

# OCCA REC TEAM HANDBOOK



**OCCA Rec Liaison**

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## **SECTION 1: QUALIFYING AS A REC TEAM**

1. Rec programs must provide proof of insurance annually to be eligible to compete at Oregon sanctioned events.
2. Rec programs are not allowed to cheer at any high school level athletic events per NFHS rule (General, Section 1, Article 2). Rec teams may only perform at half-time, before or after the game. Anyone cheering while the ball is in play must be a current member of the High School Spirit Group.
3. All teams in the rec division must compete in the non-sanctioned portion of the competition and must compete on a foam floor.
4. Rec teams are not allowed to perform on a spring-loaded floor.
5. Rec teams will follow the NFHS rules with the following exceptions:  
Basket tosses, sponge tosses, elevator tosses, or similar multi based tosses are not allowed.
6. At least one coach per rec program must be a CURRENT member of OCCA to compete or participate at any OCCA event.
7. Senior Rec athletes who are also on a OSAA high school team, are not allowed to compete at the same event. You may **not** compete twice in one day, at the same event, representing two programs.
8. All recreational teams must qualify through one of the criteria below:

### **Criteria #1**

Affiliated with and cheering for a school or community based athletic team (i.e., Pop Warner, area youth sports teams, middle school teams, etc.)

OR

### **Criteria #2**

Affiliated with a community recreational program and practicing in a community recreational facility such as YMCA or Boys and Girls Clubs and program is non-profit.

OR

### **Criteria #3**

Team members attend school in the same district **AND** the school directly feeds into the high school the recreational team is affiliated with.

OR

### **Criteria #4**

A **registered** non-profit community program such as a 501(c. Programs will be required to provide their EIN (Employer Identification Number.) A non-profit team does **not** simply mean coaches are not paid.

**If you do not meet any of the above OCCA rec criteria, you will be considered an all-star program and should refer to USASF guidelines.**

Mini Teams are teams that have members who are in the 2nd grade and under  
Youth Teams are teams that have members who are in the 5th grade and under  
Junior Teams are teams that have members who are in the 8th grade and under  
Senior Teams are teams that have members who are in the 12th grade and under

The oldest member of the team will set your division.

## SECTION 2: COACH QUALIFICATIONS/INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

### 1. Create Directorship

- Who is ultimately in charge?
- Make sure there is a clear difference between coach and director (*note: this can be the same person if needed and dependent on how you structure your program*)
  - **Director (or board):** Program management, financial responsibilities, competition registrations, equipment needs, scheduling practice space, ordering of gear, management of parents concerns, code of conduct enforcement, coordinating community involvement and appearances.
  - **Coach:** Focus on kids, team progression, responsible for supervision of athletes and communication with the director on any concerns.

### 2. Coach Qualifications

- Coaches are encouraged to be AACCA certified. This certification also comes with an individual insurance policy for those 21 and over that is highly recommended for rec coaches. Website: <https://aacca.org/>
- Coaches are encouraged to be up to date on OSAA requirements for high school coaches. This includes concussion in sports, heat illness prevention, spirit safety, and steroid training. Courses are found at: <http://www.osaa.org/spirit-safety>
- All coaches, volunteer or paid, should be certified.

### 3. Insurance

- All independent rec programs should have an insurance policy in place.
  - K and K Insurance (\$250-\$400 per team, per year)
  - Accord Liability Insurance
- School district or community center-based programs would most likely be insured through the school. You will need to contact the appropriate party to find out more information.

## 3. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY/FUNDRAISING

### 1. Program is *independent* from a school district:

- Set up a business checking account
- Set up Venmo, PayPal, PO Box, keep it simple.
- Have a system of checks and balances in place.
- Appoint a treasurer
- Establish a monthly reporting system/invoicing to parents

### 2. School District Finances:

- Contact the bookkeeper to ensure proper financial steps are followed.
- Contact the high school coach to ensure clear communication on all finances.

