

YOUNG AMERICA CHEERLEADING
“Without Cheerleaders it’s Just a Game”



2015
YAC
CHEERFEST
MANUAL



Dear Coach,

We are all **EXTREMELY EXCITED** about our upcoming YAC CheerFest! Our goal is to run a high quality, high energy, and FUN competition for our Coaches and Cheerleaders.

This packet will provide all information needed to make CheerFest a success for us all. It's an **AWESOME** opportunity to show everyone how much **SPIRIT** your team has, and what they have learned all season! Please pass this information to all of your parents so they know what to expect at CheerFest.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact your Coaches Council Representative.

*Cheers!! *o/**

Marlene Barela
YAC President

Marlene Vigil
YAC Coaches' Council President

CheerFest Divisions

The YAC CheerFest will be divided into three separate categories & squad size within those categories:

- Small-...based on a small squad size, e.g. *2-5 members
- Medium-...based on a medium squad size, e.g. *6-10 members
- Large-...based on a large squad size, e.g. *10-15 members
- Extra Large-...based on a extra large squad size, e.g. *15+ members

*******This is an example only*******

CheerFest Categories

Categories will be declared by the Head Coach by September 2nd as to their Squad's capabilities.

1. Novice (Beginner)
2. Intermediate
3. Advanced

Teams will not be allowed to change Categories after September 2nd.

CheerFest Check-In

1. We will send out CheerFest check-in/session information via email approximately 1 week prior to CheerFest.
2. **ARRIVE EARLY.** We need all squads to arrive in a timely manner, so that we are able to check in all squads and begin on time. You should be having your squad arrive **PRIOR** to the check-in start time, so they are all there and ready to check in when check-in begins.
3. Your team will not be checked in until everyone is present.
4. Prior to check-in, please make sure none of your cheerleaders are wearing jewelry. It is probably best to ask parents to handle this before dropping them off, so you are not responsible for any of the jewelry once it is removed.
5. Upon arrival, the Head Coach, Assistant Coach(es), and Cheer Trainer(s) along with the squad members must check in at the Event Registration Desk. There you will have your roster confirmed and receive a program, which will have the order of performances listed. Only coaches and coaching staff with applications on file who have completed and passed a background check and have badges on their person will be allowed in. **NO BADGE – NO ENTRY.**
6. Only Coaches, Assistant Coaches and Cheer Trainers are allowed to sit in the designated Cheer area. No brothers, sisters, moms, dads, aunts, uncles, etc. including relatives of the Coaches, Assistant Coaches, and Cheer Trainers are allowed in this area.
7. Due to limited seating space in the designated Cheer Area, you are allowed 1 Coach, Assistant Coach or Cheer Trainer for every 5 girls you have on your squad. For example, if you have 15 girls on your squad, you may have 3 coaching staff individuals sit with the squad in the Cheer Area. Team Moms may sit with the squad only if you do not have adequate coaching staff; otherwise they will need to purchase a ticket and sit with the spectators. Everyone in the designated Cheer Area must have a badge – **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

8. Your mascot parents will be allowed to sit with their mascot provided they have successfully completed and passed a background check and have their badge. **HOWEVER**, they are not allowed to go onto the competition floor. These individuals are NOT counted as part of the Coach/Asst/Trainer limitation mentioned in #7.
9. Please remember to have your Cheerleaders bring water bottles and a couple of small snacks. Parents should ensure their Cheerleader eats and goes to the restroom prior to arriving at the competition.
10. Please remind parents they are not allowed in the Cheer Area for any reason.
11. No wagons/buggies will be allowed.

