

In the early 1990s, cheerleading teams not associated with schools, whose main objective is competition, started to emerge. All-star cheerleading involves a squad of anywhere between 2-40+ females and/or males. The squad prepares year-round, but they only actually perform for 2 1/2 minutes in their competitions.

During those few minutes on the floor, a squad covers everything from stunting to tumbling to dancing. There is custom music for the entire routine and it is broken down into counts so the team members know how long stunts need to be held, when they are supposed to do their tumbling, the order the pyramid is assembled, and when specific dance moves are to be performed.

Competitive Cheerleading (also called "All-Star Cheerleading") involves a squad of anywhere between 2-40+ females and/or males that are completely dedicated to cheerleading. The squad prepares year-round, but they only actually perform for 2 1/2 minutes in their competitions. During those few minutes on the floor a squad covers everything from stunting to tumbling to dancing. There is custom music for the entire routine and it is broken down into counts so the team members know how long stunts need to be held, when they are supposed to do their tumbling, the order the pyramid is assembled, and when specific dance moves are to be performed.

There are dozens of different competitions per season. All-star cheerleading is a relatively young sport and does not have an official association that is in charge of events. Companies that run competitions include AmeriCheer, US Spirit, Universal Cheerleading Association (UCA), National Cheerleading Association (NCA, the very first), American Cheer Power, Cheerleaders of America (COA), World Spirit Federation (WSF), US All Star Federation (USASF), JAMfest Cheer and Dance, FCC (Fellowship of Christian Cheerleaders), US Spirit, and many more.

Evolving in all-male colleges in the late 19th and early 20th centuries purely as attempts to encourage crowds at their sporting competitions to cheer, the practice spread and became largely a female activity as time progressed. A significant factor was limited availability of female collegiate

sports. Organized cheerleading contests were formed; most high schools around the U.S.A. had formed cheerleading squads by the 1950's.

There have been several movies made with cheerleading as the central theme. These include:

Man of the House (2005)

Bring it On Again (2003)

Sugar & Spice (2001)

Bring It On (2000)

Cheerleader Camp (1987)

Cheerleaders Wild Weekend (1979)

Revenge of the Cheerleaders (1977)

The Swinging Cheerleaders (1974)

The Cheerleaders (1973)

The most common approach to a jump is the "prep" jump. On counts 1-2 arms are clasped, knees are together and bent. On 3-4, stand up on toes and raise arms in high V. Swing arms around in front and jump on 5-6, stand stationary and stand up on 7-8. Other approaches by cheerleading teams include power, banana, and double whip (actually two or more jumps.)

Spiriting is the use of hand motions and facial expressions, called "facials", to get the crowd into the routine and show judges that the team is excited about performing. They use these criteria to place cheerleaders within their divisions. Many competitions also award a grand champion. This award goes to the team that performed the best out of all divisions (achieved the highest score in the entire competition).