



**PITTSBURGH**

**2025-2026 Full YEAR Prep HANDBOOK**

**FIRST & FOREMOST** \_\_\_\_\_

# **THANK YOU**

\_\_\_\_\_ **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, Savannah, 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 20 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 both 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 Hawaii Pacific University; 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 endeavor 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  
Jan Kenz  
Maritza Armstrong  
Dana Thomas  
Shelbie McCuskey  
Damien Williams  
Becky Troppman

William Fields  
Emma McWilliams

Josh Pugliese  
Abbey Swinderman  
Kayli Perri  
Victoria Murcko  
Kennedy Ward  
Ella Armstrong

Owner/Head Coach  
Office Manager  
Financial Manager  
Tumbling Director  
Prep Director/Social Media/Coach  
Elite Coach/Tumbling Coach  
Tumbling coach/ Cheer Abilities  
Coach  
Elite Coach/Tumbling Coach  
Elite Coach/ Communications &  
Media  
Tumbling Coach  
Elite Coach/Tumbling Coach  
Prep Coach/Tumbling Coach  
Prep Coach  
Prep Coach  
Junior Coach

# **RULES**

## **GENERAL**

- ❖ Important, DO NOT purchase any used Backpacks, Uniforms, Warmups jackets from any former athletes or online Facebook pages. All these items must be purchased through Top Gun Pittsburgh ONLY.
- ❖ Any questions please contact Aimee, [ansaffle1@gmail.com](mailto:ansaffle1@gmail.com) or [Topgunpgh@gmail.com](mailto:Topgunpgh@gmail.com)
- ❖ 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. Water only!
- ❖ Birthday treats for any athlete celebrating his/her birthday may be distributed after practice.
- ❖ All trash must be disposed of 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(s) 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 \$500.00 fee applied to your card on file. If there is a second offense, 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 any time.
- ❖ 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 that incur beyond their first team.

### **ALTERNATES (FILL-INS)**

- ❖ Upon diagnosis of an injury, alert Aimee or your head coach immediately.
- ❖ 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 below, the credit card or ACH on your account will be charged with a late fee of \$50.00 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 current on your GoMotion accounts.
- ❖ You are required to sign a financial agreement before attending the first team practice.
- ❖ 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 this is resolved. All monies paid are non-refundable.
- ❖ If you quit or are removed from the program anytime throughout the season, you will be charged the remainder of your outstanding balance.
- ❖ No refunds will be given.

### **ABSENCE POLICY**

- ❖ **Attendance will be HEAVILY enforced; I highly recommend you read the attendance policy before committing.**
- ❖ Students are allowed up to THREE excused/approved absences for family vacations between the months of June 1<sup>st</sup> - September 5<sup>th</sup>. Beginning Sept 5<sup>th</sup>- May 6<sup>th</sup> students will be allowed an additional THREE excused/approved absences but only for school functions that result in a grade. Please plan these accordingly. Additional absences will jeopardize an athlete's placement on their respective teams.
- ❖ All other absences than listed above are NOT EXCUSED. Excessive school functions that require absences will not be approved. This includes competitive school cheer, choreography, practices, and competitions. Concerts, birthday parties, and various other celebrations will not be APPROVED. Absences are NOT allowed two weeks prior to a national competition. 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.
- ❖ Elite Teams- an absence request email must be sent to Aimee at [ansaffle1@gmail.com](mailto:ansaffle1@gmail.com). The email must be sent at the minimum of two weeks prior to the date your athlete is requesting to miss practice.
- ❖ Prep Teams- an absence request email must be sent to Shelbie at [shelbietopgunpa@gmail.com](mailto:shelbietopgunpa@gmail.com). The email must be sent at the minimum of two weeks prior to the date your athlete is requesting to miss practice.
- ❖ Anything beyond THREE absences may be grounds for removal from their teams and 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 and no absence request will be approved two weeks leading up to a competition.

## **SICK POLICY**

- ❖ You must attend practice even when you feel sick UNLESS you are sick with a fever higher than 102 degrees, 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 or any allergies.
- ❖ Refrain from illegal use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other substances.

## **BOOSTERS AND FUNDRAISING**

- ❖ Our booster account operates as Pittsburgh Superstars (PSSB) and is in the process of switching to a 501c3. More Information to come.
- ❖ 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 the booster's 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.
- ❖ 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 a 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.
- ❖ 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, or 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, and 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.
- ❖ Top Gun competition rules will be explained and enforced.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

- ❖ The competition schedule usually comes out in early June. Schedule is always subject to change. Worlds teams will attend NCA in Houston, 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.

## **THE CHEERLEADING WORLDS AND END OF SEASON CHAMPIONSHIPS**

- Top Gun accepts bid to The Cheerleading Worlds held in April.
- You are not to book flights or hotel reservations until travel dates are released.
- You must book flights and hotel reservations on the required travel dates, or your athlete will not compete at the End of the Season Championships
- If you are an athlete who crosses to a Worlds team, there is a possibility you will have to fly home between the End of season Championship competitions.
- Additional expenses will incur after receiving a bid to The End of Season Championship competitions.

