

2026 TSSAA SPIRIT PROGRAM GAME DAY DIVISION GUIDELINES

Spirit Program Game Day Division and Description:

The Spirit Program Game Day Divisions emphasize the collaboration and cohesion of a school's cheer and dance teams spirit groups in an exciting new Game Day format that fosters school pride while showcasing the school's traditions in an entertaining and crowd effective performance.

- **Fight Song**
 - The fight song section should demonstrate a school's traditional Fight Song that a team performs at games and pep rallies. Teams should incorporate crowd effective elements and choreography that enhances the overall effect.
 - Teams that do not have an official school Fight Song may use fight song music from an approved provider or use a second selection of band chant music. Music guidelines are available at varsity.com/music.
- **Crowd Leading (Sideline or Chant)**
 - The Crowd Leading section should incite and encourage crowd engagement by using traditional sideline material with repetitive, easy to follow words.
 - **Teams should perform a sideline chant appropriate for a specific game situation: offense, defense, or general.**
 - Examples:
 - Defense XX, Defense XX...
 - L-I-O-N-S, Let's Go Lions, L-I-O-N-S, Let's Go Lions
 - Blue X Gold, Let's Go Lions
- **Timeout/Tradition**
 - The timeout/tradition section should exhibit an interactive and entertaining performance similar to what spirit teams might collaboratively perform during halftime, an extended timeout, or a pep rally. This is the best time to showcase spirit program cohesiveness and unison while demonstrating energy, leadership, visual appeal, and connection to the crowd.

Divisions

TSSAA Spirit Program Game Day:

- **Spirit Program Divisions**
 - Spirit Program (Cheer & Dance)
- Junior High and Varsity divisions will be split.
- A minimum of five (5) athletes must represent each performance group (cheer & dance).
 - Overall minimum of 10 athletes/performers
 - Individual athletes must be registered as the same performer type (cheer or dance) throughout the championship weekend.
- A maximum of 75 athletes/performers are allowed to represent the spirit program.
- Up to two (2) Mascots are allowed and are **not** included in the total participant number.

General Rules and Time Limitations

- **Total performance time 3:00 minutes.**

- Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music— whichever comes first.
- All athletes and performers have 30 seconds from the team's introduction to take the floor and begin the routine. The 30 second entrance time is NOT included in the 4 minutes total time limit. If a team exceeds the 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.
- In Spirit Program divisions, 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.
- **Each section should have a beginning and end. Note: Spirited crowd leading interaction and/or the continuation of a groove/cadence/tag between each section is encouraged to continue the game day feel.**
- All athletes must compete as their registered school spirit squad member throughout the weekend. For example: Cheer athletes must compete as cheer athletes all weekend.
- Teams must follow all Varsity Spirit Rules & Regulations and Event Guidelines.

Spirit Program Game Day Props:

- Approved props are: foam fingers, rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for their intended purposes to enhance crowd leading and to guide appropriate crowd responses.
 - Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline boxes.
 - Flyovers are allowed but cannot be done over any technical cheer or dance skills.
 - Swing flags are restricted to spins only.
 - Flag tosses are not permitted.
 - Bayonets, sabers, knives, rifles or fire batons are not permitted.
 - All equipment tips on flagpoles must be padded or taped.
- NOTE: These prop rules differ from UDA Dance and UCA Cheer Game Day. See the UDA or UCA Game Day sections in the brand Rules and Regulations for specific prop guidelines.*

Cheer Team Skill Restrictions (same as current Game Day Divisions skill restrictions)

- Basket and waist level tosses are NOT allowed. Examples of toss skills allowed are quick toss stunts, toss coed skills, and toss toe touches.
- Inversions are NOT allowed.
 - Exception: Partner cartwheels on thighs starting and ending on the performance surface are allowed. The skill must immediately pass through inverted and may not be held static.
- 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 skill standing tumbling is allowed and cannot be connected to other tumbling skills. 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.

NOTE: These building skill restrictions apply when cheer athletes stunt with only cheer athletes.

Dance Skill Restrictions (same as current UDA Dance Game Day Divisions)

- Game Day Routine Safety: Teams competing in the Game Day divisions must follow all the routine safety rules and regulations at any regional or NDTC event.

