



CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: SUMMER WILLIS



Summer Willis is in her 25th season as the Spirit Squad Director for Weber State and has led the Wildcats to numerous national championships and unprecedented recognition. She has led the Weber State cheer team to a combined 10 national championships, the dance team to five national titles, and the Waldo mascot to three national championships. The Weber State cheer team has reached unrivaled success in recent years. The Wildcat Large Coed team has won seven straight national championships (2017-24) and eight overall championships. Weber State has also won three of the last four Grand National Championships, winning in 2021, 2022, and 2024. The small coed team has won two national championships and won the grand national title in 2024. Waldo has won three national titles and WSU has also had several partner stunt championships. Willis has also overseen the Wildcat dance team that has won three Hip Hop national championships (2017, 2018, 2021, 2024) and also won the Jazz Grand National Championship in 2024. In 2024, the Weber State dance team also represented Team USA at the World ICU Championships and took home the gold medal in Hip Hop. Willis began her career at Weber State in 1998 as the Spirit Squad Director and also worked in Marketing and Promotions for Wildcat Athletics. She has also served as the head coach of the Utah Jazz stunt team for nine years. Willis is a native of North Ogden, Utah, and graduated from Weber High School. She was a cheerleader at Utah State University and graduated from USU in 1998 with a degree in Communications and Public Relations. She is the granddaughter of Weber State Hall of Fame member Wallace “Wildcat” Morris, who played football for Weber College in the 1920’s. He was a Junior College All-American and had the nickname “Wildcat”. He is the namesake of the Weber State nickname “Wildcats”. She and her husband Dave are the parents of three children, a son Tytan, and twins Maverick and Madden.

ANGIE BAKER



Angie is an Arizona native and graduate of ASU. She cheered, tumbled, stunted and danced for over 20 years. Angie worked with the United Spirit Association teaching camps and judging regional and National competitions. She danced professionally for the Arizona Rattlers and Arizona Cardinals before stepping into the coaching role in 2010. Angie spent 9 seasons as the Director for the Rattlers before her current role as Director of the Arizona Cardinals Cheerleaders. Her teams have appeared on Americas Got Talent, The Ellen Show, Super Bowl performances and numerous tours Internationally.

ANNIE VALENCIA



Annie was born and raised in Florence, Arizona. She coached Florence High School Cheer for 18 years. During that time her team won 17 AIA State Championships. After retiring from coaching last year Annie was hired as the Assistant Spiritline Director for the AIA. In addition to working for the AIA, Annie is the Instructional Coach at Florence High School. In her free time she loved spending time with her kids Maya and Ryan and their extended family.

CAMERON LARSEN



Cameron Larsen is a four-time power tumbling and trampoline national champion. In college, he was a cheerleader at Weber State University and was on the 2009 NCA College National Champion team. He later transferred to Brigham Young University where he was a member of the cheerleading program and majored in business. Cameron has worked for the Universal Cheerleaders Association since 2007 and currently serves as the Varsity Spirit State Director for Utah and Idaho. Additionally, Cameron is a full time V!ROC choreographer and has choreographed routines across the country with accomplishments including state championship titles in over 15 different states and multiple national titles for UCA, USA, and NCA. As a coach, he has been a member of the coaching staff at Corner Canyon High School for 12 years and has helped the team to their 6 state titles and 3 UCA National Championship wins.

CARLOS MUNOZ



Carlos Munoz, from Dallas, TX, is a former Varsity Spirit Fashion Rep and the former National Director of Competitions for UCA/UDA and UCA All Star. He currently assists as a choreographer for UCA/UDA & NCA leadership summer material. He has choreographed for the University of Kentucky Pom Team, 2019 Russian Dance Team, 2015 NDA National Pom Champions United Middle School Dance Team. Carlos has 34 years of cheer/dance experience and served as a UCA instructor for 20 years. Carlos has judged competitions for UCA/UDA, USA, All Star Challenge, ACA, NCA/NDA at the collegiate, high school and All Star levels, in the U.S., Puerto Rico, The Cheerleading Worlds and internationally. Carlos choreographed Team USA Pom in 2017 which took the Silver Medal.

