



**PITTSBURGH**

**2024-2025 HALF YEAR HANDBOOK**

**FIRST & FOREMOST**

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# **THANK YOU**

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**FOR JOINING OUR FAMILY!**

Top Gun was founded in 1994 by Victor and Kristen Rosario in Miami, Florida. Top Gun quickly became one of the most competitive and innovative programs in the world. The Top Gun Brand has locations in Miami, Naples, Orlando, Cleveland, Arizona, and Pittsburgh – extending our family from coast to coast.

Pittsburgh Superstars DBA Top Gun Pittsburgh (TGPA) was purchased in November of 2006. We are excited to begin season 18 and continue to build the Jaguar Nation in Pittsburgh.

We strive to create competitive teams at every level and build athletic and technical athletes with the ability to be a team player. Athletes are taught to be **STRONG** mentally and physically while working towards team goals. The people we help mold at the end of their cheer journey is more of the focus for Top Gun. We are proud of the life lessons learned as a member of Top Gun All Stars. We pride ourselves in promoting the importance of balancing education with the sport. Our senior graduates have become World Champions and National champions with various colleges—University of Louisville, University of Maryland, Georgia Tech University, University of Pittsburgh, Robert Morris University, West Virginia University, Fairmont State University, Duquesne University, Penn State, Purdue, Oklahoma State, Gannon, and HawaiiPacificUniversity—just to name a few.

We at Top Gun strive to be a close-knit and supportive program that includes parents, athletes and coaches working together towards a common goal. We strive not only to be a very competitive program, but also a program others respect because of our commitment to excellence, sportsmanship, and championship spirit. Top Gun will continue to be the program others emulate due to our high standards and competitiveness.

Welcome to the Top Gun family!

**Aimee Nicewarner, Owner**  
**Pittsburgh Superstars LLC, DBA Top Gun All-Stars**



Top Gun offers athletes of all ages and abilities the opportunity to grow and develop under the supervision of professionally trained coaches. There is no better place to experience the world of competitive cheer than Top Gun. Our goal is to develop the skills and confidence at every level to prepare athletes to compete at the highest level of competition. From our coaching staff to our facility, Top Gun is proud to offer the premier All-Star program in Pittsburgh.

## MEET THE COACHES

Aimee Nicewarner	Owner/Elite Coach
Jan Kenz	Office Manager
Maritza	Accounts Manger
Dana Thomas	Tumbling Director
Courtney Stack	Prep Director/Elite Coach
Damien Williams	Elite Coach/Tumbling Coach
Becky Troppman	Elite Coach/Cheer Abilities Director
Emma McWilliams	Elite Coach
William Fields	Elite Coach/Tumbling Coach
Kayli Perri	Prep Coach
Victoria Murcko	Prep Coach
Danessa Brown	Half Year Prep Coach
Abbey Swinderman	Tumbling Coach/Prep Coach
Josh Pugliese	Tumbling Coach
Kennedy Ward	Social Media/Prep Coach
Ayden Gerlach	Senior Tumbling Coach
Tessa Troppman	Junior Elite Coach
Ella Armstrong	Junior Prep Coach

## GENERAL

- ❖ Only registered athletes are allowed in the practice area.
- ❖ Unless invited inside; parents, friends, and relatives must remain outside the gym.
- ❖ Any person that disrupts a practice will be asked to leave the gym immediately.
- ❖ No food, drinks or gum are permitted in the practice area.
- ❖ Birthday treats for any athlete celebrating his/her birthday may be distributed after practice.
- ❖ All trash must be disposed appropriately.
- ❖ Cell phones must be on silent mode and left outside of the practice area.
- ❖ Top Gun is NOT responsible for any personal items lost or stolen.
- ❖ It is the responsibility of the parent to stay informed. Check your email, GroupMe, our social media outlets, and website regularly. If you are not receiving emails, contact the gym right away. Email and GroupMe chats are the main forms of communication. There is no excuse for being uninformed when information has been provided.
- ❖ All completed forms needed by Top Gun must be filled out and turned in to the Top Gun office as requested.
- ❖ All choreography including cheer, dances, stunts, transitions, tumbling, music selections, editing, etc. are the exclusive property of Top Gun and shall not be shown or discussed with others. NO VIDEOS of routines/choreography should be uploaded to any online site or social media platform.
- ❖ **You are NOT permitted to create or sell any Top Gun spirit wear merchandise; this includes using just the team names on designs. Purchasing Top Gun spirit wear merchandise from another Top Gun location is acceptable. Purchasing any Top Gun Cheer merchandise from vendor websites, such as practice wear, uniforms, backpacks, shoes, etc. is not allowed. If you are caught there is a \$250.00 fee, the second offence you will be removed from the program.**

