



# VANCOUVER MAINLAND FOOTBALL LEAGUE

13750-88th Avenue  
Surrey, BC V3W 3L1

[www.vmfl.ca](http://www.vmfl.ca)  
Email: [president.vmfl@gmail.com](mailto:president.vmfl@gmail.com)

## VMFL Cheerleading Handbook Rules

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## **VMFL Cheerleading Season Rules and Guidelines**

Vancouver Mainland Football League (VMFL) Mission Statement

*“To foster and promote Minor Football in conjunction with our member associations with the emphasis on participation and competition.”*

### **Goals**

- 1) To facilitate an all-inclusive sport of Sideline Community Cheerleading
- 2) To provide VMFL certified coaches for the coaching of safe cheerleading skill development, while fostering community spirit
- 3) To provide VMFL spirit alongside the game of Community Football

### **Objective and Purpose**

The VMFL Cheerleading program is a division of the VMFL. To promote community spirit and football through the sport of cheerleading. To promote an all-inclusive environment where there is a place for everyone and everyone has a place.

### **Guiding Principles of the VMFL and its member Associations:**

#### **Guiding Principles of the VMFL and its member Associations:**

- To provide and promote minor football and community cheerleading, through our member associations, to youth aged 5 -18.
- To provide youth the opportunity to play football and cheerleading to their capabilities.
- To provide youth the opportunity to play contact football at the competitive level.
- To provide youth the opportunity to play flag football at the recreational and competitive level.
- To provide youth the opportunity to do cheerleading at a community and competitive level.
- To ensure that our program is enjoyable and safe for all participants.
- To ensure an educational process for the learning and development of team concepts, community spirit and good sportsmanship are entrenched in our program.
- To provide youth the opportunity to appreciate the game of football and cheerleading, enjoy recreational sport and learn the fundamentals of the sport.
- To give the opportunity for players, coaches and officials to develop their skill sets through proper certification programs.
- To ensure safety equipment is utilized properly and adequate playing fields or spaces for practice and games are made available.

### **Administration**

The Cheerleading programs of each Association must follow guidelines and document requirements as set out by the VMFL.

## Section 1 Roles

### VMFL Cheerleading Coordinator

- 1) Prime responsibility is to facilitate an open communication between Associations, Coordinators, and VMFL Coordinator, and serve as a resource regarding program development, rules, guidelines, competition preparation etc.
- 2) Appointment is approved by the VMFL and serves as a liaison between the Association Cheerleading Coordinators. The VMFL Coordinator will serve a minimum of one term.
- 3) Oversee and assist in the development of cheerleading within the league on behalf of the VMFL
- 4) Attend monthly VMFL meetings and provide status reports of all activities, concerns and or needs of the Associations
- 5) Organize and execute the annual VMFL Cheerleading Competition
- 6) Receive all roster verification forms and confirm all additional information

### Association Cheerleading Coordinator

- 1) Primary responsibility of the Association Cheerleading Coordinator (ACC) is to utilize the resources provided by the VMFL Coordinator to promote and develop the community cheerleading program for all of VMFL.
- 2) The Association Cheerleading Coordinator is appointed by the home Association Executive and is a minimum 1 year long term. If an Association Cheerleading Coordinator cannot be found, the VMFL Coordinator can be used as a resource in order to help fill the position.
- 3) The Association Cheerleading Coordinator is responsible for overseeing their home club cheerleading program and coaches.
- 4) The Association Cheerleading Coordinator is to work alongside the home Association Executive board to promote the growth of Community Cheerleading and Football.
- 5) The Association Cheerleading Coordinator is to facilitate open communication between themselves and the VMFL Coordinator within a respectful time frame.
- 6) The Association Cheerleading Coordinator is to oversee the following areas:
  - ★ Game Uniform and practice uniform requisition and assignment
  - ★ Practice and game scheduling
  - ★ Approve Cheerleading Coaching staff including Managers
  - ★ Supervise Coaches and Managers when Possible
  - ★ Ensure Association has Cheerleader Codes of Conduct
  - ★ Ensure coaching staff qualifications are provided and met
  - ★ Coordinate all administrative paperwork with Team Managers
  - ★ Work alongside the Association Secretary or Registrar to ensure frozen roster deadlines are met, and submit same to VMFL Coordinator
  - ★ If using indoor area, ensure facilities are scheduled/booked
  - ★ To uphold the rules and guidelines set out by the VMFL
  - ★ Must attend home Association meetings and VMFL Coordinator meetings
  - ★ Any other duties deemed necessary by the Association

