

# Issue Paper

**DATE:**

November 11, 2024

**AGENDA ITEM (ACTION ITEM):**

**Consider/Approve Contract with UCA and Dixie Heights High School Cheer for Nationals competition for the 2024/25 season.**

**APPLICABLE BOARD POLICY:**

**01.1 Legal Status of the Board**

**HISTORY/BACKGROUND:**

In years past, Dixie Heights High School Cheer has competed in the UCA Nationals competition in Orlando, Florida. Upon receiving a bid to Nationals the Cheer team will be competing again in February 2025. Competition will be held on Walt Disney World property.

**FISCAL/BUDGETARY IMPACT:**


The total cost of the competition is approximately \$38,400.00 and each competition cheerleader will be responsible for the \$1,600.00 individual participation cost. Cost includes lodging, transportation, park admission, competition fees, etc. Participation fee costs were approved at the August, 2024 Board meeting. All competition costs will be paid from the Dixie Heights High School Cheer school activity account

**RECOMMENDATION:**


**Approval To contract with UCA and Dixie Heights High School Cheer for Nationals competition for 2024/25 season.**

**CONTACT PERSON:**

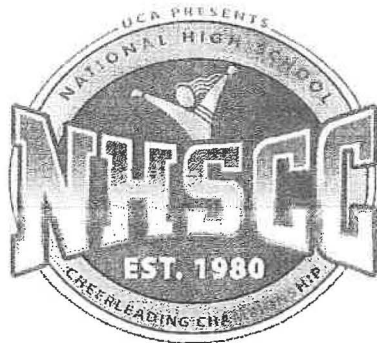
**Roddy Stamford/Teresa Catchen**

  
Principal/Administrator

  
District Administrator

  
Superintendent

*Use this form to submit your request to the Superintendent for items to be added to the Board Meeting Agenda.  
Principal –complete, print, sign and send to your Director. Director –If approved, sign and put in the Superintendent's mailbox.*



### **Competition Rules and Regulations**

By accepting these terms and conditions, you are agreeing to adhere to the Varsity Spirit Rules and Regulations. As well as the Event Guidelines. These can be viewed on the "Required Forms" tab.

### **Payment Deadlines**

Full payment is suggested with initial registration. Registrations must have at least a \$100 non-refundable deposit per person to be approved. Team registrations that are submitted online are not "approved" until the deposit or a school purchase order has been received. **All teams must be registered by January 7, 2025.**

For Family and Friends to register, there must be an approved team registration.

Balance of Payment is due by **January 7, 2025**. You may pay your balance in full earlier than the deadline to receive your ticket confirmation number(s).

*Teams can register for NHSCC prior to receiving your bid. If for any reason you do not receive a bid at your regional event, your deposit for NHSCC will be refunded to you.*

### **Tickets**

Ticket confirmation numbers will be emailed to the contact person on the registration after the invoice is paid in full. Once ticket numbers have been communicated, no changes will be accepted. All upgrades to tickets must be requested before paying in full.

To attend a Disney Park during the ticket valid dates of **February 2-14, 2025**, you must have a "Park Reservation". You may go on to your "My Disney Experience" app to make these reservations as soon as you receive your ticket confirmation number. Information on how to obtain your park reservations will be sent with your ticket confirmation number. Please be advised that it is a possibility that parks will meet capacity.

### **Hotel Accommodations**

Walt Disney World® hotel rooms are limited and may fill up prior to the published deadlines. Resort reservations are available on a first come first served basis.

### **Changes**

**Housing Changes**, or individual cancellations on your registration, must be requested through your online account and are not guaranteed until approved by your registration specialist. Please do NOT email changes to your registration specialist. Changes are handled in the order they are received through the Change Request System. Changes requested after **January 7, 2025**, will result in a \$50 change fee per change.

**Cancellations:**

Entire team cancellations must be made in writing to **National High School Cheerleading Championship** to your registration specialist.

Cancellations are not accepted by phone. Cancellation fees are assessed on a per person basis according to when the written cancellation request was received, as indicated below:

On or before January 7, 2025 - \$100

Between January 7, 2025 and January 14, 2025 – additional \$200

After January 14, 2025 - No Refund

Cancellation fees cannot be applied toward the final balance.

If Varsity Spirit must cancel the event, teams will receive a full refund of all fees that have been paid to Varsity Spirit.

**Refunds**

Refunds on accounts with a credit balance will be issued after the event is over and in the same form as the original payment method. The average processing time for a refund is four weeks from the last day of the event.

Refunds are not available for unused portions of the package or unused days on tickets.

**Contacts (Registration Specialists)**

If you would like to email concerning a team cancellation or a refund, see below for the name of your registration specialist. The letters are the first letter of your school name.

A-B	Keosha Lipsey	<a href="mailto:klipsey@varsity.com">klipsey@varsity.com</a>
C-D	Ginger Watkins	<a href="mailto:gwatkins@varsity.com">gwatkins@varsity.com</a>
E-H	Mendy Terrell	<a href="mailto:mterrell@varsity.com">mterrell@varsity.com</a>
I-M	Liz Wilson	<a href="mailto:ewilson@varsity.com">ewilson@varsity.com</a>
N-Q	Madison Toone	<a href="mailto:mtoone@varsity.com">mtoone@varsity.com</a>
S	Uriel Cabanillas	<a href="mailto:ucabanillas@varsity.com">ucabanillas@varsity.com</a>
R-Z (excluding S)	Tyra Johnson	<a href="mailto:tyra.johnson@varsity.com">tyra.johnson@varsity.com</a>

**Registration Close Date:**

Registration will close on January 24, 2025.

Registrations that are not paid in full by this date are subject to cancellation.



BY VARSITY SPIRIT

# UCA EVENT GUIDELINES | 24 25

UCA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIP, FEBRUARY 7-10, 2025



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These Event Guidelines are the exclusive property of Varsity Spirit and may not be reproduced, in part or in whole, for events not sponsored and approved by Varsity Spirit.

## UCA SCHOOL DIVISIONS

### All Junior High Divisions – 9th Grade and Below

Junior High Divisions WILL be allowed 9th grade participants if (1) they attend a school that is under the administrative supervision of the same school board as the junior high school that they are representing AND (2) a minority of the team are 9th graders. Junior High teams with a majority of 9th grader participants must compete as a Junior Varsity.

### All Junior Varsity Divisions – 7th Grade -12th Grade

Junior Varsity Divisions WILL be allowed 7th and 8th grade participants if they attend a school that is under the administrative supervision of the same school board as the high school that they are representing. Junior Varsity teams must be the official Junior Varsity of the school they represent. Teams will only be allowed to compete in the Junior Varsity Division if they are the official Junior Varsity team. If there is only one team from a school, that team will be required to compete in the Varsity division and meet the Varsity Division grade restrictions. Teams that have members that cheer for varsity sports must compete as a varsity team.

### All Varsity Divisions – 8th Grade - 12th Grade

7th grade and below participants will NOT be allowed on a Varsity team. 8th grade participants will be allowed to participate on a Varsity team if the school they attend is under the direct administrative supervision of the same school board as the Varsity team they are representing. If there is only one team from a school, that team will be required to compete in the Varsity division and meet the Varsity Division grade restrictions. Teams that have members that cheer varsity sports must compete as a varsity team.

### Game Day Divisions

Individuals are only allowed to compete in a performance routine division and a game day division for the same school/program. If a Junior Varsity and Varsity combine/share athletes for a Game Day Division, they must compete in the Varsity Divisions.

Teams may add up to 2 (two) mascots in their Game Day Routine. The mascot(s) must meet all the eligibility requirements as the athletes. The mascot(s) must enter the floor with the team and should be used to raise crowd energy and participation. The mascot(s) is not allowed to be involved in any stunts/technical skills or tumbling and should position themselves away from skills being performed. The mascot(s) will not count towards the total number nor gender of participants allowed in the division.

### Game Day Live Divisions

For more info on Game Day Live, go to page 9-11.

