

**NKYA**  
**CHEER POWER**



**COACHES**  
**HANDBOOK**

## THE MAKINGS OF A GOOD COACH:

- C Comprehension:** *Rules and skills*
- O Outlook:** *Perspective and goals*
- *To have fun*
  - *To help the cheerleaders develop their physical, mental and social skills*
- A Affection:** *Genuine concern for the health and welfare of your girls on and off the floor*
- C Character:** *Children learn by listening to what adults say, but they learn more by watching the behavior of certain important individuals – including YOU.*
- H Humor:** *Having the ability to laugh at yourself and with your Girls during practices and games*

*As a coach, you have the opportunity to make an impact on young girls' lives – make it a POSTIVE impact.*

# NKYA CHEER Power Program Goals

## **Goal #1 – To create an environment in which our children have fun**

### **Top Ten Reasons Children Play Sports**

1. To have FUN
2. To improve my skills
3. To stay in shape
4. To do something I'm good at
5. For the excitement of competition
6. To get exercise
7. To play as part of a team
8. For the challenge of competition
9. To learn new skills
10. To win

### **Why Most Children Stop Playing Sports**

1. I lost interest
2. I was not having fun
3. It took too much time
4. Coach was a poor teacher
5. The coach played favorites
6. "I Would Play Again If..."
  - a. Practices were more organized
  - b. I could play more
  - c. Coaches understood players better
  - d. Coaches were better teachers

## **Goal #2 – To teach basic cheer skills and techniques**

- Educate yourself – attend meetings and clinics. Have a continuing education plan.
- Stay up to date with the changes in cheerleading (watch videos on TV, read books, attend other cheer association camps and training clinics)
- Create "sets" or standard practice ideas and use every practice
- Know the developmental abilities of the age group you are coaching – know "age appropriate" behavior

## **Goal #3 – To model and teach sportsmanship and teamwork**

- Coaches must be positive role models exhibiting good sportsmanship like behavior at all events (practices, games, etc)
- Children will follow the example of the adult role model. Children will copy or imitate the sports behavior of the coach, including the development of values based on that behavior
- Understand and abide by the code of ethics

#### **Goal #4 - To promote increased self-esteem among our children**

- Individual and squad performance is directly related to how a cheerleader feels about herself. Your cheerleaders will perform better and have fewer performance problems when you help them feel good about themselves.
- Treat her with respect
- Avoid comparisons
- Deal with your cheerleader as a “whole” person
- Do not equate a cheerleader’s self esteem with their performance
- Challenge your cheerleaders; do not threaten them
- View your cheerleaders’ personal problems as an opportunity to develop a better relationship with them
- Communicate
- Listen
- Be empathic
- Use recognition
- Be positive
- Handle failures, setbacks and mistakes constructively
- Praise the individual, criticize the group
- Model high self esteem
- Do not condone demeaning behavior on the squad

As COACH, how are you going to achieve the NKYA CHEER Power goals?

Decide, and then factor your answers into your practice plans and game etiquette.

**Goal #1 – To create an environment in which our children have fun**

**Goal #2 – To teach basic cheer skills and techniques**

**Goal #3 – To model and teach sportsmanship and teamwork**

**Goal #4 – To promote increased self-esteem among our children**

#### NKYA CHEER Power – Coach Responsibilities

##### **#1 Responsibility –**

You are responsible for the progress and well-being of every child on your squad

- Teach and stress the basics of cheerleading
- Emphasis teamwork and sportsmanship
- Encourage all girls, regardless of abilities
- Make all activities FUN!

As a coach, you are responsible for...

#### All Communications

- To and from girls and parents
- To and from Commissioners and Coordinators
- If you do not have an answering machine at home, provide a message number, work number, cell phone number or pager number

#### All Materials

- Develop all game and CheerFest materials
- Sidelines, floor cheers, transition/crowd involvement cheer, dance, etc)
- All Practice, Games, etc
- Schedule and coordinate all practices
- Manage all games and picture day.

