



## I. SCHOOL AND YOUTH/REC GENERAL RULES

### A. SCHOOL TEAM GUIDELINES

#### 1. DIVISIONS

##### Junior High Divisions:

**Small Junior High** - 5-16 members – 9th grade & below

**Large Junior High** – 17-25 members – 9th grade & below

*(9th grade participants are only allowed if the 9th grade class is housed in the school you are representing and only a minority of the team are 9th graders. If a majority of the team are 9th graders then the team should compete in the Junior Varsity divisions.)*

##### Junior Varsity Divisions (Official JV team or a JH team with a majority of 9th grade team members):

Junior Varsity- 5-25 members–12th grade & below – female

Junior Varsity Coed-5-25 members-12th grade & below – one or more males

##### Varsity Divisions (12th grade & below):

\*Small Varsity - 5-12 female members

\*Medium Varsity - 13-16 female members

\*\*Large Varsity - 17-20 female members

\*\*Super Varsity - 21-30 female members

Small Varsity Coed – 5-20 members – 1 - 4 males

Large Varsity Coed – 5-20 members – 5 or more males

#### 2. SCHOOL REPRESENTATION

All members of the cheerleading squad must be current members of the official school spirit 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.)

### B. YOUTH/RECREATIONAL TEAM GUIDELINES

#### 1. Youth / Recreational Divisions:

Pee Wee Rec – 5-35 members – 7 yrs & younger

Youth Rec – 5-35 members – 9 yrs & younger

Junior Rec – 5-35 members -12 yrs & younger

Senior Rec – 5-35 members – 14 yrs & younger.

2. These divisions were created for teams whose main purpose is cheering and supporting a recreational team (i.e. youth football, pee wee sports, community sport teams, etc.) Competitive Only youth programs would compete in an All Star Division and follow the All Star rules and regulations.

3. Youth divisions are determined by the age of the oldest team member.

4. The competitor's age on August 1, 2009 shall be the competitor's age through the Athletic Championship competition season.

### C. TIME LIMITATIONS

1. Each team's presentation must include at least one cheer or sideline chant. The cheer or chant can be executed with or without music. 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: .5 point deduction for 3 – 5 seconds, 1.0 point deduction for 6-10 seconds and 2.0 deduction for 11 and over.

3. 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.

4. All introductions (tumbling, entrances, chants, spell-outs, etc.) are considered part of the routine and are timed as part of the performance. There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official ending of the routine.

### D. MUSIC

1. Teams may use an unlimited number of songs in their routine at all competitions.

### E. COMPETITION 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. Athletic Championship Competitions comply with the NFHS & AACCA surface ruling that school based programs may not compete on spring floors.

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

5. Signs or props may be placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member who must remain inside the competition area. For the Athletic Championships- if a sign or prop is thrown outside the competition area, that team will receive a one .50 point deduction for each violation.

6. Boundary for the NHSCC – Any squad member stepping outside or touching outside the performance

area will cause the squad to receive a .5 penalty per occurrence.

## **F. TEAM PARTICIPATION**

1. Teams may participate in more than one competition during the season.
2. Individuals are not permitted to compete on two School Teams, but are permitted on both a School Team and an All Star Team at the same event.

## **II. 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.

### **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. In the event that an injury causes the team's routine to be interrupted, the participant can stop the routine and seek medical assistance.
2. Competition officials reserve the right to stop the routine if an injury occurs.
3. 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.

## **III. HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS**

**A. 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 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.

## **IV. INTERPRETATIONS AND / OR RULINGS**

Any interpretation of any aspect 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.

## **V. 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 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.

## **VI. DEDUCTIONS**

Any team in violation of these Rules and Regulations or any of the above mentioned guidelines will be assessed a 2.0 deduction for each violation.

## **VII. 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, and may also forfeit the opportunity to participate in a competition or the National Championship the following year (School and Youth / Rec Teams).

## **VIII. 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.

## IX. SCORES AND RANKINGS

Individual judges score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his/her final score and rankings prior to the final tally of the score for all teams. Score and rankings will be available only to advisors or coaches at the conclusion of the competition.

