

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

NCA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO BE THE ARBITRATOR AND INTERPRETER OF ALL RULES COVERED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

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CODE OF CONDUCT

NCA fervently encourages and supports sportsmanship, integrity and fairness among participants and coaches in all facets of cheerleading including, but not limited to, 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, NCA asks that the following Code of Conduct be adhered to during all NCA Championships:

- Any questions or concerns that affect a team's performance or experience must be communicated by the coach to the AccuScore Table. The appropriate NCA Official will then be called to discuss the situation with the coach.
- Participants, coaches, or spectators are prohibited from making contact with the Judges during the competition.
- Judges' rulings are final related to deductions, final team placements and legalities.
- Any unruly, aggressive, or belligerent behavior by participants, coaches or spectators toward any other attendee or NCA Event
- Staff will result in a deduction, potential team disqualification, removal from the event and/or barred participation from future NCA Championships.
- Varsity Spirit reserves the right to remove any persons from a competition for unsafe or unsportsmanlike conduct.

NFHS CREDENTIALING FOR COACHES

Since 1948, NCA has provided cheerleading instruction and competitive opportunities for cheerleaders, with an emphasis on leadership and safety. Leadership in the school and elevating school spirit at games, pep rallies, community events and fundraisers are all integral parts of a cheerleader's role.

As your partner in building strong school spirit programs, we offer the Squad Credentialing Program that was developed in conjunction with the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). This program will be offered at all two day or longer Varsity Spirit camps and will focus on two areas: the importance of **SAFETY** and the **FIVE KEY PILLARS** to a successful school spirit program that include:

- Crowd Leading
- Spirit Raising
- Ambassadorship
- Athleticism
- Entertainment

The NCA High School National Championship is held each January in Dallas, Texas and is an opportunity for teams to showcase both their Performance and Game Day skills. The role that a well- rounded cheerleader plays throughout the year in their school and community is extremely important to us, therefore the Varsity Spirit/NFHS Squad Credentialing program **IS** a requirement for participation in the NCA High School National Championship.

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Our Squad Credentialing Program is part of our quest to continually elevate the profile of cheerleaders, whether on campus, at a game or representing your school for any occasion. We are committed to offering comprehensive training to cheerleaders and coaches and feel very strongly that this is one more way we can ensure that all cheerleaders understand their role and are knowledgeable about cheerleading safety.

ELIGIBILITY POLICY

High School/Junior High Division squads must consist entirely of students who have not graduated from high school. Divisions are determined by the grade of the participants at the time of the competition, regardless of the participant's current age.

Generally, every member of a team representing a school must be enrolled at that school, must be on a team officially representing the school and must perform in the official uniform of that school. All exceptions to this rule must receive written approval from NCA at least 2 weeks prior to competition. In an approved exception, a cheerleader must be a full-time member of the competing team and may not represent any other school-based team throughout the entire season. Promoting cheerleaders from other campuses for the sole purpose of competition will not be allowed. Members must be officially recognized by the competing school's administration as a member of the competing team's cheerleading squad.

The lowest official grade level for all athletes participating in high school divisions is listed as 9th grade. However, athletes younger than 9th grade will be allowed to participate in High School Open Divisions if they are enrolled in the school they are representing, are recognized as full-time cheerleaders for that school and receive written permission from NCA prior to the competition. Teams competing in Club divisions will not have to adhere by the standard eligibility requirements.

In fairness to all, NCA strictly enforces its age/grade requirements for each division. NCA reserves the right to assess a penalty, disqualify, reclaim any and all awards and/or remove video appearance for any team found to be in violation of the eligibility policy, whether before, during or after the event. A Team Roster Form will be sent to all coaches participating in an NCA Championship. One roster must be completed per team, and should include each participant's name, age, grade and birth date. This form must be signed and given to NCA during the event check-in. A school representative must sign and date this form. For High School and Junior High teams these forms must be notarized by school administration. The Team Roster Form will be reconciled against the Release and Waiver Forms to ensure all members are accounted for.

Participants may not compete in multiple Performance/Crowd Leading divisions within the School Cheer categories at the same championship (example: performers may not compete on a Junior Varsity and Medium Varsity team). NCA 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 may represent more than one School Performance Division Team, even in the event of injury or emergency. Once a team checks into the championship, the team may not be allowed to change divisions due to an injury.

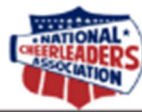
Note: Cheerleaders may compete in a Performance **OR** Crowd Leading Division **AND** in the Game Day Divisions.

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LEGALITY RULES

Rules subject to change by NFHS. Visit www.NFHS.com for the most updated rules.



NCA COMPETITION DIVISIONS



FALL 2023 - SPRING 2024

DIVISION LISTINGS

Need help deciding which division to compete in? Email ncasupport@varsity.com for help finding the division best suited for your team's experience level and strengths.

CROWD LEADING DIVISIONS

Routine Length: 2:30 minutes (Music Time: Up to 1:45 minutes)

CHEER PORTION: EMPHASIZES CROWD LEADING ABILITY WITH CROWD EFFECTIVE MATERIAL AND PROPS TO ENHANCE CROWD ENGAGEMENT

LEVEL	Division	Members	Grade	Gender
NOVICE	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
INTERMEDIATE	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
	Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
ADVANCED	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
	Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
OTHER CROWD PERFORMANCE DIVISIONS	Novice Non-Building Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	Novice Non-Building Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
	Novice Junior Club	5 - 30 members	14 years & younger	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Building Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Building Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Tumbling Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Tumbling JV/Freshman	5 - 30 members	11 th grade and below	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Tumbling Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/0 - 2 Males
	Advanced Non-Building Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
	Advanced Non-Tumbling Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/0 - 2 Males

PERFORMANCE DIVISIONS

Routine Length: 2:30 minutes (Music Time: Up to 1:45 minutes)

LEVEL	Division	Members	Grade	Gender
NOVICE	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
INTERMEDIATE	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
	Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
ADVANCED	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
	Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male

Performance and Crowd Leading Divisions will be split into Small (5 - 16 members) and Large (17 - 30 members) when there are **AT LEAST FIVE** teams registered in **BOTH** split divisions at the event director's discretion. The Novice Junior Club is available for sideline teams that do not fit into the standard divisions. This includes Elementary teams, Rec teams, and other club programs.

GAME DAY DIVISIONS

Routine Length: 3:00 minutes

Includes in this order: Band Chant, Situational Cheer, Crowd Leading Cheer and Fight Song--all crowd leading material suitable for the sideline or pep rallies.

