



SPRIT RAISING

CROWD INVOLVEMENT

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Do you ever feel like the crowd at the game would rather yell at you than yell with you? Sadly, many fans think pom-poms, mega phones and cheerleaders flying through the air are distractions from the game. After all, fans are there to watch the game, not the cheerleaders, but there are ways to get fans to appreciate you and understand what you're at there for: leading the crowd.

Getting fans to yell with you may be one of the biggest challenges as a cheerleader, but it's also your main purpose as a cheerleader. It's the reason you put on that uniform every Friday night. It's time to let students, teachers, and athletic teams know that you're not just at the game to look pretty on the sidelines, but you want to be there to make a difference in school spirit. Here are some tips to help you and your squad get fans on their feet!

GET FANS READY BEFORE THE GAME

Everyone loves music! If there's an upbeat song on the radio, it's almost impossible to ignore it! Playing music at a game can work the same way. People are already excited about watching their team play, and if you add a few spirit lifting tunes, they'll be out of their seats.

Make a CD full of upbeat, popular songs, and ask someone in charge if you can play it over the speaker system before the game. If your school has a marching band, make up a few short dance moves and words to yell in some of the songs. Get the band to play those songs before the game starts, grab a few people in the stands, and teach them the moves!

KNOW WHEN TO CHEER AND WHAT TO YELL

When your squad has talent, you want to show it off, but games are not always the place to do it. You may be on a squad that's full of elite stunts and pyramids that you're just dying to show the crowd, but you have to remember that you want fans yelling for the team, not your squad.

Stunts done in a cheer or sideline should be simple and effortless. When doing a crowd- leading cheer, you want to be in a stunt as if you are standing on the ground. There is no need to do a stunt more elite than an elevator or an extension. Remember, you will be able to lead the crowd better if you are comfortable in the stunt. You don't want the crowd focused on what stunt you are doing. Instead, you want them to focus on what you are yelling.

When you do stunts in a cheer, always incorporate signs, poms, and motions. A cheerleader flashing a sign on the ground will most likely be unnoticed, but if you put the sign up high, the crowd won't be able to ignore it!

If you can't wait until a performance to show the crowd your fabulous skills, wait until halftime or a timeout when there is no game action. You can throw up a few basket tosses, build some pyramids, and wow the crowd with your elite stunts. At this point, you won't be distracting to the game, and fans will enjoy watching your skills and be impressed with your talent!



KNOW WHEN TO CHEER AND WHAT TO YELL

There is nothing more frustrating to a player and fans when cheerleaders don't know what's going on in the game. Be sure to watch the game. Know if your team is on offense or defense, and do a cheer that goes with the game that fans will appreciate. For example, if the score is 14-7 with your team losing, it's down to the last few seconds, and your team has a fourth down on the 10 yard line, the crowd will be sure to join in for a short offense chant. (Tip: If you did not understand the football terms in that last sentence, you need to learn. If you are going to cheer for a sport, then you should know it!)

After you know what's going on in the game, and you are ready to start cheers, don't start them when your team needs concentration. Many basketball players will tell you that when they are trying to make a shot, they feel distracted when cheerleaders yell out cheers. Try not to start cheers when a player from your team is trying to shoot the ball. Instead, wait for the other team to try to score, then yell as loud as you please.

HAVE SHORT SIMPLE CHEERS

It's not necessary to tell the crowd a story with your cheers. If cheers are wordy, the crowd probably won't be able to understand you, and they won't be able to follow them. Stick with short cheers with easy words (for example: Go Big Blue, Of-fence, De-fence, Beat Those Bears, Green and White, etc.) You can easily add signs to these, and the crowd will catch on to them quickly.

Use more voice and smiles and less words and motions. When your cheers are short, you can think more about being loud and smiling, instead of remembering a ton of words and motions. As a matter of fact, several motions should not be put in a crowd leading cheer. The crowd isn't watching your motions; they are listening to your words.

Fans may not be joining in when the cheers start now, but there is no way they will ignore you if you follow these steps to great crowd involvement. Always watch the game, cheer hard, and get the crowd to yell with you. Don't forget, that's why you're there!