CHEER AMERICA CHAMPIONSHIPS

SCHOOL CHEER RULE BOOK

2026-2027

CHEER AMERICA CHAMPIONSHIPS

10.20.26

Cheer America
School Cheer Rule Book

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS & RULES - All attendees are expected to follow the event rules, regulations and policies. Athlete safety is our top priority and we expect all attendees to help us maintain a respectful, safe and fun atmosphere. All participants coaches/directors/choreographers/personnel agree to conduct themselves well, displaying good sportsmanship throughout the entirety of the competition. The coach of each team is responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents and other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification.

- Coaches/Personnel credentials must be picked up with valid ID at registration and worn by the individual it was issued to for the duration of the event. Credentials may NOT be shared or transferred for ANY REASON.
- All teams must comply with the rules/regulations and event guidelines. Any violation of event guidelines could result in a penalty, point deduction and/or disqualification.
- At least 1 credentialed coach must be present to supervise their athletes through warm-ups, on deck and while competing. It is recommended that athletes remain with a coach, team representative, or parent throughout the remainder of the event when not competing.
- At events teams may only perform skills on an appropriate surface or designated mats. The surface should be taken into consideration before engaging in any skills / technical elements. Skills should not be performed on concrete, asphalt, tile or other similar surfaces.
- Athletes cannot be exchanged during the routine. Any athlete who begins the routine must stay within the performance surface boundaries during the routine. A team cannot have one athlete start the routine and replace that athlete with a different athlete part of the way through the routine.
- All cheerleading skills including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, and jumps must follow the **NFHS Safety Guidelines**. See specific skill restrictions for each category.
- Scoring Guidelines and Documents are available on our website to guide your understanding. For additional info be sure to check our scoring website.

COACH ELIGIBILITY- Cheer America requires all coaches/directors/choreographers/personnel wishing to access the warm up area, backstage, or athlete only areas to have an approved background check, and check in at Coach registration for every event. This applies to all staff members 18 years or older.

COMPETITION AREA

- The performance surface is defined as the 42’ X 54’ (9 Panels) competition floor. This will be a spring floor unless otherwise noted. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
- The competition boundary is defined as the performance surface and any immediate safety border. A deduction may be assessed at the judges discretion for athletes completely off of the performance surface. Stepping on the border velcro is not a boundary violation.
- All skills must originate and be completed within the competition boundary. No lineups, skills, or transitions are allowed outside of the competition boundary.
- Center markers are prohibited. Cheer America will mark the center of the performance floor with a ‘X’.

TEAM ENTRY & EXIT

- Teams should move on and off the floor as quickly as possible and will be limited to 30 seconds for each. Exceeding this may lead to deductions at the discretion of the judges. Official timing will begin when the first athlete touches the mat or performance area.
- Teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm, but without excessive gestures.
- All team breaks and traditions must take place backstage prior to entering the performance area.
- Any prolonged, excessive, or premeditated celebration by individual athletes or a group of athletes while on the competition floor is not allowed.
- The only people allowed on the performance floor are the athletes and competition personnel.
- Teams should exit the floor promptly after the official ending of the routine. There should not be any organized exits, excessive celebration, or any other activities. Violating this will lead to deduction at the discretion of judges.

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SCHOOL REPRESENTATION:

- *All aspects of a performance MUST be family friendly.*
- Performances should represent the standards expected by athletes and student body representatives. Routines should highlight the skills being performed in a safe style.
- All participating members/coaches should display good sportsmanship for the duration of the event with respect for themselves, opposing teams, and spectators. Taunting or bragging, as well as discrimination of any nature is not prohibited.
- Cheer words should incorporate school pride, honor, and tradition as well as sportsmanship. Cheers or chants that are negative, insulting to other teams or the judges may reflect a lower School Representation score.

UNIFORMS

- **All participant uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention.** *Sheer, mesh, fringe and other "see through" material is not a legal midriff covering.*
- Costuming is not permitted. Traditional cheerleading uniforms that represent the school (logo, name, colors etc.) should be worn for all athletes.
- Athletic shoes must be worn while competing.
- Appropriate uniform attire and undergarments are required during all aspects of the event(s).
    - No risqué, or provocative uniforms or garments.
- Hair for all athletes must be secured off the face.
- Bows are not required. If work they must be securely fastened and appropriate for the performance.

