

**INFORMATION ABOUT
RISK MANAGEMENT AND LEGAL LIABILITY FOR DANCE &
DRILL TEAM COACHES IN WASHINGTON STATE: USING
PROPER KNOWLEDGE AND COMMON SENSE**



VARIOUS ARTICLES FOR NEW COACHES

FROM

WSDDCA

First, know your rules!

EMERGENCY PLANNING AND LEGAL LIABILITY FOR DANCE & DRILL COACHES

- We have to protect ourselves by being organized, professional, and careful. It is not enough to use common sense anymore, because some people can find a reason to sue. If not prepared the idea of LEGAL LIABILITY can make coaches feel overwhelmed or even terrified.
- First the National Federation SPIRIT Manual. Attend a WIAA Spirit Rules Clinic. Know where to find the reference points. New manuals are mailed in July for the next school year. Do not depend on your athletic director or school to furnish you a manual, because it may not happen. You may receive a rule book in the fall after your season has started, but the new rules are published in July each year.
- There are students in dance and drill who have been known to come back years later and sue a coach for an injury that may have occurred years before. If coaches can present themselves as professionals who belong to dance/drill organizations such as WSDDCA, WSDA, ACCA, DTDA, subscribe to magazines where many of the latest trends or articles are up to date (USA or UDA Coach Handbook, Dance Spirit/In Motion, Insights (DTDA), American Cheerleader or Journal of HPERD), have checked out library resources or buy books (Just For KIX Manual, Cheerleaders Guide to Life, etc.) that may deal with specific topics related to dance/drill safety or organization. A law suit may not make it to court if a coach can prove they are not liable. Attending local coach's conference such as WSDDCA Fall Coaches Conference or DTDA Regional and National Conventions. It is a good idea to keep your professional credentials on file, whether you are a teacher or not.
- Be sure to keep your WIAA Clock Hours updated and on file with your athletic director, even if they do not ask for them. It is a requirement!
- If you are going to spend time doing quality job, then do it right!
- You are covered by your school through the school district, but if a coach is found liable, a school district will not be able back up a coach. Coaches need to be aware and take the necessary steps to protect themselves.

Why people sue...

1. No medical insurance
2. Notification of parents too late
3. Coach or school attitude after injury. A coach needs to show concern

What if a suit is filed?

1. Attorneys will look for the degree of deviation from the standard of care
2. Attitude or demeanor of defendant

3. Severity of injury
4. Post injury

Note: A person can come back SEVERAL years for knee injuries, back injuries.

Coaches need to :

- Realize the Dance/Drill is a sport. More regulations for season, competitions, the state championship, and tryouts continue to occur.
- Supervise all practices, performances, and any event where the team is representing themselves as a “team”
- Program development- rules, objectives, emergency planning, manual handy, safety equipment, progression of fundamentals, proper warm up and stretching, proper instruction, education of safety guidelines and rules.
- Get coach training from variety of sources. Always seek help.
- Be sure there is performer readiness and preparation.
- Know your ASB laws, school policies and procedures. Build a rapport with your activities or athletic director.
- Consult other coaches in your building; join their local association.
- Make sure you have a safe place to practice.

Terms to know:

LEGAL DUTY- Coaches have an obligation for the care and safety of another person.

REASONABLE CARE- To what degree would a reasonable person use to prevent injury to people in their care

CURRENT STANDARD OF CARE- What is the current standard others in the field are using to protect from or care for an injury; If you were being investigated for negligence, information from the National Federation Spirit Rules, Manuals like USA or UDA, magazine articles. All things mentioned above would be consulted to establish the standard, therefore if a coach could prove they subscribe to these beliefs and follow the standard care of practice, things would look good for any coach! Other coaches in the field would be questioned about how they handle situations to establish a standard.

NEGLIGENCE- When a person with legal duty fails to follow the standard of care.

1. Act of Omission- what did you not do
2. Act of Commission- what should you have done

SUPERVISION- This is the largest factor in determining negligence. Were you present, what did you do? Coaches should be with their team members at all times. Would a football or volleyball coach throw out the ball and say “kids, just call me if you need anything?” NO

LIABILITY- After all factors of an injury are reviewed, a determination of your degree of liability is made. Were you 100% responsible? How far did the coach deviate from the Standard of Care.

CONSISTENTLY plan to follow the rules. Explain this process to the team members, so students will understand that a coach are is not making up rules for a power trip. Tell students WHY? Soon students will just automatically follow the

guidelines without question. If the coach follows the rules, the team will follow the rules. Example of what NOT to do is this: “we do this in practice or at our school, but not at a competition, where judges will give us a safety violation.” Wearing any jewelry at any time on the team is illegal, whether in practice or performance. Remember your performance, reflects your practice. FEAR- Can't live in fear... so just remember if you PROTECT YOUR STUDENTS, YOU WILL PROTECT YOURSELF. Use common sense, be neutral, firm, fair, consistent, whether that be a dance studio, gym for dance or drill team, physical education class, or at competitions.

