



RULES & REGULATIONS

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

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CODE OF CONDUCT

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

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

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

ELIGIBILITY

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

SAFETY GUIDELINES / RULES

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

MUSIC GUIDELINES / RULES

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

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

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

INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE

UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

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

FAULT OF TEAM

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

INJURY / ILLNESS

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

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

RE-PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

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

INTRODUCTIONS

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

COMPETITION AREA

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

WARM UP ROOM POLICY

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

SPOTTER POLICY

Spotters for teams competing at All Star Events:

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

Spotters for teams competing at School Events:

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

Spotters for teams competing at Collegiate Championships:

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

Spotters at all Dance Events:

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

Guidelines for Additional Spotters:

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

SPORTSMANSHIP

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

INTERPRETATIONS AND/OR RULINGS

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

DISQUALIFICATION

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

HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

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

FINALITY OF DECISIONS

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

EVENT PARTICIPATION

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

VIDEO MEDIA POLICY

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

LOGO USAGE

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

APPEARANCES, ENDORSEMENTS AND PUBLICITY

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

RULES AND REGULATIONS AGREEMENT

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

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