PRIOR LAKE CHEERLEADING

Welcome to the Prior Lake Athletics for Youth (PLAY) Competition Cheer Program! This handbook contains important information about our competition squads, and standards that all Competition Cheer parents and participants are expected to adhere to.

Our PLAY Competition Cheer program is entering its 10th season!

Competition Cheerleading is a demanding "travel" sport that runs much longer than traditional sports seasons. Our season runs from June/July through the end of January. Attendance at practice and competitions is **critical**: it is impossible to stunt effectively (and more importantly, **SAFELY**), without a full roster at each practice. We ask each family to consider the amount of time, hard work, dedication, and financial commitment involved with competition cheer **before trying out for a squad**. Parents and athletes will sign an acknowledgement that PLAY Competitive Cheer takes precedence over any other sport or club – including participation at any of our competitions. We have gone to great lengths this season to provide the majority of the season's schedule in advance of registration so that you are aware of the commitment.

We also ask for your support in building a positive program culture that reinforces the mission of our program and PLAY as a whole and being positive and respectful sport parents when in season!

Go Lakers!

Sincerely,

The PLAY Cheer Board

THE MISSION OF PRIOR LAKE ATHLETICS FOR YOUTH (PLAY)

Prior Lake Athletics for Youth serves the Prior Lake/Savage School District, to provide competitive yet fun athletic opportunities for kids. Our priority is safety, skills development, and the teaching of life lessons through sport. Our program promotes the importance of sportsmanship, teamwork, leadership, and integrity. We believe learning both success and failure through competition will benefit our future generations.

THE GOALS AND MISSION OF PLAY CHEER

Participation in PLAY Competition Cheer helps athletes grow, learn, and enjoy themselves. We aim to teach the pursuit of excellence through personal development and teamwork, ethical and responsible behavior on and off the mat, adherence to our behavioral standards, leadership, strength of character, sportsmanship, acceptance of victory with humility, and acknowledgement of defeat with grace. We aim to instill habits that will lead athletes to better and healthier lives upon leaving our program.

While winning isn't our primary goal, we believe the efforts by our athletes to be their best will lead our squads to success on and off the mat. Most of all, we aim to build athletes of integrity who develop strong relationships with each other, are filled with self confidence that extends off the mat, through the halls of the school, and throughout the communities we all serve.

We PLAY… and we CHEER.

COMPETITION SEASON STATEMENT

This packet provides an overview of the PLAY Competition Cheer program to help parents, families, and athletes to better understand the components, process, and expectations of the competition season including the tryouts, squad selections, and the season. The PLAY Cheer program is run by a group of volunteers. In this document that group will be referred to as "The Board." The Board reserves the right to edit this document and any other program documents, policies, procedures at any time for the benefit of the program.

COMPETITION CHEER PROGRAM OVERVIEW

What is Competition Cheer?

Competition cheerleading is a unique sport where a panel of cheerleading experts (judges) evaluate a squad's choreographed performance based on difficulty and execution. Judges use a standardized score sheet to determine overall squad placement in a category at a competition. The choreographed routine is typically performed in front of an audience and combines partner building skills (stunts), tumbling, traditional sideline skills, and jumps.

Traditional competition routines are 2:30 minutes long, so sometimes it is referred to as a "2:30 squad".

What Squads will we offer this year?

Squad*	2026-27 Eligibility	Type of Squad
Middle School Traditional Game Day Squads	6th - 8th grades+	Traditional 2:30 Game Day 3:00
Elementary Squad(s)	2nd - 6th grades+	Traditional 2:30
Laker Prep (pre-competitive)	1st-5th grades+	Traditional 2:30

Please note, the number of Squads we roster is based on athlete counts and tryout scores.

+Grades here refer to the grades at the time of competition not the time of tryout / rostering.

ELIGIBILITY AND AGE RANGE

Eligibility

Our organization's mission is to support the communities in the 719 school district. The PLAY Bylaws state that a participant must reside in and/or go to school within the boundaries of Prior Lake/Savage school district 719. Each sport's governing body, however, will have its own restrictions on whether an athlete is eligible to participate. This is true at our State Tournament level. The Minnesota Cheerleading Coaches Association (MCCA) further restricts eligibility requirements. *To roster onto a team that will compete at the State tournament, you must attend a Prior Lake School.* Should you fail to open enroll before the start of the season or leave the school district prior to the end of the season, you will no longer be eligible to compete and season fees will not be refunded.

Squad Age Range

There are many factors that go into this determination, and the organization continues to revisit them each year. In determining the age range of our squads, we consider the attention span, maturity, focus, size/strength/versatility, experience of each grade level, overall interest level, and coaching/practice space availability.

2026/2027 age Requirements:

1st - 5th graders are eligible for Laker Prep

2nd – 6th graders are eligible for Blue Squad

3rd – 6th graders are eligible for Gold Squad

6th – 8th graders are eligible for Middle School squads.

Squad Advancement Guiding Principles

- Athletes are evaluated through the tryout process to ensure they are placed on a squad that reflects their current skill level and experience and allows them the opportunity to grow and enhance their skills, while complementing the rest of a squad.
- Athletes could advance more than one squad, stay at the same level, or could even move backwards.
- Each season, athletes will roster based on a combination of their skill level, tryout scores, experience, and squad need.
- Once rosters are posted, please observe the 24 hour rule before reaching out to the Board or coaches with any questions about squad placement.

**Please note: Any athlete whose scores do not meet the eligibility criteria for an individual squad will be recommended for and encouraged to join a Sideline Cheer program.*

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL COMPETITION TEAMS

Commitment – this is THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT COMP CHEER:

Competition cheer is a large time commitment that spans nearly three sport "seasons" running from June/July through the end of January.

Attendance is critical and mandatory.

