

Solomons Steelers (Solomons Boys and Girls Club, Inc.) Cheerleading Program Rules

I. STRUCTURE

A. Philosophy.

The purpose of the Solomons Steelers Cheerleading Program shall be to provide an opportunity for youth to cheer within prescribed age limits and to learn the fundamentals of cheerleading. Objectives shall include the development of positive social values and character traits; good citizenship; and physical and mental health. The goal is to instill the will to win and the courage to accept defeat or disappointment with emphasis on fair play and good sportsmanship. The rules, as specified by Solomons Steelers, will govern practices and games.

B. Program Divisions.

Cheer athletes between the **ages of 4 and 14** will be placed on teams. A season will consist of the 8 to 10 game regular season, postseason playoffs, and 1-3 cheer competitions.

C. Administration.

The program will operate under the jurisdiction of Solomons Steelers (SBGC, Inc.). Any questions or discrepancies should be directed to the Cheer Commissioner who is a member of the Board of Directors.

II. CHEER COMMISSIONER AND COACHES

The Cheer Commissioner and ALL Cheer Coaches shall represent each team in our program and shall be responsible for the following:

- A. Communicate with athletes and parents about information pertaining to the program.
- B. Being aware of the conduct of players, coaches, and spectators.
- C. Distributing league schedules and all other materials and/or messages to the parents and/or guardians of all athletes.
- D. Being aware of all emergency procedures and contact information.
- E. Completing and/or re-certifying annually through the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) Coach Training and Membership Program.
- F. Ensuring all person's ages 16 and older having contact with the participants of the Cheer Program must have an annual background check, the cost of which to be paid by the individual club.
- G. Be responsible for enforcement/education and informing athletes and parents/guardians of the rules and regulations contained and provided in the cheer rules/guidelines package.

III. TEAM MEMBERSHIP

- A. Each team shall consist of no more than 36 cheer athletes. If a team needs to split for multiple football teams in one division, it will be the goal of the club commissioner to split the team equally.
- B. Team rosters shall include name and date of birth. Any additions or changes to rosters prior to the end of the season cheer competition must be approved by Solomons Steelers. (See attachment).
- C. Any coach that knowingly includes a cheer athlete that is not rostered with the club or organization will be released of their duties as a coach.
- D. In order for a team to participate in any competitions, athletes on said team must have actively participated in sideline cheer for **no less than half** of all scheduled games for their respective registered/roster assignment during the season. Any use or attempted use of interscholastic or all-star cheerleaders is in violation of the spirit, philosophy, and purpose of the Solomons Steelers Cheer Program.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Cheer athletes must be between the ages of 4 to 14 years old as of January 1 of the current season.
- B. Cheer athletes cannot change rosters once the season starts. In the event of an extenuating circumstance, cheer athletes may move with the consent of the Cheer Commissioner.

V. GAME REGULATIONS

- A. USASF Safety rules in addition to the Solomons Steelers Cheer Program Rules will be followed for all games. It is recommended that the Cheer Commissioner provide the safety manual from USASF to each Head Coach at the beginning of the season. It is also recommended that all coaches complete training specific to cheerleading through NAYS, USA Cheer, or similar. Local rules and policies will supersede all cheer rules mentioned above.
- B. The player/coach Code of Conduct is applicable before, during and after all practices and games.
- C. All athletes are strongly encouraged to participate in every practice and game. Exceptions to attendance will be made for injury, sickness, or other excused absences. An attendance log is kept by coaches at every practice and game. A minimum of 5 games will be cheered and the majority of practices must be attended throughout the season in order to qualify for competition. Majority of practices attended is at the discretion of the Cheer Commissioner.
- D. Profanity, insulting language or gestures and unsportsmanlike conduct by a cheer athlete and/or

coach toward an official, other coach or athlete is an automatic disqualification from the game and possible suspension from future games.

- E. Cheer athletes removed from a game due to misbehavior or unsportsmanlike conduct will be reported to the Cheer Commissioner and may be suspended from further participation.
- F. Any physical assault or threat of an act of assault on an official by a coach, assistant coach, or athlete will result in automatic removal from the field and/or facility and ejection of the individual from the program.
- G. Any coach, upon a second ejection from a league game by an official will be suspended from coaching in the league for the remainder of the year and possibly the next season.
- H. Solomons Steelers will take disciplinary action in circumstances concerning the credibility, integrity and welfare of the league.
- I. Halftime routines will be done by the visiting team first facing their own sideline, and then the home team will do their routine. Home team has the option to perform halftime twice (first to visiting sideline, and next to home sideline). Each team shall have 2 minutes and 30 seconds to complete their routine and return to their sideline. (Half time is typically 10 minutes).
- J. Under no circumstances will derogatory or negative cheers across the field be tolerated. Any cheer deemed inappropriate by a Cheer Commissioner during games will result in that team being asked to leave the sidelines.

