Coach Education Program

Online CHEERLEADING Sport Certification
Coach Education Program

*If you have not already done so, please complete the following Class A Certification Process at: http://soky.org/coachcertification/ prior to completing this Sport Certification Training

• Become a Class A Volunteer
• Complete and Submit Class “A” Volunteer Application.  
  *Required every three years*
• Complete the online Volunteer Orientation Training and submit its quiz.  
  *Only required once during continued involvement with SOKY*
• Complete the online Special Olympics International Protective Behaviors course.  
  *Required every three years for those over the age of 18*
• Complete the online CDC’s “Heads Up” Concussion Training for SOKY and submit its quiz.  
  *Required every three years for those over the age of 18*
Cheerleading Sport Certification

- This training will cover Special Olympics Kentucky Cheerleading events, rules, competitions, the divisioning and registration process, along with any additional Cheerleading resources and other general information.

- The online Cheerleading Sport Certification training is required for SOKY coaches who like to become sport certified and is part of the criteria to be eligible to attend both USA and World Games. The training is also for those coaches and/or volunteers that would just like to learn more information about Special Olympics Kentucky as a whole and specifically its Cheerleading program.
Coaching Special Olympics Athletes prepares Special Olympics coaches to use their sport-specific knowledge in coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities. This course meets the Special Olympics standards and competencies for coach certification. For veteran Special Olympics coaches, this course serves as a reminder of the essentials sometimes forgotten after years of coaching. For new Special Olympics coaches, this course will help prepare you for your first role in coaching Special Olympics athletes.
Coaching Special Olympics Athletes (Cont.)

The better the coach …
the better the experiences …
the better the athlete!
I COACH BECAUSE BECAUSE CLIP

Please take a minute to watch this “I Coach Because Clip” created by Special Olympics New Jersey

I COACH BECAUSE CLIP
Course Overview

Unit 1: The Athlete
Unit 2: Teaching & Training
Unit 3: Preparing & Coaching During Competition
Unit 4: Managing the Program
Unit 5: Additional Coach Information
Unit 6: SOKY Cheerleading Specifics
Unit 1 – The Athlete Overview

• Psychological Issues or Learning Issues
• Medical Issues
• Social Issues
Unit 1 – Psychological Issues & Considerations

**Motivation** – helping athletes maintain interest
- May have shorter attention span; harder to keep independently “on task”.
- May be motivated more by short-term rather than long-term goals.
- May learn better with more frequent positive reinforcement

**Perception** – helping athletes understand the sport in which they are participating
- May have difficulty focusing attention on the appropriate object or task
- May have impairments in sight or hearing
Comprehension—helping athletes remember and preform the skill they have learned (understanding)
- May find it difficult to understand verbal explanations of new skills. Often find it easier to learn through visual demonstrations and physical prompts.
- May have difficulty in understanding complex, multi-part actions or explanations.
- Often take a longer time between learning one piece of information and the next (learning plateau).
- Less able to generalize skills learned in one situation to a different situation.

Memory
- May need frequent repetition and reminders in order to remember concept or skill
### Unit 1 – Psychological Challenges

*Each psychological item has its challenge and action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Item</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Easily distracted by noise</td>
<td>Control surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>History of neglect &amp; negative reinforcement, feeling of failure</td>
<td>Focus on positive, appropriate reinforcement, catch the athlete doing well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Difficulty applying skills in different environments</td>
<td>Practice in different settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Difficulty learning through verbal explanation only</td>
<td>Add demonstrations and/or physical manipulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Down Syndrome

- Approximately 10% of individuals with Down Syndrome have a condition called atlanto-axial instability, which is a mal-alignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck. This condition may cause possible injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine.

- Prohibited sports – equestrian, gymnastics, diving, pentathlon, butterfly and dive starts in swimming, high jump, alpine/snowboarding, squat lift and soccer.