#### All Uniforms, Accessories and Equipment

- Coordinate the purchase of and distribute all accessories
- Maintain and return all equipment and uniforms

#### Staying Informed

- Attend all coaches meetings and clinics
- Read, understand and abide by all rules
- If you do not know or are unsure, ASK

### General Coach Responsibilities

1. Know and understand NKYA goals
2. Improve as teacher and coach
3. Be a proper role model
4. Be innovative in practice sessions – run organized, effective practices
5. Learn and practice positive communication skills
  - With NKYA
  - With parents
  - With Cheerleaders
6. Know the individual needs on your squad
7. Attend and carefully supervise all practices and performances
8. Have an emergency plan in case of accident or injury
9. Work with NKYA administration
10. Communicate with parents regularly
11. Keep records of every part of your program
12. Attend clinics and meetings to improve skill and knowledge
13. Provide motivation, consistency and organization for your squad

## **Codes of Conduct – Coaches**

1. NKYA General Conduct
2. NO vulgar language at any time
3. NO Alcohol or controlled substances on or around any field, gym or facility used for any NKYA activity
4. NO smoking while performing your Coaching duties (practices, games, CheerFest, etc)
5. No heated discussions / arguments with umpires / referees, coaching staff, players, spectators, etc
6. Umpires / Referees have the ability to remove coaches, players or spectators from any game / premises due to unsportsmanlike conduct. Unless otherwise specified, it is the Umpire / Referees' discretion to define unsportsmanlike conduct.

Any coach in violation, will be subject to expulsion from NKYA.

## **NKYA CHEER Power Rules – Instruction**

Before and during the season, coaches should teach sidelines, floor cheers and a dance routine. Included in this instruction should be an emphasis on teamwork, good sportsmanship, spirit, pep and enthusiasm. The following are basics that should be taught at each age division:

### **Developmental Division**

- Emphasis on teamwork and following directions
- Basic arm motions (“T”, high and low “V” etc) and clapping
- Simple sidelines for games
- Short dance routine

### **Instructional Division**

- “X” jump, also known as the spread eagle jump
- Basic arm motions (“T”, high and low “V”, etc) and clapping
- Sidelines for games (attempt to teach a simple “crowd” involvement cheer)
- One floor cheer with entire squad x-jump (all jump at same time)
- NO BUILDS – one foot must remain on floor at all times
- Dance routine (maximum of (1) minute)

### **Intermediate Division**

- Toe Touch Jump
- Improve basic arm motions and clapping
- Sidelines
- Crowd involvement cheer
- Builds – a Half Extension is the maximum build (supporting hands cannot be higher than the chest). Basket tosses, cradle catches, etc. is not permitted. All dismounts must maintain body contact. Safety comes first. Any build or stunt other than a thigh stand requires a designated, continuous, and attentive spotter.
- Floor cheer with entire squad toe touch jump (all jump at same time).
- Dance routine (maximum of 1 minute 30 seconds).

### **Elite Division**

- Toe touch jump
- Sidelines
- Crowd involvement cheer
- Builds & Partners stunts – a full extension is the maximum build (basket tosses and cradle catches are permissible with proper spotting). Safety comes first. Any build or stunt other than a thigh stand requires a designated, continuous, and attentive spotter.
- Floor cheer with entire squad toe touch jump (all jump same time)
- Dance routine (maximum of 2 minutes).

### **Tumbling Guidelines**

NKYA Cheer Power Coaching Staff are not permitted to teach, instruct or spot any tumbling skills.

Tumbling that is incorporated into routines must have been mastered elements (i.e. gymnastics/tumbling classes, home, etc.) and parents must be aware that the child will be performing the particular tumbling skill.

Cheerleading today has become very “tumbling” oriented. If your child wishes to continue with cheerleading into all-star, middle school, high school and college, it is highly recommended she take tumbling classes now. Top Flight Gymnastics and Five Star Gymnastics are excellent facilities for this type of training.

