



Expectations & Policies 2023-2024

There are certain philosophies and policies that will govern the Texas Tech Spirit Program. These policies and expectations are subject to change. Members are expected to follow the policies set forth in this document. Failure to do so may result in termination from Program.

Given the opportunity to be a member of the Texas Tech Spirit Program will be considered a privilege; it is understood that any person dedicated to being a part of the Spirit Program is also making a philosophical commitment to the program. This is a **yearlong commitment**. The intent is to continue elevating the program in the Lubbock community, the state of Texas, and nationally during games, appearances, and competition. The Texas Tech Spirit Program is in the Division of Student Life. Comprised of a Co-Ed Cheer Squad, All-Girl Cheer Squad/STUNT, Pom Squad, Raider Red, and the Masked Rider, the Spirit Program is managed by a Spirit Program Director, Cheer & Mascot Coach, and Pom Squad Coach.

Purpose & Mission:

The Texas Tech Spirit Program will promote and uphold Texas Tech spirit and traditions while striving to motivate, inspire, and entertain fans at games, appearances, community outreach events, and competitions. Members will maintain a **good sportsmanship** while focusing on **academic success, student development, leadership opportunities**, student **health and wellbeing** while operating within safety regulations set forth by the USA Cheer Safety Board.

Program Benefits:

Each member meeting eligibility qualify for the following benefits:

- Quality Education
- Academic Leadership Scholarships
 - Cheer/Pom: \$1,000 Student Life Leadership Scholarship, waives out of state tuition)
 - Raider Red: Texas Tech Credit Union Leadership Scholarship
 - Masked Rider: United Supermarkets Leadership Scholarship
- Travel Expenses Paid for out of town games
- Uniforms, Practice Attire, and Equipment Provided
- Partial Meal Plan
- Academic Tutoring Services Provided
- Discounted Family Football Tickets
- Contracted Athletic Trainer
- Supportive Alumni
- Paid Collegiate National Competition Opportunities
- Tanning & Skin Care Services
- Eyelash Extensions & Services
- Nail Salon Services
- Facial Waxing Services
- Texas Tech & Big 12 Conference Experiences and Traditions

Academic Status & Eligibility:

Members must maintain **good academic standing** during year of service. Each must demonstrate **academic progress** in securing a degree. The Spirit Program Director & Coaches through grade and attendance checks will monitor academic progress. To be eligible, students must maintain a **2.00 (or higher) current and cumulative GPA**. Mascot team members must maintain at least a 2.5 GPA. Failure to maintain GPA standards may result in:

- Additional Study Hall required hours
- Loss of travel, including possible national competition
- Required tutoring sessions
- Monthly grade checks
- Strict class attendance policy
- Possible loss of position on mat for National Competition

All members will be required to attend study hall and/or tutoring. Additional hours may be required for proper academic achievement. At any time, a member's GPA falls below a 1.00 cumulative GPA, they may be dismissed from program. **First year** students will be required to do **two hours** of study hall each week.

Any change with academic schedule that effects the total number of hours taken in semester must be discussed prior with Spirit Program Director and/or Coaches.

Attendance:

While your academic success is priority, the success of the team depends on **everyone** being at practices, assigned games, camp/clinics, and appearances. Coach may require written documentation prior to an absence. Study sessions are not excused unless you are on academic probation. You may be excused, with proper notification, for academic recognition programs but must attend as much of a practice, game, or appearance as possible.

Program members may have to give up part, or all, of their **Thanksgiving holiday break, winter semester break and Spring Break** to attend practices, games, and/or appearances.

The Spirit Program will cover, but not limited to, **football, women's volleyball, and men's & women's basketball games, and selected other Texas Tech sports**. Members may also have the opportunity to travel to post season football bowl games, conference and NCAA/NIT post-season basketball tournaments. In addition, **public appearances** are required by squad members to attend throughout the year. Incentives should not have to be offered when needs for appearances are announced. It is the responsibility of each member to make public appearances. Spirit Program members will also be **required** to attend **summer practices**.

Events in your personal life do not take precedence over Texas Tech Spirit Program activities. Once schedules are finalized, you must follow the procedure for obtaining game substitutes. The Coaches will deal with any exceptions.

Ultimately, the Coach determines an excused absence/tardy. All times are according to the Coach/Spirit Program Director's watches. Tardiness is defined as 1 to 14 minutes late to any event, practice, or game. An absence is defined as not showing up, or arriving 15 minutes late (or later) to any event, practice, or game. The Coach may implement consequences for any unexcused absence/tardy. Any and all consequences/punishments will be set forth by the Coach/Director and are final, and may not be discussed publicly with others. Examples may include:

- Extra Conditioning, for individual any/or team
- Benched for Home Game/National's consideration
- Loss of Travel privilege (includes out of town games, tournaments, events, and national competition)
- Meal Plan removed (coach determines time period)
- Removed from Program

It is understood that an advanced skill level is expected in the Texas Tech Spirit Program. Practice times are for the Coach and team to work on skills together. It is understood that you will have to devote time outside of practice to

attain a higher skill level, increase difficulty, stamina, and consistency. Therefore, “open gyms” may be built into and added the regular practice schedule.

Due to conflicting schedules, members of the Texas Tech Spirit Program will not be allowed to participate in Fall Greek Life Recruitment. If interested in participating in Spring Recruitment, member must discuss with Head Coach prior to enrolling.

Conduct:

Spirit Program members are **highly visible symbols of Texas Tech University** and, thus, must conduct themselves accordingly at **ALL** times. You should do nothing to bring embarrassment to the University, your family, your squad, Coaches/Spirit Program Director, the Center for Campus Life, or to yourself.

Selection as a Spirit Program member separates you from the remainder of the Texas Tech student body. All members must adhere to the Texas Tech University’s Student Code of Conduct (www.ttu.edu/studenthandbook).

The following rules also apply:

- No smoking of any kind, smokeless tobacco chewing, drug use (including alcohol) will be tolerated while in uniform or while fulfilling the role of the Texas Tech Spirit Program.
- It is important that the general public not be aware of your status as a Spirit Program member in establishments whose main purpose is to serve alcohol.
- Facebook, Twitter, SnapChat, TikTok and other social networking sites must contain **appropriate content** with respect to the integrity and reputation of the Spirit Program. This includes, but is not limited to social site status updates, wall postings, and pictures. Content appropriateness is based on the discretion of the Coach/Director.
- Squad members should not receive gifts or benefits from Spirit Program booster(s) or businesses. *(See Appendix B: Spirit Program Booster Guidelines)*

A **positive attitude** is essential. Any attitudes that appear detrimental to the success of the Spirit Program will be addressed. The Coach and Spirit Program Director do reserve the right to sideline or dismiss a member based on attitude. It is essential that each member take the time to become acquainted with his or her teammates, as well as other members of Spirit Program. Learning to understand all spirit program teammates helps promote team unity. Whether you agree or not with a person’s lifestyle or choices should not interfere with your desire to broaden your horizons as a person.

You may risk immediate dismissal or suspension from the Spirit Program for the following:

- Attending any practice, game, appearance, or competition under the influence or suspected consumption of alcohol and/or other non-prescribed drugs. This includes smelling of alcohol (breath or body).
- Illegal substance abuse or habitual substance abuse (including alcohol).
- If arrested or illegal behavior.
- Any actions/behavior deemed inappropriate by Spirit Program Director/Coaches.

Personal Appearance & Uniforms

Uniformity is one important aspect of a Spirit Program. Any unapproved deviation from the requested dress will have consequences. Practices attire will be scheduled at the beginning of the year. Spirit Program members will **not be allowed to wear clothing advertising another university/college** while serving as a Spirit Program member.

Uniforms, practice/travel attire, and warm ups must be kept neat and clean. You are responsible for the upkeep of the items in your possession. Alteration services are provided. Each member will be required to arrive in the proper attire, warm up, and perform by the designated time. **To be early is to be on time; to be on time is to be LATE!**

Spirit Program members will practice good personal hygiene and be well groomed.

Cheer Males: Must wear provided dry-fit undershirt under their uniform that is assigned for scheduled uniform, facial hair preferred to be shaved for a “clean cut” look (neatly trimmed is accepted) at games and appearances, hair must be a natural shade of color with a professional looking hairstyle/cut. Cheer shoes provided by program must be worn for practices, games, appearances, and competitions.

Female Cheerleaders: Must have hair pulled half-up for games, appearances, and competitions. Ponytails are recommended for practices. A grosgrain ribbon will be used for games, appearances, and practices. Hair color should be natural in appearance. Curled hair is required due to television and photo opportunities. Cheer shoes provided by program must be worn for practices, games, appearances, and competitions.

Pom Squad: Must have hair fixed appropriately for the uniform assigned. Hairstyles may change for different functions, games, and events, but ultimately the decision is that of the coach. All hair color should be natural in appearance. Shoes provided by the program must be worn for practices, games, appearances, and competitions.

Mascots: Mascot members should have the professional appearance arriving, during, and after events. Proper attire must be worn under costume. Proper care of the costume, carrying bags, and other items associated with the mascot is the responsibility of each mascot member.

Spirit Squads’ members are **not allowed to loan** or allow other people outside the Spirit program to wear any of the Spirit Squads uniforms – including wind suit, sweatshirt, and Tech Spirit t-shirts. Squad members should only wear uniforms while attending an appearance, games or official function.

All body tattoos are required to be covered and not be visible for games, appearances, or competitions. Exception will be game-day facial tattoos. Body jewelry of any type is not allowed for practice, games, appearances, or competitions. Also applies for gum, candy, and hats.

All returnable items, such as uniforms and wind suits, will be returned at the end of the season. A hold will be placed on your Tech records until all items are returned. If you should choose to leave or are dismissed from the Spirit Program, you will be required to return **all** Tech Spirit items within 48 hours of departure. This includes any t-shirts, shorts/tights, shoes, and backpack.

Eating Disorders & Use of Artificial Enhancements:

Texas Tech Spirit Program members are expected to **maintain** an appearance this is viewed as athletic. A **balanced diet and conditioning** are necessary. Due to the nature of the activity, the tendencies toward eating disorders are great. If at any time a member of the Spirit Program, or if an individual has knowledge of another member of the squad showing signs of an eating disorder, please contact the coaches immediately. The appropriate staff will be contacted and proper avenues of intervention will be taken. The use of artificial enhancements will not be condoned nor supported by the Texas Tech Spirit Program. Anyone contemplating use of supplements or new nutritional programs should seek the advice of the team’s athletic trainer.

Travel:

The coach will determine traveling squad. Spots will be determined based on skills, attitude, academic standing, and seniority. The size of the squad traveling will be determined by budget restrictions and in accordance with the Big 12 Conference, the NCAA, and University rules and regulations. Travel attire will be determined before a trip. You must be **dressed appropriately** at arrival for departure or you will not make the trip.

The squad will travel to as a group and return as a group for all travel. Squad members may not leave with an outside party at any time during travel. Exceptions to this may be made for travel during summer and holiday events. In the event that an exception is made, squad members may only leave with a parent/legal guardian with prior written document given to Coach.

At all times during travel, squad members’ behavior shall be **exemplary** and a **great representation** of Texas Tech University. While traveling, performing at University functions and at games must remain primary focus. Unable to perform to the squad’s best ability will result in consequences. Failure to abide by these regulations, the Coach/Director may impose an immediate dismissal from the Program.

Financial Resources:

The Spirit Program is supported by student service fees and operates from an annual predetermined budget managed by the Spirit Program Director that serves as the primary financial source for the squad; however, there may be times that squad members are asked to fundraise or pay for certain items. Funds that are raised by the squads at competitions, clinics, and other fundraising events will be deposited into the Texas Tech Spirit Program Fundraising Account.

Coaching Staff:

The Spirit Program Staff were selected by Texas Tech University to provide leadership, oversight, and guidance to the TTU Spirit Program. The coach and athlete relationship and squad relationships are of the highest value to a successful team. **Mutual respect** should be displayed to all members of the team and staff. Students should comply with reasonable directives of Spirit Program Staff acting in the performance of their duties **without question or complaints**. Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve concerns directly with the individuals involved. Most situations can be effectively addressed in this manner. Should a concern not be able to be addressed in this manner, students should consult with the appropriate Coach and then the Spirit Program Director.

When/if other concern(s) arise, please use the proper chain of command in this order: squad leadership, head coach, Spirit Program Director, Director of Campus Life, then Dean of Students. Having access to upper administration does not give you accessibility to them first without trying to get a resolution with coach/director.

Insurance/Injuries:

It is expected that each member has personal health insurance coverage. A current copy of the member's insurance card must be handed in and will be kept on file in the Spirit Program office. Texas Tech University does not have insurance to cover injury or illness arising from participation in spirit activities.

An athletic trainer will be available for consultation and treatment on injuries. Individuals must seek advisement on level of participation if an injury occurs. Excusing oneself without trainer's, or doctor note, may result in an absence. If an injury occurs, the team's athletic trainer and voluntary doctor must release before being able to participate in any practice, game, appearance, or competition.

Competitions/Nationals:

The National's Squad team member selection is at the discretion of the Coach. The decision is final and based on, but not limited to attitude, timeliness throughout year, progress in all skill levels, routine elements, and performance ability. Discipline issues may also be considered. The Coach can replace members of the National's team with an alternate at any given time.

End-of -Year Recognition Gifts:

Students who are in good standing on the squad may receive a gift for each year of completed service on the squad. Graduating seniors who are in good standing on the squad may receive a framed gift upon completing **no less than two years of service** on the squad.