CHANDLER CLAWSON

Chandler is the Owner and Operator of Power Up Cheer Academy, a mobile customizable stunting, tumbling, and skills coaching service. With 20 years of experience of competing and coaching at the High School, Collegiate, and All Stars levels he is focused on helping High School programs across the state of Arizona with skill progressions at every level. Chandler's coaching career started during his sophomore year where he cheered competitively at Cottonwood High School in Salt Lake City, Utah. His interest in cheer continued while attending college at the University of Utah then transferred to Arizona State University. Go Devils! He worked for United Spirit Associations throughout college where he instructed summer camps with high school teams across the west coast. For the next ten years, he continued his passion, working at an All-Star gym in Arizona training and coaching all levels, ages, talents, and skills. During his ten years, he competed at The Cheerleading Worlds competition in Florida, achieving top 3 placements in personal and coaching achievements for multiple years. He shared a Head Coach position at Cactus Shadows High School in Cave Creek, Arizona where he helped the program achieve its 10th state championship in 12 years, along with 2 USA National Championships. In 2018, Chandler started his own business named Power Up Cheer Academy LLC. He brings his skills on campus to the Arizona Schools as a mobile stunting a tumbling skill coach. During his free time, he enjoys cooking, golfing and spending time with his wife, Holly, and their 6 year-old daughter Cambria and his newest edition 6-month-old daughter, Caylee. His passion, experience, and dedication are second to none to help cheerleaders on a personal and professional level to become the best versions of themselves.



CHRISTINA LEONE



Christina Leone just finished her 20th year coaching at the high school level and is currently the head coach at Rock Canyon High School in Colorado. Her teams have earned numerous regional and state titles, are perennial finalists at UDA Nationals. 6x Colorado State Champions, Rock Canyon has earned seven medals at NDTA since 2020. In 2018, they were selected as the Varsity Brands American Spirit Leader Award winner. Christina was a 2023 NHSACA Coach of the Year Finalist and previously was named the Positive Coaching Alliance Double-Goal Coach (2015) and Colorado Coach of the Year (2016). Passionate about education for coaches, she regularly presents at conferences and for Varsity University. Additionally, she is a member of the Varsity Brands DanceCAST and has served on the board for the Colorado Spirit Coaches Association and the Spirit for Change Foundation. Christina began dancing at the age of 4 and started teaching at age 17. A Colorado native, Christina grew up as a competitive figure skater while also training in jazz, ballet, and tap, before joining her high school dance team. She went on to dance at Miami University (OH) before she began coaching in 2004. Christina has been actively judging every competition season since 2007. Her judging highlights include the USASF Dance Worlds, UDA College Nationals, NDA and USA (High School, All-Star, & Collegiate) Nationals, Dance Summit, Jamfest Super Dance Nationals and Jamfest Japan. Outside of dance, Christina maintains a full time career as a marketing manager with Sotheby's International Realty. She is an avid fan of figure skating and all Denver sports but mostly loves being a soccer/volleyball mom and spending time with her husband and two daughters.

DANI BEHRENS



Dani resides in Chandler, Arizona and is retired from coaching. Dani coached at several AZ high schools but finished out her career with 7 years at Xavier College Preparatory. Dani has over 15 years of experience in the cheerleading industry as a competitive cheerleader, choreographer, coach, and mentor. Dani has been the head coach at three different schools and has acquired 11 AIA State championships, and 5 USA Nationals titles in show cheer, coed, all-girl, and group stunt divisions. Dani also coached all star cheerleading for 3 years receiving many choreography awards, and nationals bids. Dani served on the AIA Spiritline Committee for several years assisting in organizing the game and competitive spiritline season for the state of Arizona. Dani is a graduate of Arizona State University and has a bachelors of science in secondary education with minors in history, political science, and child psychology. Dani currently is an adjunct professor for Maricopa Community Colleges. In her spare time, Dani enjoys traveling, and spending time with her husband and 5 year old daughter.

DAVE SANCHEZ



Dave Sanchez is a graduate of Harvard Law School and is a co-founder of Dance Team Union (DTU). Dave grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico and has almost 30 years of experience in dance team as a music editor, coach, choreographer, judge and competition company owner. Prior to DTU, for almost 20 years, Dave provided commentary on major state and national competitions as well as other issues important to dance teams on Yahoo! under the name “dazzman1999.” He also had over 25 years of experience judging dance team competitions for several national companies as well as for state championships and regional and local events. Dave assisted several state and national competition organizations with score sheet design and has been invited to speak about judging issues and judges training at coaches’ conferences throughout the country. Dave has also presented to several coaches’ conferences with respect to legal and consumer rights issues affecting dance team coaches. At Harvard, Dave was choreographer for musical theater productions and he has also provided music and choreography for Macy’s fashion shows and a regional ballet company. He also currently works for a major international law firm in San Francisco.

