

UFC - CHEERLEADING HANDBOOK - 2021

PHILOSOPHY OF YOUTH ATHLETICS

The Rome-Floyd Unified Football/Cheerleading (UFC) Committee was established in 1992. The committee is made up of eight members, four from the staff and Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Georgia, four from the staff and Board of the Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority. The Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Georgia and the Executive Director of the Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority appoint these members yearly. The committee has the responsibility of overseeing all aspects of the Rome-Floyd UFC rules and regulations.

It is the intent of the Rome-Floyd UFC Committee to offer this youth cheerleading program on an equal opportunity basis. All individuals wishing to participate in the program must not be disqualified or discouraged from doing so. Teams will be organized to accommodate all that register and wish to play. Participants are assigned to teams according to the school district in which they attend. All cheerleaders dressed out in each game must participate, according to the program's participation policy. Participation is most important in building character and confidence in youth. The UFC Committee hopes to make every athletic activity serve as a training ground for life.

Coaches are members of the program organizational team. Cooperation is required to maintain a quality experience of the participants. Coaches must establish a good working relationship with parents, players, and the Parks and Recreation Authority and Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Georgia. Children tend to use their coaches as role models. What coaches say and do has a tremendous effect on their personality development and self-confidence level. This philosophy has been developed to give volunteers a clear understanding of how important youth are to Floyd County. By following this philosophy, coaches will become valuable volunteers and tremendous assets to our community.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- That each participant learns and understands the basic fundamentals of cheerleading, safety procedures, good sportsmanship, and team concept, as it relates to cheerleading and its fundamentals.
- To embrace the principles of cheerleading by always supporting your teammates, including those on the opposing team, with a positive and energetic attitude.
- That each team has a great experience and successful season.

ELIGIBILITY

- All cheerleaders must pay the registration fee and be registered by the deadline in order to participate in the program.
- All cheerleaders must submit a Medical Release Form, Participation Waiver, Birth Certificate, and Acknowledgement of Rules Form (Registration packet & forms)
- There are NO try-outs. A coach CANNOT deny or "cut" a cheerleader from the team.
- Children meeting age and registration requirements may not be prohibited from participating based on creed, national origin, gender, or any other factors. We promote equal opportunity.
- All participants must be of age group (minimum of six years old) prior to September 1, 2021.

Spirit teams and mascot programs are NOT available.

PROCEDURE

- **NO Cheerleaders may practice before they have registered.**
- Only the Unified Football and Cheerleading Committee can implement mandatory cheerleading practices/events.
- During regular season, Unified Cheerleading teams are prohibited from participating in any event not sanctioned by the Unified Football and Cheerleading program. If coaches knowingly participate in non-sanctioned events while in season, teams will be disbanded for the remainder of the season. Coaches will also be terminated for the remainder of the season as well as be put on probation for the entire following season.

During regular season

- Maximum of 3 practices are allowed weekly.
- No practices on Sunday.
- Cheerleaders can only miss 1 practice weekly and still be eligible to cheer at the following game, unless approved by coach.
- Practices cannot exceed 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- All practices should end no later than 7:45 p.m.
- All cheerleaders will receive equal practice time.
- It is **mandatory** that at least 24 hours notification be given to the Cheerleading Coordinator for any cancellation of games or events.

BANNERS/SIGNS

- Banners, spirit sticks, and signs are permitted providing all debris is removed from the area before each game begins and disposed of after each game ends.
- No advertisements or promotions can be displayed on team banners, signs, or uniforms.

UNIFORMS

- The cost of the uniform is included in the registration fee of \$75.00
- The uniform includes T-shirt, shorts, pom-poms, and bow.
- The hair bows and pom-poms will signify team color.

FUNDRAISING

- No official sponsorships are allowed. Therefore, no uniforms, signage, or other items may market the names of businesses or individuals that supported the team's fundraising efforts. Make sure that companies understand this before asking for donations.

CHEERLEADERS RESPONSIBILITIES/EXPECTATIONS

- Being part of a squad is a commitment. Cheerleaders are expected to attend practices, games, exhibition, etc.
- Cheerleaders are responsible for having transportation to and from practice, games, and events.
- They are responsible for their own behavior. Disrespectful or disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated. If disruptive behavior occurs, proper disciplinary action will take place as set in place by individual team rules.
- Always show good sportsmanship to all squads as they perform. Support and encouragement are a constant in cheerleading.

DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS

- All disciplinary problems *are to be reported* to the Cheerleading Coordinator.
- Incidents should be typed up, detailing all pertinent information of the situation and either emailed or given in person.
- No cheerleader will be penalized or dismissed from the team without the permission of the Unified Football & Cheerleading Committee.
- If a conflict arises amongst parents and coaches, attempts should be made to resolve and address the conflict amongst the involved parties first. If no resolution can be made, either party may contact the Cheerleading Coordinator for assistance with the matter. The situation should be type-written in detail concerning all areas of the matter.
- Disrespectful or disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated from the coaches, parents, or youth participants. If a child is disrespectful or displays disruptive conduct, the coach will be allowed to restrict that cheerleader from participation for the next game, upon approval from the Unified football and Cheerleading Committee. A child may not be disciplined in any way because of school related matters, or any other activity unrelated to the team practice and games.

HALFTIME ROUTINES

- All music must be screened and approved by the Cheerleading Coordinator PRIOR to being played at the Boys & Girls Club or at the Levy. The CD you submit will receive an official Boys &

Girls Clubs sticker that will be the mark of approval. CD's without this sticker will NOT be played at games. This music is the ONLY music permitted for use at the Boys & Girls Club or Riverview.

- All coaches must provide the press boxes with the approved music CD and information on the needed track number.
- It is the responsibility of the coaches to bring the approved music CD to the games.
- NO explicit or suggestive language/dance will be tolerated in halftime routines. If deemed inappropriate, the squad will get **only one** warning to change/alter their dance.
 - If you get a warning, the coach MUST schedule a time for the Cheerleading Coordinator to meet and watch the routine for approval.
 - If the coach fails to do this and/or the squad continues to perform the warned inappropriate routine, the squad will lose all privileges to perform at half-time.
- Routines must be **under 2½ minutes** long.
- All approved music and track requests must be submitted to the press box **AT LEAST 10 minutes before the game time, NOT halftime.**
- All squads must be ready to perform immediately when halftime starts. Any delay sets the entire game off and will result in the following squad's halftime performance possibly being cut short if too much time has passed. It is best if each squad is organized, ready and prepared for each performance!
- Tip – Coaches may want to submit a few copies of their music CD to be approved and receive a sticker in case one is lost throughout the season.

COACHES

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Georgia's and Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority's primary mission is to develop character and build good citizenship in the youth of this community. The UFC Committee recognizes the importance of physical and mental fitness in fulfilling this mission. It is our belief that one of the most important influences that a child encounters is his/her coach. For that reason if a coach fails to follow any of the guidelines or coaching requirements, he/she could lose their right as a volunteer with the Boys & Girls Club of Northwest Georgia and the Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority. Coaches may or may not be asked to coach again depending on their actions and attitudes.

In order to run a high-quality cheerleading program and offer the best experience to our cheerleaders, all head coaches are required to become certified cheerleading coaches through the National Youth Sports Coaches Association (NYSCA). Assistant coaches are encouraged to join but not required. The \$20 annual membership fee will be paid by the Boys & Girls Clubs. After coaches have passed the UFC background check, become a member of the NYSCA, and passed the coaches certification process through the NYSCA, coaches will receive a \$1,000,000 excess liability insurance policy; access to member-only coaching resources and supplemental coach trainings; *SportingKid Live!*; a monthly member e-newsletter; a member ID card; and corporate discounts on everyday services like car rentals, hotels and more. Follow this link to certify: <https://www.nays.org/nyscaonline/preview/cheerleading.cfm>

All head coaches must be at least 21 years of age. Assistance coaches must be at least 18 years of age. Head Coaches shall be responsible for proper conduct of their assistant coaches and spectators. All volunteers will undergo criminal background checks. Violation of the following policies could result in suspension or probation from the program:

- Use of drugs or alcohol prior to or during a practice or game.
- Use of any tobacco products during a practice or game.
- Profanity, abusive language or unsportsmanlike conduct during a practice or game.
- Failure to report violations of rules or policies of an opposing team or coach in a timely manner.
- Pulling a squad off the field for any reason.

General Guidelines and Policies

- A coach is not allowed to cut cheerleaders from the team.
- Always be fair when enforcing rules or when taking disciplinary actions. Discipline is a good teacher of responsibility. Be firm, but fair.
- Constructive criticism should be reserved for a private moment. **NEVER CRITICIZE OPENLY.**
- Coaches should keep parents and players well informed on practices, games, rainouts, etc.
- Establish a good working relationship with both players and parents.
- Be concerned with safety at all times. Report all accidents or injuries to the Program Coordinators.
- Abide by doctor's decisions in all matters of cheerleader's health, injuries, and physical ability to participate.
- Always strive to make every athletic activity serve as a training ground for life.
- If coaches have children in different age divisions, they are allowed to move siblings up or down one division so they may be on the coach's team. Non-coaching parents may also be given this division waiver with the permission of the Team Coach AND the Cheerleading Coordinator.
- All head coaches must complete the NYSCA coach's certification prior to the start of practice. No one will be allowed to coach without this certification. This includes all team activities.

