

Gainesville Pop Warner **CHEERLEADING**

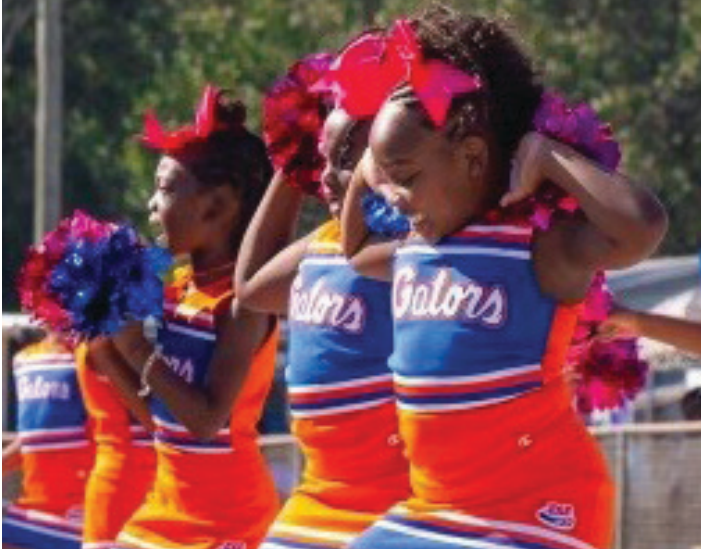
2026 Parent's Packet



City of
Gainesville

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Gainesville Gators Pop Warner Cheer 2026 Parents' Handbook



Welcome to the City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs (PRCA) Department's Pop Warner Cheer! Please take the time to thoroughly read this parent packet before you fill out the registration forms.

The department's goal is to provide your children with positive experiences through the assistance of our staff and volunteer coaches.

The mission of Pop Warner Little Scholars is to enable young people to benefit from participation in team sports and activities in a safe and structured environment. Through this active participation, Pop Warner programs teach fundamental values, skills and knowledge that young people will use throughout their lives.

Pop Warner seeks to provide fun athletic learning opportunities for children, while emphasizing the importance of academic success. Specifically, Pop Warner seeks to familiarize players and spirit participants with the fundamentals of football, cheerleading and dance. Pop Warner strives to inspire youth, regardless of race, creed or national origin, to practice the ideals of sportsmanship, scholarship, and physical fitness as reflected in the life of the late Glenn Scobie "Pop" Warner.

- Coaches and staff are certified in first aid, CPR and AED, and hold current YCADA and Pop Warner Cheer certifications.
- All coaches have been appropriately background-checked through Pop Warner and PRCA.

We are looking forward to a great season!

Our cheerleading program serves children 3- to 15-years-old. Each team is limited to a set number of participants; spaces are filled on a first-come, first-served basis and must have a minimum of six participants registered in the appropriate age level to fill a team. If the team does not have enough participants the parents will be refunded and the team will no longer exist. PRCA reserves the right to remove, add or move players to another team based on the player-to-coach ratio.

Teams

Recreational Teams: Junior Tiny-Mite ages are 3-4. This team is considered "recreational." Junior Tiny-Mites only participate and cheer at league football games and the league cheer competition, which is a one-day, local exhibition, held mid-October. Junior Tiny-Mite's season begins Tuesday, July 15, and concludes the first or second week of November.

Competitive Teams: Competitive teams consist of Tiny-Mite (ages 5-7), Mitey-Mite (ages 7-9), Junior PeeWee (ages 8-11), PeeWee (ages 9-12) and Junior Varsity (ages 12-15). These teams are considered "competitive." They participate and cheer in league football games, and compete in league competition. If a competitive team qualifies for the regional championships, the coach will communicate with the parents and a unanimous yes or no vote must take place the day after league competition concludes. **There is a strict deadline to notify Pop Warner headquarters three days after league competition concludes. Regional competition takes place over Thanksgiving weekend in Charlotte, NC.** If a competitive team qualifies for national championships, the coach must notify Pop Warner Headquarters during the regional competition. **National championships take place the second week of December in Charlotte, NC.**

***Additional fees will be required if team qualifies for regionals/ nationals**



Registration & Fees

Registration closes Wednesday, July 8.

Fully completed forms are required at the time of registration.

- ❶ **Registration Fee:** City residents: \$82.75
Non-city residents: \$103.25

The following items are included:

- Cheer uniform (items must be returned at the last event of the season)
- 1 hair bow (participant may keep)
- game socks
- 1 bloomer/brief (participant may keep)
- Pom-poms

❷ **What do I have to purchase?**

Parents/guardians are responsible for purchasing the following required items by the start of the season:

- Shoes (please coordinate with coach for purchase)
- Socks (please coordinate with coach for purchase)
- Practice clothes (includes practice bow, appropriate shorts, sport bras and T-shirts, no spaghetti straps allowed)
- Food/snacks (for games or travel)
- Spirit gifts for opposing teams
- Warm ups (jacket and pants)

Additional items may need to be purchased such as hair pieces, themed costume material for competition, etc. Team moms and/or coaches will communicate with team parents about optional items.