### 3. Annual Budget:

- Create a clear annual budget for all participants and share with the family before you select athletes/open programs for signups. *Know your community demographic and set your budget accordingly.*

- Budget to include: *(please note, you do not have to budget for everything below just be sure to include everything you **plan** to order)*
  - Uniform costs (skirt, top)
  - Poms
  - Shoes
  - Camp Fees
  - Camp Clothing/Practice Gear/Team Clothing
  - Accessories (bows, makeup, winter weather gear, bags, briefs)
  - Warm-ups
  - Equipment Charges (mat fee, megaphones, signs, flags, etc)
  - Program Registration Fee (if any)
  - Competition Expenses (choreographer, music, registration fees)
  - Coaches Fee or Facility Use Fees (some districts may have a “pay to play” fee)
  - Include a contingency for additional costs:
    - Team pictures
    - Team dinner/parties
    - Unpaid account balances
    - Scholarship opportunities

#### 4. Fundraising/Saving Tips:

- Create Fundraising opportunities for all athletes if necessary.
  - Ideas:
    - Local Business Sponsorships
    - Car Washes
    - Bottle Drives.
    - Cookie Dough Sales
- Set a tracking system with the treasurer for all fundraising activities. All to program or individual success? Be sure to communicate with parents clearly and openly regarding earned funds.
- Typical programs can range between \$50-\$1400 per year (depending on community)
- Be sensitive (if needed) to budget expectations. Demographics are different. Be sure you are setting up your program to be financially successful.
- Shop around for the best deals prior to publishing your budget. Also compare prices!
- Reuse your uniforms if possible or offer the option to sell uniforms to the following years’ teams.

## 5. **Taxes**

- Depending on how your program is structured, you may be required to file taxes. Please consult with a Certified Public Accountant.

## 6. **Non-Profit Status**

- Teams who are setting up a non-profit program are encouraged to consult a lawyer and/or certified accountant.
- Teams must officially register as a non-profit with the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) and will be required to show proof prior to competing.
- For more specific information on beginning a non-profit in Oregon: [Click Here](#)

## **SECTION 4: SEASON SCHEDULE**

*\*Please note: the below is only an example of a season schedule. You may create your schedule based on your own program timing and needs.*

### 1. **March/April**

- Hire coaching staff
- Appoint director or board
- Set Registration deadlines
- Begin budget building
- Attend annual OCCA Coaches Conference
- Secure insurance for upcoming year

### 2. **May**

- Registration (include financial commitment and schedule commitment)
- Secure choreographer (if competing)
- Register for camp (if attending)
- Hold Parent meetings after registration is complete and collect deposits for uniforms.

### 3. **June**

- Uniform Fittings (recommend paying for the order at time of fitting)
- Secure facility contracts

### 4. **August**

- Camp
- Monthly Tuition begins – Collect funds
- Handout official game schedule once set with youth football program
- Summer practice schedule
- All coaches should be certified by first practice date

### 5. **September**

- Football season – Games on Saturdays
- Regular season practice schedule begins
- Tumbling options may begin (not required but may be offered as part of tuition)

### 6. **October**

- Choreography (if competing)
- Order music (cheer sounds, unleash the beats, or pay thru choreographer)
- All music must be licensed and purchased through any of the music providers listed here: <http://www.usasf.net/safety/>
- Update competition schedule

#### 7. **November**

- Send all competition registrations
- Facility use updates
- Be sure to break for the holidays

#### 8. **December/January/February**

- Competition season in full swing

### **SECTION 5: CHEERLEADING SAFETY/RULES GUIDELINES**

#### 1. **NFHS Rules**

- All Rec Teams in Oregon must follow NFHS rules
- Rule books are found online at: [www.nfhslearn.org](http://www.nfhslearn.org). You may download to your phone/computer or order a hard copy.
- Questions regarding NFHS Rules should be directed to: Haley Thomas at [orcheertech@outlook.com](mailto:orcheertech@outlook.com)

#### 2. **NFHS Rules Exceptions for Rec Teams**

- Basket tosses, sponge, elevator toss, or similar multi based tosses are **NOT ALLOWED.**
- Total number of twists in a dismount are limited to one. Exception: Side facing stunts (arabesques, scorps, etc) may add one ¼ twist for a total of no more than 1 ¼ twists.