- 7) The Association Cheerleading Coordinator is to work with all the active cheerleading Associations and the VMFL Coordinator to coordinate the annual VMFL Cheerleading Competition.
  - ★ Provide a list of volunteers to facilitate jobs for the event
  - ★ Provide a minimum of 1 Judge for competition
  - ★ Promote the cheerleading competition within the Association
  - ★ Ensure the home Association attends competition and declares either competitive entry or showcase entry
  - ★ Maintain and enforce all VMFL rules and regulations regarding competition
  - ★ Ensure each squad's coaching staff has at least one certified minimum Occupational First Aid Level 1 person (First Aid person)

### **Cheer Coaches**

- 1) Coaches' primary responsibility is to the safety and fun of their Cheerleaders. To enrich, teach and help Cheerleaders' skill levels and Spirit grow and flourish through the sport of Cheerleading.
- 2) Coaches are volunteers and work under the direction of the Club Coordinators. Coaches represent their home Associations and the VMFL as a whole and must conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner. Coaches are role models to the children that are Cheerleading and must follow the Cheerleader's Coach Code of Conduct.
- 3) Aside from safety and fun the teaching priorities are as follows
  - ★ Sideline Cheers and Chants in preparation for Football Games
  - ★ Basic Sport Conditioning
  - ★ Foster Community and Association Spirit
  - ★ Teach a basic understanding of the sport of Football (offense, defense, etc.)
  - ★ Lastly skills related to Competition (i.e. Stunting etc.)
- 4) Coaches are to be on their feet and participating in practices. A coach must lead by example. (If a Coach is unable to stand other arrangements may be made with ACC)
- 5) Cheerleading Coaches MUST be on time to practices and games. If not possible the Coach must contact their other Coaching staff and the ACC as soon as possible to ensure the safety of their team.
- 6) Coaches are to be dressed appropriately in sports attire for practices and games. (T-shirts/Club shirt if owned or provided, active wear pants or shorts and sneakers)
- 7) Coaches must remain with the Cheerleaders at practices and games until picked up by a parent etc.
- 8) Ensure certified First Aid person is present at all practices and games

### **Team Manager**

- 1) Primary responsibilities for Team Manager are to ensure all documents and paperwork pertaining to Cheerleaders is up to date with the Club.
- 2) Take attendance at all practices and games. Provide Monthly attendance to ACC. Provide PA Cheerleading Roster at Games.
- 3) Provide a minimum of one open forum for team communication to be agreed upon between Coaching staff.

## Section 2 Requirements

VMFL Coaches need to achieve and maintain a minimum-coaching standard in order to ensure that all participants receive the safest and highest quality of coaching possible.

	Manager	Coach	Senior Coach	Club Coordinator	VMFL Coordinator
Criminal Record Check	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Code of Conduct	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
First Aid ***	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethics		✓	✓	✓	✓
Making Headway		✓	✓	✓	✓
Cheer Coach Certification		✓	✓	✓	✓
ISAF-VMFL Stunting Clinic		✓	✓	✓	✓
Tumbling/ gymnastic training		✓	✓	✓	✓
One legged extended stunt training			✓	✓	✓

\*\*\* Re: First Aid: See Association Cheerleading Coordinator Section 7 Point 5

### Training

- 1) Coaches are not permitted to coach beyond 30 days of Club season practice commencement without attending the VMFL-sponsored Cheerleading Coaching Clinic.
- 2) In order for a Coach to teach tumbling and/or gymnastics, the Coach must be certified
- 3) In order for a Coach to teach stunting, the Coach must be certified
- 4) Coaches must provide annual copy of certificate

### Section 3 Divisions, Age Limits and Structure and Restrictions of Divisions

- 1) Standard Squads - Age Limits & Divisions (Maximum 24 Cheerleaders per Squad)
  - ★ Atom 5-8 years
  - ★ PeeWee 9-11 years
  - ★ Jr. Bantam 12-14 years
  - ★ Senior 15-18 years
- 2) Mixed Squads - Age Limits & Divisions
  - ★ Junior Mixed 5-11 years
  - ★ Senior Mixed 12-18 years

\*\*\*\*Mixed squads can be formed when there is more than 1 yet less than 5 of the two age division ranges (for example: 2 Atoms and 4 PeeWees can be mixed, yet 5 Jr. Bantams and 5 Seniors are 2 squads not a mixed squad)\*\*\*\*

- 3) Associations may choose to start their Cheer program at the age of 6
- 4) Squads are limited to a maximum of 24 Cheerleaders. There is no minimum amount of cheerleaders per squad.
- 5) Cheerleaders may move up or down ONE division of the qualified division; however, they must be within one year to move up or down. The maximum number of Cheerleaders that may be brought down is TWO per squad. There is no maximum on moving up a division per squad. Moving of Cheerleaders is the final decision of the Association Cheerleading Coordinator, Association President and VMFL Coordinator.

