

2019-2020

UCA COMPETITION RULES AND REGULATIONS

Bold Print and grey background denotes a change from prior year – Updated 10.7.19

I. GENERAL RULES:

A. PERFORMANCE ROUTINE DIVISIONS

1. Recreational Cheer Divisions

Recreational Cheer Traditional

The Recreational Traditional Divisions exist for teams with the main purpose of cheering for and/or supporting a recreational team (i.e. youth football, pee wee sports, community sports teams, etc.). **All Recreation Cheer teams will need to submit both a Recreation Cheer Verification Form as well as the Roster Verification Form. Both Forms can be found online at varsity.com/youth-rec/competitions/divisionsandscoreing/. These forms must be submitted prior to your first event to: Kerry Lorenca: klorenca@varsity.com**

- Teams with a school affiliation may compete in the recreational cheer traditional division, only if at least half of the participants are in the 6th grade or younger and meet the age requirements. Teams with a school affiliation that have a majority of 7th and 8th graders must compete in the junior high division.
- Rec divisions are determined by the age of the oldest team member. The age of the competitor as of Aug. 31, 2019 will be the age used for the competition purposes throughout the 2019-2020 season.
- Basket tosses, elevator tosses and similar multi-based tosses are prohibited.

Recreational Cheer Club

- Recreational Cheer Club Divisions exist for teams who will follow the same 2 and 1/2 minute routine format with cheer/sideline and music and all other rules and regulations along with all other teams competing at any UCA event and the NHSCC.
- Rec divisions are determined by the age of the oldest team member. The age of the competitor as of Aug. 31, 2019 will be the age used for the competition purposes throughout the 2019-2020 season.
- Basket tosses, elevator tosses and similar multi-based tosses are prohibited

Recreational Teams will be eligible for bids to the National High School Cheerleading Championship, as well as the Quest Recreational Championship.

2. 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. Junior High teams with a majority of 9th graders would compete as a Junior Varsity.

All Junior Varsity Divisions – 7th Grade -12th Grade

Junior Varsity Divisions WILL be allowed 7th and 8th grade participants if they attend a school that is under the administrative supervision of the same school board as the high school that they are representing. Junior Varsity teams must be the official Junior Varsity of the school they represent. Teams will only be allowed to compete in the Junior Varsity Division if

they are the official Junior Varsity team. If there is only one team from a school, that team will be required to compete in the Varsity division.

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. Teams that have members that cheer varsity sports must compete as a varsity team.

3. Game Day Divisions

Individuals are allowed to compete in a performance routine division and a game day division for the same school. If a Varsity and Junior Varsity team combine for a Game Day Division, they must compete in the Varsity Divisions.

Game Day Live

- To earn a bid, the pep band and cheer team must create and submit a 2-minute video performing the school's traditional fight song together.**
- Teams wishing to compete in Game Day Live must attend a Varsity Spirit Summer Camp that is at least two days or more and participate in the Squad Credentialing program. To be eligible for a bid, 75% of the team must attend camp and participate in the Squad Credentialing Program.**
- The cheer team must still attend a UCA Regional Competition and compete in the Game Day division, even if they already received a guaranteed bid for Game Day Live from the video submission process.**
- Teams that accept the invitation to compete in the Game Day Live division will ONLY be allowed to compete in Game Day Live and Traditional Routine. They will not also be allowed to compete in the current Game Day division.**

Teams may add up to 1 (one) mascot in their Game Day Routine. The mascot must enter the floor with the team and should be used to raise crowd energy and participation. The mascot is not allowed to be involved in any stunts / technical skills and or tumbling and should position themselves away from skills being performed. The mascot will not count towards the total number of participants allowed.

Please visit uca.varsity.com for a complete listing of divisions for both regional competitions as well as the National High School Cheerleading Championship.

B. SCHOOL REPRESENTATION AND TEAM PARTICIPATION

- 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.)
- 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. Individuals are allowed to compete in a performance routine division and a game day division **for the same school**. If Varsity members and Junior Varsity members combine for a Game Day Division, they must compete in the Varsity Divisions.
 - Teams may participate in more than one competition during the season.
 - The team and each participating member/coach should constantly display good sportsmanship throughout the entire performance in regards 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.
 - 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 regards to grooming, traditional and appropriate attire, conservative make-up, uniformity, etc.