Ten TIPS to protect yourself:

1. Know the rules! (National Federation Spirit, WIAA, WSDDCA, School District polices, etc.)
2. Get as many certifications for coaching and safety as possible. This USA Coach Certification Program, Summer camp coach program, or AACCA are nice credentials to have.
3. Develop program goals and have a clear cut plan on how to achieve the goals.
4. Teach skills correctly with developmentally and proper fundamentals. Stress how to land or jump, eye spot, etc. Also, many injuries occur in dance & drill because of overuse. Give your team members that well deserved time off, not just in the summer, but build “mini vacations” into your program.
5. Maintain current CPR and First Aid card. WIAA has instated that all dance/drill coaches will follow the same coaches standards as other coaches for clock hours, First Aid and CPR.
6. Have a written EMERGENCY Plan on file with your administration, to be sure you are following the right plan. Send copies to parents. Role Play what you would do in a real situation. The role play activity can even be a team builder activity.
7. Direct supervision is a must! NO Coach, NO Practice.
8. During auditions or tryouts, screen your athletes for any previous or current injuries or conditions. Having a MD physical is not enough. Get in writing the injury and date from student, with physician signature. Protect yourself!
9. Provide adequate practice facilities. See if the team can get on the gym rotation. Many times early AM practices are the only time dance/drill teams see the gym
10. Explain your safety rules to parents and students early in the season. Host a new parent meeting, which is a requirement at many high schools.

Remember that it is your responsibility as a coach to know and understand all of the rules!

EMERGENCY PLAN: PREPARE, PLAN & PRACTICE

PREPARE:

- Be prepared, but tailor a plan for your specific situation.
- Use information cards- high schools require travel cards for sports; keep theme with you at all times
Name, home and school address, telephone numbers, allergies, previous injuries, family doctor name and phone number, insurance #,
- During practice be sure to have access to a telephone
Post 911 and school's complete address

PLAN:

- Assignments- during an emergency, coach stay with injured; have a reliable person call 911 with specific information such as location, information about injury (body part); send someone to meet the ambulance and direct the correct location, dismiss team if you go with injured
- For away games be sure to find out info about the location of phone, medical staff, trainer, etc.
- Be sure to check out the plan with school district regarding driving, procedures, etc.

PRACTICE:

- Role play with team members.

THINGS TO REMEMBER FOR THE COACH:

- Be sure to teach basic fundamentals of fitness training. Keep your team in shape by encouraging weight training in the off season, proper warm up. Don't know where to start? Check with the health and fitness teachers in your school.
- Make sure your practice area is safe, not by a glass trophy case or a slippery floor.
- Do not practice without a phone.
- Have first aid equipment
- Go over the safety policies with students, teach the safety rules. Educate the team. If the students love dance/drill as much as the coach does, they will probably be involved in the future, so start now with the education. Team members often go on to coach or judge dance & drill after college.
- Dance/drill can make the students a better person physically and mentally. It is the coach's responsibility for reading, understanding, and relating this information to the students. The coach is the adult, not a pal. The coach must enforce all of the rules.
 - Know your NF Spirit Rules. Be sure to attend a Rules Clinic every year.