DR. CHELSEA PEROTTI



Chelsea was trained as a studio dancer in the Denver area, and spent summers training with professional ballet companies, finishing her performance career as a professional ballet dancer in Colorado. Chelsea was also a successful high school dance coach for over a decade. She won multiple State Championship titles and was recognized as Colorado’s Dance Coach of the Year and twice as the National Dance Coaches Association’s Associate of the Year. Outside of coaching, Chelsea also has a Ph.D. in Sport Psychology and is a Teaching Assistant Professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Chelsea currently runs a company providing online and in-person educational resources for dancers and dance educators including digital courses, memberships, and workshops to help you learn and thrive. She specializes in education for dance teachers and coaches in many areas of mental skills including confidence, resilience, motivation, mindset, and leadership. Visit her website at <https://chelseapierotti.com> and check out her podcast, Passion for Dance, wherever you get your podcasts.

JAMES BLUNK



James has been working for Varsity Spirit for 18 years. He was a former UCA Instructor and was a Core Staff member, College Camp Instructor, and International Instructor and is now State Director for Northern California. He is a former member of the 2013 Team USA Coed Premier team. James was the Head Coach at Sacramento State University from 2015-2020 and is now the current coach at Jessup University and Head Coach of the 2X NHSCC Champion team, Oak Ridge High School.

KATIE BOWERS



Katie Bowers is the head cheerleading coach at Mater Dei high school in Santa Ana as well as the UCA West staffing Director. Katie just ended her 17th year coaching at the high school level and is excited to begin year 18. This will be her 7th year at Mater Dei, while previously coaching at El Dorado high school for 11 years. Katie was previously a V!ROC choreographer and skills coach for 9 years and has been speaking at conferences across the country for the past 14 years. Over the last 17 years, Katie has over 16 USA National titles, 4 CIF Southern Section Titles, 2 CIF Regional Titles and 6 UCA National Titles. Katie is member of the California Southern Section Advisory Board, as well as the 2022 CIF Coach of the Year and the 2024 Cheer Pros Coach of the Year. Katie believes that in all things you do, always strive to be better, and builds her team culture around this moto. While working at UCA, and coaching, cheerleading is a part of Katies everyday life, and she wouldn't have it any other way! "Cheer not a passion, it's a life-style".

KELLY GERLEVE



Kelly is from Maple Grove, Minnesota. She cheered for four years at the University of Minnesota and graduated with a BA in Psychology. Kelly is the former Bloomington Jefferson High School cheerleading coach. In her 11 years as head coach, she won multiple State Championships and two National Championship titles. Kelly currently lives in Memphis, TN and has been a full time V!ROC Choreographer for the past seven years.

KELSEY HIGGINS



Kelsey recently ended a 9 year career as the head coach of Chaparral High School's Varsity pom line. In her time there, she won a game day championship and an all-around state championship alongside the cheer team. Her teams have medaled at NDTC 4 times, and were frequent finalists finishing in the top 10 in pom, jazz, and game day. In 2022, she was named the state and region NFHS Coach of the Year. Prior to coaching, she was a UDA head instructor for 10 years, participating in the Macy's Day Thanksgiving Day Parade as well as the London New Year's Day Parade. Since stepping back from coaching, Kelsey has started consulting athletes on their journey to dancing in college and has continued to teach English as a National Board Certified Teacher.

LEONARDO BORJAS, JR.

Leonardo been coaching for 10+ years in the all star, high school and collegiate industry. He is well versed in coaching tumbling, building structures, and routine compositions. He has cheered at multiple all star gyms, such as the OC All Stars, where he won NCA All Star Nationals in 2021 and was a Worlds Bronze Medalist, as well as Cheer Athletics where he won NCA All Star National Championships a second time in 2022. He cheered collegiately at Navarro College where he won both National Championship and GRAND National Championship titles for the 2021-2022 season. He is currently a Weber State University cheerleader where he received my second and third National Championship and GRAND National Championship title in 2023 and 2024. While cheering at Weber State, he has placed 5th in NCA Partner Stunt at the 2023 NCA College Nationals in Daytona Beach, placed top 10 in UCA Partner Stunt at the 2024 UCA College Nationals, and was named back-to-back USA Partner Stunt Champion at the USA Collegiate Championships in 2023 and 2024. He is also a member of the 2024 Team USA.



