What's There To Cheer About?: How Does Cheerleading Affect Young Girls Of Color's Identity

Research Paper

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Abstract:
While research on gender and sports/physical activities is prevalent, there are limited studies on how cheerleading plays a part in the gender socialization of young girls. This research will focus and compare two adolescent cheerleading teams, one being a predominantly Black/African American cheer team and the other being a predominantly white/multi-racial cheerleading team. This research will view how their interactions with their peers impact how they express their self-esteem and ethnic-identity. The methodology for this study is field observations and participant observation. I frame my analysis using the social learning theory and symbolic interaction paradigms that observe how cheerleaders socially interact with each other and promote girl collectivism. Throughout my observations I have found that race and class play a significant role on how the cheerleaders interpret their self-esteem and ethnic identity. Through interactions and observations with the parents as well as the cheerleaders, I have found that cheerleading is helping the girls on the predominantly Black/African American cheerleading teams build their ethnic-identity by the choreography from the cheers and the interactions with other cheerleaders of the same race/ethnic background.
**Introduction**

What is this about?

This research looks at the affects Pop Warner Cheerleading has on adolescent, Black/African American girls’ ethnic identity through social interaction, symbolic interaction and ethnic-identity. This research will deconstruct how these particular Black/African American cheerleaders internalize race through the interactions they face as a cheerleader. With this case study, it will provide insight on Black/African American, youth cheerleaders within the Los Angeles County and rationalize how they view their ethnic-identity through cheerleading. It will also take into consideration how these cheerleaders internalize the idea of “being black” and incorporate this ideal into their style of cheerleading. This research is important because it talks about race, specifically Black/African American females and sports; which is not usually discussed. Usually when Black/African Americans are mentioned in sports, the focus is predominantly on males and when Black/African American females are considered in sports, it is usually focused towards basketball and track. While looking at Pop Warner cheerleading or cheerleading in general, most research focuses on gender and neglects to consider race.

This research is critical because it shows and explains the culture of cheer and deconstructs cheerleading into specific details. Cheerleading is broken down into many different groups; different complexities, styles, levels, performance focuses, and classifications as to whether it is competitive or not. Cheerleading requires a lot of athleticism and competitiveness that people may be unaware of. Over the years cheerleading has evolved from the idea of cheerleading being sexist and only being used to objectify women and entertain men.

Aside from learning about the cheerleading, this research is geared to focus on identity specifically for girls of color and how they interpret their own identity as well as other girls on the team. It is important for young women to learn and build their confidence and validate their identity. This research will allow the girls to start identifying their identity specifically within the cheerleading culture within their area. With establishing their identity, and observing this cheerleading team will address girl collectivism. While working with these cheerleaders, I will be observing how they work together and support each other as females within a society that teach and promote girls to compete against each other.

**Background/History**

Cheerleading History 101:

Cheerleading first started in the late 1800’s, early 1900’s, it was solely for men (Adams and Bettis, 2003). Women were not allowed to participate. During this time, cheerleading was an exclusive activity for privileged, white, males to showcase their athleticism and masculinity (Adams and Bettis, 2003). It was a way for men to practice their masculine gender roles, through lifting others and doing jumps and tumbling. Once World War II took place, men were being drafted to fight, and so women began to take over cheerleading for the time being; and over 30,000 high schools and colleges had white, female cheerleaders (Adams and Bettis, 2003). When World War II ended in 1945, men tried to reclaim cheerleading and remove women, and for some colleges they did try and ban women from cheerleading. However, cheerleading became so feminized during that
time, it was hard to retransform the stigma that was evolving of cheerleading being for privileged, white women (Adams and Bettis, 2003. Kutz, 1955,310). During this time, desegregation was taking place within schools, sports, etc. In 1947, Jackie Robinson eliminates the color restrictions in major league baseball by playing for the Brooklyn Dodgers, and in 1948, Truman, by executive action, desegregated the armed forces (Schwartz, 2003). However, just because desegregation acts were taking place within the late 1940’s and 1950’s, it still did not change the segregation between races.

The 1950’s were the height of Jim Crow racial segregation in the American South (Leib and Chapman, 2011). To continue the separation between White people and Black people, and avoid being integrated, court cases such as Sweatt vs. Painter were being supported. Due to these separations, Black/African American’s created their own communities. During the 1950’s racially segregated Black Americans did not see a significant amount of progress in the area of civil rights. So the Black/African American cheerleaders created their own particular performance style that was inspired by the expressive nature of popular black music as well as the Baptist church (Adams and Bettis, 2003). The popular music during this time was Funk, Jazz, Blues and Soul. While the Black/African American cheerleading teams were evolving, mainstream cheerleading teams were becoming highly feminized (Adams and Bettis, 2003).

“Cheerleading in the sixties consisted of pom-poms, cutesy chants, big smiles and revealing uniforms. There were no gymnastic tumbling runs. No complicated stunting. Never any injuries. About the most athletic thing sixties cheerleaders did was a cartwheel followed by the splits” (McElroy, 1999, 15).

This was a time when cheerleading portrayed the stereotypical idea of women being sexualized and degraded and only use is to look cute and cheer on men. During the sixties the feminist movement and cheerleading had two separate views towards women. The cheerleaders were implementing the stereotype of women being “accessories” for men and being beneath them; while feminist were working towards becoming equals to men.

The 1960’s were a progressive, equal rights era; for the civil rights movement as well as the second wave of feminism. John F. Kennedy was president in 1961 and was assassinated in 1963; Lyndon Johnson took over right away. With the March on Washington, Martin Luther King’s I Have A Dream speech, and the Black Panther Party all taking place it was a step for racial equality and desegregation.

The second wave of feminism focused on sexuality and reproductive rights, which were the main issues being addressed along side passing the Equal Rights Amendment that would guarantee equality regardless of ones sex (Rampton, 2008). The feminist movement was creating feminist groups, such as NOW, to create a foundation of this feminist movement. This second wave of feminism was very proactive and vocal about the issues at hand, and included women of color, seeking sisterhood. Black Women activists who became feminists in the 60’s and 70’s chose a political label and path that was not encouraged by male activist (White, 1999; Harris, 1999; Hooks, 1981, 1984; Roth 1999a, 1999b, 2004; Smith, 1983; Springer, 2001). Some Black men were not in favor of the Black women partaking in the feminist movement because they felt that the women would lose focus on the civil rights movement and focus more on the feminist movement. However, that did not stop the Black women from partaking in the feminist movement by creating groups such as the Black Women’s Liberation Group (BWLG), and the Third World
Women’s Alliance. The Third World Women’s Alliance arose directly from the Civil Rights movement by Francis Beal and other members of the SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) (Roth, 2003). The Black women participating in the feminist movement were also incorporating the civil rights movement as well.

Even though Black/African American women were participating in the feminist movement, it still did not change the discrimination in cheerleading. In 1967, Seventeen football players at Madison High School in Illinois were banned from the football team for boycotting a practice after only one black cheerleader was picked for the varsity cheerleading squad. Following the dismissal of the football players, almost all of the school district’s 1,300 Black/African American students boycotted their classes for a week (Lurie, 2014). After this incident, the school took their complaint into consideration and began to integrate the cheerleading teams. As the schools began to integrate, one factor that was adding to the tension between the black and white cheerleaders was the different styles of cheerleading between the black and white students. As Lou Lillard, a Black cheerleader explained, “The type of cheering at black high schools is… more of a stomp-clap, soul-swing… At [white] schools, the traditional cheers are straight-arm motions” (Lurie, 2014). Specifically for the Black/African American cheerleaders, they would refuse to dance to "Dixie" or wave the Confederate flag (Lurie, 2014); making the process to integrate the cheerleading teams a lot harder.

In 1967, Pop Warner, a youth football league, introduces cheer and dance programs for elementary and middle school students, opening up the sport to cheerleaders as young as four years old.

In the 1970’s NFL cheerleading teams started to be introduced (Lurie, 2014). In 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment and title IX were passed and it made a big impact for women. In 1974, two years after the passage of Title IX, some people worried that female cheerleaders would leave cheerleading for other sports. Jeff Webb, a former college cheerleader who advocated for incorporating more gymnastics into the activity, founds the Universal Cheerleaders Association. The organization would go on to hold hundreds of competitions, clinics, and camps, with a focus on acrobatic stunts and pyramids (Lurie, 2014) and after Title IX competitive cheerleading began to take place. “National cheerleading organizations actively sought to reshape this activity as congruent with the newer ideals of normative femininity” (Adams and Bettis, Woodmansee, 1993). Competitive Cheer became very popular and was a lot more physically inclined than regular cheerleading. Competitive cheerleading includes:

“Tight athletic motions, difficult jumps, and pyramid building began to be emphasized in the hundreds of cheerleading camps offered throughout the country. This new cheerleading techniques required girls who not only were strong but also were agile, were well-coordinated and possessed athletic prowess” (Adams and Bettis, 2003).

A few years after Title IX and the landmark gender equity law passes, Dallas Cowboys owner Tex Schramm decides that he wants cheerleaders to be more entertaining. So, as the team's website puts it, he knew that the public liked pretty girls, So he had women perform choreographed routines in short shorts and midriff-bearing uniforms (Lurie, 2014). Schramm wanted to maintain the business that the cheerleaders were bringing in, so he promoted the idea of cheerleaders still be “accessories” to men. In 1976, the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders drew attention from around the country when they perform at the
Super Bowl, debuting their new uniforms on a national stage (Lurie, 2014). The Dallas Cowboys also became an integrated cheerleading team with Vonceil Baker paving the way for African American women by being the first African American woman to cheer for the NFL’s first professional cheerleading squad, the Dallas Cowboys. Her sister Vanessa Baker joined her the next year in 1973 (Knox).

While the Baker sisters opened up the door for Black American cheerleaders in the NFL, and integration was taking place on the high school cheerleading teams, there were still some Black/African American cheerleading squads that still stayed separate from mainstream cheerleading. In the late 1970’s Black/African Americans created a new style of cheer called “Stomp n Shake”. This style has the same goals as “traditional cheerleaders” being to motivate their team and the crowd but they use African American dance/stepping aesthetics and were also inspired by the movement of hip hop that originated in New York City and was quickly evolving. Stomp n shake cheerleaders included tumbling and stunting during a time when mainstream cheerleading (high school) teams did not, but they also included hip and butt shaking, which was not allowed in mainstream competitive cheerleading. These cheerleaders did not smile but portrayed a more serious intimidating demeanor (Powell, 2011). In reference to the movie Bring it On the two teams, Clovers and Toros, were an example of the differences in cheer styles. Stomp n shake style cheerleading was from the Clovers (which are the Clovers are a predominantly Black/African American cheerleading team from Compton, California) and the Toros projects mainstream “traditional” cheerleading (which the Toros are a predominantly white cheerleading team from the San Diego county area).

In the 1980’s the first high school national cheerleading competition was held, and in 1981 national, state and regional cheerleading competitions were introduced (Adams and Bettis, 2003). Also in the 1980’s, cable television expanded and became standard in most households i.e. ESPN, Nickelodeon, MTV etc. (USHistory.org). With MTV, it redefined popular music with music videos of stars such as Madonna, Michael Jackson, etc. (USHistory.org). In 1983, ESPN televised the national cheerleading event (UCA, Hanson, 1995).

Also in the 1980’s it was a time when “gangsta” rap was really taking place on the west coast with rappers such as: Ice T and NWA. The rap group NWA came out with their most popular album, Straight Outta Compton. This album addressed the discrimination people of color received within the Los Angeles area, which became prevalent when the Los Angeles Riots took place in 1992 after the verdict of Rodney King. As the LA riots took place, the third wave of the feminist movement was in the works as well. “Gangsta” rap music and other hip hop/rap music became a big influence on predominantly Black/African American cheerleading teams. The dance styles seen in the hip hop/rap videos were shown on MTV and became incorporated into the predominantly Black/African American cheers.

In the 1990’s competitive cheerleading squads (All-Star teams) were being formed throughout the United States; the squads were not affiliated with schools or any sports teams (Lurie, 2014). These All-Star teams solely focus on the athletic, kinesthetic of cheerleading and is used to compete against other competitive, elite, cheerleading teams. However, high school cheerleading continues to expand as Deardorff states that, “According to the National Federation of State High Schools [NFHS], in the 1997-1998 school year, approximately 59,000 girls participated in competitive cheerleading –an
increase of approximately 25,000 since 1995-1996” (Deardorff, 1999). As of the 2000’s the National Federation of State High School Association states that, “According to the 2011-2012 NFHS High School Athletics Participation survey, 108,307 students participate in competitive spirit [cheerleading, spirit squad, drill team, etc.], which ranks ninth among girls sports” behind Track and field, basketball, volleyball, soccer, softball, cross country, tennis, swimming and diving, cheerleading/spirit, and lacrosse (NFHS.org). Today, competitive cheerleading has become very popular and is starting to become more accepting of male cheerleaders and is becoming an athletic sport.

Styles of Cheerleading:
Throughout the history of cheerleading, so many different classifications of cheerleading styles have been created from: competition, club, college, high school, youth/pop warner, NFL etc. and even different styles. While looking at different racial cheerleading teams, different races can have an influence on the style of cheerleading that they perform. For example, some predominantly black cheerleading squads do more stomp n shake cheer or drill teams. Within competition teams there are just competitive cheerleaders and all-star cheerleaders and many other groups. There is so much more that goes into cheerleading and so many different styles of cheerleading to be considered aside from what the media portrays cheerleading to be.