### **SECTION 6: PROGRAM SET UP/ PRACTICE SPACE/RECRUITMENT TIPS**

#### 1. **Name your program!**

- File with the State at: [www.filinginoregon.com](http://www.filinginoregon.com)

#### 2. **Limited Liability Company**

- Be sure to consult with a Certified Public Accountant

#### 3. **School District or Community Based Group**

- Contact a school district or community center to find out if you can offer a rec program.
  - This will require a meeting with the administrative staff or the community-based program equivalent.
- Be sure to have a clear program plan to present.
- Topics to Discuss:
  - Insurance requirements
  - Financial Processes
  - Salary for coaching staff
  - “Pay to play” fees or registration fees

- Practice Space
- Program Responsibility (school district or program directors?)

#### 4. **Financial Responsibility**

- **See Section 3 for more information**

#### 5. **Practice Space/Shared Space**

- If you are sharing space with your area high school team, you are **required** to have a “shared facility form” on file with the high school athletic director. This is an OSAA Requirement. The form can be found at the end of this handbook and must be completed annually.
- High school coaches are NOT ALLOWED to work with your rec team athletes while simultaneously working with the high school athletes. This will begin the four year eligibility of the rec team athlete. If you must share space at the same time/same venue, be sure to keep the two teams separate.

#### 6. **Practice Space Suggestions**

- School, church, community centers, outside
- Be sure to factor in equipment needs. Borrow mats? Fundraise for mats?

#### 7. **Recruitment Tips**

- Set foundation and vision for your program. Earn the trust of the parents and community!
- Build a reputable and certified coaching staff
- Consider lower costs, shorter time commitments, and flexibility in the first years
- Social Media advertising
- Community advertising
- Partner with the youth football program or affiliated schools
- Word of mouth is the most important. Building a solid program will continue to bring athletes each year
- Offer only one tryout or registration window. This will help to make a seamless transition from football to competition season.

## **SECTION 7: COMPETITION**

**ALL** rec programs who plan to compete or participate in **ANY OCCA or OSAA event** must complete the information at the end of this handbook annually. Any programs NOT submitting the required form will NOT be allowed to compete or participate in any OCCA or OSAA event. At least one coach from the rec program must be a CURRENT member of OCCA to compete at any OCCA event.

#### 1. **Divisions Offered**

- *SEE SECTION 1*
- Competition Directors will list divisions offered on registration forms

#### 2. **Events**

- All OSAA/OCCA event information is found at: [www.osaa.org](http://www.osaa.org)
- OCCA’s Oregon Cheer Championships is the largest rec team event and a great way to end the year!

#### 3. **Routine Choreography/Score Sheets**

- All score sheets are available at: [www.occa.net](http://www.occa.net)

- o Be sure to study the rules of the game prior to choreographing your routine
- o Attend performance judge trainings to gain knowledge
- o Ask for advice from other youth coaches in Oregon cheer community
- o Ask the Quality Control Judge questions at events

#### 4. Choreographers

- For a list of recommended choreographers, please email: [occageneral@gmail.com](mailto:occageneral@gmail.com)
- Reach out to former high school cheerleaders or coaches for assistance
- Hire out for one section or full routine
- Ultimately the responsibility falls on the coach to ensure all elements are met and to know the score sheet. Choreographers SHOULD be educated in this area, but this is not always the case.

#### 5. Building a routine

- Components of a Routine
  - o Opening
  - o Signs and/or poms
  - o Cheer
  - o Dance
  - o Stunts
  - o Pyramid
  - o Ending
- Routine Length/Time Limit: 2:30
- Skills to Include
  - o Assess your skills, perform what you have perfected but leave room to grow
  - o Think of the routine in chunks by using the score sheet as your guide. Make a check off list of all required elements.
  - o Perfect the tumbling basics
  - o Study the scoring rubrics. The more you read over the rubrics, the more comfortable you will become
- Music
  - o All music must be licensed and purchased through any of the music providers listed here: <http://www.usasf.net/safety/>

