Education Support

American Dance

How to Select a Camp that is Right for You

By Joyce E. Pennington

Taking your team to camp each summer can start that special spark that dazzles your team right into football season. It can teach your students the proper technique and discipline that re-enforces your ideals and goals. It can provide a medium for teaching organization as well as new routines and materials.

With so many different camp dates, locations, costs and camp formats to take into consideration, the decision is quite difficult to choose when and where to go. With careful consideration of all aspects, you can sort through that pile of brochures to select the right one for you and your team.

- Begin collecting and filing in one place each camp brochure as it is mailed to you in the Spring or visit their web sites.
- Evaluate the ability level and style of your team against the criteria taught at each camp.
- Check credentials of teaching staff as well as the establishment of the company itself.
- Figure up the transportation expense to camp and average it as part of your total expense per girl.
- Decide what part of the summer will best fit into your curriculum and rehearsal plans of the year team.
- Let the students know the date as soon as possible so family vacations may be planned accordingly.
- Research camp curriculum. Sometimes the number of routines taught can be deceiving. Remember, it is the quality of the routines that your team can bring home and actually use that is the most important.
- Ask if the company provides the type of routines that fit the style of your team. Most companies will have a video or DVD that will give you an overview of the styles of routines offered.

- Follow up with other directors that have been to the camps for direct feedback. Some camp companies may offer you referrals and make sure to follow up with at least two or more before making your decision.
- You, the director, need to be with your team at camp. They need the constant guidance and leadership that a parent or another teacher would be unable to provide effectively.
- Check on the support materials and directors workshops offered. Are these materials free or are there additional charges for these? Are their video tapes or DVD's of the routines offered as well?
- Camp needs to be a pleasant experience for the girls, yet the priority should be learning and not just entertaining. Learning valuable routines is what you are paying for to go to camp.
- Has the company been established for many years or is it brand new on the scene? Experience counts. Beware of short-lived 'fly-by-night' operations that may be just an experiment for money making.
- Check refunds and deadline policies and make sure to pass this information on to your team and their parents.
- Are the teaching accommodations air-conditioned or not? Are the teaching areas and facilities adequate and clean?
- What size is the average camp enrollment? Your team may need the special attention that a smaller camp might lend or the competition and challenge of a larger camp.
- Can you choose the routines taught for your private camp, or is the choreography just a gamble? Will you get custom choreographed routines? What all is included in the price? What is not included in the price?
- Is the company available for year 'round programs such as contests, clinics and special events? Is the office personnel capable of handling your needs? You need a company that you can depend on more than just once a year.
- And, last (on purpose) is cost. If you have compared and evaluated all of the points above, by now you realize that service and quality are very important. You always 'get what you pay for' and bargaining should not be gambled for summer camp. Not always is the lesser price always the best for your money. Why not get a Rolls Royce camp instead of a Volkswagen for only a few dollars difference.

We wish you a Happy Camp Season and hope to see you this Summer!