SYCAMORE YOUTH



FOOTBALL & CHEER

2025

PARENT/ATHLETE

HANDBOOK

Welcome to the 2025

Sycamore Youth Football & Cheer Season!

We hope this Parent/Athlete Handbook will help you familiarize yourself with our program. As our program continues to grow, information and procedures will be updated.

In the meantime, please visit www.sycamoreyouthfootball.net, as we will be adding important dates, forms, and practice schedules. **Please make sure that you are opt-ed in for messages and chats.** See Page 4 for more information on communication.

The Sycamore Youth Football & Cheer program is a recreational youth program geared for children entering 1st-6th grade. There are no try-outs or special requirements, and any child may participate. Our main goal is to introduce and teach the sport of cheer while building on the foundations of teamwork, responsibility, respect and sportsmanship.

Our program survives with great volunteers! We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of coaches that volunteer countless hours of their time to make sure your children gain a fundamental knowledge of cheer and have fun while doing so. We'd like to ask all of our parents to continue to provide the dedication, support, and enthusiasm to all our cheer coaches. The success of our program relies heavily on our parent volunteers. There are many ways to get involved, from coaching, team parent, concessions or organization of events, please help make this season a great success!

If you have any questions, concerns or comments please feel free to contact us.

Shawna Krenz
President of Cheer
815-217-6989
cheerpresident@sycamoreyouthfootball.net

Jill Manheim
Director of Cheer
815-762-2042
Jilla2244@gmail.com

Morgan Sartor
Sideline Coordinator

Heather Zimmerman
Competition Coordinator

SYFC CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to ensure the principles of sportsmanship, fair play, skill development and respect for all participants, Sycamore Youth Football & Cheer ("SYFC") has established a code of conduct that we expect all of our parents and their guests to adhere to the following:

1. I agree to the fee schedule listed in the registration form which includes a registration fee, raffle ticket fee and if applicable competition fees. I understand that the equipment including game jersey and cheer uniform are the property of the SYFC and a retainer check will be provided.

2. I understand that my primary responsibility is to foster a healthy, pleasant and safe environment for children participating in SYFC.

3. I and my guests will be a positive role model for my team and players.

4. I or my guests will never use obscene language or gestures at any SYFC event.

5. I or my guests will not be physically intimidating to any player, coach, fellow parent or referee.

6. I fully understand that the game of football should be a fun, rewarding and positive learning experience for all participants.

7. I and my guests promise to be respectful of all children, parents, spectators, officials and any other participants involved in any SYFC event.

8. I agree to facilitate a positive atmosphere for the participants of SYFC.

9. I understand if I or my guests fail to comply with the guidelines established by the SYFC Executive Board, I may be removed from the practice, game or event without warning.

10. I or my guests will not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at any SYFC game or practice.

11. I agree to volunteer at least once at a single SYFC event. This may include concessions, field set up or another to be determined SYFC event.

12. I agree to respect the boundaries of both the practice and the game fields and that only coaches, SYFC representatives, referees and other designated personnel are allowed on the field unless otherwise instructed.

ICA Code of Conduct

Rule 1-1: Rule Compliance

(a) SACD Code of Conduct Statement

All members and sponsored events (including its competitors) will be required to attest to this Code of Conduct as described below:

SACD Code of Conduct Statement

Spirit American Cheer and Dance (SACD) believes in presenting an honest, fair and competitive format for its members and our athletes. This foundation is the basis of all competitive events, and as a participant, we agree to adhere to the rules, regulations and definitions in the placement of all teams within the Divisions and Categories as outlined within the Spirit American Cheerleading Official Rules and Regulations for Recreational and Youth Cheer and those rules set forth for competitive events.

Each program has a responsibility to promote the premise of integrity to its members. In the spirit of fairness to all of the participants, our organization's acknowledgement signifies that our program has represented our athletes in accordance with this statement.

Additionally, the spirit of competition is based off of the leadership of our organization to adhere to the established rules, regulations and definitions and taught to the children of all of our organizations. conduct violations set a negative image of our sport and are detrimental to teaching values to our athletes.

