

Delaware Optimist Club Cheerleading 2011 Rule Book

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I. General League Information, Contact and Purpose

- The Delaware Optimist Football League (the "League") is run by the Delaware Optimist Club ("Club"), a non-profit, all volunteer group dedicated to serving the youth of Delaware County. The club is a member of the Optimist International ("OI").
- No member of this League is paid or profits financially from this League.
- The season will start on August 1, 2011 and end on October 30, 2011

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Purpose of the League: It is the desire of the Delaware Optimist Football League to provide the youth of Delaware County with early training in sports teamwork and good sportsmanship. The specific goals of Cheerleading are to provide all participants, regardless of previous experience or ability, basic cheerleading instruction in a fun environment, and to teach proper motion techniques, chants, cheers, good sportsmanship and teamwork.

II. Eligibility

- Cheerleading is open to all youth in Delaware County
- Cheerleader must have obtained their 5th birthday and have not obtained their 14th birthday prior to August 1, 2011.
- No prior experience is needed and there are no tryouts or competitions.

Mascots

- Children who have obtained their 4th birthday prior to August 1, 2011 may participate as a Mascot.
- There is a maximum of one Mascot per squad, unless the cheerleading coach ("Advisor") requests otherwise.
- Not all squads will necessarily have a Mascot.
- Children of the Advisor or their assistant have first priority as Mascots and the minimum age requirement does not apply.
- Mascots may have reduced practice schedules at the discretion of the Advisor.
- A parent must be physically present at all times with Mascot at games and practices (i.e., not 10 yards down the field).
- Mascots may not do any type of gymnastics and must have "both feet on the floor" at all times. Kicks and cart wheels are acceptable.

III. Registration

Registration ("sign-ups") for the 2011 season will be the May 21-July 24, 2011. Forms are available online and at Mingo sign-ups throughout May & June. July 24, 2011 is the drop dead dates for registration due to uniform orders are due to the supplier. If a cheerleader has not paid in full by July 24, 2011, they will be dropped and not able to participate in the 2011 season.

IV. Cheerleader Placement

Cheerleaders are placed on squads per the following. Squads are limited to 10 participants (including Cheerleaders and Mascot), unless Advisor requests otherwise. The number of squads is determined by the number of football teams, available participants and Advisors. Squads consist of multiple age girls. In keeping with the League's Purpose, Cheerleaders are not placed with regard to

their ability or prior experience. Requests for special squad placement are honored when possible and are subject to availability. No Cheerleader is guaranteed placement on any squad with the exception of #1 and #2 below.

1. First priority is placing Cheerleaders with parent(s) who are either Advisors or football Coaches.*
2. The second step is to place Cheerleaders on the squad for their sibling's football team, If applicable.* Additionally, if two or more siblings are signed up to cheer, they will be placed on the same squad.* For both of these to be accomplished, the League must be made aware if Cheerleader has a sibling playing football/cheering at the time of registration.
3. The third step is to place Cheerleaders who live in outlying areas of Delaware County on squads in their local area.*
4. The next step is to place returning Cheerleaders to their prior squad unless otherwise specified.
5. Specific requests are then considered, including placement for reasons of preferring a particular Advisor or squad, being on the same squad as a friend/relative, or for day care or car pool reasons.
6. The final step is to divide the remaining Cheerleaders on squads, keeping squads as equal as possible in size.

*Unless parent requests otherwise. Additionally, there may not be a squad for a football team due to low sign-up volume or lack of an Advisor. If Cheerleader's sibling is on a football team that has no squad, we will offer another squad or a refund.

V. Uniforms

- Cheerleader will be supplied with uniform consisting of a shell, skirt briefs and pom-poms. Cheerleader keeps uniform & pom-poms.
- **Uniforms are not to be altered in any way.** No words or symbols are to be printed on briefs. If uniform is altered, parent will be required to purchase a new one.
- Cheerleaders must provide basic tennis or athletic shoes and socks, which must be worn at all times during games/practices.
- Cheerleaders arriving at games/practices with any other show type, e.g. flip flops, crocs or bare feet, cannot participate for safety reasons.
- Uniforms will be available for Cheerleaders to try on at sign-ups. It is required girls try on outfits.
- All uniforms are custom printed and cannot be returned or exchanged. There are no exceptions.
- Coats, raincoats, earmuffs or gloves/mittens may be worn as weather dictates.

Pompoms

- A set of two pompoms will be available for each Cheerleader at the start of the seasons.
- Advisors keep poms during the season and give them to the cheerleaders at the last game to keep.
- If Advisor/Cheerleader loses/alters poms at a practice/game, there is a \$20 fee for a replacement set (subject to availability).

