

The Athletic Performance Standards support two pillars of the USASF Mission: (1) striving for a safe environment for our athletes, and (2) promoting a positive image for the sport. It speaks directly to the longevity of the sport and is one of the puzzle pieces that fit into our 360 degree approach to athlete care and development found in the Athletes 1st mindset. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the owner to ensure the Athletic Performance Standards are met by the teams representing their club.



# ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS TIP SHEET

*A Compliance Tool for All Star Cheer Club Owners*

This tip sheet has been created for All Star Cheer Program Owners by the USASF in partnership with industry providers who are committed to presenting All Star in a way that celebrates both the athleticism and creativity that is the foundation for our sport.

**RULE:** No risque', sexually provocative or lingerie-inspired uniform or garments allowed. All uniform pieces should adequately cover the athlete and must be secured to eliminate any possible wardrobe malfunction. Appropriate undergarments must be worn. In addition to the below specific guidelines, coaches must also consider that a combination of uniform pieces may also deem a uniform appropriate or inappropriate. ALL garments must properly cover the athlete and the athlete's undergarments during the routine.

**UNIFORM SKIRT/SHORTS** - When a skirt is worn as part of the uniform, briefs under the skirt are required. The skirt must fully cover the hips. The skirt must completely cover the briefs and must fall at least 1" below briefs (regular and boy cut briefs). When shorts are worn as part of the uniform, there must be a minimum of a 2" inseam.

**UNIFORM TOP** - Uniform tops may not include an exposed midriff (including crop tops) except when worn by athletes competing in Senior Club Elite Tier and International Senior/Open Tier divisions. Uniform tops must be secured by straps or material over at least one shoulder or around the neck (tube tops are not allowed).

## UNIFORM

### UNIFORM DO'S

- Apply the Athletic Performance Standards during practice and public appearances (not just at competitions)
- Consider tanks or t-shirts for practice wear options
- Make sure athletes wear the uniform as designed
- Keep in mind that adolescence is a time of rapid growth which could drastically alter the form, fit and function of a uniform from one season to the next
- Have the team, program name or logo on the cover up in order to be easily identifiable
- Select a fit and length that easily cover the athlete's chest and bottom and do not require the athlete to adjust the uniform for proper coverage during choreography

### UNIFORM DON'TS:

- Roll up, partially remove or alter garment items, thus changing the intended look of the uniform
- Design uniforms that do not allow for proper, supportive, athletic undergarments
- Select fit and length of uniforms that do not easily cover the athlete's chest and bottom and may require the athlete to adjust the uniform for proper coverage during choreography
- Design uniforms that have similarities to lingerie or could be perceived as sexually provocative



Athletes with non-full top uniforms must wear a t-shirt or other suitable cover up over their uniforms unless they are warming up as a team with coach supervision, in the warm-up area, traveling as a group directly to or from the warm up area or on the performance/awards stage.

**Rule:** All facets of a performance/routine, including both choreography and music selection, should be **appropriate and suitable for family viewing and listening.**

### CHOREOGRAPHY DO'S:

- Understand that it is not only the move itself, but how it is presented that determines whether it is appropriate or not
- Make it age appropriate
- Include partner work that changes levels and has a fun vibe or chemistry between the partners as opposed to a sexual connection
- Use straight lines when moving hands across the athlete's own body rather than following curves
- Consider what the movements, when combined, may be portraying
- Make sure your in-house or hired choreographer is familiar with the APS and that the athletes execute the compliant material as choreographed

### CHOREOGRAPHY DON'TS:

#### Don't Include:

- Hip thrusting
- Inappropriate touching

#### Don't Incorporate:

- Gestures, movements and signals that have a "meaning" that is sexual or violent in nature
- Slapping or positioning of body parts that may be identified as sexual or suggestive
- Positioning to one another that may be identified as sexual or suggestive
- Depiction of violent acts or behavior
- Run your hands and arms down the curves of your body
- Allow the athletes to interpret the moves and perform them differently than as choreographed

### MUSIC DO'S

- Choose music that is appropriate for family listening
- Choose songs with a positive message
- Include voice overs that make your athletes feel good without making others feel bad
- Include voice overs that are sport-focused or team/program specific
- Research song lyrics and their meaning if the music contains any foreign language
- Choose songs by family-friendly artists

### MUSIC DON'TS:

#### Don't Include:

- Swear words, including slang or abbreviations that would be considered swear words
- Slang referring to, or connotations of, sexual acts or behaviors
- Slang referring to, or connotations of, drugs and alcohol
- Explicit mentioning of body parts that may be considered sexual or flirty

#### Don't Incorporate:

- Voice overs that call out other teams
- Voice overs or lyrics that promote disreputable pop culture themes



Music or movement in which the appropriateness is questionable, or with which uncertainty exists, should be assumed by the coach to be inappropriate and removed as to not put their team in an unfortunate situation.



Avoid selecting music that requires lyrics or language to be covered or replaced with sound effects or other words. Recognizable lyrics that are masked will still be considered inappropriate.

