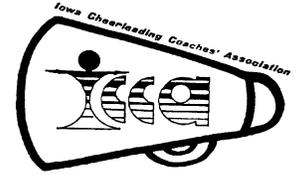




IOWA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
IOWA CHEERLEADING COACHES ASSOCIATION



## TIPS TO HELP CHEERLEADERS LEAD THE CROWD IN A POSITIVE WAY

### TO THE CHEER COACH:

Teach & practice cheerleader expectations by working through game situations at practice. The cheerleaders won't know your expectations until you teach them. Determine appropriate cheers to use in certain game situations, then have the cheerleaders rehearse them at practice so they won't be new at a game. Note the ideas to the cheerleaders below – again talking through situations and practicing the ideas help your cheerleaders know your expectations.

Keep it simple! Cheers that the crowd loves should be repeated often. Especially those that are crowd participation cheers.

Develop positive TRADITIONS. Doing the same thing before each game, or at certain points in a game, will help your cheerleaders develop traditions that the crowd enjoys and participates in. This keeps the crowd following your lead and shows great team support and sportsmanship.

***To effectively implement the following ideas you will need the help of your school administration.***

Educate your student body about expectations for them at a game and what behaviors will NOT be tolerated. Set up a special pep rally for “fan education,” or better yet, make fan education a part of every pep rally. Teach the students “call back cheers,” which are cheers everyone should do if there is a “disagreeable call.”

Educate your parents about expectations for them at a game. This can be done at a community pep rally or a pre-season parent's night practice. Ask parents to be leaders in the stands. This is something even the most positive fans can work on improving.

## **TO THE CHEERLEADERS:**

Know the rules of the game and the rules for cheerleading at the game. Cheerleading rules are there for your safety. Respect them. You will gain a lot of respect from your team and your crowd by doing the appropriate cheer at the appropriate time. I.e., – Don't do a defense cheer when the team is on offense.

Be professional. Chewing gum, talking and laughing with each other, ignoring your job (cheering & leading the crowd) will turn a crowd off. They will decide you don't care enough about the team or the game, so they won't follow.

Be approachable to the crowd. Be at the game early to warm up and be prepared. Take time to talk to the crowd or explain a new chant before the game begins. Tell the crowd when they've done well and followed your lead.

Use strong voices & make eye contact with the crowd. This shows confidence. If the crowd can't hear the cheerleaders, they have no reason to follow. The same goes for eye contact. Look at everyone in the crowd. Not just a small group of people such as a group of friends. The crowd will feel ignored if you just direct your cheers to a certain few.

Use signs & pompoms. Use the poms, and their colors, as if they were signs (raising one color in the air and then the next) with your school's colors on them. Poms can attract a lot of attention and can be fun to help get the crowd fired up. Use signs so the crowd knows what to do or chant.

Repeat each chant at least 3-4 times. It takes that many times for the crowd to catch onto what you are doing. Once they start chanting with the cheerleaders, continue 2-3 more times.

Chant while the team is in the huddle during football. Starting a simple chant like "Go, Go, Go..." when the down is fourth and one and the team is in the huddle will have a lot more impact than during the play itself.

Cheer often: at least every other play. This will not only keep you mentally in the game, but your crowd is more likely to follow. You should cheer between EVERY play when the game is very close or momentum is starting to switch.

Let any cheerleader start chants when necessary. During a game many of the chants are probably started by a captain or someone with more experience, but when the game is at a pivotal point, the most important thing is keeping the chanting going so any cheerleader should be able to start a chant: even if you repeat chants. Practicing/Rehearsing this in practice will help everyone be ready for game situations.

## **IF A SPECTATOR BECOMES UNRULY:**

Cheerleaders can be the eyes & ears for the school administration. While it is not a cheerleader's job to remove someone from a game, they certainly should notify/alert administration or the cheer coach if someone is getting out of hand. It is also not the cheer coaches' responsibility to remove someone, but they are an adult who can verify what the cheerleader saw.

Start a traditional chant or a crowd favorite when the call goes the other way and the fans disagree. This is where your crowd education pays off from a pep rally. Everyone being vocal in their own way only creates frustration for the crowd, the officials, your team & coaches. If the crowd follows the cheerleaders with a positive chant, the team knows the crowd is behind them, the officials move on (lose the frustration), and the "voice" of the crowd is still heard. This can be a challenge, but if everyone can buy into this idea because it really works.

Stay positive. It is NEVER acceptable for a cheerleader to talk back/yell or make obscene gestures at an official or spectator from either school.

For additional ideas how to make the efforts of your cheerleaders more effective contact either Jeanne Ehn <jehn@netins.net> or Nancy Huether <nhuether@ballard.k12.ia.us>, Co-Executive Directors of the Iowa Cheerleading Coaches Association.