## DIVISION GUIDELINES

- Athletes may only perform up to 2 times if one routine is a performance routine and the other is a game day routine. If an athlete is performing 2 times, they must be representing the same program/school in both performances.
  - Example: An athlete may compete with a VA team in both a performance routine and game day routine.
  - Example: An athlete may compete with a JV team in a performance routine and the VA game day routine.
  - Example: An athlete MAY NOT compete with a JR team in a performance routine and with a JV or VA squad for any reason.
  - Example: An athlete may only compete with a Rec Program in a performance routine and game day routine for that Rec Program.
- UCA/UDA strongly recommends that you have an alternate (not a member of another competing team at the same event), who is prepared to substitute in the event of injury, probation, etc. No cheerleader/dancer may represent more than one Team, even in the event of injury or emergency. Once a team checks into the event, the team will not be allowed to change divisions.
- Teams must compete in the same style Performance Routine and Game Day Routine i.e. Non-Tumbling or Non-Building must be the same for both.

4. Each school may not have more than one team compete in one single division.
5. Regional Event – Division Guidelines: Universal Cheerleaders Association will SPLIT divisions in the best interest of providing a competitive environment.
  - a. When/If a division has 11 or more teams, additional splits may be offered.
  - b. When/If a division has 11 or more teams, a split will only be offered if there is an additional split allowed by the 2024-2025 UCA Division offerings.
  - c. When/If a division has less than 3 teams, they may be combined into the same age/size division.
  - d. Please visit [uca.varsity.com](http://uca.varsity.com) for a complete listing of divisions for regional competitions as well as the National High School Cheerleading Championship.

## SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY POLICY

1. All members of the cheerleading team must be current members of the official school spirit squads and must attend the school they are representing.
  - a. **Exception 1:** Single-gender schools may use athletes from affiliated schools if they are official members of the squad. These teams must support the school(s) athletics/ endeavors throughout the year, and not solely combined for competition purposes.
  - b. **Exception 2:** See exception listed under Junior High, Junior Varsity and Varsity Divisions listed on Page 2.
2. If a school district or state association has more or less restrictions, teams will be required to follow the more restrictive set of rules.
  - a. **Example 1 – State A** allows 7<sup>th</sup> grade students to participate on Varsity Teams. Teams from State A will still be required to follow the 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade restrictions for Varsity Teams. These teams are NOT allowed to move into Junior Varsity Division.
  - b. **Example 2 – State B** does not allow 9<sup>th</sup> grade or below participation on Varsity Sports. Teams from State B would then need to follow their State Restrictions.
  - c. **Example 3 – A Junior High school** only has grades 7<sup>th</sup>- 9<sup>th</sup> grade. That team would only be allowed to utilize athletes from their school. They would not be allowed pull up or down any other athletes.
3. Individuals are NOT permitted to compete on two different School/Rec Teams at the same event. They are permitted on both a School Team and an All Star Team at the same event.
4. If there is only one team from a school, that team will be required to compete in the Varsity division and meet the Varsity Division grade restrictions. Teams that have members that cheer varsity sports must compete as a varsity team.
5. Teams may participate in more than one local or regional competition during the season.
6. The team should display an overall behavior conducive to serving as public representatives and ambassadors of their school/organization.
7. All athletes and coaches must be registered and listed on the Event Roster to be submitted at check in for each event. Roster Forms can be found at [UCA Competition Required Forms](#) under Regional Competition Forms & FAQs.
8. Schools participating in cooperative sports agreement must have written permission from their single governing school board and send in an official request on school board letterhead to [NHSCC@varsity.com](mailto:NHSCC@varsity.com) for approval to the Rules Committee to compete as one team by October 1, 2024.
  - a. Cooperative teams are limited to combining from no more than 2 (two) schools.
  - b. Both schools must be in one school district or governed by one school board.
  - c. Cooperative teams must support the school(s) athletics/ endeavors throughout the year, and not solely combined for competition purposes.

- d. Any team approved must use the combined total enrollment for both schools when submitting the enrollment letter for DI/DII classification.
  - e. If approved, the team must compete as one for the entire 2024-2025 event season.
9. Student-athletes who are subject to an open criminal proceeding relating to any offense involving sexual misconduct or violence, who have a criminal conviction for any offense involving sexual misconduct or violence, or whose names are listed on temporary or permanent ineligible lists maintained by USA Cheer or the U.S. All Star Federation are prohibited from participating in any Varsity Spirit competition.

## ENROLLMENT

All teams must submit an official school enrollment letter for determination of DI/DII division status. School enrollment is defined as all students registered as in-school students at the school and any other students also eligible to participate in athletics at that school.

1. High school enrollment includes all students registered for attendance at the school for grades 9-12.
2. The total enrollment must also include all virtual, co-curricular, and/or home school students if they are eligible for athletics at the school.
3. Single gender schools who use athletes from other schools will use the total enrollment of the school the team is representing for DI/DII classification. Teams also need to supply enrollment numbers from each affiliated school.
4. Cooperative teams must include total enrollment from both schools.
  - a. Cooperative teams must have approval from the Rules Committee.
  - b. Cooperative teams are limited to combining from no more than 2 (two) schools.
  - c. Both schools must be in one school district or governed by one school board.
  - d. Cooperative teams must support the school(s) athletics/ endeavors throughout the year, and not solely combined for competition purposes.
  - e. Any team approved must use the combined enrollment for both schools when submitting the enrollment letter for DI/DII classification.
  - f. If approved, the team must compete as one for the entire 24-25 event season.
5. Enrollment letters must include the number of students enrolled at the school as of October 1, 2024, and be submitted no later than October 31, 2024.
6. The official enrollment letter must come from the school's principal or athletic director on official school letterhead and include a copy of the registrar's/attendance office documentation of enrollment by grade/student type.

NHSCC divisions are split into Division I (1400+ school enrollment) & Division II (1399 or less school enrollment).

## UCA OPEN RECREATIONAL GUIDELINES AND DIVISIONS

### Open Recreational Guidelines

1. Athlete eligibility will be based on the birth year, or partial year listed to be eligible for that division.
2. Teams must submit a Varsity Recreational Roster Verification Form at each event. This form can be found online under Required Forms.
3. Open Recreational Teams will require all coaches to have a USA Cheer Membership. At least one coach must have the USA Cheer Coach membership that includes the USA Cheer Youth Safety Risk Management certification course and must accompany the team at every competition. Proof of certification is required upon registration for every event. See specific details under USA Cheer Coach Membership on page 4.
4. Basket tosses, elevator tosses, and similar multi-based tosses are prohibited.



### **Affiliated Open Recreational Divisions**

The Affiliated Recreational Divisions exist for teams with the main purpose of cheering for and/or supporting a recreational team (i.e. youth football, pee wee sports, community sports teams, etc.).

Teams with a school affiliation may compete in the recreational cheer traditional division, only if at least half of the participants are in the 6th grade or younger and meet the age requirements. Teams with a school affiliation that have a majority of 7th and 8th graders must compete in the junior high division.

### **Non-Affiliated Open Recreational Divisions**

Non-Affiliated Recreational Cheer Divisions exist for teams who will follow the same 2- and 1/2-minute routine format with cheer/sideline and music and all other rules and regulations along with all other teams competing at any UCA event and the NHSCC.

## **USA CHEER COACH MEMBERSHIP**

1. USA Cheer has developed a comprehensive Membership Program, which includes a background check, athlete protection training, acknowledgement of concussion training with return to participation guidance, a member code of conduct, and safety training courses on risk management and safety rules.
2. Varsity Spirit will require that all school coaches, band directors, choreographers, and personnel wishing to access the warmup area, backstage or coaches' box at our competitions have a USA Cheer Coach or Professional Membership. At least one coach must have the USA Cheer Coach Membership that include the USA Cheer Youth Risk Management certification course and must accompany the team at every competition.
3. You must complete your membership requirements before your first competition. Please note that the background check will take 2-10 days to be processed and returned. Coaches without an approved Membership will not be allowed access to the warmup area, backstage or coaches' box.
4. Varsity Spirit will provide proof of membership for each coach from your organization who wishes to go into the warmup area, backstage or coaches' box. Upon proof of membership, each coach will receive a wristband that will allow them access. Individuals whose names are listed on the USA Cheer temporary or permanent ineligible list are prohibited from attending Varsity Spirit Events, including all camps and competitions.
5. The USA Cheer Membership is available on the USA Cheer website. Once your membership is complete, you can print your membership card, or save and display it on your mobile device at event registration along with your photo ID. This season's membership will be active June 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025.