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR NEW DANCE/DRILL COACHES

- The role of dance/drill teams is to train as athletes to perform routines for their school and community events, such as half-times for football and basketball games, parades, and school assemblies. Many dance/drill teams also compete in a variety of competitions. In Washington State high schools host competitions, usually from November through March, with the WIAA State Competition in late March.
- There are a variety of styles used on dance/drill teams, such as dance, hip hop, jazz, lyrical, small prop, large prop and production, color guard, flag team, pom pom, military drill, traditional drill, show drill, high kick, and precision dance. Most teams use a combination of these styles, but fit the style into a category. There are seven categories in the competitions---dance, drill, pom, hip hop, kick, prop/production, and color guard. .
- The number on dance/drill teams vary from 6-75 students. Many teams have a few boys, but most consist of all girls. The average number on a dance/drill team is 20-25 students.
- All dance/drill teamers must be cleared for athletic eligibility, just as sports, but dance/drill is considered an athletic activity, not a sport. In a few school districts dance/drill is considered a sport. Some schools offer dance/drill as a class, either during the school day or before school. Most teams practice before and/or after school, or when the gym or multipurpose room is available. Practices are usually a couple of hours, just like other sports.
- Coaches, advisors, directors are often physical education teachers, teachers, counselors, administrators, para professionals, dance teachers from local studios, former dance/drill teamers, parents who have a student on the team, or a community member. There are a wide variety of people who direct dance/drill teams, but all should be educated and professional.
- The “season” usually starts with tryouts in the Spring. Many schools have cheerleader tryouts first, then dance/drill. The tryouts are handled much like cheerleading tryouts with routine to music with a group of judges from the school and/or community. Uniforms are usually ordered in the spring and summer, so that teams are ready for the start of school. Many teams participate in summer parades and festivals in their communities, attend dance/drill camps, and have regular practice to prepare for the school year. The Fall season brings football season with spirited school assembly routines and half-time performances. Winter is the same with basketball performances for both the girls and boys teams, and competitions. The competition season is November 1 through mid March. The season usually ends in the spring, with a few weeks off before tryouts begin again. Several teams host a “spring show” to showcase a year end of work and individual talents.
- Instructional materials are needed year round. In Washington there are workshops for general coaching techniques and philosophy sponsored by the WIAA (Washington Interscholastic Activities Association) in August. In the fall the WIAA holds required safety rule clinics throughout the state. Information can be found at www.WIAA.com. The WSDDCA (Washington State Dance/Drill Coaches Association) sponsors a fall coach’s conference in September, where a variety of topics are covered from team building and choreography to booster clubs and philosophy. The WSDDCA Fall Conference is the best way for new coaches to find out information about dance & drill teams in our state. Many of the dance/drill/cheer uniform companies contact the coaches in the fall or spring, because this is usually when the

“new” team is chosen, and perhaps new coaches are hired. Information can be found at www.WSDDCA.org.

- Stipends for coaches/advisors varies. In Washington coaches pay ranges from \$1000-\$5000 a year, with the average at about \$2500. That’s not a lot of money for the time and energy it takes for have a good program, so coaches usually are involved because they love it!
- Many coaches do work closely with the athletic and band directors, especially flag or color guard teams. Many coaches only work with the band directors during football season, for performing field shows with the band during half-time.
- Teams do training for strength, flexibility, technique for dance, and specific skill development, much like you would see in a dance studio or physical education class. A good video would be great for coaches, especially new coaches. Resources are available in various dance/drill websites or magazines.
- Many drill and dance teams have gone to a fast pace style of precision dance or jazz, but there is still a market for the traditional drill teams, especially in Washington State. Many of these teams call themselves dance/drill teams, but are actually precision dance with an emphasis on drill. One of the problems is not having a common definition for these styles. What is drill in one state, may be something different in another state. The trend around the country is more dance, and this is what many of the camps teach. However, there is a need to keep drill techniques alive for many military and color guard programs.
- Much of the music that young people like has inappropriate words, but the beat is really great. There is a need for music to be mixed, such as an oldies mix, or another theme mix. Themes like “time”, “women”, “army”, “shake”, and “dog songs” have been used, but the field is wide open for a creative coach. I
- Important topics for new coaches to investigate include: how to choreograph & music selection for routines, basic philosophy and ethics of dance/drill teams, strength and flexibility training for women, general coaching such as successful coaching, etc, National Federation Safety Rules interpretation, showmanship and perfecting routines, the basic skills and fundamentals of dance/drill, technique of dance/drill & creative floor patterning, developing a winning dance/drill program in high schools, how to teach drill down, and beating the score sheet in competitions.

TEAM BUILDING: MAKE IT WORK FOR DANCE AND DRILL TEAMS

Desire + Goals + Team Pride = SUCCESS

- **DEVELOP A PHILOSOPHY FOR YOUR DANCE/DRILL PROGRAM-** All of us would like to be associated with a successful team. Being a part of a successful dance or drill team can be filled with enjoyment, happiness, and warm memories. On the other hand, the experience can be frustrating, confusing, or stressful unless every member of the team **WORKS TOGETHER!** The responsibility of being on the dance/drill team in a high school is important to students as well as their peers. Members must be willing to work hard with a positive attitude while practicing self-discipline. Team members need to know that it is an honor and a privilege to be a part of the team. Teams who handle themselves with dignity and set good examples in the school and in the community quickly earn the respect they deserve, which shows in performing their routines.
- **GET ACQUAINTED-** Getting to know each other as people through a variety of “getting acquainted” activities at the beginning of the season help form the group of people into a team. Respect and recognition of each member’s contributions can help create a sense of belonging among the team.
- **SET INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM GOALS-** Determine what is important by focusing attention on setting both short-term and long-term goals. Each team member should set individual goals and team goals at the beginning of the school year. Decide as a group how and when the goals can be best fulfilled throughout the season or year. Thinking and talking about the group’s vision can keep team motivation high. Involving all team members in projects, choreography, and decisions can help develop a sense of determination and commitment.
- **DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEAM AS A “TEAM”-** Every team goes through a metamorphosis from the beginning to the end of the year. Being aware that power plays among team members can inhibit team building. When team members compete with each other, they will not be able to function as a unit. Teams must learn to live in the present. Each year a team will have a different “chemistry” of personalities. When a new coach or advisor takes over, team members need to help by accepting new ideas and carrying on some traditions on the team. Getting to know each other as people first, team members second helps in understanding the many different personalities. Giving feedback to other team members needs to be made with respect and tact. Compliments given in a sincere manner are appreciated even more.