Conduct during CheerFest

1. Cheerleaders should stay in their seats with their squad members.
2. No cheerleader will be allowed to roam unescorted. The Cheer Coach or a parent/guardian must escort any cheerleader who needs to use the restroom, first aid, telephone etc.
3. There will be concessions at CheerFest, but due to limited time, Cheerleaders will not be allowed to visit concessions.
4. Parents are not allowed in the designated Cheer Area for any reason. They are not allowed to come over to bring the girls concession food. Snacks and drinks should be sent with the cheerleaders before they enter the venue at the beginning of the session. **PLEASE MAKE SURE THIS IS CLEAR TO ALL YOUR CHEER PARENTS.**
5. During CheerFest, please encourage your cheerleaders to enthusiastically encourage and cheer for other squads. If a squad does a call back cheer, encourage your squad to call back. **Remember this is not a cutthroat competition.**

CheerFest Routine Requirements

1. Each cheer squad is required to do a routine which must include a cheer and a dance in no particular order which is no longer than 3 minutes in length. You may include stunting and tumbling, which is limited to your Squad's declaration.
2. Time will begin with the first motion, word or beat of music. A squad can start their performance after they are officially announced "NOW PERFORMING...." 5 points per score sheet will be deducted from your squad if your routine is over 3 minutes. If a malfunction occurs during a team's performance, the team will not be penalized and may have the opportunity to perform their routine again.
3. No routines that contain cheers that "put down" or degrade another cheerleading team will be allowed.
4. No squad shall hire a choreographer or pay anyone to come in and teach a routine. If a choreographer or anyone is hired, this will result in an automatic disqualification for the team, and the team will receive the "Spirit Award" regardless of the team's score.
5. The routine should have characteristics of cheer movements, jumps, and dance. Acceptable tumbling and stunting is also allowed.
6. Formal entrances are not allowed...squads need to move on and off the performance area as quickly as possible. Your Squad must "Spirit"/run on and "Spirit"/run off. Formal entrances will result in a 5 point deduction per score sheet.

7. Routines must be appropriate for family viewing. No vulgar/suggestive movements (body rolls, etc.), words or music will not be allowed and will result in a 10 point score deduction per score sheet. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

CheerFest Specifications

1. Each squad will be judged as a TEAM. All cheerleaders will be judged according to ability, presentation, spirit, technique, voice, jump technique, dancing technique, uniformity, etc. For further information on the judging categories, please refer to the sample scoring sheet enclosed.
2. Special emphasis will be placed on overall impression of routine and technique.
3. All squads will be performing on a mat. Please be aware that a mat will have a different feel and texture in comparison to a hard surface that most squads practice on.
4. 5 points will be deducted from a squad's overall score if any member of the team steps off the mat at any time during their performance. Poms/Signs are OK off the mat...NO cheerleaders!
5. Only 2015 YAC issued uniforms-Shell, Skirt, and Bloomers may be worn. Cheerleading squads will not be judged on their uniform appearance. Undershirts, socks and hair bows of your choice are acceptable. Uniforms that have been purposely altered to bare the midriff will not be allowed and will result in a 10 point score deduction per score sheet. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
6. 2015 YAC issued poms and hand held signs are the only props that may be used during your CheerFest routine. No megaphones, flags, poles/etc. are allowed and their used will result in a disqualification and the squad will receive automatic spirit medals.
7. Any Coach that does not bring their team to CheerFest to perform will risk not being awarded a team to coach the following season.

Music Requirements

1. The music you select must be age appropriate. We have instituted this policy due to lyrics laced with sexual innuendo and suggestive movements. In addition, **ABSOLUTELY NO PROFANITY WILL BE ACCEPTABLE IN THE MUSIC.** 10 points will be deducted from your squad's score if your music contains vulgar/profane lyrics, or lyrics laced with sexual innuendo. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
2. The only format that will be accepted will be CDs. Music should be on a CD-R not a CD-RW. Label your CD with your team and Coach's name. You should have a second CD as a backup, just in case your first disc fails. Also, make sure you test your music on several players before going to CheerFest to ensure the CD plays on different sound systems. Your CheerFest music file should be the only file on that CD – we cannot be responsible for deciphering which files should and should not be used.

Mascots

1. Mascots are not allowed to perform at CheerFest. Mascots are allowed to sit next to the Head Cheer Coach while their team is performing. Any team caught utilizing mascots in a routine will be disqualified and receive automatic spirit medals.

