

## Top FAQ's for UGA Cheer Parents

- 1) Where can I find more information about game day?
  - a. The best location is to visit <http://gameday.uga.edu/> and read all the associated pages on parking, tailgating, etc.
  - b. We advise all new parents to read this site thoroughly because it sets the guidelines of do's and don'ts concerning not only the UGA campus rules but Athens-Clarke county as well.
  - c. This will give you a good idea of what to expect and we can hopefully fill in the gaps with our FAQ.
- 2) Where is the tailgate?
  - a. Tailgating takes place in the outdoor courtyard for the Georgia Center for Continuing Education. This is on the corner of Lumpkin Street and Carlton Street.
  - b. This is also a hotel and conference center and offers the use of its restaurant, bar, coffee shop, and restrooms to guests during the game.
  - c. The cheerleaders will make an appearance within the hotel/conference center as they arrive for the tailgate.
- 3) Where can I park?
  - a. Most parking near the stadium is permit only and violators will be towed so please do not park in these unless you have a permit. The best place to get your bearings is to visit the game day site above and pull up the parking map.
  - b. It is important to note that if you look at the map there is both free and pay parking nearby.
    - i. Free parking is available but very hard to get close by unless you arrive before 7:00-7:15am (earlier for big games) as tailgaters, cheer parents, band parents, students, etc. are allowed to start setting up at 7:00am. The best location and most likely to be available is down Smith street next to Foley baseball field.
    - ii. Pay parking is available at Carlton Deck behind Stegeman Coliseum only. While the online map says South Campus Parking deck is "pay" it has been converted to permit only. Carlton typically costs \$20 per game for parking. Pay parking typically fills up by 8:30-9am depending on the size and time of the game.
    - iii. For large games (big SEC rivals) parking is even tighter and fills up even sooner than the times above. In addition, for these large games traffic from Atlanta is very bad on 316 unless you plan to arrive before 7am. You might want to consider another route if you don't plan on arriving early.
  - c. If you do not arrive in time to park in one of the options above there are many other free lots (see map) or you can venture back toward the campus edge and park in any one of numerous private lots. For small games these lots may range from \$10-30 but for big games these lots will range from \$30-60 depending on the distance.
- 4) What is the tailgate like and what goes on before the game?
  - a. Setup & Take Down will be assigned to groups of parents for each game.

- b. About 3½-4 hours prior to the game the cheerleaders meet at Stegeman, have a meeting and then get into pickup trucks to drive around campus to get the other tailgates fired up and then arrive at the Georgia Center. Generally speaking the cheerleaders arrive to our tailgate about 3 hours before the game.
  - c. They do a cheer inside the Georgia Center and then come out to the tailgate to eat. This is a great time to get family and guest pictures with the team and Hairy Dawg and to get to know the other parents and cheerleaders.
  - d. They will then get together about 1¾ hours prior to the game to head down for the DAWG walk. This time may vary based on the game and schedule but is usually no more than 2 hours prior and no less than 1½ hours.
- 5) What should I bring for the “Cheers” tailgate?
- a. You should plan to bring appropriate time of day food for the “Cheers” booster tent to feed the cheerleaders and guests of the club. This will usually be breakfast or lunch items depending on game time. You can also bring condiments if they are special (dipping sauce) but the standard items (Ketchup, Mustard, etc.) are usually there.
  - b. There are approximately 50 Cheerleaders/Dance Dawgs plus as many and often more guests so keep this in mind when planning how much to bring. That said, this is a shared tailgate so you don’t need to bring 100 servings. We have found that with larger items like sandwiches/biscuits it is usually sufficient to plan for 30-40 servings depending on the size of the game. For small items like pigs-in-a-blanket/sausage balls you probably need to double this since everyone usually eats more than one. If you are concerned about not having enough feel free to bring more because it will be eaten or taken back to the dorms by the boys!!
  - c. Drinks, utensils, plates, etc. are provided by the booster club so no need to worry about these items unless you want to bring your own soda, water, etc. No alcohol is allowed in the “Cheers” tailgate tent so if you want to bring adult beverages see items 7 below.
  - d. Chairs for yourself and your cheerleader or if you don’t mind standing while they eat then at least 1-2 for your group. Typically they all like to eat together so the parents get the boot unless you bring extras!
- 6) What types of food should I bring to the “Cheers” tailgate?
- a. Avoid junk food (donuts, danishes, chips, etc.) and focus on more healthy options (proteins, fruit, veggies, etc.)
  - b. Breakfast items that are popular include: Sausage balls, biscuits or croissants (plain, ham, cheese, etc.), pigs-in-a-blanket, breakfast pizza/burrito, fruit trays, anything from Chick-fil-A (chicken mini’s, biscuits, etc.). Also, feel free to experiment if your family has a specialty.
  - c. Lunch items are much easier but here a few items: mini-sandwiches, pigs-in-a blanket, wraps/rolls, chicken wings/strips, layered dips, salads/slaws, and again anything from Chick-fil-A (nuggets, strips, etc.). After the first game and you see all the empty Chick-fil-A trays after the kids go through the line you will know why we say this!
  - d. One final note on food: There is no electricity available at the tailgate for heating. We used a small gas grill/stove in our own tailgate area to heat biscuits/sausage balls in the