## **UNIFORM GUIDELINES**

1. **UNIFORMS**
  - a. All participant uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention. Covered midriff does include flesh or nude colored body suits and liners; however, fringe would not count as a cover. Does not apply to color guard that attends with the Pep Band.
  - b. Any team in violation of the uniform guidelines will be assessed a TWO (2) point deduction.
  - c. A traditional sideline uniform (that covers the midriff when standing at attention and has an element that is identifiable to your school – colors, logos, letters, mascot, etc.) is required for all divisions.
  - d. Teams may not use Disney themes, nor may they have costumes that resemble a Disney character. However, Disney music is acceptable if it follows the music guidelines. Any use of Disney music requires prior approval and must be sent to [musicinfo@varsity.com](mailto:musicinfo@varsity.com) at least one month prior to your first competition.
2. **MAKE-UP**
  - a. If worn, make-up should be appropriate for both the performance and age of the athletes, utilizing colors suitable for skin tone.
3. **HAIR**

- a. Hair for all athletes does not have to be worn the same but must be secured off the face with a simple style that considers all diversities.
- b. Bows are not required. If worn, bows must:
  - NOT be excessive in size
  - NOT be a distraction to the performance.
  - Be positioned in a manner to minimize risk for all participants. This is restricted to back of the head (below the crown)
  - If the bow has tails, they must be facing backwards and down to limit the ability to fall the forehead into the participants' eyes or block the view of the participants while performing.
- c. A .25 deduction will be given to teams in violation of this rule.

## TIME LIMITATIONS

1. Introductions
  - a. All introductions (entrances, chants, spellouts, etc.) are considered part of the routine and will be timed as part of the performance. Skills are not allowed during the team's entry to the floor or any time prior to starting the performance. EXCEPTION – See Game Day Below
  - b. All team breaks, rituals and traditions need to take place prior to entering the mat.
  - c. Teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm, but without excessive gestures. Example: chest bumps, hugs, handshakes, etc.
  - d. Teams have 30 seconds from the team's introduction to start the routine. If a team exceeds this time limit, a penalty of a .25-point deduction for 1-5 seconds or a .5-point deduction for 6 seconds and over will be assessed.
  - e. All teams should refrain from any type of excessive celebration following the team's performance. Any team in violation will receive a ONE-point deduction.
  - f. There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official end of the routine.
2. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first.
3. If a team (cheer team or pep band) exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. One (1) point deduction for 1-5 seconds over, Two (2) point deduction for 6 and over.
4. Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, judges will not issue a deduction until 3 seconds over the allowed time. If a routine is retimed as part of a review, the exact time will be used without the 3 second allowance listed above.
5. Because penalties are severe, it is recommended that all teams time their performance several times prior to competition and leave a several second cushion to allow for variations in sound equipment.

**Performance Routines** - Each performance routine presentation must include at least one cheer or sideline chant.

- Maximum Overall Time: 2:30 (150 Seconds)
- Maximum Musical Portion: 1:45 (105 Seconds)

**Game Day Routines** - Each Game Day performance must consist of a Band Chant, Crowd Leading section, and Fight Song.

- Maximum Overall Time: 3:00 (180 Seconds)

**Game Day Live – Game Day Routine plus the inclusion of a Pep Band**

- Maximum Overall Time: 5:00 (300 Seconds)
- Maximum Cheer Routine: 3:00 (180 Seconds)

For Game Day Routines, timing of the routine will NOT include the team spiring, rallying, or individuals performing jumps, kicks, tumbling, or single-based lifts but will begin with the first group movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first. The entrance time limit of 30 seconds still applies for Game Day routines.

## VIRTUAL COMPETITION GUIDELINES

1. All videos must be recorded in a single take. Edited footage will not be accepted. Footage may not be edited to add in the template, introduction card, program logo, etc. Editing the template or not including the template will result in a 1-point deduction.
2. Filming Guidelines — We've created a step-by-step PDF guide, [HERE](#) with filming requirements and tips.
3. Awards - Division placement banners will be awarded to each team competing that will be mailed following the event. Awards Presentations for each Virtual Competition will be hosted on Varsity TV and will be FREE to all viewers on their scheduled awards day.
4. To upload a performance video, you must create a Varsity TV account. The account does **not** need to have an active subscription in order to upload a video. However, to view the videos on the event day, you need an active Varsity TV subscription. If you have questions about your Varsity TV account, [click here](#).
5. VIRTUAL COMPETITION MUSIC GUIDELINES
  - a. School Cheer & Open Rec: All routines will be judged with sound and available for Varsity TV subscriber viewing with sound for 48 hours once the event goes live. After 48 hours, the routines will be available without sound for Varsity TV subscribers. After 5 days, routines will be available free of charge without sound for the duration of the competition season.
  - b. Only music capture incidentally will be permitted. No music can be edited into the video. Teams who do edit music into the video will receive a 2-point penalty.

## COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA

1. Participants must start in the competition area with at least one foot on the ground.
2. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
3. UCA Competitions comply with the NFHS surface ruling that school-based programs may not compete on a spring floor.
4. Approximate floor size will be 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 strips).
5. Teams should not have choreographed movements to enter the stage. Teams have 30 seconds from the team's introduction to take the floor and start the routine. If a team exceeds this time limit, a penalty of a .25-point deduction for 1-5 seconds or .5-point deduction for 6 seconds and over will be assessed.
6. Any team member stepping outside or touching outside the performance area will cause the squad to receive a .5 penalty per occurrence. Pep Band members must remain in the designated area during the performance. If a violation is assessed, the judges' decisions are final and will not be reviewed.
  - a. The white line is considered a warning mark.
  - b. A penalty will be assessed when any or a combination of the following occurs: two hands, two feet, or any part of the seat or torso touches outside of the performance surface.
  - c. Once a team member takes the floor, they must remain on the floor until the end of the performance.
7. All team mascots (ex: stuffed animals), center markers, etc. are prohibited. The center will be marked on all performance surfaces.
8. Signs or props may be safely placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member who must remain inside the competition area. Please see the deduction explanation sheet for additional Prop Restrictions. {See Game Day LIVE division rules for additional prop guidelines}

- a. Approved props include foam fingers, rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for crowd leading and appropriate for crowd response.
- b. Props may not be thrown into the crowd.
- c. Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline cheer/dance boxes used at games.
- d. No air horns or artificial noise makers allowed.
- e. Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area.
- f. Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to [UCARules@varsity.com](mailto:UCARules@varsity.com) and must be received at least 2 weeks prior to your event.

## WARM-UP TO COMPETITION POLICY

The time between when a team finishes warm-ups and is on the competition floor should be no sooner than 8 minutes and no longer than 30 minutes. NOTE: Teams delayed performing after 30 minutes should have the opportunity to warm up again or be given an area and posted a list of exercises to rewarm up their muscles: Quick Toe Raises, Squat Jumps, Jumping Jacks, Bridges, Running with High Knees and or Punches.

Based on an event's facilities, the performance schedule may allow for more or less time to get from warm-up to the competition arena. Event Officials will monitor timing and work to provide the safest competition environment for all athletes.

## VIOLATIONS

Any team in violation of these UCA Event Guidelines or any of the above-mentioned guidelines will be assessed a one (1) point general deduction. This deduction does not apply to deduction or violations within the point deduction system or already assigned a lower/higher point value. Go to [uca.varsity.com](http://uca.varsity.com) for more specifics.

## LEGALITY REVIEW (PRE-EVENT)

A deduction will be given for EACH safety/general competition rule violation. Athlete and building deductions can be found on the UCA scoring page [Competition Rules & Scoring | Universal Cheerleaders Association \(varsity.com\)](http://UCA.com/CompetitionRules) The review process for UCA Regional Events and NHSCC can be found here: [UCA Review Process](http://UCA.com/ReviewProcess). Each event is a new event and reference to previous events within the season will not be allowed during the review of legality of skills.

## SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PARTNER STUNTS, PYRAMIDS AND TOSSES

Universal Cheerleaders Association offers a service to help teams with legality and safety questions. Teams will be able to submit skills throughout the year to receive a legality or safety response. This service will help teams get a response to use in situations where the skill may be in question.