Sometimes it is not what we say, but how we say it that can make the difference in how people respond to us. Remember there is no “I” in TEAM.

- **CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING-** Each person must know that they are equally important, but that they belong to the group. Team members must learn to care and support each other during the joyous times, as well as during the trying times. All team members must learn to cooperate with the rest of the group. Allow team members to take risk to try something new, innovative and creative. It is important that each member appreciate each other, because everyone has something to offer. People need to be willing to accept ideas from others and appreciate their involvement. Having patience with each other will build respect and help develop a sense of oneness and pride within the team.
- **BUILDING TRUST-** Creating a feeling of trust among team members, coaches and parents is vital to the success of the program. Team members must be able to control their feelings, while working closely with other people. Differences are likely to arise during the year, therefore setting common goals help everyone work together. Unfinished business, resentments, or blaming others for mistakes can break the team down, therefore having a positive attitude, practicing good communication, and working hard will help team members rise above the difficult times. The coach needs to set and keep high expectations for the team and encourage higher individual levels of skill each season. Parents need to support the team by attending meetings, performances, and by keeping the lines of communication open with both concerns and with uplifting comments.
- **EXPECTATIONS NEED TO BE HIGH-** To get along, every member of the team must exercise humility and consider the feelings of other people. Team members need to support the student leaders and the coach, even when differences occur. At times the leaders or captains must forget personal desires and do what is best for the entire team. The ability to get along with other people, the ability to recognize and work with personal differences, self-discipline, lasting friendships, physical fitness improvement and quick comprehension of routines are things team members can learn from working together. These are all skills that are necessary to be successful in the working world today.
- **PROCESS TAKES TIME-** Team building is a process that takes time and energy. Improving problem solving skills will develop trust, which leads to the development of team spirit! Having team members who have the same desire to be competitive, plus common goals to work for will develop a sense of pride and lead to **SUCCESS!**

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF BELONGING THROUGH DANCE/DRILL TEAMS

We hear a lot about “excellence in education”, but how is it really achieved? Having balance between academic classes and extracurricular activities gives students an opportunity to develop leadership skills and time management. Many studies throughout the country have indicated that students who are involved with their school activities have higher grades, improved attendance, and feel attached to their school.

A common period in a young person’s life to exhibit “at risk” behavior is during the transition between middle school and high school. The search to identify with a group or having a sense of belonging is a natural part of the transition to high school. Developing the feeling of connectedness in a high school means that the students’ social structure is inclusive with a sense of community. Friendships based on trust, students helping others, tolerance for a variety of ethnic groups, and wide variety of social activities are characteristic of schools who have the framework for that connectedness. In ineffective schools students may feel alone with no real friends where family heritage is unimportant. Problems with fighting, lack of school spirit, and low attendance at games and activities are qualities that are seen in some schools where students do not have a sense of belonging.

Skills such as teamwork, optimism, believing attitudes, commitment and involvement help produce necessary changes for schools to develop a sense of belonging. Getting involved with a spirit group in high school helps to promote a more positive school climate while supporting the other students involved in athletics. Spirit groups consist of dance teams, drill teams, cheerleaders, song leaders, pep staffs, or color guard teams. The name of the team isn’t as important as the function of the team.

Spirit groups such as dance/drill teams throughout the country emphasize using their dance skills to work together for a common goal, create and invent interesting routines, and increase leadership skills. Other necessary skills include good communication, enthusiasm, and a high work ethic. “Followership” is a term used to describe students who can be positive and contributing team members, who may not be an officer or captain. Students who participate on a dance/drill team or any other athletic team, must learn to make good choices, whether in a leadership or followership role.