What’s Pop Warner?:
This research will be focusing on pop warner cheerleading. Pop warner is a term that was inspired by a man named Glenn “Pop” Warner. Glen “Pop” Warner was an American football player who later became a coach; and helped create the Youth American football organization, Pop Warner Little Scholars (Carroll, 1980). Glen “Pop” Warner was born in New York and became the captain for the Cornell University football team in 1892 (Powers, 1969). He then played professional football in the First World Series of Football, in which was held at Madison Square Garden, for the Syracuse Athletic Club in 1902 (Power, 1969). Before his football career took off, he was hired as the head football coach for the University of Georgia. In 1933 Glenn Warner coached a team in the Junior Conference Football in Philadelphia (Pop Warner Little Scholars Inc.). Warner won multiple national championships and Rose Bowl games and in 1938 he had over 157 football teams (Smith, 2005). While Pop Warner football began to take off, girls were feeling excluded and wanted to be included. In the late 1960’s Pop Warner introduced cheerleading and that took off as well with the football teams. Since then the term Pop Warner associates with youth football and cheerleaders who cheer for the football players.
Within Pop Warner cheerleading, there are different divisions. Divisions can be based on age, skill level, and for football players, weight limit. These divisions are created as categories for to separate the adolescents into fair groups to interact with, and when they compete, they compete against people within their range whether it’s by body size, height, age, skill level, etc.

Competitive Cheerleading:
In the early 1980’s competitive cheerleading began to emerge, with the first organization to call themselves a competitive cheerleading team, the Q94 Rockers from Richmond, Virginia (Smith, 2007). In 1986, the National Cheerleading Association (NCA) decided to create an All-star division for cheerleading teams that are not associated with a school or pop warner team (Smith, 2007). With creating a team that solely focuses on competitions, it moves away from cheerleaders just being considered accessories and only use is to cheer on “men”. In 2003, the competitive companies formed the United States All Star Federation (USAFS)(USASF, 2007). The USAFS was created to act as the national governing board for all-star cheerleading and to create a set of rules and standards to be followed by competitions to lead up the cheerleading worlds (USASF, 2007). On April 24th, 2004, USASF hosted the first Cheerleading Worlds competition (USASF, 2007). By hosting the first Cheerleading Worlds competition, it validated competitive cheerleading and made it an activity that other cheerleading teams want to participate in.

In 2012 all-star cheerleading would involve a squad of 6–36 females and/or males. These all-star teams prepare year-round and compete for many different competition appearances. The average length of a performance is about 2½ minutes. Within that time, each team (or squad) performs choreographed stunting, tumbling, jumping, and dancing to their own custom music. The numbers of competitions a team participates in can vary depending on the team however, most teams tend to participate in eight to twelve competitions a year (Smith, 2007). These competitions include locals; local competitions typically take place in school gymnasiums or local venues. Nationals are hosted in big venues all around the U.S. with national champions; one big national competition is Jamz. By winning at national competitions, it leads to the Cheerleading Worlds, which takes place at Disney World in Orlando, Florida (Smith, 2007). Most cheerleaders and cheerleaders’ parents are looking to be a part of and compete in the Division 1A National college Cheerleading Competition, that is hosted by the Universal Cheerleading Association (UCA) at Disney’s Wide World of Sports in Orlando, Florida where they will compete on ESPN with the most elite coed teams in the nation (Grindstaff). Competitive cheerleading has really expanded over the years and has pushed the activity of cheerleading into a more physical activity where it can be considered more of a sport. This idea of “all-star cheerleading- private for profit cheer programs” are now increasing and shifting the dynamics (Grindstaff and West, 2006).

There are also different divisions in competitive cheerleading to allow the teams to compete against other teams within the same age, skill level, and/or group size to make the competition “fair”, which is similar to pop warner cheerleading.

Pop Warner Cheerleading Vs. Competitive Cheerleading:

The differences between Pop Warner cheerleading and competition cheerleading is that Pop Warner cheerleading is based around cheering for football games. Pop Warner cheerleaders’ main focus is cheering at football games. Pop warner cheerleaders do not necessarily have to go to competitions and compete; that is usually an option. With competitive cheerleading teams, they do not cheer for football players and are solely there to compete. Since competitive teams are always looking to compete at so many different competitions, the price for competitive cheer is a lot more expensive than pop Warner cheerleading. The price for Pop Warner cheer ranges from $175-$400 a year; depending on the registration fees for the local area (Pop Warner Little Scholars Inc.). The price for competitive cheer ranges from $1500-$5000 a year; depending on the age and level of the
team that will be competing (USASF). I chose to focus on Pop Warner cheerleading because that was what I grew up participating in. Pop Warner cheerleading has a more diverse population, in terms of socioeconomic status, body image disparities, and race/ethnicity; in which all of those factors can affect ones self-esteem and self-identity.

Race, Body Image, and Self Esteem:

While talking about cheerleading and girls’ self-esteem, specifically Black females experience their own self-identity and insecurities at an increasing amount. Black American females experience the unique task of determining their identity in a society that devalues both Black Americans and women (Hooks 1991). Black American females face inherent inferiority because white women are idolized and portray the “norm” for everyday American women, while black women are assigned a subordinate status and are looked down upon (Eggleston and Miranda 2009). However, Black American women are always being sexualized and displayed for their bodies. Throughout history media portrayed black women as sexual objects from Dorothy Dainridge, Lena Horne, Halle Berry, Whitney Houston, Beyoncé, Nicki Minaj, and many more, all of these women are portrayed as sex symbols in the eyes of the media. These women are praised for their beauty and most importantly their voluptuous curves, which ironically having curves is something that is not praised in the cheerleading world and is another reason why there was a division of black cheerleading and mainstream, white cheerleading.

Stomp n Shake cheerleading squads appear to be more accepting of cheerleaders who don’t fit the relatively slender body shape of mainstream cheerleaders (Powell, 2011). Stomp n Shake cheerleaders and other predominantly Black/African American cheerleading teams allow girls to accentuate their body and be proud of their curves oppose to pressuring them to have a specific, thin body. The ideology of black females not being successful cheerleaders and ballet dancers comes from the idea that they do not have the “right” body image or the right feet to partake in these activities. The ideal body image for ballet dancers and some cheerleading teams include, “long legs, long arms, long neck, oval shaped head; body of excellent proportions; and, perhaps of greatest importance, a ‘bone thin’ frame” (Bonbright, 1989). This ideal body image does not reflect Black/African American women who have been shown to have wider hips and more curves. As Rachel Moore the executive director of American Ballet Theatre states, “I’ve heard from the mouths of dance professionals that black dancers categorically cannot become ballet dancers because they don’t have the right body” (Carman, 2014). With this being said, it has been another issue that Black/African American females are faced with. Being sexualized for their curves, but not respected in activities such as ballet and cheerleading for those same curves becomes another battle to add to self-esteem, and acceptance of ones body and through this research, it will look at how Pop Warner cheerleaders internalize these issues within their self-identity.

Why Pop-Warner?:

After understanding the difference between competitive and Pop Warner cheerleading, I decided to look at pop warner cheerleading because it focuses on a more diverse population of adolescents. Since competitive cheerleading is a lot more expensive,
it limits the amount of people who are of lower SES backgrounds from participating. Since my focus is on adolescent cheerleaders of color who reside within working class environments, I decided to place my focus on pop warner cheerleading.

Originally, I had intentions of looking at two different cheerleading teams from two different leagues. While looking at both teams I was able to use them as a comparison of a pop warner cheerleading team within a middle class environment (Trojans) to a cheerleading team in a working class environment (Bruins). After trying to work with both teams, I was unable to continue working with the Trojans team because of monetary purposes of driving to their practice and back. The Bruins team practiced a lot closer to where I reside so it was easier to commute. Aside from the commute, the Bruins team is a pop warner cheerleading league within the Los Angeles County whose missions statement is to “... provide opportunity for inner-city children to participate in youth football and cheerleading”(SYFL). This particular league (Bruins) fit the criteria that I was looking for within a league, which is why I chose to do a case study on the Bruin league but I did incorporate the Trojans team as a comparison to the Bruins team.

Trojans Background Description:
The Trojans is a predominantly white, middle class organization, however, there were some girls on the cheerleading team from different ethnic/racial backgrounds. The whole league practices on the football field at a park in a middle-class neighborhood within Orange County, California. Everyone from football to cheer are of all age divisions have a specific boundary to where they practice within this field.

They would practice three days throughout the week for two hours. Also, every Saturday, starting in August, they would cheer for the football players at the game, which would be on average 2-3 hours per game. The football teams as well as the cheerleading teams are divided by seven divisions:

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The majority of the cheerleaders within this league live within the Irvine area.

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Parents would have to pay about $325.00 for registration. They do provide scholarships for participants who could not afford to pay the registration fees and the scholarships are from other parents and people within the community. This program is to provide adolescents with extra-curricular activities.

The Trojans cheer staff have one cheer director and an assistant cheer director who both have daughters on cheerleading teams. There are three female coaches as well as about three trainers (coaches assistants) who are female. The coaching staffs are racially and ethnically diverse.

During the cheerleaders’ practices, the parents were allowed to sit wherever they wanted to. There would only be a few parents at the practice and they would sit in the grass next to where the cheerleaders sit their cheer bags. The football players practice in the same area as the cheerleaders and the football players and cheerleaders’ parents sit in different areas on the field. The parents watching the cheerleaders sit on the side where the
cheerleaders practice and the parents watching football players sit on the side facing the football players. The cheerleaders’ required attire to practice is to wear navy blue cheer shorts and either a white or chargers t-shirt or tank top.

Bruin Background Description:
The Bruins is a predominantly African American, working class organization. The whole league practices on the football field at a community college in a middle-class neighborhood within the Los Angeles County, California. Everyone from football to cheer all age divisions have a specific boundary to where they practice within this field. This spot was provided because of an arrangement the President of the league (an Iconic Hip Hop Celebrity) had with the football organization at the community college. Where they league practices is not necessarily the area where a lot of the football players and cheerleaders live. Most of the cheerleaders (as well as a number of football players) take a designated bus that is to specifically take the athletes from Long Beach (a working class area) to practice and from Long Beach. The rest of the girls live throughout the Los Angeles County and are brought to practice by their parents/guardians.

They would practice three days (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) throughout the week for two hours. Also, every Saturday, starting in August, they would cheer for the football players at the game, which would be on average 2-3 hours per game. The majority of the girls on the cheerleading team have a brother or cousin that plays for one of the football teams. The football teams as well as the cheerleading teams are divided by six divisions:

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All of the divisions except Jr. Midget have a cheerleading team. An Iconic Hip Hop Celebrity who created this whole organization of eight different teams throughout the Los Angeles County started this organization to help at risk youth stay out of trouble and shine light on the athletes who come from low socioeconomic status families.

Parents would have to pay about $125.00 as well as fundraise and get donations to allow these athletes the opportunity to participate within the league. This organization does not charge as much as many other organizations, and it provides busses as I mentioned before for the children in Long Beach. The program offers tutoring not just for the athletes (football players and cheerleaders) but for their family members to take advantage of as well. Through this program 20 of the football players have committed to division 1 colleges to play football in 2015 and 4 are currently in the NFL. This program is built to help children within the working class participate in extra-curricular activities and later on pursue and utilize this opportunity.

The Bruins cheer staff have two cheer directors (who are mother and daughter) who has a niece/granddaughter. There are 4 coaches (one being male and 3 females) as well as two trainers (coaches assistants) who are both female, and one team mom. All of the staff is African American.
During the cheerleaders’ practices, the parents are to stay at least 15 feet away from the cheerleaders. When the parents would like to talk to the coaches or directors they are to talk before and after practice. Also mid way throughout the season the parents have a one-on-one talk with the coaches to discuss their child and how she is doing with cheerleading. The football players practice in the same area as the cheerleaders and the football players and cheerleaders’ parents sit in the same area (most of them that attend practice know each other and have a child on the football team and cheerleading team). Their practices start at 6pm and go until 8pm. The cheerleaders’ required attire to practice is to wear clothes that they can stretch in, meaning no jeans or skirts, and there are no particular colors required.

Methodology

Participant Observation:

The methodology for this research is participant observation. Participant observation is when an observer submerges themselves within a culture and participates in ongoing activities (with the group) and records observations i.e. field notes (ucdavis.edu). The purpose behind participant observation is to develop a better understanding of the complex social setting and social relationships by seeing them holistically (Bogdan, 1973). By doing participant observation, it is a way to see and understand a culture first hand. Participant observation allows one to interact with a group and experience one’s culture through their perspective.

While doing participant observant, it has been an experience. Being my first time doing participant observation, I have experienced both pros and cons of this methodology. The pros of participant observation are that it provides hands on experience to actually be able to submerse in a culture. With participant observation it provides answers to a culture in details that is hard to find and express by just reading a book, article or just watching a movie. This methodology also is very interactive and provides both different and exciting experiences. While doing participant observation I was able to interact with the cheerleaders and be involved within their cheerleading world by observing how the cheerleaders interact with each other, cheerleaders on other teams, football players, their coaches, as well as the parents and family who sit in the stands and attend practices. By interacting with the cheerleaders first hand it provides another perspective to understand why they may cheer a certain way, their perspective on cheerleading and how they perceive the ideal of “being black” within a Los Angeles county cheerleading team. Throughout my first time doing participant observation I was really able to get involved and enjoy my research because I was able to see a lot of things that I probably would not have been able to see by just reading.

Although there are a lot of benefits of participant observation, I experienced a few difficulties within participant observation as well. I had a hard time writing field notes. With participant observation it is important to write down everything that takes place in detail because it is the data that is being collected. While doing participant observation for so long, it become difficult remembering to write everything in so much detail. Especially being submersed in a culture for so long after a while it becomes hard to step back from the culture and view what is going on from the outside looking in. Another thing that is a little difficult with participant observation is transcribing notes. After I take notes at the
field, I had to go home and type the notes up online and code them to later identify my data that will be used throughout my findings.

Participant observation has been a learning experience for me and has really introduced me to research. I have gone through trial and error figuring out how to properly take field note in a way that is most beneficial for me to collect data. It has encouraged me to pre-plan and organized what I am looking for in regards to data before I start my observations. I plan to continue participant observation in the future because of the enriching data that I receive.

Observing the Bruins:

Through participant observation I attended their practices 2 times out of the week for two hours at the beginning of the season and by the last month in a half I was at their practice all 3 days of the week that they practiced. I also attend their games, which are every Saturday, and I spent on average 4-5 hours with the cheerleaders during the games. I attended their cheer camp, which was two days, Saturday and Sunday for 6 hours each day. I spent on average over 300 hours with the Bruins cheerleaders from the end of July-early December. I mainly focused my research on the girls between the ages of 9-14 years old.