NOTE: All lift skill restrictions apply when dance athletes lift only dance athletes.

NEW IN 2026: Skills allowed by Cheer and Dance Athletes Together

- Single-based show and go lift. Example: partner straddle lift
- Shoulder sit
- Partner cartwheel on thighs starting and ending on the performance surface. The skill must immediately pass through inverted and may not be held static.
- Double-based thigh stand (with or without spotter).
- Connected skills between a legal dance a lift and legal cheer stunt. Example: A shoulder sit by dance athletes can connect to a cheer liberty hitch to form a pyramid structure.

Mascot(s) Restrictions

- Teams may add up to 2 (two) mascots in their Spirit Program routine. The mascot(s) should be used to raise crowd energy and participation.
- The mascot(s) must meet all the eligibility requirements as the athletes.
- The mascot(s) will not count towards the total number nor gender of participants allowed in the division.
- The mascot(s) must enter the floor with the team and remain in the performance area for the entire routine.
- The mascot(s) is not allowed to be involved in any stunts, tumbling, or skills with hip overhead rotation and should position themselves away from skills being performed.
- Mascots will only be allowed to use the approved props listed above for cheer and dance.

Performance Area

- The provided performance surface is based on the division type.
 - For SP C/D- The performance surface will be laid out as 4 horizontal cheer panels in the back and ½ regular marley floor in front. Cheer mats may be lengthened to about the width of the marley floor.
- Cheer and dance may stand or perform on either surface and must stay within the performance area.
- All cheer skills and dance skills must be performed on the appropriate legal surface for the skill being performed. Athletes must follow the specific NFHS and UCA/UDA Safety Rules and Regulations for the respective cheer or dance team for which they represent.
- Once athletes and performers take the floor, they must remain in the performance area until the end of the performance.

Scoring & Judging

- The Spirit Program score sheet emphasizes school spirit, crowd engagement, and collaboration across all members throughout the performance.
 - The Spirit Program performance must be in the following order:
 - Fight Song
 - Sideline/Chant
 - Timeout Tradition
- Score Sheet criteria – 100 Points Total Possible
 - Fight Song
 - Sights – 10 Points
 - Content: Visual appeal and crowd coverage
 - Execution: Synchronization, spacing, timing, collaboration/uniformity between participants, technique of skills and musical elements
 - Sounds – 10 Points
 - Content: Collaboration of musical and callback elements
 - Execution: Voice, pace, flow, musicality, technique
 - Crowd Engagement – 10 Points

- Content: Material that encourages a crowd response
- Execution: Ability and genuine energy to lead the crowd; Appropriate use of props/instruments
- Sideline/Chant
 - Sights – 10 Points
 - Content: Visual appeal and crowd coverage
 - Execution: Synchronization, spacing, timing, collaboration/uniformity between participants, technique of skills and musical elements
 - Sounds – 10 Points
 - Content: Material relevant to the game day environment
 - Execution: Voice, pace, flow, technique, rhythm
 - Crowd Engagement – 10 Points
 - Content: Material that encourages a crowd response
 - Execution: Ability and genuine energy to lead the crowd; Appropriate use of props/instruments
- Timeout/Tradition
 - Sights – 10 Points
 - Content: Visual appeal and crowd coverage
 - Execution: Synchronization, spacing, timing, collaboration/uniformity between participants, technique of skills and musical elements
 - Sounds – 10 Points
 - Content: Collaboration of musical and callback elements
 - Execution: Voice, pace, flow, musicality, technique
 - Crowd Engagement – 10 Points
 - Content: Material that encourages a crowd response
 - Execution: Ability and genuine energy to lead the crowd; Appropriate use of props/instruments
- Overall Impression/Collaboration of Spirit Program – 10 Points
 - Genuine school spirit and fun energy
 - Consistency and uniformity of program
 - Entertainment value

Division Rule Agreement

- Teams must follow all Varsity Spirit Rules & Regulations and Event Guidelines.
- All athletes must compete as their registered school spirit squad member throughout the weekend. For example: Cheer athletes must compete as cheer athletes all weekend.