



CHEERLEADING TRYOUTS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As the excitement of tryout season approaches, we often receive questions from new cheer families as well as experienced athletes who are new to our gym or advancing to a new level. We've compiled the most frequently asked questions here.

What happens at a tryout?

At tryouts, Athletes will be asked to jump, stunt, and tumble. While the coaches will be carefully evaluating their skills, they will also be encouraging the athletes to relax and have fun. No prior experience is necessary for our entry level teams, and everyone will be placed on a team, but not everyone will make an all-star team (some athletes may be recommended for prep or rec).

Tryouts provide athletes with an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and to be evaluated by our certified coaches who will then group them into teams of athletes with similar abilities according to the Cheer Canada & International All-Star Federation age grid. Coaches and management consider a wide array of factors when placing athletes on teams. ***We look for athletes who are well-rounded and can fulfill all or most requirements at the level of the team they are chosen for.*** Additional factors considered include the athlete's position, maturity, attendance history, coachability, leadership, and performance skills.

It is common to have younger athletes tumbling at a higher level than they can stunt. While all aspects of an athlete's skillset will be considered in the placement process, more often than not, an athlete will be placed on a team based on their *stunting level* ahead of their tumbling level. Safety is always a critical factor in selecting athletes for teams.

Is there anything we should consider before we attend a tryout?

We ask that anyone trying out for an all star or prep team carefully considers the commitment required. **Attendance at all practices is mandatory.** We respectfully request that families do not take holidays during the months of September through mid-April, with the exception of Christmas break and Spring Break. We require that our

athletes make Perfect Storm Athletics their first non-school priority. If you predict ongoing conflicts, please do not join a cheerleading team. Please note that absence (for any reason) may result in changes to your role and/or position in the routine and may result in an athlete not participating in one or more competitions.

All-star cheerleading is also a big financial commitment. Our fees will all be outlined in detail in our program handbook that will be released in late March or early April. Please ensure that you read and understand the payment schedule and can commit to all payments on their due dates. We have a “no pay, no play” policy in place.

What is the difference between a prep and an all-star team?

A prep team is simply a division within all star cheerleading. We offer tiny, mini, youth, and junior level 1 prep teams. The prep teams train a slightly shorter routine and compete at 1-day events within their own city, or as far away as Red Deer. It's the perfect way to perfect basic skills in a competitive environment. Prep teams practice once a week September through mid-April, have a lower fee investment, and a different uniform than our all star teams. All star teams are offered for tiny, mini, youth, junior, senior, and open age divisions with levels ranging from 1 to 7. We offer both tumbling and “all building” (non-tumbling) all-star teams. (All building divisions start at U16 junior age). All-star teams practice twice per week (once per week in the summer) and train June through mid-April. All star teams travel a bit further for competitions and teams for youth and up have a special travel competition.

My child is mature or tall for their age. Should we just come to the older age group tryouts?

No, please attend your age-appropriate tryout. Your athlete will still be considered for older teams if there is a need there. Some athletes on the upper edge of the age grid do prefer to train on an older team, and that preference can be made known to us at tryouts, via email, or by phone. That being said, it's important for athletes to experience being both the youngest and the oldest on a team throughout their years as an athlete.

Should I expect my child to “move up” one level every season?

Absolutely not. *Most athletes will spend **multiple seasons** at a level before having the skills to advance to the next level.* Sometimes an athlete will not advance beyond level one, or they may plateau at a particular level. Other times an athlete may advance in their tumbling, but not their stunting, and therefore will need to stay at a level to continue to build that aspect of their skillset & strength. All of this is ok! Perfect Storm strives to make opportunities available to all levels in our all star program. We separate travel trips by age division, not by level, other than Worlds or speciality travel teams. We value all

teams, all levels, and love that everyone can belong to a team at the gym where they will be most successful.

What level should I try out for?

Athletes new to all-star (coming from rec or prep) should try out for a level 1 team unless they have received a different recommendation from a coach. Athletes coming from gymnastics can try out based on their tumbling skills, but need to remember that tumbling is a small part of cheerleading and more often than not, an athlete will be placed on a team based on their stunting level ahead of their tumbling level. Current Perfect Storm athletes will be given a recommendation by their coach at the end of the season and we strongly recommend that you follow this advice. Do not attend a tryout hoping or expecting to be the exception. Athletes should attend the tryout that best fits their stunting and tumbling skill set.

Are parents allowed to watch tryouts?

Yes and no. All parents and caregivers are welcome to attend Tiny (age 5 & 6) and Mini (age 7 & 8) tryouts. However, as space in the viewing area is limited, we encourage returning cheer parents to give first-timers the priority. Youth, Junior, Senior, Open and Worlds tryouts will be closed to returning parents.

How can I best support my athlete going into tryouts?

We strongly encourage parents to help manage their athlete's expectations before tryouts begin. In reviewing the options available for her/his age and skill level, try to avoid placing pressure on your athlete to make a particular team, and instead focus on what they really love about cheerleading, whether it's the physical challenge, the friendships, the thrill of competition, or all of the above. Try to reassure your athlete that no matter what team they are on, they will always have your support.

How are the decisions made?

After tryouts our coaches go through a deliberation process. This is an opportunity for us to go through each athlete's skill assessment. From there we create teams based on age and skill, taking all areas of the score sheet into consideration. We will look at stunting & tumbling skills, ability to pick up choreography, maturity and mental fortitude. We also take past experience into account. Our goal is to place athletes on a team where they will be most successful.

When and how will we find out the results?

We plan to email results out within 48 hours of the last tryout date of that age group/level. If your athlete is being asked to come to a different tryout, we will contact you as soon as possible.

What if an athlete disagrees with her/his placement?

While we are confident that every single one of our teams is set up for success, we do understand that some athletes will feel disappointed. We are sensitive to the pressures some athletes place upon themselves. For this reason, we call some athletes to talk about their placement and provide some background on our decision. Our team decisions are final, and we ask parents and athletes alike to trust our judgment. We put a lot of thought into the tryouts process, and truly have the best interests of every athlete at heart.