



NEW COACH GUIDEBOOK



USA Federation for Sport Cheering

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Everything You Need to Know About STUNT

1. What is STUNT?

STUNT is a new competitive team sport that has derived from traditional cheerleading. STUNT removes the crowd-leading and focuses on the technical and athletic components of cheer, which include partner stunts, pyramids, basket tosses, jumps and tumbling skills. Each contest will consist of four quarters of play (Partner Stunts, Pyramids & Tosses, Group Jumps & Tumbling, and Team Performance) with a halftime in between the second and third quarters. STUNT was developed by USA Cheer with collaboration from groups of Title IX experts as well as known coaches and experts in the All-Star and traditional cheerleading community. USA Cheer is the national governing body for sport cheering in the United States.

2. How is STUNT different from traditional cheer?

In traditional cheerleading, teams are primarily focused on crowd leadership at other sports' athletic contests. When traditional cheerleading teams engage in competition, it is by combining the unique skills of crowd-leading. These routines include actual game cheers and chants as well as the use of signs and include "crowd leadership" and other entertainment categories in their scoring. The rules governing these skills take into account that they will be performing during games as well as in competition settings. For example, there are rules for traditional cheerleading that restricts what skills can be performed at basketball games. Being that there are a wide range of traditional cheerleading styles and ability levels, the rules may change from one competition to another.

In STUNT, the crowd leading component is removed and teams are judged on the technical elements of cheerleading. There is one set of rules and one scoring system that is followed at every game. Teams compete in a head to head format and judges are in place to evaluate the execution of the predetermined routines and the technique used when performing different skill elements. The scoring and ranking is objective, immediate, and easy to follow.

3. How will STUNT meet the Office for Civil Rights standards of a sport to qualify for Title IX purposes?

To determine whether a team is engaging in a varsity sport, the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has developed a detailed set of guidelines to determine on a case-by-case basis if the activity in question meets the criteria for sport. Specifically, it considers several factors related to an activity's structure, administration, team preparation, and competition.

Because there is a presumption by OCR that traditional cheerleading is not considered a sport for Title IX purposes, USA Cheer has developed STUNT as a separate discipline from cheer that is designed specifically in accordance with the OCR's guidelines for sport. For example, the exclusive purpose of the STUNT team is competition, not performance; as an intercollegiate sport it will have a fully developed regular season and post season competition schedule; it is governed and regulated by an established national governing body—USA Cheer. USA Cheer is officially recognized by cheer's international governing body, the International Cheer Union, which currently encompasses 101 member National Federations. USA Cheer is working closely with legal and Title IX experts to ensure that STUNT is created under the proper guidelines so that it can develop into a sport that qualifies for Title IX purposes. Because of the sensitivity to the entire issue of cheerleading as a sport, USA Cheer's development of STUNT with this clear differentiation will help expedite the approval process with OCR.

4. What regulations/obligations will arise out of STUNT being recognized (as an NCAA Emerging Sport)?

As an NCAA Emerging Sport, STUNT teams will be subject to NCAA rules and regulations similar to other intercollegiate varsity sports. The status and benefits of an NCAA varsity program are accompanied by an array of responsibilities that must be met by the institution, the team, the coaches and the student-athletes. For instance, depending upon off-season or playing season, the NCAA delegates a specific limit on hours of practice and strength and conditioning time. The elements of academic study hall, strength and conditioning, daily practices, structured NCAA competition and academic eligibility standards are among just a few of the elements involved in the transition of the team structure. These changes, while demanding, will have positive effects on the program including increased visibility, professional coaching and administration, and inclusion in athletic departmental policy and planning.

5. Will women who participate on traditional cheerleading squads be allowed to participate on STUNT teams once STUNT is an emerging sport?

As an emerging sport, like other varsity programs, STUNT must have its own squad that is distinct from the cheerleading program. Whether or not STUNT athletes are allowed to participate in other sports or student activities is dependent upon the rules of that particular institution. Some institutions leave the participation of student-athletes in other activities or sports up to the discretion of each coach, or the athletic department as a whole. If the athletic program permits athletes in other sports, like the women's volleyball, to participate in other sports, like track and field, or activities, like cheerleading, the rules governing the STUNT squad would be no different.