When I first started I was not exactly sure what I was looking for I know I wanted to initially look at How cheerleading affect Black/African American girls confidence, self-esteem and ethnic-identity. While at practice, I began to create specific variables that I would look for: performances of symbolic interactions, social interactions, and ethnic-identity. I would look for who was all at the field during the time and the set up of the field. I would look at where the parents would sit, which they all sat along the side of the field by the restrooms. We would look at where the football players were positioned which majority of the football teams except for the oldest team were all on the same upper field on the grass part. The oldest football team practiced on the lower football field. There would always be a concession stand by the entrance gate and that is also where the board of the league would sit. The cheer directors would sit on the same side as the parents facing the cheerleaders, where the cheerleaders would practice on the very end of the field on the sidewalk. I would then record how many people were at practice, who were at practice and who came late to practice. Once I started to understand how participant observation worked I then began to create specific variables for what I was looking for. I would look at how the girls interacted towards each other: what they said to each other, their body movements, who they talk to, and who they do not talk to. I looked what they were doing physically: who would dance all the time, who would just stand off to the side and watch, how the girls interacted to the coaches when they would teach them a cheer or dance etc. By the time I collected my data and reviewed my notes, and realized that I would not complete my IRB for interviews in time, I then came up with my research question being How do Black/African American girls present their ethnic identity through cheerleading?

While attending their events, I would interact with the girls and go through a normal day with them either at practice, game, etc. from beginning to end. We would go over and learn new cheers, work on dance routines to perform, and work on basic cheer techniques such as stretching, doing cheer jumps, and a little bit of tumbling. After I was done with the girls, I would go home and write down everything that happened that day; what was at practice, what we did at practice, how the girls responded to the coaches, and each other,
etc. One I have a significant amount of notes, I then began to code them and come up with some variable for my research.

**Findings**

**Social Interaction:**

While looking at social interactions, I looked at how both the Bruins and Trojan teams interacted amongst themselves and with other groups and how the relationships are being perceived during practice, at games, or cheer camp. The cheerleaders on the Bruins team would all interact with each other. There were no specific cliques or groups formed amongst the girls. They all looked to interact with each other as a group. Even though they interacted well with each other, when it came to the Bruin cheerleaders interacting with other groups, they perceived to be more hostile and competitive towards the other teams. At cheer camp some of the bruins cheerleaders were talking about some of the girls on another team making the comments such as “If she rolls her eyes at me one more time…” or even using the other teams as motivation to perform later by saying, “Come on guys, we have to make sure we go full out so we look better than the Cougars.” These comments were made continually whenever they were around other teams. Another time the girls showed hostility towards another team was when the Bruins cheerleaders got into an altercation with another team. While they were at a football game. The older girls who were waiting for their game got into an argument and later an altercation with the girls that cheered for the other team. One thing that I thought was interesting when I ran over to see what was going on was that the Bruins cheerleaders that were around all jumped in and were making sure that their cheer team mates were okay and girls who were not there showed concern in making sure the girls that were in the fight were okay. While watching the support they all had for each other of making sure that everyone was okay, it showed the bond that the Bruins cheerleaders had for one another.

With the Trojans team, they looked to be a little more separated and have little groups in which they hung out amongst the team. They usually looked to be in groups of about 3-5 girls and stayed in the same groups. However, when it came to looking at how the girls interacted with other cheerleading teams, it was a lot more positive in a sense that the Trojans seemed to view other teams as cheer sisters more than competitors. The Trojans made an effort to be nice and compliment the other teams with comments such as “Good Luck”, “Good Job”, or giving the other team a compliment on their attire.

While watching the how the two teams interacted with other teams in two different manners, I began to wonder why the Bruins team viewed the opposing team as competitors and the Trojan did not. Could that be encouraged as just healthy competition, or is it braking down the girl collectivism and adding to the idea that girls are always in competition with one another. At first glance it would look as if the girls are rejecting the idea of girl collectivism, but while keeping in mind the Bruins cheerleaders are able to work and interact with each other collectively then the idea of rejecting girl collectivism is not an adequate argument.

**Race and Ethnic-Identity:**

“I don’t want to do that! That’s for white girls!”:
There were multiple factors that I was looking for that related to cheerleading and racial identity. One in particular was the girls’ choice of style in cheerleading. As mentioned previously Black/African American cheerleading has been inspired by black popular music (Adams and Bettis, 2003). The style of Black/African American cheerleading embodies more of dance form. While watching the Bruins cheerleaders, they would always want to do cheers that reflected specific dance moves (popular dance moves today such as: the dougie, krumping, shmoney dance, the “nae nae” etc.). Whenever the coaches would teach the girls a cheer in which they had to do more robotic moves, a few of the girls would roll their eyes and complain. One day in particular, while the girls were at cheerleading practice, the Coach called the girls over and had them get into the cheerleading lines (the three lines that they make to present their cheers) and she was explaining to the girls that she had a new cheer to teach them. As she started teaching the girls that cheer, one cheerleader named Angelica made the comments, while rolling her eyes in a loud tone, “I don’t want to do that!” “That’s for white girls” and another cheerleader Keyanna walked closer in front of the coach and said “How about we do this instead (while doing a dance move)”. With the comments that these two girls made and while watching a few other girls shake their heads in agreement to Angelica and Keyanna, it showed how a few of the girls were rejecting the mainstream cheerleading moves and were more interested in more dance style cheerleading, which is what black style cheerleading is.

The cheerleaders did not only implement hip hop style dancing in their cheers but whenever the cheerleaders had free time (whether it is before practice, during their breaks between practice, before a game, at cheer camp or after practice), a majority of the girls would get into a circle and interact with krump battles. Krumping is a style of dance that came around in the 90’s and was influenced from clown dancing that was created in 1992 in Los Angeles, California by Tommy the Clown (uoregon.edu). He created this style dance and used it for entertainment for parties and other events. Krumping is a way for people to have an outlet from all of the violence and gangs’ activities within the area (uoregon.edu). The Bruins cheerleaders would make a dance circle and usually there would be about four girls who would always be in the middle of the circle krumping; Keyanna, Angelica, Arianna, and Dallas, and the rest of the girls would just watch and cheer their teammates on. However, one of the last days of practice, the girls were having their krump battle, and after Keyanna finished her first round of krumping, Leanna walked into the middle and stated krumping. All of the girls had a surprised look on their face because Leanna has never been in the middle of the circle before let alone Leanna has not krumped at practice. While Leanna was in the middle krumping she had a big smile on her face and after a little bit, the girls began to cheer her on. After Leanna was done all the girls started to cheer for her and congratulate her. At that moment when Leanna was dancing, she looked as if she becomes more comfortable around the girls and embraced the “culture” of “being black” within this cheerleading team. Leanna started off the season not talking at all and would always stand in the back unless the coach made her stand in the front. She also had a very quiet voice whenever the coach would sk her to say a cheer out loud and the coaches would always tell her to be louder. Leanna would never dance at practice. As the year progressed, Leanna began to talk a little more and would stand in the front, but she never would participate in krumping until this day. With the girls having the chance to do these krump battles and dancing in the circle, they are practicing and sharing culture. They are sharing
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a style of dance that in the 90’s represented Black American culture in Los Angeles. It also looks at the sense of community that was built throughout this cheerleading team and how it is an example of girl collectivism. It is an example of girls being able to work and support each other as they did for Leanna and the other girls that would krump in the middle of the circle.

“Why doesn’t my hair look like my cousins?”:
While looking at the cheerleaders and how they view their ethnic-identity, there was one girl named Nylah who had a hard time understanding her ethnic-identity of being bi-racial. When I first met Nylah at the beginning of the cheer season, she would always have her hair straight. Her father is Mexican American and her mother is African American. She lived with her father so she is always around her Mexican American family. Crystal [her Aunt] said that Nylah would ask, “Why doesn’t my hair look like theirs [her cousins’ of Mexican descent]”? Crystal said that she would explain to Nylah that it’s “because you are half black, you have different texture hair”. Crystal said that it wasn’t until she started cheerleading on this team that Nylah would start to ask to wear her hair in braids and wear her hair naturally curly and not straightened it all. At the beginning of the cheer season, Nylah would always have her hair straight and through the season the transition of her hair being in more “ethnic” or natural styles looked as if she was beginning to accept her ethnic differences between her and her cousins, and embrace being bi-racial. Being around girls that look similar to Nylah (or at least have a similar texture of hair to her) allowed Nylah to be able to come to practice and embrace her hair oppose to try and assimilate to how her cousin’s wear their hair.

My home:
Leanna’s mom shared with me that Leanna and her brother attend a predominately Asian American school. She is one of the few Black/African American students who attend the school. Her mother shared with me that having Leanna be a part of this cheerleading team, it allows Leanna the chance to be around people within her culture and that look like her. Her mom said that she has noticed that Leanna is more social and looks to be more confident in herself when she is at practice then she usually is at school events. Even while watching Leanna throughout the season she was very shy and once she became co-captain on the team the coaches encouraged her to be more of a leader. They would encourage her to be loud and to make decisions and by the end of the year she would always talk and dance with the other girls on the team any chance she had.

“I want my hair like yours”:
When I first started coming to practice, there was a bi-racial girl named Emma on the team. She looked to be mixed with Black/African American and another race that I was not able to identify. She did not talk very much and she did not talk to me at all at he beginning of the year. Once I started talking to her and was teaching her a routine, she started talking to be a lot more. While we were at a cheer competition, I noticed her move to sit behind me and started to touch my braids. I turned around and noticed her so focused while inspecting them. She then asked me how I got my hair to look like that, and I began to explain to her the process. Later on that day as I was walking with her to the restroom
she made the comment, “I want my hair one like yours [in braids]. It looks cool.” Emma showed an interest and open-mindedness to my black hair and by looking at my hair; she wanted to embrace the style as well. This supports Merton’s social strain theory of conformity; and feeling accepted in culture. Just like Nylah, it took for Emma to be around someone who had similar hair as her to be around and interact with her to feel comfortable accepting and embracing her hair and the cultural ideas that are attached to black hair.

**Conclusion**

**Overall Findings:**

While conducting this research, I was able to view how race and class affect cheerleading teams. I viewed how race affects how the girls decide to cheer and the social interactions that took place. The Bruins team cheer style was dance based. Their cheers incorporated a lot of everyday hop hop dance moves, which historically has always been what Black/African American cheerleading teams portrayed. Their interactions with each other at times were competitive; such as when they would have krumping battles and would interact with other teams and krumping battles are competitive activities. He goal of krumping is to be the best at expressing your story and that was what the Bruins cheerleaders enjoyed partaking in and translated that mentality into cheerleading.

Class was shown through their symbolic interactions. Looking at the difference in registration fees and what was required for each team to have. The Trojans team being a middle class cheerleading team was able to have a higher registration fee and include practice uniforms, but for the Bruins, it was not a priority because not as many parents were able to afford a higher registration to include practice attire. Also when it came to the uniforms their choices on bows showed the class differences. The Trojans team had very elaborate, decorative bows and that was what they were willing to pay for as a team. For the Bruins bows were not very important, they had just yellow ribbons in their hair until they had someone donate bows that were a little more decorative to them.

Ethnic-identity within both the Bruins team and the Trojans team were prevalent at some point and were influenced by the ideal of conformity and fitting into the social norms. I was able to witness how Black/African American girls incorporate their race/ethnicity and culture into their cheerleading teams. It was interesting to see how some girls embraced or became aware of their race/ethnicity just by being around other girls who are of the same race/ethnicity. This research found that the support of other girls that have a similar race/ethnicity as a person may make them feel comfortable embracing their culture. While adolescent girls, specifically pre-teens, are always looking to “fit-in” with a group, being around girls that look the same as them makes easier to feel comfortable with themselves because they can see that they are not the only one who look a certain way. For example Nylah started to embrace her natural hair once she saw other girls who had their hair natural because their hair looked similar.

**Why it Matters:**

This research is important because it shows how an activity that had such a superficial and degrading stigma can actually be a positive activity to help prepare young girls for their future. Cheerleading teaches girls a lot of skills that can be incorporated into everyday life such as time management, discipline, responsibility, diversity, teamwork, and many more. Cheerleading teaches girls about girl collectivism. It teaches girls how to
balance working as a team and having a healthy competition. These skills are important to teach girls, because we live in a society where females are always taught to compete against each other and not work together. These girls are able to learn that it is okay to work with other girls to accomplish a greater goal and how to have a healthy competition as well. These skills that the girls are learning through cheerleading will be useful for them in the future especially in the workforce and may also help to increase more women in the workforce by earning how to work together.

What’s Next:
I plan to expand this research and look more into as well as measure how the cheerleaders view their ethnic-identity and confidence by providing more observations and interviews. I also plan gain more data on how the girls build girl collectivism and interpret black culture. I would like to incorporate the football players and observe how they interact with the cheerleaders within Pop Warner/Youth football and cheerleading. I am interested in the correlation between black cheerleaders and football players and how they view and express their ethnic-identity and project gender roles within their setting of Pop Warner. I would like to see how the football players influence or do not influence the cheerleaders and their identity.

References

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Krumping blogs.uoregon.edu


Appendix:

Bruins
August 4th

· Today when we arrived at cheer practice the girls were already getting into their lines to begin cheers. I watched Coach White place the girls into their lines and Keyanna asked me if we were going to separate the groups and Angelica and Tonya stood next to her. I told them that we would run the cheers together and then after we go over the old cheers then we could separate.

· While working with the 7-9 year olds Sammy said she had to use the restroom right after a break. I asked her why she needed to go and all she said was “because” when she said that she looked guilty. I told her no and that I already knew that she just went to the restroom and to
get back in line. While she was in her line, she was standing next to Carol and when Sammy stood there Carol said, “I don’t want to stand by her. She always looks at me when we do cheers”. Sammy then rolled her eyes at Carol. I then needed to tell them to be nice to each other.