VI. Payment and Related Information

- The registration fee of \$85 covers uniform, pom poms and the cost of the program.
- Please pay at the time of registration. We accept cash, checks or money orders made payable to "Delaware Optimist Club".
- There is no fundraising (see section on Fundraising below for only exception).

Fee Deadline

- Payment must be made in full by July 24, 2011 in order for Cheerleader to participate and for uniform to be ordered.

Payment Plan

- Payment of registration fees may be divided into payment as desired, so long as the full amount is paid by July 24, 2011.
- There is no penalty or fee for using the payment plan and the full amount may be paid at any time.
- Hardship cases may contact the Club for review of their situation. All inquiries are confidential.

Returned/Declined Checks for Insufficient Funds or other Reasons

- If a check is returned or declined, there is a \$5 fee. This fee and registration fees must then be paid in cash or money order.

Refund of Fees and Requests for Squad Changes

- Requests to drop Cheerleading will be honored on and until July 27, 2011. No refunds will be issued after then unless Cheerleader suffers a season ending injury at an Optimist function. (Subject to discretion of the Optimist Board).
- Squad changes are subject to availability of space and are at the sole discretion of Cheerleading Commissioners.
- A different uniform will not be ordered due to squad changes.

Fundraising

- Advisors may choose to conduct a fundraiser to pay for a postseason party. These fundraisers are subject to the following:
 - A fundraiser may only be done if all the parents on the squad agree and participate.
 - Neither the League nor Optimist Club is involved in this fundraiser, nor are they responsible for it or the funds.
 - Cheer Commissioners need to be informed of the fundraiser.
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Insurance

- The League does not individually insure participants and is not liable for injuries or accidents.
- It is the parent's responsibility to provide any desired insurance for their participant. Proof of insurance is not required

VII. Practice Regulations

Practice may start the first week of August. Practices are in the evenings. Day/times will vary. All practices must be in the presence of an Optimist Club member. Due to insurance regulations, there are no exceptions. This may be accomplished by:

- Cheerleading squad may practice at the same time/location as any football teams, or;
- If Advisor is a member of the Optimist Club, they may practice anywhere, although it is highly recommended practice is held

close to the football team practicing to make it easier for parents with football players.

Additionally

- No more than three (3) practices per week before school season starts.
- No more than two (2) practices per week after school season starts, at least one (1) a week is required after the fair show.
- Practices may not last longer than 2 hours per practice.
- Cheerleaders are expected to attend all scheduled practices.
- Tennis/athletic shoes, socks and appropriate dress are required for practice. (Shorts or pants, t-shirts or sweatshirts are appropriate; miniskirts, sandals and halter-tops are not. If it wouldn't be acceptable in school, it is not acceptable for practice.)
- Uniforms are not to be worn for practice.
- Cheerleader should bring a water bottle to practice/games.
- Advisors must have a first-aid kit at practice/games.
- **If another child is brought to practice, they must be watched at all times by parents. Advisors are not babysitters.**
- **Parents are expected to be on time to pick their child up after practices/games. Advisors are not babysitters.**

Stunting/Gymnastics

- This league does not allow stunting with the exception of a single thigh-stand pyramid or pony mount. In either case, the Advisor, not another Cheerleader, must be on the field to spot.
- Gymnastics including cartwheels, round offs, and splits are allowed, but Advisors are not required to teach them.
- Mascots may not stunt or do any type of gymnastics.

VIII. Games

- Games are held at Smith Park on Troy Road on Saturdays.
- Cheerleaders are expected to be present and cheering at all games please notify Advisor of known absence.
- Cheerleaders are expected to cheer the entire game, but squads may take half/time or a quarter off to rest.
- We cheer regardless of weather. In the case of severe weather, the game will be delayed or called by the commissioners.
- There is usually a rain date scheduled for games that have been canceled, but no game is guaranteed to be rescheduled.
- Cheerleaders are expected to arrive at least 15 minutes before scheduled game time with complete uniform on.
- There is a "box" on either side of the field, marked with paint, for the football team and coaches, Advisors and Cheerleaders.
- Cheerleaders are not to leave box without first consulting with Advisor.
- All non-participants, including parents, spectators and other children are to keep out of the box.
- Visitors will be listed first on the game schedules.
- At the start of the game, the "Home" squad should come to the "Visitor" sideline so both squads can do a "Hello" type cheer.
- Squads are encouraged to have a half time program, but it is not required.
- Each squad has a 3 ½ minute time limit on the field for half time. The "Visitor" will take the field first, then the "Home" squad.
- Cheer – Quarters 1-2,4; Snack – Quarter 3

IX. Sportsmanship and Conduct

- Excellent attitude and good sportsmanship is expected by all Cheerleaders, Advisors and parents/spectators at all times.
- This League emphasizes basic skills, teamwork, having fun and good sportsmanship and is here for the kids' enjoyment.
- This League does not keep stats. Although football is a competitive sport, this League encourages skills over competition.
- No derogatory/rude cheers, foul language, flipping up of skirts, music with offensive lyrics, lewd or age-inappropriate moves.
- Squads should watch opposing squad's halftime. Cheerleaders should kneel down if there is an injury on either team.
- Cheerleaders and Advisors are expected to go onto the field with the football team after games and congratulate the other team on playing a good game, even if the other team has no cheerleaders.