morning and chicken/steak skewers (pre-cooked the night before and put in zip lock bags in the cooler) for lunch. Both were hugely popular however this requires a lot more work on your part than ordering a tray from Chick-fil-A. You could do the same for any heated dish like BBQ, meatballs, wings, etc.

- 7) Can I setup a tailgate on my own and bring my own tent, TV, food, drinks (including adult beverages), grill, etc.?
  - a. Absolutely and many parents and groups do just this in the large Georgia Center courtyard. This does not however mean you get off the hook for providing food for the “Cheers” tent which is where the cheerleaders and guests eat.
  - b. The “Cheers” tailgate will typically setup next to the hotel. Beyond this, the additional tailgate spots are first come first serve. There are many people and groups that setup and have been setting up for many years in the same spaces however everyone we have run into was more than willing to accommodate new cheer parents.
  - c. For small games there is plenty of room. For big games you better be early, claim your spot and begin setup at 7am sharp if you want to be close to the “Cheers” tailgate.
  - d. Remember that No Alcohol is allowed in the “Cheers” tent as this is a team oriented environment so please use discretion if you choose to setup your own tailgate.
- 8) Where do I drop off all this stuff for tailgating without having to carry it from the parking area?
  - a. Before you park (so that means leave early) you have two options:
    - i. Pull up to the Georgia Center entrance loop off Carlton and have someone help you unload. You cannot leave your car here for more than a few minutes and they do not valet park. Generally you need someone with you to help unload and move your stuff while you park or you can have someone meet you there and help while you park.
    - ii. Pull up on the side road in front of the South Campus Parking (other side of Georgia Center from Carlton) pull off to the side and unload. This is right next to the courtyard and a good option if you are early (before 7am). Later in the morning they block off this road for permit parking.
- 9) What is the DAWG walk and when does it occur?
  - a. The DAWG walk occurs before every home game and is where the football players follow the cheerleaders and Hairy Dawg and walk through the fans and Red Coat Band into the stadium. They are dropped off via bus on Lumpkin at the intersection to the Tate Center Parking entrance. The cheerleaders usually lead a few cheers before the players arrive while the fans line both sides of the street. Once the players arrive they walk down the street behind the cheerleaders and high five fans on both side of the street.
  - b. What is the timing of the DAWG walk?
    - i. The official time published by Mark Richt is that the DAWG walk will be 2 hours before the game. The reality is that this time can vary by +/- 30 minutes depending on several issues including traffic, size of game, etc.
    - ii. The best rule of thumb is that the cheerleaders ALWAYS arrive to the DAWG walk ahead of the players. If you want to see your cheerleader in the DAWG

walk you need to start walking at the very latest when they leave to get in the trucks to go to the DAWG walk. This will give you time to walk down and get a spot for their arrival and then the players arrival.

