

Orange County Youth Football League, Inc.



CHEERLEADING COACHES HANDBOOK

Cheer Regulations and Rules

OVERVIEW:

Cheerleading is a physical demanding activity that requires commitment, discipline, and adherence to established rules. All participants are expected to follow the rules and regulations of their team, their town, and the Orange County Youth Football League, Inc (OCYFL) at all times. OCYFL rules take precedence in all matters. Towns may enforce stricter guideline but may not reduce or weaken any OCYFL rule or requirement.

ORGANIZATION:

- Each town offering cheerleading shall designate a Cheer Director as a member of the town's board, with full and equal voting rights.
 - Oversees all cheerleading coaches
 - Oversees all cheerleading teams.
- The head coach of each team must be at least 21 years of age.
 - All coaches must be certified by YCADA
 - Background check annually through NSID
 - Reports to the Cheer Director
- Junior Coaches or high school demonstrator may be used to teach cheers, stunts, etc.
 - However, this individual shall be under the direction and supervision of the Head Coach or Assistant Coach.
 - Must be in atleast 7th grade
- Coaches are not permitted to participate in stunts at games. playoffs or cheerfest.
- Each town will provide a safe, convenient area to cheer, free of fan interference for home and away teams.
- Any team that does not abide by the current stunt rules at can be referred to OCYFL Board for suspension from coaching.

MASCOTS:

Mascots are allowed to participate in the OCYFL league, provided they are 16+ years of age, hold a badge by the town and are in a mascot uniform.

AGE:

All Cheerleaders must be at least 5 years old and entering kindergarten but not older than 14 by June 1st but not in 9th grade of the current season.

Cheerleaders will be placed on teams according to their grade level.

It is at the discretion of the town to allow 5 year olds to be on the MM team.

- Mighty Mites 6 & 7 years of age
- Division I: 8 & 9 years of age
- Division II: 10 & 11 years of age
- Division III: 12 & 13 years of age

Moving down a level – requires a playdown request to the OCYFL Board of Directors for approval.

REGISTRATION

Online registration through NSID

- Registration Form
- Parents Code of Conduct
- OCYFL Medical Form – signed and stamped by physician that the cheerleader is physically fit to participate with no restrictions.
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Proof of school district

APPEARANCE:

Uniform

- All cheerleaders must wear town issued uniform and bow
 - No additional accessories
 - This includes shoe charms
 - This includes hair beads
 - No jewels or rhinestones adhered to face or body

Cheer Shoes:

- Cheer shoes only, Coaches discretion during inclement weather

Hair

- All hair must be pulled back off the face, neck and shoulders in a neat like fashion.
 - High straight pony tail or tight bun.
 - Hair must not be hanging below the shoulders or fall in front of the face.

Nails

- Nails must be kept short.
 - You should not feel tips of nails on your palm.
 - No false nails
 - No nail polish at all while cheering.

Jewelry

- No jewelry is allowed.
 - With the exception of medical ID tags or medals
 - which must be taped over and clearly marked
- ALL piercings must be removed.
 - cannot be covered with tape or a Band-Aid.
 - NO EXCEPTIONS
- Makeup is prohibited for all youth functions
 - Cheerfest is only exception and should be kept to a tasteful minimum.
 - Face Shimmer is allowed
 - However no loose glitter.

YOUTH CHEER GENERAL SAFETY RULES:

Tumbling

- All tumbling must originate from the ground level.
- Spotted/Assisted Tumbling is an allowable skill.
 - However, any skills of these type will not be considered a part of tumbling difficulty.
- Partner tumbling is prohibited.
 - Participants are prohibited from tumbling over, under or through stunts or pyramids.
 - Participants are prohibited from any form of tumbling over/under individuals.
- Tumbling oriented load-ins to stunts, dismounts, and transitions (such as Cartwheels, Round Offs, and Walkovers) are permitted:
- Must follow inversion rules
- Rebounding from tumbling skills into stunts/stunt transitions is limited to cradle, load-in, and below prep level group-based stunt only.
 - If rebounding into a single based below prep level stunt, an additional spotter is required.
- 3/4 flips and 1 1/4 flips are prohibited.
- Tumbling exception:
 - tumbling with poms in hand is only permitted when executing a Forward/Backward Roll.