Medications

- Understand the physical side effects of an athlete’s medication

- Very important to know the medications athletes are taking
Seizures

- Incidence tends to be higher with Special Olympics athletes
- Athlete safety to minimize the adverse effects of a seizure

Physical Disabilities

- Some athletes also have physical disabilities which may affect the sports they can participate in or the methods of teaching a coach must use. Special Olympics has events for individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers or other assistance. *CHEERLEADING IS AN ASSISTED SPORT*
- Muscle strength may be needed for particular sports and some athletes may not have the strength for those sports. This is often due to lack of use rather than a permanent disability.
**Autism**

- 20% of athletes exhibit one or more of the autism spectrum disorders
- Over stimulate

**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**

- These athletes consistently function better on performance tasks compared with verbal tasks. The more concrete the task, the better the performance.
- Tend to have more verbal comprehension skills, despite being comfortable and chatty around people. These athletes will also tend to have attention and memory deficits and often display poor judgement in distinguishing right from wrong.
# Unit 1 – Medical Considerations for each action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>See the challenge that correlates with the appropriate action.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Down Syndrome</td>
<td>Ensure the athlete is screened for atlanto-axial instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Seizures</td>
<td>Be prepared to protect the athlete and minimize adverse affects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Autism spectrum disorders</td>
<td>Control and/or block self-stimulatory behavior and set up a behavior support plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Attention deficit/hyperactivity</td>
<td>Shorten drills and provide one-to-one assistance when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Fetal alcohol syndrome</td>
<td>Provide concrete performance tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 1 – Social Considerations

**Social Skills**
- May lack basic social/adaptive skills due to a lack of opportunity or training
- May also lack communication skills and positive interaction with others

**Recreation at Home**
- Lack of physical activity
- Lack of encouragement

**Economic Status**
- May lack financial means
- May not have access to independent transportation
All of the following social consideration(s) may impact an athlete’s participation in Special Olympics:

- Inappropriate responses to social situations
- Physical inactivity being modeled
- Lack of endurance
- Lack of access to transportation

Our challenge as coaches is to develop a full understanding of our athletes and the strengths and weaknesses they bring with them to a Special Olympics program. By doing so we can begin to develop a training and competition program that they will benefit from and enjoy.
Unit 2 – Teaching & Training the Athlete
There are many ways to organize a training session for Special Olympics athletes. Because of some of the things previously identified concerning comprehension and memory, there is considerable value in developing a consistent training routine that provides familiarity, stability, and comfort.
## Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component and Details</th>
<th>Layout of Drill or Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warm-up &amp; Stretching</strong></td>
<td>Specific to the sport, repetitive and involve athletes in leading activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills Construction</strong></td>
<td>Break skills into smaller tasks, involve many athletes at a time and practice skills related to event situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competition Experience</strong></td>
<td>Scrimmage, simulate event/game situations and work towards what the competition will look like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cool-Down, Stretch, &amp; Reward</strong></td>
<td>Playing a game related to the sport and end each training with a cool down activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session: Warm-Up

**Warm-Up**

- A warm-up should be the first physical activity in every training session or competition. It helps prepare the body and mind for the activity we are about to do. Warm-ups should begin at a slow pace and gradually become a little faster and more difficult.

- A warm-up helps us to reach a state of physical and mental readiness. When we prepare both the body and the mind, we are less likely to suffer an injury and will preform better at each practice, training and competition.
Physical Benefits: A warm-up prepares the body for sport or exercise and helps to prevent injury by:
- Increasing heart rate
- Increasing breathing rate
- Increasing blood flow to the active muscles
- Increasing body and muscle temperature

Mental Benefits: Warm-ups prepare the mind to focus on the sport or exercise by:
- Helping athletes shift focus from life to sport
- Mentally reviewing skills previously learned
- Connecting the mind and the body (linking hand and eye coordination)
Every sport is different and each sport has specific skills and movements. The warm-up should be personalized to the sport and the ability levels of all of the athletes.

However there are some general components that should be included in all warm-ups regardless of the sport in which includes the following:

- Aerobic activity to raise heart rate
- Dynamic stretches
- Sport specific movements
Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session: Warm-Up – Aerobic Activity

- Aerobic activities are whole body movements that will increase the heart rate that may include:
  - Walk or jog around the field for five minutes
  - Team Dance
  - Team Game (i.e. – tag or sport specific game)
  - Build an obstacle course using the equipment and space you have for practice

- Aerobic activities should start at a slow pace and gradually increase in intensity/difficulty and last at least five minutes.
Now that the body is warm it is time to focus on stretching the muscles you will use during your sport.

Dynamic stretches consist of active, controlled movements that take body parts through a full range of motion.

Sport specific dynamic stretches include:
- Sprints
- Agility drills
- Balance drills

General dynamic stretches include:
- High knees
- Butt kicks
- Leg swings
- Torso twists
- Side stepping
- Arm circles
Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session: Cool-Down

Cool-Down

- When your training, practice or sport session is complete you should always cool down. It as important to have a good cool-down as it is to have a good warm-up. A good cool-down allows the body to gradually return to a state of rest.