Athletes are expected to be at all choreography, camps, practices, and competitions.

Practices will be 2x/week including some additional practices closer to competition season and the State Competition.

Middle School will have 3 practices a week if a Game Day squad is rostered.

Competitions will usually take place over 5-6 Saturdays from October through the end of January, depending on the date of the State competition, which is our last competition each year. Competition dates are tentative until confirmed but are usually outlined by early summer. Should an athlete miss practice during the week of competition, coaches maintain discretion to alter choreography and stunt group positioning including sitting an

athlete from competing if they have missed important changes that would negatively impact the safety and/or performance of the squad.

We will communicate summer and season practice schedules as early as possible – we cannot release a schedule until all space is booked through the district.

Attendance

Due to the nature of the sport, ***attendance is mandatory.*** Practices are mandatory from the beginning to end of each practice unless special arrangements are made in advance with coaches. Cheer squads cannot be successful without **all** members participating. *When one athlete is missing, an entire stunt group or possibly the entire team is unable to practice stunts and pyramids safely and effectively*.

This is both a success issue and more importantly, a **SAFETY** issue.

Choreography and UCA Camp dates are mandatory for all squads.

Excused Absences

For an absence to be "excused," your coach must be notified PRIOR to the absence. Examples of excused absences would be the following: illness, family emergencies, excused medical, choir/band concerts, grade-related school-based absences (e.g., Wolf Ridge trip).

Unexcused Absences

Examples of unexcused absences would be the following: other regular sport conflicts (practices, games, meets, etc.), "regular/check-up" doctor / ortho /dental / chiro appointments, babysitting, concerts, dance/tumbling lessons, shopping, hair appointments, school clubs, parties, summer field trips, "**I DIDN'T FEEL LIKE GOING**", etc. Please schedule appointments at other times for things that can be SCHEDULED.

If your athlete has an injury or ailment that requires medical attention, we want you to seek the required help whenever you can in order to get the help needed – please let the appropriate people know as soon as possible, and please communicate it via text, email, phone call or private message, ***NOT publicly via chat features on Sports Engine or BAND.*** (This is to avoid drama and gossip). Coach contact information will always be available in the roster / staff tab of sports engine. If you need help, please reach out to a board member for directions and assistance.

Once an athlete reaches 2 unexcused absences, a meeting may be scheduled with parents, coaches, and Comp Director to discuss next steps.

Communication

Strong communication is key! If you have questions, we have a chain of command for parent questions, starting with talking to your coaches first! Nearly all issues can be resolved with a conversation with coaches but be mindful of the 24-hour rule. ***Do not make assumptions or rely on "veteran" parents for information***.

Rosters, schedules, and the chat function* are used in SportsEngine. We also have a BAND page for each squad, the BAND platform allows us to share videos with sound for coaches to post video playback for review and homework to practice.

Chat function should not be used to communicate attendance.

On competition weeks, the Program Staff will send out a comprehensive email. We typically have a schedule (that may shift slightly as you get closer to the comp) a week before each competition.

For Middle School and Elementary School Comp Squads, we advise blocking the full day (7:30 am – 4 pm) for each competition day.

Laker Prep squad will be free to leave competitions after their performance is done, but athletes will be welcome to stay and enjoy the rest of the competition and experience an awards ceremony. If the squad is not staying as a group, athletes must be always accompanied by a parent or other adult.

Practice Expectations

Beverages

Only water in a closed-top water bottle (no straws) are allowed at all PLAY Cheer practices. For the health and wellness of our PLAY Cheer athletes, they are not allowed to bring in any caffeinated beverages (Bubblr, Celsius, Soda, Coffee Drinks, Coffee Shop Fruit Drinks) to any PLAY Cheer practice or practice space.

Food

Unless outlined by coaches for an extended practice time that requires bringing a meal or snack, no food is allowed into PLAY Cheer practices. This is for the cleanliness of our shared spaces. Please plan for a mess-free snack that can be eaten before practice outside the gym.

Practice Attire

Athletes are expected to always dress in assigned practice clothes (practice tee shirts included with registration costs), navy/black lined shorts of your choice, and white cheer shoes of your choice. Jewelry must be removed prior to the start of practice. Nails must be trimmed short. Coach(es) will reach out to parents if athlete continually arrives at practice out of practice-uniform attire.

Cell Phones

Cell phones are not allowed to be out at any time during practices. Athletes should come to practice with a bag or backpack for a cell phone to be stored in. In the event of an emergency, a parent should call or text a coach while their child is at practice. If cell phone usage causes an issue / distraction on a repeated basis, parents will need to be notified.

If any of the above more than 2 times a meeting will be requested with athlete, parents, and coaches.

Parent & Athlete Social Media and Electronics Policy

Social media can greatly contribute to a positive sports environment when sharing excitement, joy, and celebrating success in a way that exemplifies sportsmanship, without making winning the only focus. It is not recommended to post personal "stats" (emphasis should be on "we not me") and it's NOT the place to air grievances. Please respect people enough to speak directly to them about concerns. Also, please teach your athlete about their own social media footprint and safety - your social media presence represents your family, the program, and our community. Athletes should make sure their social media

usage reflects upon yourself and the program positively and is age-appropriate in terms of content and maturity level. Athletes are not allowed to make pages / accounts (Insta, other apps) on behalf of the program, for example – PLMS Cheer Insta. The only approved Social Media channel for PLAY Cheer is the Facebook and Instagram pages run by the board.

If the squad is going to have a group text, all athletes on the squad should be included / invited. It is at the parents discretion whether or not participation is allowed.

Issue/Conflict Resolution Policy–24 HOUR RULE

PLAY observes a 24 hour "cooling off" rule before issues are elevated. Premature grievances will not be acknowledged or responded to.