LEVEL	Division	Members	Grade	Gender
	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
	Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
	Game Day Rally (previously Spirit Program)	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male

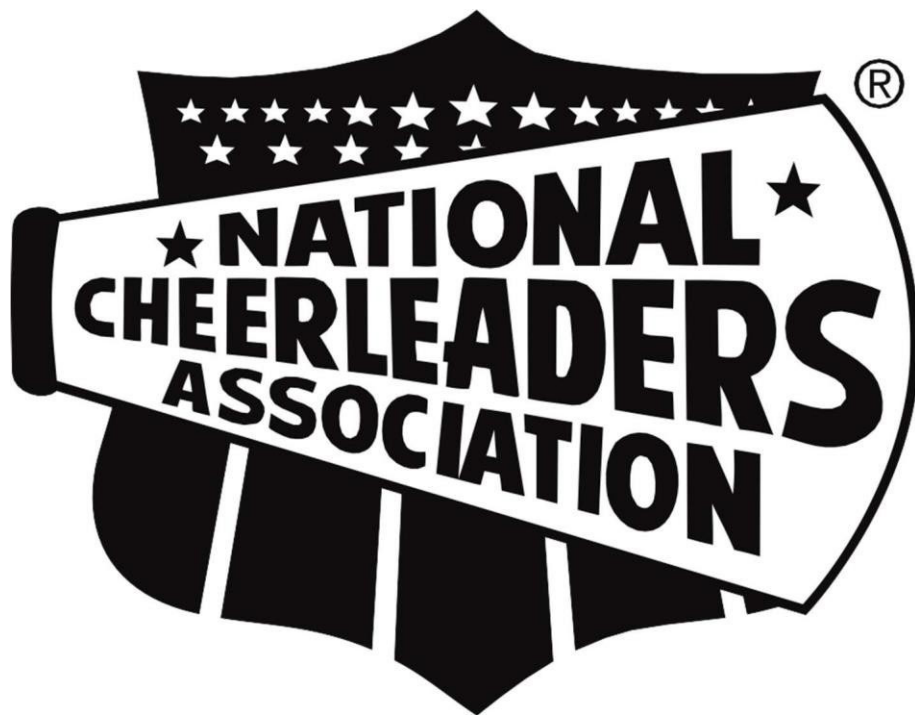
Game Day Divisions will be split into Small (5 - 12 members), Medium (13 - 20 members) and Large (21 - 30 members) when there are **AT LEAST FIVE** teams registered in **EACH** split division at the Event Director's discretion.

*Game Day Rally must consist of more than cheer and mascot by incorporating other Spirit Program elements such as band, drum line, dance teams, etc. The programs participating must be officially recognized by the competing school's admin as a member of the competing school's dance, cheer or band program.

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CROWD LEADING & PERFORMANCE DIVISIONS



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CROWD LEADING DIVISIONS

Routine Length: 2:30 minutes (Music Time: Up to 1:45 minutes)

CHEER PORTION: EMPHASIZES CROWD LEADING ABILITY WITH CROWD EFFECTIVE MATERIAL AND PROPS TO ENHANCE CROWD ENGAGEMENT

NOVICE	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
INTERMEDIATE	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
	Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
ADVANCED	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
	Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
OTHER CROWD PERFORMANCE DIVISIONS	Novice Non-Building Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	Novice Non-Building Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
	Novice Junior Club	5 - 30 members	14 years & younger	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Building Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Building Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Tumbling Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Tumbling JV/Freshman	5 - 30 members	11 th grade and below	Female/Male
	Intermediate Non-Tumbling Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/0 - 2 Males
	Advanced Non-Building Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
Advanced Non-Tumbling Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/0 - 2 Males	

PERFORMANCE DIVISIONS

Routine Length: 2:30 minutes (Music Time: Up to 1:45 minutes)

NOVICE	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
INTERMEDIATE	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
	Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
ADVANCED	Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
	JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
	Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
	Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male

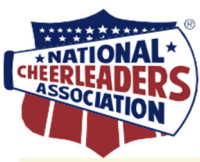
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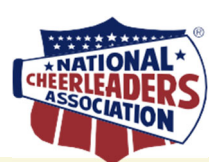
CROWD LEADING & PERFORMANCE ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS

1. All cheerleading skills including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, and jumps must follow the NFHS Safety Guidelines. All skills should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified adult coach. See specific skill restrictions for each category.
2. Each team will perform a choreographed routine not to exceed 2 minutes and 30 seconds (150 seconds).
3. **Up to 1 minute and 45 seconds (105 seconds)** of the routine may be performed to music. No voice-overs or words may be recorded to make the team's vocal projection sound louder.
4. Organized, formal entrances or exits that involve organized walk out lines, cheers or run-ons with jumps, tumbling or stunts are not permitted. Cheerleaders must enter the performance area in a timely fashion.
5. Timing will begin with the first organized word, movement or note of music by the team after they are officially announced and have taken the floor. This includes any formal, organized entrances mentioned in number 4. Cheerleaders must have at least one foot on the performing surface when the routine starts.
6. Cheer words should be practical, and the flow of words should be easy to understand by the crowd and judges.
7. In Performance Divisions, mascots will not count towards participant count. Mascots must be appropriately attired so their mobility, vision, etc. are not impaired. Mascots cannot participate in stunts, pyramids, or tumbling skills in any division.
8. The Crowd Leading divisions will follow the above NCA Performance Division Guidelines with Novice, Intermediate or Advanced restrictions and requires a cheer portion that emphasizes crowd-leading ability. Categories on the score sheet include Spacing and Formations, Crowd Effective Material and Voice/Inflection.
9. The Non-Tumbling divisions will follow the above NCA Performance Division 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-Tumbling divisions may not be eligible for certain specialty awards.
10. Non-Building divisions. In these 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.
11. Novice Junior Club and Junior High/ Middle School Divisions will be restricted from performing any type of toss or waist level cradles- See usacheer.org for more information on these additional skill restrictions. This division is for the Recreational Teams as well as any Elementary aged programs looking to register at an NCA School Event.
12. For additional division explanations including an in depth break down of each score sheet, be sure to check out our Judges training courses available to coaches through Varsity University

*Performance and Crowd Leading sample score sheets are available online as well as a video clip explaining these 2 divisions and their differences will be coming soon.



2023-2024 NCA RULES AND RESTRICTIONS



NOVICE SKILLS RESTRICTIONS

Novice teams will follow 2022-2023 USA Cheer/NFHS Spirit Rules Book with these additional skill restrictions.

STANDING TUMBLING: Standing tumbling is limited to a standing single back handspring.

- You can connect rolls and walkovers to a single back handspring.
- Standing back handspring series and jump/back handspring combinations are **not allowed**.
- Standing tucks are **not allowed**.

RUNNING TUMBLING: Running tumbling is limited to front and back handspring series.

- Flips and aerials are **not allowed** (no tucks).

STUNTS: Single leg stunts may only be held at prep level or below.

- Extended liberties are **not allowed**.
- Twisting transitions are limited to a ½ twist by the top person.
 - Exception: Log Rolls/Barrel rolls are allowed.
- All release moves must land in a cradle.
 - Released switch ups are **not allowed**.
- The only inversions allowed are transitions from ground level inversions to non-inverted positions. No other inversions are allowed.
 - Example: Going from a handstand on the ground to a non-inverted stunt such as a shoulder sit is allowed.
 - Example: Going from a cradle to a handstand or from a prone position to a forward roll is **not allowed**.

PYRAMIDS: Extended one leg stunts must be braced with a hand/arm connection by at least one person at prep level or below.

- The connection must be made prior to executing single leg extended stunt.
- Extended stunts may not brace another extended stunt:
 - Example: Braced extensions
- Any time a top person is released by the bases and braced by other top persons, they may not perform any skill during transition and must land in a cradle.
- Inversions in pyramids are **not allowed** with the exception of the inversions allowed under Novice Stunts.
- Release moves in pyramids are **not allowed** except for the release moves allowed under Novice Stunts.

DISMOUNTS: Only straight pop downs, basic straight cradles and ¼ turning dismounts are allowed. (Please see definition of dismount in NFHS rulebook)

TOSSES: The only body position allowed is a straight ride.

INTERMEDIATE SKILLS RESTRICTIONS

Intermediate teams will follow 2023-2024 USA Cheer/NFHS Spirit Rules Book with these additional skill restrictions.

STANDING TUMBLING: Flips are **not allowed**.