# NKYA CHEER Power Program Rules – Uniforms

## Uniforms

Coaches will ensure that each child on the squad receives an NKYA uniform:

- Developmental = Vest and skirt
- Instructional = Vest and skirt
- Intermediate = Vest and skirt
- Elite = Vest and skirt

The uniforms are not tailor fitted and may not be altered in any way. A day will be scheduled for uniform distribution.

\*\*A parent must attend uniform distribution day and sign to receive the uniform. A signature indicates the parent / guardian understands they are responsible for the care and return of the uniform\*\*

Accessories – Parents must purchase the accessories = shoes, tights, bodysuit or turtleneck, socks and hair bows. The coach or parent volunteer should coordinate the purchase of all accessories.

The NKYA has set a limit on the accessory fees that coaches can collect from parents = \$63 (this includes all the above items). Any other item (t-shirts, shorts, sweats, bags, etc) are optional and may not be required by the coaches.

Poms are provided by NKYA. The coach will keep all poms in her possession. Poms are never to go home with the girls. Coaches are responsible for the care and return of the poms.

All uniform and poms are to be returned at the end of the season.

If a child quits during the season, you are responsible for collecting the uniform.

Failure to return any part of a uniform will result in the child's entire family being unable to participate in any NKYA program until the uniform is returned or NKYA is reimbursed for the cost of the uniform. If necessary, legal action will be pursued.

## Uniform Care

- Keep the uniform clean during the season. DO NOT USE BLEACH. If bleach is used or any other damage occurs, parents will be responsible for the cost of replacing the uniform. Do not alter the uniform without prior approval from the Coordinator.

## **Uniform Distribution**

- Coach notifies parents of day, time, and place of uniform distribution.
- Parents need to know:
  - Coach name and division
  - Child will have the opportunity to try on the jumper, skirt, vest
  - Parent / Guardian must attend to sign for the uniform and receive information

Uniforms are not tailor-fitted. Alterations may not be made without prior consent from the Coordinator

If there are not enough uniforms, jumpers and skirts will be made and vests will be purchased.

Poms will be distributed to the coach. The coach must keep poms in her possession at all times. Poms are not to go home with the girls.

Parents are responsible for the condition of the uniform:

- Keep clean – do not use bleach
- Do not allow child to wear uniform at any other time except to/during/from games.

Uniforms are to be returned to NKYA at the end of the season in good condition. Parents will be responsible for the replacement of all damaged/lost uniforms.

## **Uniform Retrieval (At CheerFest)**

- All cheerleaders need to bring a change of clothes to CheerFest
- The coach will collect all pieces of the uniform (jumpers, skirts, vests, poms)
- Check off each piece, by girl, on the form provided
- If the uniform is not returned or a piece is missing, indicate this on the form
- Place all poms and uniforms in bags provided
- Take all poms and uniforms to the check stations as designated
- All poms and uniforms will be counted and verified
- Form will be signed by an authorized person at the check station
- Signed form is submitted to authorized person in “Tabulation Room”
- Form is verified and pictures are give to coach: coach may then distribute pictures
- If a child does not return the uniform, her pictures are to remain in the tabulation room.
- NO UNIFORM = NO PICTURES

If a child quits during the season or does not return the uniform at CheerFest, the coach is responsible for collecting the uniform. Please make a concerned effort to collect ALL of the uniforms. If you are still unable to collect, please notify the Coordinator.

## NKYA CHEER Power Rules – Practices

### **Facilities**

Due to a lack of practice facilities, we cannot guarantee practice times. Any practice times that are available will be given the Intermediate and Elite Divisions first since they build. Only one-hour time slots will be available and the coach will choose a day and time that is convenient for her.

- Developmental: May only practice one hour per week
- Instructional: May only practice one hour per week
- Intermediate: May practice two hours per week
- Elite: May practice three hours per week

However, only one hour may be provided by NKYA (practice time is based on availability)

NKYA must be notified of day, time and place of ALL practices at facilities not provided by NKYA in order for our insurance to cover these children. However, if we are not notified, each coach will be solely and personally responsible for any injuries or damages, which may occur (both to the persons and property involved).

Whether or not the practice space you use is provided by NKYA, you and your families are representatives of this organization – please conduct yourselves appropriately.