Dispute Resolution Policy

Each PLAY athlete, coach, official, referee, parent, guardian, agent or other person, team, sponsor, or other group or organization ("Participant") agrees to abide by the Dispute Resolution Process as the exclusive remedy for all grievances by virtue of their membership, affiliation, or participation at any time within PLAY activities.

Definition of Dispute

A "dispute" is defined as any conflict, grievance, or disagreement between Participants, including any parents or guardians of an athlete and that athlete's coach or a league official or members of different PLAY teams or squads that may allege an on-going violation of PLAY Policies & Procedures and/or associated league rules and policies or any other continuing circumstance which requires resolution. Disputes include, but are not limited to, concerns about:

- Tryout Results/Squad Placement
- Athlete Positioning
- Coaching Strategy/Tactics
- Teammate Conflicts
- Judges

- PLAY, Cheer, or MCCA Rules
- Code of Conduct Violations (Alleged or Confirmed)
- Disciplinary Actions

Private disputes between participants that are not directly related to PLAY activities are not subject to resolution through this Dispute Resolution Process. A violation of PLAY policy by one person does not justify a violation of PLAY policy by another person. (Example - If a head coach benches a player in violation of PLAY participation rules, the parents would not be justified in using abusive language in demanding the coach rectify the situation.)

Dispute Resolution Process/24-Hour Rule

Unless the nature of the dispute requires immediate attention (e.g. there are athlete safety concerns or there is a firm time deadline involved), PLAY participants are required to wait at least twenty-four hours after an event or incident before initiating this process. Premature grievances will not be accepted or responded to. The 24-hour rule is essentially a "cooling-off period" to allow for all parties to remove immediate emotional reactions from the dialogue. The goal of dispute resolution is for all parties to work through the situation at hand as partners in the athletic and personal development of our athletes, rather than as adversaries. PLAY believes that the 24-hour rule is critical in creating this positive dynamic.

All Participants should attempt to resolve disputes expeditiously and fairly at the lowest possible level within the following Dispute Resolution Process. Please elevate issues by email only. Text messages will not be considered. We have a general chain of command to use as a guide to resolve issues:

1. First, Athlete to Coach, if not resolved, then
2. Second, Parent to Coach, if not resolved then
3. Third, Parent to Director of Competition Cheer(compcheer@playinfo.org)

Should the issue involve a coach or parent that is also a board member, the participant should reach out to the next highest-ranking board member that is not involved in the dispute.

If, after the above steps have been taken, a dispute is not resolved to the satisfaction of the involved parties, a written grievance may be presented to the PLAY Executive Board President. This must be submitted within seven (7) days of the last good faith attempt at resolution **using the above process.** This submission is to request a review of the situation by the Executive Evaluation and Enforcement Committee (E.E.E. - comprised of the PLAY Executive Board President, Executive Vice President, and another Executive Board member). The review and response by the E.E.E. shall be considered final. Submitting such a request should be considered a last resort and doing so acknowledges that all parties agree to abide by the provided resolution.

Penalties

Failure to abide by this process for dispute resolution, including the 24-hour rule, will result in the following penalties:

1. 1st offense – Written Warning
2. 2nd offense – Removal of the parent and athlete (or coach or board member) from all P.LA.Y. activities for a period of 2 weeks.
3. 3rd offense – Removal of the athlete and player (or coach or board member) from all P.L.A.Y. activities for a period of 1 year. Permanent suspension of athlete/coach privileges is possible and will also be considered.

Notification of any youth disciplinary action may be made to any of the following parties: league governing bodies, other sport leadership within PLAY and/or local law enforcement. Notification of any adult disciplinary action may be made to any of the following parties: league governing bodies and other sport leadership within PLAY Laker Athletic Alliance member leaders and/or local law enforcement.

Significant Escalations

If a participant is involved in a physical altercation with a coach, board member, or a board member's family members, a thorough investigation will be conducted. Upon review, penalties/suspensions may be assessed, up to and including, removal from all PLAY activities for an indefinite period.

Lakers Against Bullying (#PLAB)

PLHS (Prior Lake High School), PLAY (Prior Lake Athletics for Youth), PLSHA (Prior Lake Savage Hockey Association), PLSC (Prior Lake Soccer Club), and Prior Lake Wrestling have come together to unify in an effort to improve our youth sports experience. This group shall be collectively known as the Laker Athletic Alliance (LAA).

The first initiative of the LAA is to combat bullying. Bullying is as prevalent as ever. We see this in many different forms including social, verbal, physical, and in the cyber world, specifically within social media. A few common forms of bullying in cheer are making fun of someone's team placement when rosters are posted and talking negatively towards teammates who are struggling in their stunt group or learning new skills. As parents and coaches, we need you to keep your eyes/ears open for that kind of talk—step in and stop it!

While this campaign is great, the real work is in all our actions and words. We need to lead the effort to change the culture and eliminate bullying. We need to raise our standards, hold ourselves accountable, and set good examples for our children, our siblings, our teammates, our coaches, our officials, our teachers, and our classmates. This starts by being mindful of every interaction every day. We also need to be brave and have hard conversations with our children at home regarding bullying.

Let's all come together as a community to create a welcoming and safe environment for all of the Prior Lake youth sports community and our community as a whole!
https://www.playinfo.org/lakerathleticalliance

Is it Bullying?

- When someone says or does something unintentionally and they do it once, that's RUDE.
- When someone does or says something intentionally hurtful and they do it once, that's MEAN.

- When someone does or says something intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it even when you tell them to stop or show you are upset, **that's BULLYING**.
- Level-shaming is always considered bullying. We are all Lakers and all squads are important and talented.