Students involved in dance and drill teams often have an upbeat, hopeful, and believing attitude, which in turn leads to the feeling of belonging. By believing in each other and working together the opportunity for growth, both personal and for the program, is realized. Working together with a sense of humor, admitting to mistakes, and being resourceful further the development of a team’s ability to reach their goals. Students gain a deeper understanding of self when the program’s philosophy fosters the growth process based on belonging. Having a sense of community or family is needed for students who are from single or distressed families.

When students are involved with their dance/drill team the drive to achieve excellence is followed by pride and a feeling of worth from contributions made to the school and community. In light of the many tragedies that many high schools have had to face over the past few years, with violence and shootings, schools are encouraged to use programs such as spirit groups to foster a sense of ownership and pride--- a sense of belonging.

The Basics for Starting a New Dance/Drill Team

Frequently Asked Questions of New Coaches

1. Is Dance/Drill a sport or an activity?

- Dance/Drill Teams are not considered a sport in most states. Dance/Drill Teams are defined as a fine arts and leadership activity along with cheer, music, and theatre/drama. However, participants in dance/drill and cheer must often meet all eligibility requirements for participation, which are the same requirements for all sport participants.
- Under local school district policies most dance and drill teams are under the athletic department for supervision and guidelines, but cross over between activities and athletics. Most schools consider the cheer and dance/drill programs an "athletic activity".
- There are no season limitations for cheer and dance/drill teams in most states. Most local school districts will establish season requirements.
- Almost all dance/drill teams host tryouts in April or May, attend camps in summer, begin practice with other fall sports, and continue through the end of spring. Many teams end the year with a spring show, state or national competition.

2. What are the requirements, qualifications, and rules for dance/drill directors/coaches/advisors?

- All dance/drill and cheer directors/coaches/advisors must meet the coaches standards and philosophy as describes by their state high schools. Even if not required all coaches should hold a valid First Aid Certification Card and maintain knowledge by attending workshops, conventions, and seminars.
- Dance/drill teams in many states are under the National Federation *Spirit Safety Rules*. If required each coach should have a copy of the rule book, which can be obtained from school's athletic director or by writing the National Federation, PO Box 20626, Kansas City, MO 64153-1158. The cost of the book is \$8 to order. If required by the state association, both cheer and dance/drill are under National Federation Spirit Rules for practices, performances, games, community events, camps or anytime a team is representing their school as a group.
- Some important basic rules that affect cheer and dance/drill teams for liability and safety include:
 - Wearing of any jewelry is prohibited. (Rule 3, Section 1, Article 1)
 - Fingernails shall be kept to an appropriate length. (Rule 2, Section 2, Article 2)
 - Participants shall not wear glitter on their face, hair, or costume. (Rule 3, Section 1, Article 5)
- All dance/drill coaches should attend a rules clinic each year, which is often hosted by the state activities association.
- Conventions, classes, seminars, and workshops are often sponsored by state associations, dance/drill directors associations, and national organizations for dance/drill directors specifically for dance/drill coaches are held each year related to new rule changes, legal issues, and current standards.

3. What is the purpose of dance/drill teams for high schools?

- The main purpose of high school dance/drill teams is to promote school spirit by enriching school climate for sense of belonging and to support athletic teams. Dance/drill teams often perform at half-times with the marching band at football games, perform at many boys and girls basketball half-times, and perform at school assemblies.
- Both dance/drill teams and cheer squads are responsible for the leadership of school spirit, therefore working together, while maintaining their own team's identify and clarifying roles is a must for dance/drill and cheer coaches/advisors. Both dance/drill and cheer teams are visible groups in leadership roles with considerable influence therefore high standards of conduct are essential.
- Dance/Drill Teams compete in local, state, regional and national competitions. Competitions are hosted by high schools, state associations or private companies throughout the school year.

4. How can I start to build a successful team?

- Directors, coaches/advisors need to present themselves in an educated and professional manner. They are role models for the young people they work with, therefore setting and maintaining high standards are essential. Get to know and consult with school administrators, athletic and activity directors, and fellow coaches.

- Establish a time and place to practice that is practical and safe for your team. Sharing gym space is a common problem for most high schools. Many dance/drill teams are allowed gym space in early morning, and often practice in cafeteria or multi-purpose rooms in afternoon or evenings.
- Participate in volunteer service activities, parades and other community activities. Clinics for younger children will serve the community and could be a developmental program for your team.
- Publicize your dance/drill program. PR is an important step for your team's reputation, especially in the beginning. Students deserve recognition for their hard work and long hours, therefore short articles for the school or community newspaper, school video production program, or local radio station are important.