STUNTING:

Mini tramps, springboards or any other height increasing apparatus are prohibited (exception spring floor)

NO STUNTING in bad weather (rain, mud, or high winds).

Casts and Braces:

- Participants with a hard cast may not tumble, stunt, or be considered as spotters and are not required to wrap/pad the cast.
- Participants wearing hard braces with exposed metal material, such as knee, wrist and elbow braces, are required to wrap/cover the brace with a padded material so that it protects both them and their fellow participants from injury.
- Participants wearing a full (medical) boot brace/walking boot may not be involved in stunting or tumbling.

Poms and Props

- Props are limited to poms, banners, flags, megaphones, and signs/light up signs.
- All poms and props brought on the performing area must be used during the routine.
- The use of poms and props is prohibited during tumbling, partner stunt/pyramid building, tosses, dismounts and all stunt transitions that require the use of hands.
- Once stunt is fully built, flyers may obtain and use poms and props and then transition to another stunt that does not require the use of hand(s).
 - Example: Once secure in an Extension Prep, poms may be handed to a flyer; the flyer may then transition to an extension with poms in hand.
 - Exceptions are not limited to this example.
- Bases/back spotters may not hold poms or props in their hands if the hands are the primary support for the top person during stunting.
 - Example: A back spotter grabbing the sign from the flyer in Extension Prep would be illegal.
- Front spots may hand or be handed poms or props from flyers provided the front spot is not actively building or dismounting the stunt at the time of hand off.

Stunts/Dismounts/Pyramids/Release Moves/Inversions

- Stunts may not travel over another individual and/or stunt.
 - Exception:
 - Double Based Vertical T-Lifts may travel over a single Nugget with or without contact to the Nugget.
 - Must never pass over, under or through other stunts and/or pyramids.
 - Individuals are permitted to jump over other participants on the performance surface.
 - (Division 2/3) Single leg extended stunts may be braced to other extended level stunts.
 - In all dismounts, catching base(s) MUST physically assist (re-catch the flyer to control/slow down descent) the flyer to the performance surface.
 - (Division 2/3) Superman transitions cannot invert at any point, may not intentionally travel and may only originate from prep level or below stunts or the load in position.

Pendulums

- Pendulum transitions must start from prep level or below and return to an upright stunt/load- in/ground position.
- One Spotter is required in front of the catchers during all pendulum transitions.
- Two Bases are required (must remain stationary) plus two additional catchers (must remain stationary) 1 on each side of a Pendulum or stunt that moves away from the vertical axis (i.e. Shooting Star, Shoot Outs, etc.).
- Stunts transitions must never be released to the prone position (face-down/stomach).
- Stunts may not brace/touch any other flyer while simultaneously released from the bases
 - (ex. two flyers performing Tic Tocs next to one another may not brace during the release move).
- Superman transitions may not be braced to any other stunt/transition.
- May not cradle from any stunt in which the base(s) have a knee on the ground.
- Release moves may not involve changing bases.
- In pyramids involving release moves that require a bracer for legality (ball ups, braced flips, etc.), contact between the flyer and the original bracer(s) must be maintained throughout the entire release move transition until the flyer makes contact with the original bases.
- In all pyramids that require a bracer, contact between the flyer and the bracer must be maintained throughout the entire stunt/transition.
- All downward inversions are **ILLEGAL** unless an exception is stated in the Division Rules Grid for that division.
- All inversions require 2 bases and 1 spotter.
- Inversion skills where the flyer transitions from the inversion directly over the back spot to the load in position or directly from the inversion to a shoulder sit on the back spot, requires an additional spotter.

Tosses (Division 3)

- May never intentionally travel.
- Must be caught in a Cradle by the original bases and are limited to up to 4 bases (total base count includes back and front spotters).
 - Example: 1 main base, 1 secondary base, 1 back spotter and 1 optional front spotter.
- Must never become inverted at any point during the toss.
- Limited to single trick toss

