



Iowa High School Athletic Association
Iowa Cheerleading Coaches Association



ORGANIZING A PRACTICE

by Betty Lou Jones

One of the best things that you can do as a cheerleading coach is to know what you want to accomplish at each practice. The best way I know to do this is by having it written out. Whether you have a form you use for each practice or you make yourself a list, it will help you remember what you want to do. This will help because cheerleading is made up of so many aspects: from pep rallies and games to making locker signs or practicing for a competition. It is often hard to remember everything that you need to do.

After you have selected your squad for the coming year, I find it is a good practice to put down some general rules for practice. With the cheerleaders having busy schedules, which include other activities as well as jobs, if I set a time for the start of practice and end of practice then all will be able to work around the time element.

Before each practice I first determine what I want to accomplish. For example, if I am just beginning for the year, more time will be spent on learning warm-ups, drills, jumps, and arm motions. Once these things have been mastered and you are into the season you will probably spend less time on these things and maybe more time on cheers, chants, and stunts that you will be using at the game.

I try and start my practices with any announcements that need to be made. Then I do my warm-ups. I try and do the same warm-up each day. This gets the cheerleaders into a routine so we don't forget something (I usually let the cheerleaders talk to each other during this time. I find this will help eliminate them wanting to talk at other times). Once your have finished your warm-ups, I then practice jumps and arm motions. From this point on my practices will change according to what I need to accomplish that day.

Remember when putting together a practice schedule that it is usually impossible to cover every skill at every practice. Pick and chose what you feel will benefit your squad the most. If you are practicing for a game what you practice will be different from what you do for a practice of you competition squad. You as the coach will determine what goals you feel your squad needs to meet, and then set up the practice to accomplish those goals.

At the end of a practice I try and remind the cheerleaders all events that will be coming up in the near future. Also, remind them of obligations that they might have for the squad: For example- make and put up locker signs.

The other piece of advice that I have for practices is every once in awhile get your creative juices flowing and change things up: do something fun, play a game, bring them treats, do something that they will not expect.

If you can keep your time with the squad fun and organized you will accomplish more.