Practice facilities must be left in good condition. Please clean your area before you leave. Do not allow any squad member, parent, family or visitor to roam free in any facility. If there are any complaints from any facility, practices will be cancelled for the remainder of the season on the night in question. Please be considerate.

If you practice in a school, all practices are cancelled when schools are closed (weather, holidays, etc).

You are responsible for knowing the holiday and weather policy of your practice facility.

Do not leave any facility without making sure each child has left with a parent of guardian. As coach, you are responsible for the welfare of these children.

## **Practices**

The head coach must be present at all squad functions. If this is not possible, arrangements must be made for a responsible adult, at least 21 years of age, to be in charge. Otherwise, the function must be cancelled.

- Please give a minimum of 30 minutes notice if practice is cancelled.
- It is mandatory that a parent / guardian be present at all practices.
- If attendance becomes a problem, please contact your commissioner or coordinator.

## **Attendance Policy**

Each girl must attend and be prompt for all practices. If a child misses practices and the coach was not notified, the coach may sit that child for the first quarter of the next game and during any material that was taught during the missed practice. If a child misses more than 5 practices, for any reason, the coach must notify the coordinator of this attendance issue and further action may be necessary.

## **Practice Attire**

T-shirt, shorts, sweats, socks, tied tennis shoes and hair pulled back.

\*\*Blue jeans or khaki-type pants, hard sole shoes, baggy clothes or hair down represents a safety hazard and **are not permitted**.

If a child is not dressed properly for practice, please ask them to sit down for that practice and count as an absence. Safety comes first

## Positive Coaching

To coach cheerleading successfully, you must have the heart for the job. Since your primary responsibility is to build the person through cheerleading, your heart should be filled with love and care before the first word or motion is taught. You should:

- Facilitate cheerleader development regardless of age, skill, ability or experience.

- Recognize that youngsters have interest levels as varied as their skill level and ability level.

A coach must be a leader. All coaches must recognize that they hold a position of trust and responsibility in a program that deals with a sensitive and formative period of a youngster's development. It is required that the coach has understanding, patience and realizes that they are helping to shape the physical, mental and emotional development of young people.

Youngsters often idolize their coach, not because the adult is the most successful coach, but because the coach is a source of inspiration.

Coaches must be adults who are sensitive to the mental and physical limitations of children and who recognize that sport is a vehicle of training and enjoyment, not an end in itself.

The coach must be aware that she can be either a positive or a negative influence upon the development of the athlete. In all of her personal contacts with the athletes, parents, officials, etc., the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct. It is our belief that players and fans emulate the behavior of their coach. With your leadership qualities, we feel that together we can make this program the best program available to today's youth.

It is the obligation of coaches to practice the highest principles of sportsmanship and to observe the ethics of competition. Good sportsmanship is defined as qualities of behavior, which are characterized by courtesy and genuine concern for others. The display of good sportsmanship is a statement of the individual's understanding and commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity.

All successful coaches must have the ability to organize, lead, motivate, teach, relate and evaluate.

Successful coaches have –

- Attitude (confidence, self improvement)
- Goals (realistic, measurable, attainable)
- Knowledge (current and continuing education plans)

Be a positive example. You have volunteered to be a role model, like it or not. You will be remembered the rest of your player's lives. How do you want to be remembered?

Your job is to teach the "Game of Life" to all. Discipline, responsibility, working with others, self-esteem – these characteristics are a much higher calling of importance.

No one tries to make mistakes. If a child does make a mistake – and they will, after all they are children – keep in mind that mistakes are an important part of the overall learning process. Strive to be supportive and point out things that they do well. Emphasis the positive side of mistakes –

- Mistakes provide the information needed to improve performance
- Mistakes are stepping stones to achievement

Youngsters that are positively motivated peak under pressure Fear of failure youth dread critical situations and the possibility of failure and disapproval

Use positive self-talk – “The Little Engine That Could”

Know league goals and make them your own. If you can't live with them, don't volunteer.

