

# Howell High School Varsity Pompon Team Winter 2025-2026 Handbook

**\*Please note that this handbook is not yet fully updated, as some plans and event dates are still being finalized. However, it still provides an accurate overview of the season's expectations and general structure. For any sections marked "TBD" or "TBA," please know that Coaches will communicate updates and finalized details with the team as they become available throughout the season.\***

Thank you for your interest in the Howell High School Pompon program. We are proud to say that we have remained in Class A, Division 1 for the past 17 years as well as placed top 5 and above in the state of Michigan. The sport of pompon has evolved greatly through the years on both a regional and national level and the performing styles have changed as well. In the state of Michigan, the premiere pompon organization is Mid American Pompon (MAPP). Our team will adhere to the MAPP style and form of Pom and attend MAPP camps, clinics, and competitions.

## **NEW THIS SEASON:**

We will be having a Fall and Winter team this year! The Fall team runs from April - mid November (Through High Kick). The Winter team runs from mid November - mid February (Through States). If an athlete makes the Fall team, they will need to try out again and are not guaranteed a spot on the Winter team.

This team handbook will explain or describe most of what a prospective team member and family will need to know in order to make an informed decision **before** proceeding through the tryout process. If after reading this document you have any additional questions, please contact head coaches- Sydney Ostafin: [sydney.ostafin@howellschools.com](mailto:sydney.ostafin@howellschools.com) or Kyra Sells: [kyra.sells@howellschools.com](mailto:kyra.sells@howellschools.com)

Additionally, our program abides by every policy within Howell Public Schools Code of Conduct; linked here: [Howell Public Schools Student/Parent Handbook](#)

Thank you for your interest in Howell Pompon!

## **Howell Varsity Pompon Coaching Staff:**

Co-Head Coaches: Sydney Ostafin and Kyra Sells  
Assistant Coaches: Claire Shriner and Briena Scheidler

## **Philosophy:**

Dream, Believe, Achieve

### **Expectation of Excellence**

If you are selected to be part of the legacy of Howell Varsity Pompon, you will be held to a higher standard than your peers. Members of Howell Varsity Pompon not only represent the pompon program, but also represent Howell High School and Howell in general. This responsibility is not to be taken lightly. Whether you are in class, in the community, at a competition, or on vacation, you will need to consider your place as a role model in the actions, words, social media postings, and decisions you make.

## **Part I: Howell High School Athletics**

### **Section I: HHS Student & Athlete**

As a Howell High School sports team, we are required to follow the HHS Code of Conduct and Athletic Code of Conduct. An athlete's failure to do so will result in consequences given by our principal and athletic director. Prior to making the team, each candidate should read through the Code of Conduct with a parent. If there are any questions or concerns regarding the HHS Code of Conduct and Athletic Code of Conduct, please feel free to contact coaches or the athletic director.

### **Section II: Sports Physical**

In order to participate in the tryout clinic and final tryout, every athlete must have a current physical on file in our athletic office. Any medical conditions that may restrict an athlete must be brought to the coaches' attention prior to tryouts. [A copy of the form is linked here.](#)

#### **Fall Tryouts:**

- If you don't have a physical on file in the athletic office you will need a physical dated on/after April 15th, 2025 turned in prior to tryouts.
- If you already have a physical on file in the athletic office dated on/after April 15th, 2024, you will need an updated physical dated on/after April 15th, 2025 turned no later than August 1st, 2025.

Please turn in physicals to the athletic office (located in the high school field house), ***we don't collect physicals.***

*You must use the MHSAA physical forms (note: 2 pages), link found on our website.*

### **Section III: Howell High School "Fees and Fines" Policy**

Any fees unpaid will be put into athlete's "fees and fines" through Howell High School. The unpaid funds are NOT reimbursed to the team fund by the school until the amount is paid by the family in question. If balances in the "fees and fines" account are not paid in full, this may impact the team member's ability to graduate.

