

VARSITY SPIRIT 2019-2020 SCHOOL COMPETITION RULES AND GUIDELINES

GENERAL RULES:

A. PERFORMANCE ROUTINE DIVISIONS

1. SCHOOL DIVISIONS

Schools will compete as their high school is listed with the NCHSAA (1A-4A) but split in to two

divisions: D1 = 3A and 4A schools

D2 = 1A and 2A schools

Junior Varsity Divisions (D1 and D2)

Small JV 5-16 Athletes

Large JV 17-5 Athletes

Small JV Non-Tumble 5-16 Athletes

Large JV Non-Tumble 17-25 Athletes

High School Non-Building 5-30 Athletes

Varsity CoEd (2+males) 5-30 Athletes

Varsity Non-Tumble Divisions* (D1 and D2)

Small Non-Tumble 5-12 Athletes

Medium Non-Tumble 13-16 Athletes

Large Non-Tumble 17-20 Athletes

Super Non-Tumble 21-30 Athletes

*No more than 2 males allowed

Varsity Divisions

Small 5-12 Athletes

Medium 13-16 Athletes

Large 17-20 Athletes

Super 21-30 Athletes

B. SCHOOL REPRESENTATION AND TEAM PARTICIPATION

1. All participating schools must be a member of NCHSAA in good standing. All competitors must meet state and local eligibility requirements. All teams MUST support an interscholastic athletic program in order to be eligible.

2. All members of the cheerleading squad must be current members of the official school cheer squad and must attend the school they are representing. (Exception: This will not preclude participation from sister schools for same-gender schools as long as they are official members of the squad.)

3. Individuals are NOT permitted to compete on two School Teams.

4. The team and each participating member/coach should constantly display good sportsmanship throughout the entire performance in regard to respect for themselves, other teams and the viewing audience of all ages. Teams should refrain from any taunting, bragging, or suggestive expressions or gestures as well as discrimination of any nature.

5. We recommend that the team and each of its members display an overall appearance conducive to serving as public representatives and ambassadors of their school in regard to grooming, traditional and appropriate attire, conservative make-up, uniformity, etc.

C. IMPORTANT NOTICES

1. Coaches should carefully read all of the Rules and Regulations in the event there are new requirements, procedures and penalties.

2. In order to receive all pertinent information, coaches should ensure Varsity Spirit has a functional email address on file AT ALL TIMES and check that email account frequently for new information regarding the event.

3. All competition registration changes MUST be submitted in writing (email is preferred). It is the coach's responsibility to ensure competition registration changes are received by the deadline and processed by Varsity Spirit.

4. We reserve the right to add, combine, delete or split divisions if necessary, as well as move teams to appropriate divisions. Coaches should avoid attempting to have their squad compete in a division which would provide their team an unfair competitive advantage. No team is guaranteed another team to compete against.

5. Varsity Spirit is not responsible for teams placed in the wrong division by their coach. There is a penalty for changing divisions within 14 days of the event. Changing divisions within 14 days of the event will not be processed, as a matter of general procedure.

For example, if the number of members on your team changes, and as a result your team should be in a different division, small instead of large, it is the coach's responsibility to request a division change.

Coaches should carefully read the Performance Routine Divisions in this brochure. If at all possible, the Competition Director will attempt to place the team in the correct division. However, if insertion is not possible, the team will have to compete in the initial division listed on the registration form. **No divisional changes will be made after the order of appearance is sent to coaches.**

6. The schedule is set based on the recommendations of the NCHSAA and its policies and standards. Varsity Spirit sets the division orders to best suit fair and consistent judging between two (2) full panels of judges.

7. A preliminary and final order is emailed to each team's head coach as submitted on registration form.

8. More information including judging, score sheets, deductions, safety, list of hotels, R-Line map and general event order are available at <https://www.nchsaa.org/sports/cheerleading>

D. UNIFORM GUIDELINES

1. All participant uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention. Covered midriff does include flesh or nude colored bodysuits and liners; however, fringe would not count as a cover.