Responsibilities & Requirements

- Attend a Coaches Certification/Training Meeting.
- Participate in Cheerleading Exhibition. **(Date will be announced soon)**
- Provide a copy of Unified Cheerleading By-Laws to parents, if it is requested.
- Coordinate a parent/cheerleader meeting at the beginning of the season to explain expectations, requirements, By-Laws, plan for the season, and parent obligations.
- If you are a veteran coach for a specific team & age division, you will have seniority over new coaches, unless deemed otherwise by the Unified Committee.
- Supervise the squad at all times.
- Only certified coaches are allowed to hold money for cheerleading purchases. **The Unified Football and Cheerleading program is not responsible for any financial loss.**
- Have at least ONE certified Unified Cheerleading Coach at every game and practice for the entire time.
- Leave no child alone after practice or a game.
- Provide cheerleaders with water during practice and games.
- Ensure that AT LEAST one spotter is provided during practices and games if a stunt is being performed. **No stunt should have the flyer's foot above the bases' waist.**
- Constructive criticism should be reserved for a private moment. Never criticize in front of other children.
- Always be fair and equal when enforcing rules or taking disciplinary action. Be firm, but fair.
- The committee has the authority to approve or deny one's affiliation as a voluntary coach at any time.

TO BE GIVEN TO CHEERLEADING COORDINATOR

Provide a roster of the entire squad listing the following:

- Name
- Phone Number
- Parents' Names
- Provide an updated schedule of practices including location and time to the Cheerleading Coordinator.
- Provide a copy of special team rules (if any made by coaches)

Assistant Coaches

- The head coach will appoint all assistant coaches.
- All assistant coaches will be the responsibility of the head coach.
- A head coach will have the authority to suspend or dismiss any assistant coach.
- An assistant coach will carry over duties as assigned by the head coach.
- An assistant coach will NOT have the authority to discipline any participant.
- An assistant coach will not be given the same consideration as a head coach during games. Assistant coaches MUST NEVER get involved in any discussions during the game with officials or parents.
- Assistant coaches should support the decisions of the head coach and should never publicly second-guess the head coach.

- An assistant coach can be appointed by a head coach to act as a head coach during the absence of the actual head coach.
- Assistant coaches should be able to communicate information to parents concerning the program, practice times, and locations.
- Ultimately, all assistant coaches are under the supervision and authority of the RFPRA and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Georgia.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Cheerleading Coordinator: Kelly Barker
Work Phone: 706/234-8591
Email Address: kbarker@bgcnwga.org

***Note:** *Please do not call the Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Department if you have a cheerleading question or concern. Please contact the cheerleading coordinator.*

Policy on Practices in Excessive Heat Situations

The following procedures have been established to protect the youth of Rome-Floyd County as well as the volunteers that serve as coaches in this program.

Football/Cheerleader Practice Procedures

Level 1

Under 82.0 degrees (based on heat index reading)

- Normal activity
- Provide at least three separate rest breaks per hour for a minimum of three minutes each.
- Serve plenty of water

Level 2

82.0 - 86.9 degrees (based on heat index reading)

- Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise
- Watch at risk players carefully
- Provide at least three separate rest breaks per hour for a minimum of four minutes each.
- Serve plenty of water

Level 3

87.0 - 89.9 degrees (based on heat index reading)

- Maximum time limit on practice is two hours
- Helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts only
- All protective equipment must be removed for conditioning activities
- Provide at least four separate rest breaks per hour for a minimum of four minutes each.
- Serve plenty of water

Level 4

90.0 - 92.0 degrees (based on heat index reading)

- Maximum time limit on practice: 1 hour
- No protective equipment may be worn during practice
- There may be no conditioning activities
- Provide at least 20 minutes of rest breaks per hour of practice
- Serve plenty of water

Level 5

Over 92.0 degrees (based on heat index reading)

- NO OUTDOOR ACTIVITY
- Delay practices until a cooler heat index reading occurs

Weather Updates

Heat index alerts will be issued daily at 4:00PM, 5:00PM, and 6:00PM throughout the season until temperatures are constantly below Level 1. Coaches should opt in to weather text message alerts by texting **UNFDRFPRA** to **84483**. Weather updates are also posted on the website www.rfpra.com and the weather information line at 706-290-9597.

CHEERLEADERS must also observe all heat policies related to practicing such as the maximum time limits based on the heat index levels and consuming plenty of water. It is the responsibility of all coaches to check each day to verify conditions of practice.