C. UNIFORM GUIDELINES

- 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.
- Any team in violation of the uniform guidelines will be assessed a five (5) point deduction.
- 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 Game Day divisions.
- Bows should not be excessive in size and shouldn't be a distraction to the performance. Bows should be worn in a manner to minimize risk for the participants, should be adequately secured on the back of the head with the tails facing down and should not fall over the forehead into the participants' eyes or block the view of the participants while performing. A .25 deduction will be given for teams in violation of this rule.**

D. TIME LIMITATIONS

- 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.
- Each Game Day performance should consist of a Band Chant, Situational Sideline, Time Out Cheer and Fight Song. The maximum performance time must not exceed **three minutes**. **Timing will not include the team spiring, rallying, or individuals performing jumps, kicks or tumbling, but will begin** with the first group movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first.
- If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- Introductions
 - All introductions (entrances, chants, spellouts, etc.) are considered part of the routine and will be timed as part of the performance. Stunts are not allowed during the team's entry to the floor or any time prior to starting the performance.
 - All team breaks, rituals and traditions need to take place prior to entering the mat.
 - Teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm, but without excessive gestures. Stunts are not allowed during the team's entry to the floor or any time prior to starting the performance. Example: stunts, running of the flags, chest bumps, hugs, handshakes, etc.
 - 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.
 - There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official ending of the routine.

E. MUSIC

- 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.
- For the most up to date music information, visit <http://varsity.com/music>. If you have any questions, cheer teams should email info@usacheer.net. Please check the Preferred Provider list for updates and changes periodically.
- Teams must be able to provide proof of licensing, in the form of a printed copy, during registration at the event.
- If your team is featured in the TV broadcast and uses an original composition created for your performance, your routine music can be used in the show if you also secured synchronization rights. Teams must be able to provide written documentation that synchronization rights were properly secured during registration at the event for the original routine music to be included in the show.
- When recording your music for the event, coaches or music editors should edit their song in a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) and make sure that the volume of the song is at 0. Things to note:
 - Most DAW's have a default that sets a track at -6 when a track is added.
 - Check to see if there is a normalization process after you render or save your work.
- 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 sufficient. It should be signed by your program's administrative supervisor. Go to varsity.com/music for more details.
- If a team does not have 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).
- If a team does not have the required paperwork, and chooses not to count the routine or perform to an approved track of music or a track with counts, the team will be

- disqualified from the competition and not allowed to perform or compete.
9. If there are concerns regarding a certain team's use of music, a Challenge Form must be completed immediately following the team's performance.
 10. A challenge can only be made by the official coach of a team competing at the event at which the challenge is being made.
 11. Challenge Process
 - a) All music challenges must be submitted in writing to the event director.
 - b) There will be \$100 fee to request a music challenge and must be in the form of a check made out to St Jude Children's Research Hospital.
 - c) Fees collected will be voided if 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.
 12. Each team is required to have a responsible adult remain at the music station that knows the routine and music. This representative is responsible for starting the music and stopping the music in case of technical malfunction or injury. **Clarification: Athletes/Alternates are not allowed.**
 12. All teams must provide their own CD or MP3 device for use on the event provided sound system. Music must be recorded at the correct tempo on a high quality CD or loaded onto an MP3 device.
 13. It is not recommended that a smart phone be used for playing music, due to interference that may be caused during a routine. No cover may be on any MP3 player so that a jack may be easily inserted into the device.
 14. Please make sure that all devices have a head phone jack to connect to sound system and are fully charged, volume turned up and placed in airplane mode. If using a CD make sure it's unscratched so it doesn't skip.
 15. 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 head phone jack.
 16. Music on CD must be labeled with the team name, division, team size, and be ready to play. One or several selections of music may be used. Due to greater room for technical error with some CDs you must have a back-up MP3 of your routine available.
 17. Teams may not use Disney themes nor may they have costumes that resemble a Disney character. However, Disney music is acceptable if following the music guidelines.

F. 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. UCA Competitions comply with the NFHS & USA Cheer 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. BOUNDARY FOR THE NHSCC – Any team member stepping outside or touching outside the performance area will cause the squad to receive a .5 penalty per occurrence.
 - a. The white line is considered a warning mark.