Coaches

PLAY Competition Cheer's goal is to teach and help develop athletes through learning the fundamentals of cheer and stunting and to represent Prior Lake with pride and sportsmanship. The board expects coaches to help us accomplish these goals with enthusiasm and focus.

Being A Coach

We encourage parents to consider being a coach. Cheer experience is preferred but not a requirement. All coaches must complete the required training per PLAY policies. Coaching assignments are for the current cheer season ONLY and coaches will need to re-apply for coaching roles prior to each new season. Volunteer assistant parent coaches are selected after team selections. Having a parent interested in coaching has no impact on player tryouts. Coaches are not guaranteed to coach each season. Each season the coach review process starts over for all coaches. Please go to the PLAY home page and click on the "2025 Fall/Winter coaching application" link to apply. In addition to completing the coaching application, all prospective coaches must complete a short list of other trainings/modules, and plan attend a Coach Clinics on June 7th and June 12th.

Being A Team Parent

There will be a process to become a team parent. More information will be available after rosters are released. Ideally, we'd like 2 team parents per squad to share the workload of team parent responsibilities and expectations through the season. There will be certifications required to be a team parent such as a background check and other safety checks that will allow team parents to be behind the scenes at competitions if allowed by the competition or asked by the board. Being a team parent does not guarantee "backstage" access to competitions or other events.

Volunteer Hours

To make sure that the coaches, Team Parents, and Board have the support necessary to run an effective season, families are required to complete Volunteer hours or contribute financially in lieu of volunteer hours. The family of each PLAY Competition Cheer athlete rostered on Blue, Gold or Middle School Squads is required to volunteer for 4 hours over the season. Laker Prep is required to do 2 hours due to the shortened season. Opportunities start in May. *Parent coaches, parent board members and appointed team parents contribute many more than this required amount and are exempt from any additional volunteer hours for the season*.

A volunteer deposit check of $150 PER ATHLETE will be collected at tryouts. The signed parent / athlete acknowledgement form (last page of this handbook), and check are due the first night of tryouts, and are your "ticket" into tryouts.

The deposit check is not cashed but remains in the Cheer Board's custody until volunteer opportunities have expired for the season. At that time, if your volunteer requirement has been fulfilled, the check will be shredded. If you have not met the required volunteer hours by the date we outline, your check will be cashed. *If you wish to simply forfeit the money right at the beginning of the season, you are exempt from volunteer hours. Please let the board know after rostering that you would like them to cash your check, as this will help us plan for the number of volunteer hours we need to plan*.

The Assistant Competition Director will manage the volunteer hour program, opportunities to serve and tracking. More details will be announced soon.

Examples of ways to donate your time including but not limited to:
- Mat-rolling before or after practice.
- Helping at social / volunteer events and assisting the team parent pool as needed.
- Helping onsite at clinics and other events as needed

Guidelines & policies of volunteer hours:

- Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older.
- Shifts are filled first-come, first-served.
- Volunteer hours cannot be donated to other families.

2026/2027 Uniform Update

COMPETITION UNIFORMS 2026-2027

UNIFORMS ARE PAID FOR OUTSIDE OF YOUR REGISTRATION FEES

Uniform Notes:

- There will be NO CHANGES to the uniforms for Blue Squad, Gold Squad and Middle School Squad.
- LAKER PREP will be getting a new uniform from a different vendor – this allows us to take advantage of shorter lead times which allow for a longer and more flexible registration window.
- There will be no formal consignment sale
- You will be permitted buy / obtain pre-owned items on your own, either privately or through the official "Swap n Shop Facebook page," or by re-using your own items from last season. www.facebook.com/groups/playcheeruniformshop/
- If you do not purchase a new uniform, you will need to show your uniform pieces to the Uniform Manager prior to the Uniform Deadline to ensure all pieces fit appropriately and are in good "competition-ready" condition (clean, no tears or other issues).
- **You can set up a Uniform Approval Appointment with Stacia Nedvidek, Uniform Manager. More information on this will be coming soon.**
- **Pre-owned Uniforms must be approved by June 12th**. If a complete uniform is not approved by this time, then a new uniform or missing pieces must be ordered directly from the vendor before the ordering deadline.

UNIFORM NIGHT:

May 28th from 5-8 PM, we will host a Uniform Night for Rostered athletes / families. This will be an event where you are fitted by Varsity Spirit for uniform size and can order other items (Backpacks, spirit-wear, warm-ups). The event will take place at Prior Lake High School in the commons. We will send the squad schedule once it is finalized.

It is very important that you and your athlete attend this event. Every athlete must have all the correct uniform pieces to appear on the mat for competition season – and Varsity Spirit has very long production timelines. The fit for uniforms, especially at the middle school level, is important and accurate measurements ensure correct fitting garments at a time

when bodies are rapidly changing and there is lengthy time between placing an order and delivery. Our uniform manager and Varsity Rep will be able to provide counsel on appropriate sizing at this event.

All athletes will be issued an online Fit Pass based on their squad assignment. A fit pass is an online checklist of all required uniform pieces for their designated squad that Varsity Spirit creates to measure an athlete to order new pieces.

There are three ways to obtain an appropriate uniform for the 2026/27 season.

1) EASIEST SOLUTION: Get fitted by a Varsity Rep for a NEW uniform.
    - Pay for a new uniform.
    - The P.L.A.Y Comp Cheer Uniform Manager will place a bulk order once all athletes have been measured, ensuring that all athletes have the appropriate pieces in time for competition season.
    - Uniforms will be distributed by coaches at practice once they are received.
2) Reuse your own various uniform piece from the previous year (details below).
3) Buy a pre-owned, but current, piece from a retiring or current athlete (details below)

If you opt for 2 or 3, you will need to set up a Uniform Approval Appointment with Stacia Nedvidek, Uniform Manager (information forthcoming). Approving a uniform means ensuring proper fit and that uniform pieces are in-season, in good condition, free from wear and tear, and will withstand an entire season's use. This must be completed by June 12th, so that if proper used items have not been obtained, an athlete can be measured and can order a new item by the Varsity bulk order deadline, to ensure all cheerleaders receive uniforms by their first mat appearance.