## Part II: Team Standards

### Section I: Attendance & Participation

Attendance at practice is expected, participation in a performance or competition is a privilege.

#### **Attendance Policies:**

**1. Illness:** Unless you are contagiously ill or have a medical condition, you are expected to be at every practice. A series of missed practices for illness, medical condition or injury will require a doctor's note and a phone call to the coaches at least *2 hours* prior to the start of practice. It is expected that everyone tries their best to schedule doctor/dentist appointments around our practice schedule.

**2. School Related Absences:** Absences for activities such as choir, band, student council, etc. will be excused as long as coaches are informed as soon as the conflict arises.

**3. Vacation Absences:** Vacation time taken within crucial portions of our season is restricted. We require at least two weeks' notice, and athletes are required to return knowing choreography that was missed. **Practices 2 weeks leading up to competitions are mandatory.**

**4. School Rule:** You are required to attend school for at least half of the day to participate in ANY Pom activities. Your attendance in class can impact your ability to participate in school athletic programs.

**5. Excessive Absences:** If you have more than *5 unexcused* absences in a season, coaches discretion will be used to determine an appropriate consequence. If absences are excessive, regardless of reason, removal from the team is possible. If you miss the practice before a performance, there's a chance you will be benched for that performance (this will be up to the coaches discretion).

#### **Participation Policies:**

**1. Routines:** We will learn many routines throughout the season. It is the responsibility of each individual athlete to ensure that she knows her routine and to improve her performance ability.

**2. Competitions:** Camp, MAPP Hip-Hop & High Kick Championship, MAPP Regionals, and MAPP State Championship, are all vital experiences for every team member and attendance is MANDATORY.

**3. Achieving your Varsity Letter/Veteran Bar:** In order to obtain a varsity letter/veteran bar for the Howell Varsity Pompon Team, you must perform in at least *one* of our major competitions: MAPP Hip-hop & High Kick Championship, MAPP Regionals, or MAPP State Championship. However, receiving the Varsity Letter/Veteran Bar is *always* at the coach's discretion.

Team members who are meeting the team standard will remain in good standing for all performances, halftimes, pep rallies, etc. Those who do not meet the standard are subject to suspensions for any remaining performances.

## **Section II: Academic Eligibility Commitment**

Academic eligibility for Howell High School Athletics is a minimum 2.0 GPA & passing 5 out of 7 classes. Each athlete must maintain this in order to try out for and participate in this program. After the first tryout clinic, a candidate list will be submitted to our athletic department to verify student eligibility. This information is kept confidential. It is imperative that families correct any errors in the student's academic record prior to tryouts. We will accept the school's records as being accurate and will not make exceptions.

### **Eligibility Policies – Tryouts:**

1. **If Ineligible:** If an athlete is determined to be ineligible at the time of tryouts (less than 2.0 GPA), she will not be eligible to try out for the team.

### **Eligibility Policies – Season:**

1. **For Competitions: Quarterly** grades are often reported within days of our competitions (High Kick and Regionals/States). In order to give the team the best chance for success, the pompon teams and cheerleading teams will be following an adjusted schedule in order to determine competition eligibility.
  - a. Each athlete will be required to submit a screenshot of grades 2 weeks prior to High Kick. If at that time an athlete is found to be under the 2.0 mark, she may be removed from the routine.
  - b. If an athlete is found to be academically ineligible for Regionals during quarterly grade checks, she will most likely NOT be eligible for State competition under coaches discretion.
  - c. If a varsity member is found to be academically ineligible at the conclusion of any card marking, they may be removed from the team.
2. **For Performances:** If a team member is not eligible to compete at the time of the performance, she is likewise not eligible to perform at games, pep rallies, or other such venues.
2. **For Practices:** If a team member is not eligible to compete at the time of the practice, she is still expected to attend and support her teammates in an alternative way.
3. **Academic Probation:** If at any point during the season a team member's GPA lies between a 2.0 and a 2.5, she will be placed on pom probation. This means she will be required to send screenshots of her grades to coaches each Monday until there is an official grade report (quarterly) stating that she is above this range. Before practice tutoring may also be enforced. The athlete on probation may be benched from all performances and events until their GPA is above 2.5.

