



## **2019-20 GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY SPIRIT PROGRAM RULES AND POLICIES DOCUMENT**

Welcome to the Georgia State Spirit Program. We are very glad that you made the choice to join our spirit family, as well as be a part of the GSU athletics brand. Your role as a spirit group member is a very important one. Not only are you a student-athlete, but you are also an ambassador and role model for our very diverse student population. Being a part of the program takes a lot of hard work and dedication. The payoffs of rewards in the end, along with experiences that will last throughout your lifetime.

The two primary objectives of the spirit groups at GSU are first to promote spirit, pride, and enthusiasm for GSU Athletics, the university and surrounding community; and second to be recognized as an attractive team to prospective athletes with talent that will join and be focused on continuing to build our nationally ranked competitive program for cheer, dance, and the team of mascots. The following rules, guidelines, and expectations will prepare you to make a smooth transition into the program and/or new season and help to make our spirit program continue to grow strong and successful in the future. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the information provided, please do not hesitate to ask.

### **The Georgia State Brand**

As a spirit group member and an athlete for Georgia State University, you are expected to uphold and protect the GSU Brand. This brand is what the public sees whenever GSU athletes are visible in the public. As a public figure, you must always remain professional. This means sacrificing some of the activities other college students participate in. As a representative of the brand, you must be above the average in your maturity and conduct while in uniform, in classes, and most of all on your social media.

### **Your Role as a Brand Representative**

Each of you must possess a positive, coachable attitude at all times. You must work together and respect your teammates, coaching staff, and the administration. Team members must follow university rules and always present yourselves as a friendly and positive role model. GSU athletes are considered an ambassador on and off campus, in the classroom, and online (including social media sites). Remember, you always represent the university, whether in uniform or not. Please act respectfully and appropriately. Inappropriate behavior is grounds for dismissal from the team. All members of this program must always be friendly and personable. Even when you are having a bad day, it is most important to have a positive and happy demeanor when participating in university functions, events, and games. Your appearance is equally important, and all members must maintain a professional image while participating in all events.

### **Social Media**

Again, all members must represent the brand in the most professional manner. Be very careful as to what you post on your social media pages. Inappropriate photos including nudity, profanity, and photos with of you with “beverages” in your hands, or that appear in the photo with you are not acceptable. If these posts are seen by the staff or members of the team more than once, you can be terminated from the team.

### **Employment Choices**

As a member of the Spirit Program use discretion when choosing a place of employment. Places of employment must be of an acceptable nature excluding jobs catering to the “over 21” clientele including bars, some lounges, and establishments of an adult nature. Exceptions may be made if discussed with the head coach prior to accepting an invitation to participate on the team. Although we attempt to comply with every athlete’s schedule, employment will never excuse an absence from any event. We do understand that having a job is a necessity for students, and we will try to work with your schedules as much as possible. The key to success in work related conflicts are to communicate the conflict as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made. Last minute changes in your work schedule are not an excuse for missing practices and events.

### **Communication**

Your team cannot be successful without good communication. It is very important to know about upcoming events early on to ensure that everyone can participate. To keep everyone organized and on the same page, a multitude of emails are sent during the season. It is most important that you make sure an email address is on file with the program that you check often. It is expected that you will check emails two to three times per day to make sure that you are in the loop with all spirit program information as things may change. These emails will also sometimes contain calendars of events that you should always print out and keep with you. Another good practice is to get and use a day planner to keep up with all the dates of events that we participate in. Text messages are also sent to update information by your captains. When you receive information about upcoming events and you have a conflict with the information or a question, it is your responsibility to respond immediately so that the question can be answered, the conflict can be resolved, or other arrangements can be made.

### **COMMUNICATION OF ISSUES**

If you issue with decisions or matters with your team or the program. It is most important that you set up a meeting with the head coach to discuss the topic as soon as possible. Most issues can be handled and taken care of through open communication. It is not advised to have your parents to call the athletic department to discuss issues with the administration. You are responsible for your membership in the program, and we expect you to conduct yourself maturely and handle issues on your own.

### **PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

How you carry yourself and your physical appearance are an integral part of the GSU brand. You are asked to have a clean, fresh, and professional look at all times. This includes when you are participating in spirit program events or on your own time. You are one of the most visible student-athletes on campus, so you must always maintain a positive appearance. Changes in hair color and style throughout the season must be approved by the head coach. Hair color must be of a natural shade. For performances, games, and events, hair and makeup should be game day ready. Nails should be of an appropriate length, with no color, or French tipped, and the only jewelry that can be worn are the official uniform earrings for females. Males must be clean shaven, finished hairstyles, with no jewelry. All tattoos must be covered. Only use the tattoo concealer that you can purchase at Sephora, as covering them with makeup damages the uniform. Uniforms must fit correctly as well. Make sure that your uniform fits properly throughout the season. In the event that it does not, you must exchange it for a better fitting one immediately. All spirit athletes must be in good physical condition as well as be able to perform at their best. Details on the conditioning and healthy eating program are discussed later in this document.