If you have an unavoidable conflict for the Uniform Night, you must arrange to have your Fit Pass initialed by reaching out to the Uniform Manager prior to June 12th. See separate "Uniform Night" supplement for additional details.

Middle School Squad:

- **Middle School Uniform – no changes from 2025-26**
- **Ordering:** All new MS athletes must purchase a new uniform from Varsity Spirit (shell, liner, skirt, briefs) or purchase a used item from one of last season's athletes.
    - Returning MS athletes may reuse their own pieces from last year's season, or purchase from another returning athlete.
- Middle School families will receive **2 pair of socks, 2 bows, and 2 practice shirts**, included with their registration fee.
- Shoes must be all white and can be purchased on your own (Link to Mat Shoes suggested options: https://amzn.to/4ittXE0)
- Link to Practice Shorts suggested options:
- https://bit.ly/4lGi4gL
- Link to Facebook PLAY CHEER Uniform Swap n Shop page: www.facebook.com/groups/playcheeruniformshop/

Required



Optional



Blue & Gold Squads:

- **No changes from 2025-26**
- 2 bows and 2 practice t-shirts are included as a part of registration fees
- Shoes must be all white and can be purchased on your own (Link to Mat Shoes suggested options: https://amzn.to/4ittXE0)
- Link to Practice Shorts suggested options:
- https://bit.ly/4lGi4gL
- Link to Facebook PLAY CHEER Uniform Swap n Shop page: www.facebook.com/groups/playcheeruniformshop/



Laker Prep:

- **New uniform, new vendor! No used options this year.**
- **$165 for uniform, briefs, and liner**
- Uniform ordering deadline is June 19th – information must be to Uniform Manager by June 12th.
- 2 bows and 2 practice t-shirts are included with registration fee
- Shoes must be all white and can be purchased on your own (Link to Mat Shoes suggested options: https://amzn.to/4ittXE0)
- Link to Practice Shorts suggested options:
- https://bit.ly/4lGi4gL
- Link to Facebook PLAY CHEER Uniform Swap n Shop page *(for spirit-wear, shoes, and accessories only for Laker Prep):* www.facebook.com/groups/playcheeruniformshop/



ALL NEW UNIFORMS / PIECES WILL BE ORDERED IN A FULL-PROGRAM BULK ORDER THROUGH VARSITY SPIRIT or

Athletes who need or choose to buy ***new*** uniform pieces will be fitted at Uniform Night– but will pay for the order through a secure link within 2-weeks of the Uniform Night once the Cheer Board compiles all orders into one bulk order to Varsity Spirit.

When the payment link is sent out, parents will have a short deadline to pay and we need compliance on the payment deadline. We cannot submit the Varsity Spirit order until all items have been paid for.

**All athletes are required to purchase their own uniforms, either used or new. Please take care of your uniform! This includes keeping track of your bow. Athletes/families are responsible for the full cost of replacement pieces and understand that new uniforms take 6-8 weeks to arrive from the vendor so if a piece is lost, a reorder is highly unlikely to be an option.*

***OPTIONAL* EXTRAS 2026-2027**

The items pictured to the right of the mandatory uniforms are "optional" and are also available for purchase through Varsity Spirit.

We also have optional spirit wear items, including the PL Cheer Backpack (~$60) for youth and adults from our other vendor partner, Game One, that will be available for ordering at Uniform Night on 5/28. The Game One online store will also be open at certain weeks of the season. We recommend ordering early, so you have items by September.

Fundraising Shops

We have a vendor partner, BSN, that donates 10% of the sale proceeds back to PLAY at certain times throughout the year. If you are considering buying apparel or other gifts, consider purchasing from https://bsnteamsports.com/shop/RtZ7fFvzgC to help us build funds for future mat replacement.

Shoes:

Shoes can be purchased online as well and are usually less expensive than through Varsity Spirit. Shoes are a personal preference, although we require them to be specific cheer mat shoes and they must be ALL white. If shoes are ordered that have color on them, they won't be able to be worn on the competition mat.

There are dozens of varieties of reasonably priced cheerleading shoes on Amazon with 4+ star reviews. If you type "Cheerleading shoes" into the search box, you'll find many options to choose from, ranging from $19-99. If you would like help picking out shoes, please ask a coach or team parent.

Practice Shorts:

Amazon, Target, Dicks, and Scheels all have options for practice shorts. Shorts must be lined with a brief or bike short for modesty. Athletes wear black shorts for practice.

Link to Practice Shorts suggested options:

https://bit.ly/4lGi4gL

Link to Mat Shoes suggested options:

https://amzn.to/4ittXE0

MIDDLE SCHOOL SQUAD IMPORTANT DATES AND REGISTRATION FEES

This team will practice 2 times per week, with occasional third practice before competitions and after breaks.

There will be a Showcase performance in October for families and friends

6 local competitions from October-January

Additional practices and/or clean-up camps may be added to the schedule as needed.

Squad size will be determined by tryout numbers and skill scores of eligible athletes.