Spotters

- Must be in direct contact with the performance surface.
- Continuous Back Spotter
- Not required for Knee Stands, Thigh Stands, Shoulder Sits, Double-Based Non-Extended V-Sits, and Below Prep Level Stunts
 - (exception: Required for single based stunts in which the flyer performs a Rebound entry).
- (Division 2 & 3) Required at head/shoulder area for all Barrel Rolls
- (Division 1 ONLY) All Extended V-Sits and Swedish Falls require an additional spotter who is not connected to the stunt.
- Required for all stunts, release moves and tosses prep level and above
 - (exceptions: may transition from/to back spot of a group-based stunt to Shoulder Sit, Flatbacks with at least 3 bases, vertical/horizontal T-Lifts).
 - In Flatbacks with 3 bases, one base must be supporting the head, neck, and shoulders of the flyer.
- Required for all below prep level stunts where the primary bases are not using their hands/arms to directly support the flyer
 - (example: flyer standing on the backs of the bases).
- Must not step underneath the stunt to hold the feet (soles) of the flyer's shoes without the help of an additional back spotter located directly behind the stunt.
 - Exception: One hand may go under a foot of the flyer in prep level and below stunts.
- Must never pass through the vertical plane of the stunt. The back spotter's torso may never pass under a stunt or the flyer's body
 - (example: walk under and/or through a stunt).
- (Levels 2-3) During $\frac{1}{2}$ twist transitions from prep level or below to a cradle position, the flyer and at least one base or back spotter must maintain contact throughout the transition and an additional spotter is required at the head and shoulders of the flyer to catch the Cradle.
- Must be positioned directly behind or to the side of the flyer when the flyer is facing the back spotter and stops in or power presses at a prep level or above stunt/stunt transition.
 - (Example: Reverse Extension Prep 180 to Extension Prep would require an additional spotter during the Reverse Extension Prep).
- Spotter for Single Based Stunts
- Required for a single-based partner stunts at prep level and above.
- Must be positioned directly behind or to the side of the flyer.

- Must not step underneath the stunt to hold the feet (soles) of the flyer's shoes
 - (exception: may place one hand under the foot with other hand on the ankle at prep level and below provided the spotter is positioned to the side of the flyer and they do not cradle).
- May not change roles between being a base and a continuous spotter when stunt is prep level or above.

Bases

- Must be in direct contact with the performance surface.
- Must never assume a Back Bend, Headstand or Handstand position while basing a stunt.
- Two required during a pyramid transition when the flyer is completely released by the bases while remaining braced
 - (Division 2/3) exception: single based release moves are allowed if the flyer remains vertical).
- Two bases required in all Split Stunts.

Practices:

- Practice shall not begin until August 1st of the current year.

Practices shall not exceed the following:

- No more than 10 hours per week during August
- After school starts practices are limited to
 - Mighty Mites and Division One 6 hours per week
 - Division Two and Division Three 8 hours per week
 - No more than 2 hours of practice may be scheduled on any one day
- At least 15 minutes of warm up exercise (to stretch and to limber-up) shall be included prior to practice and games including Cheerfest.
- Water and bathroom breaks will be given during practices as a squad.
 - If emergency need then rule of 3 which includes an adult
- No practice, stunting or participation at games shall be permitted without the head coach or approved certified coach.

Mandatory Cuts:

Mandatory cuts can occur for the following reasons:

- Cheerleader cannot fulfill registration requirements
- Absences:
 - A minimum of 6 practices for sideline cheer and 8 practices to stunt must be attended during the month of August or prior to the first game.
 - From the start of the school year through the remainder of the season, the number of allowed absences will be at the discretion of the individual town.
 - Policy must communicated in advance
- Health or Safety Concern
 - Unable to participate for medical or physical condition
 - Failure to comply with return to play, concussion or injury protocols
- Cheerleader refuses to abide by league rules.
 - demonstrates repeated or serious failure to comply
- Voluntary withdrawal
 - they may not return for that season, for that town or any other town.
- A transfer of a family moving will need OCYFL board approval.

All mandatory cuts must follow with written notice to the parent/guardian and an opportunity for review by the town board

Games:

All teams must be ready to go within 30 mins of the start time of the game and must be on the field prior the coin toss.