- c. The cheerleaders will line the Tate Center entrance between Lumpkin Street and Stanford Stadium. Since they are lining approximately 1 block of the street their location can vary per game so just walk down the street until you find your cheerleader.
  - d. There are fences on either side of the street so you will need to pick a side to line the street entrance. You should probably try both sides at some point in the season as the players usually rotate sides.
  - e. The DAWG walk is very fun and a great opportunity to see the players and the cheerleaders up close and maybe even get a few pictures.
- 10) Once the DAWG walk is complete where do I go and what happens?
- a. The gates open shortly after the DAWG walk so this is the best time if you want to get up close pictures at the hedges with your cheerleader. This early before the game Security allows people to stand close to the hedges and take pictures. If they have any questions just show them your Cheer Button and tell them you want a few pictures. Generally speaking the security guards don't allow people to hang out for extended periods of time on the track around the hedges so we have found it easier to go down take a few pictures and then stand on the front row of seats until people start arriving and you need to move to your seat.
  - b. This is also the time when the players will be warming up on the field so another good opportunity for pictures of the coaching staff and players or to just watch your favorite players warm up.
  - c. While things change year to year the cheerleaders are involved in the pre-game performance by the Red Coat band that ends with the players running through the banner and onto the field prior to kickoff.
  - d. Before or after the DAWG walk there are also a few things to do at Tate Center.
    - i. Visit the Bookstore where you can purchase anything your heart desires with a UGA or DAWG logo on it. Not the least expensive place but great to look around and see what you might want wear at the next game. The store does get crowded before the games but the line moves pretty good.
    - ii. The movie theater at Tate usually shows other regional or high profile NCAA games or sports commentaries and entry is free on game day. Nice place to get some A/C, cool off and relax for a few minutes before the game. There are also restrooms available in Tate right outside the theater.
    - iii. There are also a few places to eat or get snacks at Tate however after the tailgate I'm not sure anyone would need more food!
  - e. After the DAWG walk the Red Coat Band also has a rally just outside the stadium which can be fun to stay and listen. The best view is to walk up the stairs outside the Tate Center or Parking deck where you can look down into the band and enjoy the performance.

- f. If you like exercise you actually do have enough time to walk back to the tailgate and then come back for kickoff but you will work up a sweat.

11) Where can I find out about last minute or game day changes?

- a. Last minute or updated information will be posted to the UGA Cheer Parents Facebook page if things change at the last minute. Home games rarely change but there are instances where things do come up and even more so for away games. Keep in mind this page is open for everyone who joins to post updates so even if some parents are not present for a game please post new information as you find out for the others. That said, as game time nears data connections via cell networks becomes more and more difficult. See below for more information.
- b. For big games, it is very important to not rely on cell phones in and around the stadium for meeting people. Once you get in almost any big stadium the signal is very spotty and often times non-existent because of the number of people. If you need to, you should rely on text messages and even then they often times don't work and require multiple sends. If your phone converts to 1X mode (not 3G or 4G) then your battery will go fast so turn it off during the game to avoid draining the battery. During the GA-FL game it took us over 3 hours to send/receive a message to friends we were supposed to meet on game day for tailgating!!
- c. The best solution is to setup pre-assigned meeting times and locations the night before.

12) After the game where does everyone go and what happens?

- a. After the game the cheerleaders usually have a quick meeting/gathering and then head back to the tailgate to finish off any food left and say goodbye to everyone.
- b. Of course you can leave the stadium at anytime and head back to the tailgate and meet them there but it is often times fun to hang around after the game. Last year in some of the big wins (SEC Championship, etc.) the crowd stayed around about 15 minutes cheering while the players and cheerleaders ran around the field cheering on the crowd and celebrating.
- c. Once the crowd clears out you can once again walk down to the front row and track around the hedges to meet up with the your cheerleader and walk back to the tailgate.
- d. As you can imagine, once the game is over traffic is a nightmare especially for large games. People have told us stories of taking up to an hour to get out of Athens and then 3 to get back to Atlanta. There are a few alternative routes out of Athens so if you have to leave it might be a good idea to plan a backup route for the big games.
- e. If you are not in a hurry then there are a few parents that hang out afterward or go to get something to eat although that can be crowded too. Especially for the early games that end around 4pm there is plenty of time to relax while the traffic dies down. We have even gone back to the tailgate to cook burgers for dinner while the traffic died down and then left around 6-7pm and had no problems.

13) What about away games, are there similar tailgate activities for away games?

- a. Unlike home games there is no set schedule or procedure for away games.
- b. Depending on the game and how many cheerleaders are allowed to attend (some fields have limits set by the NCAA) Ben will select the team usually 10-14 days in advance.

Games requiring air travel are usually selected more in advance but there are not many of those.

- c. If you plan to attend an away game a good idea is to reach out to the other parents to see who is attending and if they have any plans for a tailgate. You can then make appropriate arrangements to connect prior to the game and possibly park in the same location.
- d. Feel free to use the FB page to post and gather away game information so that all parents attending can see what is going on that weekend.
- e. There are away games with special activities such as the GA/FL night at the yacht club and BBQ cookout prior the game as well as the GA/SC border bash in Augusta the night before the game. Details of these activities will be posted for those attending as the games draw closer.

Disclaimer: This document has been put together based upon our experiences during our 1<sup>st</sup> year of being cheer parents. A lot of the information is based upon personal preferences and trying to make game day fun. It is intended as just another source of information in your own quest to figure out the best way for you and your family to maximize your experience on game day. If you find any errors, omissions, or have suggestions for addition please forward them Kathy Ford for the next revision.