- No standing back tucks or back handspring back tucks.

RUNNING TUMBLING: Flips may **ONLY** be performed in tuck position only and from a round off or round off back handspring(s).

- Other skills with hand support prior to the round off or round off back handspring are allowed.
- Punch fronts are **not allowed**.
- No twisting while airborne.
 - Exception: Aerial cartwheels are allowed.
- No tumbling is allowed after a flip or an aerial cartwheel.
- Cartwheel to tucked flips and/or cartwheel to back handspring(s) tucks are **not allowed**.

STUNTS:

- Twisting transitions to and from an extended position may not exceed ½ twisting transition. Twisting transitions to, from and at prep level may not exceed 1 twisting transition.
- Release moves beginning at prep level or above are **not allowed**.
- Released switch ups are allowed if caught at prep level or below, they do not exceed ¼ twist, and they do not pass above extended arm level.
- Inversions may not pass through an extended position
 - Example: Pancake/Fold Over
- Twisting inversions are **not allowed**
 - Example: Suspended roll with a full twist

PYRAMIDS: Braced flips are **not allowed**.

- Extended single leg skills may not be connected.
- Pyramid transitions cannot release and twist.
- All other pyramid skills must follow stunt rules unless braced from initiation of skill with a hand/arm connection.

DISMOUNTS: Only straight pop downs, basic straight rides, and ¼ turns are allowed from any single leg stunt. Up to 1¼ twists are allowed from any two-leg stunt.

TOSSES: Up to 1 trick allowed during a toss. Tosses may not exceed 1 twisting rotation.

JUNIOR HIGH / MIDDLE SCHOOL / ELEMENTARY SKILLS RESTRICTIONS

Junior High, Middle School, and Elementary teams will follow Additional Restrictions as outlined here: <https://www.usacheer.org>

ADVANCED SKILLS RESTRICTIONS

Advanced teams will follow the standard 2023-2024 USA Cheer/NFHS Spirit Rules Book with no other skill restriction.

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2023-2024 JUDGING RANGES

The following grids outline the point ranges for specific skill sets performed by MOST of the team. Skills performed by LESS than most of the team will move the score into a lower range. In each category, most of the team must master each listed skill unless the skills are separated by the word “or.” MOST is defined as approximately 75% of the team.

NOVICE DIVISIONS

STUNT DIFFICULTY	PYRAMID DIFFICULTY	TUMBLING DIFFICULTY
3 - 4	3 - 4	3 - 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension Preps OR • One Leg Variations below Prep Level 	Pyramids involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Two Leg Stunts AND/OR • One Leg Stunts at Prep Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cartwheels OR • Round-offs OR • Forward/Backward Rolls
4 - 5	4 - 5	4 - 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensions OR • One Leg Variations at Prep Level 	Pyramids involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended One Leg Stunts (multiple) • Multiple (2 or more) Novice level transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round-off BHS OR • Standing BHS

TOSESSES

Tosses are not required but may be rewarded in the “Pyramid” category.

JUMP DIFFICULTY (4.0 - 5.0) **Must begin and finish on feet and the SAME jump must be performed by most (hurdlers in different directions are same jump)**

*Must be advanced jumps

4.0 – Single jumps

4.5 – Double jump combinations

5.0 – Triple jump combinations or double jump combinations and a single jump- MUST include variety

TIMING (9.0 - 10.0)

Synchronization and uniformity

ROUTINE COMPOSITION (9.0 - 10.0)

Spacing, seamless movement and patterns, execution of formations

VOICE/INFLECTION (9.0 - 10.0)

Pace of cheer is practical; flow of words is easy to understand.

MOTIONS/GIRLS DANCE (9.0 - 10.0)

This category will be judged based on a team’s ability to incorporate transitions, level changes, footwork and floorwork, with a variety of visual movement in their dance with a high level of perfection. Motion technique throughout the routine will also be considered.

SHOWMANSHIP (9.0 - 10.0) or (4.0-5.0)

Genuine enthusiasm and energy level throughout routine

SCHOOL REPRESENTATION (9.0 - 10.0)

Sportsmanship, performance integrity, make-up, bows

Crowd Effective Material (4.0 - 5.0)

Easy to follow, encourages crowd participation, use of props (signs, poms, flags, megaphones)

* Jump Combination = Jumps connected with continuous movement, using either a whip or prep approach

* BHS = Back Handspring

NOTE: Elementary & Junior High/Middle School Teams must follow the additional USA Cheer Safety Restrictions located in the NCA Rule Book. Advanced Jumps = Toe Touch, Right/Left Hurdlers (front or side), Pike

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INTERMEDIATE DIVISIONS

STUNT DIFFICULTY	PYRAMID DIFFICULTY	TUMBLING DIFFICULTY
2 - 3	2 - 3	2 - 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension Preps OR • One Leg Variations Below Prep Level 	Pyramids involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended Two Leg Stunt AND/OR • One Leg Stunt at Prep Level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cartwheels OR • Round-offs OR • Forward/Backward Rolls
3 - 4	3 - 4	3 - 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensions OR • One Leg Variations at Prep Level 	Pyramids involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended One Leg Stunt (multiple) • Multiple (2 or more) Novice level transitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round-off BHS OR • Stand BHS
4 - 5	4 - 5	4 - 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended One Leg Stunts AND • Single Twisting transition or dismount to or from a Two Leg Stunt 	Pyramids involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiple transitional elements, one of which is a release AND • multiple extended structures including extended one leg stunts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round-off BHS Back Tucks OR • Round-off Tucks OR • Standing BHS Series OR • Jump/BHS Combinations

TOSSES

Tosses are not required but may be rewarded in the "Pyramid" category.

JUMP DIFFICULTY (4.0 - 5.0)- **Must begin and finish on feet and the SAME jump must be performed by most (hurdlers in different directions are same jump)**

*Must be advanced jumps

4.0 – Single jumps

4.5 – Double jump combinations

5.0 – Triple jump combinations or double jump combinations and a single jump- **MUST** include variety

TIMING (9.0 - 10.0)

Synchronization and uniformity

ROUTINE COMPOSITION (9.0 - 10.0)

Spacing, seamless movement and patterns, execution of formations

VOICE/INFLECTION (9.0 - 10.0)

Pace of cheer is practical, flow of words is easy to understand

MOTIONS/GIRLS DANCE (9.0 - 10.0)

This category will be judged based on a team's ability to incorporate transitions, level changes, footwork and floorwork, with a variety of visual movement in their dance with a high level of perfection. Motion technique throughout the routine will also be considered.

SHOWMANSHIP (9.0 - 10.0) or (4.0-5.0)

Genuine enthusiasm and energy level throughout routine

SCHOOL REPRESENTATION (9.0 - 10.0)

Sportsmanship, performance integrity, make-up, bows.