VI. PRACTICES

- A. No team will meet for practice more than three times a week (Sunday thru Saturday) after the start of the school year.
 - a. 1st offense – Verbal counseling
 - b. 2nd offense – coach suspended for one or more games
 - c. Practices must not exceed two hours per session
 - d. Game day warmups shall not be longer than 45 minutes
- B. Safety is ALWAYS a priority. Teams must always use an additional spotter (backspot) when stunting. A Coach, Commissioner or Assistant Coach must be present during all stunting. Mats are an essential part of stunting and should and will be used for indoor practices.

GENERAL RULES

1. All teams must be supervised during all official functions by a qualified Coach or the Cheer Commissioner.
2. All Coaches will follow the National Standards for Youth Sports which is available at NAYS.org.
3. All teams and Cheer Commissioner must have an emergency response plan on file in the event of an injury or emergency. This plan will be shared with athletes and parents at the first practice of each season.
4. Athletes and coaches may not be under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, performance enhancing substances, or over-the-counter medications while participating in a practice or performance that would hinder the ability to supervise or execute a routine safely.
5. Athletes will practice and perform on an appropriate surface that has been checked and cleared of any debris and/or moisture prior to practicing or performing, this includes the sideline and midfield areas.
6. All squad member uniforms must cover midriff, and skirt must be modest in length.
7. No dance shoes/boots, and/or gymnastics slippers (or similar) allowed. Shoes must have a solid sole.
8. Gum and candy are prohibited during practices, games and competitions.
9. Jewelry of any kind including but not limited to ear, nose, tongue, belly button and facial rings, clear plastic jewelry, bracelets, necklaces and pins on uniforms are prohibited. Jewelry must be removed and may not be taped over. USASF Rules apply.
10. Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept at an appropriate length (short, near the end of the fingers) to minimize risk for the participants.
11. Hair must be worn in a manner to minimize risk for the participant. Hair devices, if worn, must be secure and appropriate to the activity.
12. A participant who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the activity until the bleeding has

stopped, the wound covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or uniform is changed before returning to participation.

13. Casts that are hard and unyielding or have rough edges must be appropriately covered with a padded material. *Clarification: The appropriate padded material must be such that it protects both the athlete and fellow athletes from injury. A participant wearing a cast cannot be included in a stunt.*
14. Any height increasing apparatus used to propel a competitor is prohibited. (Exception: spring floor)
15. Flags, banners, signs, pom poms, megaphones, and pieces of cloth are the only props allowed. Props with poles or similar support apparatus will not be used in conjunction with any kind of stunt or tumbling. All props must be safely discarded out of harms way (e.g. throwing a hard sign across the mat from a stunt would be illegal). Any uniform piece purposefully removed from the body and used for visual effect will be considered a prop.
16. Glitter that does not readily adhere on the hair, face, uniform, costume or body is illegal. Glitter may be used for signs, props or backdrops if laminated or sealed. Exception: glitter may be used on a sign that the football players run through at the start of the games and signs made to hang up for spirit purposes.
17. Cheerleaders are required to be at no less than half of scheduled games. Exception: If there is an A team and B team the teams should rotate every week between the football teams.
18. No stunting, tumbling, or jumping will be permitted on sidelines during live play. No exceptions.
19. Coaches are not to “spot” tumbling skills. Tumbling should only be performed by cheer athletes who have perfected those skills.
20. All cheers should be performed in a positive manner and directed toward your team to succeed. The goal is to engage the crowd and encourage the athletes, not belittle the other team.
21. Suggestive, offensive, or vulgar choreography is inappropriate for any audience. No cross-field taunting cheers will be performed.
22. Spotters are required for stunts performed on the grass.

23. Proficiency is required for all levels of cheer before skill progression. Coaches must consider the individual, group, and team skill levels with regard to the safety of the stunts/skills being performed.
24. On the level grid, all skills allowed for a particular level encompass all skills allowed in the preceding level.
25. Coaches are required to stand on the sidelines with their team during the game. Coaches should stand between their athletes and the field of play watching the game to ensure cheer athlete safety.
26. Cheer teams will face their crowd, promoting spirit among the fans and encouraging athletes to perform at their best. A member of the coaching staff will face the field, watching the game to alert cheer athletes to any approach by players and the progress of the game, i.e. offense/defense, touchdown, etc. Between the execution of cheers, athletes should face field in order to observe the progress of the game.
27. When there is an injured player down on the field, all cheer athletes will take a knee and remain quiet. Once the player is back to his feet or removed from the field, the cheer athletes from both teams will clap in support of that player.
28. During half-time routines, 1 safety spotter per stunt group is required for basket tosses.
29. Coaches must be behind a performing team for safety spotting.
30. Drops including but not limited to knee, seat, thigh, front, back, and split drops from a jump, stunt, or inverted position are prohibited.
31. Stunts will not be performed on wet grass. The home field Cheer Commissioner will assess the field. Exception: If the home field commissioner is not available, the home Head Coach of the team will assess the field.

Southern Maryland Youth Athletic Conference Cheerleading

ROSTER ADDITION OR CHANGE FORM

Cheer Athlete Name: _____

Parent (s) Names: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Reason for Roster Change: _____

Date Change Effective: _____

Change from Team: _____

To Team: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Cheer Athlete's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Club Cheer Commissioner Signature: _____ Date: _____

Club President Signature: _____ Date: _____