- Sammy continuously asked if she could go to the restroom and then she complain because she did not know the cheers and not being fully stretched out. She also would focus on the older girls instead of her own team.
- When practice was almost over, Sammy asked if we could learn a new cheer. I told her that we needed to perfect the ones that we have learned before we could learn a new one. I also explained to her that she needs to be doing the cheers correctly before we could move on.
- While Coach White was talking to Delina about being a trainer, Laurel and Lena walked up to me and lena said, “I think I know who’s going to be captain for Jr. Clinic” and I said me too. She then asked who I thought would be captain and I said Malia. She then looked a little shocked and asked me what Jada needed to work on. I told her that she needed to pay more attention. Laurel called Jada over and told her to give back the dollar Laurel gave her and told her “You need to be paying attention at practice. Okay” Jada looked like she was going to cry as she said okay and then Laurel gave her back her dollar and she left.

August 6th, 2014

- Today we had 15 girls between the ages of 7-14
- We were beginning cheer captain tryouts
- When I got to practice, all of the girls were sitting in a circle stretching together
- All of the coaches, trainers, and director were there
- After the girls were done warming up and stretching, we had them do a relay run (oppose to running laps)
- All of the girls except for Tianna participated and ran the whole way back and forth (Arianna who usually never runs because of her asthma ran the whole way today)
- When Tianna was running, she sprinted to the fence, but then stopped and started walking back. Her team was yelling and trying to cheer her on to continue and finish but she just continued to walk. She would shrug her shoulder and say, “oh well. I don’t care. I can’t run anymore”. Once she got to where the rest of her team was, she was suppose to do ten jumping jacks before the next person could start running. She refused to do the jumping jacks and her team proceeded to continue the race, even though they were far behind due to Tianna walking back
- Coach White made Tianna run again since she was not cooperating. When Tianna got to the fence (where I was) I asked her why she was running again and she shrug her shoulders and mumbled “I don’t know” then said “They just told me to run again”.
- Once they were on their last lap, Angelica ran against Jada and Jada started crying because Angelica (who is 11) beat her (Jada is 7). Laruel (who is her aunt) and Lena (who is her grandma) started comforting her. Coach white even walked over and said “It’s okay, don’t cry. You did a good job”.
- After we started going over the cheers, everyone participated and gave eye contact for the most part. Tianna would start talking every once in a while and she was not doing the cheers full out. Once myself and Coach Allen talked to her, she then started paying attention
- At around 7:30pm, tryout started. We had all of the girls sit on the bleachers and we would have each person one-by-one stand up and do four cheers and some motions
· Tianna and Salia did say that they did not want to try out. Tianna (who is related to Lena and Laurel and was added on to the team after the deadline) said that her mom told her that she did not have to try out if she does not want to.

· While Jada was trying out, she messed up on the last cheer, she said “touchdown across that line” opposed to “boogie across that line”. When she said that, a few girls chuckled. Immediately after the girls started chuckling her eyes started to tear up. She then ran to Laurel and Lena and started crying (Arianna was sitting next to me and rolled her eyes and sucked her teeth) Laurel then said “You guys shouldn’t have laughed at her, clap for your cheer sister”.

· After she said that, a few girls rolled their eyes. Arianna whispered to me “She cries too much, and Laruel only said that because that’s her niece. Watch her be captain because of Laruel and Lena”.

· Dallas then went to do her tryout and Arianna said, “Here we go, we know she already will be a captain” and Keyanna nodded her head in agreement. A little through Dallas’s tryout, Arianna said, “I’m getting nervous” she started going over the cheers while sitting down.

August 12

· Today at practice, we had 15 7-14 year olds.

· When we first started stretching, Dallas, Lexi, and Emma arrived 5 minutes late. When they arrived Dallas took out her blanket and laid it on the grass; her and Leanna stated laying on it. Emma came and lay down on the blanket with them. Dallas told her something to get her off her blanket. When Emma got off the blanket, I heard Delina yell, “Don’t start crying”! and as soon as Delina said that Emma put her hood over her head and covered her face with her hands and started crying. Delina said, “she cries too much”! Amera walked over to Emma and grabbed her arm to pick her up from the grass and told her “You’re alright” “Stop crying. You’re okay” in a calm voice. Delina continued to say, “She cries too much”!

· Once they were done stretching, we started walking to the cement when the girls usually run and Emma was crying to Coach Allen saying “Dallas and Delina are always so mean to me” Coach Allen was hugging her and rubbing her back and said, “It’s okay”.

· Once the girls were done running, we then had them get into their lines to start practicing their kicks.

· While we went over kicks with the girls and we were critiquing them, Tianna’s mom would do the same from the side. She would tell some of the girls to either “hit their high v sharper” or tell the girls to pay attention. Then Tianna’s mom made an announcement to all of the girls and said, “Older girls shouldn’t have to be reminded to get ready all the time! The younger girls can because they are little”.

· While we continued to work on their kicks, there were four parents standing there (aside from Tianna’s mom who make 5) there were a total of four women and one man, all African American, they stood a little more in the corner and were talking to each other.

· While we were telling the girls to get ready so we could do more kicks, the girls did not get ready right away, and the parents started questioning the girls asking, “What’s ready” and the girls were quiet and got ready right away.

· A few moments later, 4 more parents (all women) came over at around 7pm and were smiling watching the cheerleaders.

· Then Laurel and Lena came over with poster boards and a bag of goodies (candy, headbands, etc.) They then made the announcement “Okay parents, come on over we will be announcing the cheer captains”.

· During that time, there was a total of 12 parents standing there taking pictures and recording with their phones.

· They then announced the captains and co-captains:
-5&6: Maddie Hill (Captain)
    Ceita (Co-Captain)
-7&8: Jada (Captain)
    Mialia (Co-Captain)
-9&10: Dallas (Captain)
    Leanna (Co-captain)
-11: Arianna (Captain)
· Once the Captains were announced, all of the parents took pictures and at that moment practice was over and Lena and Laurel brought all of the girls’ hot dogs and cupcakes.
· While the girls were in line waiting to get food, Dallas walks up to me and asks, “Can I go with Eliane to the bathroom”? As I looked at Eliane, she was crying and trying to avoid eye contact with me. I told her that they could go.
· While I was standing next to Tianna’s mom, she told me “I’m sorry to be getting involved with you guys’ practice, I own a competition cheer gym and I don’t play. When I tell girls ready, they ready. Parents only see the routine the day before competition”. I just listened to her, then walked away.
· Leanna does not talk much at practice; she always pays attention, and does what we ask. Whenever I see her she will smile and say hi quietly.
· At the end of practice Tonya kept asking whom the captains were for the older girls (since we were waiting to announce them). It was between her and Keyanna. She continuously asked and all I told her was “You will be happy when we announce it”. She then gave a big smile and walked away.

August 13th

- The next day as I walked up to the practice field, the girls were in a circle stretching.
- When they were done stretching the girls then broke into their teams to practice.
- When the girls broke into their groups, I noticed Eliane was not smiling and as enthusiastic as she usually is. She was standing in the back, not talking to anyone. Whenever anyone would ask her a question she would just shrug her shoulders or shake her head. She did not talk. She did not do any of the cheers full out.
- Laurel walked over and said “I notice Eliane seems upset since she was not chosen to be captain”. Laurel and I then walked over to her Eliane’s Cousin and asked her about Eliane (Eliane’s cousin brings her back and forth to practice and is a coach for the younger girls) Laurel said to her cousin, “I noticed that eliane looks upset that she’s not captain” Then her cousin said “She just needs to get over it. We took her to get ice cream yesterday and talked to her”. She then just walked away.
- After that, Laurel and I walked back over to where the girls were and we called Eliane over to talk to her. When Eliane walked over, Laurel told her that she is a very good cheerleader and that maybe she should try and not be so bossy to the other girls. Also she was telling her how she does not want her to let this ruin her cheer experience. I then added on and told her to use it as a learning experience and to try again next year.

While we were talking to Eliane she started crying a little bit but by the end of the talk, she was wiping her tears and shaking her head in agreement to what we were saying to her. After we were done talking to her, Laurel gave her a hug and she walked back to
practice with her team and she was actually doing the cheers and looked a little more engaged. She still was not smiling, but she was doing the cheers.

- While watching the teams cheer Dallas was calling the cheers and taking on the leadership role by tell the girls to get “set” or “ready” and Leanna would just stand there and do what Dallas would say as the other girls did.

- After a while Dallas told Leanna to call a cheer. When she told her to call a cheer Leanna looked at Dallas and shook her head saying now. She then said quietly “You do it” and then Dallas said “You’re a captain too. You can call some cheers” and Leanna still told her to call the cheer.

- Once that cheer was done, I told Leanna to call the next cheer. She looked at me and shook her head no. I then told her, “Leanna call a cheer. If you want to stay captain, you will have to be comfortable to call a cheer”. She then looked at me and smiled a little she called the cheer “S-House” very quiet. I made her call it again and she said it quietly. I then told her that she needs to be a lot louder if she was going to be a captain and call cheers. She then took a deep breath and yelled “S-Hooooouse” and after that she smiled as of the rest of the girls on the team and they proceeded to do the cheer.

August 19th, 2014 Bruins

- Today as I was walking to the field that we practice on, I saw Tonya in the parking lot when she saw me she decided to wait for me so we could walk to the top field together. I then asked her “Are you excited to be Captain”? She responded by saying “Well, they changed it” And I asked her what she meant by them changing it and she said “They told us [meaning her and Keyanna] that they want us to work harder” I then just said wow kind of shocked and Tonya proceeded on by saying “Yeah, but it’s whatever” I then asked her “Who decided that”? And she said “You already know. You already know it was Laurel and Lena that did that. They always changing up stuff”.

- While we were doing relay races, I was standing in the back of the two lines. Once Arianna was done running she came and stood next to me. I asked her how school was going and if she was staying out of trouble. She gave a guilty laugh. So I asked her “Are you already getting in trouble in class”? (Laughing a little as well), she then says “Man, they had me picking up trash” and I asked her “what did you do to have to pick up trash”? She then replied (while laughing) “I was throwing a piece of paper to the trash can and my teacher saw me and said ‘We do not throw things across the class’ and so then he made me stay after and pick up trash”. I then kind of laughed and shook my head and told her “you can’t be bad in class. You need to be following the rules” She then said “yeah I know, but I don’t like him. He’s mean”.

- I then started working with the 7 and 8 year old (Jr. Clinic) girls

- There were 7 girls there today

- While we were going over the cheers, we (the coaches) would have the captain (Jada) and Co-Captain (Malia) call the cheers. After a few times Carol would ask if she could call the cheers. We just told her that the Captains were to call out the cheers and that maybe we will let her call one once

- As we continued to go over the cheers Carol would not be doing the cheers properly but continue to ask if she could call one. I then told her that she could not call a cheer until she actually did the cheers. She continued to not do the cheers properly (full-out) as well as laugh and play around while she was doing the cheers. I then told her to have a seat and go talk to the director Lena. After Lena talked to her, I then went over to her and asked her why she was not doing the cheers. She just stared at me. I told her that I was waiting for a response. She then shrugged her shoulders and I still waited for her to respond. I then asked her is she even wanted to cheer anymore and she said “It’s just I wanted to do gymnastics, and when I first started cheer, I was just going to see if I liked it. Then me and my grandma talked and I told her I
wanted to do it.” Then she paused and continued “Just when the coaches yell it hurts my ears”
I then explained to her that coaches only yell when we need to get the girls attention when they
are not listening or doing what they are supposed to do. She then says, “Oh, and I don’t feel
good at all. I have a cough and my stomach hurts. I told her” [pointing at Lena]. I then asked
her “Did you just tell her that now or at the beginning of practice” She replied quickly “earlier”
I then told her that next time she needs to talk to either me or the coaches and let us know so
she could sit out and not get in trouble for not doing the cheers correctly
· At the end of practice while I was walking to my car I saw Keyanna and Angelica and as I
was waving to say by to them, Keyanna ran up to me and asked “Can I still stay the night at
your place on Friday”? I told her “Yeah that would be fine. Just make sure you ask your aunt”
She then had a big smile on her face and said she’s right here hold on she then ran to her aunt
and said “Auntie! Auntie! She said that we [her and Angelica] can stay at her house on Friday”
I then introduced myself to her and told her that it would be okay with me so we can just leave
early in the morning and they would not have to take the bus to the school so early. Her aunt
then said it was okay because she would have to work Saturday and Sunday and could not pick
them up. Keyanna had a big smile on her face and was so excited.

August 21st, 2014
· Today at practice there were 7 girls between the ages of 7-8 years old and about 9 girls
between the ages of 9-14 years old making it a total 16 girls between the ages of 7-14 years old
· While Taylor was stretching the girls out Coach Allen and I were making up new cheers to
teach the girls. Once Taylor was done she allowed the girls to take a break to get a drink of
water and use the restroom. During that time Coach Allen and I were still working on some
new cheers and once Taylor took the little girls (5&6 year olds) the 7-14 year old girls were
just let without direction. When All of a sudden I saw Tonya and Keyanna get the girls into a
circle and started teaching them a cheer named “Check” I watched them teach the girls who
did not know the cheer and got them involved as well. They went around and made sure
everyone had a chance to say their name in the cheer and if someone messed up the would take
the time to teach them
· While we were working on the cheer, I noticed a few girls such as Angelica, Emma, Eliane,
the new older girl and about two more girls watching us and trying to learn the cheers that we
were practicing while the other girls, at the time, were taking a break and talking
· When the girls first started getting in the circle, I noticed Angelica was standing behind in
the circle and was disengaged she was just watching the girls do the cheer and she was not
really participating or really in the circle. She realized that Coach Allen and I were watching
her so she then began to “get involved”. We then called her over to us and she looked and kept
acting like she was engaged in the cheer while laughing. We told her we needed her to help us
and then she came over. We then asked her to record us doing the cheer.
· Once we finished making up some new cheers, we then called the girls over and had them
get into a circle and start teaching them the words to the cheers. As we were teaching the girls
the words to the cheer Keyanna and Tonya were really trying to lead the group in helping
everyone learn the words. Emma was assisting to learn the words as well. They would say the
cheer very loud and slow so everyone could catch on. As we were reciting the cheer Coach
Allen noticed that Angelica was not saying the cheer so she told Angelica to go stand next her
and said “Since you don’t want to say the cheer over there. You can stand next to me and I will
have to baby sit you to make sure you say the cheer correctly”. Angelica then kind of smiles
and went to stand next to Coach Allen and said the cheer quietly.
· When we showed the girls the cheer Jada said “Do you expect us little girls to be able to
do this” And I told her she will be able to do it if she pays attention
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We then started to actually learn the cheer. Tonya and Keyanna made sure that the girls were in their lines and were paying attention to the cheer and once they learned the cheer they began to teach other girls that did not get it right away.