### To submit a video:

1. All reviews must be submitted through [UCA Legality Inquiry Form \(iotform.com\)](http://UCA.com/LegalityInquiryForm)
2. The skill in question must be recorded by the team at practice. We are unable to accept videos of performances, competitions, or of other teams.
2. All submissions must include the coach, team, and division.
3. The recording will be reviewed as if every person in the video is included in the skill. This would include additional spotters.
4. Videos are limited to 30 seconds and must be able to be viewed upright without rotating.
6. All videos will receive either a "legal" or "illegal" response. If the video receives an "illegal" response, the entire video will not be reviewed but stopped at the point that the video was illegal. \*If the video is inconclusive, you will receive a response as to why we were unable to make a judgement on the video. It is up to you as a coach to resubmit the video to be re-reviewed.



7. Please note: Only submitting the skill will make the skill eligible for a warning. UCA can only guarantee this process will be accepted at UCA-branded events. This would not include other Varsity-branded and state association events.
8. Videos via text message or facetime will not be reviewed. If you know that your video does not meet all the requirements above, please refilm/resubmit the video. Only videos that meet the above requirements will be reviewed.
9. Inquiries need to be submitted 2 weeks before your team's performance to guarantee a response.
10. Video submissions will only be accepted by the official coach of the team.

If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please email [UCARules@varsity.com](mailto:UCARules@varsity.com). Due to volume, please allow up to 5 business days to get back to you. Include your team's name, your name, division, and a contact phone number. NHSCC rules questions must be submitted by January 24, 2024. If received after the deadline, the video is not guaranteed a response.

## SCORES AND RANKINGS

1. Individual score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his or her final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores for all teams. Scores and rankings will be available only to coaches or captains at the conclusion of the competition. Judges' decisions are final.
2. Any deductions or violations will be taken off the final score. For more information on scoring, score sheet and judging criteria, please visit [uca.varsity.com](http://uca.varsity.com).
3. Please send any scoring questions to [UCAscoring@varsity.com](mailto:UCAscoring@varsity.com) at the conclusion of the event.
4. **REGIONAL COMPETITION TIE BREAK POLICY** – Ties will not be broken at UCA Regional Competitions.
5. **NHSCC TIE BREAK POLICY** – Ties will only be broken for **FIRST PLACE** in the **FINAL ROUND** of competition at the NHSCC. The team with the lessor deductions will be awarded first place. If the deductions remain equal, the tie will not be broken and both teams will be awarded first place.
6. By participating in a Varsity event, teams give their consent for performances and scores to be made public.
7. Varsity TV publishes and makes available all competition routine videos from live-streamed events to recognize the hard work and talent of the athletes competing, and ultimately, to serve and grow the cheerleading and dance community. Due to the sheer number of teams and routines published, Varsity Spirit is unable to accommodate requests for removal.

## HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

1. **RULES & PROCEDURES** - Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the advisor / coach of the team and will be directed to the Competition Director. Such questions should be asked prior to the team's competition performance.
2. **PERFORMANCE** - Any questions concerning the team's performance should be made to the Competition Director immediately after the team's performance and/or following the outcome of the competition.
3. **MUSIC / AGE** - Any questions concerning a specific violation in music compliance must be submitted in writing to the Competition Director immediately following the team's performance.

## INTERPRETATIONS AND / OR RULINGS

Any interpretation of these UCA Event Guidelines or any decision involving any other aspect of the competition will be rendered by the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will render a judgment in an effort to ensure that the competition proceeds in a manner consistent with the general spirit and goals of the competition. The Rules Committee will consist of the Competition Director, Head Judge, and a designated competition official.

## GAME DAY ROUTINE FORMAT

1. The performance will follow this order: Band Chant, Crowd Leading, Fight Song.
2. The use of crowd leading tools is recommended (All are not required).

- a. Approved props include foam fingers, rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for crowd leading and appropriate for crowd response.
  - b. Props may not be thrown into the crowd.
  - c. Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline cheer/dance boxes used at games.
  - d. No air horns or artificial noise makers allowed.
  - e. Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area.
  - f. Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to [UCARules@varsity.com](mailto:UCARules@varsity.com) and must be received at least 2 weeks prior to your event.
3. The incorporation of stunts/tumbling is required in the Crowd Leading and Fight Song sections if the division permits.
  4. **Band Chant** should have an emphasis on crowd appeal and practicality – No stunting or tumbling is permitted, however jumps and kicks are allowed. Squads should focus on crowd engagement and visual appeal and use creative movements such as level changes and ripples.
  5. **Crowd Leading** - Following the band chant, the announcer will give squads a game scenario indicating an offense or defense situation. Teams should show their definitive understanding of the situation with an offensive or defensive Sideline. After the Situational Sideline, teams will move into their Cheer which can include one reflective of a timeout, general sideline/spell-out or other cheer material that incites a response and encourages the crowd to yell along. Teams will be evaluated on their ability to lead the crowd, crowd effectiveness, proper use of motions/crowd leading tools and execution of stunts/tumbling relevant to a game day environment.
  6. **Fight Song** - Incorporation is limited to three (3) consecutive 8-counts of stunts and/or tumbling. If the fight song repeats, the incorporation will only be allowed both times if it is repeated exactly the same both times. Counting will begin with the first initiation of a skill (stunt or tumbling) until one of the following:
    - a. The routine ends within the 3 consecutive 8 counts.
    - b. Building Skills must be stationary prior to the end of the 3rd 8-count and may remain stationary until the end of the routine.
    - c. Dismounts following the completion of the routine will not be included for timing purposes. Any choreographed dismounts will continue the timing of the routine. Example – Coed toe touch pop offs performed together, in unison would be considered choreographed.
  7. Each section should have a beginning and end. Note: Spirited crowd leading interaction between each section is encouraged to continue the game day feel. Stunts are not allowed as a transition before/between sections, including the team's entry to the floor and any time before starting the performance. Tumbling and single-based lifts are allowed anytime during the performance except during the Band Chant.
  8. **Additional Skill Restrictions**
    - Basket and waist level tosses are NOT allowed. Examples of toss skills allowed are quick toss stunts, toss coed skills, and toss toe touches.
    - Inversions are NOT allowed.
    - Twisting Released Dismounts are NOT allowed.
    - Single leg stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
    - Running Tumbling is NOT allowed.
    - Single standing tumbling is allowed and cannot be connected. A single tumbling skill can only be connected to a single jump. The only standing tumbling skills that are allowed include back handspring, back tuck, forward roll, front walkover, cartwheel, standing aerial, jump back handspring, and jump tuck.
  10. Any deductions or violations will be taken off the final averaged score. For more information on scoring, score sheets and judging criteria, please visit [uca.varsity.com](http://uca.varsity.com).
  11. For Game Day routines only, voice-overs and words may not be recorded or overlayed on the music tracks to make the team's vocal projection sound louder.