CROWD EFFECTIVE MATERIAL (4.0 - 5.0)

Easy to follow, encourages crowd participation, use of props (signs, poms, flags, megaphones)

NOTE: Elementary & Junior High/Middle School Teams must follow the additional USA Cheer Safety Restrictions located in the NCA Rule Book. Advanced Jumps = Toe Touch, Right/Left Hurdlers (front or side), Pike

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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ADVANCED DIVISIONS

STUNT DIFFICULTY	PYRAMID DIFFICULTY	TUMBLING DIFFICULTY
2 - 3	2 - 3	2 - 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension Preps OR One Leg Variations Below Prep Level OR Extensions OR One Leg Variations at Prep Level 	Pyramids involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended Two Leg Stunts AND/OR One Leg Stunts at Prep Level Pyramids involving an Extended One Leg Stunt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cartwheels OR Round-offs OR Forward/Backward Rolls OR Round-off BHS OR Standing BHS
3 - 4	3 - 4	3 - 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended One Leg Stunts AND Required twisting skill: Single Twisting transition or dismount to or from Two Leg Stunts 	Pyramids involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> multiple transitional elements, one of which is a release and multiple extended structures including extended one leg stunts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round-off BHS Back Tucks OR Round-off Tucks OR Standing BHS Series OR Jump/BHS Combinations
4 - 5	4 - 5	4 - 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Elite Skills* AND Single Twisting transition or dismount FROM One Leg Stunts OR Extended Stunt Sequence performed by a Single Base, Unassisted COED STYLE 	Pyramids involving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extended One Leg Stunts with Multiple Transitional Sequences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PLUS one of the following) At least one of which is a Braced Flip Transition OR Arm Braced Tic Tock [AND Multiple Extended Structures] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Layouts OR Standing Back Tucks OR Standing BHS Back Tucks <p><i>Additional skills above this may be executed including standing or running fulls</i></p>

STUNTS (ELITE STUNT SKILLS FOR ADVANCED DIVISION INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO): SEE PROGRESSIONS FOR ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- Full up/double to extended position
- Release moves/inversions that land in an extended position
- Tick tock variations
- Toss extended stunts
- Other unique mounts and transitions of similar difficulty level or harder

TOSSES

Tosses are not required but may be rewarded in the "Pyramid" category.

JUMP DIFFICULTY (4.0 - 5.0) **Must begin and finish on feet and the SAME jump must be performed by most (hurdlers in different directions are same jump)**

4.0 – Single jumps

4.5 – Double jump combinations

5.0 – Triple jump combinations or double jump combination and a single jump- MUST include variety

*Must be advanced jumps

TIMING (9.0 - 10.0)

Synchronization and uniformity

ROUTINE COMPOSITION (9.0 - 10.0)

Spacing, seamless movement and patterns, execution of formations

VOICE/INFLECTION (9.0 - 10.0)

Pace of cheer is practical, flow of words is easy to understand

MOTIONS/GIRLS DANCE (9.0 - 10.0)

This category will be judged based on a team's ability to incorporate transitions, level changes, footwork and floorwork, with a variety of visual movement in their dance with a high level of perfection. Motion technique throughout the routine will also be considered.

SHOWMANSHIP (9.0 - 10.0) or (4.0-5.0)

Genuine enthusiasm and energy level throughout routine

SCHOOL REPRESENTATION (9.0 - 10.0)

Sportsmanship, performance integrity, make-up, bows

CROWD EFFECTIVE MATERIAL (4.0 - 5.0)

Easy to follow, encourages crowd participation, use of props (signs, poms, flags, megaphones)

* Jump Combination = Jumps connected with continuous movement, using either a whip or prep approach

* BHS = Back Handspring

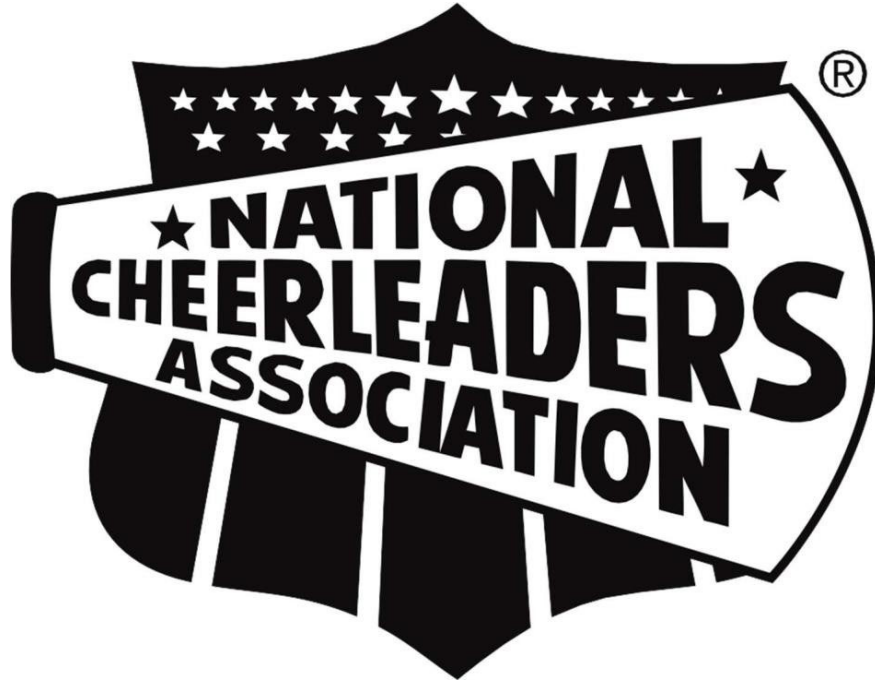
NOTE: Elementary & Junior High/Middle School Teams must follow the additional USA Cheer Safety Restrictions located in the NCA Rule Book. Advanced

Jumps = Toe Touch, Right/Left Hurdlers (front or side), Pike

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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GAME DAY DIVISIONS



NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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GAME DAY DIVISIONS

Routine Length: 3:00 minutes

Includes in this order: Band Chant, Situational Cheer, Crowd Leading Cheer and Fight Song--all crowd leading material suitable for the sideline or pep rallies.

Junior High/Middle School	5 - 30 members	9th grade & below	Female/Male
JV/Freshmen	5 - 30 members	11th grade & below	Female/Male
Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female
Coed Varsity	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male
* Game Day Rally (previously Spirit Program)	5 - 30 members	9th - 12th grade**	Female/Male

Game Day Divisions will be split into Small (5 - 12 members), Medium (13 - 20 members) and Large (21 - 30 members) when there are **AT LEAST FIVE** teams registered in **EACH** split division at the Event Director's discretion.

*Game Day Rally must consist of more than cheer and mascot by incorporating other Spirit Program elements such as band, drum line, dance team, etc. The programs participating must be officially recognized by the competing school's admin as a member of the competing school's dance, cheer or band program.

**All Varsity divisions are for 9th - 12th grade. Athletes younger than 9th grade will be allowed to participate if they are enrolled in the school they are representing, are recognized as full time cheerleaders for that school, and receive written permission from NCA prior to competition. A Varsity Team will be considered COED when there are any male participants not including flag runners or mascots.

The Game Day format will consist of one 3-minute performance that includes all three Game Day categories, plus a Game Situation Response. These categories will be performed in the following order:

- Band Chant
- Game Situation Response
- Game Day Cheer
- Fight Song

GENERAL GAME DAY ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS

1. All cheerleading skills including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, and jumps must follow the NFHS Guidelines. All skills should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified adult coach.
2. Teams may not set up props in advance of any category.
3. Props may be set once your team has been announced to the floor before your music begins.
4. The maximum performance time must not exceed 3 minutes. Timing will not include the team spirting or rallying, but will begin with the first group movement, voice, or note of music, or organized entrance, whichever comes first.
5. Teams competing in the Game Day Rally Division will follow a structure identical to the other Game Day Divisions, with the exception of the fact that this division encourages the use of sideline cheerleaders, dancers, school bands, drumlines, and mascots, etc.
6. In all Game Day Divisions all participants on the performance surface will count as a member of the team. This includes mascots, band members, flag runners, etc.
7. Mascots/Flag Runners do not affect if a team is All Girl or COED division. **All other participants WILL determine if a team is All Girl or COED except for the additional school programs listed below for Game Day Rally.**
8. Mascots/Flag Runner must be appropriately attired so their mobility, vision, etc. are not impaired. Only cheerleaders may participate in stunts, pyramids, and all tumbling skills.

