

THE SPOTTER

THE "OFFICIAL" NEWSLETTER OF THE IOWA CHEERLEADING COACHES' ASSOCIATION

Cindy's article yesterday really struck a note with me. What parts of life are worth going back to? I know I don't like communication to have to always be through Zoom or Facetime, but I do like how we have slowed down and made time to do things that we have been putting off. I got three puzzles for Christmas this past year, and my husband said, "When do you think you're going to do those?" Guess what! I've done all three!!
Happy Tuesday! ~ Kenna

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Where Does Your School Stand on Sportsmanship?

~ Michelle McCann - NW District Representative

Sportsmanship. That's a big word we tend to hear a lot about, especially being involved in middle school or high school sports. Dictionary.com defines sportsmanship as, "sportsmanlike conduct, as fairness, courtesy, being a cheerful loser, etc." How does your school define and view sportsmanship? As cheerleading coaches, I think it's really important to understand what good sportsmanship is and how to show it.

Why is it so important that we cheer coaches understand good sportsmanship? When it comes down to it, your cheerleaders are a huge representation of your school. When you think about what all the cheerleaders do, they are for the most part at almost every football game, basketball game, and wrestling meet. Because of that, cheerleaders are the face of spirit at their school, and spirit and sportsmanship most definitely go hand in hand.

It seems nowadays that every school has different limits on what they allow at sporting events when it comes to parents and specifically the student section, and almost everyone will have different opinions on what they might think is or isn't ok on how spectators should act and cheer or what they should be allowed to say. Some schools might not tolerate ANY kind of trash talking or negative acting towards the other team, but others might be more tolerant and argue that it's just a part of sports. If you are a newer coach, it might be a good idea to sit down with your principal or AD and get a feel for what their stance is on the dynamic of how the student section and parents can be at games. Find out if they are more strict or more lenient on their expectations of their fans at sporting events. Connect with them about how YOU feel about sportsmanship and what your expectations will be for your cheerleaders and the standard that you will hold them to while they are in uniform at games/meets.

That being said, make sure you do know your expectations for your cheerleaders! No matter where your administrators stand on what they do or don't allow at events, it is always our job to make sure our cheerleaders are cheering in a FUN and POSITIVE manner. Here is what our NFHS Spirit Rules book has to say about cheerleaders in their Philosophy section: "Being one of the most visible and recognizable representatives of a school, spirit groups are in a position of great influence; therefore, high standards of conduct are essential." It also says, "Spirit group activities should center on 'leading' or 'directing' the cheering of students and fans...these activities should be focused on: creating a cooperative environment among the spirit groups, athletes, student bodies, school administrators, and the communities." It's so important that we use our position as coaches to make sure that we are holding our cheerleaders to high standards when it comes to how they act on the sidelines and at the mat. Even if your fans might be getting rowdy or worked up, have your cheerleaders do things to offset that. For example, if the crowd starts booing, start a chant to try to get the crowd to change from booing to chanting.(continued page 2)

**Looking ahead to the
2020-2021 School Year?
Check out the new ICCA
Calendar! Log on to
www.iowacheercoaches.org**



Sportsmanship, Continued....

It's little things like that that can keep an event positive, even when the game or meet might not be going the way your team wants it. Just always remember your cheerleaders can set the tone for an event, and as a coach, we can help them do that! You never know the impact those cheerleaders can have on your school or community!

Jones Continues to Give, Even After Retirement

Betty Lou Jones has been named the 2020 ICCA Contributor of the Year. Betty Lou has been an integral part of ICCA for many years. She is always ready with a "How can I help?" attitude. A board member since 1994, Betty Lou currently serves as the ICCA All-Star Director, a position she has held since the inception of that program. She previously served as District Rep in both the NW and the NC Districts. Betty Lou volunteers with the Special Olympics program and gives her time to work full days at State Wrestling. She helps decorate for the Conference banquet every year, this year also jumping in to assist with vendors.

She coached for 39 years at both the high school and middle school levels at North Kossuth/North Union High School. As a successful coach, Betty Lou was awarded the ICCA Coach of the Year (2001), the National Federation Section IV Coach of the Year (2001), and the ICCA Lifetime Achievement Winner in 2006. Since her retirement from coaching Betty Lou selflessly serves ICCA with her time and knowledge. She helps oversee the ICCA financial records, reviewing money statements, as well as income and expenditures. This year she worked in the safety check station at the State Competition. She now acts as a mentor to the North Union cheerleading program.

Betty Lou currently enjoys her retirement in Swea City with her husband Larry. In addition to her other activities, Betty Lou swims in the Iowa Games every year and enjoys traveling.

The Dos and Don'ts of BOWS: Rules, Fashion, Fun! ~ Kelly Trinkle, NE District Rep.