6. What is the process for STUNT to become an NCAA Emerging Sport?

An emerging sport is a sport recognized by the NCAA that is intended to provide additional athletics opportunities to female student-athletes. In order to petition the NCAA to become an emerging sport, there are certain minimum standards:

- The activity meets OCR's definition of a sport for Title IX
- There must be 20 or more varsity teams and/or competitive club teams that currently exist on college campuses in that sport.
- Other data exists that demonstrates support for the sport. For example:
 - Collegiate recreation and intramural sponsorship.
 - High-school sport sponsorship.
 - Non-scholastic competitive programs.
 - Association and organization support.
 - U.S. Olympic Committee support
 - Conference interest in sports sponsorship.
 - Coaches Association support.
 - Professional sports support.

After its first season of competition, STUNT met the minimum criteria for emerging sport and formally submitted a proposal to the NCAA's Committee on Women's Athletics (CWA) for consideration. STUNT received a favorable response from the CWA with request for additional information and further clarification on the sport. USA Cheer is continuing to work with the CWA to keep them updated on the growth and development of STUNT and to refine the proposal for further consideration.

Breaking Down the Routines

Routines will be released at the start of the season in the form of 8-count sheets and videos. Once you receive the pre-choreographed routines, your job as a coach begins! The more prepared you are, the more successful the start of your STUNT season will be.

The first thing that helps tremendously is to go through each routine video with the 8-count sheet that is associated with it. Going one 8-count at a time, add notes to your count sheet about specific motions and movements that may not be noted. This will help tremendously when teaching routines. Here is an example of a Jump and Tumble routine:

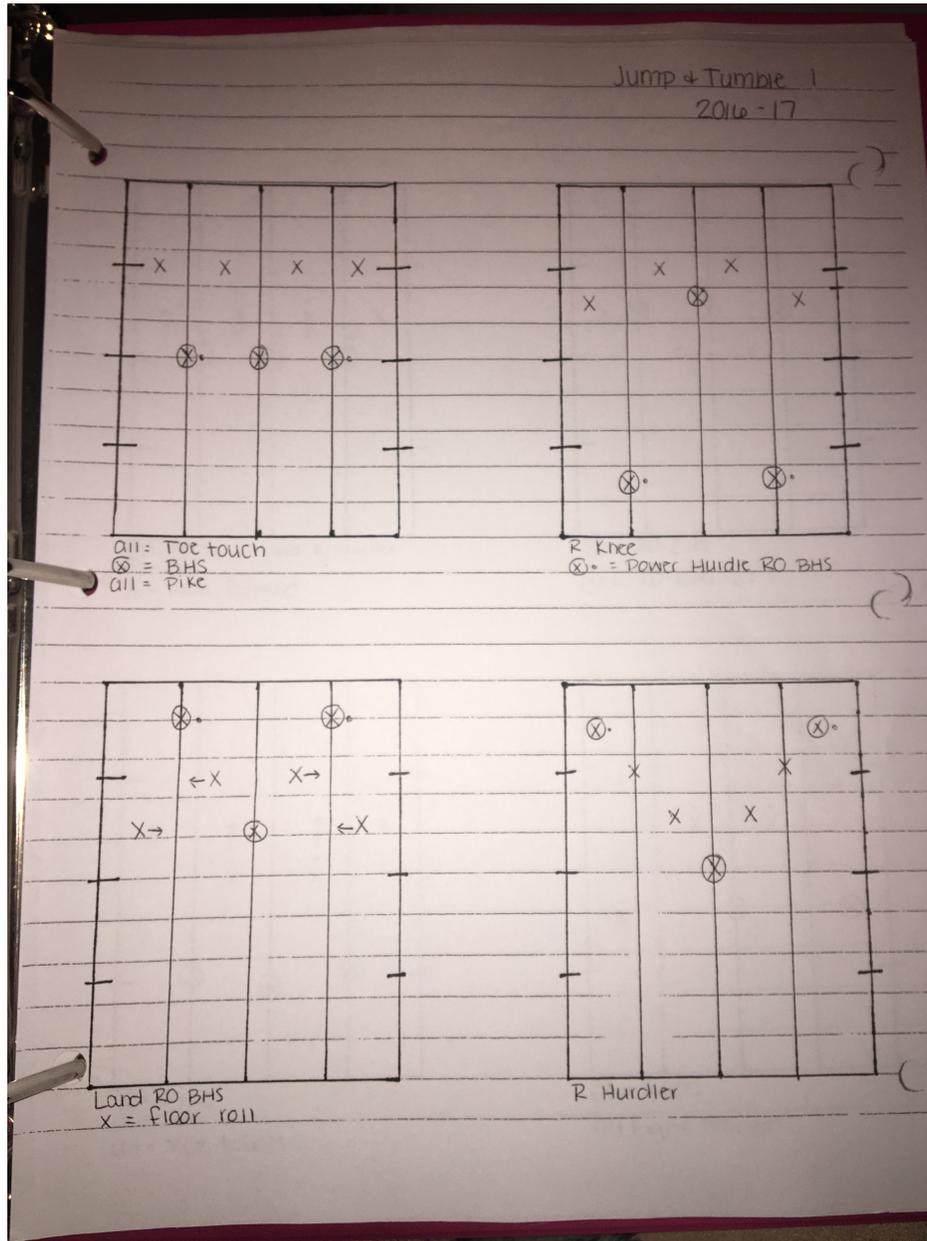
2017 College STUNT- Jumps and Tumbling- Level 1									
8-Count	Skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1						Clap		High V	
2	TT	Swing	HIT TT	Land		Hold		Front Row: Stands	
3	3 BHS			Front Row: Sit for BHS	Hands	Front Row: Land		Back Row: Stands Hold Nugget Head down	
4		Everyone Stands		Turn to Side		Clap		Hit V	
5	Pike	Swing	HIT Pike	Land Fist at knees Head down		Turn to Front		Outside 4: Walk R Step	L Step
6	2 RO BHS	R Step	Back 2 of 4: Feet together Outside 2	Back 2 of 4: Drop to Knee and Hit Hips				Front 2 of 4: Reach for Power Hurdle RO BHS	
7		RO Hands	feet	BHS	Land	Hold	Fists @ knee Head down		
8		Everyone Stands		All but 2 RO BHS and Center: Seat Step R Roll	Center Step L	2 RO BHS and Center: Stop Walking feet together		Seat Rolls Stand	
9	Front Hurdler	Clap to the Side R		High V		Swing	Hit Front Hurdler R	Land on R angle	
End		Pop Out to Front and Hit Punch Motion (R)							