❸ **Additional Fees:**

Regional Championships: Qualifying for regionals requires winning 1st or 2nd place in the league competition. If a team qualifies for regionals, it is held in Orlando, FL over Thanksgiving weekend. There is a mandatory, one-night hotel stay for the team, and additional costs are associated with that. Actual cost per athlete could range anywhere between \$200-350, depending on travel, lodging, food and length of stay.* Pop Warner sets lodging fees, and has a minimum 1-night stay requirement for all teams. * Actual amounts and due dates will be determined the last week of September.

National Championships: If a team wins the regional championship, they qualify for nationals. Nationals is usually two weeks after regionals and is in Charlotte, North Carolina. There is a mandatory, one-night resort stay for the team, additional costs will be associated. Actual cost per athlete could range anywhere between

\$300-\$400, depending on travel, lodging, food and length of stay.* Pop Warner sets lodging fees, and has a minimum 1-night stay requirement for all teams. Actual amounts and due dates will be determined and announced No. 29.

* Some team costs can be offset by fundraising dollars. For information on how you can help, call Elliot Harris at 352-393-8542.

Mandatory For Cheer

Mandatory Parent Meeting:

- **Where:** Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Multipurpose Center Gymnasium, 1028 NE 14th St.
- **Date:** Will be scheduled first week of practice

This meeting is mandatory for the parent/guardian who signed the waiver form. If parent does not attend the meeting, the child may not practice until parent meets with the Sports Recreation Leader Janielle Burney.

What do I bring the first week of practice?

- Sneakers, shorts and t-shirt are required attire for practice
- Sunscreen and water bottle
- Make sure your child is hydrated well **before** practice time

Schedules

Practice Schedule: The first day of practice is Tuesday, July 15.

- Days for practice are determined by the head coach
- Times of practice occur between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.
- All participants must complete 20 hours of conditioning before teams engage in stunting or tumbling.
- Prior to Labor Day, teams can practice a maximum of 10 hours per week.
- Following Labor Day, teams can practice a maximum of six hours per week.
- Not allowed: food, gum, hair beads, head wraps, nail polish or jewelry of any kind, except medical and religious medals.
- Please be aware that if the city closes for state of emergency, weather or otherwise, all programs will be canceled.

Cheer Practice Sites

- Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Multipurpose Center, 352-334-5053
1028 NE 14th Street
- Eastside Community Center, 352-334-2714
2841 E. University Avenue
- Football home games are held at Citizens Field,
1400 NE Eighth Ave.

Game schedules are created by Putnam Athletic League and distributed by Gainesville Pop Warner. Gainesville Pop Warner does not create or influence the schedule in any way. The schedule can be viewed at www.putnamathleticleague.com.

- The head coach is notified as the schedule becomes available.
- The head coach is responsible for distribution of the game schedule to all team members. Please expect to cheer every week.
- Games are held on Saturdays, from 9 a.m.-5 p.m., unless otherwise noted on the schedule.

Travel: All team participants must find their own transportation to the football games, league competition and playoffs.

Important Information

Where to Register:

In person

Registration packets can be picked up at the Thomas Center, Bldg. B (306 NE Sixth Ave.) and the MLK Recreation Complex (1028 NE 14th St.). Completed registration packets can be submitted in person on the 3rd floor of Thomas Center, Bldg. B (306 NE Sixth Ave.).

Scholarships: Scholarships are available for families that qualify through the School Board of Alachua County (SBAC) for free or reduced lunch. Families can also qualify through the City of Gainesville Family Application for Reduced Fees. You can request proof of free or reduced lunch through your child's school by calling the SBAC's Food Service Office at 352-955-7539, extension 1569.

Refunds: Parents may request a full refund until Saturday, Aug. 9, 2025. After that date, no refunds will be allowed and if equipment or uniforms were distributed to parents, a refund will not be processed until items are returned.

Check In and Check Out: No child is to be released to anyone other than a parent or other approved authority. You must provide written permission, in person (no calls) if you are going to allow someone other than yourself to pick up your child. If you are not sure about your release permissions, please speak with the Sports Section Rep.

Tardiness and No Shows: Parents, please make sure your child is at practice five minutes before practice is to begin. We urge parents to stay on premises due to issues that may arise during practice (i.e. injuries, weather, etc.). Please be ready to check out your child five minutes before practice ends. Coaches will keep track of tardiness and no shows. Tardiness and/or absence from practice will affect playing time in the game. A child may not be late more than five times in a season. After the fifth tardy time, the child may be removed from the team. If a child misses more than four practices in a season without properly notifying the head coach they will be removed from the team. Your child is an important part of his or her team. Missing practice or arriving late disrupts teammates and coaches trying to learn or teach the skills necessary for field plays or competition routines.