- There are many purposes of a cool-down including:
  - Decrease heart rate
  - Decrease breathing rate
  - Decrease body and muscle temperature
  - Decrease muscle soreness
  - Improve flexibility
  - Promote relaxation
Cool-Down

- The cool-down is also a great chance for coaches to review the session, to tell athletes what to expect at the next session, and to ask for feedback from athletes. Remind your athletes they need to drink water and have a healthy snack to help recover from practice. The Fit 5 Guide has suggestions for healthy snacks and recommendations for proper hydration.

- Cool-down activities may include: static stretching, controlled breathing intervals and some light aerobic activity.
- The key is to break down skills into small tasks or steps; tasks are then put together to form skills. Use drills and activities that involve many athletes at all times. Practice skills in situations that are related to the game or event. Break skills down into small steps.

Task → Skill → Application → Competition
## Unit 2 – Training Sequence
What’s the challenge and how to fix it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Sequence Element</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Acquire ability to repeatedly demonstrate sport competencies in different situations &amp; environments</td>
<td>Provide game like drills or situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Acquire ability to perform series of sport competencies effectively and necessary to perform a sport</td>
<td>Work on essential sport competencies to perform the sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Acquire ability to put essential sport competencies into practice</td>
<td>Provide scrimmage opportunities in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>Acquire ability to perform essential sport competencies</td>
<td>Break essential sport competencies down into individual parts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication is key to immediately reinforcing desired behavior. There are several key words that begin with a “C” which address what a coach should say:

- **CONCISE**
- **CONSISTENT**
- **CLEAR**
- **COMMAND-ORIENTED**
- **CONCRETE**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sport Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concise</td>
<td>Use a few key words that cue a desired action</td>
<td>“Go to the free throw line” Showing an athlete where to stand on defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Use the same word or phrase for the same action</td>
<td>Coach constantly say “Breathe” – teaching an athlete when to take a breath in swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Use easy to understand words that have one meaning</td>
<td>“Swing the bat” teaching how/when to swing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command-Oriented</td>
<td>Use words that elicit or reinforce a desired action</td>
<td>“On your mark. Set. Go.” Using this phrase for starts in athletics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Connect words to something defined or tangible</td>
<td>“Jump forward” when coaching an athlete in the long jump.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 2 – Levels of Assistance or Instruction

- It is important to use the appropriate level of instruction and assistance.
  - A lower ability athlete may require more assistance
  - Verbal cues should always be accompanied by demonstration
  - Partial physical assistance may be needed to properly position the athlete
  - When all else fails take the athlete through the complete motion
## Unit 2 – Levels of Assistance or Instruction (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Instruction or Assistance</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sport Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full Physical Assistance</strong></td>
<td>Help the athlete through the entire motion of the skill</td>
<td>Softball: coach makes an adjustment to the athlete’s arm motion when throwing the ball by moving the athlete’s arm through the entire throwing movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal</strong></td>
<td>Tell the athlete what to do</td>
<td>Footwork: “run forward to the line; then return, running backward”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstration</strong></td>
<td>Show the athlete the proper technique</td>
<td>Soccer: one athlete shoots on goal while another watches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partial Physical Assistance</strong></td>
<td>Place the athlete’s hands in the proper position</td>
<td>Golf: coach physically adjusts the athlete’s hands on the golf club with the correct grip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The goal is for coaches to meet each athlete where he/she is and treat him/her accordingly.

However, a coach may often have certain expectations of an athlete that may not be realistic … not because the coach does not care, but because the coach does not understand or appreciate the differences that may exist.

When an athlete exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior, the inappropriate behavior may not be defiance, acting out or silliness. These behaviors may simply be a reflection or part of the person and/or what is operating in the moment.
## Unit 2 – Managing Athlete Behavior (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athlete Behavior Characteristics</th>
<th>Strategies to Improve Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Swimmer has a short attention span** | 1. Dwell on a stroke or activity for short periods of time; provide numerous activities focusing on same task  
2. Provide different opportunities for repetition and review, which is the key to gaining new skill.  
3. Work one-on-one to gain full attention. |
| **Basketball athlete yells if he/she misses a shot** | 1. Emphasize the other aspects of the game besides shooting  
2. Work on shooting drills without a hoop  
3. Begin to shoot at a hoop but in a non-game setting with a one-on-one coach |
| **Bowler doesn’t wait their turn** | 1. Have a coach at the lane help with the order of bowlers, explain whose turn it is  
2. Have the bowler wait with a coach behind the bowling area until their turn is up  
3. Emphasize the order and that the bowler will always follow the same individual |
- A key goal of Special Olympics is to provide an opportunity for all athletes to experience success in competitions.

