

## **Hellcats Cheerleaders Athlete Injury Handbook**

### ***Policy, Recovery, and Return-to-Play Protocols***

At Hellcats, we are committed to the safety of our athletes and the success of our teams. We understand that injuries are a challenging part of competitive sport, and this handbook is designed to provide clarity on how we manage these situations fairly and professionally.

#### **1. Financial & Participation Policy**

##### ***Subscription and Fees***

- Team Subscriptions: These fees cover fixed operational costs (facility hire, insurance, professional staffing). Team subscriptions remain payable in full during periods of injury. This ensures the athlete's guaranteed place on the roster is secured for their return.
- Technical Classes: If an injury prevents participation in additional classes (e.g. Tumble, Development Classes), the club may, at its discretion, pause these specific fees for a predetermined length of time. Hellcats reserve the right to request a medical note be provided to authorise these payment pauses.
- Private Lessons: These may be deferred or rescheduled subject to our standard 24-hour cancellation policy.
- Competition Fees: Competition entry fees are non-refundable once paid to the event providers. In the event of an injury occurring after the entry deadline, the club cannot recover these costs and no refunds will be issued.
- Spectator Tickets: Spectator Tickets are non-refundable once paid to the event provider. In the event of an injury occurring after the order deadline, the club cannot recover these costs and no refunds will be issued.

##### ***Attendance Expectations***

Injured athletes are expected to attend weekly team training. This allows them to stay connected to their teammates, learn choreographic changes, and "mental mark" the routine, which significantly reduces the transition time when they are cleared to return.

Once cleared for light activity, athletes may use this time to work on specific physiotherapy exercises under coach supervision.

#### **2. Choreography & Team Strategy**

When an athlete is injured, routines must be adjusted to ensure the team remains competitive and safe.

- Finality of Changes: To maintain team momentum, routines modified due to an injury will not automatically revert to the original choreography upon an athlete's return.
- Coaching Discretion: All choreographic and placement decisions—including where an athlete is placed upon their return—are final and at the coaches' discretion, with the team's best interests as the priority.
- Return to Play: An athlete returning from injury will be integrated back into the routine where and when the coaches deem it most beneficial for the team's overall progress.

### **3. The 5-Stage Graduated Return to Play (GRTP)**

Athletes must complete at least one full session at each stage without pain before progressing.

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Activity Level</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Coaching Status</b>
1. Observation	Attendance Only	Mental Engagement & Social Inclusion	Athlete attends training to watch changes, learn counts, and support the team. No physical participation.
2. Light Physio	Low Impact	Re-introducing Movement	Static stretching (non-injured areas) and light, low-impact conditioning. No jumping, stunting, or tumbling.
3. Basics	Ground-Based	Technique & Body Control	Ground-based skills. Drills only (e.g., handstands, basic rolls, non-impact motions). No stunting or landings.
4. Re-Integration	Partial Routine	Endurance	Participation in parts of the routine. Light

			stunting (as a spotter or with restrictions). Low-impact tumbling only.
5. Full Training	Full Participation	Competition Ready	Full participation in all routine elements.

Note: If a team enters a "Red Zone" (3 weeks before a competition), an athlete reaching Stage 5 during this period may still be kept in a modified role to protect team stability.

#### **4. Return to Play (RTP) Assessment Form**

This section must be signed by a medical professional and returned to the Lead Coach before Stage 2 begins.

Athlete Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Injury: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Medical Professional's Clearance: \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the athlete's capacity:

- Weight Bearing: [ ] Full [ ] Limited [ ] None
- Impact (Jumping): [ ] Full [ ] Limited [ ] None
- Upper Body Weight: [ ] Full [ ] Limited [ ] None
- Stunting/Lifting: [ ] Full [ ] Limited [ ] None

Clinician Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **5. Final Safety Assessment**

Medical clearance from a doctor is the minimum requirement to begin the return process. The final decision to allow an athlete to stunt, tumble, or compete rests solely with the Lead Coach. We assess not only the medical recovery but also the athlete's strength, confidence, and routine retention to ensure the safety of the entire stunt group and team.