the athlete and many, if not all, of the non-refundable competition fees will have already been paid.)
- Any payments that become delinquent due to a declined or expired card or returned check may incur
- \$30 service charge. Accounts that are past due for more than a month may be sent to a collections agency.
- Athletes accounts must be current (zero balance) to participate in practices, camp, competitions, etc. TAC may remove an athlete from the team if the financial commitment is not upheld.
- Payments received to an athlete's account will first go to open balances. Athletes that have open balances may not participate in private lessons or additional classes until their account is current.
- A 5% discount off the total tuition amount is offered to those that pay for the year in advance. This discount is only offered to athletes who start the season in May. We must receive payment in full no later than May 31st.

### Contact Information

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