GAME DAY RALLY (Formerly Spirit Division) REQUIREMENTS

1. To enter the Game Day Rally Division, the performance must include one of the following in addition to the cheer program:
 - Incorporation of additional spirit group(s):
 - Minimum 20% band/drumline/dance team (can be one of these or mixed)
 - At least 1 mascot/color guard/majorettes/student spirit group
2. Only cheerleaders may participate in stunts and pyramids. Dancers/Majorettes may incorporate tumbling skills that are allowed by their NFHS rules as well as the additional Game Day skill restrictions listed on page 17. All other members of the Spirit Program may not participate in any stunt, pyramid, or tumbling skills.

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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GAME DAY BAND CHANT REQUIREMENTS

1. Traditional school band chant(s).
2. Incorporation of props such as signs, poms, megaphones, flags, etc.
3. Recorded band music must be used.
4. Timing will begin with the first organized movement, voice or note of music, whichever comes first and end with the last beat of music or organized movement.
5. Camp material may be easily adapted to fit this category.

SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS

- A. Tumbling and/or stunting of any kind is prohibited, including during entrances and exits.
- B. Dance skills (i.e. turns, leaps, kicks, etc.) are permitted.

GAME SITUATION RESPONSE

Each team will respond to audio cues by a game announcer, as heard at football and basketball games. In order to imitate the Game Day environment, audio cues will include an announcer-lead situational cue to which the team will show a definitive OFFENSE or DEFENSE response. Squads should focus on crowd effectiveness, motion technique and skills relevant to game day. A general response would not meet the criteria.

*Regardless of the sport, you will receive credit for the Game Situation Response if your chant matches the cue given. (Ex- If your cue is an OFFENSE Football chant and you respond with an OFFENSE Basketball chant, you will still receive credit for this category). Your Game Day Situational Response score will be determined by the following criteria:

SITUATIONAL SCORING

- Correct/Intricate Response = 5.0 (States offense or defense and other supporting action- i.e., Move That Ball)
- Correct/Generic Response = 4.0 (Interchangeably only states offense or defense)
- Incorrect or General Response = 2.0 (Responds incorrectly or with a response neither Offensive or defensive)

Below are some examples of the announcer-lead situational cues:

OFFENSE SIDELINE:

1. "And that's another (team)- FIRST DOWN."
2. "The (team) keeps the drive alive with that FIRST DOWN play."
3. "What a catch (or run)! That sets up the (team) to SCORE."
4. "The (team) takes control of the ball on their own 25-yard line."
5. "It's 1st and 10 for the (team)."
6. "It's a close game and the (team) are driving down the field for a SCORE."
7. "We're down to the final minute, the (team) needs a TOUCHDOWN for the win"
8. "Pass complete to #7 for another (team) -FIRST DOWN"
9. "That run results in another (team)- FIRST DOWN"

DEFENSE SIDELINE:

1. "The (team) needs to make a STOP to seal the win."
2. "It's 3rd down and the (team) needs to make a big STOP."
3. "After that turnover, the (team) needs to make a big STOP."
4. "The (team) needs a big STOP here, Let's Hold 'Em!"
5. "Our opponent has the ball and it's up to the (team) to STOP them"
6. "That will bring 4th down and short, the (team) need a STOP!"

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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GAME DAY CHEER REQUIREMENTS

1. No music may be used during the performance. Live drummer and/or drum track is allowed. All specialty skills (i.e., jumps, stunts, tumbling) must be performed within a safe distance of all drummers. Drummers cannot be involved in any type of specialty skill.
2. Each team's presentation must include at least two components required from the following: cheers, chants, traditional yells, and/or drum cadences.
3. Teams should utilize all areas of their squad's crowd-leading strengths. The use of poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners is encouraged.
4. Emphasis on crowd involvement and practicality. All material should be suitable for a game or pep rally.

SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS

- No baskets, sponge, elevator, or similar type tosses permitted.
- Switch up stunts are allowed.
- No inversions from stunts.
- No twisting dismounts from stunts.
- Single leg extended stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
- No running tumbling.
- Tumbling is limited to a single standing tumbling skill with the highest skill level allowed being a back tuck. Exception: A Jump CAN be connected to this single standing tumbling skill.

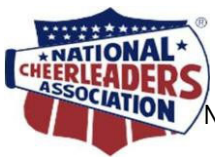
GAME DAY FIGHT SONG REQUIREMENTS

1. Teams are encouraged to use their traditional team fight song.
2. Timing will end with the last organized movement, voice or note of music, whichever comes first and end with the last beat of music or organized movement.
3. Props (poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners) are permitted in this category.
4. Performances can incorporate up to three (3) eight counts of skills (stunts, tumbling and/or jumps). The three (3) eight counts must be consecutive. During the fight song, the three (3) eight counts may be repeated, if performed identically. The three (3) eight counts of skills include loading and dismounting from stunts (unless routine finishes in stunt/pyramid).
5. Emphasis will be placed on practicality. All material should be suitable and able to be performed multiple times during a game or pep rally.

SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS

- No baskets, sponge, elevator, or similar type tosses permitted.
- Switch up stunts are allowed.
- No inversions from stunts.
- No twisting dismounts from stunts.
- Single leg extended stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
- A jump is considered a skill and can only be performed in the three (3) eight count segment.
- A kick will not be considered as a skill and can be performed at any time during the routine.
- No running tumbling.
- Tumbling is limited to a single standing tumbling skill with the highest skill level allowed being a back tuck.

*Game Day sample score sheets are available online.



DEDUCTIONS AND VIOLATIONS

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CROWD LEADING, PERFORMANCE & GAME DAY POINT DEDUCTIONS

Athlete Fall .25

- Drops to the performance surface DURING tumbling and/or jump skills

Includes	Would Not Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand, hands, or head down during tumbling or jump skill • Knee or knees down during tumbling or jump skill • Tumbling into/out of a stunt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An athlete that trips while walking during a transition

Building Bobble .25

- Stunt/Pyramid skills that almost fall or drop but are saved

Includes	Would Not Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top person becomes incorrectly weight bearing on a spot/base of a stunt but is returned to stunt • Lowering of a stunt to prep from extended position (not a timing issue) • Weight incorrectly distributed onto the bracer during a pyramid (would fall if bracer was not in contact) • Both feet/hands coming in contact with performance surface during a cradle/prone • Incomplete Twisting dismount landing in prone (stomach) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An omitted skill • Drop in a body position by the top person • Excessive movement by the bases • Minor balance checks by the top person • A single hand/foot in contact with performance surface during a cradle/prone • Coed style skill that never results in contact beyond a toss grip (omitted coed style skill)

Building Fall .75

- Drops from a building skill or transition during a stunt or pyramid

Includes	Would Not Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drops to a cradle position • Drops to a prone position • Drops to a load position • Drops that include a controlled lowering below prep level that is not an obvious timing issue • Base or spotter drops to performance surface during building skill anytime during a stunt, transition or dismount • Coed Style skills that result in contact with feet or shoulders prior to returning to feet on the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowering of a stunt from extended position to a prep level position • Stunts that almost fall but are saved and return to a stunting position • All other items listed in the building bobble or major building fall sections

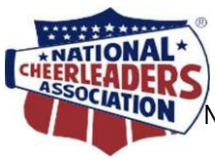
Major Building Fall 1.25

- Drops to the performance surface from a stunt, pyramid or toss by the top person AND a base or spotter OR more than 1 base and/or spotter **or uncontrolled lowering or drops to a compromising position not listed under building fall**

Includes	Would Not Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple bases and/or spotters drop to the performance surface • Top person lands on performance surface (bases are unable to prevent the top from falling to the ground) • Top person makes contact with a base or spotter who drops to the performance surface • Other compromising drops not defined by a building fall • Tosses that land in Prone (Stomach) Upright (on feet) or inverted (head down) position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top person comes in contact with the performance surface during a transition but without interrupting or stopping the skill.

