

BAND EVENT GUIDELINES

PEP BAND DIVISION



**VARSITY
SPIRIT**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

*All updates and changes displayed in **RED** font*

DIVISIONS	1
GUIDELINES	1
ELIGIBILITY POLICY	1
COACH MEMBERSHIP	2
UNIFORM & MUSIC GUIDELINES	2
TIME LIMITATIONS	3
VIRTUAL COMPETITION GUIDELINES	3
COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA	3
WARM UP TO COMPETITION POLICY	4
VIOLATIONS	4
SCORES AND RANKINGS	4
HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS	5
INTERPRETATIONS AND / OR RULINGS	5
PEP BAND PERFORMANCE ROUTINE FORMAT	5
GAME DAY RALLY FORMAT (offered at select NCA/NDA EVENTS)	6
GAME DAY LIVE GUIDELINES (offered at select UCA/UDA events)	6
CROWDLEADER ROUTINE FORMAT (offered at all USA EVENTS)	6
APPERANCES, ENDORSEMENTS AND PUBLICITY	6
PEP BAND EVENT GUIDELINES AGREEMENT	6

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.

DIVISIONS

PEP BAND DIVISION – 9th Grade and Below

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.

GUIDELINES

1. Pep Band members are allowed to play for multiple performances.
2. Each school may not have more than one team compete in one single division.
3. Please visit [Pep Band Regional Competitions - Performing Arts](#) for a complete listing of divisions for regional competitions as well as one of the Varsity Spirit National Championships.
 - **Pep Band:**
 - 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.
 - The pep band must be current members of the official pep band for the school they are representing.
 - 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.).

ELIGIBILITY POLICY

1. All members of the team must be current members of the official school 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 band. These teams must support the school(s) athletics/ endeavors throughout the year, and not solely combined for competition purposes.
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 7th grade students to participate on Varsity. Bands from State A will still be required to follow the 8th - 12th grade restrictions.
 - b. Example 2 – State B does not allow 9th grade or below participation. Bands from State B would then need to follow their State Restrictions.
 - c. Example 3 – A Junior High school only has grades 7th- 9th 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. Pep Bands may participate in more than one local or regional competition during the season.

4. The team should display an overall behavior conducive to serving as public representatives and ambassadors of their school/organization.
5. All participants 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 under Regional Competition Forms & FAQs.
6. 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 PerformingArts@varsity.com or 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.
7. Students 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 are prohibited from participating in any Varsity Spirit competition.

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. When checking in at Varsity Spirit competitions, you 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 & MUSIC GUIDELINES

1. 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.) is required for all divisions.
2. 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.

3. 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 at least one month prior to your first competition.
4. Teams must follow the Varsity Spirit Rules and Regulations Music Guidelines for each routine performance.

TIME LIMITATIONS

1. Introductions
 - a. All introductions are considered part of the routine and will be timed as part of the performance.
 - 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. The first note of music or the first step or visual move by a member of the band will start the timing of the performance.
3. If a team 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.

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.
2. 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.
3. 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. Approximate floor size will be 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 strips).
2. 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.
3. Standard marching and maneuvering drill formations are discouraged, but performers may move around on the performance area to draw the audience's attention to specific ensemble members (e.g., a drumline or horn line moves to the center for a feature and then returns to original location). Choreography and crowd leading elements are encouraged.

4. All team mascots (ex: stuffed animals), center markers, etc. are prohibited. The center will be marked on all performance surfaces.
5. Signs or props may be safely placed or dropped around the competition area by a team member. Please see the deduction explanation sheet for additional Prop Restrictions. (See each routine below 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. Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area.
 - e. Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to PerformingArts@varsity.com and must be received at least 2 weeks prior to your event.

WARM UP TO COMPETITION POLICY

1. The time between when a team finishes warm up and is on the competition floor should be no sooner than 8 minutes and no longer than 30 minutes.
2. 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 Pep Band 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.

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.
3. REGIONAL COMPETITION TIE BREAK POLICY – Ties will not be broken at Regional Competitions.
4. CHAMPIONSHIP TIE BREAK POLICY – Ties will only be broken for **FIRST PLACE** in the **FINAL ROUND** of competition. 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.
5. By participating in a Varsity event, teams give their consent for performances and scores to be made public.
6. 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 Pep Band 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.

PEP BAND PERFORMANCE ROUTINE FORMAT

1. Pep Band Performance Routine divisions will be offered at select NCA, NDA, UCA, UDA & USA events.
2. **Fight Song** – The section should reflect your school's traditional Fight Song that your band performs at games, pep rallies, etc. Bands could incorporate crowd engaging elements and choreography that enhances the overall effect. For teams that do not have an official Fight Song, it is recommended to use a second selection of pep band /stand tunes. Music guidelines are available at varsity.com/music.
3. **Pep / Stand Tunes** – This section should reflect musical selections that your band typically performs at your school's events (e.g., "Sweet Caroline," "Hey Baby," "Seven Nation Army" etc.), again with an emphasis on crowd engagement. If you choose, this section can also feature an engaging excerpt from your program's halftime show.
4. **Timeout section** – This section is intended to be more open-ended and can reflect a musical performance that isn't solely a performance of a popular song, but that still attempts to engage the crowd. A drum cadence or feature is one option, as is a horn or woodwind feature (or multiple, as timing allows). Additionally, pep / stand tunes are encouraged.

Pep Band Performance Time Limit

- Bands will have 7 minutes total time to stage the performance and exit the performance area.
- Bands can perform the three segments above in any order.
- Maximum Performance Time: 5:00 (300 Seconds)

GAME DAY RALLY FORMAT (offered at select NCA/NDA EVENTS)

1. 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.
2. Event Guidelines for NCA please visit [NCA - Divisions, Rules & Scoring](#)
3. Event Guidelines for NDA please visit [NDA - Divisions, Rules & Scoring](#)

GAME DAY LIVE GUIDELINES (offered at select UCA/UDA events)

1. Game Day LIVE Divisions will be offered and select UCA & UDA events.
2. Divisions Offered
 - a. Junior
 - b. Varsity
3. Event Guidelines for all UCA Game Day LIVE and the National High School Cheerleading Championship please visit [UCA - Divisions, Rules & Scoring](#)
4. Event Guidelines for all UDA Game Day LIVE and National Dance Team Championship please visit [UDA - Divisions, Rules & Scoring](#)
5. In order to qualify for the National High School Cheerleading Championship (NHSCC) or the National Dance Team Championship (NDTC) in the Game Day Live divisions, teams are required to attend with a cheer or dance teams qualified to compete in Game Day Live.

CROWDLEADER ROUTINE FORMAT (offered at all USA EVENTS)

1. The Crowdleader™ Team routine weaves together the three separate stand-alone categories offered as part of USA Game Day Competition divisions: Band Chant, Situational Sideline/Cheer, and Fight Song. It can be performed by a single team, or a combination of separate spirit groups from a school (cheer, song/pom, pep flags, mascot, dance team, and band).
2. Event Guidelines for USA please visit [USA - Divisions, Rules & Scoring](#)

APPEARANCES, ENDORSEMENTS AND PUBLICITY

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

PEP BAND 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 Competition, (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 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.