\*\*\*NOTE\*\*\* Stunting of everyone on squad is to be done at the level of the YOUNGEST person on the squad

- 6) Cheer squads are to cheer for their corresponding Football age group.
- 7) Cheerleaders are required to submit proper documentation (i.e. Proof of Birth, Care Card number etc.) for verified roster declaration by the 2nd week of the regular season. No stunting or tumbling is allowed until documentation is submitted.
- 8) Frozen rosters are to be verified by another VMFL Association President.

### Section 4 Uniforms

- 1) Associations are responsible for issuing basic game uniforms. Uniforms are to be Club colors. Wherever possible uniforms for each squad should be identical and may consist of shells, shorts, sweaters and skirts. Cheerleaders are to provide themselves with white socks and sport runners. Shocks are not allowed.
- 2) Uniforms are to be age-appropriate attire for youth ages 5 to 18. Uniforms are to fit comfortably and not be short and tight. Midriiffs must be covered.
- 3) Game uniforms are to be worn at games.
- 4) Every Cheerleader is to wear supportive runners, cross trainers or aerobic style shoes. All shoes on the squad must be uniform in colour and non-scuff soles are required for competition.
- 5) Hair is to be up and out of Cheerleader's face.

- 6) Fingernails must be kept at an appropriate length for stunts due to safety reasons. No artificial nails or nail polish.

## Section 5 Game conduct

- 1) Cheerleading runs the entire football season which includes preseason practice through to play-off games.
- 2) Cheerleading squads are to cheer for all corresponding Football teams to the corresponding Cheer squad; this includes away games. If more than one Football team is scheduled which causes a conflict, then the ACC must balance scheduling as evenly as possible for the Football teams. A reasonable compromise must be reached if there are two Cheer squads and one corresponding Football team.
- 3) In a case where Associations have a minimal number of squads it is encouraged that games are rotated and assigned accordingly to Jr and Sr mixed squad groups.
- 4) Cheerleaders are to be a safe distance from the sidelines at all times.
- 5) Cheerleaders are to not interfere with the playing field and are to GET OUT OF THE WAY if the football play is headed for the sidelines.
- 6) Squads are to be respectful of visiting cheerleaders and exercise common courtesy. (i.e. Do not begin a cheer until the other squad is done)
- 7) Half time performances should only be done at your own home field to show courtesy and respect to the host Association Cheerleaders.
- 8) Cheers should begin between plays on the field or during time-outs. Not on a flag or during an injury or over an announcer.
- 9) There is to be no stunting while a game is in play.
- 10) If you are a visiting team at an away game your team must receive permission from the other Coach (and Coordinator if possible) to stunt.
- 11) Cheerleaders are to display good sportsmanship. Be generous winners and gracious losers.
- 12) Cheerleaders and Coaches are to conduct themselves with honour and dignity at all times and show Association pride.

## Discipline

- 1) Associations are to have Cheerleader Codes of Conduct.
- 2) All major infractions (i.e. fighting) shall go to the VMFL Discipline Committee.

## Section 6 Stunting and Tumbling

- 1) Stunts are to only be performed with a certified Coach
- 2) Tumbling is only to be taught by a certified Coach
- 3) Mats are to be used where possible, in a safe grass area, turf, or on a track. No stunting is to be done on pavement, wet grass or wet floors.
- 4) All mounts and/or pyramids (generic stunting) are only to be two people high, meaning the top person (flyer) must be in direct support of the bottom person (bases) touching the ground.
- 5) For a pyramid to be considered valid there must be a connection between each person in the pyramid.

- 6) Spotters are required until a stunt skill is complete. Extended stunts require a continuous spotter. Insufficient spotting in the case of extended stunts is considered a major safety violation.
- 7) Splits - stunts, somersaults, jumps or drops directly INTO splits are not permitted. The hands of the Cheerleader must touch the landing surface (ground) 1st to support themselves.

Refer to IASF rules for stunting regulations and parameters

Atom - Stunting Level 1

PeeWee - Stunting Level 1  
In VMFL regulated events and competition - 1 legged prep level Non-connected allowed

Jr. Bantam - Stunting Level 2

Seniors - Stunting Level 2  
In VMFL regulated events and competition - 1 legged full extension Non-connected allowed

Tumbling for Non-VMFL Events at level of stunting age group

Tumbling for VMFL events and competition at level of Coaches training and Coordinator discretion

## Competition Rules & Guidelines

The Annual VMFL Cheerleading Competition is an exciting wrap up to the VMFL Football and Cheerleading season. The active Cheerleading squads of the year must attend the Competition and show their VMFL & home Association Spirit. It is their choice to compete or showcase, which is to be declared ahead of time.

