



2026-2027
Cheerleading
Rules and Regulations

CODE OF CONDUCT

TSSAA encourages and supports sportsmanship, integrity and fairness among participants and coaches/owners/directors in all facets of team 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, TSSAA asks that the following Code of Conduct be adhered to during the TSSAA State Cheer Tournament:

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, choreographers, 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 unruly, aggressive, or belligerent behavior by participants, coaches or spectators toward any other attendee or Event Staff will result in a deduction, potential team disqualification, removal from the event and/or barred participation from future TSSAA Cheer Tournament.
5. TSSAA and Varsity Spirit reserves the right to remove any persons from a competition for unsafe or unsportsmanlike conduct

EVENT GUIDELINES

The coach/director of each team is responsible for understanding and following the Event Guidelines.

To review additional information, click here: [Varsity Spirit - Event Guidelines](#)

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout and post event. This includes but is not limited to social media posts and comments. The coach/director of each team is responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents, and any other person's affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly.
2. All programs/teams should have, and review, an emergency action plan in the event of an injury.
3. Coaches / Directors must recognize the entire team's ability level and limit the team's activities accordingly.
4. No skills / technical elements should be performed when a coach/director is not present or providing direct supervision.
5. All practice sessions should be held in a location suitable for the activity, and away from noise and distractions.
6. Warm up and stretching should precede and conclude all practice sessions, pep rallies, games, competitions, performances, and other physical activities.
7. The performance surface should be taken into consideration before engaging in any skills / technical elements. The performance area should be reasonably free of obstructions and should not be performed on:
 - a) Concrete, asphalt, or any other hard or uncovered surface
 - b) Wet surfaces
 - c) Uneven surfaces
 - d) Surfaces with obstructions
8. The coach/director or other knowledgeable designated representative should attend all practices, functions, and games.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. All teams must follow the event safety rules for the type of team competing. This includes any High School Federation

or rules applicable. Clarifications and updates may be made during the season.

2. It is the coach's responsibility to read and understand the Safety Rules appropriate to your team type.

MUSIC GUIDELINES

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 screenshot of the song you are using from your purchased playlist
 - c. Music Provider – provide a printed copy with proof of licensing.
 - d. 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. When recording your music for the event, coaches or music editors should edit their song in a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) and ensure the song's volume 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.
5. 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.
6. 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).
7. 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.
8. If there are concerns regarding a certain team's use of music, a Challenge Form must be completed immediately following the team's performance.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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. CDs will no longer be allowed, and CD players will not be provided at competitions.
12. 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.
13. 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.

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 perform again.
3. While masks are not required on the warmup floor and/or performance floor unless dictated by state or local guidance, an athlete may choose to wear a mask. If an athlete chooses to wear a mask during the performance and the mask restricts the athletes view and/or interferes with skills or otherwise becomes a safety concern, the athlete should either secure or remove the mask. If the athlete does not secure or remove the mask, the routine is subject to being stopped by competition officials.
4. UNIFORM MALFUNCTION: As a precaution, each performer must 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.
5. 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 later. 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 people 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 later. 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, 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 as 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 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 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 if the team will be allowed to perform later.
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.

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. TSSAA Competitions comply with the NFHS surface ruling that school-based programs may not compete on a spring floor.
4. Approximate floor size will be '54 feet wide by '42 feet deep (9 strips).
5. Any team member stepping outside or touching outside the performance area will cause the squad to receive a .5 penalty per occurrence. If a violation is assessed, the judges' decisions are final and will not be reviewed.
 - a. The white line is considered a warning mark.
 - b. A penalty will be assessed when any part of the seat/torso or any combination of two hands and/or feet are completely outside of the performance surface.
 - c. Out of bounds are called by line judges and decisions are final.
 - d. Once a team member takes the floor, they must remain on the floor until the end of the performance.
6. The center will be marked on all performance surfaces. Center markers will not be allowed. This includes but is not limited to stuffed animals, toys, banners, etc. Teams are prohibited from bringing any non-used props to the performance area.
7. 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.
8. Signs or props may be safely placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member who must remain inside the competition area. Please see the deduction explanation sheet for additional Prop Restrictions. (See Game Day division rules for additional mascot prop guidelines)
 - a. Approved props include foam fingers, rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for crowd leading and appropriate for crowd response.
 - b. Props may not be thrown into the crowd.
 - c. Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline cheer/dance boxes used at games.
 - d. No air horns or artificial noise makers are allowed.
 - e. All equipment tips on flagpoles must be padded or taped.
 - f. All props must be able to fit through a standard size (36") single door.
 - g. Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area.
 - h. Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to UCARules@varsity.com and must be received at least 2

weeks prior to your event.

