



CheerForce Family:

As some of you may be aware, a recent civil lawsuit has been filed by a former CheerForce student against **former** CheerForce coach “Shawn Miller”, Varsity Brands, USASF, and CheerForce. This lawsuit alleges sexual misconduct by Shawn Miller (*a former CheerForce coach from 2004-2007*). It appears this lawsuit stems from alleged events as early as 2005 and concluding years after both parties had left CheerForce.

Unfortunately, CheerForce has been named in this long list of defendants in this civil case. To clarify the timeline, Shawn Miller coached at CheerForce from 2004 to 2007. He then left to pursue other opportunities of choreographing for cheerleading gyms around the country and began coaching at California Allstars. After Miller left CheerForce in the summer of 2007, he allegedly had a sexual relationship with this athlete who also left CheerForce in 2007 and ultimately followed him to California Allstars. *To put that time-frame into perspective, when Shawn Miller was a coach at CheerForce, most of our current CheerForce athletes had not even been born yet.*

At no time did anyone report to CheerForce sexual misconduct by Shawn Miller while he was a coach at our gym. This specifically includes this former athlete (now in her mid-30's) who filed the present lawsuit. Put simply, we did not know, and are shocked to learn of these allegations. Please rest assured that had we known, immediate and swift action to protect this athlete would have been taken against Coach Miller. This lack of knowledge, which impeded us from the ability to do our legal duty of reporting allegations such as this, leads us to also feel victimized from this former coach.

Fast forward 18 years:

These allegations first came to light in 2022. It is both shocking and sad that it took so many years for CheerForce to find out that one of our former athletes felt like they were subjected to inappropriate behavior while competing for our gym. A delay in reporting is not something CheerForce can allow to happen ever again. Open communication and transparency are something we have always encouraged and stood by. We now have cameras throughout the training areas of our facility and have always provided access for parents to view their athletes while in our care. We strongly encourage any athlete or parent to immediately bring any issue forward to be addressed right away. CheerForce will continue to explore the best possible ways to foster an environment where athletes feel comfortable sharing any concerns. **Athlete safety is our top priority.**

This is further demonstrated in the Safe@Allstar training all our competitive athletes have undergone in our program since the 2021-2022 season. These resources of education are important steps to be compliant with the Safe Sport Act of 2017. We also welcome the insight and discourse from the CheerForce family at large to help further achieve this goal.

Furthermore, because CheerForce cares so deeply about children and athlete protection, two months ago (November 2022) Becky accepted a seat on USASF's 13-person Board of Directors so she could have an active leadership role and have a positive influence on the direction of the industry.

Please rest assured that athlete safety procedures have evolved significantly over the past 18 years since the time of these alleged events. Today, all current CheerForce coaches and personnel (e.g., team moms) have been part of rigorous background checks. These background checks implement the same comprehensive screening that the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USPOC) requires all National Governing Bodies to follow for members involved with minor athletes. JDP is named as a screening provider under the USPOC screening policy to fulfill its screening program. Every CheerForce coach is vetted to ensure they are safe to be with your children. We believe our current coaching staff and personnel embodies both the spirit and goal of what CheerForce strives to achieve. Not only do we trust our current coaches with your children, but we trust them with our own child who is a cheer team member at CheerForce. We have faith in our staff, and we sincerely hope that you do too.

CheerForce supports all athletes in the pursuit of their dreams. While cheerleading is not a lifelong career for most, the lessons gained from this journey will last a lifetime. It is our goal that every experience in their journey at CheerForce be a growth-centered accumulation of skills to make our world a better place.

CheerForce Family, we find ourselves at a time when victims in our country are finding courage to speak out on their experiences. We support all athletes who have been subjected to the types of behavior alleged by this former athlete. We sincerely hope this athlete, and any others, find the resolution to which they are rightfully entitled.

To show transparency and to strengthen your trust in us, we will have an open meeting for any concerned individual to raise any questions and concerns. A separate message will be sent for date and time.

Sincerely,

Becky and Shawn Herrera

Becky and Shawn Herrera

Owners, CheerForce