### **ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

All athletes must be enrolled in at least 12 credit hours during the fall and spring semesters. Graduate students must maintain 6 credit hours per semester. You must maintain a 2.0 G.P.A. and be in good academic standing during the semesters that you are participating. If you fall below a 2.0 GPA or below 12 credit hours during the year, you will be dismissed from the team.

### **SPORTS MEDICINE REQUIREMENTS**

You must have a recent physical examination and hold your own personal health insurance policy throughout the season which officially starts at tryouts for the next season. Copies of both your insurance card and your medical physical examination must be turned in to the athletic trainer prior to participating in the program. If your personal medical insurance lapses, you will be dismissed from the team.

### **TEAM RULES**

You must attend all practices, performances, and games including post season play, national competition, and other scheduled events as specified by the program. All athletes are also required to participate in scheduled community service events and fundraising activities to benefit the spirit program. In the event you cannot attend a spirit function, you must contact your coach to discuss the conflict. Lack of communication with the coaches or “no shows” will be grounds for dismissal from the team. Extenuating circumstances will be dealt with on an individual basis by the coaching staff. Being on time is very important to the program. You are expected to arrive on time for all required functions. If you will be late for a function, immediately communicate with your coach; failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. Spirit athletes are not allowed to chew gum or wear non-uniform jewelry when participating in spirit activities. Only official earrings are accepted as part of females Game Day uniform. Female members make up should be appropriate for the activity. Only natural hair color will be accepted for both male and female members. All members’ finger nails should be at an appropriate length for safety. Female member’s finger nail color should be limited to a natural color, or French tipped while in uniform. Male members must be clean shaven face professional appearance. All visible tattoos must be covered while participating in public events. Getting tattoos or piercings is restricted to the summer months, specifically the month of June, as you will need to become active in the program in July with events.

### **TARDINESS AND ABSENCE**

Excessive tardiness will not be tolerated. You will be written up and/or dismissed once absences become excessive. All scheduled events, games, and appearances are mandatory. No shows without a valid excuse will be grounds for dismissal. Always arrive at practice 15 minutes prior to start time to properly prepare for practice. All cheer members must assist with putting out the mats, as well as rolling them up at the end of practice.

During football season, all members must park in the required parking areas, or be dropped off at the stadium. It is advised to add at least 30 minutes to your travel time to arrive on time.

Check-in time for basketball games is 90 minutes before tip-off in the practice gym. This is an important time for the teams because it is necessary to get taped up, and get skills warmed up and ready to perform for the games. Disciplinary actions for tardies may include physical activity including laps, extra conditioning, etc. Again, excessive unexcused tardies will result in dismissal from the team.

### **TRAVEL POLICIES**

When traveling with or on behalf of GSU Athletics, you are expected to govern yourself per all rules of the university as well as those set forth in this document. You are always to act as excellent representatives of the GSU athletic department. Members will be provided per diem on all trips to cover food. Any additional costs for entertainment or shopping are the responsibility of the athlete. When travel interferes with class schedules, please notify via email the conflict so that the staff can contact your instructor or professor with an absence excuse email or letter. Travel letters will also be available for you to give to your instructors prior to a major trip.

### **EQUIPMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Athletes must be responsible for all uniforms, accessories, and equipment that are issued to you for the season. You must wash/clean and return all uniforms and body liners at the end of the season, or when your membership is terminated. Should you leave the team during the season, any issued practice clothing, apparel, warm ups, and poms must be returned unless otherwise specified. If items are not returned, a hold will be placed on your student account and you will not be able to register, transfer, or apply for graduation until the items are returned. You will incur a fine for any lost, stolen, or damaged items.

### **PERSONAL ITEMS**

As a member of the Spirit Squad, you will receive a back pack or duffle bag to carry your spirit equipment. Please limit this to necessary items. Do not bring cash or valuable items with you to events. These items are your responsibility if they are lost or stolen. The Athletic Department, the coach nor the venue will be responsible for your personal items.

### **SKILL STANDARDS**

All spirit athletes are expected to work hard and uphold the skill standards of the program. Your position on the team is not guaranteed. You will be evaluated throughout the season by the coaching staff. The coach will meet with you and communicate ways that you can improve, when necessary. If your skill level, motivation level, or positive attitude falls below the set standard of the program, the coach has the right to dismiss you from the team. It is your responsibility to work on skills outside of practice to improve yourself for your team.

### **TEAM WORK**

Team unity and cohesiveness are very important elements to our success. It is important to understand that, as a member of the team, the individual's goals, opinions and issues are secondary to the team goals. If conflicts arise, they should be handled by the athletes involved. The coaching staff will step in if necessary to rectify the situation. If the conflict cannot be reconciled expeditiously, the members involved may be dismissed from the team.