MUSIC

Teams must be able to provide proof of licensing if requested by Cheer America. If you have any questions regarding music email INFO@CAcheermail.com

- All teams must provide their own device for use at the event. Music should be on a digital device.
- Each team must have a responsible representative remain at the music station for the duration of the performance. This representative is responsible for pressing "play" and should be someone familiar with the routine and music.
- All music selection MUST be appropriate and suitable for family viewing and listening.

PROPS- Use of props in the Performance/ Crowd Leading and Game Day divisions are limited to flags, megaphones, poms, signs, and other traditional sideline props (this includes rally towels, body flags and foam fingers). *Props may not be thrown into the crowd or bear the weight of the performer. No air horns or artificial noise makers are allowed. All props must be able to fit through a standard size (36") single door*

DIVISIONS

- Teams must consist exclusively of members that meet all of the following: have NOT graduated from high school, are officially recognized as a member of the team, enrolled in classes at the school they are competing for
    - *Teams must be prepared to prove current class enrollment if requested by Cheer America.*
- Divisions will be determined by the grade of the participants' at the time of competition (not age)
- Participants may NOT compete in multiple Performance/Crowd Leading divisions at the same event.
    - *Cheerleaders may compete in 1 Performance **OR** Crowd Leading routine **AND** 1 Game Day routine.*
- No cheerleader may represent more than one school, *even in the event of injury or emergency*.
- Cheer America strongly recommends all teams have alternate(s), not currently competing with another team, who is prepared to substitute in the event of injury, probation, etc.
- FLAG RUNNERS- members that are strictly used for flags & props
    - Flag runners do count towards the overall number of athletes on the floor. Flag runners, if males, are **not** considered in coed determination and *may **not** participate in any stunts or skills.*

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CROWD LEADING	PERFORMANCE	GAME DAY (UIL)
Focus on crowd leading with crowd effective material. Routines will include transitional stunts/pyramids, BUT will have a cheer section encouraging a crowd response similar to leading the fans on game day! ***Max Routine Length**:* *2 Minutes 30 seconds*	Routines should showcase skills and focus on visual elements, consisting of transitional stunts, pyramids and a cheer. In Performance divisions the cheer is NOT required to encourage crowd participation. ***Max Routine Length:*** *2 Minutes 30 seconds*	Game day routines will focus on traditional crowd leading, and must include band chant, fight song, and crowd leading section. Teams should include props such as signs, poms, flags and megaphones. - Division will utilize UIL & NFHS Scoring/Rules. - The announcer will call out an offense or defense prompt after the band chant. ***Max Routine Length**: 3 Minutes*
NOVICE: Elementary, Middle School, JV/Freshman, Varsity *Non-Building Varsity, Non-Building Middle School, Non-Tumbling Middle School, Non-Building Elementary	**NOVICE:** Elementary, Middle School, JV/Freshman, Varsity, *Non-Building Elementary	Middle School JV/Freshman Varsity Varsity Coed Game Day Rally
INTERMEDIATE: Middle School, JV/Freshman, Varsity, Varsity Coed, *Non-Building Middle School, Non-Tumbling Middle School, Non-Tumbling JV/Freshman, Non-Tumbling Varsity, Non-Building Varsity, Non-Tumbling Varsity Coed	**INTERMEDIATE:** Middle School, JV/Freshman, Varsity, Varsity Coed	
ADVANCED: Middle School, JV/Freshman, Varsity, Varsity Coed *Non-Tumbling Varsity, Non-Building Varsity, Non-Tumbling Varsity Coed	**ADVANCED:** Middle School, JV/Freshman, Varsity, Varsity Coed	

CROWD LEADING & PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

- All skills (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, and jumps) must follow the NFHS Safety Guidelines. Skill restrictions for each category are listed below.
- In Crowd Leading and Performance Divisions, **UP TO TWO Mascots are allowed ONLY if 2 DIFFERENT Mascots represent the school.** These mascots will NOT count towards participant count. Mascots cannot participate in any Skills (stunts, pyramids, or tumbling) in any division.
- Crowd Leading divisions will follow the Guidelines with Novice, Intermediate or Advanced skill restrictions and require a cheer portion that emphasizes Crowd Leading ability.

