

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

- I. Coaches
 - A. Before any volunteer can coach, they must be at least 18 years of age, meet the PA Act 153 Clearance requirements, submit a coaching biography (All Head and Assistant Coaches) & complete the following approved courses:
 1. "USA Cheer- Coaching Young Athletes"
 2. "USA Cheer- Athlete Protection for Coaches"
 3. "USA Cheer- CrashCourse Concussion Education"
 - B. It is each coach's responsibility to follow and uphold all of the rules, regulations, bylaws & "Coaches Code of Conduct" set forth. Failure to do so may result in suspension or removal from any and all coaching duties.
 - C. 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.
 - D. A high school volunteer/demonstrator (ie.- DVHS Cheerleader) may be used to demonstrate cheers, jumps, etc. However, this individual shall be under the direction and supervision of the head coach.
- 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, and for the referees, judges, and other officials.
- III. Age Requirements (Recreational Cheer ONLY)
 - A. Only children ages 5-14 years old will be allowed to participate in the recreation PAYAL season. Participants must be this age by the start of the season. Age ranges and divisions will be determined by the number of registrants.
 - B. Moving up or down a level will require a formal appeal made to the PAYAL Board &/or skills evaluation.
 - C. "Mascots" (children unregistered with the league & under the age of 5) are not permitted to participate in PAYAL. Only registered athletes may be on the practice & playing fields.
- IV. General Rules
 - A. PAYAL Cheerleading will follow "USA Cheer Youth Rec Sideline Rules" and USA Cheer/NFHS safety guidelines.
 - B. Since there are no national standards for youth recreational cheerleading, PAYAL may decide to modify the safety guidelines set forth through USA Cheer and/or the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). These modifications must be approved by the PAYAL Board.
 - C. If a cheerleader quits, they will not be permitted to return to PAYAL until the following recreational season. Registration fees will only be refunded up until uniforms are ordered (this season: July 25).

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, coaches from that squad must attend a mandatory clinic where they 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 stunting is permitted during rain, on wet ground or on hard surfaces.
4. No stunting is permitted without a certified coach present.
5. 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.
3. No tumbling is permitted during rain, on wet ground or on hard surfaces.
4. No tumbling is permitted without a certified coach present.

D. Dance

1. All music must be approved by the Cheer Coordinator/Commissioner and/or the PAYAL Board. Music licenses are not required for the recreational season.
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, FLIP FLOPS, OR CROCS). 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 be on time & attend practices prior to cheering in a game. To deter tardiness, coaches may impose additional directives &/or requirements of cheerleaders (ie- running, push-ups, etc.).
2. All cheerleaders should have sufficient knowledge of material in order to cheer at games (Be "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). Any league issued uniform is only to be worn at PAYAL organized functions.
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, but specific cold weather gear is not a requirement of the league.
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 be on time, 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.
4. More than 2 absences from games will result in immediate dismissal from the squad & forfeiture of all registration monies for the season.

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 second 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/Away team performs first.
3. Squads not performing, should always attentively watch the opposing team's cheerleaders perform their halftime routine.

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 use 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 halftime. 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 in a recreation cheerleading program (a non-school affiliated team that cheered for an organized sport) during the regular athletic season in order to try out for competition cheer. Participation in a recreation cheerleading program will be confirmed by the Cheerleading Commissioner.
- B. Tryouts/Evaluations for competition cheerleading 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 & recreation season placement does not guarantee the same division placement for competition cheerleading. For example, during the recreation season a cheerleader may cheer on a junior level squad, but be placed on a youth level squad for competition cheerleading.
- C. Competition squads will be determined by skill level & age according to UCA guidelines.