



**STUNT**

New Coaches Guidebook  
College

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## Memberships & Training

USA Cheer and STUNT offer memberships and training for all coaches. All College STUNT teams must purchase a STUNT Program Membership through USA Cheer prior to the start of the competitive season and allows them to access the materials for the current season. To purchase your STUNT Program Membership, go to the USA Cheer Membership page at [usacheer.org/membership](http://usacheer.org/membership). In addition, coaches have the option to become a STUNT Coach member. This membership requires a background screening, athlete protection course, USA Cheer Safety & Risk Management certification, and waiver. Benefits of becoming a STUNT Coach member include membership card, complimentary training, discounted certifications, USA Cheer newsletters, and more.

## Social Media

Social Media will be key for you in many areas of your program. It is the best way to communicate to the public about your program in every aspect - recruiting opportunities, game day info, fun events and team building, etc.

1. Create social media accounts (i.e. Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) for your program. This should be a separate account from any cheer program at your institution and should be specifically for your STUNT program.
2. Follow @STUNTtheSport to stay up to date with the latest news and info on our sport.
3. Follow other College STUNT teams so they know about your program and you can connect with other coaches and teams.
4. Follow local high schools and any high school STUNT programs.

## Recruiting

It is essential for you to connect with high school coaches and athletes as you build your roster. If you are a new program, you want them to know that your program is up and running and offers an opportunity for their athletes to compete as a STUNT athlete in college. If you are taking over an existing program, you will want to introduce yourself and your new vision for the program.

The USA Cheer Recruiting Combines are a great way to connect with athletes, are offered every fall, and are held all across the country. At these combines, you are able to meet and talk to high school athletes and watch as they showcase their skills for your evaluation. You can collect their contact info and from there you recruit athletes that fit your program's needs.

CaptainU is also a great resource for recruiting athletes. You can create an account for your program and connect with athletes based on your program's needs. It is a platform that allows you to use filters to refine searches, view athlete profiles, message and respond to athletes, search for events, invite athletes to camps, and manage your recruiting lists. Visit [www.captainu.com](http://www.captainu.com) to set up your account.

When recruiting STUNT athletes, there are specific positions that you want to look for. These include tumblers, jumpers, bases, backspots, and tops. Oftentimes 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.

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 make changes quickly.

For the pyramids & tosses' routines, there are many requirements for positions. In addition to needing top girls with trick skills and strong basket throwers, you will also need stable top girls for pyramids. Many times, you will have to double-block an athlete to make a routine work. For example, a trick basket top may have to base a pyramid and then top a basket. Versatility in multiple roles will allow these routines to become a strength for your team.

In jumps & tumbling, technique is key! Athletes must be able to execute jumps and tumbling 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 combined mental and physical 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.

### Breaking Down Routines

Prior to the routines being released, you will have access to the Skills Sheet in your account. This grid will show you which skills will be in each routine. This allows you to begin working skills with your team even prior to having the full 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! Preparation is key! 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. You will notice the main skills in each 8-count are listed on the left-hand side. As you begin to watch videos, you will have an idea of what skills are being performed and which athletes you might consider for those roles. This first step of brainstorming for each level will help as you prepare to assign routines and positions to your athletes.



## 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. Your first-year coaching STUNT will be all about learning and being flexible.

Teaching STUNT routines involves both videos and 8-count sheets. It can be beneficial to assign routines and to have athletes prepare for the routines before the practice they are being taught. When the athletes come to practice prepared with their counts, you can spend your time more efficiently learning and working skills.

As a coach, it's important to have a good grasp on the routine that you are teaching, including the correct grips and positions. When teaching, always start with counts, and continually review what has been taught, going one 8-count at a time.

## Practice Planning

Every coach plans their practices differently. It is important to adhere to the practice allocations of your athletic department for your division (i.e. NAIA, JC, D1, D2, D3, Club) while also having a plan in place that is flexible. When you start training for STUNT season, look at how many weeks you have and be sure to plan out your days and weeks. Things to consider:

- How many days per week are you practicing?
- How many weeks do you have until the season starts?
- How many levels do you want learned and game ready before your first game? (Aim for at least levels 1-4)

Break down the weeks into teaching practices, workshop practices, and cleaning/game ready practices according to your calendar. By giving yourself a clear timeline, it will keep you on track to ensure you are ready for your first game.

It is important prior to your first game to hold team meetings in which you teach the game structure, go through the Rulebook, and go through scoring. It is essential for your athletes to understand the game itself and to know what the officials will be looking for and what is considered a deduction. You want to make sure you practice correctly and create good habits at the very start of your season.

### Quarter 1: Partner Stunts

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

### Quarter 2: Pyramids & Tosses

- Master the pyramid in sections 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 & Tumbling

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

#### Quarter 4: Team Routine

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

### First Game Tips and Tricks

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

- Plan to arrive at 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. You and your athletes do not want to feel rushed on game day.
- Do a mock “game” multiple times during your normal practice time the week prior to your game. 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 STUNT College Rulebook and that you understand the rules. Have your Rulebook with you and have items that might come up highlighted or tagged.
- Have your 8-count sheets binder with you and assign a player or team manager to have them out and flip to them during the game for reference.
- Assign a parent or team manager to videotape the game so that you can review the routines. This will be essential in learning for your team after every game.

Can't wait to see you this season!