- Non-Tumbling divisions: Must follow the Guidelines and, in addition, will prohibit all tumbling, except for inversions into or from load in positions, stunts and pyramids. Tumbling is defined as any skill with feet over head rotation. **Exception: a back handspring entry into stunts / pyramids will not be allowed.**
- Non-Building divisions: No partner stunts, pyramids or tosses are allowed. If an athlete is ever lifted off the performing surface by another athlete or athletes, it would be considered a 'building skill,' and therefore illegal.
- Elementary Divisions: **ALL TOSSES ARE PROHIBITED.**
- **MIDDLE SCHOOL- STRAIGHT RIDE TOSSES ARE ALLOWED, HOWEVER THEY WILL NOT BE SCORED.**

GAME DAY INFORMATION

School game day divisions will follow the format and scoring style set by Texas UIL Spirit. Teams will perform their routines in the same style as Texas UIL Finals, with one three minute performance composed of a Band Chant, Fight Song and Crowd Leading section. Additionally during the performance there will be an announcer cue describing a game day offense or defense situation which the team must respond to.

- Each section of the routine has a one-minute time limit.
- Music used for Band Chant and Fight Song must be recorded marching band music.
- Crowd leading tools such as signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones are encouraged.
- Sideline practicality and effective leadership should be considered in all parts of the routine.

BAND CHANT
Emphasis on crowd effectiveness, appeal, technique and practicality. No stunts or tumbling permitted

FIGHT SONG
In addition to Fight Song motions and movement, up to three consecutive eight counts should be incorporated with stunts, jumps and/or tumbling.

CROWD LEADING
Time begins with a buzzer sound with the team already on the floor following the Band Chant. Performance should have an emphasis on crowd involvement.

GAMEDAY SKILL RESTRICTIONS
- **PROHIBITED SKILLS:** baskets, sponge/elevator tosses, inversions, twisting dismounts from stunts, running tumbling
- Single-leg extended stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches
- Standing tumbling is limited to ONE SKILL at a time. A back tuck is the most elite tumbling skill allowed.

SAFETY RULES
UIL rules require all spirit activities to be in accordance with the safety standards prescribed by the NFHS Spirit Safety Rules, which may be purchased in electronic or print form at [www.nfhs.org.](http://www.nfhs.org)

PERFORMANCE & CROWD LEADING - NOVICE SKILL RESTRICTIONS

*NOVICE TEAMS WILL FOLLOW **USA CHEER/NFHS SPIRIT RULES BOOK** WITH THESE ADDITIONAL SKILL RESTRICTIONS.*

STANDING TUMBLING:
- Single back handspring is allowed
- Connected rolls and walkovers to a single back handspring are allowed
- Series front or back handsprings are **NOT ALLOWED &** Jump(s) handspring combos are **NOT ALLOWED**

RUNNING TUMBLING:
- Series front or back handsprings are allowed
- Aerials and Flips are **NOT ALLOWED**

STUNTS
- Single leg stunts held at prep level or below are allowed
- Extended single leg Show N go's are **NOT ALLOWED**
- Single leg stunts at prep or below may rotate up to ½
- Up to ½ twist by the top person to or from and 2 foot stunt is allowed *(**EXCEPTION**: Single Barrel/log rolls are allowed and must start/end in cradle)*
- Release moves are **NOT ALLOWED**

INVERSIONS
- Ground inversions to a vertical upright position are allowed
- Ground inversions may rotate up to ½ twist by top person
- Release ground inversions, Suspended forward rolls, and Downward inversions are **NOT ALLOWED**

PYRAMIDS
- All skills must follow novice stunts unless braced by at least one person at prep level or below with hand/arm connection. **The required connection must be made at the initiation of the skill and remain connected throughout the entire transition.**
- Extended single leg stunts must be braced by at least one person at prep level or below with hand/arm connection.
  - The required hand/arm connection must be made prior to executing the extended single leg stunt. *(bracer MUST have a minimum of 2 bases or 1 base and 1 spotter).*
- Extended stunts may not brace or be braced by any other extended stunts.
- Braced Release moves are **NOT ALLOWED.** Any time a top person is released by the bases and braced by another top person, they may not perform any skill and must land in a cradle.
- Inversions are not allowed except those allowed in Novice Stunts.