## X. JUDGING CRITERIA

The judges will score the squads according to the judging criteria on a 100 point system. The judges scores will be averaged together with deductions being taken off the top. Day one will count for 40% and day two for 60%

## XI. 2009-2010 SPECIFIC SAFETY REGULATIONS AND GLOSSARY

### A. Definitions

1. **Base** - A person who is in direct contact with the performing surface and is supporting another person's weight.
2. **Basket Toss** – A stunt in which a top person is tossed by bases whose hands are interlocked.
3. **Bracer** – A top person that is supporting another top person in a pyramid.
4. **Cradle** - A dismount from a partner stunt, pyramid or toss in which the top person is caught in a face-up, piked position before being placed on the performance area or remounting into another stunt, pyramid or loading position.
5. **Cupie/Awesome** - A stunt in which both feet of the top person are in one hand of a base.
6. **Dive Roll** - A forward roll where the feet leave the ground before the hands reach the ground.
7. **Double Based Suspended Roll** - Dismount or transition with a foot-over-head rotation.
8. **Elevator/Sponge Toss** – A stunt in which the top person loads in to an elevator/sponge loading position and is then tossed into the air.
9. **Extended Stunt** – A stunt in which the entire body of the top person is extended in an upright position over the base(s). Chairs, torches, flatbacks and straddle lifts are examples of stunts where the bases' arms are extended overhead, but are NOT considered to be extended stunts since the height of the body of the top person is similar to a shoulder level stunt.
10. **Hanging Pyramid** – A pyramid in which the top person's weight is primarily supported by another top

person. Examples of hanging pyramids are: a person being suspended between two shoulder stands; a "whirlybird" stunt where one person's weight is being supported by the legs of a top person in a shoulder sit; and a "diamond head" where two persons are suspended from one shoulder stand.

11. **Helicopter Toss** - A stunt in which the top person is tossed into the air in a horizontal position and rotates parallel to the ground in the same motion as a helicopter blade.

12. **Inverted** – A body position where the shoulders are below the waist.

13. **Knee Drop** – Dropping to the knees without bearing the majority of the weight on the hands or feet.

14. **Loading Position** - A position in which the top person is off the ground in continuous movement that puts the bases and top in a position to end the movement in a stunt.

15. **Post** - A person on the performing surface who may assist a top person during a stunt or transition.

16. **Prop** – Any object which can be manipulated or used as a base (ex: poms, signs, flags, megaphones, etc.)

17. **Quick Toss** – A toss technique where the top person begins the toss with both feet on the ground. The bases can apply an upward force on any part of the body other than under the feet.

18. **Released Pyramid Transition** – A pyramid in which the top person in a braced stunt is released from their bases and is in a descending mode before being caught in a cradle, stunt or loading position prior to being transitioned to another stunt.

19. **Spotter** - A person who is responsible for assisting or catching the top person in a partner stunt or pyramid. This person cannot be in a position of providing primary support for a top person but must be in a position to protect the top person coming out of a stunt or pyramid.

20. **Stunt** - One or more bases supporting one or more top persons off of the ground.

21. **Tension Drop** - A dismount from a stunt or pyramid where the top person(s) are directed toward the ground while their feet are held by the base(s) until just before the landing.

22. **Top** - A person who is either being supported by another while off of the performing surface or who has been tossed into the air by another person.

### B. General Guidelines

1. Cheerleading squads should be placed under the direction of a qualified and knowledgeable advisor or coach.
2. All practice sessions should be supervised by the coach and held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders (i.e., use of appropriate mats, away from excessive noise and distractions, etc.).
3. Advisors/coaches should recognize a squad's particular ability level and should limit the squad's activities accordingly. "Ability level" refers

to the squad's talents as a whole and individuals should not be pressed to perform activities until safely perfected.