2. Any team in violation of the uniform guidelines will be assessed a five (5) point deduction.

E. TIME LIMITATIONS

1. Each performance routine presentation must include at least one cheer or sideline chant. The musical portion must **not exceed one minute and thirty seconds. Total time limit is two minutes and thirty seconds.**

Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first.

2. If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation as follows: Three (3) point deduction for 1-5 seconds over, five (5) point deduction for 6-10 seconds over and seven (7) point deduction for 11 seconds and over.

3. The routine time limit is 2:30. Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, a 5 second grace period will be taken into account. Judges will not issue a deduction until their stopwatches show a time of 2:35.

4. Because penalties are severe, it is recommended that all teams time their performances several times prior to the competition and leave a 2-3 second cushion to allow for variations in sound equipment.

5. Introductions

a. All introductions (tumbling, entrances, chants, spellouts, etc.) 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. There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official ending of the routine.

6. Teams are responsible for their own music and must provide a person to control (start/stop/pause) all music. Bring a back-up copy of all music. Music must be either on a iPhone, MP3 players or iPod. If music is on an iPhone or other device with multi-functionality and messaging, all services must be stopped (airplane mode enabled) to avoid interruptions in music. **iPod capabilities ONLY will be in warm-up.

F. MUSIC

1. I have read and understand the USA Cheer Music Copyrights Educational Initiative and all sound recordings used in our team's music shall only be used with written license from the owner(s) of the sound recordings.

2. These guidelines are as of June 16, 2016. For the most up to date music information visit <http://varsity.com/music-guidelines> . If you have any questions, cheer teams should email info@usacheer.net. Please check the Preferred Provider list for updates and changes periodically.

3. Teams must be able to provide proof of licensing upon request. If a team does not have proof of music licensing available, they will be allowed to perform to an optional approved track of music or a track with counts (provided by Varsity Spirit). If a team cannot provide proof of Licensing, and do not perform to an optional approved track or to counts, the team will be disqualified from the competition.

4. If there are concerns regarding a certain team's music, a Challenge Form must be completed immediately following the team's performance.

5. Challenge Process

a. All music challenges must be submitted in writing to the event director.

b. There will be a \$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.

c. Fees collected will be voided if the challenge is correct.

d. If the team challenged can provide documentation during the event and can be verified, the fees will be donated to St. Jude.

e. If the team challenged can provide documentation that requires further review, a decision will be finalized within 48 hours of the event.

G. COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA

1. Participants must start in the competition area with at least one foot on the ground.

2. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.

3. Varsity Spirit Competitions comply with the NFHS surface ruling that school based teams may not compete on a spring floor.

4. Approximate floor size will be 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 strips).

INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE:

A. 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 rather than the team, the team affected should STOP the routine.

2. The team will perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred. The degree and effect of the interruption will be determined by the competition officials.

3. All point deductions accumulated to that point will carry over.

B. 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 decided by officials, the team will perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred.

C. INJURY

1. The only persons that may stop a routine for injury are as follows: a) competition officials, b) the coach/advisor from the team performing, c) an injured individual.

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 at a later time, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of the competition officials. The team may 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, 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. In the event of a suspected concussion, the participant cannot return to perform without clearance from a licensed medical professional that has training related to head injuries, even with a waiver from a parent or legal guardian.

d. In addition to the Varsity Brands head injury policy, we encourage you to be familiar with specific law of North Carolina where the competition is being held. All teams should follow NCHSAA rules/regulations for safety from the NCHSAA Handbook.

PROTOCOL FOR PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

A. RULES & PROCEDURES

Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the coach/advisor of the team and will be directed to the Competition Director. Such questions should be made prior to the team's competition performance.

B. 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.

C. MUSIC

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 Rules and Regulations 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.

SPORTSMANSHIP

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. The coach of each team is responsible for seeing that the team members, coaches, parents and other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification or a team penalty.

SAFETY VIOLATIONS

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

DISQUALIFICATION

Any team that does not adhere to the teams and procedures of these "Rules and Regulations" will be subject to disqualification from the competition, will automatically forfeit any right to any prize or awards presented by the competition.