- A Special Olympics athlete can benefit from many aspects of a competition (including meeting new people, participating in the festivities of Opening Ceremonies and other social events, the excitement of traveling to new places and staying away from home, etc.). None of these things, however, should be as important to the coach as the focus on the participation in the competition itself.

- This section highlights ways to improve the quality of an athlete’s competition experience.
Unit 3 – Preparing for Competition

**Registration and Key Pre-Season Items**

- Provide accurate entry and team roster information along with accurate scoresheets and appropriate divisioning guidelines in which all are provided to SOKY State Office in a timely manner and by the requested due date.

- Help the specific Program Director prepare a successful competition for your athletes by meeting the registration deadlines and by turning in accurate and up to date information.

- As a coach, know and understand all of the rules in which can then be properly taught to your athletes.

- Hold preseason meeting with athletes, coaches & family members to discuss expectations of the season – set the standard and any guidelines needed.
Supervision

Discuss the challenges associated with participating in competition away from home, and why adequate, non-coaching additional support personnel are needed (other persons).

Transportation

Lodging (need for same-sex supervision) [SOKY Housing Policy]

Social activities

Coaches meetings (Who will supervise athletes during these?)
Unit 3 – Preparing for Competition (Cont.)

**Travel and Overnight**

- Discuss overnight concerns with parents or group-home supervisors.

- Write up a simple checklist of items to bring and distribute to athletes and parents.

- Make sure that all special medication needs are understood. Coaches may have to assist with handling medications. Have all medical forms and information readily available at all times.

- Work with most effective rooming arrangements, taking into account athlete choice, behavioral and personality clashes, etc.
Unit 3 – Competition-Day Coaching

**Guidelines for Success**

- **Teach responsibility & independence:** Assist athletes in dressing appropriately (proper uniform), understanding what is happening at competition site, maintaining a focused attitude and appropriate behavior.

- **Arrive Early:** Allow time for putting on uniforms, warm-up and stretching routines and time to focus on the competition.

  Encourage maximum effort no matter your specific division or opponents throughout the entire competition!
Guidelines for Success

- Help athletes learn from winning & losing
  
  *Deal graciously and realistically with winning and losing. Focus on effort made, recognize accomplishments and new skills that were performed and taking something positive away from the experience.

- Let athletes compete without direct supervision (depending on ability or division)
  
  *Not running down the side of the court shouting instructions, allowing the competition officials to conduct the competition and allowing athletes to make mistakes and helping them learn from their mistakes.

IF YOU MUST PROTEST A RESULT OR OUTCOME OF AN EVENT, PLEASE DO SO IN A CALM & RESPECTFUL MANNER!
The coach can be the key person who makes any competition experience a good one.

*Please, take the time to adequately prepare for competition and plan for on-site supervision and make sure your time coaching is time well spent.*
The successful Special Olympics Kentucky coach:

**Is sports and coaching knowledgeable:**
- Special Olympics Kentucky is a sport organization
- Technical knowledge of the sport and how to teach it is essential if coaches are to effectively help athletes improve their sport skills and truly benefit from Special Olympics.
- Successful coaches are constantly looking for opportunities to learn more about the sport.

**Is Special Olympics Kentucky knowledgeable:**
- Special Olympics Kentucky offered sports and modified rules to each sport
- Special Olympics Kentucky Mission Statement
- Special Olympics Kentucky Athlete and Coach Oath
- Special Olympics Kentucky Coaching Requirements (Coach Certification Process)

*A better understanding of these will benefit your athletes!*
The successful Special Olympics Kentucky coach:

Recruits and trains assistant coaches:

- Individualized coach-athlete teaching is key to successful training in Special Olympics.

- Assistant coaches can be recruited to help provide individualized attention.

- Assistant coaches are useful only if they are trained and coordinated at practice.

- Invites fellow co-workers or friends out to see a game or a practice in hopes they will become involved.

Recruit and trains athletes:

- A coach is also a promoter and recruiter; always tries to expand participation
- Places athletes in correct division or ability level every season
- Puts a priority on safety
- Puts a priority on Health and Fitness & overall well-being of athletes
- Conducts high-quality training and competition
- Involves and educates families of participants
- Assists with community inclusion to improve social and communication skills of participants
Understands the proper and preferred method for wanting to communicate any feedback, suggestions, or complaints to the SOKY state office.

