

## PCA Fall 2023 4th and 5th Grade Evaluation Process

### **What is the purpose of the evaluation process?**

Since its inception, the goal of Platinum Cheer Association has been to prepare our athletes to earn a spot on the extremely competitive high school teams in our area. As the skill level of these high school athletes grow, we have identified the need to focus on the skills of our mid-program athletes (4th and 5th grade) to ensure they are fully prepared for the PCA tryout process beginning in 6th grade so they can properly progress to the skill level needed to join a high school team. PCA places a strong emphasis on progression - and in order to ensure the mid-program teams are able to progress as a team as a whole, we recognize the need to ensure every athlete on the team can contribute to the team goals in a meaningful way. Athletes that are invited to join a team will be held to a high standard and will be expected to train hard both in and out of practice to continue to grow and develop individual skills to contribute to the success of the team.

### **What is the difference between an evaluation and a tryout?**

The evaluation process is to determine an athlete's preparedness to contribute to the team in a meaningful way. This means the athlete demonstrates target-skill appropriate knowledge and technique in the areas of jumps, stunting, tumbling, and motions. During the evaluation process, the athlete will not be compared to other athletes.

### **Is my athlete guaranteed a spot on the team when I register?**

The 4th and 5th grade teams will not be determined until the April evaluations are over - please keep this in mind when determining if this is the right path for your athlete. By registering for the 4th and 5th grade teams, you are committing to participating in the evaluation process and accepting a position on the team if you are invited to join. Due to the nature of the evaluation process, we cannot allow any early or late decisions. At the end of the evaluation process, PCA will notify all athletes if he/she has been invited to join the Fall 2023 team.

### **What will be evaluated to determine if an athlete is invited to join a team?**

During the evaluation process, athletes will be asked to demonstrate a variety of skills to determine if he/she is ready to participate on the team. We understand that every athlete progresses at a different pace and we strongly encourage everyone to NOT compare her skills to another athlete's. PCA is looking for strong, well-rounded athletes that can contribute in ALL or MOST areas - please do not go into this process discouraged because your athlete feels 1 area is a weakness.

**Jumps:** Athletes will be asked to demonstrate a pike jump, a toe touch, a hurdler, and a combo jump (pike to toe touch or hurdler to toe touch). The athlete should demonstrate proper form and technique - including prep, jump execution, and landing.

**Tumbling:** Athletes will be asked to demonstrate the highest level running tumbling and standing tumbling skill he/she can execute without a spot on a dead mat. Athletes are expected to tumble with correct technique - good form on a lower level skill will outweigh poor form on a higher level skill. Athletes should focus on demonstrating a skill she can perform with confidence and strength. There is no tumbling requirement to be on a team, but tumbling is a valued skill that will be assessed to determine the value the athlete can bring to the team.

**Motions:** Athletes will be provided with a short cheer and dance sequence to demonstrate at the evaluation. This will be emailed with ample time for the athlete to practice at home. The athlete should perform these sequences with confidence - demonstrating sharp motions with proper arm placement, utilizing facials, and without relying on watching another athlete for cues.

**Stunting:** Athletes will be divided into stunt groups to demonstrate stunt skills in the preferred stunt position. Bases and backspots should be prepared to demonstrate proper grips and form to execute stunts at both the prep and extended level. Flyers should be prepared to demonstrate a variety of body positions in addition to demonstrating proper knowledge of the mechanics of flying in a stunt. Due to the limited time at the evaluation process, athletes are strongly encouraged to attend March clinics to have ample time to demonstrate skills. For safety purposes, coaches need to be assured that all athletes on the team can contribute to stunting skills at the level of the team in an appropriate and safe manner.

**Coachability:** Throughout the evaluation process, coaches will observe how an athlete puts into practice corrections and directions given. The successful athlete will utilize these corrections to improve her skills.

### **What do I do if my athlete isn't invited to join a team?**

If we feel your athlete is not ready yet after the evaluation process, we will provide feedback and recommendations to help improve for future seasons. If your athlete is passionate about cheer, we strongly encourage her to continue working hard and to try again next season! Athletes should continue to focus on improving jumps, motions, tumbling, and stunting technique through classes or participation on another cheer team.

### **Will I receive a refund if my athlete doesn't join a team?**

If your athlete is not invited to join a team for the Fall 2023 season after the evaluation, you will be refunded any payments made to date. If your athlete is invited and you decline the spot on the team, no refund will be given. We strongly encourage you to discuss with your athlete the commitment being made when signing up for the evaluation process.