

JUMP JAM Coaching Tips

from Kirsty-Lee Bracegridle of St Andrews School, Christchurch, New Zealand

Hi, I'm Kirsty-Lee. I've been a Jump Jam Coach for 5 years at 4 different schools in Christchurch, NZ. My teams have been very successful in the Regional and National Jump Jam Competitions in New Zealand. If you have the chance to coach a Jump Jam Team, give it a go! It's very rewarding and so much fun! I've put together a few of my tips, these may help you if you are new to coaching a team.

Auditions:

- Advertise Jump Jam auditions 2-3 weeks from audition date. Students can pre-register their interest before the audition day.
- Hold 2-3 fun lunchtime sessions: Open to the whole school or maybe just the Year group you are wanting to coach. These sessions give the students a taste of Jump Jam before the audition date. Teaching these sessions, yourself can be so much fun, use your personality to encourage the students to enjoy Jump Jam. If you are not the type to jump around you can always stick the Jump Jam video on for the students to follow. Make sure you select a range of tracks for the students to learn, and don't forget to include the audition tracks.
- Running more than one audition day can make things easier to select your team.
- Make sure you know the audition tracks well.
- 1st audition give all the students a number and audition them in groups of 10. Select 30-40 students that stand out with confidence, full movement, co-ordination, smiles and personality. Then 1 week later hold the 2nd audition, hoping that all have practiced the routine, you should be able to select your team easily. Make sure you select about 14-18 students, incase student's situations change during the year and they have to pull out.
- At the 1st Audition it is a great time to hand out letters/permission slips to successful students to show parents, regarding travel (if any), costumes and costs involved in being part of the Jump Jam team. Students can return their permission slips before the 2nd audition.
- Selecting students; some stand out straight away, yet others can take a little longer to shine. Don't be afraid to select students that have had no stage/performance experience before. As sometimes these students shine more than others in the team on competition day!

Practices:

- Aim to have at least 2 team practices a week. Lunch times are best, as students have a lot of energy to burn at midday.
- Make sure all students are present for practices, so everyone learns together.
- The first 2 weeks, get the students to learn the chosen track over and over again, making sure everyone knows it well.
- Film the team every 2 weeks, and show the students the film. This is a great way for them to see themselves and where they need to improve.
- Keep practices fun!

Choosing a Jump Jam Routine for Competition:

- Jump Jam has many fun routines to choose from, which makes it hard to select which one to use for the competition. Select a track that the students respond well to. If doing Jump Jam Challenge, it's a great idea to set a basic theme from the start, this helps with costumes and choreography changes.

Setting a Theme:

- Research the music track using google and YouTube etc, this will give you clues for costume and choreography changes.
- Was the track used for a movie? Is it an old song from the past? Who sings it? What do they wear in the music video?
- After researching the music track, think how you can theme it like no other school has. Be different, be creative and be entertaining.

Costumes:

- Creative costumes stand out more, be different. Make the costumes fit the music. Costumes don't have to be expensive to stand out!
- Hair and makeup play a big part too. Think creative makeup and hair with attitude! Again, search your theme!!!
- Getting parents to help organise costumes, hair and makeup is helpful.
- On filming day, plan to get the team ready together. Arrange to have parent helpers on the day.

Choreography:

- Think of the theme and be creative!
- Use formations and the whole stage.
- Mix the students up, so everyone gets a turn being at the front.
- Make sure your choreography changes are kept under the limit.

Voices:

- Get the team to use their voices. Make use of the music and theme to tell your story on stage.
- Make sure they are still using full movement when using voices.
- Search the lyrics on YouTube and alter to suit Jump Jam words.... Print them out and give to the team.
- Highlight words you want them to say during the song, so they can practice with the routine.

Big S word: 'Synchronize':

- It takes 7 times to learn a routine correctly and 13 times to correct a mistake.
- Count sections down to the students 5678, 12345678, again and again without the music... until all the students are doing the same in time.
- Think of small things like hands, fingers, and feet. Are they making fists or blades? Are fingers stretched out? Are thumbs tucked away during blade hands? Are hands fists on hips when not in use? Do they look strong?
- Make sure all moves are finished correctly before starting the next move.
- The team should move as one!