- NONE OF THE LISTED ITEMS ABOVE SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT OR DURING AN EVENT
- THE ITEMS ABOVE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED VIA EMAIL OR PHONE CALL BY THE HEAD COACH AND ONLY THAT PARTICULAR COACH (EMAILS SHOULD BE SHORT AND TO THE POINT)
- THE HEAD COACH SHOULD FUNNEL ALL COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE TEAM, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, ETC. THROUGH THEM PRIOR TO BRINGING IT UP TO SOKY STATE OFFICE

We understand that every coach deserves to be heard, but in order to communicate most effectively, every coach should also understand the proper methods listed above!
A Positive Sport Experience Starts With The Coach

- Coaches have the greatest opportunity to create positive change in Special Olympics athletes, because they are the ones who work with athletes on a consistent basis. Good coaches know that learning to play a sport is more than just mastering skills associated with the sport – it takes teamwork, commitment, sacrifice, and dedication. These are qualities that Special Olympics coaches work to instill in their athletes, with the understanding that these lessons can have a positive impact on the athletes’ lives outside of sports. The second reason is that it is a requirement.

- You as a Special Olympics coach are role models and character builders. Coaches help our athletes discover their physical skills, their self-worth, their human courage, and their capacity to grow. Being a Special Olympics coach is one of the most important and rewarding volunteer roles.
Unit 5 – Additional Information
Coaches Corner (Cont.)

Responsibilities of the Special Olympics Coach

• Assist athletes in learning sports skills and applying them in competitions.
• Encourage confidence and self-esteem through sport.
• Obtain equipment for athletic training.
• Help to recruit athletes and assistant coaches.
• Register athletes for competitions.
• Know and share the mission of Special Olympics in your community
• Most importantly HAVE FUN!

SOKY COACHES CORNER
Coaches Corner (Cont.)

Coach Resources

- **Coach Code of Conduct:** Special Olympics Coaches are role models whose behavior should serve as a positive example for their athletes.

- **Athlete Code of Conduct:** Special Olympics Kentucky is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics.

- **Family Member Code of Conduct:** This should be emphasized during training, competition, and special events at any level.

- **Volunteer Code of Conduct:** For SOKY volunteers.

  - [Volunteer Code of Conduct](#)
  - [Family Code of Conduct](#)
  - [Athlete Code of Conduct](#)
  - [Coach Code of Conduct](#)
Unit 5 – Additional Information
Coaches Corner (Cont.)

Key Coaching Forms

- Accident/Incident Form: [Online Version]
- Certificate of Insurance: [Online Version]
- Athlete Medical Form: [Online Version]
- Class A Volunteer and Unified Partner App: [Online Version]
- Local Program Contact List: [Online Version]
- Special Olympics Logo Usage Guidelines: [Online Version]

All can be found on the [SOKY COACHES CORNER PAGE]
Special Olympics Coach Oath – “In the name of all coaches, we shall follow written and verbal instructions of Special Olympics officials at all times, have our athletes at the appropriate events and activities at the proper time and abide by the rules and policies, in the spirit of sportsmanship.”
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

Important General Information

- **Main Point of Contact:** Vice President of Field & Athlete Services
- **Winter Sport:** Season runs from November - March
- **Season Timeline:**
  - Local/Area sign-ups/tryouts take place in November / December
  - First Packet of Information (registration packet) is sent out mid-December
  - Two regional competitions will take place in late January/early February:
    - East Regional Competition – Richmond (One day event)
    - West Regional Competition – Louisville (One day event)
  - State Competition is usually held on a Saturday in late February/early March in Louisville.

SOKY CHEERLEADING SPORTS MANUAL
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

Special Olympics Kentucky Cheerleading Regions

Regional Competition Sites

East Region – Richmond
West Region – Louisville
Purpose:

- The purpose of Cheerleading is to be a supportive unit to the basketball team and to show leadership, sportsmanship and pride for the team.

- The competition is open to all cheerleading squads - even those who do not have a basketball team to support.

- All squads must participate in their assigned Regional Cheerleading Competition, in order to qualify for the State Cheerleading Competition. Typically, the Regional Cheerleading Competition will be held in late January/early February. Squads must register with the State Office in advance.

