



I. Mission and Philosophy

The mission of the Liberty University Cheerleading team is first and foremost to glorify the Lord Jesus in everything we do! We will strive to maintain a positive image and be ambassadors for the University by upholding the values and expectations of the cheerleading program and the University. While on the LU Cheerleading team, athletes will be encouraged and guided spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. It is the goal of the program to help minister to the athletes and to help coach them not only in cheerleading, but in life, helping to shape them into confident and capable adults. The Liberty University Cheerleading team will be encouraged to maintain a strong relationship with God and will also strive to use cheerleading as a tool for ministering to those we come into contact with. Our team verse is Romans 15:5-6 which says *“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Further, the purpose of the Liberty University Cheerleading team is to provide positive support for athletic teams, participate in various Liberty and community events, and participate in fundraising activities as appropriate to support the program. In participating in these activities and events, the cheerleaders will work to improve recognition, respect, and loyalty to Liberty University, promote student and fan morale and excitement, and develop, promote, and improve the Liberty University cheerleading team to make the squad recognized and respected. **Excellence in every way is expected from every member of the team!**

II. Organizational Structure

Liberty University's cheerleading program is composed of two squads, the Red Squad and the White Squad. The Red Squad will consist of 16 to 20 members and will cheer at all home football games and most of the Men's basketball games. The Red Squad will also compete at UCA College Nationals. The White Squad will consist of 16 to 20 members and will cheer at all home football games and most of the Women's basketball games. There may or may not be alternates for each squad. The Red Squad and most of the White Squad is chosen at the spring tryout. There will be a fall tryout to fill any additional places for the White Squad.

All cheerleaders are referred to as student-athletes, and the academic standing of each cheerleader is a priority. It is the goal of the cheerleading program to not compromise the athlete's academic standing.

The Liberty cheerleading program is budgeted in Athletics. Cheerleading is not governed by the NCAA or BSC rules and regulations, however, the NCAA and the BSC require that AACCA Safety guidelines are followed at NCAA and BSC championships.

III. CHEERLEADER BENEFITS

- a. Cheerleaders are provided their uniforms, bloomers, shoes, poms, megaphones, camp clothing (usually 2-3 Nike outfits) and warm-up suit.
- b. All travel expenses for games and camp are paid for by the University.
- c. Cheerleaders are provided a camp opportunity each year.
- d. Cheerleaders have the opportunity to travel to at least 2 football games.
- e. Cheerleaders have the opportunity to travel to men's and women's BSC tournaments, and the NCAA tournament if either team wins the BSC title.
- f. The cheerleaders are provided an athletic trainer to care for injuries.
- g. The cheerleaders have the opportunity to register early for classes each semester before other students to get priority class time.
- h. Cheerleaders are provided tutors if they are struggling.
- i. Cheerleaders have an athletic academic coordinator to help with any struggles academically.
- j. There is limited scholarship available for cheerleaders.

IV. University and Community Appearances and Involvement

The cheerleading team is invited to many University and community events. Squad involvement at such events is imperative to build support for athletics and positive morale for the University. There could be up to two appearances per week, but usually not more than one (in addition to games). Following are some of the activities the squad has been involved in:

- a. Setting up and working one local cheerleading competition in February
- b. University Block party
- c. Chick-fil-a night in the fall and spring for the Flames Club

- d. Tailgate madness at the rot (University dining hall)
- e. Madness on the mountain (Basketball season opening)
- f. Pre-game activities for football and basketball
- g. Girls 5k run (volunteer)
- h. Flames Club luncheons
- i. Homecoming parade
- j. Special Olympics event
- k. Rooco show at Doc's diner on Tuesday nights
- l. Convocation involvement

