



2016-2017
Parent-Athlete
Program Information

EST 1997
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!

Dakota Spirit
3910 West 59th Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57108
605-373-0414

www.dakotaspirit.com

ONE TEAM, ONE SPIRIT!

Dakota Spirit Mission Statement

**To promote the spiritual, physical, and mental development of youth through
cheerleading!**

CONTENTS

Please read the contents of this handbook to become familiar with the Dakota Spirit policies and program for the 2016 season.

WHO TO CONTACT

Dakota Spirit Office		605-373-0414	
Director/Founder	Robin Fritsch	605-373-0414	Robin.Fritsch@dakotaspirit.com
Assistant Director	Joanna Fritsch	605-373-0414	Joanna.Fritsch@dakotaspirit.com
Bookkeeper/billing	Linda Lepp	605-941-5918	Linda.Lepp@dakotaspirit.com
Gym Location:	3910 West 59th Street Sioux Falls, SD 57108		

Website: www.dakotaspirit.com

Facebook: Dakota Spirit

Twitter: @DSCheerleading

Instagram: dakotaspirit

HOURS OF OPERATION

The office is open Monday-Thursday: 2:00-5:00. Contact us to set up a special appointment if needed.

The gym is open evenings Monday-Friday, Saturday morning & most Sunday afternoons. We are closed holidays.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to promote the spiritual, physical, and mental development of youth through cheerleading.

PLEDGE

We strive for a level of excellence that has built a solid reputation in our community, state, and region. Youth development is the focus of our program and parental support is critical to our mission. Dakota Spirit places strong emphasis on character, leadership, service, and academics. We provide an encouraging environment where every child will have a sense of belonging and achievement.

STAFF

Our veteran staff of trained and certified coaches is a great strength of the DS program. Several of the coaches have received state, regional, and national honors. DS is a certified USASF gym.

OWNERS

Robin and John Fritsch have been involved with youth for many years. They have six children, including three daughters who have cheered at DS and the U of M and are currently involved with coaching. John and Robin both have their masters in education. Robin is the founder/director of the program and has been in the cheer industry for over 35 years.

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: Dakota Spirit is a member of the United States All Star Federation (USASF) and the American Youth Sports Association. We are dedicated to professional growth and networking in the cheer industry.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Dakota Spirit, celebrates its 20th season. It was originally known as Supersquads and was founded in 1997 by Robin Fritsch. DS began with 12 young girls and was the first organized youth cheerleading program in South Dakota. It continues to be the largest program in the region with 17 teams

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TEAMS

A variety of teams give every student a place to succeed and a team suited to fit every budget, skill and level of interest. Athletes are placed on teams appropriate to their age and ability. Team members learn motion technique, tumbling, stunts, safety, cheers, jumps, teamwork, performance skills and sportsmanship. Dakota Spirit teams are always striving for excellence, positive sportsmanship, and involvement in the community.

Developmental League (D-League) Teams

Performance Teams that are low cost, minimal time commitment, non-competitive and include a maximum of 5-6 performances with one weekly practice. The curriculum includes team time, fundamentals & performance skills! Season is September-March and no experience is needed. Special events include Showdown (Nov), Valentine's Classic (Jan), Spiritfest (Mar) plus 2-3 exhibition performances. Low cost uniform and white cheer shoes needed. Parents will meet the first night of class for a short informational meeting.

Recreation League (REC League): Beginner to intermediate competitive teams that perform and compete at area events. Experience is not required to participate. These teams focus on skill performances, 5-6 area competitions & choreography camp.

All Stars: Advanced teams for students seeking the highest level of training and excitement! Tryouts are required. All star teams are for athletes with commitment to skills development, team travel and full participation (cannot miss practice/competitions). Weekly practice includes one tumbling practice and two team practices. Teams practice on Sundays beginning in September, choreography and boot camp and 8-9 competitions per season including local, regional & national events.

Team Expenses Include:

- ✓ Registration Fee: due with forms
- ✓ Monthly Tuition: auto withdrawal required (monthly or full year payment option)
- ✓ Uniform: It is the student's responsibility to purchase a uniform.
- ✓ Cheer Shoes: any white cheer shoe. Contact us if you need to order shoes.
- ✓ Travel & Choreography fees for All Stars & Prep teams only

Required Documents: Athlete Registration Form, Code of Student Behavior, Parent Behavior Contract, Medical & Liability Waiver, Tuition Agreement.

PRACTICE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Practice is required.** Coaches expect students to be at all practices unless there is a required school event or illness. No other excuses are allowed for missing practice/competitions. Please notify coach in advance.
2. Cell phones are not allowed in the gym or lobby during practice. Phones can be put on silent. Athletes should NOT be checking phones during practice as it is a disruption to practice.
3. Dakota Spirit practice attire is required for All Stars. REC Teams are required to wear black shorts & Team practice shirt.
4. Do NOT wear your cheer shoes outside or for other activities. Clean cheer shoes only on the mat.
5. Please wear appropriate practice gear, makeup, and act with Christ like behavior towards others.
6. Hair must be in a ponytail during practice. No Earrings, piercings, or jewelry.
7. Respect towards coaches, volunteers, parents and teammates is required.
8. Team members must treat our facility with respect and are expected to tidy up after practice.
9. No gum, candy, food or drinks are allowed in the practice gym.
10. Students can bring Birthday treats as long as they are responsible for clean up of all snacks.

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PERFORMANCE/COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS

- 1) All Team Practices, Competition and Performances are required. Please be respectful of your commitment to the team. The entire team suffers when members do not show up.
- 2) Uniform, hair bow, performance make up and cheer shoes are required at all events.
- 3) **NO** earrings, fingernail polish, long nails, body tattoos or markings at practice/competitions/events.
- 4) Coaches reserve the right to suspend a student from a performance if they are not fully prepared to perform or if practices have been missed.
- 5) If you will be absent, you are required to contact your coach in advance.

BEHAVIOR & SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship and positive behavior is the hallmark of our program. Parent and Student behavior is a reflection on our entire program and the expectation is to be a beacon of Christ like behavior at all times. The staff will use their discretion as to the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken if there are behavior concerns.

DAKOTA SPIRIT ATHLETE'S CODE OF CONDUCT

All Athletes of every age must understand that misbehavior may result in probation and possible dismissal. Therefore, we expect athletes to adhere to the code of conduct at all times:

1. I understand that being a member of Dakota Spirit is a special privilege and I will commit to doing my best.
2. I will attend all practices and events and I understand that the coach must be notified if I will be absent. **DS expects parents to contact coaches when an athlete will be absent.*
3. I must come mentally and physically prepared for practice, dressed in proper athletic gear, hair up, no gum or jewelry.
4. I will show good manners and respect towards others including my teammates, coaches, parents, and other teams.
5. I will be responsible for my belongings, parent notes, uniforms and preparedness for practice/events.
6. I will be respectful of all facilities we use.
7. I promise that I will maintain a grade point minimum of a 2.5 (C +) throughout the season.
8. I understand that cheerleading has many risks and I may get hurt therefore I will not stunt, tumble or cheer without the presence of a coach.
9. I understand as a DS member, I am expected to be a servant leader and will volunteer for at least 3 community service projects during my season.
10. I understand there is zero tolerance for use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, foul language and inappropriate conduct and I will use social media in an appropriate and respectful manner.
11. I will not miss more than 5 Dakota Spirit practices (including tumbling for all stars) per season. I will not miss practice the week of a competition and understand that I will forfeit my position to compete if absent.

DAKOTA SPIRIT PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

1. I will serve as a beacon of Christ like behavior and an example of good sportsmanship.
2. I will show respect to the coach.
3. I will avoid chronic complaining and will express myself in a courteous manner.
4. I understand that it is not allowed for parents to be on the practice floor at any time and if I need to speak with the coach I will set up a time to meet.
5. I agree to cover all tuition and travel fees at the requested due dates.
6. I agree to get my child to all practices and performances, and I understand that it is my responsibility to notify the coach if my child will be absent.

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7. I will avoid putting pressure on my child to fly, base, tumble, or be the star of the team realizing that each child is a star in their own unique way.
8. I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the sport is for youth, not adults.
9. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
10. I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy for others including all cheerleaders, staff and DS families.
11. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or unkindness towards others.
12. I will demand that my child treat others with respect regardless of race, creed, color, sex or ability.
13. I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning.
14. I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making mistakes or losing a competition.
15. I will promote the physical, mental and spiritual development of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child.
16. I will respect coaches and staff and will never question, discuss, or behave in a confrontational manner.
17. I will demand an environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and I will refrain from their use at all DS events where children are present.
18. I will stay positive at all times and support the decisions made by DS knowing they are made in the best interest of the entire program, not just my child.

PARENT EXPECTATIONS

Parents are important to the success of our program. We value your involvement and commitment! Coaches Coach, Cheerleaders Cheer, and Parents support!

1. Parents are expected to get their child to all practices, competitions & events.
2. Parents must notify their team coach in advance if their child will not be in attendance (required school functions and illness are the only excuses for missing practice or events).
3. Parents are responsible for all information pertaining to their child (emails, waivers, student info)
4. Parents are not allowed in the practice area.
5. Parents must pay to enter all events and competitions.
6. Parents are required to supervise their child at all competitions, events and team travel.
7. Parents are expected to pick up their child on time following events, practices, and competitions.
8. Please be respectful of your coach, teammates, and the program. Dakota Spirit has zero tolerance for parents who create problems for the organization.
9. Please do not call or text coaches after 9:00 pm
10. Matters of concern should be brought to the director.

IMPORTANT FINANCIAL INFORMATION & PAYMENT PLAN

D-League: 7 payments – Auto withdrawal on the 5th of the month

Recreation League: 8 payments-Auto Withdrawal on the 5th of the month. Tuition payments include team practice, Team practice shirt, competitions and performance fees.

All Star Prep: 8 payments-Auto Withdrawal on the 5th of the month. Tuition payments include team practice, fees for area competitions, and Team Tumbling class (begins in Sept). National competitions are separate and NOT included in your tuition .Choreography Camp will be billed separately.

All Stars: 10 monthly Tuition payments- Auto Withdrawal on the 10th of the month which includes practice & tumbling. Note designated Non-tumbling/non practice days on monthly calendar.

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Travel payments are a separate Automatic Withdrawal on the 20th of each month.

Team Monthly Statements: Monthly statements will be emailed to the parent responsible for payment. Please review your statement each month and contact bookkeeper if you need clarification.

Statements each month include:

1. Travel Statement (All Stars only) 2. Tuition Statement

Sibling Discount: \$30 for D-League, \$40 for REC League, \$50 All Star & All Star Prep.

** The discount will be applied in December and will be given to the 2nd/3rd/4th child.*

**Monthly statements are NOT sent for classes*

**Private Lessons must be paid for at the time of the lesson.*

Payment Requirements:

- ✓ Automatic Withdrawal is required for all fees (tuition, competition & choreography fee).
ACH information must be provided. Checks are NOT allowed for monthly payments. If a parent must make a monthly cash payment, payment is due by the 5th of the month or a late fee is assessed.
- ✓ Students with outstanding balances will not be allowed to participate until paid.
- ✓ Students will be dropped from the program after a two month lapse of payment.
- ✓ All Stars will get a statement for both travel and tuition each month
- ✓ Insufficient fund: \$30 charge will be made to your account each time there is insufficient funds
- ✓ Changes to Bank accounts: A voided check and new account number will be necessary. There is a \$20 processing fee for us to change the information with the bank. Please contact Linda.lepp@dakotaspirt.com to make a change.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Dakota Spirit provides financial assistance to those who qualify. All information is confidential. A Uniform Loaner Program is available to students in need of a team uniform. A student deposit is required for loaner uniforms. United Way Connecting Kids coupons are accepted for tuition assistance for D League, Rec League and classes. DSCP makes a match to further help the student. Connecting kids is not available to All Stars and there is minimal assistance provided for All Stars.

ALIVIA COON SCHOLARSHIP

Students who are interested in applying for the Alivia Coon Memorial Scholarship should contact the office. Each year since 2013 a scholarship is awarded to a student in our program in memory of Aliva Coon, a former student in DS who died in 2012 in a house fire.

REFUNDS

There will be no refunds unless a student has overpaid on their account. All Stars who drop must fulfill their travel agreement for competitions.

STUDENT DROPS

Students who drop are responsible for giving a 2 week drop notice. Tuition payment through the end of the month is due prior to student departure. Travel payments and Choreography Fees are non refundable. All unpaid travel fees are the responsibility of the parent. Fundraising earnings are non-refundable and will be used for student scholarships.

CONFIDENTIALITY

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All matters pertaining to your child and family are confidential and respected. Please share with us any concerns so that we can act in the best interest of your child. We will not discuss other members with you, only your own child.

UNIFORMS: It is important to order your uniform on Uniform Sizing Nights. Uniforms are a custom order and we have limited new or used ones in stock. Uniforms can be resold at Uniform Sizing Nights or Open Houses.

UNIFORM/SPIRITWEAR PRIVILEGE: It is expected that all Dakota Spirit gear will be worn with all due respect and privilege. DS Articles not worn in a respectable manner will not be tolerated.

“PHOTO” NIGHT

All teams will have a photo night scheduled in late fall. Individual pictures are taken in uniform at the gym. A team picture is taken at this time. Pictures are scheduled when all uniforms have been received. Purchase of Pictures is optional.

DAKOTA SPIRIT’S TRADITIONAL EVENTS

Dakota Spirit Showdown & Silent Auction: Performance Kick Off featuring a silent auction. Proceeds go towards new gym equipment and student scholarships. Every parent is asked to contribute to the silent auction with a donation.

Valentine’s Classic Cheer & Dance Championship: Competition for dance and cheer teams from the five state region. This is Dakota Spirit’s major fundraiser hosted by DS parents and All Star Parents are required to solicit a program ad and work a VC shift.

Spiritfest: Our grand finale performance to officially end our season.

COMMUNICATION

- ✓ Email: All athletes are required to have an email address in order for us to communicate team information, monthly statements, competition information, program updates, fundraisers, & other timely information. Competition Schedules & team info is provided the week of the event
- ✓ Parent Information Board: Timely information, upcoming events, fundraisers, etc.
- ✓ Texting: Rec & All Star teams have group texting for group matters. Coaches will only text a parent/athlete with factual info or time sensitive team info. Please refrain from using texting as a means of communication for important matters.
- ✓ Dakota Spirit website, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are also sources of information throughout the season.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event that bad weather requires us to cancel practice, we will make every attempt to contact you via email, texting, website, Facebook, & local stations. If there is a tornado or severe weather warning during practice, students will move into the locker room until all is clear. Inclement Weather make up policy: If it is a class, you are welcome to do a makeup. For team practices, we have 2 extra practices built into our season in anticipation of cancelled practices at some point during our winter season. For this reason, it is not likely that we will reschedule unless we reach 3 or more weather related cancellations.

TAG TEAM

Team Ambassadors Group: 2-3 parent helpers are selected to assist the team with special events, team parties, Showdown Baskets & the team community service project. Contact your team coach if you are interested in assisting the team in this special role.

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CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROJECTS

Team members are asked to participate in 3 Christian service projects. It is a way to bring our families together in a show of support for those who have a special need and it is our way to give back to our community. Blanket Night is one of our annual projects when we all get together to make tied fleece blankets for abused and homeless children at Christmas. Each team has a designated project organized by the TAG TEAM and coaches.

SAFETY

Every effort is made to ensure proper safety and precaution. Cheerleading has inherent risks of injury by the very nature of the sport. Please be forewarned that every effort is made to prevent accidents. We cannot guarantee that students will not get hurt. Injuries such as concussions, broken bones, sprains, strains, paralysis, and even death are within the realm of possible injuries. Parents are responsible for all medical costs and assume all liability for accidents. Please read carefully the Waiver/Medical Release form and the Concussion Information. Regarding stunting, students are selected for specific positions based on several factors including strength, experience and ability.

In the event of an injury, emergency steps will be taken, the parent will be contacted, and if deemed necessary, the student will be transported to the nearest available hospital by the parent, staff member, or emergency transport. Dakota Spirit strives to run a safe program and prides itself on safety first.

STUDENTS ONLY: Only student athletes are allowed in the gym. Parents must remain out in the lobby during practice. This is an insurance requirement. It is for your own safety and protection as well as ours. Thank you for your cooperation.

LOBBY VIEWING AREA

The lobby is used for student gatherings, video viewing, and parents. Please keep your talk positive and avoid gossip and criticism of our program, our students and others. Please do not bring food to the gym unless it is for a special occasion. On occasion the lobby is closed for viewing in order for teams to have less distraction. We reserve the right to hold closed practices as deemed necessary. Parents are not required to stay at practices.

GYM VISITORS

All new visitors to the gym must check in with a staff member. Athletes are welcome to have visitors as long as they are not children under 14 who are unsupervised and are not a distraction to practice. All visitors must remain in the lobby. All Star team members are asked not to have friends during practice so that the full focus can be on the team.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Athletes and parents may not set up social media using our name Dakota Spirit. Dakota Spirit has all legal rights to its name and illegal use or abuse of our brand will result in legal action. Video footage of our routines can not be placed on any social media for public viewing. All social media postings by members must be favorable and done in good sportsmanship. Students and Parents must refrain from any form of verbal confrontation on social networks. Abuse of social media is grounds for suspension. Parents are asked to monitor their child's social media for the protection and appropriate actions of their child. All Star teams have Members only Facebook pages as a means of communication with their team.

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LOGO, NAME, & INFORMATION IN PRINT

Dakota Spirit has legal rights to its name, logo, and all information in print. Permission must be granted for use of our legal name on any item, team spiritwear, print material, fundraiser, event, etc.

COMPETITIONS & TEAM TRAVEL

Parents are responsible for supervision of their child during events, competitions & team trips. Parents who are unable to attend an event are asked to find an adult chaperone for their child. If you cannot respect the rules of travel, curfew, competitions and expectations set forth by Dakota Spirit, we will give you one warning followed by dismissal.

DAKOTA SPIRIT RETAINS THE RIGHT TO:

Place athletes according to where we believe the athlete is best suited & will have the most success.

Remove or suspend an athlete based on attendance, conduct, skills, payment default or conflicts.

Remove a parent based on parental conflicts.

Determine the position the student will play on the team (base, flyer, tumbler, etc)

Request that an athlete take additional classes to improve skills.

Add or cancel practices or competitions as deemed necessary.

PHOTO DISCLAIMER: As a member of Dakota Spirit, parents agree to the disclaimer as stated:

“I grant permission to Dakota Spirit to use photographs taken of my Daughter/Son. I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the unfinished photographs or printed or electronic matter that may be used in conjunction with photos now or in the future, whether that use is known to me or unknown, and I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising from or related to use of the photograph”.

DAKOTA SPIRIT CHEER PARENTS BOOSTER CLUB (DSCP)

Mission statement: Dakota Spirit Cheer Parents, Inc. is a federal non-profit, 501© 3 organization supporting cheerleaders through educational opportunities and financial means such as fund raising, sponsorships and grants. DSCP promotes the motto, “One Team, One Spirit” through community service, charitable activity and program assistance.

All DS students benefit from the Booster Club. Many students benefit from the DSCP Scholarship fund. For the good of the program parents are asked to volunteer for a committee or event.

Parents, family members or friends of Dakota Spirit who work for companies who have charitable giving programs are encouraged to designate volunteer hours/charitable giving to Dakota Spirit Cheer Parents organization. Charitable giving enables many students to participate in the Dakota Spirit program.

DSCP Booster Club Policy

1. All Dakota Spirit Athletes & parents are considered members of the DSCP.
2. All money currently in the booster account and all incoming donations, grants or funds will be used for the benefit of the entire Dakota Spirit program.
3. All Monies received must benefit the entire program and may not be specified for one athlete. (*Exception: Scholarship athletes*).
4. Monies may be used for Coaches fees as needed to benefit the program (i.e. travel expenses, certification & training)

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5. Booster Club Scholarships are approved by the DSCP Board of Directors and are for recipients who meet all requirements.
6. All Fundraising opportunities must be approved by the DSCP Board of Directors and must be for the benefit of the program.

FUNDRAISING

All fundraising activities must be approved by Dakota Spirit and the DSCP Board of Directors. Teams and team members cannot organize a fundraiser in the name of DS without prior approval and regulation. Group fundraisers done through DSCP are for the benefit of all participants.

Parents must agree to the Fundraising policy included in this information. Monthly statements will indicate fundraising credit. Credit is not applied until 30 days past.