

## **Cheerleading Guidelines and Contract 2008-2009**

These guidelines are provided to inform students of the expectations of participating in the cheerleading program at Truman State University. They are designed to comply with both the Truman Athletic Department policies and the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors safety regulations. Persons selected for the Truman cheerleading squad must be in agreement with these guidelines and must adhere to them during their tenure on the squad.

The purpose of the Truman State University Cheerleader is to promote school spirit by supporting teams during athletic competition, to lead the crowd in cheering for the teams, and to provide entertainment to crowds during pep rallies, parades, and breaks in athletic competitions.

### **Tryouts**

1. Tryouts will be held during the spring semester, or as needed throughout the academic year in order to fill vacancies.
2. Evaluation criteria for tryouts will be made available to the public.
3. Evaluations by coaches and tryout judges are final and are based on numerical score.
4. Returning members must re-try out for the squad each year, unless they are seniors with three previous years' experience on the Truman squad.
5. Persons who have quit or have been removed from the squad must have special permission from the coaches to try out again.
6. No video tryouts will be accepted.
7. Tryout sessions will be closed to outside parties.
8. Persons wishing to try out must be current Truman students in good academic standing or graduating seniors who have been accepted to Truman for the next academic year.

### **Squad Makeup and Time Commitment**

1. The squad will consist of 12-18 female members and 0-4 male members.
2. All members are expected to participate for one year, starting after tryouts and ending at tryouts the following year.
3. Several alternates may be chosen during tryouts and may be called upon until the end of the fall semester.
  - Alternates will be chosen based on who is the best fit for the squad position that is open at the time.
  - Alternates will not be expected to practice with the squad, but will be expected to learn all chants and cheers on the demonstration video.
4. Practices will be approximately 2-3 times per week for 90 to 120 minutes each, usually on weeknights after 5:00 pm.
5. The squad will cheer for all home football games plus one away game, select volleyball games, and men's and women's basketball games.
6. Cheerleaders are generally expected to perform at 2-3 cheer clinics and pep rallies per year, and to participate in selected homecoming week activities.
7. Squad members are responsible for contributing to recruitment of new members.
8. There will be a camp/training weekend held at Truman in July, and all members will be expected to attend.
9. At camp each member will be given a video demonstrating Truman's cheers and chants. Every member will be responsible for learning the words and motions for each cheer and chant prior to the beginning of the school year.

### **Teamwork and Attitude**

1. Each squad member will treat coaches, captains, game officials, and other athletics staff with respect at all times. This attitude should also extend to members of this and other cheerleading squads.
2. Members are expected to behave appropriately during games and appearances, refraining from booing, heckling, or other negative behavior toward officials or other teams.
3. Members will be given a verbal warning at the time of their first offense and may be dismissed from the squad for any subsequent offenses. Coaches' discretion will be final regarding inappropriate behavior or attitude.

### **Attendance**

1. Members are required to attend all practices, games, and appearances set by the coaches. This includes camp, Homecoming, pep rallies, and potentially postseason tournament games. We will determine practice times and game schedules in advance to help you arrange your schedule, though times may occasionally be subject to change.
2. Conflicts with work, sorority/fraternity functions, or other extracurricular activities are not valid excuses.
3. Every effort should be made to arrange academic schedule to accommodate practices and games.
4. Tardiness at practice, games, and appearances will not be tolerated. Members must arrive at events dressed, taped, and ready to warm-up with the team by the set time determined by the coaches.
5. Members must be ready and in position for pre-game activities, and may not leave the game early without prior approval.
6. Members must ride to and from away games with the team unless prior written approval is on file with the Athletics Department.
7. Squad members must contact a coach and captain when missing practice, games, or appearances (excused or unexcused).
8. Coaches will consider the following acceptable reasons for missed practices, games, and appearances:
  - Injury – The member must attend practice but will not participate until medical clearance has been provided.
  - Illness – A member may miss practice but must provide a doctor's written note verifying illness (mild cramps, headaches, etc. are not considered acceptable illnesses and will not be excused).
  - Family Emergencies
  - Class requirement that cannot be fulfilled at another time
9. Coaches' decision is final regarding consequences for attendance violations. Guidelines are as follows:
  - Tardiness at practice or games- One toe touch jump for each minute late; members who are consistently late may be dismissed from squad after a verbal warning
  - Missing practice without valid excuse- Warning for first offense and suspension from next home game for subsequent offenses
  - Missing a game or appearance without prior permission- Suspension from next home game for first and second offense and dismissal from squad for third offense

### **Academic Eligibility Requirements**

1. To be eligible for the 2008-2009 season you must fulfill the following requirements:
  - Enroll in and complete a minimum of 12 credit hours each semester at Truman State University
  - Maintain academic good standing with the university
  - Sign a release each semester authorizing the Athletics Department and cheerleading coach to verify your grades
2. Prior approval by your professors is necessary if you will be missing class due to a game.