9. 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.

SPOTTER POLICY

Varsity Spirit Spotters will be available on the main competition floor.

Note: Teams should not attempt skills beyond their ability level.

EVENT POLICIES

All attendees are expected to follow event policies to ensure a respectable and secure environment.

To review the event policies in detail, click here: [Varsity Spirit - Event Policies](#)

TSSAA SCHOOL DIVISIONS

All Junior High Divisions – 9th Grade and Below

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

All Varsity Divisions – 8th Grade - 12th Grade

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

Mascots

Teams may add up to 2 (two) mascots in their Game Day Routines. The mascot(s) must meet all the eligibility requirements as the athletes. The mascot(s) must be a student of the school. The mascot(s) must enter the floor with the team and remain on the floor for the entire routine or an out of bounds penalty will be assessed. The mascot(s) should be used to raise crowd energy and participation. The mascot(s) is not allowed to be involved in any stunts, tumbling, or skills with hip over head rotation 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. Mascots in costume will not be allowed outside of the competition venues. The mascot must always remain behind the formation during the routine.

CHEER DIVISION GUIDELINES (Performance and Game Day Divisions)

Only TSSAA member schools may compete at TSSAA Competition.

Cheer Squads may only compete in ONE category/division (Game Day OR Performance) at the TSSAA Competition.

Individuals are NOT permitted to compete in two (2) routines. Cheer teams may participate in Spirit Program in addition to their cheer routine (Game Day or Performance). An individual may compete in 1 cheer routine and 1 Spirit Program routine. Individuals are NOT permitted to compete in two **cheer** routines.

FOUR registered coaches are permitted to enter the team entrance and stay with the team throughout warmup and performance.

Alternates must be dressed in matching school cheer uniform or team warm-up. Alternates dressed in street clothes or dress other than cheer uniform/team warmup will need to purchase a spectator ticket and enter as spectator.

TSSAA strongly recommends that you have an alternate (not a member of another competing squad at the same event),

who is prepared to substitute in the event of injury, probation, etc. No cheerleader/dancer may represent more than one Team, even in the event of injury or emergency. Once a team checks into the event, the team will not be allowed to change divisions.

*The TSSAA reserves the right to add, modify, and/or combine divisions based on actual registration. Divisions with less than 3 teams competing for 3 consecutive years will be combined or eliminated the following year.

Please visit <https://tssaa.org/sports/cheerleading> for a complete list of divisions for TSSAA State Cheer Championship.

ELIGIBILITY POLICY

1. All members of the cheerleading team must be current members of the official school spirit squads and must attend the school they are representing.
 - a. Exception 1: Single-gender schools may use athletes from affiliated schools if they are official members of the squad. These teams must support the school(s) athletics/ endeavors throughout the year and not solely combined for competition purposes. █
2. Cheer Squads may only compete in ONE category/division (Game Day OR Performance) at the TSSAA Cheer Championship.
3. Individuals are NOT permitted to compete on two **different** School Teams at the event.
4. The team should display an overall behavior conducive to serving as public representatives and ambassadors of their school/organization.
5. All athletes and coaches must be registered and listed on the Event Roster to be submitted at check in for each event. Roster Forms can be found at [UCA Competition Required Forms](#) under Regional Competition Forms & FAQs.
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.

SCHOOL/PROGRAM REPRESENTATION

1) UNIFORMS

- a) All participant uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention. Covered midriff does include flesh or nude colored body suits and liners; however, fringe would not count as a cover.
- b) Any team in violation of the uniform guidelines will be assessed a TWO (2) point deduction.
- c) A traditional sideline uniform (that covers the midriff when standing at attention and has an element that is identifiable to your school – colors, logos, letters, mascot, etc.) is required for all divisions.

2) MAKE-UP

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

3) HAIR

- a. Hair for all athletes does not have to be worn the same but must be secured off the face with a simple style that considers all diversities.
- b. Bows are not required. If worn, bows must:
 - NOT be excessive in size
 - NOT be a distraction to the performance.
 - Be positioned to minimize risk for all participants. This is restricted to back of the head (below the crown)

- If the bow has tails, they must be facing backwards and down to limit the ability to fall the forehead into the participants' eyes or block the view of the participants while performing.
- c. A .25 deduction will be given to teams in violation of this rule.
- d. Cheerleaders must wear athletic shoes.