- The home team will welcome the visiting team with the “Hello” cheer first.
 - A coach, not a junior coach, from each team will travel with the team during the “Hello” cheer.
- Half time to be shared by both cheer teams, the visiting team will use the field first for their routine.
 - Each team’s performance should not exceed two and a half (2:30) minutes
 - Each team will watch each other’s routine, cheer and support each other
 - Remaining time is to be spent with coach regrouping for the next half of the game.
- During an injury of a player from either team,
 - all cheerleaders will stop and take a knee while the player is being administered to.
- No trips to concession stand or wandering the field during the game or half time.
 - Eating in uniform is at the discretion of town
- A cheerleader’s job is not only to cheer, it’s to observe the game, get involved, and know where their team stands.
- Rain or shine all squads are to cheer at all games.
 - No stunting in rain
- At the completion of the game congratulatory handshakes by both teams will be done prior to any traditional spiriting.
 - Each team should line up right behind their football team
- Police your area and clean up before exiting the field

Playoff's

If your team goes to playoff's attendance of cheerleaders is not optional

Cheerfest:

- All towns with cheer teams are required to provide 3 volunteers for cheerfest
- All towns participating in cheerfest are required to bring a raffle basket valued at \$50.00 to cheerfest
 - Failure to provide will incur \$100.00 fine to the town

All regular season rules will apply in addition to those set forth by the Cheerfest committee.

- This is an exhibition ONLY.
- Usually scheduled for early November.
- Any team that does not abide by the current stunt rules at Cheerfest will be referred to OCYFL Board for suspension from coaching.
- Cheerfest Routine -2 minutes 30 seconds (2:30) Timing will begin with the first choreographed word, movement, skill, or note of music following the team's entrance to the performance surface.
 - Cheerfest – Timing will start with the first participant to spirit onto the performance surface.
 - Teams may use a short count and a set prior to the start of the music/cheer. (Example: "5,6,7,8 – Panthers!")
 - Timing will end with the last choreographed word, movement, skill, or note of music preceding the team's exit from the performance surface.
- Coaches may not delay the start of the routine in order to fix formations.
- Only registered participants of a team are allowed on the performance surface.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Actions taken will be under the discretion of an event official

- Routines must be appropriate for family viewing.
- Appropriate choreography and music **MUST** be used.
 - Teams using excessive vulgar or suggestive movements, words or music will be penalized the following year.
- Tear away uniforms and/or removal of clothing is not allowed.
- Uniforms and make up should be age appropriate and suitable for family viewing.
- Items that may damage the performance surface are prohibited. (loss glitter)

Camps:

All cheerleaders associated with OCYFL may attend camp as an individual, group, or a team with or without their coach.

- Camp is defined as a meeting of one or more training sessions provided by an outside organization.
 - Camps are optional and not a requirement to be part of OCYFL.

Competitions:

The OCYFL will not sponsor any competition team. There are NO competitions allowed within the regular season. Towns may attend competitions AFTER the full regular season including playoffs and Super Bowl as a private league and must provide their own insurance separate from the OCYFL. The OCYFL rules should be the base rules all follow with careful attention to the competition host's rules.

Infractions:

At the town level:

- At the 1st infraction, Cheer Coaches will be given a verbal warning.
- At the 2nd infraction, Cheer Coach will be given a written warning and a one game suspension.
- At the 3rd infraction, the situation will be referred to OCYFL Board.

Rule Category	MIM (6-7)	D1 (8-9)	D2 (10-11)	D3 (12-14)
Stunt Level Requirements	No Higher than waist level	No Higher than prep level/ extensions must be braced	Extension level	No restrictions height wise
Single Leg Extended Stunts (braced to other extended level stunts)	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Allowed	Allowed
Superman Transitions	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Allowed with restrictions	Allowed with restrictions
Pendulums	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Allowed with spotters	Allowed with spotters
Cradle from base with knee on ground	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
Release moves (changing bases)	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed
Inversions (general)	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Allowed with 2 bases & 1 spotter	Allowed with 2 bases & 1 spotter
Basket Toss	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Not Allowed	Allowed with 4 bases max
Barrel Rolls (spotter required)	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Required at head/shoulders/feet	Required at head/shoulders/feet
Extended V-Sits and Swedish Falls (additional spotter)	Not Applicable	Required for Extended V-Sits/Swedish Falls	Not Required	Not Required
1/2 twist to cradle (spotter at head/shoulder)	Not Applicable	Required	Required	Required
Single-Based Partner Stunts (spotting rules)	Not Applicable	Strict spotting position, limited cradle	Strict spotting position	Strict spotting position

Incident Reporting Protocol

The Orange County Youth Football League (OCYFL) is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and sportsmanlike environment for all participants, including athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and spectators. This Incident Reporting Protocol establishes a standardized process for submitting, reviewing, and resolving game-related incidents in a timely and fair manner.