Every time Emma would learn a section, she would walk in front of me and say, “I know the cheer” and then show me every new section of the cheer she learned. Once she would walk up to me and show me then Sonia and Sammy would usually come behind her and say they know the cheer as well and show me.

Malia was getting a little frustrated with the cheer when she would not get it perfectly; but she would continue to try and get it and she also would say “So does it go like this”? Whenever she thought she had the cheer down.

We then broke into smaller groups where Coach Allen was working with Malia, Jada and Nylah.

Team Mom Banks was working with Emma, Sammy, Sonia, and Riley.

I was working with Nia.

Eliane and the girl that always gives me her inhaler were working together.

Tonya and Keyanna were working with the rest of the older girls.

At one point when practice was almost over I saw Keyanna and Tonya talking to Angelica and the older Sonia was standing there and Keyanna started talking to her about the football players and Sonia started talk more than I have seen her talk thus far. Keyanna then went with Tonya and Angelica and then Keyanna turned around and told Sonia “You can come too” and Angelica and Tonya agreed and Angelica then said “Yeah! Come hang out with us what’s your name”? and Sonia smiled (which I rarely ever see her do) and walked with them.

While working on the cheer Emma would walk up to me often and say “I know the cheer” And show me she would also walk up to any of the 7&8 year olds who may need help and assist them.

Once practice came to an end and we told the girls to “Bring it in” (get into a huddle) they were all happy and laughing with each other.

After practice as we were getting ready to go Coach Allen and I told Team mom B how much we love the bow that she had on her wrist for the girls and how we wanted one. When we said that Laurel quickly said “Um those are only for the girls Sorry. We are only having her donate 35” So then I told Banks that I wanted to buy one so if she could let me know the price then I will give her the money and Coach Allen said the same. When Coach Allen, Banks and I were walking to our cars Banks said “I can just ask her to donate two more. I’m sure she wouldn’t mind” so then she told us that when she first showed Lena the bows lea told her that she did not like the rhinestone (crystals) because they looked pink and that Banks needed to tell her that. Banks said that she told Lena that is she did not like it then she needed to tell her because they are a donation and she did not want to be rude. I then told her that I thought that the rhinestones were cute and Coach Allen agreed with me. So she said “ Yeah I’m not about to tell her that” and then we left.

August 23rd, 2014

Keyanna and Angelica’s Aunt dropped off both Keyanna and Angelica at my house at about 1am because she was just getting off work after working all day and would not be able to take them to the cheer camp the next day. When I saw her she asked if the girls would need anything and I told her the Angelica would need some white shoes. She said that she would get them for her and will bring them the next day. Before she left she gave them money for food.

Today the girls had cheer camp in Long Beach.

Keyanna and Angelica rode with me to the camp.

When we got there, there were teams that were group together outside of the gym in a park.
There were six cheerleading team leagues there.

When we first got there all of the girls for our league was there already.

When we got there, we had the girls start stretching. The girls got into a circle, with Keyanna and Tonya in the middle leading the stretches, and the rest of the girls were following as they said.

While the girls were stretching, the Colts got into a line with their hands behind their back looking towards the Bruin cheerleaders. I then asked Laurel what they were doing and she looked at them and then said to me “They want to battle our girls” and I just looked at them and then went to go watch the Bruins stretch.

While the girls were done stretching the majority of them needed to go to the restroom, so myself and the other coaches went to take them. When we came back Lena was walking back and was yelling at the girls (as we walked back from the restroom) and told them to hurry up and get in line so that we can go check into the camp. She continued to yell at the girls and tell them to pay attention, get into a single file line and not talk. While Lea was saying this a few of the girls were rolling their eyes, sucking their teeth, and whispering and looking at Lena.

When we got into the gym all of the cheerleaders were getting read to walk in. When we walked in one of the SHARP instructors guided us to where we were to sit. We sat in three lines going back. Once all of the cheerleaders got into the gym, the SHARP instructors started getting the cheerleaders stretched out. Some of the coaches sat in the back on the bleachers while others were intertwined with their league stretching with them.

There were a lot of the Colts coaches sitting on the bleachers.

Once the SHARP people were done stretching, they started going over motions with cheerleaders. While they started learning a little motion combination, I could hear Arianna, Angelica, and Leilani saying “Man!, Hold on I got it!” Whenever they would mess up and when the would get it right they would smile and say “Yes! I got it!”

There were a few parents sitting outside while we were inside the gym: Maddie Hill’s mom, Tonya’s mom, Nylah’s dad, Micki’s mom, and Mill’s mom were the only parents there who stayed.

While the SHARP Instructors were talking and working on motions, I noticed that Sammy (the one on Jr. Clinic) was not paying attention. I told her multiple times that she needed to pay attention so that she could learn the combination, but she continued to stare off and daydream and so one of the SHARP instructors walked by and specifically asked her to pay attention.

One of the instructors gave Malia a high five while she was doing the combination because she was the only one counting while they were doing the routine. Malia started smiling once the instructor gave her a high five.

Once the girls went over motions, the SHARP instructors decided to play Simon Says with cheer motions. Once it started coming down to a few people there was one girl on the Bruins team, two girls from the Colts, a girl from the Browns, and one girl from the Seahawks. The Seahawks girl got out and then the Steelers cheerleader got out. So the only ones left were two girls from the Colts and one girl from the Browns. One of the girls from the Colts got out.

When it came down to the last two, the Colts coaches started standing up and cheering for the one cheerleader that they had left and the other cheerleaders apart of the league started cheering for her as well. And the cheerleader from the Colts won (even though Coach Allen, the Bruins coach, felt that she should have not won because she did mess up one of the motions).

After the girls learned a short routine and were practicing on the routine and their kicks, I noticed them (mainly the older girls) helping each other with how their arms should be and telling each other to point their toes.
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- When Malia told the Jr. Clinic girls to “get ready”, Emma looked mad and said back to Malia in a forceful tone “Why are you yelling at me”?
- Maddie’s mom was walking around asking if anyone needed any kind of help
- While the girls were breaking into groups, before they headed outside Dallas did a toe touch and the instructor was impressed and asked her to do a double toe touch and she then smiled and did a double toe touch and the instructor gave her a high five and Dallas had such a big smile on her face
- While the older girls were outside doing their toe touches, Tonya told Arianna and Angelica to stay in their line while they were doing toe touches
- Tonya’s mom was standing by the older girls group and was watching them practice
- Mailia would ask questions while working in her group and she would continuously practice her toe touch even when the instructor did not ask. She even asked the instructor to watch her do her toe touch, which led Sammmy practicing her toe touches as well
- When the 11-14 year olds were to get into their stunt groups and none of wanted to be a flyer, except for Angelica who is one of the smaller girls on the team
- At first Arianna did not and Allie did not but we were able to get Arianna to be the flyer. Tonya was also volunteering to be a base or front spot
- When I went to go see the Jr. Clinic cheerleaders, Sammmy, Emma, Jada and a cheerleader from the ducks cheerleading team worked together to get Jada up in a thigh stand
- After a while Carol started crying and when asked why she was crying she said “Jada is too heavy. She is hurting my leg” When then changed the stunt group and had Tara be the flyer. When we removed Jada she started crying and when we told her there was nothing wrong with basing, she still continued to cry. Her mom came by and asked her what was wrong and we told her what happened and her mom said in a comforting voice “Well I told her that she would have to be a base because she is a little bigger. She’ll get over it” However when Lena (her grandma and director) came over and asked why Jada was crying and we told her she said “Oh well why can’t Emma and someone else lift her” we explained that she was a little too heavy but then she just walked away.
- When I walked over to watch the older girls I noticed when Angelica was flying in the air, she was smiling and looked very engaged in what she was doing
- When it was time to take a break, Tonya and Keyanna got the girls into two lines and had them say a cheer while they were walking. (Tonya specifically get the girls into their line and made sure they stayed in lines)
- While I was checking lines and making sure everyone was hitting their high “v’s” properly, Dallas asked me to look at her high “v” specifically
- While taking a break, there were two boys who looked between the ages of 11-14 sitting by a bench by the cheerleaders. Leilani looked to be trying to get their attention by being loud; she kept looking over to them. While she was doing that Keyanna and Tonya walked up to me and Keyanna said “Leilani is so annoying. She is only worried about the boys over there when they don’t even like her” and then Tonya said “yeah one is my cousin and I don’t want her looking at them”.
- All of the teams are predominantly Black/African American at the camp. There is one girl who looks to be white and three girls on the Bruins group looked Latina
- At the end of the day Tara won a trophy for her group, Dallas won a trophy and Arianna won a trophy. They won them from their instructor they were with throughout the day
- Tonya, Arianna, Keyanna, Angelica and Delina (the trainer) stayed the night at my place because it was easier Keyanna and Angelica’s Aunt because she had to work and would not be able to take them the next day and the other three just wanted to stay the night (Keyanna convinced Tonya). When we got to my dorm room, Tonya was asking me about college and
what kind of grades she needed to have to get into college. I asked her what kind of grades she has now and she said “straight A’s” I told her “wow that’s good!” and she replied with “Yeah my mama and dad don’t play. Especially my dad he gets mad if I get B’s” and I told her that was good and to keep it up. Arianna was next to me and I then asked her what kind of grades she had and she said “I get A’s and B’s but I just get in trouble a lot” (and laughed)

Later on I was talking to Angelica and she said “when I have kids, I’m going to let them do whatever they want but when they get bad grades I’m going to whoop them” I then asked her about her grades and she said that she gets good grades

Throughout that night the girls asked me to go outside so that they could dance. The girls went outside and Angelica, Arianna and Keyanna were krumping while Tonya was playing around acting like she could krupt and Delina was on her phone. We were out there for about an hour and a half and they were all laughing and talking and dancing together.

When we finally went inside and were sitting in the living room Keyanna asked Tonya about her dad and Keyanna asked Tonya if her dad would be at the games and Tonya said “no, my dad don’t like cheerleading he only likes basketball”

August 24th, 2014 Bruins

Today the girls were not smiling and looked uninterested in the activities today. They were not practicing their motions or their jumps or anything at all. They were just standing around and talking to each other

Today Laurel had to have a talk with Arianna and asked if she still wanted to be a captain and how she needs to set an example. Arianna rolled her eyes after Laurel talked to her and walked away with a smirk on her face

Nyelah started crying today and she told coach Allen that it was because she could not get the cheer and told me that it was because Lena yelled at her

When we went outside to take a break Nyelah was sitting in her dad’s arms and he was holding her and cradling her

They girls broke into their groups and were working on a routine with a SHARP instructor

When I went to the Jr. Clinic group, they were all arguing and yelling at each other while they were suppose to be stunting Tara was yelling at Jada for not holding her in the thigh stand and then Emma and Malia were arguing because Malia would yell at the girls and tell them to pay attention and Emma would tell her to not yell at her

The instructor then told me when I got there, "They have to work as a team" no matter if you don't get along outside it doesn't matter inside you have to be BFF. Cheer is about bonding and teamwork SHARP cheer instructor

When the girls took a break Keyanna, Angelica, Tamia, and Arianna came over and looked upset. Keyanna then said that two of the girls from the Crenshaw Colts were walking past them and walked to their trainers and were whispering and looking and point at her. Tamia then said “Yeah they have been having an attitude with us during this whole time we have been in our groups”. Keyanna then said, “If they keep looking at me like they crazy, I’m going to have to fight one” We then told Keyanna that she needs to leave them alone and be the bigger person and just ignore them.

All the girls then went back into their groups to finish learning their routines so that they could perform them

It was finally time to perform them so all of the parents came in and sat on the bleacher; the cheerleader sat on the opposite side and cheered on their league when they went up to do their routine.

Once everyone was done performing their routine, the camp was done and everyone one was getting ready to leave until Laurel asked Keyanna how they were getting home. Keyanna
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said, “I don’t know. Can I call my aunt”? When she was on the phone with her aunt I could her Keyanna start to raise her voice and say “Everyone is about to leave right now! Can you just come!” After that Keyanna just gave the phone to Laurel and when Laurel asked her what happened she said “She said she coming so we will just wait. You can leave” and rolled her eyes and walked away. 