### **HOLIDAY PARTICIPATION**

As a member of the program, you are required to participate at football bowl games, holiday basketball games, and events during the Christmas holidays, as well as Spring Break. Make sure that if you have plans, or live in another state, that you communicate your possible conflicts as early as possible so that we can work together to find an alternative plan to replace your absence.

### **COMPETITION TEAM**

A competition cheer team, as well as the dance team, will be formed to compete. Understand that it is a privilege to be selected to participate on the competition team. All members chosen for this honor will be the most dedicated and hardworking individuals that we have in the program. Tryouts for the teams will be held early in the fall. Additional fund raising, sponsorships, and additional events will be required of these team members to defray the costs of participation in the event. Fund raising activities will begin in the summer months to maximize the revenue.

### **SAFETY AND HEALTH**

Our goal is to run a safe program with healthy athletes. You are expected to stay in shape and be physically fit while participating in this athletic activity. Staying fit and eating a healthy diet, along with getting proper rest, will help keep you strong and full of energy. This will also help to prevent injuries, which in turn will help the team's progress and performance readiness for games, events, and competitions. Team workouts are scheduled weekly. All athletes in the program are required to participate in the two workout sessions per week. Workouts are managed by the Strength and Conditioning department. Missing more than three workouts in one semester removes you from workouts, which then benches you from travel for the remainder of the semester. Always communicate with the Strength and Conditioning coach to work through an issue.

### **TREATMENT AND CARE**

The GSU training room is available to you for treatment in the event of an injury due to spirit squad activities. In the event of an injury at an official team function, you are required to be evaluated by a GSU athletic trainer. It is your responsibility to make appointments that will not interfere with practice time or other scheduled cheer events. After evaluation, you must be cleared by a trainer to participate in team activities. If you are not cleared to participate due to an injury, you must still attend all scheduled practices and activities to observe. You will not be able to return to participatory status until cleared by the athletic trainer. When visiting the training room for treatment always dress appropriately and do not wear headphones for your treatment to be effective.

### **ATHLETE BENEFITS**

There are many benefits for being a member of the Spirit Program which include the following:

- Priority registration for the spring semester.
- Academic advisement and tutoring.
- Access to the Athletic Study Hall.
- Access to the athletic training room and medical assistance for injuries.
- Access to the athletic weight room,
- Access to the strength and conditioning coaching staff for workouts and nutrition assistance,
- Access to the learning lab and academic study halls,
- Under Armour gear, shoes, warm ups, and sweats.

- Uniforms and accessories.
- Travel to away football games and post season basketball games including travel expenses and meals by the GSU athletic department.

### **TEAM POUNCE**

Stipends are available to the Team Pounce mascots only currently. These athletes must successfully complete the season to be compensated. The amounts awarded to you are deducted from your tuition each semester. Stipend money can be reduced for disciplinary issues when necessary. Final decisions are determined by the head coach. If your membership is terminated during or before the semester is complete, your student account will be billed for the amount that you owe.

### **SPONSORSHIPS AND FUNDRAISING**

Everyone in the program is expected to participate in fundraising events, as well as our summer Sponsorship Drive to raise funds for the program. Amounts will be set by the coaching staff. These funds must be secured for you to participate in the program. These funds are also nonrefundable if you leave the team.

### **TEAM FEES**

All members are required to fundraise to pay for UCA/UDA camp, which we will attend in late July. The cost per participant is \$540. If you attend camp, this fee is non-refundable upon dismissal from the team. All members that join the team after camp must pay a \$300 Team Commitment Fee. This fee is nonrefundable if the member quits the team or is dismissed due to disciplinary action. The fee must be paid within 30 days of making the team. It should be paid in a Money Order form written to Georgia State University. ABSOLUTLY NO CHECKS!

### **TEAM RESIGNATION AND DISMISAL**

We value your position on the team, and of course want everyone to have a successful season. If you must leave the team during the season for academic reasons, you can return to the team the next season. If you leave for any other reason during the season, we ask that you take one full season off to regroup and come back to the program. It is best to not quit in the middle of the season. We are here to support you in any way that we can so that we can retain our athletes and make our teams grow stronger. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the staff and speak with us.

This document is to protect and insure program consistency as well as ensure you have the best experience as a member of the GSU Spirit Squad. All spirit group members must uphold the rules and expectations outlined in this document throughout your time as a member of the program. An athlete can be removed from the program due to infractions to rules stated here in this document by the head coach.

I \_\_\_\_\_, understand the terms of this  
(Print name)

GSU Spirit Group document and intend to comply to with the best of my ability throughout the 2019-20 season. I understand that I will hold harmless Georgia State University, GSU Athletics and its staff in the event of injury, harm, accidental death, or theft of property while serving as a member of this program.

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Athlete's Signature

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Date

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Head Coach's Signature

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Date