## GAME DAY LIVE ROUTINE FORMAT & PEP BAND GUIDELINES

1. Same rules and skill restrictions will still apply as the above stated guidelines for Game Day Routines.
2. Pep Band/Color Guard members would be allowed to play for multiple performances; however, they may only play for the school they attend. The pep band must be current members of the official pep band/Color Guard for the school they are representing.
3. The Pep Band/Color Guard must be in a school-related, coordinated outfit (i.e., traditional team uniform, coordinated outfit representing your school colors, letters, mascot, etc.).
4. The entire performance may not exceed 5 minutes with entry and exit of all performers. Teams must enter from same location.
5. Pep Bands/Color Guard may use props.
  - a. Props must conform to the NFHS Band safety course guidelines.
  - b. Props allowed include those listed above for cheer teams.
  - c. **Single swing flag is the ONLY additional prop allowed for Color Guard.**
    - i. **Single swing flag tosses are allowed. However, angled tosses are prohibited. Horizontal (if center on the body) and Vertical tosses are the only planes of travel allowed for single swing flags.**
  - d. Batons, rifles, and sabers are not allowed.
  - e. Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline boxes/band platforms used at games.
6. Pep Band/Color Guard instrument rules:
  - a. **ONLY Handheld or harnessed instruments allowed by the pep band.**
  - b. **Pep Bands/Color Guard will be responsible for transportation of all equipment to and from the event.**
7. Pep band/Color Guard members may not be involved in any stunts, tumbling, splits, leaps or aerial skills and should position themselves away from skills being performed.
8. **Designated Pep Band/Color Guard Performance Area.**
  - a. **Pep Bands/Color Guard will line up anywhere center stage within the performing surface (54 X 42) and their timing will begin the first beat of music.**
  - b. **Pep bands/Color Guard must remain in designated areas of approximately 54 feet wide by 5 feet deep on the back side (behind the mats). Additional performance areas on either side of the raised stage of 5 feet wide by 42 feet deep each area will be designated.**
  - c. **Pep Bands/Color Guard will be limited to 40 total members. Teams may place those members to the side or back with a maximum of 20 members in each location.**
  - d. **During the performance, Pep Band/Color Guard members are allowed to change formation but must remain in the designated performance area in which they started.**
  - e. **Any team member stepping outside or touching outside the performance area with both feet will cause a .5 penalty per occurrence. Pep Band/Color Guard members must remain in designated area during the performance.**
  - f. **Once a team member takes the floor, they must remain on the floor until the end of the performance.**
9. **Game Day LIVE Format**
  - a. **Pep Band/Color Guard and/or Cheer will have 30 (thirty) seconds to preset for their Game Day LIVE performance; Athletes / performers must all enter from the same location.**
  - b. **The announcer will introduce the team, and the Pep Band will have 1 (one) minute to play any cadence or song.**
    - Only the Pep Band/Color Guard is scored at this time.
    - The cheer team should be positioned so that the Pep Band can adequately be scored but may rally the crowd during this time. NO skills are allowed at this time.
    - The performance will start with the first beat of music.
  - c. **BAND CHANT:** The pep band/color guard may remain on the stage/mat during the Band Chant portion of the Game Day routine. Pep Band should focus on playing spirited music that reflects a game day environment, and that the cheerleaders can incorporate visual movements to.

- d. Prior to the end of the Band Chant, the Pep Band must relocate to the designated areas before the start of the crowd leading section.
- e. CROWD LEADING: The pep band should provide a cadence that the cheer team and crowd back home could easily yell along with, eliciting a crowd response during the situational sideline. There must be a clear distinction between the Sideline and kicking off the Cheer portion. The cheerleaders and pep band may show spirited interaction as a clear transition. The pep band's role is to influence crowd participation by responding to the cheer team's call-backs and encouraging the crowd to yell along. They may also create a cadence that would be relevant to the game day environment to increase the overall crowd effectiveness.
- f. FIGHT SONG: The final element should reflect your school's traditional Fight Song. For teams that do not have an official Fight Song, it is recommended to use a second selection of band chant music. When performing the fight song, the pep band should focus on sound quality, technical accuracy, musicality and engagement. They should lead the cheerleaders and the crowd with their performance, as well as participate in call-backs, if applicable.
- g. RUN OFF: The pep band has 30 seconds to play original, spirited music while the cheerleaders exit the competition floor. Once the piece ends, the pep band may exit. Only the pep band is scored during this time. Cheer and Pep Band/Color Guard must exit to the same location.
- h. The use of pre-recorded tracks is not prohibited. However, it is recommended that the Pep Band members provide the music live for the entirety of the routine.

## 2024-2025 SAFETY RULES AND ADDITIONAL DIVISION RESTRICTIONS

Rules subject to change by USA Cheer. Go to [usacheer.org](https://usacheer.org) for the most updated rules.

- Open Rec and Junior High Divisions will be restricted from performing any type of toss (basket, elevator, or similar multi-based tosses) or waist level cradles.
- Non-Tumbling Divisions will restrict any hip over head rotation except for entries and exits to stunts/pyramids. Back handspring entries WILL NOT be allowed in the Non-Tumbling Divisions.
- Non-Building Divisions will restrict any athlete from providing support to another athlete off the performing surface.

## National High School Cheerleading Championship Information



## HOW TO QUALIFY FOR THE 2025 NHSCC:

In order to qualify for our National High School Cheerleading Championship (NHSCC), teams are required to fulfil the following requirements:

1. 75% of the qualifying team must have attended a 2 Day Varsity Spirit Summer Camp and participate in the Squad Credentialing program.
2. Compete and receive a bid at a 2025 UCA qualifying regional competition for the 2025 National High School Cheerleading Championship. Teams who do not receive a bid at their in-person regional may email [NHSCC@varsity.com](mailto:NHSCC@varsity.com) for other eligibility options.
3. The division the team competes in at the regional will be the only division the team is allowed to compete in at the NHSCC. Exception – some divisions at the NHSCC are further split by Team Size or School Size.
4. Teams may qualify for bids in multiple divisions if competing at different regional qualifying events for each division of the same routine type.
5. Individuals may NOT represent more than one team at the National Championship. Exception – Junior Varsity members may perform with the Varsity in a Varsity Game Day Division. See Division guidelines above.
6. To create a Championship that gives equal opportunity for schools of similar student composition, UCA will sub-divide the Varsity divisions at the NHSCC based on school enrollments in the 9th - 12th grades as of October 1, 2024. Varsity Divisions I & II – Please provide a letter signed and verified from your registrar's office on school letterhead with your total enrollment information. See Enrollment guidelines above. Check out [www.uca.varsity.com](http://www.uca.varsity.com) for more details.
7. Attending a regional UCA competition does not guarantee a bid to the National High School Cheerleading Championship. Only scores of 90% or higher are guaranteed a bid. Additional bids are awarded for teams based on the following factors:
  - a. Depth of division
  - b. Scores above the natural break in a division
  - c. Deductions
  - d. Raw scores versus final scores
  - e. National averagesIt is the discretion of the Event Director and Scoring Manager to determine to award bids based on these factors. At the conclusion of the event all bids are final.
8. Virtual events are not eligible for bids to NHSCC. For states in which no regional event is available within close proximity, teams may request prior approval for a virtual bid. Email [NHSCC@varsity.com](mailto:NHSCC@varsity.com)

## HOW TO QUALIFY FOR GAME DAY LIVE AT 2025 NHSCC:

In order to qualify for our National High School Cheerleading Championship (NHSCC) in the Game Day Live division, teams are required to fulfil the following requirements:

1. **Cheerleaders:**
  - a. The cheer team must attend a UCA Regional Competition and compete and receive a bid in the Game Day division.
  - b. Teams that accept the invitation to compete in the Game Day Live division will ONLY be allowed to compete in the LIVE version of Game Day. They will not be allowed to compete in another Game Day division.
2. **Pep Band:**
  - a. If a pep band and cheer team choose to attend a competition; the pep band must register for the event and complete a release waiver for each participant.
  - b. The pep band must be current members of the official pep band for the school they are representing.
  - c. The pep band must be in a school-related, coordinated outfit (i.e., traditional team uniform, coordinated outfit representing your school colors, letters, mascot, etc.).
3. Visit [uca.varsity.com](http://uca.varsity.com) or contact your State Director for Game Day Live event availability.

## NHSCC SPECIFIC EVENT GUIDELINES

***Please note: All UCA Event Guidelines in this document will apply at the NHSCC. The following Event Guidelines are in addition to and specific to the National High School Cheerleading Championship.***

### NHSCC CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISIONS

Athletes may only perform up to 2 times if one routine is a performance routine and the other is a game day routine. If an athlete is performing 2 times, they must be representing the same program/school in both performances.

Teams must compete in the same style Performance Routine and Game Day Routine. i.e. Non-Tumbling or Non-Building must be the same for both.

UCA/UDA strongly recommends that you have an alternate (not a member of another competing squad at the same event), who is prepared to substitute in the event of injury, probation, etc. No cheerleader/dancer may represent more than one Team, even in the event of injury or emergency.

### TOURNAMENT FACILITY

1. The competition is scheduled to be held at Disney's Wide World of Sports ®
2. The tournament officials shall have the right to alter the time and location of the competition in the event changes because necessary due to inclement weather, facility problems, television production requirements, or any other situation deemed by the tournament offices to be essential to the successful execution of the championship.