August 27th

· Today when I got to practice and said hi Lena and Laurel, they told me that I would be doing one-on-one’s with the parents and talk to them about how their cheerleader was doing with their attitude, motions, loudness, enthusiasm, etc.
· I first talked to Nylah’s “aunt”. I talked to her because her dad was on the football field coaching for his son and her aunt volunteered to do it for him. While talking to Nylah’s aunt, about how Nylah is just very shy and I would like to see more enthusiasm out of her, Crystal (her aunt) started telling me how Nylah has always had a hard time being bi-racial (Mexican and black) because she is always around Mexican people (she does not stay with her mom). Crystal said that at times, Nylah would ask, “why doesn’t my hair look like theirs”? or “Why don’t I look like them”? and Crystal (who looks bi-racial as well) would explain to her “because you are half black, you have different texture hair” Crystal said that it wasn’t until she started cheering here at Pomona that she would be happy to see more people who looked like her
· Crystal then said that she enjoys seeing Nylah cheer because it does help her talk to people and get out of her shy zone a little
· Crystal then asked me what should Nylah work on at home, and I told her to have Nylah continue to practice the cheers and work on being sharp and staying on beat. Crystal chuckled and said “Yeah she doesn’t really have rhythm” She also asked me to give her a list of cheers so that she could practice them with her as well as have Micki practice with her since their families are really close and they are always together. I then told her that she could practice stretching with her and Crystal said that Nylah would have Crystal doing stretches and Nylah would say “I’m the coach” and make Crystal do specific stretches
· While I was talking to Eliane’s dad, we were talking about how good Eliane is as a cheerleader and he was telling me how she was a little disappointed because she was not a captain and I told him that it was because she came off a little too bossy to the girls. He kind of chuckled and said, “Yeah, she acts like a third parent at home”. Eliane’s dad also helps coach football. He then said that he is very proud of her she does good at cheer and at school
· I then was talking to Leanna’s mom, I was telling her how good Leanna is doing and how she has been breaking out of her shyness since she is now a captain. Leanna’s mom said to me that she really likes practicing at home with Leanna and she stays on top of her with to make sure she knows the cheers. She said that she is also working with her on her shyness because she (her mom) is very social and she tries to explain to her daughter that it is important to talk to people and make connections. Leanna’s mom said that she used to be a cheerleader growing up so she knows about cheer. Also her family is all scholars they all went to college so she expects her children to do well in school. Leanna’s mom was telling me how Leanna and her brother go to school in the area and the school’s population is predominantly Asian American so being at cheer practice allows Leanna the chance to be around people within her culture and her mom notices that Leanna seems to be more confident and more social at practice.
· When I talked to Nicole’s mom, she did not seem very interest. She listened to what I had to say and then just smiled said thank you and left.
· Those were the only parents I was able to talk to that day. When practice was over Nylah’s dad came over and asked about the meeting and he wanted to know what he could do to help his daughter improve. He said that he wanted to be involve and be able to help her himself in whatever she may need
August 28th, 2014

• Allie is no longer on the cheer team
• Today at practice there were 10 (11-14 year old) girls who were at the start of practice and then Salia came late which made a total of 11 (11-14 year old) girls at practice
• While the girls were going over their cheers Tonya asked if they could take a water break I told them that they could. When they came back from their water break, I noticed that Nylah was crying. I then asked her what was wrong. She walked up to the front to talk to me and she just continued to cry for about a minute or two. She then told me that when they were on break Angel was doing the cheer “Red Hot” and Nylah said that she corrected Angelica because she was saying the cheer wrong and Angelica told her “Don’t correct me. That’s why you need to put Chap Stick on your ashy [chapped] lips”

September 4th, 2014

• Today there were 14 girls between the ages of 9-14 years old
• Tonya is no longer on the cheer team. She decided to just play basketball
• Once the girls were done stretching, Banks said that she wanted to talk to all of the Captains and co-captains. She wanted to talk to them about boundaries and how they should talk to their teammates without yelling at them and being an authoritarian
• When the girls then broke into their teams, I went with the 9 and 10 year olds and we started to practice the cheers. After a while Nicole and Alexis would not be paying attention and playing around so Dallas (the Captain) would yell at them and say “COME ON GUYS! PAY ATTENTION” Dallas did that a few times and after awhile of her yelling at the girls to pay attention (and before I could tell her anything) Leanna said “Dallas, remember what Banks talked to us about” and Dallas replied by saying “Yea, but their not paying attention and I’m not being rude about it” after she said that, she turned around and said “Okay everyone let’s do this cheer again”

Sept. 24th Wednesday

• Nylah is no longer on the cheer team
• Brittany was added to the cheer team. When I asked Lena and Laurel why she gets to be added on the team so late in the season. Laurel rolled her eyes and said “Because her dad was some NBA player so they made a big deal to put her on the team
• When I arrived at practice Lauren told me that she had another break down at the game right when she got onto the field so they had to have her sit out for the game
• When I saw Nylah at the practice field sitting with her aunt she was smiling and laughing and jumping around and talking to her aunt
• Nylah walked up to me as I was walking to the restroom and started talking to me and smiling and was a lot more enthusiastic and loud compared to how I’ve seen her during practice
• Laurel told me that her dad felt it would be best for her to just not cheer anymore he told Laurel that he tried everything he could to help support her with cheer, he even stopped coaching football so he could focus on her and cheer but it did not work
• 13 girls between 7-14
• Arianna practiced with Sr. clinic today (the 9-10 year olds)
• None of the older girls were there (E came late and Keyanna and Angelica came the last 30 min.)
• While practicing Arianna was not saying the cheers, she would roll her eyes every time a new cheer would start or if someone on the team spoke, she would not do the motions of the cheer full out either
• Whenever coach Allen would tell Arianna to do a cheer she would act as if she did not know how to call out a cheer
• Also Dallas and Arianna would argue with each other every time they have to cheer with each other. Especially if one of them would try and correct the other or have to teach the team a new cheer they would get an attitude with each other and argue
• I was correcting Dallas with one of the motions and Arianna said "see I told you that you were doing it wrong" and Dallas rolled her eyes looked forward at me and coach Allen and says "Arianna why are you trying to call me out?!" Arianna then said "I'm not I'm just telling you exactly what Sekani said" then Dallas looked a little frustrated
• When we had a break I was talking to Arianna and asked her why she looked so disengaged in practice today she said that she was mad because of the extra conditioning coach Allen had them do. I explained to her why it was important and I asked her if she could get more involved. She replied "I'm only doing it for you" and continued walking
• The girls were getting tested on all 25 cheers that they have learned and Lena and Laurel would place red dots on the cheers that they felt the girls did not know
• When Arianna was done getting tested with her team she was upset at some of the cheers that lea put a red dot on she said "I don't understand why she gave us a stupid red dot for some of these cheers. I know we did them right"
• Arianna was also telling me how she does not like cheering with Sr. clinic "I don't like cheering with them. Dallas is always trying to get me in trouble"

October 2nd

• While the older girls (11-14) were practicing the dance, they were not very attentive; they were talking and not doing the dance full out
• There were 7 girls at practice
• There was a lady whose son plays on the football team there to choreography their dance
• They continued to practice the half time routine by themselves while the choreographer was helping out the younger girls
• The girls were not doing the routine full out until a few football players came over and sat in the grass behind them and were watching. At that moment the girls started doing the dance full out and when they all had their short solo part they did that full out (Angel started twerking, Kiera started krumpting and jumped into the splits and the rest of the girls either twerked a little, did the nay nay or douggied). When the football players where watching they were all smiling and laughing amongst each other.
• While they were practicing, Kiera said that her ankle was hurting and when I asked her why, she said that she hurt it teaching her class a hip hop dance
• I was talking to Banks about my research and she started telling me how much cheer has affected her daughter in such a positive way. Banks was telling me how she always felt bad for her daughter because she wanted her to get involved in something because she is the middle child and the only girl. Now since she cheers she is more outgoing and shows a lot more excitement she always is showing her mom cheers (some that she makes up herself) as well as dances

Bruins October 4th, 2014

• I arrived at Mt. SAC at 9:00am
• When I got there and was walking down to the football field where I have to walk past a security guard (which there is one security guard at every gate and two in the front entrance) The only way to get on the field is if you are a cheerleader or a coach and by now they know who is a coach and who is not, and the little boy (5 and 6 year olds) were playing their game in their new grey and pink jerseys in honor of breast cancer month. I saw Laurel and Banks with the Jr. Clinic girls (7and 8) waiting in line to take their picture. When I finally got down
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to the field where they were, Laurel told me that they were running a bit behind and that I could go sit down in the stands until it was my team’s (Sr. Clinic) turn to take their picture.

Lea did not attend the game today because she was suspended for a week because of the parent meeting that took place about her from parent complaints and the team mom’s complaint which mainly was about finding out where the money everyone is paying, where is it going and from the previous weeks game when Lena allowed the girls to do their cheer “Check” (which is like a diss cheer) as a hello cheer to the other team.

As I walked through the stands I saw a lot of the other team (Colts) sitting by the closest side of the bleachers to the parking lot. There were a lot of the football players wearing their blue jerseys as well as a lot of their parents were blue and having shirts and hats that said Colts on them.

As I kept walking more towards the middle of the bleachers, I saw a lot of the Bruins parents and a few of the Sr. Clinic cheerleaders as well as Arianna (who is on Jr. PeeWee 11 year olds).

When I walked over there to sit down, I decided to get up and try and get something to eat by the vendors who set up by the entrance of the stadium the vendors were Latin Americans who had a taco stand, a shaved ice stand, and a stand that sold bacon covered hot dogs, carne asada fries and other food of that sort.

As I was walking to get tacos, I ran into Keyanna, Angelica, Leilani and Arianna walked over shortly after me. Keyanna and Lailani raced over to give me a hug and were debating about who I liked more than the other as Arianna was telling them that I liked her the most because I always give her candy. While they were debating Angelica walked up to me and told me that I looked different, she then was able to identify that it was because I had on make-up and she told me that I looked pretty and she liked the way that I did my hair she said “Look at you. You’re all in with the style. That’s how a lot of people wear their hair now-a-days”.

As I was standing there talking to them, I then remembered that I was going to get something to eat. When I walked over to get some tacos, Leanna came and stood next to me. She said “My mom told me to come stand with you until it is time for us to take our picture”. I then looked over and her mom smiled and waved at me and asked, “Is it okay if she stays with you”? And I told her that it was okay. While Leanna’s mom was standing there, she was trying to get her son (who is about a year or two older than Leanna) together and ready to take pictures because she wanted Leanna and him to take a buddy picture together.

As I was waiting for the two ladies to cook the meat for the tacos, Laurel called me and told me that it was time for me to gather the Sr. Clinic girls and take them down to the field to take their picture. So when we got down to the field the football players for Sr. Clinic were still taking their picture. I also saw Emma (she is on the 7 and 8 year old team) and she was sitting there with her brother waiting to take her buddy picture. She told me that she was hot and tired and kept asking if she could go sit in the stands. She did not want to wait on the field to take her picture. While the boys were in line waiting to take their picture, they would be laughing and playing around by pushing each other, making fun of the person taking their picture, etc. Finally the coach came by and started yelling at the boys and told them to pay attention so that we could get past the pictures so they could warm up before their game started. There were about four coaches yelling and cussing at the boys, they would push them if they were not paying attention and grabbing them by their jersey’s to get them to move in the direction they wanted them to. Once the boys were done with their individual pictures, it was time to take the group picture with all of the boys and cheerleaders together. The coaches as well as the photographers (who looked like they were in their early 20’s, both were female. One looked Latina and the other looked pacific islander) were yelling at the boys to get them in line from tallest to shortest so that they could be positioned for their pictures. While that was happening...
the cheerleaders were asking me when they would take their picture because they were getting hot waiting (It was already 90 degrees outside at 10am) so I told them to get into their line so that we can hurry and take the team picture so that they could take their individual pictures and be done.

- After the team picture then Leanna and her brother, Nylah and her brother, and Alexis and her brother took their buddy pictures. After that Dallas and her little sister (her little sister who is on the 5 and 6 year old team) took their buddy picture, after that all the girls took their individual pictures and were done.
- I went back to the bleachers to get Arianna ready for her picture team picture and to see if Brittany was there yet. Arianna and I went down to the field and right when we got down to the field, Brittany came down. We were sitting under the tarp waiting for the boys to take their picture and while we were sitting under there, there was one boy specifically who kept making rude comments to Arianna. He called her a Bitch, called her black, called her ugly and told her she was stupid. When he kept calling her black and dark one of the boys on his team said to him “Man, You’re darker than her” and another said “Yeah, You’re black too so shut up” and a few of the boys on his team started laughing at him so he stopped calling her names. She then looked at me and said in a low voice; “he’s just mad because he used to like me but I never liked him” I then looked at the boy and told him he needed to stop using those inappropriate words. I especially told him that he should never call any girl a bitch because he wouldn’t like it if I or anyone else called his mom that. His team mates started to laugh and he just rolled his eyes and said under his breath “Man, whatever” his coach then came by and I told him about this boy’s language and how he needs to watch what he calls women and his coach then looked at him and yelled at him in front of everyone
- After all the boys took their picture and the cheerleaders took their picture we then had to wait to take our team picture. We were waiting for The Boss Dogg (the head coach) to come
- About 10 minutes later, The Boss Dogg arrived. We were then starting to get into our positions to take our picture. However during that time of waiting me, Arianna and Brittany decided to ask The Boss Dogg if he would take a picture with us and after the picture we were talking to him for a little bit.
- When it was finally time to get in line to take our team picture Dallas came running up to the metal fence screaming “SEKANI! SEKANI! COME QUICK THEY’RE FIGHTING!” I then asked Dallas who and she said “KEYANNA AND LEILANI” so I looked confused and asked her “Wait what is happening”? And she replied in a frantic voice “I DON’T KNOW! I DON’T KNOW THEY’RE FIGHTING!!!! COME QUICK!!” at that moment I saw Angelica sprint to the gate looking in the direction of the fight. I then grabbed Angelica before she could even try and run to get out. As I looked through the fence I noticed parents getting the girls and I heard Leilani yell “LET ME GO! LET ME GO! I’M GONNA KILL HER!!” At that moment, I made sure that someone had them because I knew the security would not let me out of the gate at that moment. The security guards that were around the entrance were over there as well grabbing the girls.
- After we took our picture, I grabbed Arianna and went to go look for Keyanna and Leilani. As we were walking to look for the girls, B and I stopped and talked to the Colts director. While we were talking to her the first thing she said to us “We do not condone fighting” she then proceeded to say “You cheerleaders fought one of my cheerleaders” B then apologizes and says “We are very sorry for what happen, we are going to talk to the girls now, but we are very sorry” While we were talking to the director, the head security guard came over and told us “From Now on any cheerleader that is walking around without a coach will automatically be sent home!” I told Arianna to have a seat and she said, “No, I want to stay with you” So she went with me o go find the girls. While I was walking to find the girls, I ran into Laurel
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The director) and I asked her where the girls were, She said they were with The Boss Dogg's cousin and that she was talking to them and cooling them down. She then told me that when the girls come back I am to take them to get their picture and after that they would be done for the rest of the day and that they will no longer be able to cheer for that game.