Estimated Middle School Schedule:

*May 6-9	Tryout Registration / First Payment Due
May 15	Rosters Announced
May 28:	Uniform Fittings
June 15:	Uniform Ordering Deadline
*June 1:	Second Season Payment Due
June 15:	First day of MS summer practices
July 20 + 21:	MANDATORY MS Squad Choreography Camp (8-12 – no exceptions)
July 27 + 28:	MANDATORY UCA Home Camp (9 am – 3 pm each day)
*Sept 1:	Third (final) Season Payment Due
Sept 14:	First Day of School Year practice
October 22:	PLAY Cheer Family and Friends Showcase – TOMS, Jerabek Gym
October 24:	Lakeville Comp
November 7:	Jefferson Comp
December 5:	Santa's Cheer Shop PL Comp
December 12 /19 :	UMN Cheer Comp (Date TBD by UMN)
January 9/10:	Tonka Freeze Comp & Routine Critique
January 23:	MCCA State Comp

Middle School Registration Fee – Once your May tryout fee is paid**,** you will have the choice to pay the remainder in-full on June 1 or split into 2 even auto-payments on June 1 and September 1.

Registration Covers: • Practice space gym rental fees • Professional coaches training* • Paid coaching stipends* • Choreography • Music rights and mix purchase • UCA Home Camp • Practice Shirts (2) • Competition Bow (2) + PL Socks (2) • Equipment (e.g., signs, megs, poms) • Other incidentals (PLAY insurance, safety items, tryout software, etc.) • 5 Comp registrations + MCCA State • Additional Cleaning and possible pre-state • Extra gym time, Comp Fees, equipment for Game Day Registration cost assistance may be available for those who qualify for free and reduced-price school meals. Reach out to adminassistant@playinfo.org for more information.	**$1,300 + $200 for Game Day** April Tryout Fee: $250 (Non-Refundable) *The remaining balance can either be paid in full on June 1 or split into 2 even auto-payments on June 1 and September 1.* ***Option One*** *- Pay Remainder in Full:* June 1 Payment: $1250 ***Option Two*** *- Split Remainder Balance:* June 1 Payment: $625 Sept. 1 Payment: $625 (total fees equivalent to $163/mo. for 8-month season but must be paid on the schedule above)

BLUE/GOLD SQUADS* IMPORANT DATES AND REGISTRATION FEES

Blue: Incoming Grades 2 – 6

Gold: Incoming Grades 3 - 6

Each will practice twice a week and compete at 5-6 local competitions. Additional practices or camps may be added to the schedule before competitions.

Estimated Schedule:

*May 6-9	Tryout Registration / First Payment Due
May 15	Rosters Announced
May 28	Uniform Fittings
June 19:	Uniform Ordering Deadline
*June 1:	Second Season Payment Due
July 6:	First day of B/G summer practices
July 27 + 28:	MANDATORY UCA Home Camp (9 am – 3 pm each day)
August 3-7:	MANDATORY B/G Squad Choreography Camp (Exact times TBD)
*Sept 1:	Third (final) Season Payment Due
Sept 10-14:	First Days of School Year practice (through Jan 21/22)
October 8	PLAY Cheer Showcase
October 24:	Lakeville Comp
November 7:	Jefferson Comp
December 5:	Santa's Cheer Shop PL Comp
December 12/19:	UMN Cheer Comp (Date TBD by UMN)
January 9/10:	Tonka Freeze Comp & Routine Critique
January 23:	MCCA State Comp

Blue/Gold Registration Fee – Once your April tryout fee is paid**,** you will have the choice to pay the remainder in-full on June 1 or split into 2 even auto-payments on June 1 and September 1.

Registration Covers: • Practice space gym rental fees (++) • Professional coaches training • Paid hourly program coaches • Choreography • Music rights and mix purchase • UCA Home Camp • Clinics and routine cleanings • Practice Shirts (2) • Competition Bow (2) • Equipment (e.g., signs, megs, poms) • Other incidentals (PLAY insurance, safety items, tryout software, etc.) • 5 Comp registrations + MCCA State Registration cost assistance may be available for those who qualify for free and reduced-price school meals. Reach out to adminassistant@playinfo.org for more information or to determine qualification.	**$900** May Tryout Fee: $250 (Non-Refundable) *The remaining balance can either be paid in full on June 1 or split into 2 even auto-payments on June 1 and September 1.* ***Option One** - Pay Remainder in Full:* June 1 Payment: $650 ***Option Two** - Split Remainder Balance:* June 1 Payment: $325 Sept. 1 Payment: $325 (total fees equate to $113/mo. for 8-month season, but must be paid in full or split into payments as outlined above)

*The number and size of the elementary squads will be dependent on tryout headcount and skill assessment.

LAKER PREP SQUAD IMPORTANT DATES AND REGISTRATION FEES

Incoming Grades 1 – 5

Please reach out to CompCheer@playinfo.org for more information.

Estimated Schedule:

May 28:	Uniform Night – try on and order uniforms
August 10	First day of Laker Prep
August 17	MANDATORY Laker Prep UCA Camp, 8-12
November 7:	Jefferson Comp
December 5:	Santa's Cheer Shop PL Comp
December 12/19:	UMN Cheer Comp (Date TBD by UMN)

Laker Prep Registration Fee $400

Registration Covers: • Practice space gym rental fees • Hourly coaching fees • Music rights and mix purchase • Practice Shirts (2) • Competition Bow (2) • Equipment (e.g., signs, megs, poms) • Other incidentals (PLAY insurance, safety items, tryout software, etc.) • TBD- exhibition registrations if charged by each competition. Registration cost assistance may be available for those who qualify for free and reduced-price school meals. Reach out to adminassistant@playinfo.org for more information or to determine qualification.	**Total Fees:** **$400 registration, due upon registration**

THE TRYOUT PROCESS 2026/2027 SEASON



You will need to join this band tonight to see the cheer and jump sequence videos that your athlete is learning in clinic and will use for tryouts. We will also use this band to communicate other information about tryouts. After rostering is complete, this BAND will dissolve, and if your athlete rosters on a squad, you will be invited to join a squad-specific BAND.

Who: Incoming Grades 2nd - 8th grade athletes for the 2026-2027 school year (current 1-7th graders).