**RULE:** If worn, **makeup should be uniform and appropriate for both the performance and the age of the athletes utilizing neutral colors for eyes and skin.** Face/Eyelid rhinestones are not allowed. False eyelashes are allowed but may not be decorated in rhinestones or additional jewelry. Rhinestones are legal when adhered to the uniform and illegal when adhered to the skin.

**MAKEUP DO'S**

- Use a neutral color palette with natural or pastel colors that complement the uniform design
- Choose a lip color that compliments the uniform and age of the athlete
- Choose eye makeup that is appropriate for the youngest on the athlete of the team

**MAKEUP DON'TS:**

- Use vivid, multi-color eye shadow applications
- Heavy/over exaggerated makeup designs that extend from the lash to the brow
- Adhere rhinestones or other jewelry to the skin, brow or eyelashes
- Assume all teams need to wear makeup
- Choose a lip color that is so bold that it becomes distracting or makes younger athletes look older



When opting to use glitter, keep in mind the safety concerns of the athlete wearing it so that it doesn't hinder their vision. Consider shimmer as an alternative option.

**RULE:** Hair must be secured off of the face with a simple and unexaggerated style that is adaptable to all diversities. Bows should not be excessive in size nor a distraction to the performance. Bows should be worn in a manner to minimize risk for the participants, adequately secured and not fall over the forehead into the participants' eyes or block the view of the participant while performing.

**HAIR DO'S**

- Consider hairstyles that project an athletic appearance
- Consider hair accessories that support an athletic appearance, such as scrunchies or cuffs
- Place the bow on the crown or back of the head
- Consider hair accessories that are made of grosgrain ribbon
- Consider the age and size of the athlete's head when choosing hair accessories
- Choose a hairstyle that is adaptable to all diversities

**HAIR DON'TS:**

- Use bows with a ribbon width greater than 4"
- Place bows on top of or near the front of the head
- Choose hairstyles that are over exaggerated
- Choose hairstyles that are difficult to achieve or maintain during the athletic routine
- Choose hair accessories or hair pieces that are difficult to secure and/or may come loose and fall off during an athletic routine



Choose a hairstyle that is simple to achieve. Consider the amount of time it may take to "do" the hair and the comfort of the athlete while they are executing their routine. It should not be something they need to worry about maintaining on the floor or that feels unnatural or heavy.



*Expert Tip:*

When choosing providers of music, choreography, uniforms, hair accessories and photography services, ASK THEM if they are familiar with the USASF Athletic Performance Standards and if their product is compliant.



*Expert Tip:*

The Athletic Performance Standards apply to the OVERALL PRESENTATION and encompass all facets of the look and performance. In isolation, each component may be compliant, but when combined and then performed the delivery may not meet the standards of "appropriate" as outlined in the policy. Be diligent in your efforts to evaluate the look and performance in totality and not solely focus on the look or routine.

**MEDIA & PHOTOGRAPHY DO'S**

- Review your own online platforms to make sure images are age appropriate, athletic and amplifying a positive image of All Star
- Keep in mind that photos of All Star athletes in action can be perceived differently from those outside the sport
- Consider having a friend who does not participate in All Star review your online platforms for a different point of view
- Turn off location services and/or geotagging so that an athlete's location is not revealed in a social media post
- Model what "safe" posts look like to your clients, parents and athletes
- Educate yourself on the risks of posting photographs of minors on social media
- Develop a policy for your program's image and how you would like it viewed by those outside All Star

**MEDIA & PHOTOGRAPHY DON'TS:**

- Enable location services or geotagging
- Like or share posts that do not meet the Athletic Performance Standards or amplify a positive image of All Star
- Post, print or publish a photo you wouldn't want an employer, school administrator, parent or grandparent to see



**Post photos that include a larger group or encompass a wide angle shots of similar skills. Close up images that highlight an individual athlete's flexibility and draw attention to private parts, even if clothed, are known to be highly sought after and more easily "photoshopped" by those with ill intent.**



*Expert Tip:*

Do your due diligence to maintain safe interactions between minors and adults when bringing in someone to work with or interact with your athletes. Find out if their company properly screened them OR if they have completed the USASF screening process and received a Green Light Determination. Insist all adults follow the Pro-active Minor Abuse Prevention Policies.

*Remember to Ask Yourself:*

**IS IT AGE APPROPRIATE FOR THE YOUNGEST MEMBER ON THE TEAM?**

**DOES THE LOOK REPRESENT THE ARTISTRY AND ATHLETICISM OF ALL STAR?**

**IF CAPTURED IN IMAGES OR VIDEO, WOULD IT BE VIEWED AS AN ATHLETIC ACTIVITY?**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information, scan the QR code below or visit USASF.net to watch a short overview video and complete an interactive review form. The form will provide you with an in-depth understanding of the Athletic Performance Standards and has drop-down tips based upon your specific answers. It also includes the ability to request follow-up from a member of the Steering Committee should you need additional assistance after completing the review form.