- The State Competition is usually held on a Saturday in late February/early March. Squads must register with the State Office in advance.
Divisions & Requirements

- Sponsors/coaches are to register their squads in one of the following divisions:

1. Beginner
2. Intermediate
3. Advanced Small
4. Advanced Large
5. Unified Small
6. Unified Large
7. Elite Small
8. Elite Large
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

**Beginner Division – Level 1**

- Squads in this division must perform a **non-gymnastic** cheer (refer to definition of non-gymnastics cheer).
- There will be no time limit in this division.
- NO music will be allowed during the performance of this cheer.
- NO signs or props may be used during the cheer.
- Pom-Pons are not allowed during the cheer.
- Coach/Sponsor may place the athletes in their proper position on the floor, but may NOT be on the floor once the performance begins. Coach/Sponsor may give verbal or physical cues from the sideline if needed. (Coaches/Sponsors must be out of the judges’ view).
- Squad size is limited to a minimum of 5 up to a maximum of 16.
- All squads **must** participate in a Regional Cheerleading Competition, in order to qualify for the State Cheerleading Competition held in February or March.
- ‘One squad’ divisions must score within 20% of the judge’s maximum points possible (five judges and you automatically drop the lowest and highest score) to receive first place. A score less than the minimum will earn second place.
Intermediate Division

• Squads in this division must perform one sideline chant (performed first) and either a gymnastic cheer or a non-gymnastic cheer. (Refer to definitions) Must have at least one formation change during the cheer.

• There will be no time limit in this division.

• NO music will be allowed during the performance of the sideline chant or the cheer.

• NO signs or props may be used during the cheer.

• Pom-Poms are not allowed during the cheer.

• Coach/Sponsor may place the athletes in their proper positions on the floor but may NOT be on the floor once the performance begins. Coach/Sponsor may give verbal cues from the sideline if needed. (Coach/Sponsor must be out of the judge’s view).

• Squad size is limited to a minimum of 5 up to a maximum of 16.

• All squads must participate in a Regional Cheerleading Competition, in order to qualify for the State Cheerleading Competition held in February or March.

• ‘One squad’ divisions must score within 20% of the judge’s maximum points possible (five judges and you automatically drop the lowest and highest score) to receive first place. A score less than the minimum will earn second place.
Advanced Division – Level 2

• Squads in this division must perform one cheer, either a gymnastic or a non-gymnastic cheer and a pom-pom routine. (Refer to definitions) Must have at least one formation change during the cheer and the pom-pom routine.

• Squads may choose their own music and must be suitable for family listening. Music must be operated by a coach from your squad. Timing of the music will be on the first motion by squad member(s) not when the music starts.

• The pom-pom routine must be performed to music and pom-poms must be used. (Music of choice)

• Signs may be used in the cheer only.

• There will be a 1-minute time limit on the cheer and a 2-minute time limit on the Pom-Pom routine.

• Coach/Sponsor may place the athletes on the floor but may NOT prompt or cue their squad in any way once the performance begins.
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

Advanced Division – Level 2 (Cont.)

• Squad size:
  Small – minimum of 5, maximum of 15 cheerleaders
  Large – minimum of 16, no maximum cheerleaders

• All squads must participate in a Regional Cheerleading Competition, in order to qualify for the State Cheerleading Competition held in February or March.

• ‘One squad’ divisions must score within 20% of the judge’s maximum points possible (five judges and you automatically drop the lowest and highest score) to receive first place. A score less than the minimum will earn second place.

Advanced Division Penalty Points

• Any squad exceeding the time limit of two minutes on the pom-pon routine will lose 15 points per judge.

• Any squad exceeding the time limit of one minute on the cheer portion of the routine will lose 15 points per judge.
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

Unified Division – Level 3

• Squads must perform a two-minute routine that incorporates both music and a cheer. The routine may include gymnastics, pyramids and a sideline chant.

• Squads may choose their own music and must be suitable for family listening. Music must be operated by a coach from your squad. Timing of the music will be on the first motion by squad member(s) not when the music starts. The music portion of the routine must not exceed one minute, but must be at least 45 seconds long.

• The make-up of the routine is at the coach’s discretion, (i.e. whether to start with the dance or cheer).

• There must be a sideline chant incorporated to make the transition from cheer to dance or vice versa.

• The cheer must be a gymnastic cheer and follow the gymnastic cheer guidelines defined in this manual.

• There must be a jump in the cheer.

• Signs may be used in the cheer only.

• You may choose your own music. It must be put together and operated by a coach from your squad.
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

Unified Division – Level 3 (Cont.)

• Timing of the music will be on the first motion by squad member(s) not when the music starts.