Maximum 1.75

- When multiple deductions should be assessed during a stunt or toss (by a single group) or during a pyramid skill, then the sum of those deductions will not be greater than 1.75. During pyramids where a fall continues to affect other portions of the pyramid, the deduction will not exceed 1.75. Two separated pyramids will result in separate deductions. The MAX deduction for a pyramid will not exceed 3.5.



DEDUCTIONS AND VIOLATIONS

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CROWD LEADING & PERFORMANCE DIVISION VIOLATIONS

Safety Violation

- Specific NFHS Safety Violation and/or building skills performed out of division/level – 1.0 deduction
- General NFHS Safety Violation and/ or tumbling skills performed out of division/level. This will also include errors/violations that may result because of a fall such as a bracer in a pyramid. -.5 deduction

Props Violation .5

Props violations fall under the general safety violation and will be deducted 1 time per routine if the violation is for the same bullet listed below. Multiple bullets would result in multiple violations. Props are allowed to be placed off the performance surface by someone who remains inside the performance surface.

- A hard prop with yielding edges released from a top person to the ground
- A prop is thrown by a person on the ground with intent to travel
- Tumbling not allowed by NFHS with props in hands

Boundary Violation .25 (for National events only)

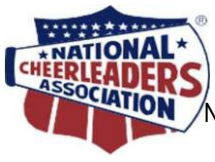
The performance surface is defined as the 42' x 54' competition floor. The competition boundary is defined as the performance surface. A .25 deduction will be assessed per occurrence for an athlete **that is completely out of bounds with both or any combination of these body parts:** 2 feet, 2 hands, or any part of the seat or torso outside the competition boundary. At a Regional or Classic event, a warning will be given for any boundary infraction. **If a violation is assessed, judges' decisions are final and will not be reviewed.**

Time Limit Violations .25/ 1.0

Teams that exceed division time limits are subject to the following deduction:

- 1-5 seconds over time will result in a .25 deduction.
- 6 or more seconds over time will result in a 1.0 deduction.

Routines that exceed the time limit run a risk of being assessed a deduction. Judges will use a stopwatch or similar device to measure the official time. Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, judges will not issue a deduction until their stopwatch/clock shows a time that exceeds 3 seconds over the time limit. If a deduction is assessed and a review is requested, a violation will remain for any team with a performance that exceeds the time requirements outlined in the NCA School Rule Book.



DEDUCTIONS AND VIOLATIONS

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GAME DAY DIVISION VIOLATIONS

NFHS Rules Violation 3.0

Game Day Format Violation 2.0

This deduction will be assessed for any violation that does not meet the specific restrictions and guidelines listed in the NCA School Rule Book specific to the Game Day Division: (See Pages 12-14)

Props .5

Props violations fall under the general safety violation and will be deducted 1 time per routine if the violation is for the same bullet listed below. Multiple bullets would result in multiple violations. Props are allowed to be placed off the performance surface by someone who remains inside the performance surface.

- A hard prop with yielding edges released from a top person to the ground
- A prop is thrown by a person on the ground with intent to travel
- Tumbling not allowed by NFHS with props in hands

Boundary Violation .25 (for National events only)

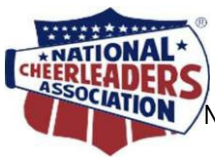
The performance surface is defined as the 42' x 54' competition floor. The competition boundary is defined as the performance surface. A .25 deduction will be assessed per occurrence for an athlete **that is completely out of bounds with both or any combination of these body parts**: 2 feet, 2 hands, or any part of the seat or torso outside the competition boundary. At a Regional or Classic event, a warning will be given for any boundary infraction. **If a violation is assessed, judges' decisions are final and will not be reviewed.**

Time Violation 1.0/ 2.0

Teams that exceed division time limits are subject to the following deduction:

- 1-5 seconds over time will result in a 1.0 deduction.
- 6 or more seconds over time will result in a 2.0 deduction.

Routines that exceed the time limit run a risk of being assessed a deduction. Judges will use a stopwatch or similar device to measure the official time. Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, judges will not issue a deduction until their stopwatch/clock shows a time that exceeds 3 seconds over the time limit. If a deduction is assessed and a review is requested, a violation will remain for any team with a performance that exceeds the time requirements outlined in the NCA School Rule Book.



DEDUCTIONS AND VIOLATIONS

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GENERAL VIOLATIONS FOR ALL DIVISIONS

Minimum Number of Athletes 1.0

Teams that compete with fewer than the minimum number of athletes required for that division will receive a 1.0 deduction. Teams that compete with more than the maximum number of athletes will be disqualified.

Inappropriate Choreography Deduction 1.0

A deduction of 1.0 will be given for vulgar or suggestive choreography, which includes, but is not limited to, movements such as hip thrusting and inappropriate touching, gestures, hand/arm movements and signals, slapping, positioning of body parts and positioning to one another. Deductions will be given for music or words unsuitable for family listening, which includes, but is not limited to swear words and connotations of any type of sexual act or behavior, drugs, mention of specific parts of the body torso, and/or violent acts or behavior. Removing improper language or words from a song and replacing them with sound effects or other words constitutes inappropriate, and deductions will be made accordingly.

Division Violations 1.0

If a team performs with a member participating in more than one Performance/Game Performance division, the second and each subsequent team will receive a 1.0 deduction off their final score for each illegal participant (maximum penalty is 10.0).

Unsportsmanlike Conduct Deduction 1.0

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 will result in 1.0 deduction and removal of coach or disqualification. Includes the following:

1. Inappropriate and deliberate physical contact between athletes during the event
2. Abuse of equipment or any items associated with the event
3. Using language or a gesture that is obscene, offensive, or insulting
4. Using language or gestures that offend race, religion, color, descent or national or ethnic origin
5. Failing to perform a routine
6. Excessive appealing at AccuScore
7. Showing dissent towards scoring official decision by word or action
8. Threat of assault to an event representative
9. Public criticism of an event related incident or event official

**Uniform midriff and bows will no longer be a deduction but may affect your School Representation score which includes, Sportsmanship, Performance Integrity, Image (hair, make up, bows, uniforms) in the Performance/Game Performance divisions and your Overall Impression score in the Game Day divisions. Please see Page 20 of the NCA School Rulebook.*

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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LEGALITY VERIFICATION

As a coach, it is important to be current on the NCA Rules and Restrictions, the NFHS Spirit Rule Book and any additional USA cheer requirements. If you have questions concerning any safety rules or questions regarding specific performance elements, please follow these steps. This will ensure that you receive a timely and accurate response to your questions.