V. Guidelines and Expectations

- a. PRACTICE ATTENDANCE
 - i. Both squads practice three times per week for two hours each practice. There may be extra practices on Saturday's, Sunday's, or other week nights or mornings as needed.
 - ii. Cheerleaders must communicate with the coach if he/she has plans to go out of town on the weekends in case practices are scheduled. Attendance is expected at **every practice**. Cheerleaders must get approval to miss a practice **AT LEAST one week in advance** (with exception of family emergency; ie. death or serious accident.)
 - iii. **EXCUSED ABSENCES OR APPROVAL TO LEAVE A PRACTICE OR EVENT EARLY MUST BE GIVEN TO THE COACH IN WRITING IN ADVANCE.**
 - iv. **Unexcused practice absence = sit the next home game. 3 unexcused absences=expulsion.**
 - v. Cheerleaders must be ON TIME and ready to go before practice begins and must be dressed properly:
 - 1. wrists and anything else taped
 - 2. white cheerleading shoes tied properly
 - 3. sports bras and bloomers for the girls
 - 4. proper cheerleading clothing on
 - 5. girls must wear hair UP (all of it)
 - 6. no jewelry at all unless taped/covered
 - 7. cell phones must be silenced or turned off prior to practice
 - vi. It is the responsibility of each cheerleader to get to the gym quickly. **Within the semester 3 tardies=1 game suspension.**
 - vii. In the case of illness, absence will be excused **only with a doctor's note**. Cheerleaders are expected to practice unless the doctor has prescribed not to (this includes vomiting). The same goes for participating in practice activities or conditioning.
 - viii. In the case of injury, cheerleaders are expected to go see the trainer **BEFORE** practice to be cleared to practice or with-held by the trainer for that practice and any other. Cheerleaders are responsible to see the trainer on a regular basis if injured. The trainer is not responsible for calling athletes. Cheerleaders are also responsible for scheduling visits to get treatment and for following the trainers prescribed treatments and/or exercises to heal quickly.

- ix. **If a cheerleader misses, is more than 15 minutes late, or leaves more than 15 minutes early from a total of 6 practices, excused or unexcused in the course of the semester he/she will be suspended for the rest of the semester.**

b. WEIGHT ROOM/CONDITIONING POLICY

- i. Liberty Cheerleading has the advantage of using the athletic weight room and strength trainers.
- ii. There will be two REQUIRED workouts per week in the weight room for the girls, and three REQUIRED workouts per week in the weight room for the guys.
- iii. When weight room/conditioning times have been set, cheerleaders must report to every workout unless excused by the coach or the trainer.
- iv. Cheerleaders will be required to sign in and out of each lifting session unless working with a trainer.
- v. Staying in excellent physical shape is absolutely required for the safety and success of the team.
- vi. Consequence for missing a lifting session is TBD by the coach.

c. GAME ATTENDANCE

- i. Football games: all cheerleaders cheer for every home football game.
- ii. Basketball games: basketball games will be shared by each squad. MOST of the men's games will be cheered by the red squad; MOST of the women's games will be cheered by the white squad; HOWEVER, some games may have both squads and some games we may switch squads.
- iii. Travel teams are TBD for all away games and tournaments.
- iv. Cheerleaders are expected to cheer select games during breaks (Fall break, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Spring break).
- v. Cheerleaders are expected to be on time for pre-game activities. It is mandatory to stay on schedule as there are many things to accomplish before each game. (Tardy policy applies.)
- vi. Sickness/injury policy for practice applies to games also.
- vii. If a cheerleader misses a game without an excuse (Doctor's note or proof of emergency) he/she will risk being suspended for the remainder of the semester.
- viii. It is expected that cheerleaders DO NOT forget anything for a game. Every cheerleader must come completely prepared with his/her uniform CLEAN. There will be consequences for cheerleaders not prepared for a game.
- ix. Guys and girls must be clean shaven for games. Girls are not allowed to wear lotion.
- x. Cheerleaders may only perform stunts, pyramids, and tumbling that have been approved **prior to the games**.
- xi. If cheerleaders are unsuccessful at performing stunts/pyramids (if a stunt or pyramid is dropped) the stunt group must hit it 10 times in a

row before leaving the game at the end OR choose to come an extra day for conditioning.