Reportable Incidents

Incidents may include, but are not limited to:

-
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Verbal or physical altercations
- Harassment or abuse
- Spectator misconduct
- Violations of league rules or policies
- Safety concerns occurring during games or league events

Incident Submission Requirements

- All incidents must be submitted in writing using the official OCYFL Incident Report Form
- Reports may be submitted by:
 - Coaches
 - Game officials
 - League or town representatives
- Incident reports must be submitted no later than Monday at 6:00 p.m. following the game weekend

Late Submissions:

Reports submitted after the deadline will not be considered, unless exceptional circumstances are reviewed and approved by the OCYFL Executive Board.

Review & Resolution Timeline

Initial Review & Notification

- Upon receipt, the incident report will be reviewed by the Incident Coordinator or a designated OCYFL Board Member
- The report will then be forwarded to the town or team named in the report for an official response

Response from Named Town or Team

- The named town or team must submit a written response
- Responses must be received no later than Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. following the initial submission deadline

Failure to respond within the required timeframe may result in the incident being reviewed based solely on the original report.

Executive Board Review

- After the response is received, the original incident report and written response will be distributed to all OCYFL Executive Board members
- The Executive Board will review the materials and conduct a discussion and vote
- Review may take place:
 - Electronically, or
 - During a scheduled meeting, if deemed necessary by the Board

Final Decision & Communication

- A final determination will be made no later than Friday at 6:00 p.m. of the same week
- The outcome will be communicated via email to:
 - The original reporting town or team
 - The responding town or team

Any disciplinary actions, sanctions, or recommendations will be clearly outlined in the communication.

Authority & Finality

All decisions rendered by the OCYFL Executive Board regarding incident reports are final and binding, unless otherwise stated in league bylaws or disciplinary policies.

Official Incident Reports can be found in the forms section of this handbook



Orange County Youth Football League, Inc

Incident Report

Town Reporting: _____ Date: _____

Location of Incident: _____

☐ Home Field ☐ Away Field ☐ Other _____

Details: _____

Ejections:

☐ Player ☐ Coach ☐ Parent ☐ Volunteer ☐ Spectator

Name of person(s) ejected:

Head Referee Name: _____

☐ Police called ☐ Ambulance called

Date Incident was submitted to OCYFL: _____ ☐ E-mail ☐ In person

Who submitted the report to OCYFL? _____

Position: _____

OCYFL Executive Board Only

☐ Spoke with reporting town ☐ Forwarded form to the other town involved

☐ Sent all gathered information to E-Board for review, discussion & decision

Outcome of the report: _____

☐ Decision sent to all parties involved

Injury Report Protocol

Injury Report Submission Requirements

- Injury reports must be completed by a town representative or coach
- Reports must be submitted in writing using the official OCYFL Injury Report Form
- All injury reports must be submitted to OCYFL within one (1) calendar day of the injury
- Reports are required for record keeping, insurance, and safety monitoring purposes

Failure to submit an injury report within the required timeframe may result in disciplinary action.

Documentation & Record Keeping

- Injury reports will be reviewed and retained by OCYFL for:
 - League records
 - Insurance documentation
 - Safety review and trend monitoring
- Submitted reports do not replace medical clearance requirements for return to play

Confidentiality

All injury reports will be treated as confidential medical information and handled in accordance with applicable privacy standards.



Orange County Youth Football League, Inc Injury Report

Player's Name: _____ Date of Injury: _____

Town: _____ Team: _____ Coach: _____

Location: Where specifically did injury take place? _____

☐ Home Field ☐ Away Field ☐ Other _____

Explain: _____

Player taken to hospital or doctor? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Taken for medical attention by ☐ Ambulance ☐ Parents ☐ Other

Where Parents present ? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Where Parents notified? ☐ Yes ☐ No Notified by whom: _____

Was local league board member notified? ☐ Yes ☐ No Who? _____

Write a brief description of the injury, what action was the player doing at the time of the injury? _____

Did the player have to stop practice or game activity? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did player return to normal practice? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes when? _____

If the player was unable to return to normal activity, we need a doctor's note for player to return. **Any player who went to doctor or hospital must have a doctor's note to return.**

Date Injury Report was submitted to OCYFL: _____

Who submitted the report to OCYFL? _____