



Vanderbilt University Guidelines for Cheerleaders

Introduction

These guidelines are provided to inform cheerleaders of the expectations of participating in the cheerleading program at Vanderbilt University. Persons selected for the Vanderbilt Cheerleading Squads must be in agreement with these guidelines and must adhere to these guidelines during their tenure on the squad. These guidelines are as follows:

I. PURPOSE

The Vanderbilt Cheerleaders shall dedicate themselves to the following:

- 1) Providing support for athletic teams during competitions;
- 2) Leading the crowd in cheering for athletic teams, and, in doing so, improving student and fan morale; and excitement
- 3) Developing and promoting loyalty to Vanderbilt University;
- 4) Developing, promoting, and improving Vanderbilt cheerleaders in such ways as to make the squad recognized, respected, and treated as an athletic cheerleading team;
- 5) Participating in various Vanderbilt and community events to further the recognition and respect of Vanderbilt and its cheerleaders;
- 6) Participating in fundraising activities as appropriate to support the cheerleading program

II. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Vanderbilt cheerleading program is a student activity. In order to be a successful Vanderbilt cheerleader, the students' first priority shall be to **academics**. Next, the cheerleader should be given opportunities to develop into a responsible and mature adult.

The Vanderbilt Cheerleaders shall be comprised of a Co-ed Squad, All Girl Squad and a Mascot. The Co-ed Squad may be comprised of (8-10) female and (8-10) male cheerleaders at the coaches' discretion. The All-girl Squad shall be comprised of (16-20) females. The Co-ed Squad members cheer for football and men's basketball; The All Girl Squad cheers home football games and women's basketball games. Both Teams will only travel to tournament games during basketball. Unless otherwise instructed to do as by the coach. The Mascot program is comprised of (2-3) students and between them, every football game and every home men's and women's basketball game will be attended. They too, will travel to tournament games for basketball. This may require that we travel two mascots at the same time during basketball tournament games.

Any squad traveling to away games including tournament games may be limited by budget considerations, and there may be occasions when a full squad is not able to travel. Tryouts and an evaluation by the coach, and judges select the members of all squads. Tryouts for the Co-ed and All Girl Squads are held during the spring semester. Members of all squads are required to attend practices, fundraisers, pre camp, college cheer camp, and any event sponsored by Vanderbilt Cheerleading.

The cheerleading program at Vanderbilt University is a student activity and is administered through the Division of Student Life. The Coach of Cheerleading Programs is responsible for the:

- 1) Organization and oversight of all aspects of the Vanderbilt cheerleading program, mascot program and competition squad;
- 2) Supervision of cheerleaders at athletic or special events;
- 3) Enforcement of the standards and expectations set forth in this document;
- 4) Provide instruction in the fundamentals and techniques of cheerleading.
- 5) Coordination of summer camps, stunt clinics and cheerleading workshops;
- 6) Communication with appropriate university offices;

7) Administration and monitoring an applicable budgets,

The Asst. Vice Chancellor, Brock Williams, supervises the Coach of the Cheerleading Programs.

III. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The members of the Co-ed Squad are awarded a meal plan scholarship at the Hendrix Room for both the fall and spring semesters, which includes meals Sunday - Thursday. The All Girl Squad will receive a one-day a week meal plan the first and second semester, in the Hendrix room.

The person/persons selected as the mascot, Mr. C, is/are considered to be a member of the Cheerleading team and will be awarded a meal plan at the Hendrix room 2 days a week fall semester, and 3 days a week spring semester.

All cheerleaders will have a meeting with both the Coaching staff and the Asst. Vice Chancellor at the end of the fall semester to discuss the cheerleader's progress and his or her scholarship for the spring semester.

IV. RULES AND REGULATIONS

A. Tryouts

1. Anyone wishing to try out for the Co-ed and All Girl Squads during the spring semester shall:

A. attend mandatory clinics taught by senior cheerleaders, former cheerleaders in good standing, other qualified persons, and the Coach of Cheerleading Programs;

B. has a 2.2 cumulative grade point average on all college work or be a new student approved for regular admission.

2. Only with special permission of the Coach of the Cheerleading Programs and Asst. Vice Chancellor, Brock Williams, can one try out for cheerleader or mascot after he/she has left, or been removed, from the Cheerleading Program on a previous occasion.

3. Forty (40) cheerleaders consisting of thirty (30) females and ten (10) males may be chosen at spring tryouts. The mascot may be chosen on a different day during the spring.