NICOLE CESTONE



Nicole has over 30 years of dance and competitive dance team experience and is nationally known for her choreography and experience in the dance industry. Nicole was a scholarship dancer at Jimmie Defores Dance Center in Costa Mesa, CA and a member of the Tremaine's Dance Company in Los Angeles with Marguerite Derricks growing up. Nicole graduated from UCLA where she was on the UCLA Bruin dance team, and was their choreographer for many years after graduation. Nicole started off as a dance/song instructor for the United Spirit Association for 10+ years and went on to lead their program development team and was their Dance/Song Program Director for many years. Other awards include Innovative Choreography, Superior Showmanship, Grand Champion, and Technical Excellence. She was named "Coach of the Year" at the California State Championship in 2014 & 2016. Nicole was the Dance Director/Head Dance Coach of the Santa Margarita Catholic High School Dance/Song Team for 10 years and is currently still involved in their program as their Varsity competition coach and choreographer. Currently, Nicole is the Dance State Director in the West Region for Varsity Spirit where she oversees and manages their three dance brands, USA, UDA, and NDA. Nicole also works as the United Spirit Association's Dance/Song Curriculum Director and serves as the judges' trainer and coordinator for USA National events. When not at a Varsity dance event, you can find Nicole at a dance convention or competition with her studio, Pave School of the Arts, where she teaches dance classes multiple times a week and directs their Senior Company competition teams and program. Nicole also directs her own company, TeamUp Dance, which is a dance training program to prepare, teach, mentor and level up dancers from 8th grade to High School Dance, JV to Varsity, Varsity to College/Pro-Dance. She trains dancers and coaches to achieve their goals and reach competitive greatness! Nicole has a passion for training dancers to be at their personal and team best, and she loves sharing her experience and knowledge with her students. Nicole lives in San Juan Capistrano with her husband and three kids. Nicole danced two seasons for the Disney California Angels performing at Anaheim Angels home baseball games. Her credits also include production and choreography for the American Bowl in Mexico City with Ricky Martin, the Paris and Austria NFL Tours, the Pro Bowl in Hawaii, and numerous pre-game and half-time shows for NFL, NBA and college teams. Nicole has choreographed for numerous NFL, NBA, WNBA, CFL, and Arena Football Pro-dance teams including the Laker Girls, San Diego Charger Girls, San Francisco 49er Gold Rush, Los Angeles Clippers, Sacramento Kings Fast Break, Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders, and New England Patriots to name a few. Nicole was a featured choreographer at the Pro-Dance Convention for NFL and NBA dance teams for several years. Nicole has coached several nationally ranked high school dance and song teams over the years and has been featured in many LA dance projects and national commercials. Nicole has won numerous National titles over the years to include USA Spirit Nationals, USA Dance National, NDA National, JAMZ, and UDA National Dance Team Championship in Orlando, Florida.

STEPHANIE RACIAK



Stephanie is a previous UDA Instructor, who has traveled across the US, Great Britain, Italy, Germany, Austria, Norway, Slovenia, Mexico, Japan, Scotland Croatia, Chile, Columbia, Australia, Finland and Ecuador teaching many athletes of all ages and backgrounds. She has over 30 years of training and was a former member of the junior Gus Giordano Company. Inducted into the Hall of Fame of Dance at a young age, Stephanie is a former athlete, captain and coach for the University of Illinois Illini Dance Team. She has consulted and choreographed for several high school and college competitive teams, including both National and World Champions. Stephanie was honored to be a choreographer for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in 2013 and 2014, and the Chicago Bulls Bullskidz half-time show in 2018. She also was a professional performer for two seasons with Six Flags Great America. She has performed on the MDA telethon featuring Jerry Lewis and has been the technical coach for the last 10 years at Maine South High School (2017, 2019 & 2022 UDA National Champion High Kick Team). Most recently, she was honored to consult the University of Minnesota Dance team in 2023 & 2024 in both pom & jazz. She is currently a UDA/NDA State Director.

WHITNEY LUNT

Whitney Lunt is the head cheerleading coach at Corner Canyon High School in Draper, Utah. She is in her 12th season as the head coach and has been there since the school opened in 2013, giving her a unique opportunity to build a program from the ground up. During her tenure as head coach, she has led to her team to 6 State Championships and 3 UCA National Championships, including a back to back state championship this past season. Her team has also been featured for the past 6 seasons on ESPN for the airing of the National High School Cheerleading Championships. Whitney is an Executive Board Member of the Utah State Cheer Coaches Association and has been vital in helping to grow and develop cheerleading in Utah over the past 10 years, including being a part of cheerleading becoming a sanctioned sport in the State of Utah. She also travels around the state and country teaching stunting and educating coaches. Whitney believes that passion for your sport, holding athletes to high expectations, love, and never-ending hard work can take you anywhere that you want to go, and this has been her coaching philosophy for the past 11 seasons. She is very passionate about the sport of cheerleading, and she is excited to be with you in May!