Missing Games: A child cannot miss more than **two games** in the season; an absentee form must be completed by the parent/guardian after each missed event. If a child misses more than two games they will be removed from the team.

Photography and Video: To promote City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs (PRCA) and its programs, we prefer photographing/filming youth while they are active in our programs. Many times, television, newspaper and outside camera crews will ask permission to take pictures or to film the participants during various activities or events.

As a parent/guardian, signing the household registration and Pop Warner media form gives your consent to have your child photographed and relinquish all rights, title and interest in the finished photographs, tape, files and negatives to be used for publicity purposes for PRCA.

Communications: In the event of practice cancellations, inclement weather, time changes or schedule changes, communication is important.

In order to receive these communications from city staff please text **@cogcheer** or **@cogfb** to 81010. You will receive any mass communications via text message. Standard text message rates apply.

Fundraising: Gainesville Pop Warner is expanding fundraising this year. Fundraising is necessary to help reduce the costs associated with regionals and nationals. We will be looking for volunteers to help serve on a fundraising committee. If you are interested, please email Elliot Harris at HarrisEO@GainesvilleFL.gov.

Please Note

PRCA has a partnership with Pop Warner. All parents, participants and spectators must adhere to both set of rules. PRCA follows Pop Warner rules and guidelines, in conjunction with the City of Gainesville's rules and policies.

Parent Conduct: Parent conduct sends an important message about the role parents have in supporting their child. Parents must read, understand and sign the code of conduct before their child participates in our league. Any parent, spouse, guardian or guest who displays or engages in improper conduct at any game/practice will be asked to leave the facility and be suspended from the following game. Repeat violations may result in a multiple game suspension, the season forfeiture, the privilege of attending games or the removal of the child from the program.

Discipline

This policy is enforced to ensure a safe, professional and organized program and to help each participant learn and grow as a responsible person in a fair and consistent manner. If a child shows consistent disregard for the program's rules, a verbal warning and written report will be issued. A second offense will warrant a conference with the parents and coaches. If a child commits a third offense, this will warrant a one-week suspension without refund, and the fourth offense will result in withdrawal from the program without refund.

All disciplinary actions are at the discretion of the staff and coaches on site. If the staff member feels that the violation is severe enough, they can make the first disciplinary action suspension.

All disciplinary actions shall include standards that prohibit children from being subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, frightening or associated with food or fluids, rest or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited by all personnel. There is zero tolerance for offenses involving drugs, alcohol, tobacco, weapons or any physical or verbal aggression or language and behavior of a sexual nature.

These actions will result in immediate suspension or expulsion without refund. Rules will be discussed with participants on the first day of practice.

Discipline Policy

1st Offense: Verbal warning and written report.

2nd Offense: Restrictions and written report.
Conference with parent/guardian.

3rd Offense: Written report and suspension.
One to five days mandatory suspension depending on the nature of the incident, and/or how many times the child has been disciplined.

4th Offense: Written report and involuntary withdrawal.
Parent conference to inform the parent/guardian the participant will be withdrawn from the program for a period of six days or more, but not to exceed one year.

Pop Warner Scholastics Program

Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. (PWLS) is the only national youth sports organization in America that requires its participants to perform adequately in the classroom before permitting them to play.

- A child must show proof of satisfactory progress in school with a minimum grade point average of a 2.0 or 70%.
- If a child does not meet the requirements of a 2.0 or better they may fill out and submit a **scholastic eligibility form**, which you can pick up at the time of registration from the PRCA Administrative Office or online.
- The scholastic eligibility form must be accompanied by a progress report or report card to be eligible to play after the Oct. 15, 2025 deadline. That report card/progress report must be dated between Sept. 1 and Oct. 15, 2025.



Report Cards are Due to the PRCA Administrative Office at Time of Registration

- The entire report card (all four quarters or all three trimesters) must be turned in.
- Report cards can be printed out through the Skyward portal for SBAC students.
- If the report card has not been turned in, your child will not be registered.

Get Money for School!

Since 1993, over \$1.3 million in scholarships have been awarded to Pop Warner scholar-athletes! Last year, Pop Warner selected 8,000 participants around the country to receive scholarships! Scholarships awarded range from \$500-\$5,000.

To Receive Scholarships from Pop Warner

- Participant is currently in 5th grade or higher.
- Has a 96% grade point average or better.
- Has a complete prior year's report card.

Have More Questions?

Sports Recreation Leader

Dyron Bell

352-393-8527

BellD1@GainesvilleFL.gov

All forms are available for download at:

www.gainesvillefl.gov/PopWarner



City of
Gainesville

IT STARTS IN
PARKS
Coaching, Connecting, Community.

352-334-5067
GainesvilleFL.gov/PRCA

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