Consider yourself a TEACHER rather than a coach.

As a coach, you are the youngster's authority while on the floor. Please understand that most youth have a negative attitude toward all authority. It is your job to change that into a positive. You can! By exemplifying the real reason for authority and showing that, every human needs authority in his / her life.

There are three basic reasons for authority:

1. Protection – You are your squad's protection – making sure that they are safe during practices and games. You provide a safe, fun atmosphere in which they can have fun practicing and enjoy games.
2. Direction – You are to direct your team in all fundamentals, skills, etc. An authority has a plan and shows the way. When followed, the activity promotes self-esteem and fun.
3. Correction – You, as an authority, will have to correct. This should always be out of concern and compassion. Correction is a positive when handled properly. Remember, authority is never taken. True authority is given by those who want authority in their life.

Caring will always show that you would like to protect, direct and correct your squad.

Keep in mind that, above all, the motivating factor for most children who enter an organized youth sports program is their desire to have FUN. This is particularly true with young children, many of whom are newcomers to the youth sports scene.

## Coaches Pledge

I will place the emotional and physical well being of my cheerleaders ahead of a personal desire to win.

I will treat each cheerleader as an individual, remembering the large range of emotional and physical development for the same age group.

I will do my best to provide a safe practicing and playing situation for my cheerleaders

I will promise to review and practice basic first aid principles needed to treat injuries of my cheerleaders.

I will do my best to organize practices that are fun and challenging for all my cheerleaders.

I will lead by example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all my cheerleaders.

I will be knowledgeable in the rules of cheerleading and I will teach these rules to my cheerleaders.

I will use those coaching techniques appropriate for all of the skills that I teach.

I will remember that I am a youth sports coach, and that the game is for the children and not adults.

### **HINTS, TIPS & TRICKS**

- Read, Read, Read, Read your manual...and re-read again!
- Keep all information in one binder (manual, coaches phone # list, roster, cheer lists, etc)
- Write everything down (words and arm motions for sidelines, cheers, dance movements, positions/formations, etc) AND distribute to cheerleaders and parents
- Place frequently used items (ie sideline cheers) in sheet protectors. Keep in your "binder" and use at all practices and games.
- List sideline cheers by Offense, Defense, Spirit / Crowd, General, etc
- Use 'attendance' sheet to document absences
- Use 'phone call' sheet to track all calls; establish a code (ie VM = Voice Mail, NA = No Answer, B = Busy)
- Use blank calendar to distribute schedule to parents
- Establish a "snack" schedule – parents volunteer to bring snack / drink for each girl after the games. Note – most facilities have a No Food / Drink policy. Take care of all garbage.

- Establish 'phone tree' for calls. Have the last person on the list call you and repeat the message.
- Develop a newsletter immediately. Include your name, assistant coach(es) names, phone numbers, practice info, expectations, etc
- Have a practice format (ie warm up, jumps, review, new material, breaks, "news" time, etc) Follow this format every practice.
- Accessories – ask a parent to coordinate this purchase. Collect all money up front. Do not distribute accessories unless you have received money. Keep all receipts – give parents copy.
- Handouts (ie game schedules, newsletters, etc) put the girl's names on the top of her paper prior to distribution. That way you know who did not receive her copy.
- Use your practice time wisely. Teach more difficult material at practice. Teach simple things (most sidelines) during the game.
- Make game time FUN – include the basketball team and parents; make a team "banner" (poster with the players and cheerleaders names on it) and display at every game. Make other spirit items (posters, shaker bottles, etc) for use in the stands.
- Create "spirit" ideas – Team Spirit & Team Pride – Catch the Wave, jump sequence (1,2, jump, yell team name) stomp/clap sequence to warn parents a crowd involvement cheer is coming.
- Spirit – for younger girls, assign a spirit word / phrase to use when spiriting on / off the floor.
- Develop simple hand signals to communicate to your squad.
- Use "key words" to stress important ideas, use frequently and be consistent.
- Check TV guide for cheerleading competitions on ESPN and ESPN2. Tape and watch again for routine ideas.