## TEAMS

Top Gun retains the right to:

- ❖ Place its athletes on the team(s) it feels will best suit the athletes and the program.
- ❖ Decide if an athlete may participate on more than one team.
- ❖ Decide the role and/or position an athlete will have/play on their teams.
- ❖ Request that an athlete/team take additional classes or camps to improve their skills.
- ❖ Request that an athlete/team practice longer than their regularly scheduled time or add additional practices, camps or competitions if deemed necessary.
- ❖ Move, replace, add, suspend, or even dismiss an athlete indefinitely from a team or the entire program based on criteria including but not limited to attendance, conduct, skills, finance, parent conflicts, etc.

## CROSSOVER POLICIES

- ❖ Athletes are first and foremost a rostered member of their primary team.
- ❖ Athletes must attend all practices of both their primary and secondary team.
- ❖ It is at the discretion of coaches/staff to discontinue having an athlete crossover at anytime.

Athletes that elect to participate on more than one Top Gun team must:

- ❖ Be in good financial standing
- ❖ Be willing and able to fulfill all the responsibilities required by each team
- ❖ Be responsible for any additional entry fees they incur beyond their first team.

## ALTERNATES (FILL-INS)

- ❖ Upon diagnosis of an injury, alert your head coach immediately and an in-person meeting must be scheduled with the program director.
- ❖ If an athlete becomes injured, we will find a replacement to hold their spot until the athlete is able to return. The injured athlete is required to dress and attend all practices.
- ❖ Parents of the athlete are responsible for paying the competition/coach's fees for any replacement that fills their spot when they are not able to compete. This includes quitting and program removal. Prepaid competition fees are non-refundable.
- ❖ If a bid is earned, the original rostered athlete will receive the bid unless they missed the competition by choice (i.e., not due to injury).

## PAYMENT/BUYOUT FEE

- ❖ All payments must be current to buy apparel, take privates, or enroll in clinics. If you do not pay on the due dates listed above, your credit card or ACH on account will be charged with a late fee the day after payment is missed. A late fee will also be added if the card on file is rejected, this includes declining due to expiration dates. Please make sure your information is up to date on your GoMotion accounts.
- ❖ If for any reason you have not paid on the date the items are due, your athlete will sit out of all classes and practices until it is taken care of. All monies paid are non-refundable.
- ❖ If you quit or are removed from the program anytime throughout the season, you will be charged a \$500 buyout fee and the remainder of your tuition payments.
- ❖ No refunds will be given.

## ABSENCE POLICY

- ❖ **Attendance will be HEAVILY enforced this season; I highly recommend you read the attendance policy before committing.**
- ❖ Alternates or injured athletes must follow all rules, requirements, and guidelines. Additional absences will jeopardize an athlete's placement on their respective teams.
- ❖ After the season starts, the ONLY excused absence is a school function that results in a grade. All other absences are NOT EXCUSED. Excessive school functions that require absences will not be allowed. This includes competitive school cheer, choreography, practices, and competitions. Birthday parties, vacations, concerts will not be APPROVED. An unexcused absence may result in the athlete being moved to an alternate position or pulled from an upcoming performance at the discretion of the staff. It is the responsibility of the athlete to learn any changes prior to practices. Alternates must follow all requirements and guidelines
- ❖ An absence request email must be sent to Aimee at [ansaffle1@gmail.com](mailto:ansaffle1@gmail.com) for elite team and Courtney Stack [courtneystack21@gmail.com](mailto:courtneystack21@gmail.com) for prep teams. The email must be sent at the minimum of two weeks prior to the date your athlete requesting to miss practice.
- ❖ Anything beyond THREE absences may be grounds for removal from the program.
- ❖ Just submitting a vacation request does not mean it will be approved and excused. You must follow up on the request if you have not heard back in seventy-two hours.
- ❖ Practices are mandatory, no absent request will be approved two weeks leading up to a competition. Absences will not be approved.
- ❖ Excused absences: contagious illness, family emergency, school related event that impacts a grade.