FINALITY OF DECISIONS

By participating in this competition, each team agrees that the decisions 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.

SCORES AND RANKINGS

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 the registered coach for that team at the conclusion of the competition, unless you have received them on the floor at awards.

JUDGING CRITERIA

1. Performance Routines
 - a. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the Varsity Spirit Score Sheet. Each team will be evaluated on a 100-point system.
 - b. Cheer will count for 35 points and 65 points for the Music section of the routine. Each section will be combined for the final score.
 - c. Any deductions or violations will be taken off of the final score.

JUDGING PANELS

1. Head Judge – The Head Judge is responsible for overseeing the entire judging panel that consists of panel judges and Point Deduction/Safety Judge.
2. Panel Judge – Panel Judges are responsible for scoring each team's performance based on the Varsity Spirit Score Sheets. Each Panel Judge will fill out a score sheet for each performance.
3. Point Deduction/Safety Judge – Safety Judge is responsible for assessing deductions in each routine for athlete(s), stunt(s), and pyramid fall(s), drop(s), or collapse(s). Please review the "Point Deduction"

explanation sheet. They will also be responsible for administering all safety violations and time violations.

4. ALL JUDGES' DECISIONS ARE FINAL.

2019-20 SAFETY RULES

Rules subject to change by NFHS. Go to www.cheerrules.org for the most updated rules.

ROUTINE SCORING GUIDELINES

SCORESHEET FOR MUSIC SECTION BREAKDOWN

BUILDING Score Sheet

Partner Stunts (25 Points for All-Girl, 25 Points for Coed)

PERFECTION OF SKILL – 15 POINTS

1. Proper Technique
 - a. Top, Base and Spots
 - b. Entries/Dismounts/Transitions
2. Synchronization
 - a. Timing of skill performed
 - b. Stunts – Load-in/Dismounts/Transitions
3. Spacing
 - a. Formations during all skills performed.

DIFFICULTY – 10 POINTS

1. Level of skills
 - a. Intermediate, Advanced, Elite, and Super Elite
2. Number of Stunts Performed (Coed if applicable – use of Coed skills throughout, unassisted stunts, and maximizing total number of males) in sequence
3. Number of Bases Used
 - a. Maximizing stunt groups
 - b. 2 vs. 3 Bases – Front Spots
4. Transitions and Variety
 - a. In and out, Inversions, Release Moves, Twisting

Note: Skills that are NOT executed will NOT count towards a team's difficulty score. Ex: 5 attempts but only 3 actually execute the skill.

Stunt Sequence (suggestions for choreography)

1. Entrance
2. Body Positions
3. Transitions
4. Dismount
5. Execution
 - a. Technique
 - b. Stability
 - c. Synchronization
 - d. Flexibility
 - e. Spacing
 - f. Bobbles/Falls
6. Difficulty
 - a. Number of stunts attempted compared to number of people on the team
 - b. Number of times stunts are attempted in routine
 - c. Uniformity – can all groups do the same skill?
 - d. Less bases = more difficulty

Pyramids (15 Points)

PERFECTION OF SKILL – 10 POINTS

1. Proper Technique
 - a. Top, Base, and Spots
 - b. Entries/Dismounts/ Transitions
2. Synchronization
 - a. Timing of skills performed
 1. Group Load-In/ Dismounts/Transitions
3. Spacing
 - a. Formations during all skills performed
 - b. Stunts/Pyramids – Connections

DIFFICULTY – 5 POINTS

1. Level of Skills
 - a. Load-In, Release Moves, Origin, Landing
2. Number of structures performed
3. Number of bases used
 - a. Maximizing stunt groups
 - b. Single based skills (Coed if applicable)
4. Transitions & Creativity
 - a. Entries, transitions between structures, pyramid variations

Pyramid Sequence (suggestions for choreography)

1. Entrance
2. Structures
3. Transitions
4. Dismounts
5. Execution
6. Difficulty
 - a. Number of athletes involved in building the structure
 1. Should include ALL athletes
 2. BUT . . . should also include single based stunts (possible if braced)
 - b. Number/Variety
 - c. Transitions
 1. Twisting
 2. Release
 3. Inversion/Braced Flips