- When I finally saw them walk back it was Keyanna, Leilani and Angelica
- I told them to have a seat, not talk about what happened and that when the time came, we would go down and take their picture.
- We finally walked down to take their picture and the rest of their team members arrived. They began telling the rest of the team what happened and at that point, their Coach Allen arrived. I then took Arianna back to the stands and I went back down to the field to coach my girls during their game. When I got to the field, Laurel told me that after the game that was going on at the time (sr. clinic), no one else will be able to cheer.
- Arianna was standing at the gate at the time so I told her that she would not be cheering that day. She started laughing and said okay. I then went over to talk to Coach Allen and she was very mad because Laurel would not tell her what happened, she was mad about the situation and the fact that she drove all the way from long beach and her team is not even cheering. I then allowed her to help me coach my team so she had something to do
- As far as the girls were concerned Leilani went home, Salia and E left and Keyanna and Angelica went to sit in the stands with Amera and Delina and at that moment they were talking and laughing with them
- After the game, we all just had to pack up and go home and Lauren went to talk to the director for the Colts because they both had to fill out an incident report. Which Keyanna had a slight different story than the Colts cheerleader. There was a female security guard who said she witnessed the fight and told Lauren what she saw which favored in Keyanna's story

Bruins

October 7th, 2014

- Today when I got to practice, I did not see anyone there but one football team (Jr. Peewee) and a few parents
- When I walked over I saw Laurel and Lena and Taylor. Laurel and Lena said that we would not be having practice today because everyone was having a by week except Jr. PeeWee (The Boss Dogg's team) which were the only team who had a game that Saturday but they wanted to talk about what happened on Saturday. Laurel proceeded to tell me that Leilani would be suspended for a week and Keyanna and Angelica would be suspended for two weeks. I then asked why Angelica was suspended for two weeks when she had nothing to do with the fight. Laurel said that she did not know she was not a part of the first fight but apparently two fights took place and Keyanna did not tell her the entire story.
- Laurel continues on and says that what really happened was that the cheerleader from Crenshaw walked by and Keyanna and Leilani were talking about her and saying that if she kept looking at them that Keyanna would slap her. So that led to Keyanna and the other cheerleader to argue and apparently Keyanna hit the girl first and when the girl swung to hit Keyanna back, Keyanna ducked which led to Leilani being the one who got hit. After they were separated from this fight, Keyanna went to go sit down with her aunt and one of the girls from the Crenshaw team walked up to Keyanna and started arguing with her again and so Keyanna hit that girl as well and at that point The Boss Dogg's cousin grabbed her, Leilani and Angelica and went to go talk to them. So Laurel said that she was frustrated because Keyanna did not tell her that whole story so it made Laurel look bad when she was trying to defend Keyanna while talking to the Cheer Board. Laurel then said that on Wednesday they will be having a big meeting with Keyanna, Angelica, their aunt, Leilani and her mom and the board members to talk about what happened
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- Laurel also added that this was an on going tension being built because the girl that **Keyanna**
got in a fight with were one of the girls that were causing problems with them at the cheer
camp that took place in August
- After Laurel told me what happened I told her that if they needed anyone to speak on
**Angelica**'s behalf since I was with her during the first fight and she had nothing to do with it,
then they could call me and she said that she would keep me posted on what will happen and
so I left

**Bruins**

**October 14**, 2014

- Today when I got to practice, I saw all of the football teams out and the parents were all
sitting on the sidewalk close to the locker rooms
- When I walked over to where the cheerleaders practice I saw the little 5 and 6 year olds far
in the corner, the 7-9 year olds were with their coach, the choreographer was with the 10-14
year olds. Most of them were learning the new choreography except **Salia, Leilani, and E** were
being taught what the rest of the girls have already learned from a previous practice by
**Keyanna**
- While the 10-14 year old girls were practicing and would have little breaks, I noticed at first
**Dallas, Leanna and Eliane** (The only 10 years olds) would group up and talk to each other
and the older girls would talk and hangout
- When the girls all came together to go over the dance, I noticed **Keyanna** helping **Brittany**
and **Leilani** talking and hugging **Brittany** as well.
- After practice they all decided to keep dancing so they started krumping. **Dallas** went first
and everyone, especially **Angelica** and **Keyanna** (who both do this type of dancing all the
time)
- Once they were all done dancing they all walked together as a group over to the concession
stand and were all talking to each other and laughing with each other.
- While I was sitting with Banks, she told me that she was saying her goodbye and when I
asked her what she meant, she said that she was not coming back. Her and her daughter were
done for the year. When I asked her why she said that there was a lot of drama going on between
her and Lea and that she did not want to work with Lea anymore because she did not like how
she did things. She did not like how she would talk or yell at the girls (specifically Nylah) and
she did not like how secretive she was about money and how she always said that they did not
have any more to buy the girls pom poms. So after that she gave me a hug told me to tell the
girls she loved them and left.
- Her and her daughter did not come back to practice

**October 16**

**Bruins**

- 10 girls here at practice
- The girls were practicing down stairs in the parking lot, because the college student athletes
where using the side that the girls usually cheer on. The football players were still where they
usually practice
- They were all paying attention learning the cheer
- When E and Salia were talking Ariana told them to be quiet and pay attention
- Whenever they had a few minutes they would all talk to each other.
- Leaha’s mom came to talk to me while they were practicing and she was telling me how
she was telling her daughter to practice correct and was also telling me how her and the parents
felt like Kenyans danced too hard she was standing in the front talking to me
- They all took a break and Leanna stayed to practice with coach brown
Arianna said that she was annoyed especially with Brittany because she was telling her to get it right and she told me excuse me you can't even dance

When the boys came the girls got excited and Keyanna made a joke about her cousin (who is a football player) and they all started laughing and staring at the boys

They then did they dance as full out as I have seen them because the boys were watching

Arianna said she wasn't trying out. I told her that I think she should and then she said “Why I’m not going to make it” I then told her “Well if you did the dance full out and not rolled your eyes while you were dancing, then you would make it for sure”. We continued walking until we saw Arianna’s sister and cousin, I told them that Arianna did not want to try out and her sister said, “Yes you are! Or I’m telling mom” and her Cousin looked at me and said “Yes she is. We know her mom would make her tryout even if she don’t want to” I then looked at Arianna and said “Should we talk to your mom and see what she says” She then smiles and said “Uh fine I will try out, but I don’t like how Keyanna is in front of me. No one can see me” I told her that Coach White did not make any final spots yet so she still has a chance to be in front if she actually does the dance full out and show him that she wants to do it. She said okay and walked away.

October 25th

Sammy’s (sr. Clinic) dad walked over to Where Laurel, Lena and Taylor were and said, “Why is my daughter crying saying that she is not doing competition?” Taylor then tried to explain that she was not at practice and practices have been mandatory and if you are not there, you cannot perform at competition. Laurel then said “yes, and I sent out an email to all of the parents letting them know that” Her dad started yelling at Lena and Laurel because Sammy was crying and he felt that she should be able to compete because she has been at all of the other practices. After he was done yelling and cursing, they let her practice and be apart of the routine

When I walked over to where the older girls were, Keyanna came up and told me that Lauren told her that her and Angelica were doing a duet for competition. I told them that I wanted to see what they were planning to do. As they were getting ready to dance, Arianna walked over to me and said that she did not like that Angelica and Keyanna have a duet. She said that it was not fair. Keyanna and Angelica also got a mini duet in the dance with the whole team and Arianna later walked over to me and said “I don’t like that part where we just stand in the back while Keyanna and Angelica dance”

While the girls were practicing the dance. During Keyanna and Angelica’s mini duet in the routine I saw Dallas and Leanna in the back doing cartwheels. I then told them to come to the front and do a cartwheel while Angelica and Keyanna were dancing. When I had them practice it Arianna walked up to me and said, “Let me do a cartwheel. I want to do one” So I decided to let her and Leanna do a cartwheel and Dallas stand in the middle and do her back handspring that I have been practicing with her on.

I then started practicing with Dallas on her back handspring and after a while she decided to do it by herself. Once she did it, she had the biggest smile on her face and said, “I did it Coach Robinson! I did it!” I gave her a high five and then she said, “Can I show Coach White and everyone else”? I told her sure and she ran over to tell everyone to look. She did her back handspring again and all of the older girls ran over and congratulated her.
· All three-cheer teams won first place at their competition. Also Angelica and Keyanna won 1st place for their duet. They also won most spirited. I was unable to attend
· While looking on Instagram, I saw a lot of parents post pictures and videos of their cheerleader and their team and all of the comments talked about how proud they were of their daughter and how excited they were to see them perform

Trojans
July 29th

· Today while stunting, I observed Christina continually lifting Sydney up and saying how she was holding a lot of Sydney’s weight. Tiffany also continually asked if we were going to stay in the same group that we had them in (being Kayla, Cynthia, Christina and Sydney) she asked me Multiple times as well as asked Coach Tash at the end of practice
· During stunting Cynthia complained a lot about how Sydney’s thumb was digging into her (Cynthia’s) collarbone and how it hurt. Sydney would apologize and say she was not trying to; and at times she could not help it when I stepped in to base for Cynthia’s spot she asked me if she could front spot and when I said no, she then asked me if she could count. So I allowed her to count. I then switched Cynthia and Kayla as biases and placed Caitlin and Sarah as bases. Once I did not switch Cynthia again if she could front spot and when I told her no, she then asked me when we would start tumbling I told her that I was not sure but until we start practicing she should not tumble. She then sat down next to me and was quiet.
· Meanwhile, during this time Christina asked me if she could base with Sarah. I told her that I wanted to try out Caitlin and Sarah together first but during that time, she was persistent in telling me how Sarah and her were the same height and when they were given time to go get water. Christina and Sarah were standing off to the side measuring their arms to each other
· I have not seen Caitlin talk very much
· At the beginning of practice, I noticed all of the girls on the older team would all stand together and interact while the girls on the younger team would be broken apart either in groups of three, two, or by themselves or sitting with their parent
· While the girls were in their lines on the asphalt I noticed the three taller girls Caitlin, Cynthia, and Kayla were all in the back
· Sydney was in the back as well and she seems to be the only one to look Asian American
· There was one girl that is mixed with Black/African American and something else and when we went over the dance that last thirty minutes of practice, she was in the front she asked one question while practicing the dance but other than that she did not talk very much
· There looked to be two Latina girls Cynthia and Marie. Marie received M&M’s from Coach Tash because she memorized everyone’s name and interesting fact yesterday (Monday) at practice. She was also chosen to do the whole dance to music in front of the whole dance previously, but the rest of the team only knew the first eight count
· While stretching Sydney and Christina were sitting together stretching in the front and they were laughing together while stunting
· Also, when Sydney, Caitlin, Cynthia, Christina, and Sarah all went to the bathroom while the other girls were practicing the dance, Kayla was standing behind me in the grass. The first time I asked her if she would like to join them she did not respond. The second time I
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asked her she said okay and slowly walked over and when the girls from the restroom came back, she walked over to Cynthia and started talking to her, then got in line and started to do the dance
• They are required to wear dark blue cheer shorts and either a blue (Trojans) shirt or tank top and their hair is to be in a ponytail

August 2nd

• Today I went to a cheer camp at Buena park High School to go through some cheer information for the OCJAFF league (Trojans)
• I arrived at the school around 8:15am and when I walked into the school. I saw a lot of cheer teams (probably between 6-8 different team associations)
• I noticed a lot of the teams were predominantly African American teams and about two teams looked to be predominantly Latina cheerleading teams
• When I finally met up with the Irvine coaches and checked in, I finally asked, “Why aren’t the Irvine cheerleaders here”? Tash said, “I don’t know, but they really should be” and Alahna agreed and asked Alysha “Why don’t our girls come to these cheer camps? They should be here at this one” Alysha responded by saying that she didn’t think about it and that next year they would include it into the cheer registration fees “add another 60 dollars so they can come here”
• As we walked into the auditorium where the orientation was being held, I noticed that there were a lot of African American coaches, a few who looked Latina and only the Irvine coaches who looked white. A lot of the coaches also looked 30 and older and all looked like parents who had cheerleaders on the teams
• When we went to the stunting clinic, which included the cheerleaders as well. I asked Tash “What level will the girls be competing in”? As soon as I asked Tash that and she laughed and said “We are defiantly level one. I wouldn’t even try to have them do level two. Their skill level isn’t there” Then Alahna jumped in and said, “Yeah our girls are not athletic enough to do a lot of things level two can do. They don’t have enough muscle”. She then continued to say, “We don’t have cheerleaders who actually like to cheer for the athleticism we have girls that cheer just to say they cheer” and Tash shook her head in agreement
• While at the stunt clinic, I noticed that the cheerleaders from all of the teams who were there were very engaged in the Jamz instructors. They were very involved and responsive to the instructors and responded with just as much energy and excitement as them
• During the stunt clinic, Tash and Alahna were explaining to me a little about the Irvine league. They were telling me how the league is still fairly new and how they have not really had any coaches who really knew about cheer (aside from us three) most of the coaches only coach because their daughters are on the team and in reality they do not really know much of anything about cheer
• While hearing this, I had a hard time understanding how that process would work so I asked, “How did they teach cheers and stunts if no one knew”? Alahna replied and said that they would just watch YouTube videos and get their information that way that just made me wonder even more why the cheerleaders were not at the cheer clinic
• As we watched the cheerleaders sit in the middle of the gym floor all sitting within their groups/leagues but all together, they would be watching the Jamz instructors present instructors and demonstrate cheers
• During that time Tash and Alahna were talking about combining teams for competition so that they would get more points for their routine
• They talked about it during the entire stunt clinic and brainstormed ideas to fundraise for competition. When we finally met up with the rest of the coaches, Tash asked Alysha if they would be able to combine teams. While she asked the Jamz cheerleader was there and said that it is allowed through Jamz, however it depends on what the league says. As soon as the Jamz person said that, Alysha immediately said “No! We can’t do that. We have to stay with the team you are registered with”. Then Alahna questioned, “Are you sure”? Alysha responded “I’m pretty sure, but I can check and let you know” When she walked away, Tash looked at me quietly and said, “I’m going to talk to the OCJAFF people, because she [Alysha] likes to just say stuff and check after, so I’m going to ask someone that knows”.