## **Section III: Conduct Commitment**

### **Quitting /Removal from the Team:**

1. If a Howell High School athlete quits the team or is removed from the team by coaches at any time following tryouts (**Excluding health reasons**), they will not be allowed to try out for Howell Varsity Pompon for any following season.
2. Regardless of the reason (quitting, removal) there will be NO REFUNDS for money fundraised and any/all payments previously made by the athlete.

### **Bullying Policy:**

1. We have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying on this team. Reports made by school staff members, teammates, or others will be handled by the coaches and/or athletic department.
  - a. Offense 1: Warning; Coaches will talk to the athlete about the alleged report made.
  - b. Offense 2: Possibility for the athlete to be benched or placed on probation.
  - c. Offense 3: Possibility for the athlete to be removed from the team.
    - i. Depending on the situation, an individual could immediately be removed from the team. All consequences and decisions regarding bullying will be up to the coaches discretion with the assistance and advice of the Athletic Director.

### **Social Media Policy:**

1. All team members are required to follow the Howell Varsity Pom Team account on social media in order for coaches to monitor content being posted by members.
2. We have a zero-tolerance policy for any “cyberbullying,” inappropriate pictures, and/or inappropriate posts. If a member has to question if it is appropriate - they should not be posting it.

### **Communication & Grievance Policy:**

1. All communication via email must be done through [sydney.ostafin@howellschools.com](mailto:sydney.ostafin@howellschools.com) and [kyra.sells@howellschools.com](mailto:kyra.sells@howellschools.com)
2. All communication between coaches and athletes will be through a team group-chat on the GroupMe app, a text group chat with the coaches or through email.
3. *If any issue with coaching, practices, or other related activity arises during the season, the first step will always be to refer to this handbook.* If after consulting the handbook there is still a concern, follow these communication steps:
  - a. Athletes are strongly encouraged to come to coaches with any and all communication themselves first.
  - b. Coaches should then be contacted by email first if parents need to reach out.
  - c. If the issue is unable to be resolved via email, a phone call will be set up with coaches and parents.

- d. If the issue is unable to be resolved via phone call, an in-person meeting will be set up with coaches and parents.
- e. If at that point the issue/complaint is still not resolved, the coaches will contact the Athletic Director to hold a meeting with coaches, parents, and the Athletic director.

## Part III: Financial Responsibility and Fundraisers

Due dates for payments will be sent out at least 2 weeks in advance or as soon as the need arises, whichever comes first. If you cannot make a payment on time we ask that you please contact the coaches *prior* to the due date so we are aware/can work with you. Late fees may be applied if payments are not made in time without any communication. Keep in mind that some items can and will be re-used, and your first year in the program will be your most expensive.

**\*All payments may potentially be partially or totally covered through fundraisers\***

### **Section I: Payment Schedule/Financial Responsibility**

- Exact payment breakdown sheets will be sent out throughout the season as well as when each payment is due
  - We will fundraise as much as possible to decrease payments.
    - All payments turned in directly to athletic office
    - All checks made out to “Howell Athletics/Varsity Pom”

### **Section II: Fundraisers**

There will be several fundraisers held throughout the year. Some of these will be team-wide fundraisers, where all proceeds go toward supporting the entire team. These are typically traditional events that everyone participates in, such as kids clinics, bottle drives, Snap Raise, etc.

Team fundraising is not mandatory. However, please note that any funds raised—whether through team or individual efforts—are nonrefundable.

This season, we will have parent volunteers helping to plan and oversee fundraising efforts. If you're interested in getting involved, please contact the Coaches.