Try-out Dates – all at Twin Oaks Middle School (TOMS):

Tryouts: May 11 & 13
**Please reach out immediately to compcheer@playinfo.org if you have a date conflict.*

Each athlete will get a personalized email with their unique try out time. If you do not receive an email by 7:00 pm on May 10th, please reach out to the comp director at the email above.

What are athletes being evaluated on?

The tryout process is designed to be a low pressure and positive experience, and to ensure that low pressure experience in the shortest timeframe possible, you will see some changes from tryouts in the past.

This is an opportunity for athletes to highlight their skills, ***attitude,*** and work ethic.

Tryouts will focus on cheer motion technique & form, cheer knowledge, jumps, stunting and tumbling.

The panel of judges will be from outside the PLAY organization and experts in the field of cheer.

TRYOUTS

Photos will be taken during the clinic / tryout process and matched up with tryout number in Tryout Genius.

Monday May 11 / Active Stunt Observation Tryout

5pm-8pm - Specific arrival times will be emailed out once registration closes.

See description below of active stunt observation tryout.

Wednesday May 13 / Floor-Based Tryouts

5pm-8pm – Specific arrival times will be emailed out once registration closes.

Groups of 4-5 will try out in front of a panel of outside judges.

Cheer Motion Technique/Form/Knowledge

Jump Sequence

Tumbling Skill

See description below of each set of skills evaluated.

TRYOUT SKILL DESCRIPTIONS:

Cheer Motion Technique and Form – will be displayed through a choreographed cheer that will involve cheer motions, movement on the mat and the use of props. **This cheer will be taught at Clinic #2 and videos posted on the Tryout BAND for athletes to work on prior to tryouts.**

Jump Skills –The jump choreography will include a double jump (two jumps consecutively) and a single jump with choreographed motions in between. This will also be taught at Wednesday's Mandatory clinic – it will be on Band for at-home practice and refined at open gyms on Thursday.

Tumbling Skills - must be performed safely ***without a spot*** on a dead mat. A simple tumbling rubric will be used, and a point value assigned for the execution of the cleanest tumbling skill your athlete can perform. Only one tumbling skill or pass will be done at tryouts (for example, if you can do a standing back handspring, a round-off back handspring ***and*** a round-off back tuck – you would do your most advanced skill (the round-off back tuck) at tryouts). If your highest and cleanest skill is a cartwheel, you would do a clean cartwheel at tryouts, if your cleanest skill is a back walkover, you would do that at tryouts.

Active Stunt Observation Tryout – this new design is intended to make the stunting tryout a fun and low-stress process. Athletes will be put into assigned stunt groups with a mix of new and returning athletes. In a low-key environment, the athletes will get to informally stunt with each judge as they move around the mat as a group. Athletes will get a chance to stunt in a role they know and prefer and will also be asked to challenge themselves with a new role. The idea is not to get every single stunt to hit – but rather allowing the judge to view the coachability and versatility of each athlete. They will see them excel at the roles they may know, and also see if they are willing to challenge themselves with something new.

Note: All stunts will be performed under the supervision of trained observers. Athletes are assessed by outside evaluators. Coaches and board members do not contribute to the in-person tryout evaluations. During tryouts, any board member, coach, or volunteer that has an athlete participating is removed from the tryout area during their tryout time.

Tryout Attire

To maintain the integrity of the tryout process, athletes are provided with a tryout number and the evaluators only know the players by their number.

All athletes will be required to wear a plain black tee-shirt and black or navy lined athletic shorts, plain socks, and clean cheer/tennis shoes. Hair must be pulled back (slicked with gel/hairspray) off the face. No bows or makeup. Athletes are <u>not permitted</u> to wear any graphics, logos, or bows/socks with their name or with any cheer, dance team, gymnastics, tumbling gym or any other sport affiliation. This includes socks. <u>No jewelry</u> allowed. Nails must be trimmed short (below fingertip).

****Due to compliance issues in the past – any athlete that arrives outside of the attire rules (plain black t-shirt (with a sports bra underneath if applicable) and plain black or navy shorts, no-show socks and tennis or cheer shoes) will be asked to come back at a later tryout time with the correct attire on. <u>No exceptions.</u>***

Squad Selection Process and Scoring

Athletes will be placed on a team that appropriately fits their age and ability. Athletes will be considered for ALL squads they are grade eligible for unless indicated otherwise on the registration form to consider only a lower-level squad (this only applies to 6th graders who wish to request an elementary squad placement vs. a middle school placement). ***You <u>cannot</u> request to be considered for only a higher-level squad.***

An athlete's selection for a certain squad in the past does not guarantee a spot on that squad for the following year. No spot or role is EVER guaranteed based on the previous season's placement or role on a previous squad.

The goal is to put athletes on squads where they will be the most successful. Different levels are necessary to ensure safety and to allow for growth. We aim to create teams of similar development sets and the balance of roles to be competitive in their respective divisions and to maximize participation.

Tryout Scoresheet Criteria

Athletes will be evaluated on their demonstrated skills in the following categories (in order of importance):

- **Cheer – Motion/Technique/Knowledge** (correct cheer (knowledge of choreography) motion technique and form, body control, energy/performance/voice projections, crowd leading)
- **Stunting** (active observation score on form/execution/stability, versatility, ability to take corrections and follow cues, body control and coachability)
- **Jumps** (performed on the correct counts and choreography, proper form (chest up, straight legs, pointed toes), height of jump, cleanliness, control of landing)
- **Overall Confidence** (attitude, impression, enthusiasm, energy, coachability).
- **Tumbling** (athletes should choose their single cleanest tumbling skill or tumbling pass, and will choose one to be judged on execution and cleanliness)

Team Registration, Tryout Fee, and Refund Policy

A $250 non-refundable tryout fee is assessed at registration. A separate registration will be required after squad placement to cover the difference in the season costs and the tryout fee. Please see each squad's financial costs chart. No refunds are made once an athlete has been placed on a squad.