- A. The skill in question must be recorded by the team at practice. We are unable to accept videos from performances, competitions, or of other teams.
- B. All submission must include the coach, team, and division in the email subject line.
- C. The recording will be reviewed as if every person in the video is included in the skill. This would include additional spotters.
- D. Videos are limited to 30 seconds and must be able to be viewed upright without rotating.
- E. Emailed videos must be sent via a YouTube link, make sure the video is 'Unlisted' and not set to Private. Please include the full program name and division in the subject line.
- F. 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 the video was unable to make a judgement. It is up to you as a coach to resubmit the video to be re-reviewed. Videos that do not follow the above rules will not receive a response.

EMAIL VIDEOS TO:

NCA Legality Verification ncascoring@varsity.com

REMINDERS

VIDEOS THAT ARE NOT IN THE ABOVE FORMAT WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.

VIDEOS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE NCA OFFICE at least THREE WEEKS PRIOR to the championship date. Videos not received in the NCA office three weeks prior to the championship date will NOT be reviewed. Please do not wait until the final days to submit these as this greatly slows the process to respond and get feedback returned if any changes may be necessary. Videos submitted for review for High School Nationals should be submitted prior to December 23rd, 2023, to allow for turnaround time.

DO NOT DEPEND ON YOUR CHOREOGRAPHER TO DETERMINE IF SOMETHING IS LEGAL. IF YOU FEEL THAT SOMETHING MAY BE ILLEGAL, SEND A VIDEO TO THE NCA OFFICE

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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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) or weather rather than the team, the coach of the team affected should STOP the routine from the music stand.
 - a. Examples: Equipment Issue- Music volume is all the way down and athletes cannot hear the beginning of the routine, etc. Venue Emergency- power outage, fire alarm, etc.
 - b. If the coach chooses not to stop the routine, the team may not have the option to perform again.

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.

INJURY

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 injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless:
 - a. The competition officials receive clearance from, first, the medical personnel attending to that participant, the parent (if present) AND THEN the head coach/advisor of the competing team.
 - 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.
3. In addition, the sponsor/director 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.
4. In the event of an injury or emergency, 1 parent or legal guardian maybe allowed backstage during the evaluation process. While backstage, they will need to remain with the athlete or an event staff member.

UNIFORM MALFUNCTION

1. All uniform pieces must be secured to eliminate any possibility of a wardrobe malfunction with appropriate undergarments worn. If, in the event, a uniform malfunction was to occur resulting in indecent exposure, it will be the responsibility of the coach/sponsor to ensure the music is stopped from the music table.

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.

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

NCA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO BE THE ARBITRATOR AND INTERPRETER OF ALL RULES COVERED IN THIS DOCUMENT.

COMPETITION AREA

1. NCA Competitions comply with the NFHS and USA Cheer Safety surface ruling that school-based programs may not compete on a spring floor. Most NCA Competitions will have a Competition Area measuring 42' deep by 54' wide carpet-bonded foam floor. See each event for confirmation of the floor type and size.
2. All permitted skills (stunts, pyramids, tumbling etc.) must be performed on the competition mat.
3. Poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners may be placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member.
4. Objects cannot be thrown outside the competition floor.

PROPS

Use of props in both Performance and Game Day divisions is limited to flags, megaphones, pom, signs, and other **traditional** sideline props (this includes rally towels). If you have specific questions about the legality of your prop, please contact ncascoring@varsity.com. If worn, and an athlete's mask is no longer appropriately secured to their face, competition must stop for the athlete to properly fix their mask.

INTERPRETATIONS / RULINGS

NCA has the authority to decide on any issue, protest, penalty or rule that is unclear or not specifically addressed in this book. NCA will render a judgment in an effort to ensure that the competition is conducted in a manner consistent with the general spirit and goals of the competition and NCA.

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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SCHOOL REPRESENTATION

We recommend that the team displays an overall behavior conducive to serving as public representatives and ambassadors of their school with traditional and appropriate attire suitable for all athletes. Any violations to the below restrictions to Uniforms, Make-up or Hair and Bows will result in a reduction of the School Representation score.

MAKE-UP

1. If worn, make-up should be appropriate for both the performance and age of the athletes, utilizing colors suitable for skin tone.

HAIR

1. 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.
2. **BOWS** are not required. If worn, bows must:
 - a. NOT be excessive in size
 - b. NOT be a distraction to the performance.
 - c. Be positioned in a manner to minimize risk for all participants. This is restricted to back of the head **(below the crown)**
 - d. **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.**

UNIFORMS

Outfitting for cheerleading performances should follow traditional dress standards. All participant uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention. Covered midriff includes nude/skin mesh, uniforms with colored mesh, body suits and liners; however, fringe would not count as a cover. Uniforms for all team types should be appropriate for the age of the participants performing the routine.

All facets of a performance or routine, including choreography, music selection, outfitting (cheerleading), and cheer words should be suitable for family viewing and listening. Uniforms for all team types should be appropriate for the age of the participants performing the routine. Outfitting for cheerleading performances should follow traditional dress standards. In general, school performances, including but not limited to the actual routine, signs, cheers, chants and hand signals/gestures, should adhere to outfitting, performance and music guidelines and criteria in place and approved by the administration or institution to which the school team belongs.

Any uniform or music in which the appropriateness is questionable or with which uncertainty exists should be submitted to NCA for approval. Because multiple performances of the same routine will generally lack distinction, NCA is not able to approve with absoluteness the appropriateness of choreography (since movements can be easily modified, NCA could feasibly approve a particular movement when viewed on a video or in person, only to have it performed differently during competition). However, choreography, if questionable, may be submitted to NCAscoring@varsity.com for feedback.

Cheer words should incorporate school pride, honor, and tradition as well as sportsmanship in their cheer. Cheers that are negative, insulting to other teams or the judges may reflect a lower School Representation score.

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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MUSIC FORMAT

NCA will follow the Varsity Spirit Music Guidelines for all competitions. Please visit varsity.com/music for the most up-to-date guidelines and latest resources. For further questions on Music Licensing please email musicinfo@varsity.com

Music should be on a digital music player/iPod. CD Players will not be available at Nationals or Classics. NCA & NDA will provide an auxiliary cord. Depending on the type of phone, please make sure you have all necessary adapters to plug into the auxiliary cord. Be sure to follow these steps below prior to your performance:

- Set up a playlist for each routine
- Turn OFF any equalizer, sound check and/or volume limit
- Turn your volume up to 100%
- Turn off all notifications
- If using a phone, make sure it is in airplane mode to avoid incoming calls during performance
- Remove any cases from your device
- Ensure music is downloaded to the device in the event wifi or service is limited or unavailable

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, non-commercial 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 any Varsity Spirit Brand logo including banners, rings, bows, t-shirts, etc. without prior approval from the Varsity Spirit office. The use of the brand letters will be allowed.

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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NCA HIGH SCHOOL NATIONALS JANUARY 19-21, 2024

HOW TO QUALIFY

STEP 1: NFHS CREDENTIALING

ALL teams attending NCA High School National Championship must complete the Varsity Spirit/NFHS Squad Credentialing program at ANY Varsity Spirit Summer or Fall camp in 2023. At least 75% of the athletes competing at Nationals must meet the credentialing requirement (a mascot would count towards the 75% requirement).

STEP 2: RECEIVE A BID

Teams must complete **ONE** of the following:

- (a) attend an NCA Summer or Fall camp in 2023 OR
- (b) compete at an NCA Regional or Classic Championship – In Person or Virtual.

