

# Road Map to

## STARTING AN EXCEPTIONAL ATHLETE TEAM

Establishing an Exceptional Athlete team will be one of the most rewarding experiences for coaches, their assistants and everyone in your program. Spreading positivity and teaching inclusivity is a key component in developing life skills for all athletes and what better way than to introduce them to Exceptional Athletes!



### OPPORTUNITY AND BENEFITS FOR ATHLETES

Exceptional Athletes, like all athletes, have the opportunity to gain valuable life lessons and skills such as time management, confidence, mental focus, teamwork and so much more. Participants develop friendships that last a lifetime and learn the value of self determination. Being active in sports also demonstrates the benefit of independence and the respect that comes with inclusion.

### BE IN THE KNOW

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#### Utilize the Member Resources tools

- **Guide to Starting an Exceptional Athlete Team:** This video shows how to start an EA team, what is required/recommended, tips for marketing your EA program, ideas for routines, costumes, uniforms, competitions, and more.
- **Handbook:** This guide defines disability and USASF's mission and goals. It provides requirements/recommendations for coaches, buddies and assistants. Find answers to FAQs and a glossary of terms most used with this population.
- **Assessment Form:** This tool outlines the athlete's disability, needs, challenges and strengths to help prepare you to be the best EA coach.
- **People First Language:** This guide equips everyone in your program with the proper vocabulary when referring to someone with a disability.
- **Score Sheets:** Learn the criteria used to evaluate performances for CheerABILITIES and DanceABILITIES teams.
- **Score Sheet Video Training:** This video is available to help you learn what judges look for in a routine.

2

**Market** and promote your team on social media, give flyers to parents who are teachers, drop off at schools, day centers, physical therapy offices and offer a free class.

3

**Know** the rules for each division: Exhibition, Novice and Elite. Decide which one best fits the needs of your athletes.

4

**Research** uniform/costume providers that will work with the individual needs of your athletes based on their tolerance of materials, zippers, snaps, etc. Study and analyze typical routines of lower level and younger athletes for creative ideas and modify accordingly.

5

**Identify** the events that offer the division that best fit the needs of your team.

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#### How to find Member Resources

1. From your USASF Coach or Program membership profile, click your name in the top right corner.
2. Choose USASF Members Resources.
3. Choose Exceptional Athletes.

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#### Need help?

Reach out to: **Glenda Broderick**  
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