



Cheer Handbook

Section 1 – Philosophy

Golden Empire Youth Football and Cheer is Kern County's largest high school feeder program operated for the benefit of its youth participants. As a League-sponsored non-competitive activity, cheerleaders serve as a support group for the athletic program Golden Empire Youth Tackle Football. We consider ourselves not just team supportive cheer but not quite competitive cheer also known as Sideline Cheer. GEYC cheerleaders are Student Athletes in that order. We seek to develop well-rounded young men and women who learn not only the fundamentals of cheerleading, stunting, dance and chants but also the importance of education, in an atmosphere conducive to developing sound mind, body and character. Inspire youth to practice the ideals of sportmanship, scholarship, self discipline, teamwork, leadership and physical fitness. Cheerleaders should strive to boost spirit, promote good sportsmanship, and develop positive crowd involvement! Cheerleaders should focus on directing the cheering of student and adult fans. In this role, cheerleaders are positive, effective leaders. Their activities should be focused on: creating a cooperative spirit among the cheerleading teams, athletes, and the community; recognizing outstanding plays and examples of good sportsmanship on the part of competing teams; and aiding the organization and game officials in the promotion of good sportsmanship by the spectators.

Section 2 – Participation Eligibility

- All GEYF/GEYC Participants must be a minimum of 6 years of age on or before **November 15th** of the current calendar year for the Rookie Division.
- All GEYF/GEYC Participants must be a minimum of 8 years of age on or before **November 15th** of the current calendar year and cannot exceed the age of 14 years and or be enrolled in high school regardless of Division. For the Freshman, Sophomore, Junior Varsity and Varsity divisions.

Every cheerleader must meet GEYC registration requirements. At the time of registration, all GEYC Participants must provide original birth certificate as well as two copies, and proof of residency (utility bill) as well as a physical.

Recruitment of participants within an area is the sole responsibility of the Cheer Representative and head coach of each division. Participant must reside (the place where the participant sleeps, eats, bathes, studies, and interacts with his siblings and/or parent(s), guardians, or foster parents) within an area's boundaries, and must provide proof of residency in that area. Upon proper verification, participants involved in a dual family/residence scenario have the option to play in either respective area upon providing appropriate proof of residency at time of registration.

Participants attending parochial schools must provide appropriate enrollment documentation to establish program eligibility

Section 3 - Team Size and Divisions

There are five (5) divisions allowed per Area.

Rookie Division: Ages 6 & 7 years.

- **Freshmen Division:** Ages 8 & 9 years.
- **Sophomore Division:** Ages 10 & 11 years.
- **Junior Varsity Division:** Ages 11 & 12 years.
- **Varsity Division:** Ages 13 & 14 years.

Cheer participants age and division bracketing is used for classification purposes only. **Divisions** can be combined for single or multiple squad usage. Divisions can **only** be combined into the following categories:

- **Rookie/Freshman**
- **Freshman/Sophomore**
- **Sophomore/JV**
- **JV/Varsity**
- **Full Unity**

Section 4 – Coaching Eligibility

All head GEYC Head Coaches must be at least twenty-one (21) years of age. All practices and games will always be supervised by a Head coach. All coaches will submit an application and be subjected to a “Live Scan” background check before being interviewed and approval submitted by Board to coach. **Coaches must not have been convicted of any crime, which cause them to register under Section 290 of the California Penal Code.** Coaches, Board Members, and or league employees are all subject to a background check. Criminal convictions and or arrests may disqualify an applicant. Coaches in high school are eligible to coach as follows:

- High School Freshman– Rookie, Freshman Divisions
- High School Sophomore – Rookie, Freshman, Sophomore Divisions
- High School Junior Varsity – Rookie, Freshman, Sophomore, JV Divisions
- High School Senior – Rookie, Freshman, Sophomore, JV Varsity

Coach’s duties include but not limited to the following:

- 1. Properly plan the activity.** Make sure that athletes are in proper condition. Teach skills in a progression so that athletes are prepared to handle more difficult skills.
- 2. Provide proper instruction.** Keep up-to-date on better and safer ways of performing techniques. Teach athletes the rules and the correct skills and strategies of the activity.
- 3. Provide a safe physical environment.** Periodically inspect playing areas and the practice area for hazards and remove them. Prevent improper or unsupervised use of facilities.
- 4. Match your athletes.** According to size, physical maturity, skill level, and experience.
- 5. Supervise the activity closely.** Do not allow athletes to practice difficult or potentially dangerous skills without proper supervision. Forbid horseplay. Do not allow athletes to use facilities without supervision.
- 6. All Coaches (including Assistant Coaches)** must be First Aid and CPR certified, and must provide to their Cheer Representative a copy of their current certification

Section 5 – Practice Schedules

After school starts and during the regular/post season, practice for all divisions will be limited to three (3) two and a half hour (2.5) practices in a seven (7) day period.

Once school has let out for the summer, all teams are allowed to practice a maximum of 5 2 ½ hours practices in a (7) seven day period.

Practice locations **must be** approved by the Area Representative.

Head Coaches, and/or Cheer Representatives must be present in order for practice to take place.

The following suggestions can help the coach to set up practices.

- Place—this should be a safe environment. Practice sessions must be held in a location suitable for spirit activities, i.e., appropriate matting, grassy area, free of obstructions, free of distractions and excessive noise.
- Time—If possible, have a consistent start time each day. Start on time and wrap up at the end of practice. Distribute a monthly calendar with a schedule of all practices and games.
- Goals—Set goals for each practice. Involve the students in goal setting
- Conditioning—A well-conditioned athlete will have fewer injuries and will recover more quickly from injuries. Conditioning should be done before practicing jumps, stunting and tumbling.
- Have a variety of activities for each practice by incorporating all aspects of cheerleading.
- Review safety techniques at every practice.

Section 6 – Stunting

Stunting is ONLY permitted by coaches that have been certified through GEYC. Stunting is an exciting and growing aspect of cheerleading requiring endurance, strength, balance, flexibility and timing. As the athleticism and complexity of stunting increases, it is important that coaches are well trained.

Please refer to GEYC Stunting Guidelines for all stunting rules and levels

Getting Ready for Stunts

- Access performer readiness
- Implement a strength and conditioning program
- Follow stunt progressions

Assessing performer readiness

- Is the athlete strong enough to perform the skill?
- Has the athlete learned the skills leading up to this skill?
- Does the athlete clearly understand the skill being practiced?
- Is the environment adequate to practice the skill? (Matting, lighting, ceiling height, etc.)

Strength and conditioning

- Warm up—Should include general activities that warm the body. Walking and jogging are examples of warm up activities.
- Stretching—Should be an organized routine covering all parts of the body.
- Flexibility training—Used to decrease the chance of pulled muscles.
- Endurance training—Increases the efficiency and capacity of the cardiopulmonary system.
- Strength training—Used to build muscle mass and reduce injuries.

Section 7-Team Unity and Goal Setting

Team Building - Why team build with cheerleaders?

- Team building is a proactive method of managing issues, leadership, attitudes, success, and misbehavior.
- They are not familiar with one another.
- Usually, they have just completed tryouts in which they were competing for a position on the team and, in most cases, competing against one another.

Setting Team Goals

Teams should set goals for each practice, each game, each week, each season, each year. Here are some suggestions to you on how to set goals in different areas, depending on your traditions, your style, your potential, your limitations, your attitudes, and your determination.

Determining Your Goals Cheers

- Basic cheer technique
- Crowd involvement cheers--use of signs
- Performance-type cheers

Jumps

- Execution, technique
- Learn new ones
- Warm-up exercises
- Team incorporation

Attitude Goals

- Becoming better friends
- Building unity
- Communication with each other
- Understanding and following guidelines
- Raising the level of the cheerleaders' attitudes

Involvement

- Raising team spirit
- Participant involvement at games
- Community involvement
- Parent support of cheerleading program

Chants

- Short Spirit
- Game action-knowing what to do when
- Crowd response, allowing enough repetitions

Stunts/Mounts

- Basics
- Improve what we know
- Work into cheers
- Spotting techniques
- Endings

Creativity Goals

- Use of new cheers and chants
- Formations/Incorporation's
- Using innovative ways to encourage crowd participation and interest