#### 6. Competition Practice Plan/What to expect at events

- Practice – Ready to Perform!
  - o Break down sections at practice.
  - o Mix it up and do not spend an entire practice on stunting.
  - o Practice like you will perform.
  - o Practice the warm-up process to mimic the events.
  - o Review all judges' comments and scores and make notes on where to improve.
  - o Ask for feedback from assistant coaches or other coaches.
  - o Keep feedback positive and stay focused and relaxed around your athletes.
- What to expect at events?
  - o Arrive no more than one hour before your team performs unless you want to watch.
  - o When you receive the performance order, count about 5 minutes per routine to figure out approx. when you will perform. Share this information with parents/fans.
  - o Keep your athletes together and their belongings. Space is usually limited.
  - o Expect a 9-panel cheer floor for the performance area.



- o A spring floor will **not** be available at OCCA/OSAA events.
- o Once you arrive in the main performance area, establish where the warm-up area is located, where the music is played and where the Quality Control station is located. Share this information with your assistants.
- o Stretch and warm-up OFF the mat.
- o Be courteous to those around you and be aware of the performance schedule. A team who is performing at #15 should not be on the warmup mat before team #10.
- o Be efficient once you take the warm-up mat. Only use the mat for necessary skills. Running full out 5 times is not efficient and not being courteous to those around you.
- o Stay seated in designated team seating.
- o Parents/Fans should remain in the spectator section for the duration of the event.
- o Music – Be sure to have designated someone to play your music that knows your routine. Be sure it is in airplane mode, volume turned all the way up, phone case OFF, and you have the necessary dongle if needed. It is the responsibility of the coach (or designated music person) to play the music. If your music is not playing, it is the responsibility of the **COACH** to avoid time deductions and to begin counting when appropriate.
- o Competition Terms
  - **“Up Next”**: Team is taking the floor
  - **“On Deck”**: Team immediately following the team on the floor
  - **“In the Hole”**: Team is waiting to be on deck
  - **Quality Control**: Your challenge form will be available approx. 15 minutes following your performance. The form will list your **DIFFICULTY** scores only and should you feel it is incorrect, you may challenge for the revised score. This is also an opportunity to ask questions regarding scoring rubrics and safety violations.
  - **Spectator Entrance**: All persons should enter through this entrance apart from athletes and coaches.
  - **Team Entrance**: Only coaches and athletes should enter through this entrance
  - **Cheer Grams**: Some events offer cheer grams. Parents/Fans can purchase and create an encouraging message to their team or specific athlete to be read prior to performing.

## 7. Etiquette/Tips

- o Give yourself plenty of time for travel and parking.
- o HAVE FUN and stay positive throughout the day. Go over positive feedback only on competition day.
- o Provide all complete and clear event information as soon as you receive it to parents/fans. (time, location, parking info, admission price, concessions, etc)
- o Provide information sheets during the practice before with what to pack, wear, meeting time, etc.
- o Be sure all parents/fans know they represent your program and encourage them to behave in a manner that is positive and respectful to all other teams, coaches, event personnel, judges, and school officials.
- o Have a discussion with all your athletes and coaches about behavior expectations, uniform expectations, and sportsmanship before EVERY event.

## **SECTION 8: PROGRAM HANDBOOK**

### **1. Set Program Expectations**

- Create a team handbook. May include:
  - Financial Responsibility (be upfront, no hidden costs/fees)
  - Program Rules (missing practice or games, tardiness, discipline, etc.)
  - Behavior Expectations from athletes and parents
  - Social Media expectations
  - Time Commitment/Schedule
  - Program mission/vision
  - Coach/Director/Board contact information
  - Policies may include:
    - What happens if an athlete quits the team?
    - Scholarship opportunities
    - Fundraising policies
    - Accounting (how payments should be made, invoices, etc)
    - Travel to games or events

### **2. Resources**

- Reach out to local coaches (or OCCA) for a copy of a current handbook to use as a starting point.

## **SECTION 9: WHO TO CONTACT**

If you have questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to reach out with questions. We are more than happy to help you!