- b. A penalty will be assessed when any ONE full hand, foot or body part touches outside of the performance surface.
- c. Once a team member takes the floor, they must remain on the floor until the end of the performance.
- d. Boundary deductions will not be issued at UCA Regional Competitions
6. Signs or props may be safely placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member who must remain inside the competition area. **A ONE (1.0) point penalty will be assessed for Props (signs, etc.) that are made of solid material or have sharp edges/corners released from a top person. A HALF (0.5) point penalty will be assessed for persons on the ground throwing hard props (signs, mags, etc.) - breaking of the wrist or if the arm extends away from the body.**
7. All team mascots, props, center markers, etc. are prohibited. The center marked on all performance surfaces.

G. NHSCC QUALIFICATION:

1. **For 2019-2020, USA Cheer recommends that all coaches complete the USA Cheer/AACCA Safety Risk Management certification course. The course is accessible online or in person, and certification is valid for four years. The online course takes between 3 and 6 hours. Coaches can take the USA Cheer/AACCA safety course on USA Cheer.org/safety or on the NFHS site.**
2. **NHSCC will require one coach per cheer team to complete the Safety Risk Management certification course and must accompany the team at the NHSCC. Proof of certification is required upon registering for the National Championship.** All teams must compete in the same division at the National Championship in which they qualified.
3. Individuals may NOT represent more than one team at the National Championship. Exception – Junior Varsity members may perform with the Varsity in a Varsity Game Day Division.
4. **It is understood that teams that participate in the National High School Cheerleading Championship will NOT knowingly and willingly participate in any other cheerleading event promoted as a national or international championship for the 2019-2020 school year. (Exception: USA National Championship and The Quest Recreational Championship) A school can compete at UCA and NCA if that team is recognized as a separate team by the school and no athletes are the same. (No athletes can compete at both events) Teams who violate this rule will be subject to disqualification and will forfeit the opportunity to participate in the subsequent National High School Cheerleading Championship.**
5. 75% of the qualifying team must attend a Varsity Spirit camp and participate in the Squad Credentialing program in order to be eligible to compete and receive a bid at a 2019 fall qualifying tournament for the 2020 NHSCC.
6. **Game Day Live teams will be required to qualify video and then attend a camp and receive a bid in the Game Day Division. Game Day Live bids will ONLY be offered to teams that submit a video. There will not be a Game Day Live division at any UCA Regional Competition in 2019.**

H. LOGO USAGE

Teams will not be allowed to use the UCA logo or the NHSCC logo including: banners, rings, bows, t-shirts, etc. without prior approval from the UCA Office. However, the use of the UCA letters will be allowed.

I. 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 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.

J. SPOTTER POLICY

In an effort to promote a higher level of safety for competing athletes, UCA will provide additional spotters at all UCA school and recreational cheer competitions for the main floor.

Guidelines:

1. UCA Competition provided additional spotters will be mandatory on the competition floor.
2. School-based teams and recreational teams may provide additional spotters in rehearsal/warm up.

Definition of Additional Spotter:

Individuals on the competition floor provided as a safety precaution to spot certain elements of a routine. Competition provided additional spotters will follow the listed guidelines.

Additional Spotters:

1. Should only be used during the stunt, pyramid, and/or basket toss sections. Additional spotters are present for added safety and should stand at the back of the floor when not spotting those sections.
2. Should not touch, assist, or save skills being performed. Additional spotters should only be used to prevent a fall to the competition floor. Any touch, assist, or saved skill will be given a fall deduction.
3. Should be dressed so that they are presentable, professional, and distinguishable from the performing athletes.
4. Should not dress or act in a manner that distracts from the athletes and their performance.
5. Should be at least 18 years old and familiar with spotting the skills of the performing team.

Note: To provide the safest competitive environment, teams should not attempt skills beyond their ability level.

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. The only persons that may stop a routine for injury are: a) competition officials, b) the advisor / coach from the team performing or 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 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. **Any athlete who exhibits signs or symptoms of a suspected concussion will be removed from the activity immediately and will not be allowed to participate (i) within 24 hours of the incident AND (ii) without first being cleared by a medical professional trained in concussion management.**
 - d. **In addition, the sponsor/director and all of the coaches attending the competition must be familiar with all federal, state and local laws applicable to such individuals and relating to such individuals' duties and responsibilities regarding the recognition and treatment of injuries.**

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.