(b) Violations of the Rules and Regulations/Discipline

The spirit of competition is based off of parental conduct that adheres to the established rules, regulations and definitions and taught to the children of all our member organizations. Conduct violations set a negative image of our sport and are detrimental to teaching values to our athletes. SACD recognizes that while these definitions are sound in their format, organizations and individuals may attempt to circumvent their intent. This has long been an issue in competitive sporting events and we encourage our membership to strive towards ethical behavior as it relates to this sport.

Violations of these rules are considered damaging to Spirit American Cheer and Dance and its members. Organizations and individuals that fail to adhere to these policies may be excluded from all SACD sponsored events, any SACD sanctioned or affiliated tournament or competition, exclusion or barring from membership with SACD and penalties and/or fines as allowed by the By-laws of SACD.

It is with this in mind that we ask you to support Spirit American Cheer and Dance (SACD) in setting a fair and equitable environment for all athletes of our organization.

Communication.

In an effort to keep all parents and/or guardians of our cheerleaders informed and as up to date, as possible, and ensure the safety of all cheerleaders and coaches, maintaining a direct and clear line of communication is of the utmost importance.

All communication will be through the SportsEngine including, but not limited to direct messages to/from your coach(es). You can access the SportsEngine website by visiting https://www.sycamoreyouthfootball.net/ or, by downloading the SportsEngine - Team Management App for your mobile device.

Schedules, rosters, etc. are all available through this website/app. Please note, you must login at the top right corner of the website to gain access to your cheerleader's squad.

Parent/Guardian communication and SportsEngine requirements:

1. Notifications must be turned on for messages and chats;
2. Attendance is mandatory for practices and games. If your cheerleader is not able to attend, please provide advance notice via direct message to your coach(es);
3. The RSVP function must be utilized in advance of practices and games so coaches can plan accordingly;
4. To ensure that all messages are received and avoid any automatic filtering to spam, add the SportsEngine email address to your email contacts;
5. The email address associated with each cheerleader's account is the email address used at the time of registration.
6. Any and all communications to coaches and board members of SYFC in person or via SportsEngine should be conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for SYFC and ICA. Harassing, demeaning, intimidating, or obscene language and communications are strictly prohibited. Failure to abide by these requirements and Codes of Conduct may result in suspension or removal from practice, games, or the league without warning.

2025 Calendar of Events

June 7th	Uniform Fitting @ SHS, 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM
June 10th	Uniform Fitting @ SHS, 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM
July 21st - July 23rd	SYFC Mini Camp
July 29th – September 25th	Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:30-7pm Sideline Cheer Practice [ALL SQUADS] @ North Grove Elementary. **PLEASE NOTE:** Any changes to practice dates or times due to weather or school events will be communicated directly.
July 30th-November 19th	Wednesdays 6pm – 8pm Competition Cheer Practice [COMPETITION SQUADS ONLY] @ SHS Fieldhouse **PLEASE NOTE:** Any changes to practice dates or times due to school events or otherwise, will be communicated directly.
TBD	PICTURE DAY (ALL SQUADS)
August 16th	Week 1 Games
August 23th	Week 2 Games
August 29th	FNBO Challenge | Parade of Athletes @ Huskie Stadium, NIU
August 30th	NO GAMES | LABOR DAY
September 6th	Week 3 Games
September 7th	Cheercago Competition @ Hampshire High School
September 13th	Week 4 Games @ SHS
September 20th	Cheer Rodeo Competition @ South Elgin High School
September 20th	Week 5 Games
TBD	Homecoming Parade | Downtown Sycamore
September 27th	Week 6 Games
October 4th	Cosmic Clash Competition @ TBD
November 1st	Final Fling Competition @ NIU
November 15th-16th	ICA State Competition Pt. 1 @ NIU
November 21st-23rd	ICA State Competition Pt. 2 @ NIU

IMPORTANT: This calendar of events is tentative and subject to change. Information about each squad's game time, competition times, etc. will be forthcoming.