4. One is not eligible for cheerleader tryouts after he/she has served on the Co-ed and/or All Girl squads for a total of five years. If he/she has served as a cheerleader on the squad at another college or university, the number of years served as a cheerleader at another institution may count toward eligibility. Under special circumstances, the cheerleading coach and Asst. Vice Chancellor may make an exception to this rule.

6. The Vanderbilt Cheerleading program is a competitive and time-consuming activity. Persons who have other serious commitments (outside of academics) of their time; such as children, a spouse, a 20 hour or more work week, etc., are strongly encouraged to discuss their commitment with the cheerleading coach before trying out for the squad. Similarly, persons in academic programs that have significant time-consuming demands are encouraged to do the same.

7. Squad members are required to work as a team. Conflicts among squad members will be resolved in a manner prescribed herein.

B. General

1. Cheerleaders and Mascots shall:

a. Enroll and maintain a 2.2 cumulative grade point average on at least 12 hours (full-time student status) throughout both fall and spring semesters.

B. be enrolled as a full-time Vanderbilt student, and

C. remains in good disciplinary standing with the University.

2. For justifiable reason(s), the Asst. Vice Chancellor may make an exception to rule

B. 1. A. above.

3. An individual who fails to meet the criteria listed above may have their scholarship reduced accordingly.

C. Practices / Workouts

1. Cheerleaders:

A. must not practice as a squad without the coach;

B. must attend all practices/workouts scheduled by the coach,

C. must notify the coach, or captain as soon as possible if he/she finds it impossible to attend practice/workouts or knows he/she is going to be tardy,

D. may not consume alcoholic beverages before or during a practice/workout, or game

E. may participate in approved stunting without a spot unless the stunt is a one arm stunt or has a double twisting cradle. All unapproved stunts must be performed with a spotter present, and

2. Must cooperate with the captains and other cheerleaders, concentrating on individual improvement, listening to instructions, and letting the captains and/or coach know if there are any problems.

3. A cheerleader that has unexcused absences from any practices/ workouts or game, can be removed from the cheerleading program. An excused absence consists of a death in the family, illness, and a test. Proof of each must be shown to the coach to be excused.

Note: An approved stunt is one that has been successfully completed 7 consecutive times.

2. All squad members are expected to be present at every practice.

3. Only the current cheerleading squad and the coach are allowed to participate in practice sessions. Anyone else in attendance must be approved in advance by the coach.

4. An individual who fails to meet the criteria listed above may have their scholarship reduced accordingly.

D. Games

1. Cheerleaders and Mascots:

A. must attend all required football and basketball games, and/or special scheduled games or activities,

B. must arrive at the game site ninety minutes prior to kick off or tip off, unless the coach designate an earlier or later time,

C. must not consume alcoholic beverages before or during a scheduled event,

D. must perform only approved stunts that have been learned, practiced and perfected (all partners will be required to hit a stunt seven (7) consecutive times prior to scheduled events in order to perform that stunt); if a new stunt is attempted without approval, both partners will be subject to disciplinary action;

E. must not attempt new stunts while in front of crowds at scheduled games/events,

F. when traveling as a squad, must arrive at the scheduled departure time in appropriate dress, and be in appropriate uniform at all scheduled events, as designated by the Coach,

G. must conform to the appearance standards set by the Coach.

2. The Coach will select a captain and a co-captain for both teams. All squad members will be looked at for the position of Captain, no matter what year in school.

3. Uniforms are the responsibility of the individual cheerleader and will be fixed and/or replaced if damaged, and cleaned before each event and/or game.

4. No public display of affection during scheduled events or during squad travel is permitted.

5. No food is allowed during scheduled games/events unless provided for the entire squad.

6. No gum or jewelry is allowed during practices and/or during scheduled events.

E. Travel

1. Travel to away games will be in accordance with budget restrictions and in accordance with the SEC Conference, NCAA, and University rules and regulations.

2. The squad, or a portion thereof, will travel with a University representative as a group and return as a group, except in special cases which have been approved in advance by the coach.

3. Final authority of all decisions made while traveling shall rest with the coach.

4. An itinerary will usually be prepared and given to each cheerleader traveling at the last practice before an away game or will be given at the designated meeting place the day of travel. The itinerary will include times of departure, arrival, telephone number(s), appropriate articles of clothing, etc. Squad members shall adhere to the itinerary.

5. When only a specific number of cheerleaders are attending an away game, final authority on who participates rests with the Coach. Consideration as to the

selection shall be as follows: 1) fairly even distribution of tips for each squad member; 2) attendance records at practices, games, special events with due consideration for tardiness; and 3) input from the squad. Other methods of selection that could be used are 1) drawing, 2) seniority, 3) class.