All facets of a performance/routine, including choreography, music selection, uniforms and cheer words, should be appropriate and suitable for family viewing and listening. Examples of inappropriate choreography may include, but are not limited to, vulgar or suggestive movement appearing offensive or sexual in content, displaying acts of violence, and/or relaying lewd or profane gestures. Music, words, or sound effects unsuitable for family listening which includes, but is not limited, to swear words and connotations of any type of sexual act or behavior, drugs, and/or violent acts or behavior. Removing improper language or words from a song and replacing with sound effects or other words may still constitute 'inappropriate.' Cheer words should promote school pride, honor, tradition, and sportsmanship. Cheers that are negative, insulting to other teams or the judges may reflect a lower score. Music, movements, or cheer words in which the appropriateness is questionable or with which uncertainty exists should be assumed by the coach to be inappropriate and removed as to not put their team in an unfortunate situation. If you have any questions, please email UCArules@varsity.com.

ENTRANCES AND EXITS

1. All introductions (entrances, chants, spellouts, etc.) are considered part of the routine and will be timed as part of the performance. Skills are not allowed during the team's entry to the floor or any time prior to starting the performance. **EXCEPTION** – See Game Day Below
2. All team breaks, rituals, and traditions need to take place prior to entering the mat.
3. Teams should not have choreographed movements to enter or exit the stage. Teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm, but without excessive gestures. *Example:* hugs, handshakes, choreographed dances, rituals, etc.
4. Teams have 30 seconds from the team's introduction to start the routine and **30 seconds after routine completion to exit the performance area**. 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. **Official entrance timing will begin when the first athlete touches the mat or performance area.**
5. 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**. Excessive celebration includes, but is not limited to, team huddles, alternates/coaches entering the competition floor, falling to the ground, dancing, head/hair swinging, split drops, inappropriate gestures, and/or other similar moves.
6. There should not be any organized or choreographed exits or other activities after the official end of the routine.

ROUTINE TIME LIMITATIONS

1. Timing will BEGIN with the first choreographed movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first. Timing will END with the last choreographed movement, voice, or note of music whichever comes last.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Because penalties are severe, it is recommended that all teams time their performance several times prior to competition and leave a several second cushion to allow for variations in sound equipment.

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

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

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

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

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

PERFORMANCE ROUTINE DIVISIONS

1. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the UCA performance routine score sheet.
2. Cheer will count for 30 points; Building Skills will count for 50 points and Overall will count for 20 points. Building and Overall score sheets only judge skills and choreography within the music portion of the routine.
3. 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.

GAME DAY ROUTINE DIVISIONS

1. The performance will follow this order: Band Chant, Crowd Leading, Fight Song.
2. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the UCA Game Day score sheets. For detailed score sheets please visit uca.varsity.com.
3. The use of crowd leading tools is recommended (All are not required).
 - a. Approved props include foam fingers, rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for crowd leading and appropriate for crowd response.
 - b. Props may not be thrown into the crowd.
 - c. Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline cheer/dance boxes used at games.
 - d. Air horns or artificial noise makers are not allowed.
 - e. All equipment tips on flagpoles must be padded or taped.
 - f. All props must be able to fit through a standard size (36") single door.
 - g. Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area.
 - h. Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to UCARules@varsity.com and must be received at least 2 weeks prior to your event.
 - i. Mascots will only be allowed to use the approved props listed above. Any part of the mascot uniform that is used as a prop must have prior approval here: [UCA Legality Inquiry Form](#)
4. The incorporation of stunts/tumbling is required in the Crowd Leading and Fight Song sections if the division permits. If there are no skills (stunts and/or tumbling) performed, a score of 0 will be given for the skills categories.
5. **Band Chant** should have an emphasis on crowd appeal and practicality – No stunting or tumbling is permitted, jumps and kicks are allowed. Squads should focus on crowd engagement and visual appeal and use creative movements such as level changes and ripples.
6. **Crowd Leading** – Teams must give time for the announcer to give squads a game scenario indicating an offense or defense situation following the Band Chant. Teams should show their definitive understanding of the situation with an offensive or defensive Sideline. **Teams may not stunt until the sideline has been started by the athletes.** After the Situational Sideline, teams will move into their Cheer which can include one reflective of a timeout, general sideline/spell-out or other cheer material that incites a response and encourages the crowd to yell along. Teams will be evaluated on their ability to lead the crowd, crowd effectiveness, proper use of motions/crowd leading tools and

execution of stunts/tumbling relevant to a game day environment. **No music is allowed during the crowd leading section.** If there are no skills (stunts and/or tumbling) performed, a score of 0 will be given for the skills categories.