## **SICK POLICY**

- ❖ You must attend practice even when you feel sick UNLESS you are sick with a fever higher than 100.4, vomiting, diarrhea, or other contagious illness. A doctor's note with detailed information regarding your illness, treatment and length of recovery will be required. If you do not have the above symptoms or doctors' notes – please attend practice.

## **HEALTH/INJURIES**

All athletes must:

- ❖ Provide Top Gun with current emergency contact information.
- ❖ Inform Top Gun of all medical conditions that may limit or prevent their ability to participate in any Top Gun activities.
- ❖ Notify Top Gun of all injuries sustained because of their participation in any sanctioned Top Gun activity.
- ❖ Provide valid written documentation from a doctor explaining the reason and the duration for which they may be limited or unable to participate in any Top Gun activity.
- ❖ Provide Top Gun with a list of any medications that they are currently taking.
- ❖ Refrain from illegal use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other substances.

## **BOOSTERS AND FUNDRAISING**

- ❖ Our booster account operates as Pittsburgh Superstars (PSSB).
- ❖ Money earned is applied to the athlete's expenses such as uniform, practice wear, shoes, scrunchie, choreography, and competition fees. All money earned through fundraising, sponsorship, etc. becomes property of PSSB, our boosters account. If the athlete leaves the gym for whatever reason, no money will be refunded or transferred. There will be no personal checks written for a refund under any circumstances.
- ❖ Fundraising is available throughout the season. A schedule of fundraisers will be posted.
- ❖ Athlete sponsorship is another way to offset costs. The sponsorship letter (found in Gomotion) can be presented to an individual or business. Sponsors are promoted on our website.
- ❖ There are no refunds issued or transfers to any outside organization.

## **TRAVEL COMPETITIONS**

- ❖ If air travel is required, you must submit your airfare itinerary to Jan Kenz.
- ❖ Athletes must stay with their parents, guardian, or designated chaperone.
- ❖ Under no circumstances are athletes allowed to swim during competition weekends.
- ❖ Jan Kenz is the Top Gun Office Manager, NOT our travel agent. She will alert you as soon as hotel blocks become available. At that point, you are responsible for making hotel reservations.
- ❖ There are several "stay to play" events. This means that we MUST stay at one of the designated hotels assigned by the event producers. There are no exceptions to this rule. Breaking this rule puts the program and brand in jeopardy of disqualification.

## **PRACTICE & CLASSES**

- ❖ Fingernails must be of short; sport length and no jewelry can be worn.
- ❖ Athletes may not video other athletes or teams in the gym without coach's permission.
- ❖ Athletes may not bring food and drink besides water into the gym. Exceptions include crossovers in the gym for more than 4 hours or medical conditions.
- ❖ Practice wear must be worn in its entirety each practice.
- ❖ Please arrive no more than 15 minutes before scheduled practice time.
- ❖ All practices are closed. No parents or spectators allowed in the gym during practice time.
- ❖ Any items left in the gym longer than two weeks will be donated to Goodwill.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP & SOCIAL MEDIA CONDUCT - All athletes AND parents must always:**

- ❖ Set a positive example for others to follow.
- ❖ Be respectful and courteous to everyone.
- ❖ Schedule an appointment to speak with a coach or staff member to discuss any issues that may arise.
- ❖ Refrain from gossiping or any form of verbal or physical confrontation.
- ❖ Refrain from celebrating the misfortune or defeat of another person, team, or program.
- ❖ Accept team placements and awards with dignity and class.
- ❖ Refrain from posting, reposting, or sharing anything that is negative, includes foul or defamatory language.
- ❖ Athletes must refrain from using any type of substance, or posting anything to do with tobacco, smoking, vaping, drinking alcohol or prescription or illegal drugs. This is grounds for immediate dismissal.
- ❖ Be cautious of what behavior and language may be going on directly or indirectly while being photo'd or videoed.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

- ❖ The competition schedule usually comes out in mid to late June. Schedule is always subject to change. Worlds teams will attend NCA in Dallas Tx along with possible chosen teams this season.
- ❖ Anyone can be added to the program at any time for any reason at coach's discretion.
- ❖ All Competitions are mandatory. Missing a competition could result in removal from the program.