6. Traveling as a Vanderbilt cheerleader is a privilege. While traveling, the cheerleaders' behavior will be excellent. Behavior by cheerleaders that is unruly, includes harsh language or is discordant, rude, rowdy, rough, or boisterous will be subject to appropriate discipline.

V. ALTERNATES

A. Should any permanent position open on the either squad, the coach can choose a member from the Alternate list to fill the position. The criteria for filling the position will be based upon which person best fills the spot, at the given time. In addition, the coach may hold open tryouts.

B. In the instance that members of the Co-ed squad or All Girl squad are dismissed or voluntarily quit the squad, they are removed from the Hendrix room immediately.

C. In the instance that members of a squad are required to miss a game, an alternate may be chosen by the coach.

D. The same rules and expectations bind all cheerleaders who fill in for or replace regular squad members.

VI. COMPETITION SQUAD

A. A competition squad may be chosen early in the fall to represent Vanderbilt at various competitions throughout the fall and spring semesters.

B. Possible competitions include, but are not limited to, Conference competition, UCA, NCA, Athletic Cheerleading, Cheersport and COA.

C. Members of the Competition Squad will receive no additional compensation for their participation on the Competition Squad.

D. Members of the Competition Squad will be selected from members presently cheering on either Co-ed or All Girl squads. Exceptions may be made upon approval of the coach.

E. Members of the Competition Squad will participate in fundraising activities throughout the fall and spring semesters.

F. Members of the Competition Squad are subject to disciplinary action as described herein.

VII. GUIDELINES FOR SKILLS TRYOUT AND INTERVIEW

A. During the selection process, each candidate shall have one tryout, which includes a skill tryout and an evaluation by the Coach. The candidates will be evaluated on the following:

1. Coaches Evaluation. The evaluation may be worth up to 50 % of the total tryout score and will be based on the following.

a. Performance, attitude, commitment and enthusiasm during prior years as a Vanderbilt Cheerleader, if applicable;

b. Attitude, commitment, and enthusiasm demonstrated during clinics and tryouts.

2. Skill tryout. The score may be 50% of the total tryout score, and **MAY** consist of the following (the cheerleading coach reserves the right to make changes):

a. Cheerleader candidate:

1. One (1) sideline routine with incorporated partner stunts and tumbling.

2. One (1) fight song routine with an incorporated stunt

3. up to four (4) partner stunts, including an optional stunt selected by the coach.

4. One (1) suggested standing backhandspring, one (1) suggested standing back tuck, and one (1) optional standing/running tumbling pass.

5. One (1) dance routine.

6. One Interview in front of the panel of judges

7. One Band chant routine

b. Cheerleaders will be chosen by the judges during this time.

c. Persons selected for each squad will be announced and/or posted at the end of the tryout. The Coach will be available to answer individual questions related to the tryout by appointment only.

d. If the Coach sees that a reduction in candidates should be made during the tryout clinic, a "cut" may be made after each clinic.

3. Mascot Tryout: Perform a three (3) to five (5) minute routine in costume, which includes the following:

A. skit made up by the candidate.

D. incorporation of props.

C. ability to assume the character of the mascot.

D. ability to imitate the walk, head movement, trot, kick, and hand and arm movement.

E. evaluation by the Coach of previous experience.

4. The Coach of the Cheerleading Programs or Asst. Vice Chancellor shall have the prerogative of removing distractions or changing the location of all tryouts.

B. EXIT INTERVIEWS

1. Exit interviews may be conducted with each squad member after the last basketball game and before spring tryouts.

2. Each cheerleader is required to participate in the exit interview if scheduled, regardless of their status with the squad during the coming year.

3. All equipment and clothing will be returned at this time.

VIII. INJURIES/ILLNESSES/INSURANCE

A. Any illness or injury shall be reported to the Coach immediately and appropriate medical documentation provided.

B. Personal insurance is recommended from all squad members. .

C. Any injury suffered during practices, games, or other official functions will be treated by a doctor/trainer in the athletic training room at McGugin. In the event of an injury, your Vanderbilt insurance has a 10,000 deductible. We recommend that each cheerleader have their own insurance policy to help pay the deductible in case of injury.

D. If an injury or illness incapacitates a squad member, he/she shall not be permitted to practice or cheer until such time as he/she provides written clearance from a doctor in the Vanderbilt Athletic Training room.

E. If a doctor recommends that a squad member no longer cheer, due to an injury or a health problem, the squad member shall be removed from the squad. If chronic illness or injury causes a squad member to miss games and practices repeatedly, or interferes with the performance of the squad, the Coach, in consultation with the Asst. Vice Chancellor, Brock Williams, may remove the squad member.

IX. PHYSICAL QUALIFICATIONS

A. Cheerleading is a strenuous and physically demanding activity. The Vanderbilt cheerleading program is committed to promoting and fostering healthy lifestyles and eating habits for squad members. Conduct which opposes this philosophy and/or conduct which poses unacceptable risk and disregard for the health, safety and welfare of participants is in violation of this policy and will result in appropriate counseling and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination from the squad.

B. The nature of cheerleading activities, particularly partner stunting, demands certain physical requirements. The male squad members must have sufficient strength to base pyramids and to lift, hold, throw and catch females safely. Female squad members must maintain appropriate physical conditioning so they can be lifted, held, thrown and caught safely.

C. For safety purposes, physical assessments may be conducted unannounced by the Coach and weight Trainer during the year.

D. The Coach and or trainer may conduct regular body fat tests and percentages.

E. The weight and physical ability of squad members during the season should not fluctuate significantly from the time of tryouts. The Coach and weight trainer will work with each individual to develop a healthy plan for maintaining an appropriate weight. If a cheerleader fails to maintain an appropriate height to weight ratio during a semester, he/she may forfeit their position on the squad.

F. Squad members who acknowledge an eating disorder shall be suspended from performance (games and practices) and referred to Student Health Services for evaluation. Upon the recommendation of a physician, the squad member may be returned to performance. In accordance with the severity of the problem, the Asst. Vice Chancellor, Brock Williams and/or Coach may seek the physician's continued approval for the squad member to perform (games and practice). A squad member whose eating disorder problem presents sufficient documented disruption to squad practice, travel, and performance may be suspended or terminated from the program.

G. The Coach, in consultation with the Asst. Vice Chancellor, Brock Williams will make ultimately final decisions concerning the above section.

X. SAFETY

The increased athletic activity in cheerleading has resulted in an increased concern for safety. Cheerleading involves a variety of gymnastics, motions, partner stunts, rotations, pyramids, dance and heights; participation in cheerleading involves a certain amount of danger of personal injury. Cheerleaders are placed on notice that improper conduct of

Cheerleading activity may result in catastrophic injury, paralysis or even death. In becoming a participant in this program, a cheerleader voluntarily assumes the risk involved by participating in cheerleading practices, games, and other activities. In addition, cheerleaders must be aware that body piercing with any types of objects can be dangerous to the individual and fellow squad members, and will not be allowed during practices and performances.

XI. AWARDS

1. Provided funds are available to do so, awards for graduating cheerleaders will be given by the University. The Coach will determine these awards.
2. Additional awards, if funds are available, may include:
 - a. **Most Valuable Cheerleader.** The recipient must have been a member of the Cheerleading program during both semesters of the current academic year. The recipient will be chosen by secret ballot by the cheerleading squad. Among qualities to be considered are: cheerleading ability, dedication, loyalty, and helpfulness to others, scholastic achievement, enthusiasm, willingness to work, promptness, and attendance;
 - b. **Most Improved Cheerleader.** Recipients (one male and one female) must have been members of the cheerleading program during both semesters of the current academic year (by vote of the squad).
 - c. **Recognition of Captains.** Will be determined by the Coach, in consultation with the Coaching Staff.
 - d. **110% Award.** Recipient must have been a member of the cheerleading program during both semesters of the current Academic year (by vote of the squad)
 - e. Names of the recipients shall be kept secret until presentation of the awards in the spring;
 - f. The Coach and the Asst. Vice Chancellor each year based on budgetary consideration will determine the feasibility of these awards.
 - g. Other awards may be given at the discretion of the coach.