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It is also useful to make copies of these sheets for your athletes to have with the notes. They can help with consistency later in the season.

Once you have gone through all of the routine videos and made notes on the 8-count sheets, the next step is to create formations. The videos are taped so that you can see the hash marks and lines. Only the first formation is judged, but spacing matters throughout the entire routine. Here is an example of the formations for the above routine:



It's also beneficial to write in what skills are performed in each formation so that you can be aware when assigning athletes later on.

Selecting your STUNT team

Selecting your team will vary depending on what the athletic department at your school does to obtain athletes. Most likely you will be recruiting athletes for your program throughout the year and possibly having a tryout as well.

When recruiting STUNT athletes, there are specific positions that you want to look for. These include tumblers, jumpers, bases, backspots, top level flyers, and middle level flyers. Often times in STUNT, athletes will need to be versatile and step out of their normal position. Therefore, athletes who can do multiple roles can be very valuable, especially in pyramids!

For partner stunt routines, you want athletes with strong technique in their stunting. Usually your best elite stunters will also serve as your best basic stunters due to mastery of technique. STUNT requires athletes to often perform skills with techniques different from what they've learned in the past. For this reason, it's important to make sure that partner stunt athletes are able to adjust and work with varying teammates and grips.

For pyramid and toss routines, there are many requirements for positions. In addition to needing trick flyers and strong basket throwers, you will also need stable shoulder stands, middle layers, and top girls. Many times, you will have to double-block an athlete to make a routine work. For example, a trick basket flyer may have to base a pyramid and then fly a basket. Versatility in multiple roles will allow these routines to become a strength for your team.

In jumps and tumbling, technique is key! Athletes must be able to execute jumps and gymnastic skills as close to perfection as possible. These routines are the most individually focused, so it is also important that these athletes can handle the pressure of the round. Sometimes, routines will be similar, so spreading the wealth in these routines will greatly help your athlete's ability to remember counts and perform at a high level.

Assigning Routines

Once you have selected a team and outline the routines, the next step is to assign out the routines. Before you start putting people into positions, it can be very valuable to do skill evaluations so that you have a document of who is best at what. The areas that can be beneficial to assess are:

<u>JUMPS</u>	<u>TUMBLING</u>	<u>BASKETS</u>
Toe-Touch	Backhandspring	Toe-Touch
Right Herkie	Back Tuck	Pike
Left Herkie	RO BHS	Kick Single
Pike	Standing BHS BT	Back Tuck
Right Hurdler	RO BT	Tuck X-out
Left Hurdler	RO BHS BT	Pike Open
Double Toe-Touch	RO BHS Layout	Arabian
Hurdler-Toe Combo	RO BHS Full	Layout Full
Pike-Hurdler-Toe	BHS BHS Full	Layout Double Full

In addition to documenting individual skills, it's also helpful to attempt pieces of pyramids to find out which athletes are best in certain positions. Pyramids will often take the most time to master and work-out which athletes are best suited to routines.

