



Washington State Cheer Coaches Association

Pacific Northwest Virtual Coaches Conference

Speakers 2021



Bill Ahern is a graduate of the University of Kentucky with a degree in Biology and a minor in Earth Science and was a member of their 1987 National Championship cheerleading squad. He has 35 years of experience working with UCA and Varsity Spirit on the educational side of the company. Formerly he was the regional director for the Northeast region and currently he works on UCA curriculum and staff training. Bill also has over 20 years of experience working with the safety and technique side of cheerleading which includes working with AACCA on safety guidelines for high school and college cheer and over 10 years with NFHS as a technical advisor to their safety guideline committee. Bill currently works with USA Cheer on the development of the emerging female sport of STUNT and specifically with the development of the materials used for the game (routines and music) as well as the training pieces used by the coaches and officials of the sport.



Jim Lord has been involved in cheerleading since 1984 as a cheerleader, coach, choreographer and instructor at the high school and college levels and has served as the Executive Director for AACCA since 1997. Since AACCA merged with USA Cheer in 2018, he is now the Director of Education and Programming for USA Cheer. Jim has presented at coaches conferences in over 50 states and countries and works closely with the NFHS Spirit Rules Committee. He is married to his high school sweetheart, and together they have one 14 year old son who is much smarter than he is.



Katie Bowers is a V!ROC Director who specializes in clean and collegiate style choreography. Katie has coached high school for over 16 years and currently coaches All Girl at Mater Dei High School (since 2018). Katie has an extensive cheerleading background. She previously coached El Dorado High School from 2005-2018 leading them to 5 UCA National Winning Titles. Katie is a mom of four and resides in California with her husband and family.



Stephanie Brodbeck has over 20 years of experience in the cheerleading industry. She was a gymnast and competitive cheerleader most of her life, cheering for some of the best programs in South Florida including Top Gun All Stars, Miami Elite All Stars, and Legend Lady Jags. Today, Stephanie is the owner of a company called, Pro Cheer International, a training camp & choreography company based out of South Florida. Pro Cheer specializes in the high school market. Her company has successfully coached several different schools to their first ever, state championship titles. They are most proud of that and pride themselves on achieving goals once thought impossible, while building morals, character, and leadership skills that will last the athletes for a lifetime.



George McGuire, MS, CSCS, CPDS, FMS started his cheerleading career at Steilacoom High School here in Washington state. He would eventually go on to cheer for the University of Hawaii from 2005-2012 winning 2 USA Partner Stunt championships as well as earning his Bachelors and Masters of Science in Kinesiology and Rehabilitation Science. George is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist and a Certified Program Design Specialist as well as the current CEO and founder of Create Fitness located in Kent, Washington.



Brian Cao has been involved in the spirit industry for over 20 years as a participant, instructor, adjudicator, coach and choreographer on the school, allstar, collegiate and professional levels. He opened a competitive cheer gym & dance studio in 2007 and operated the business for 8 years. In 2016, Brian returned to his roots with NCA & NDA, with whom he has been affiliated for the past 24 years. After serving as Head Instructor and State Director for the West Coast states 2003-2005, he returned to the corporate team and took a role as Customer Development and Choreography Specialist from 2016-2017, he was named as the Director of Choreography Training and Education, and recently took on a new role as West Regional Staffing Director. (Source- Varsity University)



Chris Opheim joined the Mississippi State Cheer program in June 2018, as the Director of Spirit and Fan Engagement. In this role, he oversees all Mississippi State Spirit Squads, and serves as the head cheerleading and mascot coach. Prior to arriving at Mississippi State, Opheim was the Spirit Squad Coordinator at Washington State University from 2012-18. Opheim also worked as a member of Universal Cheerleaders Association from 2003-14, where he served as an instructor for High School, College, and International levels. During his time with UCA, he also served as a judge for National and International cheerleading and mascot competitions. Opheim attended the University of Northern Iowa and the University of Arkansas. (Source- Mississippi State University Athletics)



Sheri Gazitt is a life coach for teen girls and the business owner of Teen Wise Seattle. She is a parent and teen educator who delves into difficult topics that parents and teens face every day such as friendship issues, perfectionism, peer pressure, anxiety, and stress. She has been a guest on TV and radio shows like Q13, Chat with Women, Disney Radio and podcasts. Her professional and personal experiences give her a unique perspective on the teen world. Sheri has three daughters spanning high school and college. All of them act as consultants and give their stamp of approval on her content.



Robby Sortore has worked with and coached numerous Jr High, High School, College and All Star teams from around the Northwest. Currently Robby is the coach and choreographer for Mount Si High School in Snoqualmie, WA. In 2019 Mount Si won both Game Day and Traditional State Championships along with placing 2nd in Traditional and winning a National Championship at UCA National High School Cheerleading Championship in Orlando, Florida. Robby is formally a UCA Head Instructor for 8 years and is currently the Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) Northwest State Director for the past 9 years. It's here that Robby has the opportunity to learn the most innovative new techniques and ideas in safety, stunting, pyramids, jumps, Game Day, etc. and help implement them to squads across the Northwest.



Kim Mayer has been coaching high school cheerleading for over 30 years and is still just as passionate, competitive, and excited about the sport as she was when she began. She has been a speaker at cheer conferences, National Coach of the Year recipient, and is the director of one of the largest cheer camps on the west coast. Over these 30 plus years, Kim has won numerous State and Regional titles as well as a UCA National Championship and a World School Championship. In addition to coaching, Kim teaches English at Hanford High School and was just awarded the Crystal Apple Award for teaching!



Jennifer Wiyreck is the WSJCA President.



Dani Yorkston is in her 12th year as a certified judge with the Washington State Cheer Judges Association and has judged at WIAA Cheer State for eight years, the last five as the Head Technical Judge. She serves on the WSCJA Executive Board as the Vice President and on the Washington Officials Association Executive Board.



Cathy Sisks is an Assistant Coach at Foster High School and is the WSCCA College Director and Scholarships Chair. She has over 15 years of experience in the industry, coaching for various programs including Rec, Middle and High school teams. She has a love for cheer and the young people she coaches. Cathy also has a philanthropic heart outside of cheerleading. She works for Mary's Place working with homeless families and doing mission outreach projects with youth across the Pacific Northwest.



Anne Christiansen has been coaching cheerleading for 20 years and is the current Rec Director for the WSCCA. She is the Head Coach for the Eastside Dream Elite recreational program. Anne oversees eleven teams in six locations with Eastside Dream Elite, including her Cheer Ability team for people with developmental disabilities. Eastside Dream Elite has won the Rec Program of the Year award and Anne has been named the WSCCA Rec Cheer Coach of the Year award. In 2017 she was inducted into the WSCCA Hall of Fame. Anne has a B.A. in Communications from Brigham Young University and an M.A. in Educational Leadership from the University of Washington. When Anne is not coaching or judging cheer, she also enjoys hanging out with her twin 10-year-old boys and her husband (Mr. Coach Anne), singing at Benaroya Hall with the Ensign Symphony & Chorus, and traveling with her family.