5. What are the basics of organizing a dance/drill team?

- In order to be a successful director/coach/advisor or effective teacher getting and keeping educated on current rules, guidelines, and basic knowledge of dance/drill are essential to program development and organization.
- Be highly organized! Establish program philosophy, rules, guidelines, expectations before tryouts. Develop a constitution/code for all students and parents to sign to make sure all important information and dates are available before tryouts take place.
- Get support from parents by organizing a booster club, hosting a fund raising activity together, and by having meeting when necessary to share information about the program.
- Develop student leaders in the program by establishing that the director/coach/advisor is the "chairman of the board" and that the student leaders/captains are considered the officers. Various committees and jobs can be established throughout the year to help develop leadership and followership skills for all team members.
- Motivation of students for any program comes from being enthusiastic, positive, and committed. Establishing team building activities, high work ethic, and goals are important for newly establish teams as well as older teams. A team frequently reflects the standards and even the personality of their director/coach/advisor. Having a sense of humor and good communication skills will help any team get through tough times.
- Organize your team like a business. Fund raisers are often a must for teams. Make sure collected money for uniforms is correct and that your "customer service" is friendly and productive.
- Proper conditioning and warm-up, appropriate progression of skills, and emergency planning are fundamental to a successful dance/drill team.

6. Where can I get help?

- National dance/drill organizations, state dance/drill coaches associations, and summer camps helps coaches by often providing a handbook, network list, workshops, meetings and conferences. Most dance/drill coaches/advisors belong to an association and enjoy sharing with their comrades at meetings and conferences.
- Joining national organizations such as the Dance/Drill Directors of America and attending summer camp with team can help increase the knowledge base of coaches/advisors.
- Subscribing to magazines such as "Dance/Drill-In Motion", "Dance Spirit", "Dance Teacher Now", "Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance" or "American Cheerleader" can increase knowledge base and education of the latest happenings in dance/drill across the country.
- Websites for dance/drill are good resources, especially new coaches.

BECOMING AN ADVOCATE COACH FOR TEAM MEMBERS: AN IMPORTANT TRAIT FOR DANCE/DRILL DIRECTORS

An important role for all dance/drill directors is to serve as an advocate for all team members. Dance/Drill Teamers are one of the most visible groups of students on high school campuses, therefore the challenge to keep their standards high takes much time and energy throughout the year. Students on dance/drill teams work to perfect their skills in precision fundamentals, showmanship and projection, and in the memorization of many routines.

To help team members reach their highest potential, directors need to constantly be advocates for their students. Students enjoy positive, but meaningful comments after a long, tough practice, which can help team members strive to do their best with more self-confidence. There are several ways directors can become advocates for all team members, not just the ones in leadership positions. Bringing treats to share, giving them pictures of themselves in action, handing

out “quote for the day”, or weekly awards for special recognition are a few examples. Directors need to remember they are constant role models for the students, therefore a smile, sense of humor, eye contact, and effective listening skills are necessary each day.

One way to individualize positive feedback for students is to write individual notes to students. Many times it is difficult to think of different comments for each individual. The following examples can help to inspire or give ideas to coaches:

EXAMPLES OF NOTES FROM DANCE/DRILL COACHES TO THEIR TEAM MEMBERS...

Dance & Drill: Sportsmanship At It's Best!

Dance and Drill activities are unique in many ways, but especially atypical because of the support teams give to one another. Whether dance/drill teams are at a parade, half-time performance, or a competition, cheering for the “other” team is proper etiquette. Spirit groups get applause and cheers from everyone in the audience out of respect with appreciation for their performance and what they stand for. What other sport or activity do you see “cheering for the other team”?

Many sports teams take sportsmanship for granted, but win or lose, good sportsmanship is a must. Everyone appreciates watching a participant or team overcome a low score or loss with dignity and positive attitude, just as much as the winner's delight. Win or lose, reaching goals, having the desire to excel at the highest skill level possible, and having an enjoyable experience motivates others to support dance and drill teams. Dance & Drill Teams often set the example for other teams to follow regarding sportsmanship.

There are several ways spirit groups can increase sportsmanship in a high school setting. The first is to realize that dance & drill teams are representatives and ambassadors of the school, and their role must be taken seriously by school administrators. Support for the spirit groups, such as cheerleaders, song leaders, and color guard/flag teams, often takes special time and energy from athletic and activity directors along with administrators, because of their similarities. Many high schools are choosing to have one director or teacher for the spirit groups to encourage more group cooperation and organization.

Being friendly toward spirit groups from the visiting school can encourage friendly competition. Dance/Drill Teams are a visible group, and therefore have a responsibility to lead by example with exemplary behavior and sportsmanship. Accepting the judges or officials decisions, whether you agree or not, shows respect. Using positive language and encouraging phrases when cheering for others is a good example of sportsmanship. Most spirit groups see the promotion of good sportsmanship and citizenship as their role in a school setting.