X. Advisors

- Advisors are UNPAID volunteers. They are donating their time and talent. This League would not exist without them.
- Advisors aren't professions. Most have cheer experience and/or have access to someone who does.
- The Advisor's job is to teach the fundamentals of cheerleading, good sportsmanship and teamwork.
- It is not the Advisor's job to serve as a babysitter for Cheerleaders or for other children brought to games/practices.
- Advisors may have one assistant if desired. It is entirely up to the Advisor to what degree the assistant will help out.
- Advisors must be at least 18 years old. Assistants must be at least 13 years old.
- Advisors are to follow all guidelines and rules set forth in this Rule Book.
- At no time can Advisor leave squad during practices or games without adult supervision.
- If Advisor needs to miss a game, they must get an adult substitute and contact a commissioner with the information.
- Advisors must be an active member of the Optimist Club and pass a background check.

How Advisors are Matched with Squads**

- Advisors who return from a previous season have first priority to coach for the same team's squad again.

- If that team is no longer available or Advisor cannot coach that particular squad, Advisor has first pick of remaining squads.
- New Advisors select from remaining squads, but we ask that squads needing an Advisor due to sibling placement be selected.
- If there are more Advisors than squads, returning Advisors have first priority. New Advisors are taken on a first come basis.
- **Unresolved issues from a prior year of Advising may require the approval of the Board of Directors for an Advisor to return.

XI. Awards and Pictures

- All Cheerleaders will receive an award (a trophy or medallion) issued by the League
- Most squads have a party (with or without football team) at the end of the season, such as a cookout or pizza party.
- As of this writing, the providing of trophies or other participation awards is up to each Advisor (this may change as league/ sponsor funds become available). Parents may be asked for reimbursement for trophies, awards and/or party.
- As of this writing, two all-team photo days are being scheduled in early August. All teams/squads will be photographed then. Please check with your Coach or Advisor for exact date and time.

XII. Disciplinary Procedures

In order to be fair to all, disrespectful or uncooperative behavior, on or off the field, cannot occur. Examples may include but are not limited to being disrespectful or rude to squad mates, Advisor, opposing team, parents or referees, being uncooperative or disruptive, or displaying poor sportsmanship. If Cheerleader exhibits misconduct the following disciplinary procedures may be followed in order by the Advisor

1. The Cheerleader is given a verbal warning with an exact description of the misconduct.
2. *The Cheerleader or entire squad may have extra physical conditioning (jumping jacks, running, etc.)
3. **The Cheerleader may be benched for a quarter, which she must attend.
4. **The Cheerleader may be benched for an entire game, which she must attend.
5. **The Cheerleader is expelled from the program with no refund given. This step can only be completed by a Commissioner.

*From the second time on, a parent/guardian of the Cheerleader must be notified that the misconduct has occurred (with an exact description of the misconduct) and what has been done as a result.

**From Step 3 the Commissioners must have an Incident Report filed and be informed or involved in any actions taken.

XIII. Grievance Procedure

In the event of a dispute relating to cheerleading, the following procedure is to be adhered to, Mandatory: All meetings and discussions, whether they are with Cheerleading Advisors, the Cheerleading or Football Commissioners or Optimist Club members must be done outside of game/practice times and must be set up ahead of time. During practices and games, Advisors, Commissioners, and Optimist member have other responsibilities.

1. All problems must first be addressed with the squad's Advisor.
2. If problem is not resolved to either party's satisfaction, the next step is to bring the dispute to the attention of a Cheerleading Commissioner. She will discuss the dispute with all parties to resolve the dispute.
3. If this resolution is not sufficient, the problem should be addressed with a Club President. He will set up a meeting within one week to discuss the dispute with all parties and come to a resolution.
4. In the event the problem remains after this discussion, the final step is to bring the problem before at least three members of the Optimist Club Board during a regularly scheduled Optimist meeting. All adults involved in dispute must be in attendance. The decision of the Optimist Club is final.

XIII. Rule Changes

Any new rules and regulations implemented will be given to Advisors and Cheerleaders as soon as they become available.