

# MAKING LIFE MORE FUN

## Video Game Offers Something To Cheer About

(NAPSA)—What was originally a way to show support for a favorite sports team has, interestingly enough, evolved into a sport of its own. An estimated 50 percent of girls participate in sports, with cheerleading ranking among the most popular. About 3.5 million girls across the U.S. participate, sometimes starting as young as age 4. But how exactly did organized cheerleading get started?

Rooting for the home team (or favorite players) is a tradition as old as the sports themselves, but it is believed that the first custom cheer was created at Princeton University in 1884. And it was a Princeton grad who took the concept to the University of Minnesota a few years later.

Then, in 1898, a Minnesota student named Johnny Campbell directed the first organized cheer, in an effort to make something positive out of the school's dismal football season. Campbell's efforts evolved into the first cheer squad (in 1903) and a cheerleading fraternity. These early groups were all-male; their deep, loud voices were considered better for spurring on the crowd. It wasn't until the 1920s that women became involved in cheerleading and began to incorporate gymnastics, pyramids and throws.

While the music, moves and uniforms have changed dramatically over the years, the inspirational art remains much the same as it was a century ago—including the use of the megaphone (early 1900s) and pom-poms (mid-1930s). Still, it has been primarily a low-tech affair, a graceful show of athleticism and spirit.



**A popular cheerleading video game has got spirit. How about you?**

But today, cheerleading has cartwheeled off the sidelines and away from the gymnasium—and onto the small screen. Cheer competitions have been broadcast on ESPN since 1997, and now it's the centerpiece of a popular video game. "Imagine Cheerleader" for the Nintendo DS lets players create a variety of cheers, shop for uniforms and accessories and show support for their team.

Players use the Nintendo DS stylus to perform different cheers, kicks, lifts and a variety of routines that will get the crowds pumping and inspire their team. And in "Challenge Mode," players get to test their cheering skills against a variety of unexpected and sometimes silly cheerleading opponents, from school cliques such as the "Black Cats" to more surprising challengers like ninjas and pirates.

And in a rah-rah case of life imitating art, cheerleaders can use their game system to choreograph routines for their real-life squads—and put them into play at the next big game.

"Imagine Cheerleader" is rated E for everyone. To learn more, visit [www.imaginegame.com](http://www.imaginegame.com).