The school's promotion of good sportsmanship can be encouraged in many ways. Here are a few examples of how some high school's promote sportsmanship:

- Use of "common courtesy" goes a long way. Be nice!
- Citizenship can be first shown by properly saluting the flag or by appropriately singing the National Anthem at the beginning of a game or event.
- A "Good Sportsmanship" or "Spirit Award" can be awarded to the class a pep assemblies for the loudest and most appropriate support of school spirit or for athletic teams. Coaches and student speakers can help educate

the student body about sportsmanship at pep assemblies, especially before an important game or playoff.

- Spirit groups can encourage the school newspaper to write an article about the positive effect of sportsmanship on the school climate in general.
- Spirit groups can speak to local radio and television stations about encouraging and acknowledging good sportsmanship by fans at competitive events.
- Sportsmanship quotes can be read over the public address system before important competitive events. Encouraging students to dress in school colors or paint their faces for an athletic event gives students a positive outlet for their school spirit.
- Sportsmanship banners and signs can be made by the spirit groups to promote positive support of teams.

Sportsmanship can be best described as have “class”. Practicing good sports- manship gives winners and losers of games or competitions something to hang on to when the contest is over. A self-centered participant or team is not enjoyable to watch. Winning isn’t everything, but performing to the best of one’s ability is! Having a winning attitude motivates a team to do their best. In athletics part of sportsmanship is learning how to improve your skills when you lose a game or match. In Dance & Drill teams can learn to improve their skills after receiving a low score or having a poor performance. Setting goals to reach higher levels each year can be a means of determining a team’s “win” or “lose” attitude.

Dance & Drill Teams can be seen practicing good sportsmanship at every event or competition when they cheer on others to excel, reach their goals, and show enthusiasm. Maybe other activities need to follow the example set by these mighty athletes.

DANCE TEAMS AND CHEER SQUADS: EFFECTIVE COORDINATION

by Teri Rowe and Danise Ackelson, Washington State Dance/Drill

Many dance, drill, cheer, song, or color guard teams are working together under the term "Spirit Team" for more effective coordination. Many schools have cheer and dance practice together, or they are practicing in the same area of the building at the same time. A new trend is to have only one coach for the entire Spirit Team. Both cheerleading squads and dance teams are part of the "spirit package" at any school, but it can be an ineffective package, if these groups are not coordinating their activities, respecting and supporting each others' programs and working together to emphasize the strengths and purpose of each group. It is important that while these groups may be under one team, each needs to maintain their own identify as either cheer or dance.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR DANCE TEAMS AND CHEERLEADING SQUADS

- Both the cheer coach and dance coach need to communicate with school administrator, athletic or activity director, and band director, which is important to the overall structure. An organizational meeting held at the beginning of the year will help eliminate problems. Discussions using the following topics could be held:
 1. Schedule for practice facilities for season or year
 2. Schedule for practice times for school year
 3. Coordination of practices with other sports teams
 4. Expectations for each group
 5. Goals for squads
 6. Role of parents or booster clubs
 7. Fund raisers for the year
 8. Costs of uniforms or costumes
 9. Emergency procedures
 10. Role of captains or leaders
- Cheerleading and dance coaches must have a clear understanding of each other's program and must work toward common goals of promoting spirit in the school.
- Look for ways to make programs compliment each other instead of competing.
- Clarify the objectives of each group.

Cheerleaders priority should be one of leading the crowd, controlling the crowd and getting people involved in cheers and chants.

- During the games, cheerleaders need to make sure they are one step ahead of the crowd. By starting cheers before the student body or crowd has a chance to "Boo" or use inappropriate language, cheerleaders remain in control of the crowd.
 - Cheerleaders can often do a quick dance with the band playing, or chant during a time out or quarter break to keep the crowd interested and involved.
 - Dance teams has a different job of promoting spirit through entertainment.
 - Usually during half-time dance teams take a few minutes to do a routine, choreographed to taped music or with the school band.
 - Sometimes before a game, dance teams can get the crowd's enthusiasm prepped by performing an energetic routine on the floor or in the stands.
- Cheerleaders and dance teams need to respect each other and have the desire to work together. The coordination of the two groups working together starts at the top, with the coaches. Scheduling a practice together, having a pizza party, or get-together is one way to begin building the relationship.
 - Don't be afraid to discuss touchy subjects such as which music will be used this year, which will perform at assemblies and half-times, and what will the uniforms look like.
 - Try performing a routine together at a pep assembly or basketball game half-time.
 - Develop comfortable communication and remember to have a sense of humor!
 - Anticipate problems and be proactive problem solvers.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT LEADERS