XII. DRUGS, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, AND NICOTINE

- A. Cheerleaders at Vanderbilt are expected to be decent individuals with the ability to ascertain right from wrong as well as be law abiding. This expectation is most important when it comes to drugs, alcoholic beverages, and nicotine. Cheerleaders must understand that, especially while in uniform their actions and behavior are under constant observation and scrutiny. Because cheerleaders who travel across the state or nation act as public relations persons for the university, it is imperative that cheerleaders (who are 21 or over) neither consume nor possess illegal drugs, alcohol, or nicotine. In most cases, Vanderbilt cheerleaders will be under the legal age of 21, in most states, to consume alcoholic beverages.
- B. Cheerleaders shall not possess or drink alcoholic beverages at any University function, car, van, bus, at any time or while traveling with the University for any reason.
- C. Cheerleaders shall not consume alcoholic beverages before or during a game or practice.
- D. Cheerleaders shall not use any form of nicotine before or during a game or practice.
- E. Cheerleaders shall not offer to purchase or attempt to coerce cheerleaders who are under 21 or who do not want to drink alcoholic beverages into doing the same at any time.
- F. Cheerleaders who violate these rules shall be subject to serious disciplinary measures up to and including immediate dismissal from the squad.
- G. Cheerleaders shall not participate in the unlawful possession, use, dispensation, distribution, or manufacture of controlled substances while at a University function or while traveling. If there is a time in which a Vanderbilt cheerleader causes embarrassment to the school or team, they may be immediately dismissed from the squad.

XIII. RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

- A. Conflicts between squad members
 1. Disputes among squad members should first be resolved between the squad members who are involved in the conflict. If an impasse still exists, either individual may ask that the team captain assist with resolution. The team captain will meet with the individuals involved. If the matter is not resolved at this level, the team captain will notify the coach. The coach will meet with the squad members to assist with the resolution of the matter.
 2. If necessary, the Asst. Vice Chancellor will assist the coach with final resolution of the matter.
- B. Conflicts between squad members and the coach

1. Disputes that exist between squad members and the coach should be resolved among the parties who are directly involved. If the matter is not resolved, the coach will arrange a meeting between the squad member(s), the coach and the Asst. Vice Chancellor.

XIV. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

A. Tardiness

1. To practice

A. requires that the squad member run 1 mile following practice

2. To game:

A. requires that the squad member run 1 mile at the next scheduled practice

3. Prior approval from the Coach is required if a squad member will be late for a scheduled practice or game.

4. to workout

A. late/absences twice and you will be dismissed from working out in the training room, which will result in you being dismissed from the team.

B. Absence

1. from practice/workout

a. An excused absence from practice/workout during the week prior to a game will result in the squad member running one mile at the next scheduled practice/workout.

b. An unexcused absence from practice/workout during the week prior to a game will require the squad member to be present at the next game and assist the coach with game responsibilities. The squad member will not cheer at that game. The squad member will run 1 mile at the next scheduled practice/workout.

c. Two excused or unexcused absence/tardiness from workout will result in losing privileges to workout in McGugin and will result in being dismissed from the squad

2. from game

a. An excused absence from a game will result in running 1 mile at the next scheduled practice.

b. An unexcused absence from a game will require the squad member to be present at the next game and assist the coach with game responsibilities.

The squad member will not cheer at the game.

C. Two (2) Missed games will be grounds for immediate dismissal from the squad at the discretion of the coach and/or Asst. Vice Chancellor.

3. Repeated occurrences of tardiness or absences may result in the reduction of the squad member's scholarship or dismissal from the cheerleading squads.

4. Any cheerleader that has 3 unexcused absences from practices including workouts will be removed from the cheerleading program. An excused absence consists of a death in the family, illness, or test. Proof of each must be shown to the coach to be excused.

5. In the instance that members of the Cheerleading squads are dismissed or voluntarily quit the squad, their meal plan at the Hendrix room will be removed immediately. You are required to return all items given to you from the cheer program. These items, but not limited to, all practice/workout clothes, uniforms, shoes, bags, warm-ups, bows, and sweatshirts.

XV. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity for selection to the Co-ed, All Girl, and Mascots squads shall not be denied to any person(s) because of race, color, creed, or national origin if otherwise qualified.

XVI. ENFORCEMENT OF THESE GUIDELINES

Participation as a Vanderbilt Cheerleader is voluntary and is done so with the understanding that there are certain

requirements and expectations that are necessary in order to maintain a high-quality cheerleading squad.

Failure to

comply with these guidelines can result in the Coach of the Cheerleading Programs making a decision to either

temporarily suspend an individual from one of more contests/events or to permanently dismiss the individual from

the squad. Squad members may receive disciplinary action for the following:

1. Missing practice/workout without approval of the coach.

2. being late to practice/workout without prior approval of coach.

3. Safety violation.

4. Violation of any team rule or regulation.

5. missing a game or scheduled event without prior approval of Coach.

6. Other--left to the coach, in consultation with the Asst. Vice Chancellor, based on the severity of the situation.

XVII. CHANGES TO THESE GUIDELINES

The Coach of the Cheerleading Programs and/or the Asst. Vice Chancellor, Brock Williams, may make changes in these guidelines during the year. Any changes will be provided in writing to all members of each squad prior to implementation.

Written May 3, 2004

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