

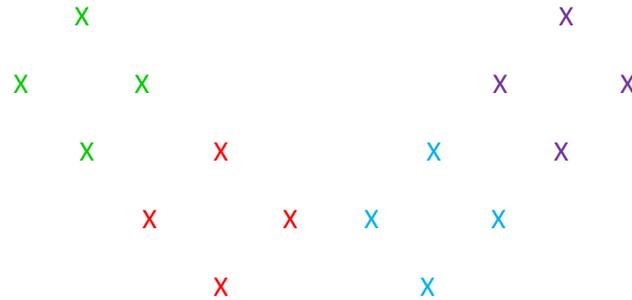
CHOREOGRAPHY

10 Keys to Effectively Constructing your Routine

- 1.) Skill Development and Fundamentals should NEVER be replaced by Choreography
 - Safety and use of progressions should always be a coach's primary concern before starting the choreography process. UCA's unique Member Pricing allows you to develop skills first with a camp, do UCA choreography second, and save lots of \$\$\$
- 2.) Communication before the Choreography Process Begins
 - Communication with your cheerleaders, parents, administrators, and anyone else that has an expectation of you and what your competition season will look like
 - What's different with your choreography this year? Did you graduate 8 seniors and have many cheerleaders new to performing? Will you have to increase or reduce your difficulty this year based on ability level, safety, etc.? Why is something different this year? Let them know before you start choreography and take the mat!!
- 3.) Plan Ahead
 - Decide your style, know your scoresheets, assess your ability level, determine the amount of time you can dedicate to competition practices, etc. in order to determine what kind of routine you plan to choreograph for
 - Many factors determine what your routine should look like. Decide what they are and how they affect your planning before your choreography starts.
- 4.) Determine your Structure
 - For school teams, are you going to use music – cheer – music, cheer – music, etc.?
 - What pieces are going where?
 - 24 – 25 eight counts are standard for a 90 second music section – how will you allocate each eight count to maximize your scores and effectively show off your skills
- 5.) Identify your Strengths / Weaknesses
 - Most teams are NOT good at everything – those who can highlight their strengths, and reduce unnecessary exposure to their weaknesses through great choreography usually do better at competitions
 - Be creative when hiding weaknesses – doing a cartwheel between a double toe touch and a pike jump shows off full team tumbling, adds creativity to your formation change, and might get a point for creativity where the difficulty lacks

6.) Formations are Evolutionary

- Design your larger formations (jumps, dance, standing tumbling) from your stunt groups. Each stunt group can be placed in a mini formation on the floor, and when every group is placed in a larger formation, you have a symmetrical, well-designed formation



- Each color is a stunt group – notice how 4 “diamond” formations can form a nice larger, team formation.
- There is minimal movement to get from a stunt formation to a team formation when each piece of your puzzle is a group, and not an individual.
- When I see this formation, I see 4 puzzle pieces (number of stunt groups) not 16 pieces (each individual stunt group.) Much easier to manage 4 and not 16!!

7.) Your Music 8 Counts are Precious!!

- Remember, school teams have 24 – 25 of them; all star teams have about 49
- Are you using them to maximize your scores by demonstrating the skills reflected on the scoresheet or are you using them to move unnecessarily because of bad planning / structure, etc.?
- When you're using entire 8 counts (or more) to transition and another team is using 4 counts to transition, they have TWICE as many counts to show off skills, and NOT bad planning from a choreography standpoint
- Treat center as a gate - do you have a good reason for allowing someone to cross from one side of the mat to another??

8.) Synchronization vs. Ripples

- Synchronization = Added Difficulty and More Time for other Skills
- Peeling Off Intermediate / Advanced Tumbling Passes = Wasting Time
- Ripples should be used to highlight difficult or exciting parts of your routine, and they work great with sound effects. Don't ripple for the sake of rippling – have a reason!

9.) Cheer

- What style are you? What style does your scoresheet call for?
- Traditional – slower pace, use of signs and props to encourage crowd response, stunts, jumps, and tumbling that make it easy for a crowd to follow the purpose of your cheer
- Contemporary – faster pace, intricate words and motions, less focus on crowd leadership and more intention on telling a story
- Regardless of style, is it practical? Are you accomplishing the purpose of your cheer? For example, if you have a more contemporary style, are you using solid stunts that allow your crowd to easily see the signs and hear your words? If contemporary, are your words clear and your pace practical so your cheer can be heard?

10.) Music

- Music should be appropriate, well constructed, and easy to count
- Music should match your choreography
- Both the team and judges who evaluate your performance should enjoy listening to your music
- Sound effects are used to highlight different pieces of your routine, not to cover up bad mixes, and should not unnecessarily be placed everywhere in your music
- Themes CAN work well if they don't reduce the overall selection or quality of the mix. However, they're done often and can be found boring or unoriginal at times.

A couple of other things to remember

Great choreography takes practice, and often some changes are necessary even with great planning.

If you're hiring an independent choreographer (someone other than you) ensure they have the following credentials / requirements

- 1.) AACCA Safety Certification
- 2.) Personal Liability Insurance
- 3.) Background Check
- 4.) References
- 5.) Anything else required by your administration to reduce liability

Don't assume the risk otherwise!! Imagine telling your AD or Program Director that you're bringing someone in to work with YOUR cheerleaders who doesn't have the required safety certification or insurance! Would he / she allow you to take the risk?

If you have any questions on choreography, or if I can set up a choreography camp for your team, let me know. I love talking about choreography and I'm your #1 resource for outstanding choreographers and music!!