PLAY's refund policy can be found here: https://www.playinfo.org/page/show/764527-refund-policy

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Any athlete that plans to try out for the PLAY Cheer Competitive Program must have a parent or guardian attend the mandatory parent meeting on Wednesday, May 6 from 6:45-7:45pm in the TOMS auditorium. Attendance will be taken.

If you have an unavoidable conflict, please reach out to compcheer@playinfo.org.

On the following page is the P.L.A.Y Competition Cheer Commitment / Conduct Agreement.

This SIGNED agreement, along with your $150 volunteer check, is your ticket into tryouts.

Please bring both to the first day of TRYOUTS on May 11th and hand in at the Check-in table. Checks should be made out to P.L.A.Y (Prior Lake Athletics for Youth). They will be held – and not cashed – by CHEER Treasurer until close to the end of the season when they will be shredded upon completion of volunteer hours or cashed if not completed.

2026-2027 P.L.A.Y. COMPETITION CHEER COMMITMENT/

CONDUCT AGREEMENT

The Competition Cheer season is considered to begin June (depending on the squad) and goes through the MCCA State Competition on January 23, 2027

This form must be signed by both athletes and parents for entry to Competition Cheer Tryouts 2026.

A spot on a competition cheer squad is earned and it is detrimental to the squad when an athlete has other priorities that take them away from cheer. If a parent (or guardian) knows that their child is going to be committed to another sport, club or hobby please consider our in-house Sideline program or High School Sideline Program, and allow an athlete who does not have any attendance limitations an opportunity to roster.

Athletes/Parents/Families agree that failing to adhere to the commitments below will result in disciplinary actions. Disciplinary actions include suspension, being ineligible for future seasons or removal from the current season. No refund will be given.

Athlete's Commitment:

If I am selected to represent Prior Lake as a competition cheerleader, I commit to the following:

- Treating my teammates, coaches, judges, cheer board, spectators, and opponents with respect.
- Always trying my best with the best attitude I can bring to the mat.
- Being prepared to practice (wearing assigned practice gear, cheer shoes on, bathroom breaks taken, NO cell phone or caffeinated drinks, etc.) at least 5 minutes prior to the start of practice.
- **Making P.L.A.Y. competition cheer my most important sports commitment during the P.L.A.Y. cheer season. If a competition or practice conflicts with activities or sports that are not P.L.A.Y. Competition Cheer, I will give P.L.A.Y. Competition Cheer priority.**

- Attend all practices and provide my coaches with as much advance notice as possible if I must miss a practice or competition.
- Respect the no cell phone, water-only and no snacks at practice policies of PLAY Cheer.
- Understanding that missing comps/practices can and will reduce my role on the squad and may lead to a different part in a routine.
- **Understanding that each season is new – I may not be on the same team or do the same role I had the prior season. I may not have the exact role I want on the mat, but I know I am part of a team and will work to do the best I can for the betterment of our squad.**
- Remembering I am representing Prior Lake and PLAY competition cheer and the community, and will act with respect in all the communities I compete in.

Parent's Commitment:

If I (we) are a parent(s)/guardian(s)/families of a competition cheerleader, I (we) will abide by the following:

- **Understanding that each season is new – my child may not be on the same team or have the same role they had the prior season. Each season the pool of talent, ability, height, strength and number of squad members is different. Every squad starts fresh each season with a choreographer creating a routine they see fit for the current squad, which may change over time as coaches finalize the routine.**
- Making sure that transportation arrangements are made to get our athletes to and from all competitions and practices as scheduled on time.
- Respect the no cell phone and water-only policies of PLAY Cheer and support the coaches and board if I am approached about my child not following these policies.
- **Making P.L.A.Y. Competition Cheer my most important sports commitment during the cheer season. If a Competition Cheer competition or practice conflicts with activities or sports that are not P.L.A.Y. Competition Cheer, I will give P.L.A.Y. Competition Cheer priority up to and including award ceremonies and adhering to the presentation guidelines outlined for my P.L.A.Y. Cheer Squad (i.e., hair and make-up level of my P.L.A.Y. Cheer teammates for award ceremonies and program photos).**

- Attempt to arrange family activities and vacations to eliminate conflicts with team practices and competitions. Where conflicts are unavoidable, I will notify the head coach, as soon as possible, of any dates our athlete will not be available.
- **Remember to act and speak responsibly and respectfully toward our squad, the opposing squads, all coaches, cheer board members, judges, other spectators, and all others involved.**
- *Understanding that my conduct, behavior and actions toward the squad, coaches, board, opposing squads, other spectators can have an adverse impact on my athlete and certain actions could result in being prohibited from attending meets or sport functions.*
- Remember you are representing Prior Lake/PLAY Competition Cheer and the community.

Commitment Policy Action Process:

Athletes and families with major conflicts need to be aware of the commitment level required and make the appropriate decision. If you are selected for a Prior Lake Competition Cheer squad you commit to participating **in all** practices and competitions, and you acknowledge and agree to the following consequences should you fail to meet that commitment:

- If an athlete misses practice but is not injured or sick. This must be communicated in advance to the head coach:
    - 1st offense – Coaches may use their discretion to not penalize an athlete if there is no history of absences and the reason for missing the practice is valid.
    - 2nd offense will be a meeting with parents, Comp Director and coaches to discuss a plan moving forward and may include removal or reduction of role on the mat.
    - 3rd offense will result in disciplinary action at the discretion of coaches and the Cheer Board, up to and including suspension from competitions.

Athlete Signature Date

Parent Signature Date