Please reach out to Coaches for approval for any fundraising.

**Potential Fundraisers:**

- Snap Mobile
- Tentative Bottle Drive
- Restaurant Fundraisers-Buffalo Wild Wings, Aubree's, ect.
- Eternity Brewing Silent Auction/Raffle
- Football Game/Super Bowl Squares

## Part III: Season Schedule for Winter

**Tentative Season Schedule**

\*All days, times, and locations are dependent on space availability\*

An up to date team calendar can be found on Team Up at, dates will be added ASAP

Team Up Link: <https://teamup.com/ksor1n3n1auxcjhkf9>

### **Section I: Monthly Practice Schedule**

**\*Please check the TeamUp calendar and emails frequently throughout the season for all event dates, times, and locations\***

**\*Practices are closed to spectators\***

**TENTATIVE Winter Practice Schedule**

**Start of the Season**

**Tryouts:** 11/17 & 11/18 (5:00pm-8:00pm both days at the Freshman Campus)

**Performances**

Basketball performances, clinics, showcases, and any other performances: TBD (once dates are posted, we will be update the TeamUp calendar)

**November:**

-Practice: 3-5 days a week, 2.5 hour practices

-Thanksgiving Break: We will be potentially participating in the Howell Fantasy of Lights Parade, which takes place the day after Thanksgiving

**December:**

-Practice: 4-5 days a week, 2.5 hour practices

\*Another practice may be added weekly

-Christmas Break: Regionals and States come quickly after Christmas Break, and therefore practices during break will be mandatory. We will schedule around Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day.

### **January/February:**

- Practice: 5-6 days a week, 2.5 hour practices
- Basketball Games: Typically on Fridays or Tuesdays at 7 pm during Jan/Feb
- Regionals: Typically during mid/end of January
- Regionals dress rehearsal-we encourage family/friends to attend
- States: Typically during start/mid February
- States dress rehearsal-we encourage family/friends to attend
- Lock-In and potentially hotel, Friday/Saturday before competition on Sunday
- The week following States we will have a team meeting/celebration
- Banquet: TBD- Typically during February/March

### **March:**

- Banquet: TBD- Typically during February/March

\*Final schedules will be posted on TeamUp and sent out via email closer to the dates of occurrence. Times, days, and locations could potentially change. The amount of practices weekly and durations of each practice may decrease or increase, this comes down to the coaches discretion. It is **the pommer's responsibility** to be aware of such location/time changes.\*



## **Social Media**

**Website:** <https://howellvarsitypompon.wixsite.com/howellpom>

**Instagram:** @howell.varsity.pompom

**Facebook:** @howellvarsitypom

**Twitter:** @Howellpompon

## **Contact Information**

### **Co- Head Coaches:**

Sydney Ostafin

[sydney.ostafin@howellschools.com](mailto:sydney.ostafin@howellschools.com)

517-375-9485

Kyra Sells

[kyra.sells@howellschools.com](mailto:kyra.sells@howellschools.com)

734-431-0623

### **Assistant Coaches:**

Briena Scheidler

517-915-6900

Claire Shriner

517-927-7032

**Athletic Director:** John Young

[youngj@howellschools.com](mailto:youngj@howellschools.com)

**Assistant Athletic Director & Assistant Co-Curricular Director:** Brian Osborn

[osbornb@howellschools.com](mailto:osbornb@howellschools.com)

**Administrative Assistant:** Susan Jones

[jonessu@howellschools.com](mailto:jonessu@howellschools.com)

**Howell Schools Athletic Department/Office**

Field House at Howell High School

1200 W Grand River Ave.

Howell, MI 48843

517-540-8335

I have read the entire Howell High School  
Varsity Pompon Team Winter 2025-2026  
Handbook with my parent(s)/guardian and  
understand the commitment, expectations, and  
responsibility that is required for this team.

**\*After reading please sign below and bring this  
page to tryouts\***

Student Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_