## **POINT OF CONTACT**

- ❖ *Aimee Nicewarner* – Owner/Coach: [ansaffle1@gmail.com](mailto:ansaffle1@gmail.com) Vacation dates - for all Elite teams, you must email 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.
- ❖ *Jan Kenz* – Office Manager - [jan@topgunpa.com](mailto:jan@topgunpa.com) All other questions regarding fundraising, competitions, travel.
- ❖ *Shelbie McCuskey* – Prep Director/Coach: [Shelbietopgunpa@gmail.com](mailto:Shelbietopgunpa@gmail.com) Vacation dates - for tiny and full year prep teams, you must email your vacation dates at the minimum of 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: [Dana@topgunpa.com](mailto:Dana@topgunpa.com) All tumbling questions and schedule or tumbling class changes. Please contact Coach Dana with last minute issues with practices – if you have general questions, please email your coach to schedule a meeting.
- ❖ *Maritza Armstrong* – Financial Manager: [Maritza@topgunpa.com](mailto:Maritza@topgunpa.com) All finances, credit card payments, payment plans or anything regarding money related questions pertaining to Top Gun.
- ❖ *Team Moms* - During competitions, the team mom is your first 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.



# Cost Breakdown Full Year Prep

<u>All NEW ATHLETES to TG ELITE Expenses Levels 1-5</u>	<u>Cost</u> <b>Girls</b>	<u>Cost</u> <b>Boys</b>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Notes:</u>	<u>Additional Notes:</u>
Tryout fee	\$75	\$75	Now	Before tryouts	
Membership/Registration Fee	\$75	\$75	6/1	Included in with first tuition payment	
Elite Tuition Level 1-5	\$130	\$130		First of every month	Sibling discount \$25 per kid for monthly tuition.
New Athlete Bundle- Pricing is subject to change	\$375	\$365		<b>Girls</b> PW #1 \$100, Backpack \$125, Shoes \$100 T-shirt \$25, Bow/Scrunchie \$25	<b>Boys</b> PW #1 \$115, Backpack \$125, Shoes \$100 T-shirt \$25
Choreography Fee Level 1-5	\$350	\$350			
Music Fee	\$50	\$50			
New Uniform (program uniform)	\$225	\$225			Will be worn for two seasons. Warm up not sure how long.
Warm Up Jacket	\$165	\$165			
Competition Bow	\$45	N/A			
Competition Fees	\$1000	\$1000			
Payment Plan	\$2415	\$2360	<b>Boys</b> 10 payments of \$236	<b>Girls</b> 10 payments of \$241.50	You can make payments toward your balance at any time. Once you are paid in full, your card will no longer be charged monthly.
Payment In Full	\$2415	\$2360			
<b>Returning Athlete</b>	\$2290	\$2235	<b>Boys</b> \$223.50 x 10 payments	Girls 10 a \$229	
<b>Fees not included in package above</b>					
Hair Piece	\$65	NA		Parent order: link will be sent	
USASF Fee	\$49	\$49		Parent pays USASF.net	
Tuition Crossover Fee	\$45	\$45		First of every month	
Crossover Competition fee	TBA	TBA			
Crossover Choreography fee	\$225	\$225			

- ❖ Additional costs may be added for spirit wear clothing, team bonding, skills camp throughout the season, miscellaneous items.
- ❖ Mini Models competition fees are priced on the high end, depending on the competition, the comp fees could be reduced.
- ❖ Athletes will purchase their own hair pieces.
- ❖ Prices are made based on estimates done in good faith. All fees are NON- REFUNDABLE & SUBJECT TO CHANGE.
  - Teams that secure a bid to post-season competitions will incur additional expenses after receiving the bid. The amount will be set based on that event fee, coach's fees, spirit gifts, practice rental facility, and the number of athletes attending. These fees are NOT included in your monthly package.
  - There will be a 3% service fee on all ACH/Debit cards.
  - Any card that declines payment or NSF payments there will be a \$50 charge for every occurrence. This will be enforced.
  - It is your responsibility to make sure all payments and accounts are up to date, if you lock your card and we run monthly fees, you will be charged \$50. If payment is not made athletes will have to sit out for practices.



### **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.**

## **Holiday Closures and Choreography**

May 25 <sup>th</sup> - 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Gym Closed (Memorial Day)
June 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Gym Closed (Father's Day)
July 1 <sup>st</sup> - July 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Gym Closed
July 19 <sup>th</sup> - August 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2025	Routine Choreography (Mandatory)
August 29 <sup>th</sup> - September 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2025	Gym Closed (Labor Day)
October 14 <sup>th</sup> -17 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Dance Choreography
October 9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> , 2025 Supermodels (Camp Geneva)	Mandatory Camp (Florida)
November 27 <sup>th</sup> - 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Gym Closed (Thanksgiving) Sunday, November 30 <sup>th</sup> is Mandatory for all elite athletes
December 24 <sup>th</sup> – December 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	Gym Closed (Christmas) Practices will be moved around during the holidays.
December 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2025 - January 1 <sup>st</sup> 2026	Gym Closed (New Year's)
April 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2026	Gym Closed (Easter) Please keep in mind, vacations will not be approved; we will be prepping for the end of the year events.

**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.**