### **Uniform and Appearance**

1. Appearance must be clean and neat, including hair, makeup, and jewelry.
2. Coaches' discretion is final on uniform fit and cleanliness.
3. You are responsible for the upkeep of your uniform. Issued uniforms and equipment must be turned in at the conclusion of the year or once you have completed your duties with the squad.
4. Chewing gum is not allowed at practice or games.
5. No jewelry of any kind may be worn during practices or games.
6. No smoking or consumption of drugs or alcohol while in uniform will be tolerated. Members may not consume alcoholic beverages or drugs prior to or during games, practices, or special events.
7. Hair should be kept out of the face, and worn all-up or half-up during all practices and games. All hair accessories should be worn in moderation and comply with safety regulations set forth by the AACCA.
8. No long nails, natural or acrylic, shall be worn. If scratches occur at games and practices, coaches reserve the right to require nails be trimmed immediately.
9. There will be no weight requirements for any member of this squad. Members are, however, expected to maintain an overall level of fitness that allows them full participation in conditioning, stunting, and jumps.

### **Financial Responsibilities**

1. Though uniforms are owned by Truman State University and are provided to each cheerleader, individual members are responsible for some items and expenses, which include but are not limited to the following estimates:

-Warm-ups - \$140	-Shoes - \$35
-Crop tops - \$30	-Sweatshirt - \$25
-Briefs - \$10	-Camp expenses - \$50
-Poms - \$30	

This brings the total cost for a new female member to \$320 and the cost for returning members (who may already own warm-ups, crops, briefs, and poms) to \$110. New male members' expenses are similar to that of a returning member, with the addition of warm-ups, cost to be determined.

2. All uniform items will be ordered for each member through Truman. The fee will be due to the coach by Friday, April 25, 2008 so that these items may be ordered and received before the end of the fiscal year.
3. Because uniform items will be ordered specifically to each member's size this money will not be returned to any member who quits the squad.
4. Throughout the year the squad may participate in fundraising activities in order to purchase new uniforms, accessories, equipment, etc. Each member is expected to participate in all fundraising activities.

## **Captains**

1. There will be two captains chosen each year to serve the entire year.
2. Any returning member may ask to be considered for the position of captain regardless of year in school.
3. Coaches will choose captains based on the prior year's performance, attitude, attendance, respect toward coaches and teammates, and commitment to safety. Coaches' decisions will be final.
4. Captains are expected to help promote the skill development of other squad members, as well as to lend support to coaches' decisions regarding safety and discipline.
5. Responsibilities of captains include, but are not limited to:
  - acting as a liaison between coaches and squad members
  - coordinating half-time, time-out, and pep rally routines
  - making a tentative agenda for each practice, and bringing this to the coach for approval at the beginning of practice
  - meeting or e-mailing with coaches during the summer to coordinate the camp schedule
  - making/keeping a list of current cheers and chants
  - demonstrating all cheers and chants on videotape; copying and distributing tapes to all members at camp
  - selecting and starting appropriate cheers and chants during games

## **Safety**

1. Every effort will be made by coaches and cheerleaders to reduce injury risk at all practices and games. All members will follow coaches' instructions regarding safety practices.
2. Practices will take place on appropriate mats and under the supervision of an AACCA-certified coach, according to NCAA guidelines.
3. Individual cheerleaders will not organize separate practices for stunting or tumbling outside of those scheduled by the coach.
4. The coaches' discretion will be final regarding individual or squad readiness to perform a particular stunt or program outside of practice. In general, to be performance-ready, a stunt must have been performed successfully five consecutive times during practice.
5. All cheerleaders are encouraged to carry health insurance. Truman State University carries secondary insurance to provide additional coverage for injuries incurred at practices or games, provided all safety guidelines have been consistently followed.
6. Members will undergo a physical examination by Truman's Athletic Department physician before the beginning of the fall athletic season. This will be scheduled by the coaches and athletic trainers.
7. Each member will be required to sign an informed consent statement listing their insurance carrier and an emergency contact person, as well as providing authorization for emergency treatment. This will also serve as an acknowledgement of their cooperation with the guidelines listed above.
8. A complete list of the AACCA safety guidelines is available at [www.aacca.org](http://www.aacca.org) (click on "safety rules for college" in the left margin).

### **Informed Consent and Treatment Authorization**

I, the undersigned, understand that the activity of cheerleading involves risk to the participant. I further acknowledge and understand that due to the nature of this activity there is a possibility that I may sustain physical illness or injury in connection with my participation. I further acknowledge and understand that by participating I am assuming the risk of such physical illness or injury, and I further release Truman State University and its representatives from any claims for personal illness or injury that I might sustain during my participation in this activity.

I further understand that Truman State University has established rules and regulations pertaining to conduct, behavior, and activities of all students and cheerleading participants, by which I must abide during participation in this activity, and that I will be responsible for my own failure to abide by these rules and regulations. I have been provided with a copy of the cheerleading guidelines for 2008-2009, and agree to participate in accordance with these expectations.

In order that I may receive necessary medical treatment in the event that I sustain injury or illness during participation in this activity, I hereby authorize the cheerleading coach(es) or other supervising adult to obtain medical treatment for me for such an illness or injury during the activity, and I hereby hold Truman State University and its representatives harmless in the exercise of authority.

In the event of an emergency, please contact the following person on my behalf:

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Contact Person's Name

Phone

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Insurance Carrier

Group/Policy Number

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Participant's Signature

Date

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Signature of Parent or Guardian

Date