

New Mexico cheerleading competition may end over death threats, aggressive posts

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ALBUQUERQUE - A high school sports governing board is considering canceling next year's State Spirit Competition following death threats and inflammatory social media posts, the Albuquerque Journal reports

Sally Marquez, executive director of the New Mexico Activities Association, said she will present options including cancelling the event at the group's meeting next month.

"Right now, spirit is not abiding by what we believe are education-based athletics," Marquez said. "This year was probably the worst out of all of them." Various parents, athletes, coaches and other outside parties all are contributing to an inappropriate social media presence, Marquez said.

The state competition, which encompasses female cheer, co-ed cheer and dance, is the third-largest money-making postseason event on the high school calendar, after basketball and football. This year's competition featured 106 dance and cheer squads, and approximately 2,000 athletes.

But the event has been plagued with sportsmanship issues.

According to officials, a direct death threat was made to two people who were helping the governing staff with this year's state spirit competition late last month. It was not known if the two people who received the death threat have pressed, or will press, charges.

In addition, officials said there were aggressively worded social media posts, and their negative impact on coaches and athletes alike, contributed to the governing board calling a special meeting last week.

But Carlos Abeyta, a cheer coach at Albuquerque's Del Norte High School, said specific schools should be targeted rather than the whole event.

"My suggestion is (to) suspend (the offending) schools for a year," Abeyta said. "If it was my own kids, suspend me for a year."

The State Spirit Competition isn't the only sport causing

sportsmanship headaches for the governing board. Earlier this year, the association warned Estancia High School over rowdy fans. Carlsbad High School also [imposed crowd restrictions](#) after improper behavior from student fans.

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[NMSU cheerleaders place fourth in the nation](#)

[Wisconsin HS cheerleaders got 'Big Booty' and 'Big Boobie' awards. ACLU is now involved.](#)

[Carlsbad basketball games see seating restrictions due to bad student behavior](#)

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