

News Release

Dobbs Ferry High School Cheerleading Is a Competitive Three-Season Varsity Sport

New Middle School Cheerleading Team to perform at Modified Games



Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. August 8, 2016—No sooner did school let out at the end of June, than three weeks later one Dobbs Ferry High School sports team had already begun its 3-4 day-a-week practice schedule. Since mid-July the varsity cheerleaders, comprised of 18 girls grades 10-12, have been honing their skills and routines in preparation for the start of football season and cheerleading camp at the end of August.

The girls will be participating in an intensive two-day cheerleading camp at Division 1 Hofstra University, where they will receive individualized instruction from members of the University's nationally ranked Cheering Squad. The team will work on stunts, pyramids, tumbling and other basic skills necessary for the sport. Dobbs Ferry High School Coach and Science Teacher Kelly Rancier was Assistant Cheerleading Coach at Carmel High School and is a former Hofstra cheerleader. She was what is called a "flyer." Flyer, base and backspot are the stunting positions. Flyer is the person they are tossing; the two bases do the heavy lifting; and the backspot is usually the tallest person and their job is to take some of the weight off the bases.

Rancier has taken the Dobbs Ferry team to a new performance level that includes local and regional competitions. The team usually practices in the Middle School gym or outside during the summer months and moves to the Springhurst gym come September. In the fall, they continue to practice four days a week plus perform at a game on the weekend. The girls cheer through fall and winter season (football and basketball) and then compete starting December through February. They are active for three seasons, more than any other varsity team. Rancier has been the varsity coach for three years. This year, the team took 1st place at a cheerleading competition at Walter Panas High School in December. In March, Dobbs Ferry senior Leanna Guarascio won a cheerleading scholarship to college... a first for the High School.

Rancier also received the Coaches' Award for "most improved" team in Section 1 from the Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland, Cheerleading Coaches Association (WPDRCCA). "We hope to enlist a number of 9th graders this year for the varsity team," Rancier said. "We have some very exciting news though for the 2016-2017 school year, as we'll be offering a Middle School cheerleading team consisting of 7th and 8th graders. The team is open to both boys and girls and they will cheer at modified football games. We hope to get about 12-20 students to join. It helps if you have gymnastics skills or like gymnastics or tumbling, but it's not a requirement."

According to Rancier, the team uses new material and half-time routines every year. They never duplicate dances or competition performances. Rancier choreographs the moves, stunts, dances, formations and transitions. It takes about 2-3 weeks to learn and perfect a half-time routine. Competition routines take approximately two months of work to perfect. The team starts practicing in October for the December competition. While most college teams do have male members, there is another competitive tract for coed teams at the high school level.

“I love coaching and it’s so gratifying to be part of a sport that has meant so much to me...I’ve never had to let go!” Rancier said. “The High School and District has been very supportive. We didn’t have winter cheerleading two years ago, or participate in any competitions and now we are ready to add a Middle School Cheerleading team. It’s important to have a feeder program in place to continue to grow the Cheerleading program in Dobbs Ferry.”

Presently, the Dobbs Ferry High School Varsity Cheerleading Team competes in a division that includes schools which are almost double our size with up to 749 students in their high schools. Dobbs Ferry is in Conference 2, comprising the “smaller” schools, although some of the other programs have junior varsity teams, freshman teams, tumbling coaches and assistant coaches. Cheerleading is not just pom-poms and rah-rah anymore ever since the Board of Regents recognized “Competitive Cheerleading” as an official high school sport in 2014. “Our cheerleaders are talented and dedicated student-athletes,” Rancier said, “and we are so proud of their accomplishments in such a short time.”

For more information, please contact:

Public Information Officer, Elizabeth Hausman (914)693-1500 x3013