ATHLETES ARE EXPECTED TO RESPECT THEIR COACHES, REFEREES, JUDGES AND EACH OTHER. BULLYING, NAME CALLING, TEASING AND FOUL OR DEROGATORY LANGUAGE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

NO STUNTING OR TUMBLING WITHOUT A TRAINED COACH PRESENT.

INSUBORDINATION IS UNACCEPTABLE! (At the discretion of the Board/Cheer President, excessive violations of the above rules may result in non-participation in practice(s), game(s) and/or competition(s) up to and including removal from the league indefinitely.

Practice Rules

- Per ICA rules, we cannot practice more than nine (9) hours per week.
- Practices are closed to all parents.
- Attendance will be taken at all practices.
- All athletes should arrive at practice at least fifteen (15) minutes early. This allows for bathroom breaks, shoe changes or anything else your child may need to do. Practices will begin promptly at their scheduled time.
- Competition squads should arrive early and be prepared to roll-out mats prior to practice starting and roll-up mats at the end of practice, as a team.
- Competition cheerleaders should show up to practice in regular shoes or sideline shoes and bring their indoor, mat shoes to change into. Outdoor and sideline shoes will not be allowed on the practice mats.
- Appropriate practice attire is required. (NO jeans or baggy clothes. Cheer shoes and sports bras are required.) Any cheerleader who arrives at practice in inappropriate attire, sandals, crocs, etc. may be asked to sit-out.
- Athletes should bring a labeled water bottle to ALL practices.
- No chewing gum., snacks or candy during practices or games.
- No jewelry including earrings. No makeup or lipstick.
- Hair must be pulled out of the face and off shoulders. No metal barrettes or clips. (bobby pins are allowed)
- Fingernails should be trimmed short so as to not scratch or injure participants.
- Use of electronic devices is strictly prohibited, except in cases of emergencies.
- **Athletes, parents and spectators are expected to follow the Sycamore Youth Football & Cheer Code of Conduct at all practices.**

Game Rules

- Athletes are expected to arrive at games thirty (30) minutes prior to the scheduled start time.
- **Many times games are running ahead or behind schedule. Coaches are unaware of this until they arrive at the field. Please be patient in these situations.**
- Athletes are expected to cheer the entire game.
- Games are played in sun, rain and snow - attendance and participation is required.
- Games are rarely cancelled. Games and practices can only be cancelled collaboratively by the Football & Cheer Presidents.
- It is important that the squads all look uniform. Cheerleaders should arrive at games in full uniform (skirt, briefs, top, bow, no-show, white socks and sideline cheer shoes).
- SYFC Warm-up Jackets or PLAIN BLACK weather-proof jackets and PLAIN BLACK weather-proof pants are required for ALL sideline cheerleaders/games. We will cheer during the heat, rain and snow.
- No eating or chewing gum during games.
- No jewelry, including earrings.
- NO MAKEUP and/or LIPSTICK.
- No nail polish, hair chalk, etc.
- Hair pulled out of the face, in a high-pony and off shoulders with the uniform issued bow. No metal barrettes or clips. (bobby pins with rubber ends are allowed).
- Use of electronic devices is strictly prohibited, except in cases of emergencies.
- **Athletes, parents and spectators are expected to follow the Sycamore Youth Football & Cheer Code of Conduct at all games.**

Competition Rules

- Everyone should arrive in full uniform (skort, top, warmups, bow, socks and regular shoes). Cheerleaders will be required to have a separate indoor, mat shoe which they will change into before competing.
- No chewing gum.
- No jewelry, including earrings.
- Fingernails should be trimmed short so as to not scratch or injure participants. No nail polish (ARC 1-10:E)
- No makeup, lipstick, hair chalk, etc. That may stain league-issued uniforms.
- To ensure the safety of athletes, hair must be pulled away from the face and must be in a high, full ponytail off shoulders. (ARC 1-10:C(i)(a)) Check with

your team coach for how hair should be done.