• While sitting at the benches during lunch, I was looking at all of the different football and cheer coaches from different organizations interacting with each other.

• While sitting at the table with the Irvine cheer coaches they were talking about some of the cheerleaders and some of the “troubled” girls from previous years and the coach for the older girls was talking about her daughter and her lack of confidence and dedication. She was saying how her daughter always says she can’t do things and never tries to learn new things. The coach was explaining when he whole team was learning how to do forward rolls, her daughter would sit there and say she couldn’t do it, she wouldn’t really try and she {her mom} doesn’t understand her lack of enthusiasm. She wonders if she is just lazy, insecure or does it for attention.

• After lunch, I went to watch a little more stunting, and then I left.

August 5th

Trojans

• Today at practice, there were 12 cheerleaders at practice.
• There were two dad’s at practice (Rea’s and Lauren’s) and 4 mom’s.
• When I arrived at practice, I was told that I would be coaching with Ky.
• Christina ran up to me and said “Yay, You are here today”.
• When we first started practice, Ky got the girls into some windows and had then begin to stretch.
• Most girls would appreciate Ky and I pushing their backs down when they are in a straddle. A few girls (Sam and Kylie) did not want me to help them.
• Once we started doing cheers, Ky began teaching the girls a new cheer (Charger’s Territory). While learning the cheer, Ky changed one of the moves within the cheer, when she changed it Sam raised her hand and said, “Last year we did it this way” (as she demonstrated how they did it last year) and Kayla and Cynthia agreed with her.
• As Ky asked them to repeat what they did, I told them we were learning it a new way. As we were practicing, Lauren would continuously ask me, “Sekani, is it like this”? Or she would say, “So . . . it’s like this”.
• When we finally had them work on the cheer in groups of three, Sam ran to Kayla and asked her if they did the cheer the old way last year. Kayla agreed. So then Sam went to her group with Sydney and Jackie and she was discussing with them how she thought the cheer went one and they were doing it the way Ky taught them.
• When I walked over there, she told me “In my whole four years of cheerleading, we have always done this cheer like this” (as she demonstrated). I told her, “Okay, I understand that you are used to doing it that way, but we are going to change it” After I said that, she put her hands over her face. I then told her, “I know it’s a little hard to change it but just try and keep going over it the new way” She did not respond.
• When we all went back over the cheers as a group, Lauren would continue to ask me
to watch her do the cheers; I noticed Caitlin and Lauren were both having a hard time learning the cheers. However, Lauren would ask for help and for me to watch her. Caitlin would stand in the back and not talk, but she did continue to practice whenever she was not stunting.

• Once we started stunting, I had the girls get into three groups: Group one: Sydney (flyer), Cynthia and Kayla (bases), and Christina (backspot) Group Two: Marie (flyer), Caitlin and Sarah (bases), and Jennifer (backspot) Group Three: Mackenzie (flyer), Kelly and Rea (bases) and Lauren (backspot)

• When I first told the girls to get into groups, group one automatically connected together and all of the other girls either stood there looking confused or wanted to be a part of group one.

• Once we were able to get the groups together, we started stunting. Ky started to get group three up while I started to warm up group 1&2 with hang drills. During that time, Kayla and Cynthia continued to complain about their shoulders during the hang drills.

• When we started to actually stunt, we had group one and two alternate going up so that I could supervise. While Marie would go up she would “toe” and push her bases out which made it harder for them.

• I tried to work with group three to get them to do a hang drill and the whole time Kelly kept saying “I’ve never based before” “I get too wobbly when I hold the girls, That’s why I don’t base”. I just told her to keep trying.

• While trying to get the stunt up, Lauren would eagerly ask if she could base. I would tell her that she needed to wait till Coach Tash got there before we could make any changes.

• While Ky and I would work with groups one and two, Lauren would ask when her group would be able to practice some more and I told her when Tash came back.

August 18th

• Lauren likes to say what other people are doing.

• When I corrected Lauren she said " Oh no I was purposely doing that because I thought it was fun."

• Sarah told Christina not to touched her.

• Marie always had a comment to relate to the motions such as " it's like you are pointing someone in the eye."

• Lauren and Sarah stood next to us while we were talking as coaches. Sam was mainly trying to talk to Tash only.

• Lauren likes to always be in front of Coach Tash talking to her and asking what are we going to do next.

• Sarah and Marie would continually questions about how to do a specific move or if would ask if we could watch them do their moves to see if it is right or not.

August 19, 2014

• Today there were 10 girls at practice (1 looked to be half black, 1 was Asian, 2 looked to be
Hispanic and the other 6 looked white)  
- The girls who were there were: Lauren, Caitlin, Rae, Cynthia, Sydney, Jennifer, Sarah, Marie, Cali, and Christina  
- While the girls were in two lines practicing their arm motions, I noticed Lauren’s arm was placed differently than the other girls. When I told her the correct way her arm should be she said “Oh yeah, I know. I just put my hand like this because last time I hit my side”  
- Later on that day I noticed Lauren jumping during her dance when that move in the dance did not require jumping. After the third time I told her “Lauren you don’t have to jump when you point. You can just pivot your foot”. Then Lauren said, “Oh no! I was purposely doing that because I thought it was fun” So I just told her okay as long as she knew how to do it properly.  
- While we were practicing the dance, Whenever Tash would correct the girls or tell them to hit a motion a specific way (usually to make it look sharper) Marie would usually intervene and make a comparison such as “it is like you are poking someone in the eye” and other references similar to that.  
- Marie was also the main one (aside from Sarah) who would ask questions. She asked the most questions in regards to the dance.  
- After a while of running the dance Marie (who was at the point of the triangle) was starting to forget the moves and Tash said “Marie, You know this dance. Stop second guessing yourself”.
  - While the girls were walking from the area where they were stretching to the asphalt where they were practicing their dance, I noticed all the girls were walking and talking together in pairs and groups except for Cali who was walking quietly by herself.  
  - When we were going over the dance, Cali was in the back and she would not talk to anyone she was just trying to learn the dance.

Trojans 10-9-14

When I first arrived at the practice I noticed the older team with new, pink charger jerseys
-I then walked over to my team and Jessica was stretching the girls out. I said to her “wow those jerseys (that the older girls had on) are cute. She then said to me that one of the dad’s on the football team bought them for the older girls team.
-There were 11 girls at practice the only one missing was Cynthia
-Sarah and Sydney are the team captains
-Once Mia came, we started working on stunts. Mia became an assistant coach for the girls
-Whenever Marie would ask Mia something she would always say “Mia, I mean . . .” after a while Mia told me that she had to tell the girls to stop calling her Mia and call her . . . because they were too young and it felt weird (Which for me, it felt weird hearing them call her Mia as well)
-While working on the shoulder sit with Cali, Kelly, and Lauren; Lauren and especially Kelly kept trying to say what the other person is or is not doing and that was the cause of why the shoulder sit would not operate
-A little closer to the end of practice Marie’s mom was there and she was telling Marie things like “Lock your legs” “Stand up” and reminding her to pay attention while she was stunting
-When Marie’s mom was walking away to talk to her little daughter (who was on the mascot team Marie said “Mom watch, we are going up again” and her mom stood there to watch her go up in her stunt again
-Also, towards the end of practice Cali’s mom came over and was watching Cali cheer; Cali’s mom even started recording Cali while I was teacher her, Lauren and Kelly a two eight count dance
- At the start of practice the only parents there were Jessica (Kayla and Kelly’s mom), Alysha (the cheer director), Lauren’s dad, and Caitlin’s mom came walking up with Caitlin’s pink pom poms. By the end of practice Marie and Cali’s mom were there as well as the 4 who were originally there.
- Sydney and Sarah are the captains; The Captains were chosen by some football moms.

Trojan (Cheer Competition) October 19th, 2014

• When I got to the competition, I saw a few busses drive in that had certain cheer teams inside. I saw the Aztecs bus and another team’s bus drive in. Also, the Trojan Pee Wee team came to the competition in a limo.
• When I was walking into the competition, the cheerleaders were all in line waiting to enter the gates (Trojan was in the front of the line).
• As we waited to walk in, there was a certain order that they wanted to sit the teams so the Jets had to walk in front of the Irvine team and while they were walking by Mia was complementing the girls and telling them good luck. Some of them as they walked by would smile and say thank you and talk a little bit, some would just say thank you, some waited until they were told by their coach to say thank you, and others would just walk by and not smile or anything.
• Some of the girls on the Irvine team were saying how cute the little Inglewood teams (mascots) were when they walked by.
• While waiting in line the older Inglewood team started doing a chant in a circle with their male coach.
• The Jets girls came with black varsity jackets that had a black cheerleader on the back. They had matching green cheer backpacks and they also had like paint cans that were decorated with their colors and had their names on them.
• The majority of the Carson Colts coaches had a letterman jacket that had a cheerleader on the back and was very decorative with rhinestones and lots of lettering.
• The Colts cheerleaders had a lot of pink accessories (for breast cancer awareness) they had pink t-shirts, pink spanks, their pom poms were pink and blue in them and their parents and fans wore pink shirts as well.
• When we finally got into the stadium (Which was outside), the parents, family and friends sat on one side and the cheerleaders and cheer coaches sat on the other side.
• When they sat down, One team started doing chants and quickly all of the teams were standing up doing chants/cheers.
• Once we were in the competition for a little bit, it was then time for the girls to start trading pins. This is a time where the girls on every team would take their team pins (They each had about 8-10) and they would trade their pin to another team and in the end, they should have a pin from all the different teams.
• It was interesting to see how some of the pins had some type of representation of their team as a whole. For example Poly had an African American cheerleader on their pin. The broncos had a brown cheerleader that looked to be Latina on theirs.
• While talking to Tash, she was saying “all of these teams like Cults and other teams go all out on their hair and I don’t get the point” A lot of teams had twist and/or braids in their hair. Some teams had their hair curled and other teams had fake pony tails on.
• Some teams had big elaborate bows while other had small simpler bows.
• The Pee Wee Irvine girls had their hair in a ponytail with a big sparkly bow and the Older Irvine girls had their hair in a bun with the same bow.
• While waiting for the competition to start there was music playing. At one point Taylor
Swift’s song “Shake it off” came on and almost all of the cheerleaders in the stands started singing that song in sync.

• We started taking the girls group by group to go eat breakfast. When it was time for the Pee Wee girls to eat we walked over to the side of the bleachers and all of the teams had their own tent set up and decorated with their teams colors. Some team like Paly, Inglewood, The Browns and a few other teams had very decorative and elaborate tent decorations and set-ups while the Irvine team had decorations however, they were not as elaborate as the other teams.

• At the tables, the teams provided food/snacks for all of the girls on their teams.

• While watching the teams in the stands it was clear for most teams the different styles of cheer that was being demonstrated. While waiting for lunch to end, music was playing and the Jets were all following the coaches who were standing at the bottom on the floor by the gate doing dance moves and the cheerleaders were standing on the bleacher copying what the coaches were doing (like drill teams).

• When the Jets Jr. Pee Wee team went out to compete, over half of the team could do backhand springs and half of the team could do back tucks as well (about 20 girls, about 14 could do backhand springs and about 8 or 9 could do back tucks) (They did not stunt).

• A handful of the Cults could tumble as well, they also had very high toe touches (they did not stunt).

• Orange had a lot of cheerleader. They had at least 20 for each team. They were very clean with their motions, however they did not have very much tumbling*.

• The Trojan cheerleaders were very sharp as well and had stunts that did not fall.

• Both Trojan teams won first in their division (Pee Wee competed against one team which was the Aztecs; a predominantly Latina team) and the older girls did not compete against anyone, however they won overall for their division aside from first place.

• While the older Irvine team was getting ready to perform during lunch, they were all very concerned about their make-up and making sure everything looked good. They would even help each other with their eyeliner and lipstick and were making sure everyone looked okay.

• During lunch, Paly cheerleaders were in a circle doing step chants/cheers all together.

• Some (about 5) of the colts football players stood on the field with their jerseys while the cheerleaders performed.

• The cults football players gave the cheerleaders a bag of treats after they performed.

• Some of the Jets football players stood on the field with their jerseys and gave the girls a bag of gifts.

• Some of the Trojans football players stood on the field with their jerseys and gave the girls cookies and a necklace.

• While looking in the stands there were about half of the people wearing lime green t-shirts, which were a representation for the Jets.

• A number of people were wearing pink and blue which looked to be representing of the Cults on the other side of the stands.

• In the middle of the stands were a handful of Trojans fans and the rest of the people were an assortment of other teams.

• While giving awards Jets won a lot of the awards.

• They also had the most amount of staff of the football field when it was awards time.

• The Jets fans had horns and whistles that they blew whenever one of the teams won.

• While all of the cheer staff was on the football field, it was a time to do some dances and show spirit for your team. The Aztec staff where doing stunts (Lifting other coaches into the air) a few of them started to tumble and do some toe touches.

• The Jets team was dancing and created a soul train line.

• A few of the other teams would do a few of the line dances but not too much to stand out.
Some of the Trojans staff would do the line dances
• While the cheerleaders were sitting in the bleacher, a lot of teams were chanting and dancing
to the music, the Trojans team would do a few cheers every so often, but for the most part they
would just sit down and watch what was going on or talk amongst each other
• When the announcer announced the second place winner for hip-hop, the Cults were
called. When the Cults went to get their awards they walked away without smiling and had
their head down
• While standing behind the blue tent with the Trojans Pee Wee team Caitlyn kept saying how
nervous she was since it was her first competition however, Cali was saying how she was not
nervous, she just was ready and anxious to go out and perform.
• Cali told me while I was walking her to the restroom how she loves competitions because she
loves being able to perform. Her favorite competition is regionals

*= Back hand springs, Back tucks and above