### ROUNDS OF COMPETITION

1. UCA reserves the right to determine if a preliminary, semi-final or final round will be necessary. All divisions with only one round prior to the finals will be classified as semi-finals.
2. From each round of competition, 50% of the teams in each round/group will advance.
3. Final rounds of competition will be confirmed two weeks prior to the championship; however, all advancements will be based on the final number of teams that perform in each round/group. A minimum of 3 teams will advance to the finals round of competition. A maximum of 12 teams will advance from each round.
4. Tournament officials will have full authority to make the final determination of the number of rounds and the of teams selected to advance. In the event of a tie for the final spot advancing, both teams that are tied will move on. In the event of a tie for first in the preliminary round, both teams will automatically advance to the final round.
5. UCA will combine divisions in the best interest of providing a competitive environment. When/If a division has less than 3 teams, they may be combined into the same age/size division. Division combinations will be finalized no later than 2 weeks prior to the NHSCC.
6. Order of Competition
  - The Order of Competition for the first round will be determined by a random draw.
  - Advancing rounds will be determined by reverse rank with the lowest ranking team performing first.
  - Divisions with multiple prelim/semi-final groups that combine into one round of competition will be combined based on each groups' ranking and alternated accordingly.
  - Teams with scheduling conflicts when advancing to the next round must submit a schedule change request within 30 minutes of the division announcements. Teams will be moved earlier in the schedule for one of the performances.
7. The top team in each preliminary will automatically advance to the finals in their respective division unless otherwise listed below.

#### Advancing Guidelines

- Divisions with 0-24 or less teams will have a Semi-Final and Final Round.
- Divisions with 25-40 teams will have a Preliminary A/B, Semi-Final and Final Round.
- Divisions with 41-60 teams will have a Preliminary A/B/C, Semi-Final and Final Round.
- Divisions with 61-80 teams will have a Preliminary A/B/C/D, A/B Semi-Final and C/D Semi-Final and Final Round.
- Divisions with 81 or more teams will have a Preliminary A/B/C/D/E/F, A/B/C Semi-Final and D/E/F Semi-Final and Final Round.

## **NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP PARTICIPATION**

1. It is understood that teams that participate in the National High School Cheerleading Championship will NOT knowingly and willingly participate in any other cheerleading event promoted as a national or international championship for the 2024-2025 school year. (Exception: USA National Championship and The Quest Recreational Championship) This includes all prizes and awards labeled as National or International Champions.
2. School teams cannot compete in another event promoted as a National or International Championship (Exception: ICU World Cheerleading Championships and World School Cheerleading Championships) for the 2024-2025 school year within a school division or category regardless of team name.
3. A school can compete at UCA and NCA if that team is recognized as a separate team by the school and no athletes are the same. (No athletes can compete at both events)
4. Teams who violate this rule will be subject to disqualification and will forfeit the opportunity to participate in the subsequent National High School Cheerleading Championship.

## **PRIZES AND AWARDS**

1. All athletes performing on the team must be registered and rostered for the event.
2. All teams in the final round of competition will receive a trophy.
3. Teams who rank first, second, or third place will additionally receive a bronze, silver, or gold medallions for each athlete who performed on the floor plus two coaches and up to 5 additional rostered alternates, administrators or other.
4. National Champion teams will receive a champion banner.
5. National Champion teams will receive a National Champion jacket for each division/category. Jackets will be awarded for each athlete who performed on the floor plus two coaches and up to 5 additional rostered alternates.
6. Additional medallions and jackets may be requested at the conclusion of the event. Additional award requests will be shipped, based on availability, following the event.

## **TELEVISION COVERAGE**

The National High School Cheerleading Championship is nationally televised on ESPN and ESPN2. Because of the format of the show, not all finalist teams will be shown on the telecast.

## **APPEARANCES, ENDORSEMENTS AND PUBLICITY**

All teams winning titles, awards or prizes agree to have all appearances, endorsements and publicity approved through the NHSCC office.

## **UCA EVENT GUIDELINES AGREEMENT**

By accepting the Terms and Conditions as the authorized person from my program I agree and acknowledge that (i) I am the sponsor/director of the team (ii) I have read and understand the foregoing, (iii) I will be solely responsible for communicating the foregoing to all coaches/directors in my program that will coaching and directing teams at the UCA Regional Competition and NHSCC, (iv) I will ensure that my teams will comply with all rules and regulations at all times, and (v) my team will support the results of the competition, as I am a role model for my programs. I have read and reviewed both these specific UCA Event Guidelines and the Varsity Spirit Rules and Regulations.

These Event Guidelines are the exclusive property of Varsity Spirit and may not be reproduced, in part or in whole, for events not sponsored and approved by Varsity Spirit.





# **RULES & REGULATIONS**

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## CODE OF CONDUCT

Varsity Spirit encourages and supports sportsmanship, integrity and fairness among participants and coaches in all facets of cheerleading including team/squad practice and performance. We strive to uphold the highest standards and promote this to the best of our abilities and believe that coaches are instrumental in promoting and instilling this among their respective team members.

To ensure the most positive experience for all attendees, Varsity Spirit asks that the following Code of Conduct be adhered to during all Regional, Virtual, and National Championships:

1. Any questions or concerns that affect a team's performance or experience must be communicated by the coach to the AccuScore Table. The appropriate Official will then be called to discuss the situation with the coach.
2. Participants, coaches, or spectators are prohibited from contacting the Judges during the competition.
3. Judges' rulings are final related to deductions, final team placements and legalities.
4. Any disruptive or aggressive behavior displayed by participants, coaches, gym owners, or spectators towards others, including Event Staff, may lead to penalties such as deductions, potential team disqualification, removal from the event, or exclusion from future Regionals and Championships. This includes behavior that is unruly, disruptive, aggressive, threatening, abusive, or violent, such as bullying, verbal, physical, or sexual harassment directed at any individual.
5. Varsity Spirit reserves the right to remove any persons from a competition for unsafe or unsportsmanlike conduct.
6. Student-athletes who are subject to an open criminal proceeding relating to any offense involving sexual misconduct or violence, who have a criminal conviction for any offense involving sexual misconduct or violence, or whose names are listed on temporary or permanent ineligible lists maintained by USA Cheer or the U.S. All Star Federation are prohibited from participating in any Varsity Spirit competition.
7. Coaches and Gym Owners should be aware of the eligibility for individuals travelling with the team and understand that an individual listed on the temporary or permanent ineligible listed maintained by USA Cheer or the U.S. All Star Federation are prohibited from participating in any Varsity Spirit competition.

## ELIGIBILITY

1. Varsity Spirit strictly enforces the age requirements for each division. Varsity Spirit reserves the right to assess a penalty, disqualify, reclaim any and all awards and/or remove video appearance for any team/gym found to be in violation of the eligibility policy, whether before, during or after the Event.
2. A team roster will need to be completed prior to participating in the event. One roster must be completed per team to include all coaches and athletes.
3. Varsity Spirit will require that all coaches, directors, choreographers, and personnel wishing to access the warm up area, backstage, coaches' box, or athlete areas at our competitions have required credentialing, background check, and safeguarding as required by each event.
4. Please refer to Event Guidelines for specific restrictions and/or deductions.

## SAFETY GUIDELINES / RULES

1. All teams must follow the event safety guidelines / rules for the type of team competing i.e. cheer, dance, band, all star, rec etc.
2. Please refer to the appropriate Safety Guidelines / Rules. Clarifications and updates may be made during the season.
3. It is the coach's responsibility to read and understand the Safety Rules appropriate to your team type.
4. For additional safety information including Fan Code of Conduct and Prohibited Items please visit [Varsity Spirit Safety](#).