• There will be NO verbal or physical coaching from the sideline. Partners can assist in placing athletes on the floor in the first formation, if needed.

• All squads must participate in a Regional Cheerleading Competition, in order to qualify for the State Cheerleading Competition held in February or March.

• NO mount can be more than 2 people high (safety purposes).

• A jump MUST be performed in both the non-gymnastic cheer and the gymnastic cheer. One person or everyone can do the jump.

• No gymnastics or props can be used in the Pom-Pom Routine. You can use motions, jumps and dance steps. (Refer to definitions).

• Signs may be used in the cheer only.

• At State Competition, athletes may NOT participate in both Unified and Traditional divisions.

• ‘One squad’ divisions must score within 20% of the judge’s maximum points possible (five judges and you automatically drop the lowest and highest score) to receive first place. A score less than the minimum will earn second place.
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

Unified Division – Level 3 (Cont.)

• Squad size:
  Small – minimum of 5, maximum of 15 cheerleaders
  Large – minimum of 16, no maximum cheerleaders

• SOKY athletes must exceed or be equal to the number of unified partners.

• Any squad that does not abide by this ruling, will be disqualified and receive participation ribbons at Regional and/or State Competition. Rosters that are not in compliance will not be accepted.

Unified Division Penalty Points

• Any squad exceeding the time limit of two minutes will lose 15 points per judge.

• Any squad failing to have at least 45 seconds of music will lose 15 points per judge.

• Any squad who participates with more partners than Special Olympics

• Athletes will receive participation ribbons and will not be considered for place awards.

• Any coach, parent or assistant demonstrating the routine while the squad is performing, will result in 25 points per judge deduction to the squad.

• Any squad failing to perform a jump in the cheer portion of the routine will lose 10 points per judge.

• Any squad failing to perform a sideline chant in their routine will lose ten points per judge.

• Coaches, parents and/or assistants are NOT allowed on the floor once the squad has been called to the floor. If this occurs, a 10-point deduction per judge will be deducted.
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

**Elite Division – Level 4**

- This level is intended for squads who train year-round and are committed to the additional practice needed to prepare for competition at this level. These squads MUST also have sufficient and qualified personnel who understand and practice safety protocol.

- Squads must perform a two and a half-minute routine that incorporates both music and a cheer. The routine must have gymnastics, pyramids and a transition sideline. Squads may choose their own music and must be suitable for family listening. Music must be operated by a coach from your squad. Timing of the music will be on the first motion by squad member(s) not when the music starts. The music portion of the routine must not exceed the two and a half minutes, but must be at least 45 seconds long.

- The make-up of the routine is at the coaches’ discretion, (i.e. whether to start with the dance or cheer).

- There must be a sideline chant incorporated to make the transition from cheer to dance or vice versa.

- The cheer must be a gymnastic cheer and follow the gymnastic cheer guidelines.
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

Elite Division – Level 4 (Cont.)

- At least two jumps must be performed in the routine.
- You may choose your own music. It must be put together and operated by a coach from your squad.
- Timing of the music will be on the first motion by squad member(s) not when the music starts.
- Coach may coach from the sideline and you must have at least two spotters on the floor
- There will be NO flip dismounts.
- NO mount can be more than 2 people high (safety purposes).
- Signs and pom-poms can be used in the routine.
- Squads must be associated with a gym. (A facility that focuses on health, wellness, gymnastics, cheerleading, etc.)
- Athletes can only participate on one squad.
- ‘One squad’ divisions must score within 20% of the judge’s maximum points possible (five judges and you automatically drop the lowest and highest score) to receive first place. A score less than the minimum will earn second place.
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

Elite Division – Level 4 (Cont.)

• Must have at least two spotters on the floor at all times.
• All coaches must be certified in the sport of Cheerleading by Special Olympics Kentucky.
• Squad members must be composed of all Special Olympics athletes.
• Squad size:
  Small – minimum of 5, maximum of 15 cheerleaders
  Large – minimum of 16, no maximum cheerleaders

Elite Penalty Points

• Any squad exceeding the time limit of two and a half minutes will lose 15 points per judge.
• Any squad failing to have at least forty-five seconds of music will lose 15 points per judge.
• Any squad failing to perform two jumps in the routine will lose 10 points per judge.
• Any squad failing to perform a transition sideline chant in their routine will lose 10 points per judge.
• Any squad not having at least two spotters on the floor at all times will lose 25 points per judge.
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

General Rules

• Refer to specific divisions for minimum and maximum number of squad members.