7. **Fight Song** should represent the traditional Fight Song the school does at games. Incorporation is limited to three (3) consecutive 8-counts of stunts and/or tumbling. If the fight song repeats, the incorporation will only be allowed both times if it is repeated exactly the same both times. Counting will begin with the first initiation of a skill (stunt or tumbling) until one of the following:
 - a. The routine ends within the 3 consecutive 8 counts.
 - b. Building skills must be stationary prior to the end of the 3rd 8-count and may remain stationary until the end of the routine.
 - c. Dismounts following the completion of the routine will not be included for timing purposes. Any choreographed dismount will continue the timing of the routine. *Example* – Coed toe touch pop offs performed together, in unison would be considered choreographed.
8. Each section should have a beginning and end. *Note:* Spirited crowd leading interaction between each section is encouraged to continue the game day feel. Stunts are not allowed as a transition before/between sections, including the team's entry to the floor and any time before starting the performance. Tumbling and single-based lifts are allowed anytime during the performance except during the Band Chant and still must be within the 3 8-count limit in Fight Song.
9. Additional Skill Restrictions
 - Basket and waist level tosses are NOT allowed. Examples of toss skills allowed are quick toss stunts, toss coed skill entries, and single-based toss toe touches.
 - Inversions are NOT allowed.
 - Twisting Released Dismounts are NOT allowed.
 - **Twisting Released Stunt Transitions are NOT allowed.**
 - Single leg stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
 - Running Tumbling is NOT allowed.
 - Single standing tumbling is allowed and cannot be connected. A single tumbling skill can only be connected to a single jump. The only standing tumbling skills that are allowed include back handspring, back tuck, forward roll, front walkover, cartwheel, standing aerial, jump back handspring, and jump tuck.
10. Any deductions or violations will be taken off the raw score. For more information on scoring, score sheets and judging criteria, please visit uca.varsity.com.
11. For Game Day routines, voice-overs and words may not be recorded or overlayed on the music tracks at all. Any voices captured in the original recording are allowed.

PRIZES AND AWARDS

1. All athletes performing on the team must be registered and rostered for the event.
2. First and Second place awards will be given in each division.
3. TSSAA first place division winners are eligible to receive a bid to the National High School Cheerleading Championship (*Check out [UCA NHSCC Championship Rules](#) for more details*)

2026-2027 SAFETY RULES AND ADDITIONAL DIVISION RESTRICTIONS

Rules subject to change by USA Cheer. Go to usacheer.org for the most updated rules.

- Junior High Divisions will be restricted from performing any type of toss or waist level cradles.

If you have any questions concerning the legality of a skill, please email the video to ucarules@varsity.com. Include your team's name, your name, contact phone number, and the event attending. Videos sent via text message will not be accepted. Videos submitted for an TSSAA event must be received THREE weeks prior to the event and must be labeled with the event attending.

2026-2027 LEGALITY AND ADDITIONAL DIVISION SKILL RESTRICTIONS

Coaches are responsible for knowing the rules set forth for Varsity Spirit events. Rules subject to change by USA Cheer

and NFHS. Go to usacheer.org and <https://nfhs.org/activities-sports/spirit/> for the most updated rules and rules books.

- Junior High toss restrictions can be found on the USA Cheer website: [Safety & Education - USA Cheer](#)
- Non-Tumbling Divisions will restrict any hip over head rotation except for entries and exits to stunts/pyramids. Back handspring entries WILL NOT be allowed in the Non-Tumbling Divisions.

LEGALITY REVIEW (PRE-EVENT)

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

Performing the skill at a prior event or in a prior round of competition does not ensure that a skill is legal nor that it would have warranted a legality warning.