## **POINT OF CONTACT**

- ❖ Aimee Nicewarner – Owner/Coach: Vacation dates - for all Elite teams, you must email [Ansaffle1@gmail.com](mailto:Ansaffle1@gmail.com) your vacation dates at the minimum of two weeks prior to leaving on vacation. Please email request, you must also follow up to make sure request was received. All requests require a written 'approval' response from Aimee to have your request approved. THREE unexcused absences may result in removal from the program. When emailing, please add "Vacation Request" in the Subject Line.
- ❖ Courtney Stack – Prep Director/Coach: Vacation dates - for tiny and full year prep teams, you must email [courtneystack21@gmail.com](mailto:courtneystack21@gmail.com) your vacation dates at LEAST 2 weeks prior to leaving on vacation. Please email those and you must get an 'approved' response from me to have your request approved. 3 unexcused absences may result in removal from the program. Emergencies regarding your Prep and Tiny athlete
- ❖ Dana Thomas – Tumbling Director/Coach: All tumbling questions and schedule or tumbling class changes. Please contact Coach Dana at [Dana@topgunpa.com](mailto:Dana@topgunpa.com). Last minute issues with practices – if you have general questions, please email your coach to schedule a meeting
- ❖ Maritza Armstrong - All Finances, credit cards, payments, payment plans. Anything regarding money related questions to Pittsburgh Superstars. [Maritza@topgunpa.com](mailto:Maritza@topgunpa.com)
- ❖ Team Moms: During competitions, the team mom is your 1<sup>st</sup> point of contact. They are not to be contacted at all hours of the day. Please respect that this is a voluntary position, and they all have regular jobs outside of Top Gun.
- ❖ Jan Kenz – Office Manager - All other questions regarding boosters, competitions, travel, etc. [jan@topgunpa.com](mailto:jan@topgunpa.com)

# Cost Breakdown Half Year Prep

**All Star Cheerleading requires a large amount of commitment, not only from the athlete but also from the family. Please make sure you are aware of our policies as well as the financial commitment. Thank you for taking the time to ensure Top Gun All Stars is the right choice for your athlete and family.**

Regular season tuition covers one weekday practice & one tumbling class per week.

- There will be an interest rate on all ACH/Debt cards.
- Tuition, Uniform/Jacket, comp fees and other required items may be automatically charged to your card on file.
- Any card that declines payment or NSF payments there will be a \$30 charge for every occurrence. (This will be enforced)
- It is your responsibility to make sure all payments and accounts are up to date.
- All EXPENSES are subject to change.

Full Year Prep Expenses	Cost	Due Date	Due Date		
Tryout fee	\$75			Before tryouts	
Membership Fee	\$60	9/21		9/21/24	Already paid if currently tumbling at Top Gun
Half Year Prep Tuition	\$127	10/7		7 <sup>th</sup> of every month	
Half Year Novice Tuition	\$112	10/7		7 <sup>th</sup> of every month	
USASF Fee	\$49	10/15			
Choreography Fee	\$250	11/1			
Uniform Girls (program uniform) & Warmup Jacket	\$375	10/20		Two payments of \$187.50, Oct 20 <sup>th</sup> & Nov 20 <sup>th</sup>	Will be worn for two seasons.
Uniform Boys (program uniform) & Warmup Jacket	\$375	10/20		Two payments of \$187.50, Oct 20 <sup>th</sup> & Nov 20 <sup>th</sup>	Will be worn for two seasons.
Comp Bow	\$40	12/1			Will change yearly
Hair Piece	\$65	11/1		Tiny Teams will not wear hair piece	Will be given link
Program Tee	\$25	12/1			Will change yearly
NEW athlete bundle, Practice wear, Shoes, Practice Bow/Scrunchie, Backpack	\$345	10/1			Will change yearly
Returning athlete bundle- Practice wear/Bow	\$125	10/1			
Shoes	\$105	10/1			
Competition Fees	\$699	11/15	1/15	November – January 11/15 – 1/15	

<b>Half Year Prep</b> <b>*Competition Fee</b> <b>Payment plan</b>	<b>Option 1:</b> <b>*One payment \$699</b> <b>Due: Nov 15th</b>	<b>Option 2:</b> <b>*Three payments \$233 Due: Nov 15<sup>th</sup>, Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, Jan 15<sup>th</sup></b>
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## Payment plan options for all competition fees

Price is an estimate and subject to change.

**\*These prices are estimates based on existing figures. They are subject to change but are done in good faith and are accurate as possible. \* All fees are NON-REFUNDABLE & SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

# MANDATORY DATES

## 2023-2024

November 28th	Gym Closed (Thanksgiving)
December TBD	Gym Closed (Christmas Eve & Day)
December 31- January 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2024	Gym Closed (New Year's)
April 20th	Gym Closed (Easter)