- Cheerleaders will dance, and dance teams will perform lifts and stunts in a routine.
- Dance teams have greater flexibility to show various styles with pom, kick, novelty and precision routines.
- Cheerleaders dance routines usually do not include advanced dance elements or marching.
- Dance teams should only use stunts, tumbling or lifts to enhance their routines, rather than just for the sake of doing them.
- Time outs at basketball games are normally appropriate for cheers, crowd involvement activities, band songs, or short dance sideline routines.
- Dance teams normally will have the "big show" at half-time and for a pre-game show. Flexibility needs to come into play when cheer squads wish to share the half-time for a short dance routine.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CHEER AND DANCE TEAM COACHES

- If a dance team member decides to try out for the cheer squad next year, or vice versa, she should be supported and encouraged by the team and the coach to do so. Many college cheer squads require equal skill in dance and cheer, so the experience with both can be beneficial.
- Remember that young eyes are watching you. Set the example of good communication and problem solving.
- Discuss and work out the problems between coaches and try to not involve the student if there are problems. Teach the students to respect the other coach and program by working out a compromise, and then, supporting that plan.

Conclusion:

PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR NEW COACHES

- Let's learn from one another; keep up with changing times; Coaches need training, too; Read everything you can get your hand on.
- Questions to think about.
 1. What is the one thing you wish someone would have told you before starting at team?
 2. What is the biggest mistake you have made in your coaching?
 3. What is one thing you have done that has caused your program to be successful?
- What make a good coach/advisor? Pick out one area that you think need work on and set some goals for the year.
- Network with other coaches to discuss Fundraising, Team Building Activities, Ice Breakers/Getting Acquainted Activities, Community Involvement, Team Traditions/ Themes for the Year.

- Think of the difference between coaching a dance/drill team in a high school vs. a community team at the YMCA, dance studio, etc. There is a difference to cater to your audience. Your biggest critics will be the high school student body. If you can win them over, you are on the right track!
- Observe the audience. Do you get cheers from students at performance? at pep assemblies? at basketball or football half-times? The student body usually cheers for the kickline.
Try to add show stoppers to your routine. Get some creativity going. Make the move something that gets the “ah ha” response from the audience.
- With parents develop a “team concept”. Develop an US thing, not me. Develop a vision with goals, everyone has to play “zone” defense, where we all play, but we don’t always have the ball.
- Develop a year long theme such as reach for the stars, climb the mountain, the journey is the reward, etc.
- All must sacrifice the “star” quality for team effort.
- The fruit is at the end of the limb; sometimes we must go out there to get it.
You have to learn to bend, or you will break. What do these mean?
- Word of Wisdom for New coaches- When you have problems with parents, don’t talk during practice.
Schedule a time, maybe with AD or VP, if parent is really

angry. Use a neutral setting and practice CIVILITY. Try not to use phone, but go Face-to-face.

- Takes time to develop your reputation as a coach. Even if you have been in the field, teacher, choreographer, coaching is a whole new game.
- Each year with a new team, some returning members, trust has to be rebuilt; powers or leadership has to be re-established. A new chemistry within the group develops each year. Take time to establish this early in the season like an insurance policy, where the more you do on the front end, the less problems you are likely to have later.
- Be organized! Write memos, go over the guidelines, code, constitution, expectations after the season has begun.
- Metamorphosis- Stages- Excitement, costume, uniform, work! At the first indication there is a disgruntled person, or parent, “Nip it in the bud”. Learn to back up, review, take the time to build trust when establishing a new team. Being nice, acting like a friend, being talented, isn’t enough. Be on guard that you are the ultimate role model. Young people watch and remember everything a coach does. Be consistent.
- Be careful to treat all the team members equally, stay away from gossip, and don’t share things with captains or officers that pit team members against each other.
- What if you have a team that has one or two people that just don’t fit for many reasons such as too conservative, can’t get the routine, always late, shy, boyfriend problems between team members, learn to deal with this effectively.

Instead of ostracizing that person, find a way to reframe the thinking of team members. Accept their personality and help them become a part of the team. This can be done through humor, joking, talking, getting that person to share their feelings, but it takes time. The coach has to be mature one. The team will follow the coach's lead without even knowing it!

- The coaches need to teach techniques of tolerance and acceptance, so that one student doesn't become picked on. Teenage girls, especially, like to do this to each other, as they struggle to become the star. We need to teach them how to be mature, to leave the petty issues alone. Sometime just making a general statement about "petty" issues, can help them move on. Don't talk something to death, just cut it off. Other times talking, getting the issues on the table cleanse a team, and help them move to the next stage.