### Section One: VMFL Participation Qualifications

Every single squad whether competing or showcasing, VMFL or not, will be evaluated for the VMFL Spirit award.

#### 1) VMFL Squad

- ★ Cheered for a minimum of 80% of all games (Home and Away) corresponding to the Cheer team (i.e. North Surrey PeeWee Cheerleaders have cheered for North Surrey PeeWee Football)
- ★ Maximum 24 Cheerleaders per individual squad
- ★ Association must provide a Cheerleading Coordinator or Association representative to assist in Competition plans, setup and take down etc.
- ★ Can only compete with their frozen roster of Cheerleaders
- ★ Declared 1 month prior to date whether competing or showcasing

#### 2) Individual Cheerleaders

- ★ A minimum of 80% of all eligible practices and games must be met in order to compete.
- ★ Can only compete on the one squad of the frozen roster submitted by the Association Cheerleading Coordinator.



### 3) Non-VMFL Squad

- ★ Must be either invited by or ask the Cheerleading Coordinators Committee to join the Competition
- ★ Must follow VMFL Competition rules, guidelines, age groups etc.
- ★ May be subject to entry fee
- ★ May be required to provide representative to assist in setup and take down of the Competition
- ★ Declared 1 month prior to date whether competing or showcasing

## Section Two: Categories, Age Limits, & Restrictions

### 1) Standard Squads - Age Limits & Divisions (Maximum 24 Cheerleaders per Squad)

- ★ Atom            5-8 years
- ★ PeeWee        9-11 years
- ★ Jr. Bantam     12-14 years
- ★ Senior         15-18 years

### 2) Mixed Squads - Age Limits & Divisions

- ★ Junior Mixed   5-11 years
- ★ Senior Mixed   12-18 years

- Mixed squads can be formed when there is more than 1 yet less than 5 of the two age division ranges (for example: 2 Atoms and 4 PeeWees can be mixed, yet 5 Jr. Bantams and 5 Seniors are 2 squads not a mixed squad)
- Mixed Squads compete at the majority of age group of team
- All stunting must be done at the age restrictions of the YOUNGEST person on the squad

- 3) Squads must compete (or showcase) in proper divisions with a verified roster. Each Cheerleader can only compete (or showcase) on one team.
- 4) No restriction on how many squads an Association can have within a division
- 5) Complete disqualification will result if non-qualified Cheerleaders are discovered to have participated in any portion of a competition routine

## Section Three: Code of Conduct

- 1) Coaching staff must remain with their squad at all times.
- 2) Cheerleaders are required to remain with their squads throughout the entire Competition, with the exception of break times and lunch. Cheerleaders are not to leave the premises of the Competition without permission from their Coach.
- 3) Disrespectful behavior, inappropriate comments, or use of profane language directed at other Judges, Coaches, and Coordinators or towards another squad or member of another squad will not be tolerated. This behaviour is not in keeping with the goal of the Competition; therefore, violation of this rule may result in disqualification of the squad.
- 4) Coaching staff, Managers, Cheerleaders or parents may NOT coach or prompt their Cheerleaders during their performance. This means that there will be absolutely NO Coaching from the sidelines, behind the Judge's table, or any other part of the Competition area.

\*\*\*Note: Coaches, Managers, and Cheerleaders are not permitted to sit in front of or stand behind the Judge's table at any time or that squad will be disqualified

\*Coaches are to be either within the Associations' designated area or in Coaches' designated seating area (if provided) during routine performance\*

#### Section Four: Stunting, Spotting, and Props

- 1) All mounts and/or pyramids (generic stunting) are only to be two people high, meaning the top person (flyer) must be in direct support of the bottom person (bases) touching the ground.
- 2) For a pyramid to be considered valid there must be a connection between each person in the pyramid.
- 3) Spotters are required until a stunt skill is complete. Extended stunts require a continuous spotter. Insufficient spotting in the case of extended stunts is considered a major safety violation.
- 4) The only permitted props are signs, poms, and megaphones. Glitter will be permitted to be used on poster/sign props and must not come off.
- 5) Costumes other than actual pieces to the Association uniforms are not allowed.