SCORESHEET FOR MUSIC SECTION BREAKDOWN

TUMBLING/JUMPS/DANCE Score Sheet

STANDING/RUNNING GROUP Tumbling (10 Points)

EXECUTION – 5 POINTS

1. Proper Technique/Form
 - a. Arms, Legs, Entry and Landings
2. Synchronization
 - a. Timing of skills performed
 - b. Connection of combo passes
 - c. Entry and Landings

DIFFICULTY – 5 POINTS

1. Difficulty of skills performed in groups
 - a. What's the most elite pass performed by large groups?
 - b. Highlight additional Elite Group Passes
 - c. Number of athletes participating in group pass
2. Two (2) or more athletes is considered a group

Tumbling – Running and Standing (suggestions for choreography)

1. Execution

- a. Technique
- b. Synchronization
- c. Spacing
- 2. Difficulty
 - a. Type of skill
 - b. Number of athletes performing the skill
 - 1. More difficult to synchronize multiple athletes
 - 2. More difficult to use variety of tumbling “lanes” (diagonal is longer)
 - c. Combination skills (jump+tumble) – can increase tumbling difficulty.

JUMPS/DANCE – 5 POINTS TOTAL

JUMPS – 3 POINTS

- 1. Performance
 - a. Proper Technique - A good demonstration/control of skills
- 2. Form
 - a. Placement of Chest/Arms/Legs
- 3. Height
 - a. Level of jumps by TEAM
 - 1. Low-Medium-High
- 4. Synchronization
 - a. Timing of Jumps performed
 - b. Approach/Landings

JUMPS - Suggestions for Choreography:

Execution – The whole team will be evaluated, not just strongest jumpers in front.

- Approach, Height, Flexibility, Landing, Visual Interest and Synchronization (does this worsen in combinations?)

Difficulty

- Type of skill, Number of skills – Variety
- Number of athletes performing each skill
- Combinations. Please note: ***Adding tumbling after the jump does NOT increase your jump score!***

DANCE – 2 POINTS

- 1. Technique
 - a. Good demonstration of team’s cheer dance ability
- 2. Execution
 - a. Sharpness – Motions
 - b. Placement – Levels of arms, wrists, elbows
 - c. Timing – staying on counts

- d. Energy and Expression throughout
- e. Rhythm/Correlation to music
- 3. Visual Impact
 - a. Spacing – Formations/Transitions
 - b. Use of Levels – Level changes, Floor work, Lunges, etc.
 - c. Overall Choreography – Compliment the music
 - d. Visual Appeal – Quick, clean formation changes, ripples/group work

COED TEAMS – JUMPS/DANCE – 5 POINTS

MALE INTEGRATION – Male team members are expected to be actively involved and continually integrated into the competition routine, displaying skill sets that include stunts, tumbling, motion technique, and/or dance.

OVERALL IMPRESSION– 5 POINTS

- 1. Routine Creativity
 - a. “Wow” Factors
 - b. Use of the floor throughout the routine
 - c. Includes a variety of skills
- 2. Flow – Seamless flow from beginning to the end
- 3. Use of Formations/Transitions
 - a. Use of floor and variety of formations
 - b. Creative Transitions – Fast, clean and effortless
- 4. Energy from beginning to end of routine

THE CHEER PORTION

Crowd Leading (15 points)

Crowd Effective Material – 5 points

- 1. VOICE –
 - a. Voices should be loud and clear
 - b. Emphasis should be on mascots, colors, letters, etc.
 - c. Voices should command the crowd’s attention
 - d. Voices should not drop during skill incorporation.
- 2. PACE –
 - a. Moderate pace that is easy to follow but also generate excitement/participation
 - b. Should be designed to get the crowd to yell back (avoid story telling/bragging, wordy cheers are difficult to follow)
 - c. Allow time for the crowd to respond before leading into the next verse.

d. The TEAM should maintain the control of tempo in the cheer/sideline.