DISMOUNTS: Only straight pop downs, straight cradles and ¼ twisting dismounts are allowed. *(See definition in NFHS Rules)*
TOSSES: The only body position allowed is a straight ride to a cradle position.

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PERFORMANCE & CROWD LEADING - INTERMEDIATE SKILL RESTRICTIONS

*INTERMEDIATE TEAMS WILL FOLLOW **USA CHEER/NFHS SPIRIT RULES BOOK** WITH THESE ADDITIONAL SKILL RESTRICTIONS.*

GENERAL TIMBLING:
- No twisting while airborne (Aerial cartwheels are allowed)

STANDING TUMBLING: limited to one single standing back handspring
- Series front and back handsprings are allowed.
- Jump handspring combos are allowed
- Flips are **NOT ALLOWED**

RUNNING TUMBLING:
- Back Flips performed in a tuck position are allowed (must come from a roundoff, cartwheel, or RO BHS)
- Other skills with hand support prior to the cartwheel or round off are allowed.
- Aerial cartwheels are allowed
- No tumbling is allowed after a back flip or aerial cartwheel.
- Front flips are **NOT ALLOWED**

STUNTS:
- Up to ½ twist allowed to and from an extended position.
- Up to 1 twist allowed to and from prep level or below.

RELEASES
- Release moves are allowed UP to prep level or below.
- Release moves are allowed up to ¼ twist
- Release moves must initiate from prep level or below

INVERSIONS
- Inversions are allowed at prep level or below
- Inversions may not pass through extended position (Foldover/Pancake stunts are NOT ALLOWED)
- Suspended Rolls are allowed
- Downward inversions are ONLY allowed from a horizontal/cradle position at or below prep level.
- Released inversions are allowed up to ¼ twist
- Connected inversions are allowed up to 1 twist UP to prep level.

PYRAMIDS
- All pyramid skills must follow intermediate skill restrictions unless connected to one bracer at prep or below with hand/arm connection. Connection must be made from initiation of the skill through completion.
- Extended single leg stunts may not be braced by any other single leg extended stunts.
- Braced Release moves are allowed up to ½ twist.
- **A braced forward or backward flip is allowed; connection to 2 different bracers is required; each bracer must have hand/arm to hand/arm connection with a separate arm of the top person; no twisting is allowed, and the flip must end in a cradle.**
- All other braced inversions must be braced from initiation of the skill and remain connected throughout the entire transition.

DISMOUNTS:
- Only straight pop downs, basic straight cradles and ¼ twisting dismounts are allowed from any single leg stunt.
- Up to 1¼ twists are allowed from any prep level stunt or any two-leg stunt at any level.
- During twisting dismount, no skill other than the twist is allowed.

TOSSES
- Up to 1 trick is allowed. May not exceed 1 twisting rotation. During a twisting toss, no skill other than the twist is allowed.

PERFORMANCE & CROWD LEADING - ADVANCED SKILL RESTRICTIONS

Advanced teams will follow the USA Cheer & NFHS Spirit Rules Book with no additional skill restrictions.

ELEMENTARY / MIDDLE SCHOOL SKILL RESTRICTIONS

- **ELEMENTARY-** ***ALL TOSSES ARE PROHIBITED.***
- **MIDDLE SCHOOL-** ***STRAIGHT RIDE TOSSES ARE ALLOWED, HOWEVER THEY WILL NOT BE SCORED.***
- *Junior High, Middle School and Elementary teams will follow the NFHS Spirit Rules Book and the additional restrictions outlined here: https://www.usacheer.org*

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Scoresheets, Scoring Guidelines, and Stunt/Pyramid Progressions can be found on our scoring website. *www.cachampionships.com/scoring*