2. Mascots will have the opportunity to perform a special Mascot Routine as a group at CheerFest.

Registration/Sponsorship Fees

All cheerleaders must have his/her YAC registration fee paid in full before he/she will be allowed to perform. If you have a cheerleader on your squad who has not paid his/her registration fee, he/she is not eligible to participate in CheerFest. If a cheerleader who is ineligible to perform is included in the routine, the entire squad will be disqualified. **NO EXCEPTIONS!!!**

All teams must have their Team Sponsorship Fee (\$250.00) paid in full to NMYAFL by Sept. 2, 2015, or they will be disqualified and receive an automatic spirit medal.

Safety Guidelines

1. Hair is to be pulled up and off of the face securely.
2. Jewelry of any kind is prohibited. This includes earrings (including small stud earrings), bracelets, nose, tongue and belly button rings (body piercing), necklaces and pins on uniforms. (Exception: medical alert bracelets may be worn, but must be approved prior to competition and must be taped down.) Please inform your parents to remove jewelry prior to arriving at the venue.
3. Socks and athletic shoes must be worn. **No canvas shoes will be allowed.**
4. Knee drops, seat drops, front drops, and split drops from a jump or airborne position are prohibited. Hands must be properly placed on the floor before knees/splits touch the ground.
5. It is up to the squad's Head Coach to design all routines with safety in mind.
6. Uncertified coaches who allow their team to stunt will be disqualified, and they will automatically receive a spirit medal.
7. Coaches who allow their squad to perform stunts above the coaches' certification level will be disqualified, and they will automatically receive a spirit medal.
8. Any cheerleader wearing a cast cannot be involved in stunts or tumbling of any kind.
9. Safety guideline violations as noted above will result in a 10 point score deduction per score sheet per occurrence unless otherwise stated. **No exceptions!**

Stunting/Tumbling

Acceptable Stunting & Tumbling by Category is listed below. Your team will receive an automatic 10 point score deduction per score sheet if they perform a stunt or tumbling outside your declared Category. If your team performs an unacceptable stunt or tumbling (see list below), your team will be disqualified and receive an automatic spirit medal. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

NOVICE (Beginner) Stunts/Tumbling:

Thigh level Stunts

Piggy Back

Shoulder Sits

Forward/Backward Rolls

Cartwheels (1 or 2 armed)
Round Off
Back Bends
Back/Front walkover
Front/Back Handspring***

***Cheerleader must be certified to perform Front/Back Handsprings – Certification documents must be received in the YAFL office no later than 5pm on Thursday, September 25th.

INTERMEDIATE Stunts/Tumbling:

Includes Novice Level Stunts/Tumbling
No stunts above the Half, or shoulder level
1 Legged Stunts (i.e.: Liberty) max height at Half level
NO rotating (turning) or walking Stunts permitted

ADVANCED Stunts/Tumbling:

Includes Novice & Intermediate Stunts/Tumbling
Extension or “Full” level (cradling from a Full is allowed)
Shoulder Stand
Rotating (turning) or walking stunts are acceptable at Half Level only
1 legged stunts (i.e.: Liberty) at a full (cradling from a Full is allowed)
Tumbling into a stunt
Twisting into or out of a stunt
Twist cradle from half only

UNACCEPTABLE Stunting/Tumbling in all Divisions:

NO Basket Tosses
NO Tic Tocs (Switching from one leg to another)
ALL Stunts must ALWAYS have a back spot and the back spot must have both hands on the flyer at all times without exception.
Free Falling – Spotters must guide flyer with arms at full length at all times (up & down)
NO Aerial tumbling (no handed cartwheels, tucks, etc.)
NO tumbling with poms

Sportsmanship Code

1. All cheerleading squads and Coaching staff, etc. must behave in a courteous manner at all times. Any squad or cheerleader(s) acting inappropriately will cause their squad to be penalized. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
2. Poor sportsmanship by the spectators will result in the team for which that spectator is cheering incurring a penalty. Cheer Coaches, please pass this information on to your cheer parents and ensure they are aware of this rule.
3. The YAC CheerFest has a no tolerance policy when it comes to negative chanting, conversations or taunts from squad to squad or individual to individual. We will hold the Head Cheer Coach completely responsible for ensuring that their team (cheerleaders, players and all adults) behaves appropriately at all times while at any Competition.