- Hair ribbons/bows must not cover the eyes. Hair accessories may not contain hard metal clips or closures, with exception of bobby pins. No beads may be worn or woven in an athlete's hair. (ARC1-10:C(i)(b))
- **Eyeglasses are permitted but must be secured with an appropriate athletic eyeglass strap. (ARC 1-10:G)**
- No parents are allowed in the "Child Safe Zones". This is for athletes and coaches ONLY. Anyone found in violation may get the team disqualified.
- No parent is allowed to approach ANY ICA Official to contest results.
- Photos and videos posted to any social media must be posted as private.
- Athletes must maintain proper hygiene (Cleaned/Brushed hair etc.)
- **Athletes, parents and spectators are expected to follow the Sycamore Youth Football & Cheer Code of Conduct at all competitions.**

Absentee Policy

Cheerleading is a team sport, with each participant having a required place in a routine. When team members are absent it can keep the entire team from achieving their goals for that practice, and jeopardize the safety of all involved in that stunt group and prevent some participants from practicing portions of the routine.

- **Missing Practices** - Please give your coach a two (2) hour notice in the event of an unexpected absence (i.e., illness or family emergency). If this is not done, it will be considered an unexcused absence.
- **Missing Games** - Please give your coach a twenty-four (24) hour notice. If this is not done, it will be considered an unexcused absence.
- **Excused Absences** - An absence will only be excused for the following reason with advance notice:
    - Illness
    - Family Events
    - Religious Events
    - School-related functions

Conflicts with other sports, family vacations, school-related events must be dealt with ahead of time. Planned participation in other activities, trips, etc. should be reported to your coaches upon season start. Excessive absences and/or late notice for planned vacations may be considered unexcused.

ALL athletes need to be present at each of the practices (Tuesday and Thursday for Sideline only squads; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for Competition squads) **immediately before a performance or competition to participate in that performance or competition unless otherwise discussed or prearranged with**

each squad's coaching staff.

Competition Uniforms

Competition uniforms are property of Sycamore Youth Football & Cheer. Uniforms are not available for purchase. The uniforms (except for bows) are to be returned at the end of the season in the same condition in which they were given out. Sizing is done to the best of our ability, based on current available stock. Uniforms are not specially ordered to fit each cheerleader. Uniforms cannot be altered in any way, which includes removal of tags.

A uniform deposit of $150 per athlete will be required at uniform handouts. The deposit will be returned at the end of the season provided the uniform is returned in the same condition it was handed out in.

Sideline Uniforms

Sideline uniforms are property of the members. Uniform fittings are scheduled in advance of season start and are required for all sideline cheerleaders and will be purchased through fees paid at the time of registration by the League for the cheerleaders' benefit. Uniforms are ordered to fit each cheerleader and measured in accordance with the information provided by the retailer. Any sizing issues are not the responsibility of the League. No exchanges, returns or refunds will be provided.

Required Purchases

Competition Squads:

- **Mat Shoes:** The REQUIRED competition shoe is the Nfinity Rival 2.0 ($84.99) in WHITE. It can be purchased from Omni Cheer or the Cheer Shop in Woodfield.
- **Sideline Shoes:** PLAIN WHITE cheer-specific shoes are required. The cheer shoe suggested for sideline cheer is the Kaepa Cheerful Cheer Shoe ($45) which is available through The Cheer Shoppe or through Amazon. We understand that each family's situation is different, so we have put together a recommended list of sideline cheer shoes which is available here: SYFC Amazon List
- **White, no-show socks**
- **Warm-ups:** PLAIN BLACK, weather-appropriate zip-up hoodie or jacket, and PLAIN BLACK, weather-appropriate black pants are required for games, parades, and events in the event of rain, cold weather, etc. The Amazon link provided above has some suggestions for warm-ups. The Sycamore Cheer warm-ups that were required in prior years may be worn.

  Outfits, jackets, or warm-ups for competition events are up to each squad and are to be determined by their coaches.

Sideline Squads:

- **Sideline Shoes:** PLAIN WHITE cheer-specific shoes are required. The cheer shoe suggested for sideline cheer is the Kaepa Cheerful Cheer Shoe ($45) which is available through The Cheer Shoppe or through Amazon. We understand that each family's situation is different, so we have put together a recommended list of sideline cheer shoes which is available here: SYFC Amazon List
- **White, no-show socks**
- **Warm-ups:** PLAIN BLACK, weather-appropriate zip-up hoodie or jacket, and PLAIN BLACK, weather-appropriate black pants are required for games, parades, and events in the event of rain, cold weather, etc. The Amazon link provided above has some suggestions for warm-ups. The Sycamore Cheer warm-ups that were required in prior years may be worn.