## MUSIC GUIDELINES / RULES

1. I have read and understand the USA Cheer Music Copyrights Educational Initiative and all sound recordings used in our team's music shall only be used with written license from the owner(s) of the sound recordings.
2. For the most up to date music information, visit <http://varsity.com/music>. If you have any questions, cheer teams should email [musicinfo@varsity.com](mailto:musicinfo@varsity.com). Please check the Music Provider list for updates and changes periodically.
3. Teams must be able to provide proof of licensing, in the form of a printed copy, during registration at the event.  
For example:
  - a. Clementine – provide team's invoice from camp.
  - b. iTunes – provide a screenshot of the song you are using from your purchased playlist. No edits may be made to the music other than timing edits.
  - c. Music downloaded from a subscription service (Apple Music, Spotify, Youtube, etc) is not allowed.
  - d. Music Provider – provide a printed copy of proof of licensing.
  - e. Band Music – If you'd like to perform to a recording of your band playing a single musical composition, you will need to provide documentation that confirms the following:
    - The team has secured a compulsory license to make copies of the recording made by the band or orchestra.
    - The band or orchestra recorded the song for and in conjunction with the cheer/dance squad.
    - The school principal or dean was aware of and approved this recording.
    - The band or orchestra does not provide music to other cheer/dance squads.
    - No other musical compositions are embodied in the recording to be used by the authorized cheer/dance squad.
4. If your team/ensemble is featured in the TV broadcast and uses an original composition created for your performance, your routine music may be used in the show if you also secured synchronization rights. Teams must be able to provide written documentation that synchronization rights were properly secured during registration at the event for the original routine music to be included in the show.
5. When recording your music for the event, coaches or music editors should edit their song in a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) and make sure that the volume of the song is at 0. Things to note: Most DAW's have a default that sets a track at -6 when a track is added. Check to see if there is a normalization process after you render or save your work.
6. If you would like to perform your school's original fight song, you may bring a recording of your marching band playing the song. You will need to get the school's permission to use the song and recording. A letter granting permission for the cheer or dance team to use the fight song on school letterhead is enough. It should be signed by your program's administrative supervisor. Go to [varsity.com/music](http://varsity.com/music) for more details.
7. If a team does not have the required paperwork, they will be given the option to count the routine verbally or perform to an approved track of music or a track with counts (Provided by Varsity Spirit).
8. If a team does not have the required paperwork and chooses not to count the routine or perform to an approved track of music or a track with counts, the team will be disqualified from the competition and not allowed to perform or compete.
9. If there are concerns regarding a certain team's use of music, a Challenge Form must be completed immediately following the team's performance.
10. A challenge can only be made by the official coach of a team competing at the event at which the challenge is being made.
11. Challenge Process
  - a. All music challenges must be submitted in writing to the event director.
  - b. There will be \$100 fee to request a music challenge and must be in the form of a check made out to St Jude Children's Research Hospital. Fees collected will be voided if the challenge is correct.
  - c. If the team challenged can provide documentation during the event and can be verified, the fees will be donated to St. Jude.
  - d. If the team challenged can provide documentation that requires further review, a decision will be finalized within 48 hours of the event.
12. It is required that each team have a responsible adult remain at the music station that knows the routine and music (no alternates or team members allowed). This representative is responsible for pressing "play". Should an adult

choose not to stay at the music table for the duration of the routine, and a malfunction occurs, teams may or may not be permitted to perform the routine again.

13. It is not recommended that a smart phone be used for playing music, due to interference that may be caused during a routine. No cover may be on any MP3 player so that a jack may be easily inserted into the device.
14. All teams must provide their own device for use on the event provided sound system. Music should be on a digital music player/iPod/iPhone. CD's will no longer be allowed, and CD players will not be provided at competitions.
15. Please make sure that all devices have a headphone jack to connect to the sound system and are fully charged, volume turned up and placed in airplane mode. All cases should be removed from the device.
16. Please ensure that jacks are clean and free of any debris which may impact connectivity. You will need to acquire an adapter in advance if your player does not have a headphone jack.
17. Teams may not use Disney themes, nor may they have costumes that resemble a Disney character at any of the Walt Disney World® Championship events based in Orlando, FL. However, Disney music is acceptable if it follows the music guidelines.

## **INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE**

### **UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES**

1. If, in the opinion of the competition officials, a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the competition equipment, facilities, or other factors attributable to the competition, venue (power outage, fire alarm, etc.), the coach of the team at the music stand affected should STOP the routine.
  - a. Examples: Equipment Issue – Music volume is all the way down and athletes can't hear the beginning of the routine, etc.
  - b. Venue Emergency – power outage, fire alarm, etc.
2. If the coach chooses not to stop the routine, the team may not have the option to perform again.
3. **UNIFORM MALFUNCTION** As a precaution, each performer is required to take the necessary steps to avoid inappropriate exposure during the performance. Should a uniform malfunction resulting in indecent exposure occur, the routine should be stopped immediately. This is a shared responsibility of all parties involved to recognize a malfunction has occurred.
4. If allowed to perform again, judging will resume from the point at which the injury/interruption occurred as determined by the judges. The routine must be performed full-out from the beginning of the routine. All point deductions accumulated to that point will carry over. If a team prefers not to re-work the routine, at the coach's discretion, they will take the score they have received up to that point. If a skill has not been performed a "0" will be given in the category. Teams that limit/mark skills prior to the point of injury could result in an adjustment in scores based on the skills performed.

### **FAULT OF TEAM**

1. In the event a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the team's own equipment, the team must either continue the routine or withdraw from the competition.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed later, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. The team must perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred.

### **INJURY / ILLNESS**

1. The only persons that may stop a routine for injury are: competition officials, the advisor/coach of the team performing or an injured individual. This is a shared responsibility of all parties involved to recognize an injury has occurred.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed later, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. The team must perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. The injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless:
  - a. The competition officials receive clearance from the first aid attending to that participant, the parent (if present) AND THEN the head coach/advisor of the competing team.

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- b. If the medical personnel do not clear the participant, the participant can only return to the competition if a parent or legal guardian in attendance signs a return to participation waiver.
- c. An athlete who has a suspected concussion should be removed from the activity immediately and should not be allowed to return to participation the same day of the incident and without being cleared by a medical professional in accordance with state law or organizational policy.
4. In addition, the sponsor and all of the coaches attending the competition must be familiar with all federal, state and local laws applicable to such individuals and relating to such individuals' duties and responsibilities regarding the recognition and treatment of injuries.
5. In the event of an injury or emergency, 1 parent or legal guardian may be escorted backstage during the evaluation process. While backstage, they will need to remain with the athlete or an event staff member.

#### **RE-PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE**

1. The competition officials will determine whether the team will be allowed to perform at a later time.
2. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed later, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials and must be within thirty minutes after the rest of the division is complete.
3. If allowed to perform again, judging will resume from the point at which the injury/interruption occurred as determined by the judges. The routine must be performed full-out from the beginning of the routine. All point deductions accumulated to that point will carry over.
4. Teams that limit/mark skills prior to the point of interruption could result in an adjustment in scores based on the skills performed.
5. If a team prefers not to re-perform the routine, at the coach's discretion, they will take the score they have received up to that point. If a skill has not been performed a "0" will be given in the category.

#### **INTRODUCTIONS**

1. Any introductions (tumbling, entrances, chants, spellouts, etc. are considered part of the routine and will be timed as part of the performance.
2. All team breaks, rituals and traditions need to take place prior to entering the mat/stage area.
3. Teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm, but without excessive gestures.
4. Any prolonged, excessive, or premeditated celebration by individual athletes or a group of athletes while on the competition floor is not allowed.
5. Coaching staff, parents, fans and/or other members of the performing team entering the competition boundary before, during or after a performance is not allowed. The only people allowed on the performance floor are the competitors and competition personnel.
6. There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official ending of the routine.
7. Please refer to Event Guidelines for specific restrictions and/or deductions.

#### **COMPETITION AREA**

1. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
2. Approximate cheer floor size will be 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 panels foam /spring). Approximate dance floor size will be 50 feet wide by 50 feet deep.
3. All skills must originate and be completed within the competition boundary. No lineups, skills, or transitions are allowed outside of the competition boundary. Anytime a participant unintentionally steps outside the competition boundary, they must return immediately.
4. The competition boundary is defined as the performance surface and any immediate adjacent safety border.
5. All center markers are prohibited. We will have the center marked on all performance surfaces.
6. Please refer to Event Specific Guidelines for any additional restrictions/clarifications.