• A Pom-Pom routine can NOT be used as a choice of cheer in either the Beginner or Intermediate Divisions.

• A jump must be performed in both the non-gymnastic cheer and the gymnastic cheer. One person or everyone can do the jump.

• No gymnastics or props can be used in the Pom-Pom Routine. You can use motions, jumps and dance steps. (Refer to definitions).

• No mounts or gymnastics can be performed in a non-gymnastic cheer.

• No music will be used in either a non-gymnastic cheer or a gymnastic cheer. This includes the beginner and intermediate divisions.

• No mount can be more than 2 people high. (This is for safety purposes).

• One point will be deducted from a squad’s total score for every infraction of the rules committed.
General Rules (Cont.)

- Coach/Sponsor is NOT allowed on the floor during the performances of any routine. This rule is enforced for four divisions (i.e., beginner, intermediate, advanced and unified) (Please refer to the DIVISION REQUIREMENTS Section concerning verbal and physical cues by Coaches/ Sponsors). A 15-point total deduction (5 pts. each judge) will be taken from the squads final total score for infraction of this rule.

- Elite division only – MUST use spotters during their routine. (A coach may be considered as a spotter).

- Medals and ribbons will be awarded to each squad according to placement, (gold, silver, bronze, fourth, fifth, etc.)

- ALL judge’s sheets will be used to break a tie.

- No signs or props can be used in the following divisions: beginner and intermediate.

- No pom-poms can be used in the following divisions: beginner and intermediate.

- Music can not be used in the following divisions: beginner and intermediate.
Cheering Guidelines

- A uniform constitutes wearing outfits that are alike; shorts, skirts, stretch pants, tops, shoes.
  - Make sure uniforms are clean and pressed
  - Shoes should be clean and polished and alike
  - Lollies should be worn under skirts
- Must be appropriate for the size of the athlete. Shirts should be long enough to cover all body parts when arms are extended above the head.
- Hats are not considered as a part of the uniform; they can be considered as a prop.
- For safety reasons, long hair should be out of the face and secured.
- Jewelry of any kind including but not limited to ear, nose, tongue, belly button and facial rings, clear plastic jewelry, bracelets, necklaces and pins on uniform are prohibited. Jewelry must be removed and may not be taped over. (Exception: medical ID tags/bracelets, and uniform rhinestones. Rhinestones are illegal when adhered to the skins as opposed to a uniform. Temporary tattoos are also allowed).
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

Cheerleading Terminology

- **Gymnastic Cheer** - A cheer performed using any type of gymnastics, mount or partner stunt.
- **Non-gymnastic Cheer** - A cheer using only jumps and motions.
- **Pom-Pom Routine** - A routine performed to music using pom-poms. A Pom-Pom Routine is not a cheer, so it will NOT be accepted in the Beginner or Intermediate Division. NO GYMNASTICS will be performed in the Pom-Pom Routine.
- **Sideline Chant** - Any cheer of a repetitious nature using motions or jumps. (Ex: Go Big Blue, Go Big Blue, etc.)
- **Gymnastic** - Any type of individual or partner stunt performed other than jumps and motions; such as mounts, splits, rolls, walkovers, cartwheels, and handsprings.
- **Mount** - Any type of stunt that uses two persons supported by one or more persons. (Mounts can only be 2 people high)
Unit 6 – SOKY Cheerleading Specifics

**Cheerleading Terminology**

- **Partner Stunts** - Any type of stunt that uses two persons and one of those persons is using the other person for support.

- **Jump** - A spring from one or both feet with a landing on one or both feet.

- **Motions** - Movements using straight and/or diagonal arms; in combination with head/foot movements.

- **Prop** - Any type of hat, flags, hand-held ribbons, etc. Props are **NOT** allowed in a Pom-Pom Routine or Cheer. Only Pom-Pons are allowed in a Pom-Pom routine. Signs can be used in the cheer for the Advanced and Unified Division and in the routine for the Elite Division.

- **Formation** – Moving from one set position to another within the cheer (includes the intermediate, advanced, unified and elite divisions). This does not mean that only one person moves.
THANK YOU FOR FINISHING THE SOKY CHEERLEADING SPORT CERTIFICATION TRAINING PRESENTATION! IN ORDER TO COMPLETE AND RECEIVE CREDIT FOR ENTIRE TRAINING, PLEASE TAKE THE FOLLOWING QUIZ:

CLICK HERE:
SOKY CHEERLEADING SPORT CERTIFICATION QUIZ