



SPIRIT RAISING

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# CHEERING FOR NON-TRADITIONAL SPORTS

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With the exception of all star cheerleaders, today's cheerleaders consider supporting their schools' athletic teams a top priority. And while it's great to be present at the more traditional sporting events such as football and basketball, if you're striving to be a true representative of your school, you shouldn't limit your cheering to just two sports.

A school's athletic department includes every team - football and basketball being the two obvious, but there are so many more. A few sports you may not think of when coming up with this season's cheers are baseball, soccer, hockey, swimming, and the list goes on.

"The University of Minnesota Hockey Team is legendary," states UM Cheer Coach Alissa Dubay, "and we feel that it's an honor to cheer for the reputable Golden Gopher Hockey Team. The program is well known for its well-recruited talent and enthusiastic fans. We look forward to every game and to cheering in our sold out arena."

Cheering for a sport like basketball is completely different than cheering for another sport like soccer. But different isn't always a bad thing. Most people appreciate a change of scenery, but there are some who prefer to stick to the same routine - for example, only cheerleading for the traditional sports, namely football and basketball.

No matter what, you must keep in mind that your role as a cheerleader is to support your school's athletic programs. You are part of an entire program, not just one team. Everyone brings their own unique skills to games and events, but you're all working together to promote every athletic team.

"It's definitely a different experience going from cheering at a football game, then switching gears to cheer at a volleyball game," Emily Lawrence, a University of Memphis cheerleader, expresses. "But it's nice to root for another sports team every once in a while. Our volleyball players really get pumped up when we're there, which makes us happy to be there. It's a little more laid back, and we always have a great time."

"We cheer for our volleyball, soccer, and swim teams along with football and basketball," says South Lafourche Cheer Coach Dana Gros. "If we aren't able to cheer on the sidelines, we move into the stands and keep the crowd excited about the game. Whatever sport we're cheering for, our focus is always to support our teams any way we can."

Differentiating your cheers and performance routines from one sport to the next can be somewhat challenging, but not something you can't master over time.

As a team, you should attend a few games or matches before making the decision to start cheering at them. This way, you can get a better understanding of how the game is played and know what cheers to call and when. Plus, if those players see your squad's interest in their games, they'll be more willing to give you respect and in turn attend your competitions or events.

When everyone at your school works together to promote school spirit, it can create a more unified atmosphere. And that's exactly the positive reaction you'll have at your school if you spread your cheer to more than just the traditional sports.

"I think cheerleaders should be seen at different sporting events throughout the year," says Emily. "The only way to keep school spirit alive is by supporting all teams, or at least as many as you can manage."

"Supporting all of our sports teams encourages school spirit and provides our fans with entertainment no matter what event they're attending," says Coach Dubay. "We must always remember that we are part of a larger group, which consists of the other cheer squads, the dance team, and our mascots. And it's important that all athletic teams feel worthy of our presence."

