



Morale on Competition Day

By: Kathryn Guion

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For many teams, competition day can be the most exciting day of the year. This is the day when all the hard work of memorizing choreography, cleaning motions, and drilling technique comes together. Until the awards ceremony is finished, most coaches are in a constant state of stress. For the dancers, though, it is vital that morale is very high and that they feel confident, excited, and ready to compete.

To help them perform their best, here are some do's and don'ts for you on competition day:

- DO** be a source of energy for your team. They will look to you for encouragement and positive words.
- DO** encourage your team to breathe and relax immediately before competing. Some nervous jitters are good, but too much can take away from a dancer's level of control.
- DO** encourage good sportsmanship throughout the day, no matter the results.
- DON'T** concentrate on other teams. **DO** remind your dancers that they are at the competition only for themselves, and not to turn their focus to another team.
- DON'T** get hung up on little things. If that difficult turn sequence isn't hitting perfectly on the practice floor, work on it for a few minutes and then move on. **DO** show confidence in the dancers. This will put them at ease and reassure them that they can hit that sequence perfectly.
- DON'T** emphasize placement, **DO** emphasize effort. If the team performed as well as they could, then your goal was accomplished.

While competition day is the best day of the year for some dancers, for others it is the most nerve-racking. As a coach, you want each dancer to have a positive experience no matter the results of the competition. Assure your dancers that you are confident in them and thankful for all of their hard work. Above all, always assure your team that you are proud of them!