Cheer Bows! Definitely one of the most exciting parts of being a cheerleader. The cheer bow sets cheerleading apart from other sports and activities as well as maybe even some envy from non cheerleaders! As a coach you may think cheer bows are a pain... that we are trying to keep our cheerleaders looking like athletes. But the truth is, whether it is game day or competition, cheerleading is a show! It can unify your squad, add confidence and improve teamwork! The cheer bow is a part of a cheerleader's uniform that grabs attention and helps dignify school spirit!

Some things to think about when choosing a cheer bow for your squad:

First and foremost make sure your bow is legal. Some big legality issues are glitter that flakes off, rhinestones that are not properly adhered, and hard centers/rhinestones as the center part of the knot. Also, bows should not touch any part of the face or forehead. (Check the ICCA website for more clarity.)

What will the bow be worn for? A game day bow might look very different from a practice bow, competition bow or other types of performance bows. Practice bows can be used to help keep the squad unified as a team. They also help to know what it feels like to cheer, tumble, stunt and jump with the bow in their hair. They would generally be plain or more neutral. Game day bows might show more of your school spirit or school colors. Competition bows and other performance bows may be more flashy.

Think about the personality of your squad or team. When I choose a bow for my team (practice, game day or competition) I think about my squad. Are they more traditional? Or are they really unique and out there? I also try to incorporate our season/competition theme. It can be really fun to incorporate bows with bananas on them for a team with a great sense of humor, or a bow with flamingos for a competition squad with a tropical theme.

Cheer bows are just another part of making cheerleading look flashy and easy... even though we all know it is not! But isn't that what it's about? No one wants to watch a team struggle and have it look hard.... Have fun with it!



*The best advice I have ever received
.....My family and their needs should
come before my job commitments.*

Always put my family first.

~Paula Kirkpatrick, SE District Rep

Things to Do NOW for Tryouts ~ Jeanne Ehn, Executive Director

Regardless of the tryout option a coach might pick, there are some steps to take to make sure things go smoothly and still improve squad skills.

1. Have a conversation with the athletic director so he/she is aware of the picked plan and can assist as needed. Make sure it is okay with the administration as well (your AD will do this). These are new times for everyone. The more communication, the better. Perhaps make the decision together or give reasoning why the chosen option is the best for all.

2. It might be smart to contact all potential cheerleaders with some ideas to help them improve their skills on their own. If your school has a website, post to it so cheerleaders know what social media outlets to use.

A. Contact potential cheerleaders with the tryout plan. It will help them know what to expect.

B. Urge potential cheerleaders to perfect their motion technique while looking in a mirror. Give them tips on placement so they really can improve. This will save time when the season really gets going. Maybe they could send you a video for you to suggest improvements.

C. Ask them to get outside and video jumps for improvement. Give them more tips or websites to research. That way when they play back the video they have things to watch for. They do not have to send these to you. Remind them to check for holes in the ground or a low hanging tree branch before beginning.

D. Do not promote "gathering to practice." They need to be good stewards of social distancing. Coaches who put the stay at home expectation in front of their cheerleaders will help it happen. The more they stay home, the sooner the team can be picked and the season started.

E. Optional: Send some season requirements to learn: the school song, a motion technique drill, some simple, often used chants. Ask them to learn and perfect each one. An expectation would be that they know these when the season begins.

F. Invite potential cheerleaders to share it with their friends or others they'd like to see on their squad.

Consider This:

NCA and UCA are offering help with free virtual tryouts and judges. Just remember to okay this tryout with your athletic director and administration before beginning. Contact your school's Varsity Rep for more information.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

2020 ICCA

Academic Scholarship Winners

Paige Beck, Mount Vernon

Savannah Stalzer, Albia

Karson Swim, Oskaloosa

Being a Proactive Coach

~ Paula Kirkpatrick, SE District Rep.

When I think of a Proactive Coach, I picture a coach who does everything possible to promote their cheer program and make sure it is seen as an important athletic program. A proactive coach advocates for their program and works to make sure the cheer program is treated like all other athletic programs and activities at the school. A proactive coach gets training and learns all the safety rules. So if you would like to be a proactive coach, here is what you should do: Attend Iowa Cheer Coaches' Conference and learn all you can. Work closely with your AD and Principal, with the goal to be part of the athletic programs at school. Treat your cheerleaders as athletes. Athletic practices, athletic training, athletic mindset. Have the cheer program on the rotation for new uniforms. Advocate for all the safety equipment that you need. Refer to yourself as the cheer COACH. You are the coach, not the sponsor. Be sure you coach your team the way other coaches do. Give your cheerleaders every opportunity that you can, such as ICCA events. Lastly, reach out to other coaches. Network through the ICCA social media opportunities. It is a great way to learn new things and help each other.