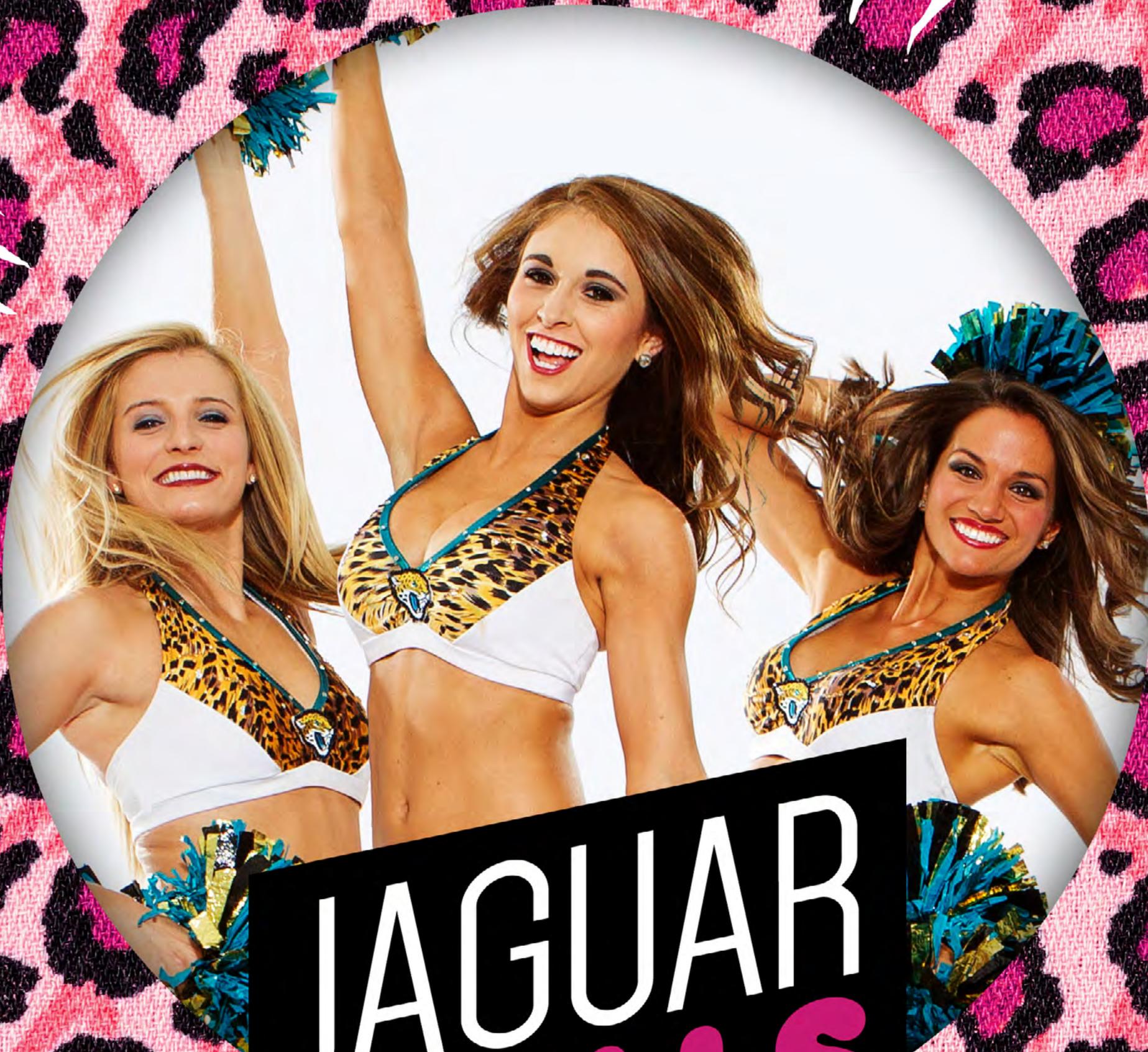


FEMALE FEATURE



# JAGUAR SKILLS

Words by: Jess Davies

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# GRAB YOUR POM POMS AND PREPARE TO GET BUSY, IT'S THE CHEERLEADING GUIDE TO SHAPING UP. JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS' CARDIO JUNKIE RACHEL REVEALS ALL TO BESTFIT'S JESS DAVIES

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## CHEERLEADING IS MASSIVELY COMPETITIVE

"There's a long audition process that consists of many people trying out. There is a lot of competition out there. When I auditioned there were three rounds; pre-lims, semi-finals and finals. And now, our team is pretty dedicated to fitness, working out and being proactive about their looks, image and looking their best. On a personal basis, I always want to try and look my best. You always know there are people out there watching you, so I like to be in shape, especially because it makes you more confident about what you do."

## PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

"We practice every Tuesday and Thursday night for about three hours each. We have a further session before the game to finalise everything and make sure the routine looks good for the match itself."

## TRAIN HARD – BE CONSISTENT - STAY DISCIPLINED

"Our routines are tiring, especially when you're practicing non-stop; it's a proper workout as far as cardio is concerned."

"With that in mind, I go to the gym three times a week and run when I can. I try to do at least three runs every week varying from three to five miles. I also try and stick to the same structured and disciplined routine each week. Our practices are pretty intense and there's a lot of cardio involved, so they're a good work out as well. You've got to stay on top of things and make sure you make time for it."

"You also need flexibility, stability and strength, so you need to make sure you train consistently, on a weekly basis, otherwise you won't see any improvement or progress. I also recommend working on your core – strength is absolutely essential for dancing."

## SMOKE THOSE CALORIES

"I go to the gym and vary between arms and legs. I'll start cardio when I get there, doing three miles on the treadmill before moving on to the arm trainer and stairmaster. I always try to burn at least 500 calories during my cardio phase. Then I just go into strength work on either my arms or legs. I'll use either free weights or machines."

## YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

"Nutrition is really important. I always tell people that cheerleading is ten per cent working out and 90 per cent eating well, so I try to avoid carbs, like bread. I stick to chicken and turkey and stay away from fried foods, although I do have a really bad sweet tooth. I don't follow a particular diet, I just watch what I eat on a daily basis."

## CHEERLEADING: A SIMPLE RECIPE

"Drink lots of water and stay away from sugary things such as soda, cake and muffins. Try to get at least 30 minutes of cardio three-five days a week. Then just watch what you eat; diet is very important when it comes to your overall fitness and ability to stay in shape."

## ENJOY YOURSELF

"Cheerleading is a lot of fun and it gives you a lot of exciting opportunities, such as travelling, that most people don't get to experience. You need a lot of energy and a fun and positive personality [to be a cheerleader]. You are performing in front of thousands of people, so you need to be confident in yourself and what you do."

## REST IS IMPORTANT

"If you don't rest you're going to get injured more often, and so when we're not practicing we're trying to recover to help make sure that the muscles are ready to go for the next practice. I'm used to doing a lot of cardio, but doing it time and time again can become tiring because your body just wears down a little bit."

## GAME DAY

"We do the same warm-up for every practice. We start with a stretch to get our muscles warmed up so that we're able to perform at the highest level. The game itself is anywhere from three to four hours, so we try and replicate that length of time in our training sessions to get a feeling of what it's going to be like on game day."

## PROFILE

Born and raised in Jacksonville, Rachel attended Douglas Anderson School of the Arts as a dance major. She recently graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of North Florida with a degree in Elementary Education. Rachel is back for her second season with THE ROAR, Jacksonville Jaguars' cheerleading team.

**THE JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS HOST THE DALLAS COWBOYS AT WEMBLEY STADIUM ON NOVEMBER 9.**