3. FLOW –

- a. Should be seamless from beginning to end.
- b. No abrupt transitions or tempo changes

Ability & Energy to Lead the Crowd – 5 points

- 1. Teams should encourage crowd participation
 - a. Natural spirit
- 2. Teams should spread out to cover the crowd
- 3. Encourage the crowd to yell from beginning to end
- 4. SMILE
- 5. Demonstrate confidence
- 6. Demonstrate strong leadership to the crowd
- 7. Project enthusiasm

Proper Use of Signs, Poms or Megaphones & Motion Technique – 5 points

- 1. SIGNS should be used to:
 - a. Promote Crowd Involvement
 - b. Be easy to read
 - c. Be shown to crowd in time to respond
 - d. Use signs only on words
- 2. POMS should be used to:
 - a. Indicate specific colors or times to yell
- 3. MEGAPHONES should be used to:
 - a. Project voices
 - b. Help add visuals for the cheer
- 4. MOTION TECHNIQUE
 - a. Execution should be sharp and precise
 - b. Placement, levels, bent wrists/elbows (on ground and in stunts)
 - c. Overall sharpness w/motions, including use of props
 - d. Avoid “over-choreographing”, shaking

Skill Incorporations (15 points)

Proper Use of Skills to Effectively Lead the Crowd – 5 Points

- 1. STUNTS
 - a. Used to make cheerleaders visual to better lead the crowd

b. Stunts to consider: Preps, Extensions, Liberties, Hitches

- 1. Motions, hold poms or signs and still effectively lead the crowd
- 2. Stretches/Arabesques and complicated transitions?

- Are we effectively leading the crowd?

2. TUMBLING/JUMPS

- a. Think S/S/S – Single Synchronized Skills
- b. Synchronized ALWAYS better – unless choreographed to match crowd response
- c. Running/Quick jump combos better for MUSIC portion – it is difficult to yell and lead.

- 3. Teams should incorporate skills that can be performed well. These skills should not inhibit their ability to lead the crowd effectively. Do what you do well and move on!

Execution – 10 points

- 1. Proper Technique
 - a. Top, Base and Spots/Jumps/Tumbling
- 2. Synchronization
 - a. Timing of skills performed
 - 1. Stunts – Load-in/Dismounts
 - 2. Tumbling – Entry/Landings
 - 3. Jumps – Approach/Landings
- 3. Spacing
 - a. Formations during all skills performed
 - 1. Equal on each side of center
 - b. Stunts/Pyramids – Connections
 - c. ***Remember – Skills should be SOLID, SAFE & should be 100%performance READY!**

Overall (5 points)

Flow, Overall Crowd Effectiveness, and Difficulty of Practical Skills

- 1. Does your team lead the crowd effectively?
- 2. Do you demonstrate SPIRIT raising antics?
- 3. Do you exhibit strong athleticism?
- 4. Are you keeping the crowd entertained?
- 5. Was the overall routine well executed which led to a SOLID and SAFE performance?

6. Difficulty level and number of all skills demonstrated by team

- a. Intermediate, Advanced, Elite Skills -
The skills performed should not hinder a team's ability to lead the crowd, think PRACTICAL – Full-up to extension vs. full up to stretch or braced flips.

Other tips to remember:

Transitions:

- a. Should be seamless; avoid downtime between various routine elements
- b. Try to avoid athletes crossing the center line unnecessarily

Expression:

- a. Athletes should be showing genuine spirit/excitement/sportsmanship

- b. Avoid taunting/slashing/excessive rallying

Appearance:

- a. Uniformity
- b. Natural look (Avoid oversize bows, excessive make-up, etc.)

Music:

- a. Correlation to routine
- b. Flows with skills; not too choppy/too many clips. Sound effects enhance skills, not distract

Music should be appropriate for all crowds; should be a proper reflection of the school.

Please retain a copy of these rules for your files



**ON BEHALF OF MY TEAM, I HEREBY ACCEPT THE COMPETITION AND ROUTINE
RULES AND GUIDELINES AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THESE RULES**

(School/Team Name)

(Date)

(City/State)

(Coach's Signature)

(Division – Small Varsity, Varsity Non-Tumble, etc.)

(Administrator's Signature)