C. MUSIC / AGE - Any questions concerning a specific violation in music compliance must be submitted in writing to the Competition Director immediately following the team's performance.

IV. 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.

V. SPORTSMANSHIP

1. All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the competition with positive presentation upon entry and exit from the performance area as well as throughout the routine.
2. The advisor and coach of each team is responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents and other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification.
3. When a coach is in discussion with an official, other coaches, athletes and parents/spectators, they must maintain proper professional conduct. Failing to do so may result in 1.0 deduction, removal of coach or disqualification.

VI. VIOLATIONS

Any team in violation of these Rules and Regulations or any of the above mentioned guidelines will be assessed a ten (10) point deduction. This deduction does not apply to deduction or violations within the point deduction system. Go to uca.varsity.com for more specifics.

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.

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 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.

REGIONAL COMPETITION TIE BREAK POLICY - All ties in each division or group will remain.

X. JUDGING CRITERIA

1. Performance Routines
 - a. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the UCA 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 the final score. For more information on scoring, score sheet and judging criteria, please visit uca.varsity.com.
2. Game Day Routines
 - a. The Game Day Championship showcases what traditional cheerleading is all about – leading the crowd! Teams will be evaluated on their ability to lead the crowd, proper game day skill incorporations / performance, motion/dance and overall routine.
 - b. The performance will follow this order: Band Chant, Situational Sideline, Cheer, followed by the Fight Song.
 - c. The use of crowd leading tools such as signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones is required.
 - d. The incorporation of stunts and tumbling are only allowed during the fight song, sideline, and cheer. Stunts are not allowed as a transition before or between sections. This would include the team's entry to the floor, **between the sideline and cheer**, and any time prior to starting the performance. Exception: **Tumbling is allowed prior to the start of the performance and between sections, but would be prohibited in the band chant section.**
 - e. Fight song 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 and continue until either the incorporation is complete or the end of the 3rd 8-count.
 - f. The Band Chant should have an emphasis on crowd appeal and practicality – No stunting or tumbling is permitted, however jumps and kicks are allowed. **The incorporation of stunts and tumbling are only allowed during fight song, sideline and cheer.**
 - g. Following completion of the band chant, the announcer will give squads a game scenario indicating an offense or defense situation. Teams should show their definitive understanding of the situation with an offensive or defensive crowd-leading response.
 - h. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the UCA Game Day score sheet. Each team will be evaluated on a 100 point system.
 - i. The Sideline and Cheer will count for 50 points, and the Band Chant and Fight Song will count for 50 points. Each section will be combined for the final score.
 - j. 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, this would include the team's entry to the floor and any time prior to starting the performance.
 - k. Traditional game day uniform is required.
 - l. Total Time is limited to 3 minutes.

- m. If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. 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
- n. Additional Skill Restrictions
 - No Tosses (basket, sponge or elevator) are allowed.
 - No Inversions are allowed.
 - No Twisting Released Dismounts are allowed.
 - Single leg stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
 - No Running Tumbling is allowed.
 - Standing Tumbling is limited to one tumbling skill and a back tuck is the most elite tumbling skill

allowed. Examples: Standing full is not allowed. Rippled Single Back Handsprings would be allowed. Jump tumble (single skill) would be allowed

- o. Any deductions or violations will be taken off of the final averaged score. For more information on scoring, score sheets and judging criteria, please visit uca.varsity.com

XI. 2019-2020 SAFETY RULES
Rules subject to change by AACCA. Go to www.CHEERRULES.com for the most updated rules.

For any clarification or interpretation of the above safety guideline please email UCARules@varsity.com

I agree and acknowledge that (i) I sponsor/director of the team named below (ii) I have read and understand the foregoing, (iii) I will be solely responsible for communicating the foregoing to all coaches/directors in my program that will coaching and directing teams at the NHSCC, (iv) I will ensure that my teams will comply with all NHSCC 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.

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)

 (Advisor / Coach's Signature)

 (Division — Junior High, Small Varsity, etc.)

 (Administrator's Signature)