Refer to IASF rules for stunting regulations and parameters

Atom - Stunting Level 1

PeeWee - Stunting Level 1  
In VMFL regulated events and competition - 1 legged prep level Non-connected allowed

Jr. Bantam - Stunting Level 2

Seniors - Stunting Level 2  
In VMFL regulated events and competition - 1 legged full extension Non- connected allowed

Tumbling for Non-VMFL Events at level of stunting age group

Tumbling for VMFL events and competition at level of Coaches training and Coordinator discretion

#### Section Five: Standard Rules for all Routines

- 1) Music must be appropriate. No profanity or reference to sexual acts. Inappropriate music may result in loss of position
- 2) Overtime penalty will be assessed at 1.0 point for every 1 second over, deducted from each Judge. Time begins when the squad signals of their first motion, or sound, after they have taken their places on the floor. It ends when the team indicates an obvious and strong clean finish.
- 3) Teams may be called on to give or repeat an additional cheer or portion only at the discretion of the Judges
- 4) If a mishap occurs, a lower mark may be given under execution, however the team's recovery will be judged under showmanship, providing a chance to gain points
- 5) Performances will be done on a 40'x40' matted surface.

## Section Six: Uniforms/Grooming Standard Rules

- 1) Competition uniforms are the regular season uniforms worn for games.
- 2) Every Cheerleader is to wear supportive runners, cross trainers or aerobic style shoes. All shoes on the squad must be uniform in colour and non-scuff soles are required for competition.
- 3) Make-up is allowed but must be tasteful. No excessive body paints allowed. Club name, symbols, etc. are permitted
- 4) Hair must be up and out of the face.
- 5) Fingernails must be kept at a length appropriate for safe participation and execution of stunts and cheers. Artificial nails and nail polish are not permitted.
- 6) All jewelry must be removed unless it must be worn due to medical or religious reasons. All piercings or jewelry MUST be removed or MUST be taped to the skin.
- 7) Glitter is not allowed to be worn by a Cheerleader. It is a safety issue; if it comes off it can become a slipping hazard.

## Section Seven: Competition Routine Categories

### Competing Squad

- 1) Squad routines are to include every Cheerleader on the frozen roster
- 2) Routines include cheers, a compulsory dance, jumps, tumbling, stunts and pyramids.
- 3) All squads will have a maximum performance time of 3 minutes.

### Group Stunt

- 1) 1 stunt group per squad may compete and must be selected from the frozen roster of the entering squad
- 2) Stunt groups will include the Atom, PeeWee, Jr Bantam, Senior divisions and will be either 4 or 5 Cheerleaders
- 3) Stunt groups must follow stunting rules for age division
- 4) All stunt group routines will have a maximum performance time of 1 minute

### Pairs

- 1) A maximum of 2 pairs per squad may compete and must be selected from the frozen roster of the entering squad
- 2) Pair's routines can be Atom, PeeWee, Jr Bantam, and Senior. They are to include cheers, a compulsory dance, stunts, jumps and tumbling.
- 3) Pairs stunts must follow stunting rules for age division
- 4) Pairs routines will have a maximum performance time of 1½ minutes

### **Showcasing Squad**

- 1) Showcasing squads can include any (or all) cheers, dance, stunts, pyramids and tumbling.
- 2) Showcasing squads must follow stunting rules for age division.
- 3) All Showcasing routines will have a maximum performance time of 3 minutes.

### **Section Eight: Practice**

- 1) Based on time availability, each squad will be given an opportunity to run through their routine on the performance mat. A time limit restriction will apply, to give all squads an equal and fair opportunity. This is an opportunity to check music levels, review your team & exits, set marks, and run through your routine. There is to be no practicing of stunts outside of scheduled times or the squad/group will be disqualified
- 2) Club Cheerleading Coordinators will be given practice times before the Competition date. It is their responsibility to communicate that to their squad Coaches. Only the squads designated for practice will be in the performance area.
- 3) Floor time is forfeited if you arrive late and/or not prepared at the designated time. The squad will be added to the end of the schedule only if time permits.
- 4) All stunting must be on the matted surface with a certified Coach present.

### **Section Nine: Judging**

- 1) A minimum of 6 qualified Judges with experience in cheerleading will be judging. Each Competing Cheerleading Association must provide a minimum of 1 Judge. Final approval of Judges will be at the discretion of the VMFL Cheer Coordinator.
- 2) There will be an unidentified Spirit Judge committee.
- 3) From the volunteer list there must be 1 timekeeper and 2 score-checkers. The timekeeper will be responsible for timing the Competition. The score-checkers will be responsible for calculating and double-checking the final scores. These roles can be divided up to 2 designated volunteer shifts; the first shift will be before lunch and second will be after lunch.
- 4) The VMFL Coordinators will provide the Judges' score sheets and a copy of the VMFL Cheerleading Competition Rules and Guidelines.