d. TRAVELING FOR GAMES, CAMP, OR OTHER UNIVERSITY ACTIVITIES

- i. ALL UNIVERSITY RULES, POLICIES, AND THE LIBERTY WAY must be respected and followed while on any trip.
- ii. Game expectations and standards apply even at away games.
- iii. Only **red/navy Liberty cheerleading** attire is to be worn while traveling for games, camp, or any other cheerleading activity.
- iv. When traveling by plane, business casual dress is expected when traveling TO the destination. Comfortable dress may be worn on the returning trip.
- v. Cheerleaders are expected to be respectful and responsible while traveling with the University.

e. ATTITUDE/TEAM COMMITMENT

- i. No cursing AT ALL.
- ii. Cheerleaders are expected to respect each other's space, belongings, and desire to meet goals and work hard.
- iii. Cheerleaders are expected to respect ANYONE in an authority/leadership position. Do not argue with authority. A warning will be given on the first occurrence, then dismissal from practice (which will then constitute missing a practice which means being suspended from the next game).
- iv. Cheerleaders have a responsibility to follow the rules set in the Liberty Way. All athletes have a responsibility to have a positive self-image, fully supporting LU and the cheerleading squad.
- v. Anything of questionable nature on Facebook will be dealt with
 1. Alcohol, provocative or inappropriate pictures, inappropriate language, or anything against the Liberty way is unacceptable.
 2. Facebook is monitored; the coach reserves the right to administer punishment to anyone who does not use good judgment with facebook.
 3. **DO NOT PUT ANYTHING QUESTIONABLE ON FACEBOOK.** If you don't know what is questionable, ask.
- vi. **By attending LU cheerleaders agree while on the team not to:**
 1. **Consume any alcoholic beverages**
 2. **Stay the night with someone of the opposite sex and/or have sexual relations with anyone**
 3. **Use any illegal drugs**
 4. **Sign out to someone's house then not stay there**
- vii. **If any of the above rules are broken or if any other policy in the Liberty Way is broken, discipline will be to the coach's discretion. A warning and appropriate discipline will be administered the first time. After the first time the athlete risks being dismissed from the cheerleading team.**

- viii. The coach maintains communication and a close relationship with the staff in the student conduct office; the coach reserves the right to administer punishment to anyone who gets in trouble with student conduct.
- ix. Captains and SAAC representatives have very critical positions and will be removed upon failure to perform these positions positively and upon failure to uphold the responsibilities properly.

f. **ACADEMICS**

- i. **GPA Requirements**
 - 1. Prior to freshman year: 1.8
 - 2. Prior to sophomore year: 1.9
 - 3. Prior to junior or senior year: 2.0
- ii. If athletes do not maintain a 2.3 GPA, study hall becomes a requirement to continue cheering: 6 hours per week for freshman, 4 hours per week for sophomores, juniors, or seniors.
- iii. There are tutors available for all athletes.
- iv. Cheerleaders are expected to make all appointments with professors or advisors **OUTSIDE** of practice times.
- v. Procrastination is unacceptable. Projects, assignments, and meetings will not be excused absences.
- vi. Grades are periodically checked.
- vii. All cheerleaders are expected to turn in copies of class schedules by the first week of class each semester.

g. **PRE-SEASON EXPECTATIONS**

- i. Cheerleaders may be expected to arrive early on-campus on a set date which may be before non-athlete students arrive.
- ii. Pre-season living costs are paid for by athletics.
- iii. Cheerleaders will attend a spirit camp to prepare for the year; the cost of this is also covered by athletics.
- iv. During the pre-season cheerleaders will be practicing more than normal hours to prepare.

h. **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

- i. It is critical that all athletes eat healthy foods and strive to maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- ii. Guys and all female bases must eat and lift properly to gain healthy weight necessary for stunts.
- iii. Flyers are expected to maintain exceptional fitness; it is expected that flyers return after every break at the weight they were prior to the break. This is a safety issue.
- iv. Cheerleaders are expected to maintain workouts during breaks.
- v. Foods that cheerleaders should refrain from:
 - 1. Fried food
 - 2. Candy/sweets
 - 3. Soda

i. MISCELLANEOUS

- i. Non-cheerleaders must get permission in advance to watch practice.
All practices are closed.
- ii. In the event a cheerleader is removed from the team, he/she must turn in all uniforms and anything else received from the athletic department within one week. Failure to do so will result in a charge to the students account.