Obviously, do not allow your team to engage in any booing, hissing, name-calling, etc. Remember that “class” is the key word.

4. For further details about sportsmanship, please refer to your 2015 Fall Coaches’ guide.

This is your squad’s chance to show how much Spirit they have, and what they have learned all season! Every Cheerleader is to be commended for his or her hard work and dedication into making this competition a success.

Cheer Coaches remember.....

Do...

- Tell them how proud you are of their hard work and dedication
- Thank them for their performance
- Praise them for their achievements

Don’t...

- Dwell on their mistakes
- Make a young impressionable cheerleader feel bad about his/her performance
- Exhibit poor sportsmanship

Spectators’ Etiquette Information – Please share this with your team’s parents

1. During CheerFest, we encourage everyone to enthusiastically cheer and applaud for all cheer squads.
2. Spectators are encouraged to respond during a response cheer. (Example: Give me an “A”. You respond with “A”.)
3. No balloons, wall banners, bubbles or decorations will be allowed at CheerFest. These items may be confiscated at the door. Hand held signs are allowed. Please do not hold up signs during performances as they can be very distracting.
4. Please remain seated while squads are performing. Seating is general admission.
5. Parents are not allowed to enter or sit in the designated Cheer area.
6. Parents may not bring concession food over to their cheerleaders during CheerFest – Water and small snacks should be sent with cheerleaders prior to entering the venue.
7. Feel free to video tape any and all of the performances. Please be considerate of those around you.
8. Good Sportsmanship Reminders
 - Be courteous to opponents, fans and cheerleaders.
 - Be responsible in your behavior towards everyone present.
 - Respect and abide by all decisions made by judges.
 - Exercise self-control at all times. Please do not boo a judge’s decision, a coach or a squad.
 - Display character in your every action.
 - Learn to win with character and lose with dignity
 - Be aware of the rights and feelings of those near you.

YAC CheerFest Scoring Requirements

Enclosed you will find a sample CheerFest Score Sheet for the Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced categories that will help you identify the skills the judges' evaluations will be based upon. Please use it as a reference. Absolutely no interaction of any kind is allowed with the judges. We ask that you not confront the judges on any issues, however, please thank them for volunteering. All judges scores will be added together to arrive at a total score.

1. The scores of the judges will be tabulated for each team.
2. A penalty judge will assess penalties for infractions of safety guidelines, time limits, inappropriate choreography and non-issued props and uniforms. These penalties, if applicable, will be deducted from each score sheet to arrive at a final score. Executing a clean routine is very important.
3. All judges' decisions are final.
4. First, second, and third place will be awarded within each category/division. All others will receive a "Cheer Spirit" medal. All medals will be awarded at the conclusion of each event. A special "Grand Champion" award will be given to the top scoring team across all divisions/categories per Session.
5. Ties will not be broken. Tying teams will share a title.
6. Head Cheer Coaches will receive their squad's score sheets at the final Coaches' meeting in October.

At a glance

Disqualification

- **Unpaid YAC Registration/Sponsorship fees
- **Unacceptable tumbling/gymnastics
- **Use of non-issued props & uniforms
- **Non-certified coaches stunting
- **Unacceptable stunting
- **Hiring a choreographer
- **Using a mascot in the routine

Penalty

- **Violation of the YAFL/YAC Sportsmanship code by spectators and participants

Point Score deduction

- **Exceeding time limit
- **Stepping off the mat
- **Formal entrances
- **Uniform altered to bare midriff
- **Music requirements not met
- **Safety guideline violations
- **Inappropriate choreography
- **Jewelry worn
- **Performing stunting/tumbling above the category the squad is in



