



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CARMEN BUTLER TO MANAGE THUNDER GIRLS

Former Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader, Mavs Dancer to help oversee Thunder Girl auditions

OKLAHOMA CITY, July 6, 2010 – A former Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader, Dallas Mavericks dancer and special education teacher has been named the new manager of the Thunder Girls, the Thunder announced today. Carmen Butler joins the team this week and her first order of business will be to help run Saturday's open auditions for the 2010-11 Thunder Girls team. Butler takes over for Sabrina Ellison, who, after four years with the organization, is relocating to California to be with her family.

"We are excited to welcome Carmen to the Thunder family," said Thunder Director of Events and Entertainment John Leach. "She brings great experience and energy to the position. Having worked in a leadership role for an organization as well-known, highly valued and professional as the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, she has a definite concept of what a major-league dance team should offer fans and the community. Also, having been a Mavs dancer, she has experience in NBA game and community environments."

A Nebraska native, Butler earned a Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Nebraska. In addition to her dancing, she has worked since 1997 as a special education teacher at school districts in Nebraska, Texas and Maryland.

She began her sports dance career in 2000 with the Omaha Beef indoor football team, where she rose to the level of co-captain. In 2005 she realized her dream of becoming a Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader. "I always wanted to become a Cowboys Cheerleader. They represent the gold standard of pro sports entertainment, the very best. It was a challenge I wanted to undertake and I was successful. I hope to bring that same level of professionalism and prestige to the Thunder Girls," Butler said. During her three years with the Cowboys Cheerleaders, she was selected as a group leader, was named veteran of the year and facilitated cheerleading camps and other community events. From 2008-09, Butler was a dancer for the Dallas Mavericks where she was selected best in appearances.

"With her experience and personality, we know Carmen will help build on the tremendous Thunder Girls' foundation already in place, said Thunder Senior Vice President Brian Byrnes. "Under Sabrina's leadership, the Thunder Girls became a proven favorite with our fans. Sabrina set a high standard of professionalism that we are confident Carmen will be able to uphold and build upon." In addition to managing the Thunder Girls, Butler will also continue to develop the Thunder's junior dance team, the Raindrops.

"It's a great honor to join an organization like the Thunder. I'm excited at the opportunity to continue to develop the Thunder Girls' profile within games and in the Oklahoma community," Butler said. "This dance team is made up of talented, intelligent women who balance this experience with their full-time careers and do it with great skill and professionalism. I look forward to working with them."

Butler will help oversee the audition process as the 2010-11 Thunder Girls squad is selected. **Open auditions will be held at the Ford Center beginning at 10 a.m. on Saturday.** Finalists will be selected for follow-up auditions and interviews, leading up to the final selections on Thursday, July 15, at 6 p.m. at Toby Keith's I Love this Bar & Grill in Bricktown.

"We are looking for talented, poised, charismatic, professional women who fully understand the role of the Thunder Girls, to entertain our fans and represent the Thunder throughout the community," Butler said. "I encourage any women with a passion and energy for entertaining to come try out. Don't prejudge yourself. You never know what we might be looking for and you might be a perfect fit!"

Women 18 and older with dance, cheer or pom backgrounds are welcome to audition. Registration forms are now available at thunder.nba.com, along with details on the audition process. The Thunder Girls audition is presented by FireLake Grand Casino.

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