

Making Practices Fun and Effective

Achieving goals and the sense of accomplishment that comes with that are part of what makes participation in athletic activities so fun and rewarding. If you can be organized and realistic with your planning and goal setting, you can help kids work hard AND have fun!!

- ☒ Break bigger goals down into smaller steps that can be more noticeably mastered, so your athletes will feel a constant progression
- ☒ Follow AACCA Stunting and USAG Tumbling Progressions
- ☒ Set realistic expectations
- ☒ Use Progression Charts
- ☒ Talk about goal setting with your team
- ☒ Hold their attention with constant direction
- ☒ Change the activity every few minutes
- ☒ Organize practice space for maximum eye contact
- ☒ Make sure athletes always have an assigned activity, use stations
- ☒ Use car floor mats for formations
- ☒ Plan organized breaks
- ☒ Hydration and rest are important
- ☒ Individual breaks waste time and break concentration
- ☒ Make conditioning about building strength and stamina
- ☒ Relate exercises to specific skills, and vary them regularly
- ☒ Use games and contests as teaching aids and for physical and mental lessons
- ☒ Physical contests are a fun way to reward stamina and strength
- ☒ Ice-breakers can help socialize team and break tension
- ☒ Use adventure recreational games to highlight group behaviors
- ☒ Use physical tasks to teach body awareness and/or trust

Focusing and having FUN with Football Games

Even at the youth level, interest in and enthusiasm for competitions has begun to encroach on the game aspect of many cheer programs. This lack of focus on the game can result in a number of negative side-effects. Here are some ideas on how to make the game portion of your season rewarding and enjoyable!

- ☒ Have a simple, low budget fund-raiser to gather a little money for crowd treats (like a bake sale, restaurant raffle, car wash, etc.)
- ☒ Do a 'welcome tunnel' for crowd and direct them to where you want them

to sit

- ☒ Have name tags for player's moms
- ☒ Make fun signs for parents with their athlete's name or picture, mascot or meg
- ☒ Hand out words to cheers, one per game
- ☒ Make run-through signs or just use streamers
- ☒ Have 'theme' games – beach day, Halloween day, etc
- ☒ Do creative score celebrations like jump ripples, push-ups, flat-back lifts
- ☒ Have crowd do 'the wave' – seed crowd with squad members
- ☒ Throw candy (ex: fire balls) with sidelines or seed bleachers to attract fans
- ☒ Run back and forth following the line of scrimmage
- ☒ Play current music and have dance or stunt sequences prepared
- ☒ Assign 'football friends', at least three cheers per half
- ☒ Have individuals start simple chants with reward system
- ☒ Do a half-time, pre or post-game performance

To ensure appreciation for your cheer team, make connections with the players and the crowd:

Be sure your squad understands how the game works – reach out to the FB coach to stop by one of your practices for a quick seminar

Understand the ref's signals

Always keep material situation-appropriate

Show respect for players, refs and spectators

Competing Successfully

Philosophy – it's not All-Stars: no cuts, no levels, no time

Don't pay for a routine

Don't panic about difficulty

Successful execution IS a win

1. Set appropriate goals (winning isn't one)
 1. Understand the scoresheet and rubric prior to beginning choreography
 2. Use as much familiar material as possible
 3. Learn 1 segment at a time, drill and review
 4. Don't use every person, but don't hide people
 5. Start simple, add difficulty once mastered (avoid watering down)
 6. Don't stress having every group do the same stunt, use levels
 7. Practice shrugging – it's perspective!

Have a parent/team meeting prior to your first event to impart critical information

- Arrival location and time
- Apparel, hair and make-up
- Explain how the competition will run
- Talk openly about sportsmanship