



THUMB AREA FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Cheerleading Guide

This handbook is a guide for the responsibilities and obligations of all cheer coaches of the Thumb Area Football League (TAFL). It is the responsibility of each coach to read the information contained in the handbook and to abide by its policies.

Philosophy:

The Thumb Area Football League offered cheerleading for the first time in the 2005 season. Our hope was to improve the local community teams by adding the cheer component to our league. Introducing cheerleading at an early age encourages our youth to learn the basic fundamentals, as well as, what the sport of cheerleading can offer. Teamwork and sportsmanship are the means by which the TAFL hope to strengthen each community program while giving the communities the “complete” football experience.

Through sports, children are taught the value of hard work, discipline, team building, role playing, sportsmanship and other aspects that help develop a child’s character. A large part of our self-esteem is derived through positive athletic experiences.

The TAFL will provide for every athlete, an environment in which children achieve not only athletic success but lay the foundation for success in life as well. The TAFL seeks coaches with unique personalities to teach positive lifetime skills and values to all the athletes. In order to ensure that athletes are prepared for commitments and personal sacrifice needed to be successful, coaches must help them develop and understand the role of an athlete’s dedication and self-discipline. It is the nature of athletic competition to strive for victory. There is only one criterion when determining a successful season; it is guiding an athlete and a team to reach its maximum potential. Along with this comes emphasis on good sportsmanship, which includes being modest in victory and acceptance in defeat.

Leadership:

Coaches must develop an understanding of the role of youth sports and communicate it to parents, athletes and to the public. Diligence, enthusiasm, honesty, pride and a love for the game should be exhibited by all coaches. Personal appearance, dress and conduct should all be exemplary.

Sportsmanship:

Although we will compete hard, we will compete fairly and respectfully. Coaches, athletes and spectators must recognize that their conduct plays an important role in establishing the reputation of the TAFL and that our positive actions can contribute directly to the

success of our teams. Sportsmanship includes being appreciative of all performances of every athlete. The welfare and safety of all participants should always be first in the coach’s mind.

The main reason for the TAFL is to help provide opportunities for young boys and girls to develop their respective capabilities to the fullest extent. Development of positive attitudes is an important means to accomplish this goal. The promotion and teaching of only clean, aggressive and fair play while stressing the importance of good sportsmanship must be a standard set for all.

The coach must stress the importance of cooperation, communication, hard work and dedication. The coach must also be the leader and set a positive example. To be effective, a coach must be respected. A coach should always be fair and unprejudiced with participants, considering their individual differences, needs, interest, temperament, aptitudes and environments. However, coaches must constantly strive for excellence in all areas. Participants have a right to expect coaches to have genuine and up to date knowledge of that with which they propose to teach and direct.

Each coach is responsible for the supervision of every athlete at all times. Firm, fair and constant discipline must be maintained. Should issues arise and discipline needed the following guideline should take effect:

- No physical discipline is allowed.
- Make consequence fit the offense.
- Use discipline on a case by case basis.

Ongoing discipline issues should be handled by discussing them with the child and their parents.

As a coach you are a frequent topic of conversation, at various community locations. Your profession, as well as your reputation as a coach, is constantly under scrutiny. Your actions and statements should always reflect confidence and respect for the TAFL.

Membership:

1. Each community director may 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 should arise.
3. Teams can be divided by age or divisions. There is a maximum of twelve participants per team.

Practice Area:

1. Surface needs to be safe and/or padded (ex: gym floor, mats, grass, etc.). Surfaces not allowed are concrete, driveways, gravel, etc.
2. Space must allow for physical conditioning and stunting.
3. If stunting, adequate ceiling height must be provided.

Stunting:

Prohibited Stunts

Shoot throughs
Suspended rolls
Basket tosses
Single base extension
Toe touch cradle from extension
Twist to cradle from extension
Basket toss to any flair
Double twist to cradle

A spotter must be used when performing all stunts.

Required Spotting Technique

TOUCH, WATCH & AWAY

The spotter must TOUCH either the base and/or the top when performing a stunt shoulder level or above.

1. During the stunt and dismount, the spotter must be WATCHING for possible errors and ACTING to prevent injuries with special emphasis on the head, neck, and back areas of the top.
2. While TOUCHING, the spotter must be sufficiently AWAY from the stunt so as to not be a primary support.

Procedures to assure SAFETY - The following procedures are recommended to communities to enhance the level of safety when skills and stunts are taught.

1. When skills are being taught and practiced, it is recommended that mats be used.
2. When stunts are being taught and practiced, matting should be a requirement.
3. **All** stunts should be taught with the use of spotters.
4. Beginning skills and stunts should be taught and mastered before intermediate skills are introduced; intermediate skills and stunts should be taught and mastered before advanced skills and stunts are introduced.

The following chart lists beginning, intermediate and advanced skills and stunts. This list is not complete, but should serve as a guideline for coaches to use when practice is conducted so that skills are practiced and mastered in a progressive order according to difficulty.

*Advanced is to be taught **ONLY**, by coaches with advanced background experience.

BEGINNING

Skills

Forward roll
Kicks
Spread eagle jump
Tuck jump

Stunts

Pony stand
Thigh stand
Double base ponystand
Elevator
Shoulder stand
Double base shoulder split catch

INTERMEDIATE

Skills

Backward roll
Cartwheel
Front hurdle jump
Round off
Sidesplits
Double hook jump

Stunts

Russian lift- spotter on waist
Triple base Deadman lift
Double based Elevator boxed out
Shoulder sit

ADVANCED

Skills

Back handspring
Back walkover
Heel stretch
Herkie jump
Switch splits
Toe touch jump

Stunts

Triple base straddle lift/V-sit
Chair
Torch
Pop to a stunt
Half Pendulum
Pendulum
Show and Go
Mountain Climber
Extension with two bases (one
spotter & two back spotters)
Floor up to extension
Twist up to extension

ALL STUNTS REQUIRE A SPOTTER

Resources:

www.cheermcca.org Gives advice from the Michigan
Cheer Coach Association.

www.libcheer.com All star gym site, clinics, private, open
gym times (Blue Water Sports Complex)

www.cheermichigan.com Camps, clinics, workshops