Additional Expenses

- **Raffle Tickets** $100 of raffle tickets must be purchased per athlete and was paid at the time of registration. Tickets will be distributed during the first week(s) of football practice when you turn in your volunteer checks (see below). You must provide these to the board members at the tables as you walk into practice and will receive your raffle tickets. Cheer coaches will not be collecting volunteer checks. You can sell the tickets to recoup your money. Raffle tickets should be turned in to the league, and winners will be announced at the Homecoming game.
- **Volunteer Fees** are $100 per family due at the beginning of the season. Once you have fulfilled your volunteer obligations, your check will be destroyed.
- **Competition Uniform Deposit** $150.00 (see above under uniforms). This will be collected by each competition squad at a time and date to be determined. **Uniform Deposit checks should not be turned in with your volunteer checks.**
- **Competition Fees**- State fees are not covered by the league and fundraising is REQUIRED to cover the cost.
- **Miscellaneous Fees** other team-specific expenses may be required throughout the season to cover snacks, team parties, or other various expenses. Check with your team parent for more information.

2025 Sycamore Youth Cheer Commitment To Competition Agreement

PLEASE SIGN BELOW AND RETURN

Our teams will be competing in the ICA Cheer Competitions for the 2024 Fall Season. Our main goal during the regular season is to advance to the State Championships. This agreement is to help all athletes and their families understand the level of commitment required to be part of our competition teams.

Our competition routines only work when EVERY athlete is present to do their part. Every athlete has an important role within their routine. To be fair to ALL athletes, it is required that ALL athletes be at EVERY practice, for the ENTIRE practice, and ON TIME in order to sufficiently prepare for competition. *(Please refer to the Practice Rules of our Handbook).*

Practice time alone is not enough time to perfect routines. It is extremely important that your athlete practice at home. Always remember to follow our safety pledge while practicing without a coach!

All events are mandatory and all practices leading up to them are very important. We understand that illnesses and unforeseen circumstances do occur. *(Please refer to the Absentee Policy of our Handbook)*

Competition Dates *(dates are tentative)*

1. ***Cheercago*** *- September 7th @ Hampshire Highschool*
2. ***Cheer Rodeo*** *- September 20th @ South Elgin High School*
3. ***Cosmic Clash*** *- October 4th @ TBD*
4. ***Final Fling*** *- November 1st @ NIU Convention Center*
5. ***State Championships*** *– Pt. 1, November 15th & 16th @ NIU*
   Pt. 2, November 21st - 23rd @ NIU

Please note, additional practices may be added as required leading up to competitions.

Please take the time to discuss our expectations with your athlete. All coaches are asked to agree to the same level of commitment and will make every effort to create an enjoyable and successful season.

By signing this agreement, you acknowledge and agree to adhere to the higher level of commitment required for a successful competition season.

Date: _____

Athlete: _____

Parent: _____

2025 SYFC Handbook Acknowledgement

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have received and have read this Handbook and will adhere to the policies set forth in this Handbook. I have had an opportunity to clarify any questions, which I may have concerning the provisions of this Handbook. I further understand that this Handbook is not a contract and that the policies contained herein may be changed without notice at the sole discretion of Sycamore Youth Football & Cheer who retains the right to interpret and apply the stated policies as it deems appropriate. I acknowledge that I have reviewed these policies at length with my athlete and that by signing below I understand that both my athlete and I agree to the terms contained herein. Any violation of these policies by myself, my family, my guests at SYFC events or my athlete may result in non-participation in practice(s), game(s) and/or competition(s) up to and including removal from the league indefinitely at the discretion of the Board/Cheer President.

_____

[First & Last Name of Athlete - Please Print]

_____

[First & Last Name of Parent/Guardian - Please Print]

_____ _____

[First & Last Name of Parent/Guardian - Please Sign] [Date]