**General Questions and Competition Related Questions:** Megan Day, OCCA Rec Liaison, [RecLiaison@occa.net](mailto:RecLiaison@occa.net)

**General Questions:** Sarah Devereaux, OCCA President, [President@occa.net](mailto:President@occa.net)

**Safety Questions/Stunt Legality:** Haley Thomas, OAOA Spirit Commissioner/OSAA Spirit Rules Interpreter, [cheerleading/sri@osaa.org](mailto:cheerleading/sri@osaa.org)

To become an OCCA Member, please complete the form listed on our website. The form/link can be found at [WWW.OCCA.NET](http://WWW.OCCA.NET). Be sure to follow all OCCA Social Media and request to join the OCCA Rec Team Group Page.

## **SECTION 10: FORMS**

1. Forms are located at [WWW.OCCA.NET](http://WWW.OCCA.NET):

- Shared Space Facility Usage – Must be completed annually for any rec team who practices at a high school facility.
- OCCA Rec Team Information Form – Must be completed before you compete or participate in any OCCA/OSAA Event.

- Form links are also available at [WWW.OCCA.NET](http://WWW.OCCA.NET) under Rec Programs

## **SECTION 11: FAQ's**

### **1. Is OCCA the governing body for all rec teams?**

*No, OCCA is not a governing body. OCCA is a coaches association and provides support to rec team coaches and athletes. OCCA Members are required to follow the OCCA Code of Conduct. Any repeat violations of the Code of Conduct may result in revocation of membership.*

### **2. Are Rec Teams required to follow the OSAA Moratorium Week policy?**

*No, technically rec teams are not governed by OSAA. However, if you plan to use a high school facility for your practice during Moratorium Week, you will need to find an alternate arrangement. No practices are allowed at any high school facility (including outdoor areas during this time). If your coaches are also high school coaches, they can still attend rec practice if no high school athletes are present. Most Rec Teams take this week off to avoid confusion and potential coach conflicts.*

### **3. Why is OCCA requiring proof of insurance and information to compete or participate in events?**

*To be in line with national standards as many of the Varsity Brand events require this information to participate. This is to ensure all Rec Teams are following and meeting the criteria and to protect OCCA from any potential liability at our One Day Clinics and Events. You may choose to not comply with the new policy, but your team will not be allowed to compete at OSAA/OCCA events or participate in OCCA One Day Clinics. As a coach, you assume all liability for your team.*

### **3. Are Rec Teams allowed to throw basket tosses?**

*All rec teams at all levels, basket tosses, sponge, elevator toss, or similar multi based tosses are **NOT ALLOWED***

### **4. Are Rec Teams allowed to have a sideline and competition team?**

*Yes, if the OCCA Rec Team Information Form is complete and you meet one of the required criteria.*

### **5. Is the Rec Team allowed to practice at the same time as the high school team?**

*Yes, the Shared Facility Request form must be completed and on file with the athletic department and both teams must be practicing separately. Share the space but practices must be separate.*

### **6. Do Rec Teams compete at the OSAA State Cheerleading Championships?**

*No, the OSAA State Cheerleading Championships are for high school varsity teams only. Rec Teams are encouraged to end their year at the OCCA Cheerleading Championships in February. This is the main Oregon event for all Rec Teams!*

**7. Are Rec Teams required to compete at two events prior to the OCCA Cheerleading Championships?**

*No, this requirement is for high school varsity teams to qualify for the OSAA State Cheerleading Championships. Rec Teams may compete as little or as much as they would like to. No requirements. At least one coach per rec program must be a CURRENT member of OCCA to compete at any OCCA events.*

**8. Are senior rec team athletes eligible to compete at OCCA All-State?**

*No, OCCA All-State is open to high school varsity level athletes only.*

**9. I have read through the handbook, but I want to consult with someone. Who do I contact?**

*We understand this is a lot of information. We are here to help you with the process and this handbook is meant to be a guide for suggestions, advice, and direction. Please feel free to contact the OCCA Rec Liaison, Megan Day at [RecLiaison@occa.net](mailto:RecLiaison@occa.net). Megan is more than happy to help you or to connect you with someone in your area.*