4. All cheerleaders should receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading gymnastics (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps).
5. Professional training in proper spotting techniques should be mandatory for all squads.
6. All cheerleading squads should adopt a comprehensive conditioning and strength building program.
7. All jewelry is prohibited during participation.
8. An appropriate warmup routine should precede all cheerleading activities.
9. Tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps should be limited to appropriate surfaces.
10. As a general rule, all programs should qualify cheerleaders according to accepted teaching progressions. Appropriate spotting should be used until all performers demonstrate mastery of the skill.
11. Supports, braces, etc., which are hard and unyielding or have rough edges or surfaces must be appropriately covered. A participant wearing a cast (excluding a properly covered air cast) shall not be involved in stunts, pyramids, tosses or tumbling.
12. Squad members must wear athletic shoes (no gymnastic slippers).
13. When discarding props (signs, etc.) that are made of solid material or have sharp edges/corners, team members must gently toss or place the props so that they are under control.

### **C. Partner Stunts, Pyramids and Tosses**

1. All pyramids and partner stunts are limited to two persons high. "Two high" is defined as the base having at least one foot on the ground.
2. The top person in a partner stunt, pyramid or transition may not be in an inverted position and cannot transition to another stunt, the ground or a dismount in an inverted position. Exceptions to this rule are the following:
  - a. Double based suspended forward rolls where the top person has continuous hand-to-hand contact with two primary bases or with two posts who are controlling the top person are allowed to a cradle or the performing surface. They may not land in a loading position for a stunt. The top person cannot have contact with one base and one post.
  - b. The top person in a stunt may begin in an inverted position on the performing surface and be loaded into a non-inverted position shoulder height or below provided that they have constant contact with a base or spotter until they are in the non-inverted position. A base or additional spotter if necessary must be in a position to protect the head, neck and shoulder area of the top person.
3. Suspended splits in a transition are allowed provided there are a total of four bases that support the top person; at least three of the bases must support under the legs of the top person, and the fourth base may support under the legs or make

contact with the hands of the top person. Top person must have hand contact with bases during transition.

4. Partner stunts and pyramids higher than shoulder stand level must have a continuous spotter for each person over shoulder stand level. Spotters are considered part of the squad with regard to the squad member maximum limitation. For single-based extended stunts, the spotter may hold at the ankle of the top person and / or the wrist of the base. If the spotter is supporting under the sole of the foot in any way, they are considered to be a base and would require an additional spotter.
5. When one person is bracing another (including overlapping of arms), one of the individuals must be at shoulder height or below. Exceptions to this rule are the following:
  - a. Extensions (double or single based) may brace other extensions.
  - b. Double Cupies/Awesomes (two cupies/awesomes being held by the same base) are allowed. If the stunt is dismounted to cradles, there must be three people for each top person being cradled. This exception does not include variations such as Double Heel Stretches.
6. If a person in a partner stunt or pyramid is used as a brace for an extended stunt, that brace must not be supporting a majority of the top person's weight. (To demonstrate this, the foot of the top person's braced leg must be at or above the knee of their supporting leg.)
7. Extended Straddle Lifts must have an additional spotter for the head and shoulders of the top person (similar position to a Double Based Elevator/Extension Prep).
8. The bases of any extended stunt must have both feet in direct weightbearing contact with the performing surface.
9. Hanging pyramids must have a continuous spotter for each shoulder stand involved in suspending another person. Hanging pyramids are not allowed to rotate.
10. In a Released Pyramid Transition the following rules apply:
  - a. At least 3 bases must be under the top person throughout the transition.
  - b. Bracers at shoulder level must have a spotter in place during the transition movement. Exception: Shoulder sits and double based thigh stands do not require an additional spotter.
  - c. The top person must be in hand/arm to hand/arm contact with at least one bracer during the entire transition.
  - d. The top person may not be supporting their weight on any other body part of the person(s) assisting (i.e. Shoulders of the bracer).
  - e. The top person must be continuous in motion and cannot be supported so that they pause at the top of the transition.
11. Basket tosses, toe pitch tosses, elevator/sponge tosses or similar tosses are limited to no more than four tossers and must be dismounted to a

cradle position by two of the original bases, plus an additional spotter at the head and shoulder area.

These tosses may not be directed so that the bases must move to catch the top person. The top person may not hold any objects (poms, signs, etc.) during the toss. (Rule 11 does not apply to a "Quick Toss.")

