



MALE CHEERLEADING

**BUILDING A COED
PROGRAM**

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What comes to your mind when you think of guy cheerleaders? If it's a bunch of boys dancing around in polyester skirts, your mental image needs a reality check. In actuality, male cheerleading means higher stunts and baskets and more extreme tumbling.

So maybe now you're thinking it might be nice to invite a few guys to join your squad and start working on a coed routine. Before you get ahead of yourself, here are a few tips about how to recruit guys for your new and improved coed squad.

FIND THE RIGHT GUYS

Before you start trying to recruit guys for your squad, think about where you'll need to look. It's probably best to try to recruit guys who have already been involved in a sport. That way, he'll understand the time and commitment it will take to be on the team. As much as you may favor the bigger guys (for stunting purposes), remember that smaller guys make for great tumblers, so don't automatically rule out a guy just because he looks too small. Consider the "red shirts" on the football team (if you're at the college level) or those players who dutifully hold down the bench on the basketball court. An even better option might be the guy who played a sport last year but isn't involved in a sport for the time being. Perhaps he plays basketball in the winter, but right now his sport isn't in season. Don't limit your search to football and basketball players, though. From the swim team to track to the wrestling team, you're bound to find some suitable guys for your squad.



GET THEM INTERESTED

After you consider all your options, approach the guys and invite them to practice. As silly as this may sound, try to leave the word "cheerleading" out of the conversation. Instead, try to say something like, "You should come watch one of our practices sometime – we think you'd be great at tumbling and stunting." Let them know that they don't need to stay long, and that if they hate it, they can leave at anytime. It also wouldn't hurt to throw in the fact that it's a great way to meet lots of girls.

Don't forget to emphasize competition. Since most guys are competitive by nature, they'll love the thought of taking home a first-place trophy. If your squad competes nationally, entice them with the trip to Disney World. It never hurts to let them know how much their hard work and dedication will eventually pay off.

KEEP THEM MOTIVATED

At practice, emphasize the stunting and tumbling aspects of the activity in addition to leading cheers. Get them involved in the crowd-leading aspect of enjoying the game from the sidelines. Adjust the motions in your cheers and sidelines to be guy-friendly (no hip movements and minimal arm motions). Give them megaphones and tell them you want them to yell the words of the cheers like there's no tomorrow, but you won't expect them to do the full motions to the cheers or dance with the girls at all.

It may take a few weeks (or months) of persistent recruiting, but eventually, the boys should begin to come around. Don't get discouraged if it's harder than you thought it would be, and remember that making such a major change in your program will take time. However, with a lot of ambition and a little luck, your coed squad should be up and running before you know it!