Young America Cheerleaders

New Mexico

****YAC CheerFest Score Sheet****

Team/Division: _____

Category: _____ **Division:** Small Medium Large Extra Large

CATEGORY	Max Pts.	Score	Comments: Skills/Notes/Improvements
CHEER TECHNIQUE Voice, Pitch, Use of Words, Consistency, Pace Crowd Involvement Motion Technique	10 5 5		
CHEER TIMING & TRANSITIONS Timing, Precision, Synchronization, Uniformity, Transitions & Formations Variety, Continuity, Use of Floor, Spacing	5 5		
DANCE/CHOREOGRAPHY Variety, Rhythm, Originality, Flow of Routine Motion Technique	10 10		
DANCE TIMING & TRANSITIONS Timing, Precision, Synchronization, Uniformity, Transitions, Formations Variety, Continuity, Use of Floor, Spacing	5 5		
OVERALL PERFORMANCE Overall impression, Execution, Creativity, Confidence & Perfection of Routine Spirit, Energy Tumbling, Jumps Stunts/Pyramids Signs/Poms	15 10 5 5 5		
TOTAL SCORE	100		

Judge Signature: _____



Young America Cheerleaders

New Mexico

YAC CHEERFEST Infraction Form Session _____

Team: _____

Division/Size: _____

Penalty Judge: _____

Penalty:	Deduction:	Infraction to score/comments:
Stepping off mat (poms/hand held signs are fine off mat, no Cheerleaders)	5 points (total not per instance)	
Routine exceeding 3 min and/or Formal entrance	5 points	
Uniforms alter to bare midriff	10 points	
Inappropriate Choreography, body rolls, etc.	10 points	
Music Requirements: no profanity, vulgar lyrics, sexual innuendo	10 points	
Safety Guidelines <ol style="list-style-type: none"> No Jewelry No Knee/seat/front/split drops from jump or airborne position. Hands must be placed on floor before knees/splits hit the ground. No Canvas Shoes – Athletic Shoes must be worn Cheerleaders wearing casts cannot stunt/tumble Stunting/Tumbling above Category in: NOVICE: <u>ACCEPTABLE</u> Thigh Level Stunts, Piggy Back, Shoulder Sits, One man stunts Forward/Backward Rolls Cartwheels (1 or 2 armed) Round Off Back Bends Back/Front walkover Front/Back Handspring (Cheerleader must be Certified) INTERMEDIATE: <u>ACCEPTABLE</u> Includes Novice Level Stunts/Tumbling Nothing above Half or Shoulder level Stunts 1 Legged Stunts (i.e.: Liberty) @ the half level only <u>UNACCEPTABLE</u> No rotating (turning) or walking Stunts permitted ADVANCED: <u>ACCEPTABLE</u> Includes Novice & Intermediate Stunts/Tumbling Extension or "Full" level (cradling from a Full is allowed) Shoulder Stand Rotating (turning) or walking stunts are acceptable at Half Level only 1 legged stunts (i.e.: Liberty) at a full (cradling from a Full is allowed) Tumbling into a stunt Twisting into or out of a stunt Twist cradle from half only	10 points per occurrence	
<u>UNACCEPTABLE in all categories Stunting/Tumbling:</u> NO Basket Tosses NO Tic Tocs (Switching from one leg to another) ALL Stunts must ALWAYS have a back spot and the back spot must always have both hands in contact with the flyer at all times without exception. Free Falling – Spotters must guide flyer with arms at full length at all times (up & down) NO Aerial tumbling (no-handed cartwheels, tucks, etc.) NO tumbling with poms	Disqualification-Spirit Medal	
Unacceptable props- Only 2015 YAC issued Poms or Hand Held Signs are allowed	Disqualification-Spirit Medal	
Unpaid YAC Registration/Sponsorship Fees	Disqualification-Spirit Medal	
Non-certified coaches stunting	Disqualification-Spirit Medal	
Hiring a choreographer	Disqualification-Spirit Medal	
Using a Mascot in a stunt	Disqualification-Spirit Medal	

Acknowledgement Page Cheerfest Manual

By signing this page, I acknowledge that I understand everything pertaining to CheerFest that is explained in this manual. I further acknowledge that this information will be passed on to all assistant coaches, cheer trainers and parents.

Team Name:

Coach's Name (printed)

Coach's Signature

Today's date