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PARTNER STUNTS, PYRAMIDS AND TOSSES

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

To submit a video:

1. All reviews must be submitted through [UCA Legality Inquiry Form \(jotform.com\)](#)
2. The skill in question must be recorded by the team at practice. We are unable to accept videos of performances, competitions, or of other teams.
3. All submissions must include the coach, team, and division in the entry information.
4. The recording will be reviewed as if every person in the video is included in the skill. This would include additional spotters.
5. Videos are limited to 30 seconds and must be able to be viewed upright without rotating.
6. All videos will receive either a "legal" or "illegal" response. If the video receives an "illegal" response, the entire video will not be reviewed but stopped at the point that the video was illegal. *If the video is inconclusive, you will receive a response as to why we were unable to make a judgement on the video. It is up to you as a coach to resubmit the video to be re-reviewed.
7. *Please note:* Only submitting the skill will make the skill eligible for a warning. UCA can only guarantee this process will be accepted at UCA-branded events. This would not include other Varsity-branded and state association events.
8. Videos via text message or facetime will not be reviewed. If you know that your video does not meet all the requirements above, please refilm/resubmit the video. Only videos that meet the above requirements will be reviewed.
9. Inquiries need to be submitted 2 weeks before your team's performance to guarantee a response.
10. Video submissions will only be accepted by the official coach of the team.

If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please email UCARules@varsity.com. Due to volume, please allow up to 5 business days to get back to you. Include your team's name, your name, division, and a contact phone number.

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 about the team's performance should be made to the Competition Director immediately after the team's performance and/or after the competition's outcome.
3. **MUSIC** - Any questions concerning a specific violation of music compliance must be submitted in writing to the Competition Director immediately following the team's performance.

4. Questions regarding another team and/or their performance will not be allowed.
5. Deduction sheets will be available shortly following each team's performance. Questions regarding deductions can be made by the Schools Official Advisor/Coach of the team only and must be done within 10 minutes of the team's deduction sheet being released to team or prior to final awards-whichever happens first. Challenges will NOT be accepted after the team's 10-minute timeframe and/or after competition results have been announced.

SPORTSMANSHIP/ DISQUALIFICATION

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 automatically forfeit any right to any prizes or awards presented by the competition. 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 advisor and coach of each team is responsible for seeing team members, coaches, choreographers, parents, and other people affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification. When a coach is in discussion with an official, other coaches, choreographers, athletes, and parents/spectators, they must maintain proper professional conduct. Failing to do so may result in 1.0 deduction, removal of coach or disqualification. If face coverings are required: athletes and coaches who do not comply with the face covering requirement may be assessed an unsportsmanlike deduction of 1 point.

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 need for the judges to make prompt and fair decisions in this competition and waives any legal, equitable, administrative, or procedural review of such decisions.

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 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 TSSAA competition official.

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. **THERE IS NO PROCESS OF PROTEST.**
1. Any deductions or violations will be taken off the final score, and TSSAA will not change or overturn the judges' decision.
2. TSSAA TIE BREAK POLICY – Ties will only be broken for **FIRST PLACE** during the 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.
3. By participating in a TSSAA event, teams give their consent for performances and scores to be made public.

VIOLATIONS

Any team in violation of these Rules and Regulations or any of the above-mentioned guidelines will be assessed a two (2) point general deduction. This deduction does not apply to deduction or violations within the point deduction system or already assigned a lower/higher point value. Go to uca.varsity.com for more specifics.

If you have any questions concerning the legality of a skill, please email the video to ucarules@varsity.com. Include your team's name, your name, a contact phone number, and the event attending. **Videos sent via text message will not be accepted.** Videos submitted for an TSSAA event must be received **THREE weeks prior to the event** and must be labeled

with the event attending.

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 TSSAA, 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 TSSAA logo VARSITY (UCA, UDA, NCA or NDA) or the NHSCC logo including banners, rings, bows, t-shirts, etc. without prior approval from the TSSAA and UCA Office. However, the use of the TSSAA or UCA or NCA letters will be allowed.

OFFICIAL PARTNER

Varsity Spirit is the official spirit partner of TSSAA Cheer. No other cheer/dance instructional organization, choreographer may present, solicit business, recruit, or distribute merchandise during the TSSAA State Cheer Championship. Exception: If the Vendor has expressed in an advanced Statement of Work and received written consent from TSSAA and Varsity Spirit.

TSSAA and VARSITY COMPETITION RULES

While the final details and schedule of any competition could require up to the day adjustments, and all guidelines are subject to change based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), federal, state and local guidance, please be assured that TSSAA and Varsity Spirit are committed to delivering the same quality of competition experience for which we are known. We appreciate your understanding of the flexibility this will require. By accepting the Terms and Conditions as the authorized person from my program I agree and acknowledge to abide by the TSSAA and Varsity Spirit Competition Rules.

TSSAA RULES & 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 be coaching and directing teams at the TSSAA Regional Competition and States, (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 TSSAA Rules and Regulations.