

*Taking One for the Team: A study of NFL Cheerleading*

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Cheerleaders are an integral part of the football experience in the United States. Although a sport in its own right, with intercollegiate and high school competitions measuring gymnastic prowess and synchronized dance routines, cheerleaders in the National Football League (NFL) live a very different experience. Twenty-six of the thirty-two NFL teams have cheerleading squads, with the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders considered the most famous. This research project examines the job of NFL cheerleaders, detailing the selection process and analyzing the system of rules that govern behavior. Recent controversies involving disputes over the treatment of female cheerleaders by male fans, and lack of labor rights and protections taken for granted by other similarly-situated employees highlights the unique problems faced by NFL cheerleaders. The purpose of this study is to explore these issues with the intention of proposing feasible reforms.