

DJP New Parent Guide

Things Parents need to know for Cheer

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Welcome!

Welcome to Dewitt Junior Panthers! DJP is a group of volunteers who fill positions on the Board, as coaches, concessions sales, sideline teams and many, many others. As the parent of a new player or cheerleader, you'll find a lot of helpful information in this guide to make your first year with DJP successful!

Signing Up for DJP

You can sign up your child for Dewitt Junior Panthers at their website. While the website will ask you for your contact information as well as payment. There is a convenience fee to pay online. You should receive a confirmation email that you have successfully signed up once complete. Payment can be made by check payable to Dewitt Jr. Panthers, mailed to P.O. Box 80, DeWitt, MI 48820

When you sign up for DJP, you will also have the opportunity to volunteer as a coach, assistant coach or parent rep. Yes, even the 3th grade team is coached by 3th grade parents!

After submitting payment, head BACK to the Dewitt Junior Panthers site and create an account. There you can update your contact information and sign up to receive DJP-wide emails. Later in the season, come back often to check the schedule, update contact information and sign up for team-specific email reminders.

Additional Wear for Cheer

Items can be purchased at Bottoms Up, (lollies, bodysuit), Omni Cheer (cheer shoes) and cheaper prices for white cheer shoes, leggings, socks, tank top can be purchased at local stores. The DJP Facebook page often has items for sale, and a league-wide swap meet where you can purchase used items from other DJP parents.

It can be expensive, but know that most items you purchase can be used for at least 2 years (growing spurts notwithstanding.) **Cheerleaders** :

Your player will need:

- White cheer tennis shoes □ White no see socks.
- Navy blue leggings
- Navy blue bodysuit
- Navy blue bloomers, (lollis, spanx, boy shorts)
- Navy blue tank top

Dewitt Junior Panthers will provide:

- Vest
- Skirt and/or pants
- Gear bag

Coaches

****If you have indicated your willingness to be a volunteer coach, you will be contacted one week prior to practice starting (usually the beginning of August) so coaches can meet one another and get a list of kids participating to confirm contact information.**

Your child's coach is a parent volunteer. Especially in 3th grade, they are usually just as new to DJP as you are! However, all of them have extensive knowledge of cheerleading, and work their hardest to instill a love of the game, sportsmanship and hard work into each player.

Cheerleaders: Each grade has a single team with a coach and at least one assistant coach and parent rep.

Cheerleaders: Pre-Season

Practices

Practices for DJP start the first full week of August (Tuesday), and run T-Th for 2 hours until school begins 68pm. The few weeks of practice cheerleaders need to dress for the weather. Warm: shorts, t-shirt, socks, cheer shoes, ponytail (hair), and **NO jewelry or nail polish**. If your daughter has recently had her ears pierced you can tap them before practice.

Once school begins, practices go to 2 days/week, and a game on the weekend.

****The first practice**

At the first practice, we ask that ALL parents attend the first 20 minutes of practice to meet your child's grade-level coaches, and to provide contact information for anyone who wants to be emailed/texted regularly regarding the upcoming season.

Choosing Teams

After 2 weeks of practice and cheer camp DJP Board will assign grade level teams with skill level also. Special requests will be considered for those needing certain practice days or other situations if know in advance. Please speak with a Board Member so placement is made to accommodate your cheerleaders needs.

Parent Team Liaison/Volunteering

Parent Team Liaison

We all like to know what's happening and when, right? **That's why each team needs a parent volunteer to be the Team Coordinator.** The coaches have their hands full getting the kids prepared for each game.

The Parent Team Liaison will assist coaching staff with various needs such as help coordinating parent volunteers and arrangements for the entire season.

Volunteers

DJP is a volunteer organization & we can't do it without parents/grandparents/aunts/uncles/older siblings/interested bystanders!

We used to ask that each family volunteer at least 4 hours each season, but that was difficult to keep track of. Just know that we do need you, and expect each family to volunteer to the best of their ability.

All home games need at least 9 volunteers:

- 3 chain gang ○ The on-field refs help this group out just as much as they help the kids. No experience required!
- 3 press box (announcer, spotter, timer/clock) ○ Announcer: You've got to know how to read the ref signs to announce & be comfortable with a microphone. Football savvy dads, high school-age siblings who know the game are good candidates for this.
 - Spotter: Who has the ball? Who tackled them? You've got to be able to figure these things out so you can tell the announcer.
 - Clock. Being able to know when to stop the clock and what quarter is what are necessary.
- 3 concessions ○ Can you hand out coffee, snicker and popcorn with a smile? Even make correct change? This is the position for you!
 - Since concessions can't really watch the game, concessions volunteers usually work the stand at a game OTHER than their own.

The Parent Team Liaison coordinates the volunteers for each game. It's easiest to volunteer at the beginning of the season for whichever positions interest you!

Games

Schedules

Games are organized by the Capital Area Youth Football League. They determine what teams play one another. In the past, they've waited until close to the beginning of the season to establish the schedule. As soon as these are confirmed they will be posted on the DJP website, as well as emailed to you.

Game Basics

- Each game has four 8-minute quarters, with a 10-minute halftime. Games take about 80 minutes to play.
- Cheerleaders will cheer during each quarter, with a half-time hello cheer or routine as the season progresses.

Game Arrival

Players should expect to arrive to the field (home or away) about 30 minutes prior to the start of their game.

Where games are played

The Dewitt playing fields are located across from the Junior High Parking Lot. Bring a camp chair. Park in the school lot. No parking in pick up lane or on the grass.

The location of other games can be found on the DJP website under the "Schedules" tab. Find your team, and click on the name of the away opponent to be taken to directions to the away field. This directions page will also give you a list of amenities at the away field (if there are bleachers. Concessions, etc.)

End of Year Banquet

The week after the final game there is an "End of Year Banquet/Potluck" for each grade's team. The kids get together to celebrate their accomplishments, the coaches speak about each kid – and clean uniforms are turned in for the year.

It's a nice celebration that really shouldn't be missed.

Miscellaneous

The DJP website

The DJP website is a sub-site of “www.dewittjrpanthers.org” – which is used by all the Capital Area Youth Football League. You can find useful information such as schedules, directions to away games and game results. We can be found at www.dewittjrpanthers.org.

DJP Facebook Page

There is a DJP Facebook page, which can be found at www.facebook.com/DewittJuniorPanthers . This is a ‘Closed Group’ which means that all members must be added by a page administrator. To join the group, simply navigate to the DJP Facebook page and click “Join.” You will be approved by the page administrator shortly.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DewittJuniorPanthers>

This page is useful to post/share game photos as well as to check in on the status of practice/game rainouts and other information posted on-the-go.

Spirit Wear

The DJP Board will offer Spirit wear for sale at the beginning of the season. As a first time parent it’s hard to know what might be good, but a sweatshirt is always a safe bet.

Coaches: you will receive a DJP Coach polo.

Photos

Individual and team photos will be taken at the beginning of the season, and families will have the opportunity to purchase them (along with turning those photos into player cards, buttons, etc.) – as these have become very popular!

In addition, a photographer will be on filed during at least 2 home games to capture live-action photos. These will be available for purchase after the season has ended.

Conclusion

We look forward to a successful season with DJP! If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact the board: