

Rocklin Jr. Thunder



Cheer Parent Handbook

2023

Rocklin Jr. Thunder is a member of the Sierra Athletic Conference (SAC) league and is an organization dedicated to offering a cheer program for children ages 4-14. There are five possible cheer squads: Mascot, Jr. Pee Wee, Pee Wee, Jr. Midget, and Midget. Note: Squad eligibility is based on the cheerleader's age on August, 1st 2023. (There are no limitations pertaining to the age of Mascots).

Rocklin Jr. Thunder Cheerleaders cheer for Rocklin Jr. Thunder football games and compete at two cheerleading competitions. They learn sideline cheers, dances, jumps, and stunts to cheer on the crowd at the football games and perform a halftime routine and a competition routine.

Our official SAC practice season begins on Monday, July 17th 2023 and ends no later than Mid November with the SAC Football Championship Game. All cheerleaders are required to attend all summer camps/clinics, practices, games and competitions. Cheerleading is a team sport, and everyone's participation is essential and mandatory for the success of the entire squad.

Cheer Squad Age Matrix					
(Age as of August 1 st 2022)					
AGE	Mascots *	Jr. Pee Wee	Pee Wee	Jr. Midget	Midget
6	X				
7		X			
8		X			
9		X	X		
10			X	X	
11			X	X	X
12				X	X
13					X
14					* X
<p style="text-align: center;">* Mascots: No Max age *Midget: High School students are not eligible to participate</p>					

Cheer Tryouts

Tryout Registration Fees: \$75

Registration February 27th- May 6th (Register by April 22nd to guarantee a tryout t-shirt). The tryout fee covers the tryout location, judges, lunch on Saturday and a tryout t-shirt (if registered by April 22nd)

Tryout Schedule

- Saturday May 6th is our tryout clinic held at Granite Oaks Middle School from 9am - 3:00pm
- Sunday May 7th is tryout day, also held at Granite Oaks Middle School from 9am - 12:00pm

Tryout Dress Code:

- RJT Tryout shirt given out at check in on Saturday morning (White or royal blue t-shirt if you did not register in time for a tryout shirt)
- Black or blue Softe style shorts (no pockets or zippers)
- Flexible, lace up, cheer style shoes for tumbling and jumps
- Hair in a high ponytail and bangs clipped out of face

For safety reasons, please clip nails and remove all jewelry including earrings.

Placements Details: Participant's squad placement will be according to the SAC age matrix, judges scores, clinic observations, tumbling, stunt experience and will be at the discretion of the V.P of Cheer. All efforts will be made to place every child trying out. **Important note:** Keep in mind that your daughter is not trying out for a "Specific Squad".

Tryouts: We have a panel of three judges for tryouts that will score participants individually. Participants will also be evaluated by RJT cheer coaching staff during the clinic on the following:

- Ability to Learn & Take Directions
- Attitude, behavior, & Maturity
- Loud, Clear Cheer Voice
- Technique & Sharpness of Moves
- Tumbling* & Stunting Ability

**Every child will be asked to demonstrate their tumbling ability even if it is just a forward roll or cartwheel.*

Team placements will be posted to our website www.jrthunder.com

Camps, Clinics, Practices, & Competitions

All camps, clinics, practices, and competitions are MANDATORY. Cheerleading is a team sport and everyone's participation is essential for the success of the entire squad. Each team will attend pre-season camps and clinics to learn the fundamentals of cheer such as cheer safety and stunt technique. Mascots do not attend the stunt clinic and halftime camp. Mascot's halftime instruction TBD after squad placements is finalized.

Camps, Stunt Clinics and Orientation:

- July TBD - Half Time Camp (Jr. Pee Wee, Pee Wee, Jr. Midget, Midget)
- July 15th & 16th - JAMZ 2-Day camp at Lincoln High School (Jr. Pee Wee, Pee Wee, Jr. Midget, Midget)
- July 17th – First Day of Practice

All Squads Competitions (except Mascots):

- JAMZ RELOAD Cheer Competition: October 22nd, 2023
- SAC League Championship Competition: November 12th, 2023. Mascots have the option to perform in a showcase.

While we want everyone to have fun, cheer takes a lot of commitment and hard work in order to be successful. We will be developing each cheerleader to be able to learn new skills such as motions, stunts and jumps in a safe manner and environment. Cheerleaders are expected to attend all practices, clinics, camps, games, and competitions (mandatory). Due to the nature of the sport, all practices, games and events are mandatory, and it is expected that cheer will take priority over any other activity with the exception of school.

Season Registration and Expected Fees

2023 Cheer Squad Season Registration Fee:

The RJT registration fee covers the cost of equipment maintenance, insurance, practice facilities, gym mat rental, halftime camp, JAMZ cheer camp, JAMZ competition fee, SAC League competition fee, custom halftime & comp music, skill training, coach certification and other RJT operational costs. Registration also pays for a basic picture package, League-wide year-end celebration, and a trophy.

The Cheer Registration Fee by Squad: (Registration fees due by May 10th, 2023)

- Mascot: Reduced registration fee, TBD
- Jr. Pee Wee - Midgets: \$525

Multiple Child Program Discount

There is a \$25 family discount for each additional child in the RJT program (Football & Cheer)

Expenses that are not included in registration: (Parents are responsible for these expenses)

- Gate Admission Fee for SAC Football games & Jamboree: Adult \$5.00, Senior Citizens and children 5-12yrs \$3.00 (Children under 5 are free)
- Entrance Fee for family members for season competitions: Jamz Comp and SAC League Competition
- Snack fund: \$25 - This is collected by the Team Parent at the beginning of the season
- End-of-season coaches' gifts: \$20 - This is collected by the Team Parent at the end of the season

Cheer Uniform

Uniform Cost Estimate: The complete uniform includes: shell top, competition top, skirt, kick pants (briefs), socks (1 blue, 1 pink), shoes, pom-poms, and bows (game day bow & Breast Cancer Awareness bow). New jacket is required for 2023.

Note: Payment for Uniforms must be made in full at the Uniform Fitting May 10th

- Mascot Uniform items *TBD (*Will not exceed \$400 and this is an estimate*)
- New Cheerleaders: Jr. Pee Wee to Midget Uniform items \$475-\$575 (this is an estimate)

Optional Items: The following items are available for optional purchase: pants, backpack, extra kick pants, jersey, socks and shoes for practice because game shoes are not worn at park practices.

Note: The Warm-Up jacket is the only approved jacket that can be worn while cheering. The weather becomes an issue around late September-October when it is cooler in the morning and evenings. Non RJT jackets, hoodies, sweatpants, etc. are not allowed to be worn during games unless they are approved by the coach. If your daughter is interested in continuing on for the competition squad, this set is the only approved warm-ups for competition day. Competition season goes from November through February.

All cheerleaders that would like to wear their previously bought uniform will be expected to bring the items to the coach at the uniform fitting for a fitting inspection and approval. **RJT has a strict policy on the fit of uniforms – please be aware that if your daughter no longer fits comfortably into her uniform she will be required to purchase a new one (or used if available).** Full payment for uniforms will be due at that time. Although RJT coaches will be available for consulting during the fitting process, all uniform sizes ordered will be the responsibility of the parent. RJT will not reimburse any person for the cost of an incorrectly sized uniform - please order carefully.

Required Forms for Participation: We will need the following forms or your child will not be eligible to participate in the camps, clinics, or on the first day of practice. The SAC Medical Clearance form must be printed and filled out by a licensed physician after 4/15/23, but before participation in any RJT camp or clinic activities.

- Birth Certificate (new cheerleaders only)
- SAC 2023 Medical Clearance Form

All required forms will be distributed and collected by coaches and cheer staff at the Mandatory Cheerleader Uniform Fitting on May 10th. The SAC Medical Clearance form must be printed (www.jrthunder.com) and filled out by a licensed physician after 4/15/23, but before participation in any RJT pre-season camp or clinic activities. Your coach will notify you of the final collection date for this particular form. It is highly recommended to make an appointment with your pediatrician ASAP to avoid any possible delays.

Practice, Attendance, Behavior, Appearance, & Academics

Practice: Starting Monday, 17th, the regular season mandatory practices will begin at Twin Oaks Park. The first week of practice is a conditioning week which is geared toward building strength, endurance, and teamwork. According to the SAC league rules, your child's attendance during the first week of conditioning is **absolutely mandatory** in order for her to continue with the rest of the season - NO EXCEPTIONS! After conditioning week, regular practices will focus on proper cheer techniques which will be incorporated into half time routines, sideline chants, and the development of the competition routines.

Park Practice: Park practices will be held at Twin Oaks Park usually from 6:00pm-8:00pm, four nights a week (times subject to change). Once school begins, our practices will be reduced to three nights a week unless a 4th day is needed*. Parents are welcome to stay at the park to watch their child's practice from a distance and without interference/distraction. Mascots have modified schedules that's about half the time of the other squads and parents may be required to stay during practice.

*Once we reduce practices to 3 days/week, your team's coach may add an additional practice day if deemed necessary. This usually occurs closer to competition time.

Parent Showcase: On a few scheduled Thursday nights we will have a Parent Showcase where each squad performs for family and friends to "showcase" what they have learned. This is a great time to show your support for our girls that work very hard every day!

Indoor Practice: In mid-September all practices will be moved indoors to various school gyms. Once the squads move indoors the practices become closed to parents, no EXCEPTIONS. Practice days and times may vary due to school gym availability. Some practices may start as early as 5:00pm or go as late as 9:00pm. In-door practice schedules and times are TBD and are subject to change depending on facilities. Again, please be flexible as we are usually at the mercy of the schools. Every effort will be made to have the younger squads practice in the earlier time slots whenever possible. Indoor practices include the use of floor mats and your help is needed to set up the cheer floor before practice and also put away mats at the end. *All cheerleaders must arrive 10 minutes early to make sure practice starts on time.* Mascots have modified indoor schedules that's about half the time of the other squads and parents may be required to stay during practice.

Cell Phones: Cell phones may be brought to practice, however they are not to be used during practice without direct permission from the coach. Phones are not allowed to be used during breaks and may only be retrieved at the end of practice. As you can imagine, cell phones are extremely distracting. If this rule is abused in any way, your coach may forbid cell phones altogether.

Attendance: Due to the nature of this team sport, where routines, formations, and stunts are created based on

the number of cheerleaders per squad, it is mandatory that all members attend each and every practice, camp, game, and competition in order for the squad to be successful. Any planned absence you are aware of must be communicated to your Head Coach ASAP. All other absences must be called in to your coach no later than 2 hours prior to the event. Family activities, vacations, church functions, etc. should be scheduled around cheer to avoid interfering with RJT scheduled practices and events. **Please see the attendance policy located on our website for full details.**

Note: We have a very strict attendance policy. Any cheerleader with tardy/absences will result in a reduced role in the competition routine (for example: you will be taken out of stunting or be placed in the back with a very limited role in the routine). Our advanced stunts and skills require everyone's participation during every practice. Please note that if your child misses any practices in the 2 weeks prior to a competition they will be removed from the routine and not be able to perform in the upcoming competition.

Behavior: Our coaches and student instructors are volunteers and dedicate a tremendous amount of time to their squads. It is extremely important to be respectful of the coaches, instructors, and ALL RJT participants. While Rocklin Jr. Thunder encourages a fun atmosphere, if a cheerleader is not participating in an acceptable manner, your coach or a member of the RJT staff will contact a parent to come and take the child home. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to the following: failure to take directions; defiance; rudeness to a coach, instructor, or teammate; disruptive or uncooperative behavior; profane or foul language; disregard for the safety of others. RJT wants to make every child's experience with the cheerleading program a positive, fun, and exciting learning experience. We expect all participants to demonstrate appropriate behavior at all times.

Social Media Agreement & RJT Behavior Agreement:

- We will have a zero tolerance policy in regards to posting negative, derogatory, and/or threatening posts on any social media site (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tik Tok, SnapChat, and other various social media outlets) We take all threats and bullying very seriously. Your cheerleader will be suspended until the head coach and VP of Cheer can meet with the parents and the cheerleader to discuss the appropriate course of action. Issues regarding parent social media infractions will be addressed by the President of RJT and the VP of Cheer.
- All squads will be responsible for adhering to our in the Social Media Agreement & Behavior agreement. These documents are located on our website for full details.

RJT's dress code will be enforced at all practices, camps, games, and competitions

Appearance and Dress Code: Cheerleaders are to understand that their appearance in their uniform is a direct reflection of their squad, coach, and organization. Uniforms must be kept clean, neat, and mended. If the uniform is not kept clean and in proper shape, the cheerleader will not be allowed to cheer until it is fixed. Sport tops and bras should match the uniform color or be inconspicuous. Bra straps cannot be visible. Nylons, leggings, or tights may not be worn with the cheer uniform at any time. Each cheerleader must arrive completely dressed in full uniform prior to arriving for the game or event. No variance in uniform or hairstyle is permitted without the expressed permission of the coach.

Jewelry: No jewelry of any kind is permitted while cheering. Parents, **DO NOT** get your daughter's ears pierced during the season – she will NOT be allowed to wear earrings at any time. This is a safety issue that is NOT negotiable!

Hair: Hairstyles must be neat and out of the face. Hair must be worn up in a high ponytail while cheering unless otherwise approved by the coach. No bobby pins allowed. Hair must be secured with butterfly clips. No unnatural hair coloring or hair style where the hair has been shaved is allowed. Highlights and lowlights are the only exception to this rule. You must stay within range of your natural hair color. Bows must be worn while cheering at games and competitions. Silver sparkle spray is allowed but should not be excessive.

Make-up: With the exception of the Midget squad, there will be NO make-up allowed at games, camps, or clinics. Make-up is to be worn in a clean, fresh look at the Midget head coach's discretion, with VP of Cheer oversight. No heavy, bright, or dark colored make-up is allowed while the cheerleader is in uniform or at practices. If a cheerleader arrives at a cheerleading event in make-up or in make-up that does not conform to this standard, the cheerleader will be asked to fix or remove her make-up prior to the game.

Competition Make-up: All squads may wear white/translucent sparkle eye shadow, Rocklin blue eyeliner (on top lid only), and natural/light lip gloss for competitions at the head coach's discretion, with VP of Cheer oversight. No heavy, bright or dark colored make-up is ever allowed while the cheerleader is in uniform.

Nails: Nails are to be kept short and only to the end of the finger. Press on or acrylic nails are not permitted. **No colored nail polish is allowed.** This is a safety issue and is not open to negotiation! If the nails are found to be too long, the cheerleader will be asked to trim them before being allowed to participate.

Glasses: If your cheerleader wears glasses then she must have a strap/or band attached for all practices, games, and competitions. This is a safety issue and is **NOT NEGOTIABLE.**

Academic Goals: The RJT program is dedicated to developing well-rounded individuals and maintains an academic policy requiring our student athletes to perform in the classroom as well as on the field. All cheerleaders must maintain an acceptable grade point average (passing status) throughout the season and remain free of any behavioral problems at school.

In order to maintain academic accountability, the Head Coaches may, at their discretion, require grade checks at any time during the season. If at any point a cheerleader does not maintain passing status, they may not be allowed to perform at the next regularly scheduled game or competition. Additionally, if a child is suspended from school for any reason, they will not be allowed to perform at the upcoming game or competition. Cheerleaders not participating at the game for these reasons are still required to attend the game (in full uniform) but will sit on the sidelines.

Certification & Jamboree, Game Day, & RHS Cheer

Certification & Jamboree: TBD Saturday in early August - This is a mandatory event! Certification is the Sierra Athletic Conference's process of verifying the identity and eligibility of each cheerleader. During the certification process each squad will provide documentation showing proof of eligibility to participate: photo of cheerleader, certified copy of birth certificate, medical release, player/parent contract, etc. This process confirms that each cheerleader is eligible to participate in the program and agrees to the guidelines and policies. This is why all of the required paperwork is so important to be filled out properly and turned in by the deadlines. Mascots attend and go through the certification process, but don't need to be officially certified.

Game Day: All cheerleaders are to arrive at the time and location specified by the coach, which will be at least 1 hour prior to game start time for warm-ups and stretching (*Mascots: See Modified Game day below*). All cheerleaders will be in proper uniform attire. Their uniform will be neat and clean. Hair must be worn up in a high ponytail while cheering (unless otherwise approved by the coach). A parent must attend each game unless prior arrangements are made with another family member/friend to be responsible for your child during the game (this is especially important if your daughter gets injured or falls ill). All parents are to meet their daughter inside the stadium at the end of each game in order for the coach to release them. Please instruct your daughter to stay with her squad until the coach has made contact with the parent and safely releases them to the proper adult. Note: *Parents are not allowed on the track or playing field at any time.*

Game Times: While game times may vary during the season, the typical schedule for games will be:

- Jr. Pee Wee 10:00am-12:00pm
- Pee Wee 12:00pm-2:00pm
- Jr. Midget 2:00pm-4:00pm
- Midget 4:00pm-6:00pm
- Mascots may rotate games each week or cheer specifically for one team.

Mascots Modified Game Day: Mascots game attendance may be modified to attend specific games. Arrival time will be at the coach's discretion. At the games, our mascots only cheer for the first two quarters and perform a half time routine. They may rotate cheering for different football teams or cheer specifically for one team. A schedule will be created once the participants have been selected and prior to the season starting. A parent must attend each game unless prior arrangements are made with another family member/friend to be responsible for your child during the game.

Cheering with Rocklin High Cheerleaders: Our RJT Jr. Midgets and Midgets will have an opportunity to cheer with the Rocklin High School Cheerleaders at a Rocklin High School Thursday/Friday night football game. We will have more details along with the dates when the season starts.

Volunteer Requirements & Fundraisers

Family Volunteer Requirements: Rocklin Jr. Thunder Cheer and Football organization runs solely on the efforts of volunteers. We have no paid coaches, coordinators, administrators, or board members. A large number of people are needed to help the RJT program run smoothly. Parents will be **required to fulfill 10 hours (per child) of volunteer duties**. Parents are required to submit a **Volunteer deposit** in the amount of \$250 or an opt-out fee in the amount of \$250. This is to ensure they complete their hours or for the opt-out option the funds can be used to pay high school students to work shifts. The volunteer deposit is due at the Cheer orientation. The deposit checks will only be deposited if a family fails to complete all of their hours. The Volunteer Coordinator and Treasurer will work together towards the end of the season to identify those participants who have, or have not, completed their volunteer hours. The game prior to the last home game, deposit checks will either be shredded upon completion of hours or deposited if they failed to complete the required hours.

***Participant's whose family fails to complete the volunteer hours are not eligible for participation on the Open Season Cheer Competition Squad and may be subject to suspension from the remaining RJT activities at the discretion of the RJT Board of Directors.

Volunteer sign-ups are pre-arranged and conducted online. The complete Volunteer schedule and sign ups will be available at the beginning of the season for the season. Volunteer hours can be fulfilled by working shifts at home games, booster or snack bar events scheduled at the park, as a team parent. Complete details about volunteer opportunities and requirements can be found on our website under the volunteer section. For any volunteer related questions please email: volunteer@jrthunder.com

Open Season Competition Squad(s)

Open Season Competition Squad: The open season begins in November after the SAC football season ends and continues into the first week of March. Participation on RJT's open squad gives cheerleaders the opportunity to continue cheering at a competitive level. The open squad competes in 2-3 regional competitions and a final Jr. Nationals Competition (dates, venues, and locations TBD at a later date). There is a separate registration process and fee for the competition season (registration fee is due in November and does not include costs associated with travel or hotel accommodations).

Depending on the number of girls that are interested and eligible, we will combine our four top squads: Jr. Pee Wee & Pee Wee cheerleaders would be combined into a Pee Wee Open squad and Jr. Midget & Midget cheerleaders will form the Midget Open squad. Team selections are made by the Coaching Staff and approved by the VP of Cheer. There is no open squad for Mascots.

The Open Competition Squad is a **privilege**. Eligibility and selection is based on many factors displayed and achieved during the regular season. The criteria for eligibility and selection are as follows:

As a family:

- Family Volunteer hours were completed
- Positive attitude towards Coaches, RJT staff, cheerleaders, other spectators

As a Cheerleader:

- Attendance was great. Which includes practices, games and competitions
- Displayed commitment to the team
- Positive attitude towards teammates and staff
- Maturity
- Pays attention
- Willingness to learn & advance
- Outstanding performance
- Skill & Ability
- Compatibility with teammates
- Did not have disciplinary/infraction issues

More details about RJT's open season competition squad will be distributed by your coach toward the middle part of the SAC season.

Miscellaneous Rules & Procedures

Health Insurance - Your family health insurance will serve as primary coverage for the RJT participant.

Family Pets – For safety reasons, family pets, leashed or unleashed, are not allowed at and should not be brought to the practice fields or to games.

Smoking – The Rocklin High School campus and all other campuses where we will be playing throughout the season have been designated “Tobacco Free Environments.” Therefore, smoking is not permitted on or around any school campus we visit. It would also be appreciated if people refrained from smoking at or around the practice fields as well.

Drug & Alcohol Use – Use of drugs or alcohol is strictly forbidden at practices and games. Use of drugs or alcohol at these events will not be tolerated, and anyone involved in those activities will be asked to leave.

Food & Drink - The snack bar is a crucial source of program revenue, so for that reason, it is asked that no outside food or drink is brought into to games or competitions. Coolers will not be allowed into the Rocklin High School stadium on gameday. If you must bring your own food and/or drinks please enjoy them outside the gated area of any game or competition. Players are allowed to bring water.

Admission Fees - Admission will be charged at all home and away games. Everyone attending the games, with the exception of coaches, players, Board Members and Sierra Athletic Conference certified personnel are required to pay an admission fee. This requirement also applies to all game day volunteers.

Adults: \$5.00

Children and Senior Citizens: \$3.00

Children 5 and Under: Free

Booster - Watch for the booster table to be set up during some park practice and at every home game. We have some new gear this year, so check it out and show your Rocklin Junior Thunder pride!

Complaints – Any complaints must be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors (see Section 11.03 of the Rocklin Youth Football Association Bylaws.) Complaints may be submitted via the internet at www.jrthunder.com. A written response to a properly submitted complaint will be provided to the complaining party as soon as possible after the next regularly scheduled board meeting. The complainant may appear at the next regularly scheduled board meeting if he/she wishes to do so.

Communications – Communication is extremely important to the success of any organization. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please submit them to the appropriate member of the Board of Directors. You may do so via the internet at www.jrthunder.com.

Important 2023 Cheer Season Dates

Please add these important dates to your calendar:

- **Tryouts:** May 6th & 7th at Granite Oaks Middle School, both days start at 9:00 am
- **Mandatory Parent Meeting :** May 6th at 9:00 am at the beginning of try-outs
- **Mandatory Uniform Fitting:** May 10th 5:00pm, location Twin Oaks Elementary School gym, registration and uniform payments due and all required forms to participate need to be turned in at this time also.
- **Orientation Meet & Greet:** Sometime in June, time/location TBD by each team's head Coach. This cheerleader orientation & Meeting is an individual squad meeting for the girls to get to know their coach, teammates and the expectations and responsibilities of being a Rocklin Jr. Thunder.
- **Mandatory JAMZ Stunt Camp:** July 15th & 16th at Lincoln High School, 9am-3pm
- **Mandatory Halftime Camp:** July 10-13, each cheerleader will only attend 2 days for 4 hour sessions, dates and times will vary based on teams
- **First Day of Practice:** July 18th - Twin Oaks Park
- **Mandatory Jamboree:** August TBD
- **Mandatory JAMZ Reload Competition:** October 22nd, 2023
- **Mandatory SAC League Competition:** November 12th, 2023

-Please note: These will be updated on our website as the times are available.

Thank you for participating in Rocklin Jr. Thunder!