12. Participants may not pass over or under other participants from tosses.

Exceptions to this rule are the following:

a. Single based tosses can go over another person.

13. Free falling flips or swan dives from any type of toss, partner stunt or pyramid are prohibited.

14. Partner stunts, pyramids and participants may not pass over, under or through other partner stunts or pyramids.

15. Single based stunts in which the top person is parallel to the performing surface and the bases' arms are extended must have a continuous spotter at the head and shoulder of the top person. (i.e. Bird, Side T, Single Based Flatback, etc.)

16. Multi-based tosses that land in stunts (i.e. basket to elevator/extension prep, etc.) are allowed; however, they cannot significantly exceed the height of the intended stunt and cannot include a skill (twist, toe touch, etc.) during the toss. Multi-based tosses cannot land in a loading position. Multi-based tosses that include a skill (twist, toe touch, etc.) must be cradled. (Rule 16 does not apply to a "Quick Toss.")

17. A single based toss (one base touching during the toss movement) is allowed into a loading position to that original base.

18. Backward suspended rolls and single based suspended rolls are prohibited.

19. Cradle dismounts from partner stunts or pyramids shoulder height or above require one spotter in addition to the original base(s).

20. Cradle dismounts from multi-based tosses require one spotter in addition to the original base(s).

21. Cradle dismounts from partner stunts (other than basket tosses, elevator/sponge tosses or similar tosses) to another set of bases must be caught by three bases. Any type of gymnastics movement (1/2 turn, twist, toe touch, etc) is prohibited.

22. The total number of twists in a dismount from stunts or tosses cannot be greater than two rotations.

Exception to this rule:

a. Side facing stunts and tosses (i.e. Arabesque, Scorpion, Kick Double Full Basket, etc.) may add a one-quarter twist in order to cradle to the front.

23. A minimum of two catchers are required when the top person falls away from the bases to a horizontal, flat-body position.

24. Tension drops are prohibited.

25. Helicopter tosses greater than a 180 degree rotation (half-turn) are prohibited. Helicopter tosses require 4 bases to be in position during the entire release. There must be a base at the head/shoulder area during the initiation of the toss as well as the catch. The bases are not allowed to change positions during the release.

26. Single based split catches are prohibited.

27. The use of mini-trampolines, springboards, spring-assisted floors or any other height-increasing apparatus is prohibited for competition or performance. These devices may be used for skill development and practice under the supervision of a coach trained in their use.

28. Basket tosses, elevator/sponge tosses and similar multi-base tosses are prohibited on surfaces other than a mat, grass or rubberized track.

## D. Tumbling and Jumps

1. Dive rolls are prohibited.

2. Flips greater than one rotation are prohibited.

3. Twists greater than one rotation are prohibited.

4. A forward three-quarter flip to the seat or knees is prohibited.

5. Participants may not tumble over, under, or through partner stunts or pyramids, or over or under individuals.

6. Participants may not tumble over a prop. Exception: A forward rollover a prop is legal.

7. Participants may not land in a partner stunt or in a catching position from an aerial tumbling skill. (Example: A back flip from a tumbling pass into a cradle is prohibited, however, rebounding from a back handspring into a cradle is allowed.)

8. Landings for all jumps including knee drops must bear weight on at least one foot. (Example: A toe touch jump or kick to a hurdler position, to the seat, knees, or landing with both feet back, or to a push-up position are prohibited.)

9. Any type of hurdler position or the position with both feet back (sitting, landing or lying) is prohibited with the exception of a "Z" sit.

*Note: The above safety guidelines are general in nature and are not intended to cover all circumstances. All cheerleading gymnastics including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified adult advisor or coach. Cheerleading jumps, gymnastics and stunts may involve height and inversion of the body and there is an inherent risk of injury involved with any athletic activity. While the use of these guidelines in coordination with the AACCA Safety Course will help minimize the risk of injury, the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators makes no warranties or representations, either expressed or implied, that the above guidelines will prevent injuries to individual participants.*