## WARM UP ROOM POLICY

1. Approved Coaches, performing participants and alternates in uniform of the team practicing are the only individuals allowed into warm up. Exception:
  - a. A child under the age of 10 and is not competing must accompany an approved Coach. They will be allowed in warm up for all events but must remain in adult supervision in all backstage and warm up areas.
  - b. Children ages 11 and over will not be allowed in warm up unless they are a rostered on the competing team in warm up.
  - c. All coaches must inform Varsity personnel at registration to receive access credentials.
  - d. Strollers may not be allowed at select events. See event guidelines if additional restrictions apply.
2. Varsity Spirit will require that all coaches, directors, choreographers, and personnel wishing to access the warm up area, backstage, coaches' box, or athlete areas at our competitions have required credentialing, background check, and safeguarding as required by each event.
  - a. Must be an eligible coach listed on the event roster and must use approved warm up entrance.
  - b. Photo ID will be required of all coaches when checking in to any Varsity Spirit Event and may be spot checked periodically during the event.
  - c. Junior Coaches (Coaches under 18) – All junior coaches must be listed on the roster as a coach.
  - d. Identification (lanyard, wristband, other) will be provided by the Varsity Spirit event that you are attending and must be worn for the duration of the event. Identification cannot be shared or transferred for ANY REASON.
  - e. Transferring a wristband to another person that does not meet the warm-up room requirements will result in immediate action for the person or persons involved and the program they represent. Such action may include, but is not limited to, removal from the venue, disqualification of a team or multiple teams from the organization, and disciplinary action for the program.
  - f. Varsity Spirit reserves the right to not permit access or remove any persons from a warm up that does not have proper identification.
3. Warm up Minimum Standards
  - a. The time between when a team finishes warm-ups and is on the competition floor should be no sooner than 8 minutes and no longer than 30 minutes. NOTE: Teams delayed performing after 30 minutes should have the opportunity to warm up again or be given an area and posted a list of exercises to rewarm up their muscles: Quick Toe Raises, Squat Jumps, Jumping Jacks, Bridges, Running with High Knees and or Punches.
  - b. Based on an event's facilities, the performance schedule may allow for more or less time to get from warm-up to the competition arena. Event Officials will monitor timing and work to provide the safest competition environment for all athletes.

## SPOTTER POLICY

### Spotters for teams competing at All Star Events:

1. Varsity Spirit will allow all programs to provide additional spotters in warm up and performance and must meet the below guidelines.
2. The use of additional spotters is not mandatory and will be at the coach, program director or gym owner discretion.
3. Programs may use up to 4 additional spotters for each performance; however, additional spotters are not required.

### Spotters for teams competing at School Events:

1. Varsity Spirit will allow school teams and recreational programs competing at a school event to provide additional spotters in the warm up room only and must meet the below guidelines.
2. The use of additional spotters is left to the discretion of the coach.
3. Teams may use up to 4 additional spotters for each warm-up; however, additional spotters are not required.
4. The use of additional spotters is not mandatory and will be at the coach's discretion.
5. Spotters will be provided on the main competition floor at all events.
6. Teams will not be allowed to decline spotters on the main floor.

**Spotters for teams competing at Collegiate Championships:**

1. Varsity Spirit will allow college teams to provide additional spotters in the warm up room only and must meet the below guidelines:
  - a. Event spotters will be provided by the event producer in warm up for all teams.
2. The use of additional spotters is left to the discretion of the coach.
3. Teams may use up to 4 additional spotters for each warm-up; however, additional spotters are not required.
4. The use of additional spotters is not mandatory and will be at the coach's discretion.
5. Spotters will be provided on the main competition floor at all events.
6. Teams will not be allowed to decline spotters.

**Spotters at all Dance Events:**

1. Additional spotters are not permitted or provided for dance team performances.

**Guidelines for Additional Spotters:**

1. Should only be used during the stunt, pyramid, and/or basket toss sections. Additional spotters should stand at the back of the floor when not spotting those sections.
  2. Should not touch, assist, or save skills being performed.
  3. Additional spotters should only be used to prevent a fall to the competition floor.
  4. Spotters are not allowed to count or coach while on the floor.
  5. Should be dressed so that they are presentable, professional, and distinguishable from the performing athletes. Program provided additional spotters should not wear clothing similar to the performing team's uniform.
  6. Should not dress or act in a manner that distracts from the athletes and their performance.
  7. Should be at least 18 years old, listed on the official event roster and familiar with spotting the skills of the performing team.
  8. See specific Brand Event Guidelines for deductions (if applicable) regarding spotters.
- Note: Teams should not attempt skills beyond their ability level.

**SPORTSMANSHIP**

1. All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the competition with positive presentation upon entry and exit from the performance area as well as throughout the routine.
2. The advisor and 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.
3. When a coach is in discussion with an official, other coaches, athletes and parents/spectators, they must maintain proper professional conduct. Failing to do so may result in deduction, removal of coach or disqualification.

**INTERPRETATIONS AND/OR RULINGS**

1. Any interpretation or any aspect of these Rules and Regulations or any decision involving any other aspect of the competition will be rendered by the event officials.
2. Officials will render a judgment to ensure that the competition proceeds in a manner consistent with the general spirit and goals of the competition.
3. Decisions of the event officials may or may not be made the day of the event.

**DISQUALIFICATION**

Any team that does not adhere to the terms and procedures of these Rules and Regulations and the Brand Event Guidelines will be subject to disqualification from the competition, will automatically forfeit any right to any prizes or awards presented by the competition.

## HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

1. **RULES & PROCEDURES** - Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the advisor / coach of the team and will be directed to the Competition Director.
2. **PERFORMANCE** - Any questions concerning the team's performance should be made to the Competition Director immediately after the team's performance and/or following the outcome of the competition. Questions regarding another team and/or their performance will not be allowed.
3. **MUSIC / AGE** - Any questions concerning a specific violation in music compliance must be submitted in writing to the Competition Director immediately following the team's performance.

## FINALITY OF DECISIONS

By participating in this competition, each team agrees that the decisions made by the judges will be final, and results may ONLY be reviewed for clarification. Each team acknowledges the necessity for the judges to make prompt and fair decisions in this competition and each team therefore expressly waives any legal, equitable, administrative or procedural review of such decisions.

## EVENT PARTICIPATION

1. By participating in a Varsity event, teams give their consent for performances and scores to be made public.
2. Varsity TV publishes and makes available all competition routine videos from live-streamed events to recognize the hard work and talent of the athletes competing, and ultimately, to serve and grow the cheerleading and dance community. Due to the number of teams and routines published, Varsity Spirit is unable to accommodate requests for removal.

## VIDEO MEDIA POLICY

No commercial recording (audio or visual) or commercial live streaming is allowed in the event venue or other event-related venues (including, but not limited to, hotels and restaurants) or on the grounds of any such venues (collectively, "Event Locations"). In the event a team authorizes the commercial recording or streaming in any Event Location, the team will be automatically disqualified. In addition, the personal, noncommercial use of live streaming apps (such as Periscope, Facebook Live, etc.) to capture all or any part of a performance during the event is not permitted. By attending/purchasing admission to the event, each attendee grants permission to Varsity Spirit, LLC and its affiliates, designees, agents, licensees, and invitees to use the image, likeness, actions and statements of the attendee in any live or recorded audio, video, film, or photographic display or other transmission, exhibition, publication, or reproduction made of, or at, the event in any medium, whether now known or hereafter created, or context for any purpose, including commercial or promotional purposes, without further authorization or compensation.

## LOGO USAGE

Teams will not be allowed to use the any Varsity Spirit logos or those of the Varsity Spirit Brands on any merchandise including banners, rings, bows, t-shirts, etc. without prior approval from the Varsity Spirit Office. However, the use of the letters will be allowed.

## APPEARANCES, ENDORSEMENTS AND PUBLICITY

All teams winning titles or awards agree to have all appearances, endorsements and publicity approved through Varsity Spirit.

## RULES AND REGULATIONS AGREEMENT

By accepting the Terms and Conditions as the authorized person from my program I agree and acknowledge that (i) I am the sponsor/director of the team (ii) I have read and understand the foregoing, (iii) I will be solely responsible for communicating the foregoing to all coaches/directors in my program that will coaching and directing teams at the Regional and National Competitions, (iv) I will ensure that my teams will comply with all rules and regulations at all times, and (v) my team will support the results of the competition, as I am a role model for my programs. I acknowledge that my team must comply with these Varsity Spirit Rules and Regulations, as well as, the Event Specific guidelines for each event.

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