Once you feel like you have a good sense for your teams' strengths, you can start assigning routines. It can be helpful to use a grid to track who is in what routines. While you want to utilize your best athletes as much as possible, it's also important to not overload an athlete with too many routines. Here is an example of a routine grid:

Aly		2		4		6				4	5	6		1		3		5			x	x	x	x	x	x	9
Brit	1							1	2	3		6										x	x	x		x	5
CJ			3		5			1							2							x	x	x		x	4

By laying out all athletes and routines in a grid, you can easily see how many routines each girl is in and make changes accordingly. It's also helpful to not have too many athletes in every routine within a level so that they do over-tire in the fourth quarter.

Sample Practice Plans

Date: January 29, 2015

Time: 4:00-6:30pm

Absent: Aly (lab until 4:30pm)

4:00pm: Team Warm-up/Individual Stretch

4:20pm: Jumps

- 20 kicks on each leg
- 5 of each jump in mirror

4:40pm- Tumble Lines

- Standing tumbling to STUNT counts
- Runs with power hurdles

5:00pm- Mark all STUNT routines

- Focus on clean transitions

5:15pm- Partner Stunt Routines 1 and 6

- Work on sync of ripple in PS1
- Chunk PS6
- Run full out

5:30pm- Pyramid Routine 6

- Chuck pyramid section (assign spotters)
- Work basket progressions

5:45pm- Partner Stunt Routines 2 and 4

- Chuck and run

6:00pm- Partner Stunt Routines 3 and 5

- Chuck and run

6:15pm- Conditioning

- Run partner stunt routines 1-5
 - Each minor deduction=10 push-ups
 - Each major deduction=5 suicide sprints

6:30pm- End Practice

Strategies for Teaching Routines

Each quarter will evoke different teaching styles and each team will learn best in different ways. As a coach, it's your job to figure out how you teach best and how your athletes learn best.

Teaching STUNT routines involves both videos and count sheets. When possible, share both of these with your athletes and encourage them to review and learn what they can. It can be beneficial to assign routines and to have athletes prepare for the routines before the practice they are being taught.

As a coach, it's important to have a good grasp on the routine that you are teaching, including the corrects grips and positions. When teaching, always start with counts, and continually review what has been taught, going one eight-count at a time. It's best to just focus on counts when learning, and save the actual skills for after the counts have been mastered.

TIPS AND TRICKS

Quarter 1/Partner Stunts:

- Stunts can be taught in mass since most of the time, all groups do the same thing.
- Have athletes fully mark all parts while learning so that you can ensure that they have the correct timing and grips.

Quarter 2/Pyramids and Tosses:

- Master the pyramids before running them full out to counts.
- Assign spotters to specific routines and positions to keep everyone safe at games and practices.

Quarter 3/Jumps and Tumbling:

- Focus on all counts, including transitions and stands.
- Utilize hashes to help keep formations on as the routine progresses.

Quarter 4/Team Routine:

- Drill transitions between routines!
- Devote practice time to running these routines and building the stamina needed to execute them.

Scheduling and Hosting Games

Game schedules should be set in the fall by communicating with your regional director and local coaches. Ideally, schedules will be set before the season begins and videos are released.

If hosting a game or tournament, make sure that you have the following supplies and equipment:

- 8 strips of 6x48 carpeted foam cheer mats (same color/thickness)
- 5 additional strips of 6x48 carpeted foam cheer mats
- 30 chairs for team bench
- Functional scoreboard and scoreboard operator
- Sound system and person to operate music
- Microphone and announcer who understands STUNT routines
- 3 scoring officials who are registered with UCA Cheer
- 1 referee who is registered with USA Cheer

Additionally, when hosting a game that you are also coaching, it's beneficial to have a "game day manager" who can help with questions and administrative tasks so that you can focus on coaching. The more prep that goes into the event, the better it will go!

First Game Tips and Tricks

The first game will be both exciting and nerve-racking! However, it takes playing a first game for both coach and athletes to fully grasp the game of STUNT. The one thing that I can guarantee, is that once you play, you will be hooked!

-Plan to arrive to the game site around an hour and a half before the game begins. This will give athletes ample time to get dressed, warm-up, and be fully ready for the game.

-Mock a “game” multiple times during normal practice. Go through different situations such as a music malfunction, injury, and overtime so that athletes are prepared.

-Make sure that you have read and review the College STUNT Rule Book and that you understand the rules.

-Assign a parent or team manager to video tape the game so that you can review the routines and share them at practices.