

## Spirit Participants Responsibilities

### GENERAL:

1. Spirit team members should be present at all games to which they are assigned, and initiate positive crowd involvement.
2. Spirit teams should be in their assigned places throughout the contest.
3. As representatives of the school, proper and positive behavior should be required at all times.
4. Spirit teams should be required to arrive a sufficient amount of time before games begin. Their duties should include: (a) meeting and greeting the visiting teams and making them feel welcome; (b) assisting visiting teams with questions such as where they are to be located during the contest, where they can change, etc.; (c) allowing adequate time for their warm-up period.
5. Prior to the start of a game, a plan between the home and visiting cheerleaders, pep bands and other spirit groups should be devised whereby all groups have the opportunity to cheer/perform during noninjury time outs and intermissions. This will help eliminate confusion and prevent delays in the game while the officials wait for the spirit teams to get off the field or floor.
6. At games away from home, spirit teams should arrive as a group and meet the host teams.
7. Participants should know the game rules and officials' signals to the extent of understanding when and what type of cheers are appropriate. Spirit team members should always pay attention to the game or contest.
8. When the official signals for the game to begin after a time-out, the spirit teams should leave the floor immediately. Spirit teams shall stay clear of the playing area prior to and during the contest so as not to interfere with the players or officials or increase the possibility of injury.
9. Spirit teams should accept the decisions of officials and discourage disagreement of fans by initiating positive chants or cheers.
10. Spirit teams should realize the importance of actively influencing the positive conduct of the spectators.
11. Spirit teams should adapt their routines to the environmental conditions and playing surfaces for which stunts, pyramids and routines are used (i.e. mounts, pyramids or gymnastics shall not be permitted during rain, strong wind, or extreme cold on slippery or uneven surfaces or where there is not enough space. Hot and humid weather also may present problems.)
12. After performing or cheering, spirit team members should clear the playing area of any materials that could hinder play, i.e. pom fragments, signs, hair bows, apparel or props.
13. Spirit team members should use appropriate and positive language throughout all practices, games, performances and competitions.

### SPORTSMANSHIP:

NOTE: The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances including on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin.

Good sportsmanship is conduct which imposes a type of self control involving honest rivalry, courteous relations and graceful acceptance of results. School spirit is a reflection of these attitudes and behavior. If a school is to succeed in one of its prime functions, that of developing good citizenship, it is necessary that student groups radiate proper sportsmanlike conduct. Sportsmanship is good citizenship in action.

The promotion of sportsmanship is a primary responsibility of spirit groups.

1. Spirit teams always should cheer in a positive manner. It is inappropriate to cheer against the other team or to cheer in response to an opposing player's mistake. Initiating response cheers between home and opposing spirit teams or fans is strongly discouraged.
2. Cheers and chants with suggestive words and/or motions (ex. pointing at opposing teams or fans) shall not be used because in many situations they bring about an inappropriate response.
3. Spirit leaders should call attention to the importance of sportsmanship at all pep rallies. When permitted, placing sportsmanship posters promoting good sportsmanship on the wall of the gym or throughout the school is helpful.
4. Spirit leaders should discourage their followers from yelling or cheering while an opponent is shooting free throws. Intimidation of opponents has no place in high school athletics.
5. Spirit leaders are in a position to preview spirit signs that will be posted for their school's contests (when permitted). Prohibiting inappropriate signs from ever being posted can greatly assist the administration and helps students or school personnel understand the importance for positive signage which is to create and maintain a positive crowd atmosphere.
6. Obnoxious behavior should not be encouraged nor permitted under the guise of school spirit. Opposing players, officials and fans should be treated with respect and dignity. If inappropriate crowd behavior exists, assistance should be obtained from a school administrator or game - management.

#### TECHNIQUES FOR LEADING CHEERS:

1. Stimulate and control crowd response.
2. Choose the right cheers at the right time.
3. Be certain that words used in a cheer do not suggest, inflame or taunt an audience.
4. For indoor events, do not use artificial noisemakers or noise enhancers, including, but not limited to cowbells, sirens, clackers, cans with marbles or rocks inside, air horns or any other noisemaking apparatus. Megaphones may be used only by cheerleaders, directed only toward one's own fans.
5. Divert the crowd's attention by starting a crowd cheer when booing develops.
6. Cheerleaders should get the crowd to respond to their lead by preparing them during pregame warmups.
7. It is important that the cheerleader make eye contact with the crowd while leading a cheer; his/her facial expressions are very important in generating enthusiasm and a strong response.
8. Emphasize each word so that each is distinct and the cheer may be understood and followed easily.

#### WHEN TO CHEER:

1. As your team comes on the floor or field.
2. When your team or a player makes an exceptional play.
3. When a substitution is made on your team. When appropriate, cheer outgoing player and incoming player.
4. As encouragement and tribute to an injured player when that player leaves the game.
5. When an opponent, who has played spectacularly, leaves the game.
6. As encouragement to own team in its drive for a score.
7. As encouragement to own team in defense of its goal.

#### WHEN NOT TO CHEER:

1. When an opposing player makes a mistake or the opposing team is being penalized.
2. When an opposing player is injured.
3. As important announcements are being made over the public-address system.
4. When an unsportsmanlike act has occurred or is occurring.  
Note: Negative or demeaning cheering is never acceptable. Chanting or cheering for the purpose of taunting the opponents is also never appropriate.

#### WHEN TO PERFORM:

Spirit teams should be aware of the time available to perform. Appropriate situations for routines are: pregame, full 60-second time-outs, between quarters, at half-time, and postgame.