NCA TEAM GOLD (not a part of qualification)

Teams that attend an NCA Camp, Regional- either in person or our virtual championship in December and finish the season off with us at NCA High School Nationals will be recognized as a part of NCA TEAM GOLD. Each Team Gold squad will receive:

- Guaranteed Early Pricing
- Priority Hotel Blocking
- Priority On-Site Check In
- Priority Open Practice Sign Up
- Preferential Order of Performance
not guaranteed
- Athlete gifts and more!

GAME DAY FORMAT AT NCA HIGH SCHOOL NATIONALS

The Game Day format will consist of **one** 3-minute performance that includes all three Game Day categories plus a Game Situation Response. These categories will be performed in the following order:

1. Band Chant
2. Game Situation Response (See Game Day Situation Response on page 15)
3. Game Day Cheer
4. Fight Song

Every team registered automatically qualifies for the Sunday round of competition. Saturday and Sundays score will affect your Final score with Saturday being 25% and Sunday being 75%.

GAME DAY DIVISION NATIONAL CHAMPION AWARDS

If a team wins a Game Day National Championship title, and also wins a National Title in a Performance/Game Performance division, individuals will only receive one National Championship jacket. Teams will receive a banner and trophy for each national title

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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CALIFORNIA TEAMS COMPETING UNDER CIF RULES

Teams that fall under the California Interscholastic Federation will be able to compete in a preliminary round and a final round at our championship without competing on a Sunday. Each team competes within their chosen division for a preliminary round on Saturday which accounts for 25% of their final score. On Saturday evening, the California teams return to perform their final round which accounts for the remaining 75% of their final score. The judges score the routine at that time and the performance is recorded. On Sunday, the teams from California are placed into the performance order, however, the video of their performance is played for the crowd during that time. The judges will review the scores and finalize. California teams are then welcomed onto the mat for their Final Awards Ceremony to receive their awards.

NCA HIGH SCHOOL NATIONALS – USA CHEER SAFETY RISK MANAGEMENT COURSE DOCUMENTATION

All school coaches, choreographers and personnel wishing to access the warmup area, backstage or coaches' box must have a USA Cheer Membership. **At least one coach**, preferably the head coach, must have the Cheer Coach Membership and must be present with the team at the event. The Cheer Coach, STUNT Coach or Professional Membership is acceptable for all other personnel. For more information on this membership visit:

<https://usacheer.org/membership/usa-cheer-coach>

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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MASCOT SAFETY RULES

1. Be sure that the character is tailored to meet health and safety needs. Your character should be well ventilated so heat can escape. The costume should be designed so that it is easy to remove the head, hands, and feet. Removing these items will allow for proper aeration and cooling breaks.
2. Take breaks approximately every 15-20 minutes. Prior to each game you should set-up a private room (or area out of view by anyone) to which you can retreat and take breaks. Make sure to have plenty of fluids available. Ideally, drink water before, during and after your appearances.
3. Always have a trailer (a person responsible to stay near you) to help with crowd control. When you are in a familiar area you may be able to maneuver quite well. However, many mascots have poor vision. A trailer not only helps you to maneuver more safely, but also can keep crowds from getting out of control (especially in open festivals, malls, and parade situations).
4. Be prepared if you begin to feel extremely overheated. Have a plan, including an emergency signal with your coach, squad, and trainer. Do not get out of character immediately after an appearance (especially if in air conditioning) or you may cool down too quickly. Walk around in costume and gain control of your breathing, then remove the head, hands, and feet. Sip fluids, recline, and if necessary, place ice packs on the back of your neck and hands. Note: Prevent heat exhaustion and related symptoms by building tolerance, stretching properly, drinking fluids, and following a proper diet.
5. Dress-up before you dress-out. During an appearance, your body heat can rise in excess of 100 degrees (especially during fall football games). To prepare your body for this increase in temperature, you should wear sweats or warm clothing prior to each appearance. Eventually, your body temperature will automatically rise before each appearance, and you may experience a chill.
6. Be aware of your limits when performing and be aware of the limitations that the character places on you. Pay attention to obstacles and people around you to prevent injury. When walking into a new area, scan the layout and try to memorize the location of obstacles. Also, count stairs as you go; chances are you will use those stairs again.
7. Protect your character and protect your image. Use common sense not to become too reckless while in character. This could result in putting yourself and your audience in danger. Protect your image through regular maintenance of your character. Always make sure it is clean and in good condition. Avoid doing stunts that may cause damage. Your school, in many cases, has invested a great deal of money in your mascot costume.

MASCOT COMPETITION

1. Competition is open to all Middle School and High School mascots (Schools may have more than one mascot compete if each character maintains their own identity- (Ex. Mr. Wuf & Ms. Wuf). Division splits will be dependent upon registrations.
2. Only ONE costumed mascot can perform. NO other live props are allowed.
3. Each mascot will perform a routine lasting a maximum of 1 minute and 30 seconds (90 seconds) not including set-up and tear-downtime. The following overtime penalties will occur:
 - A. 1 - 5 seconds over time will result in a .5 deduction
 - B. 6 or more seconds over time will result in a 1.0 deduction.
4. Other people may assist with the set-up, support and tear-down. These assistants may not participate in any activity within the skit, others than to support props.
5. Mascots are allowed a total maximum set-up/tear-down time of 1 minute and 30 seconds (90 seconds). The following overtime penalties will occur:
 - A. 1 - 5 seconds over time will result in a .5 deduction
 - B. 6 or more seconds over time will result in a 1.0 deduction.

* This penalty is separate from the routine time penalty. For example, if your set-up time is 1 minute, your routine is 1 minute 33 seconds and your tear-down time is 40 seconds you would be assessed a .5 penalty for going 3 seconds overtime for your performance and a 1.0 penalty for going 10 seconds overtime on your set-up/tear-down time.

NCA SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES

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6. The routine should contain a theme and should be well organized and understandable.
 7. Music may be used and must be compliant with copyright laws. Music must be in digital format. The routine should include the following elements:
 - A. 20 consecutive seconds minimum of dance with music
 - B. 20 consecutive seconds minimum of prop utilization
 - C. 20 consecutive seconds minimum of crowd interaction/response material
- *For questions on Music Licensing please email musicinfo@varsity.com
8. Mascots should enter the performance area in a timely fashion.
 9. Timing will begin with the first organized word, movement, or note of music after they are officially announced.
 10. Timing will end with the last organized word, movement, or note of music by the mascot.
 11. Any size props may be used. Props that may cause damage to the matted surface may not be used. Confetti, water, paints or other such props that may delay Competition are prohibited. Violations will result in a 2.0 deduction or disqualification.
 12. Mascots may not utilize any type of height increasing apparatus (mini tramps, springboards, etc.).
 13. Participants must always be dressed in the school's official mascot costume including set-up. The costume must be the school's official mascot.
 14. Routines must be appropriate for family viewing. Any vulgar or suggestive movements, words or music will result in a 2.0 score deduction or possible disqualification.
 15. Mascots should utilize all areas of technical strengths including actions/reactions, motions/emotions, character traits and habits, pantomime, crowd interaction, crowd appeal, prop utilization, and overall impression.
 16. Mascots will be judged on the following categories with each valued at 10 points:
 - A. Characterization
 - B. Creativity
 - C. Crowd Leading
 - D. Dance
 - E. Prop Design/Effectiveness
 - F. Overall Impression
 17. Must follow the 2023-2024 School Cheer Rule Book.

*Mascot sample score sheets are available online.