ROME-FLOYD UNIFIED FOOTBALL/CHEERLEADING PROGRAM

Parent's Code of Ethics Pledge

I shall not criticize officials. Many of our officials are young and learning how to officiate, much as your children are learning to play. Please be patient and treat them as if they were your own children.

I shall not be a "Grand Stand" Coach. It's very difficult to teach children the game, foster a competitive spirit "and" deal with unruly or demanding parents. Please try to be a cooperative helpful parent that supports the coach and the team. Also, please refrain from being a "sideline coach." Do not sit behind backstops or pace along the sideline shouting instructions.

I will set a good example of sportsmanship for the children. Yelling at officials, players on the field or coaches shows great disrespect for youth sports and sets a poor standard of sportsmanship. It is the coach's job, alone, to discuss any problems with the officials.

I will encourage my kids AND the rest of the kids on the team. Let's pump all these kids up so they'll have the times of their lives out there. Keep the comments positive and the results will be too!

I will address any team or player problems quietly and only with our team coach. Arguing or questioning the coach in public is detrimental to getting a successful resolution and sets a bad example for the players.

I will make an effort to attend and be on time to all team events. A commitment to the team is important; plus, on game days, plenty of time should be allowed for proper warm-ups to help avoid dangerous injuries. If you can't make it to the game early enough, please try to arrange for alternate transportation.

I will try to emphasize to my child that winning a game is the result of "team work."

I will place the emotional and physical well being of my child ahead of personal desires to win.

I will strive to make every youth sports activity serve as a training ground for life and a basis for good mental and physical health.

I understand that my child may need my support at home by assisting with schoolwork and extra practice in the backyard.

I am aware that my coach is also a leader. It is your coach's responsibility (and the official's) to monitor both the players' and parents' conduct. Any fan who becomes a nuisance, out of control or aggressive may be asked to leave the game and field area.

I will refrain from smoking or using any tobacco or alcohol product while at all youth sports events.

I understand that if I do not conduct myself in a positive manner, I may be asked to vacate the premises. ABUSIVE OR PROFANE LANGUAGE WILL NOT BE TOLERATED on Boys & Girls Clubs or Recreation Authority facilities and grounds or toward any person in attendance. ZERO TOLERANCE for unruly behavior.

How can you get involved? If you want to offer input, please volunteer! We always need coaches, officials, and more! Staging a successful youth sports program is truly a cooperative effort. Coaches are all unpaid volunteers. Any help you can volunteer is genuinely appreciated!

Parent Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Participants Name (Please Print): _____ **Date:** _____



Minor Waiver/Release
Release Of Liability For Minor Participants
Please read before signing

IN CONSIDERATION OF _____, my child/ward, being allowed to
PRINT FULL LEGAL NAME OF CHILD/WARD
participate in any way in the Rome-Floyd Unified Football/Cheerleading Program and its related events and activities, the undersigned acknowledges, appreciates, and agrees that:

The risk for injury to my child/ward from the activities involved in these programs is significant, including the potential for permanent disability and death, and while particular rules, equipment, and personal discipline may reduce this risk, the risk for serious injury does exist; and,

- 1) FOR MYSELF, SPOUSE, AND CHILD, I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, both known and unknown, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES or others, and assume full responsibility for my child's participation; and,
- 2) I willingly agree to comply with the program's stated and customary terms and conditions for participation. If I observe any unusual significant concern in my child's readiness for participation and/or in the program itself, I will remove my child from the participation and bring such attention of the nearest official immediately; and,
- 3) I myself, my spouse, my child, and on behalf of my/our heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest Georgia and the Rome-Floyd Parks and Recreation Authority, their directors, officers, officials, agents, employees, volunteers, other participants, sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, and if applicable, owners and lessors of premises used to conduct the event ("Releases"), WITH RESPECT TO ANY AND ALL INJURY, DISABILITY, DEATH, or loss or damage to person or property incident to my child's involvement or participation in these programs, WHETHER ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE, to the fullest extent permitted by law.
- 4) I myself, my spouse, my child, and on behalf of my/our heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS all the above Releases from any and all liabilities incident to my involvement or participation in these programs, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THEIR NEGLIGENCE, to the fullest extent permitted by law.

I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IT FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT. I UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE RISKS INVOLVED IN PARTICIPATING/ALLOWING MY CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROGRAM, MY/MY CHILD'S PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ADHERING TO RULES AND REGULATION, AND ACCEPT THEM AS A PARTICIPANT.

(PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE)

(PRINT FULL LEGAL NAME)

(PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE)

(PRINT FULL LEGAL NAME)

(DATE SIGNED)