



A VARSITY SPIRIT BRAND

# 2019-20 CHEER GAME DAY RULES & GUIDELINES

(Please read through all Rules & Guidelines carefully as significant changes have been made from the 2018-19 season) – Rev. 6-5-19

## I. GENERAL RULES

***All permitted cheerleading specialty skills, including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps for the Game Day Divisions must follow the 2019-20 USA Cheer/AACCA High School Cheerleading Safety Rules. Please see additional specific skill restrictions below for each category. All skills should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified adult advisor/director/coach.***

### A. DIVISIONS

- Junior High / Middle School – 6+ Members
- High School – 6+ Members
- College (offered at Game Day Championships only on 2/15/20) – 6+ Members

### B. SCHOOL REPRESENTATION

- All members of the performing squad must be current members of the official school spirit squad, dance team and/or band, and must attend the school they are representing. These must be individuals who cheered and/or performed for games during the appropriate season. (Exception: this will not preclude participation from sister schools for same-gender schools as long as they are official members of the squad.)
- All Cheer Game Day routines are required to be comprised of at least 50% cheerleaders. Schools are encouraged to include other sideline spirit groups (i.e. dance team, song/pom, mascot, pep/short flag, etc.); however, the routine(s) must be comprised of at least 50% cheerleaders and will be judged as one unified routine. Other performance-based and/or spirit groups may not enter the division without their cheerleaders.
- If other sideline spirit groups are part of a cheer game day routine, then that activity must abide by any specific game day rules related to them (i.e. song/pom members must follow the specific song/pom game day rules/specialty skill restrictions during the routine)
- Mascots are limited to the same props as cheerleaders (poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners) and are **NOT** allowed to stunt in any Game Day division.
- Routines must be appropriate for family viewing. Any vulgar and/or suggestive movements, words, or music will result in a score deduction.
- The team and each participating member/coach should constantly display good sportsmanship throughout the entire performance in regard to respect for themselves, other teams and the viewing audience. 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 regard to grooming, traditional and appropriate attire, conservative make-up, uniformity, etc.

### C. UNIFORM RULES

- Sideline/traditional school uniforms must be worn.
- 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.
- No tear-away uniforms and/or removal of clothing are permitted.

### D. COMPETITION AREA

- Participants may enter from outside the competition area for their performance.
- All permitted skills (stunts, pyramids, tumbling etc.) must be performed on the competition mat.
- Competitions comply with the NFHS & USA Cheer/AACCA surface ruling that school-based programs may not compete on a spring floor. Approximate floor size will be a traditional mat of 54' (feet) wide by 42' (feet) deep – 9 strips.
- Tossing, throwing or other projecting of any type of object outside the competition floor and/or into the crowd is not allowed.
- Poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners may be placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member.

### E. MUSIC RULES/RESTRICTIONS

- Music rules are being followed at all USA and/or Varsity Brands events. Competition music must be properly licensed, and a team must provide proof of licensing at any event where the music is used. If a team cannot provide proof of licensing, the team may be disqualified from the event. For further details visit [www.varsity.com/music](http://www.varsity.com/music).
- In order for a team's routine music to be featured in a television broadcast, should this be an option, teams must do the following:
  - Use an original composition created or commissioned by you (i.e. an original song and recording to which you own or license the rights by written agreement)
  - Additionally, secure the synchronization rights. Not all original music providers can/will provide these rights.
  - Submit proof of licensing, as well as synchronization rights, when requested after the event.
- Music is defined as any recorded sound amplified through the competition sound system.
- A sound system will be provided. Speed control is not available. Music checks on the main sound system are not permitted. A representative must be present at the sound system at the time of performance. Advisor/director/coach is asked to hold onto their own music until the time of performance and to take music back following the performance.
- All teams must provide their own MP3 device (or smart phone) for use on the event provided sound system. Music must be recorded at the correct tempo. Although it is not recommended due to interference that may be caused during a routine, a smart phone may be used for playing music. No cover may be on any MP3 player or smart phone so that a patch cord may be easily inserted into the device. Please ensure that jacks are clean and free of any debris which may impact connectivity. You must ensure that your device has a jack into which a patch cord may be inserted. Note that you may need to acquire an adapter in advance if your player does not have a head phone jack. One or several selections of music may be used, as long as they follow the music licensing rules.

## F. TIME LIMITATIONS/ENTRANCE/EXIT

- Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 1 minute.
- Teams may not set up props in advance of any category.
- See specific category for details on the start and stop of each type of routine.
- All team breaks, rituals and traditions need to take place prior to the team being called to the performance floor
- Teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm, but without excessive gestures. Example: chest bumps, hugs, hand-shakes, etc.
- All teams should refrain from any type of excessive celebration following the team's performance. Any team in violation may receive a "sportsmanship" penalty.
- There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official ending of the routine.

## G. 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 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.

## H. LOGO USAGE

Teams will not be allowed to use any USA and/or Varsity Spirit Brand logo including: banners, rings, bows, t-shirts, etc. without prior approval from the Varsity Spirit office. The use of the brand letters will be allowed without permission; however, not the licensed logo.

# CHEER GAME DAY CATEGORIES

## II. BAND CHANT CATEGORY

### A. ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS

- Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 1 minute.
- Band Chant must be made up of at least 50% cheerleaders. Non-cheer teams may participate (i.e. song/pom or dance), but may not comprise more than 50% of the total team numbers.
- A team may begin on or off the performance floor for the start of their music. Once the team name is called and the music begins, timing of the overall routine starts.
- Timing will end with the last beat of music or organized movement.
- The Band Chant must be one traditionally played by a school sideline/jazz band. Crowd interaction and involvement, including yell-backs, spell-outs, school colors are encouraged.
- Camp material may easily be adapted to fit this category. For example, any band chant learned at a 2019 Varsity Brands camp could be used for this routine. Examples might include "Rock 'N Roll Part II, "Land of A Thousand Dances," etc.
- Sideline/traditional school uniforms are required.
- The use of poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners is permitted and encouraged.
- Judging will be based on the following criteria, as well as elements noted on the scoresheet:
  - Creativity and musicality, variety and the execution of transitions and formations.
  - Crowd leading ability, including crowd encouragement, ease of crowd to participate, etc.
  - Material appropriate for a sideline situation during a time-out, quarter break, between downs, etc.
  - Placement, synchronization and strength of motions/movement.
  - Visual effect and spacing.
  - Overall impression and crowd appeal.
  - Thematic routines and/or specialized costuming is not encouraged.

Emphasis should be placed on crowd interaction/involvement and entertaining the crowd. All material should be suitable and able to be performed multiple times during a game or pep rally/assembly.

### B. SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – BAND CHANT CATEGORY

- Tumbling and/or stunting of any kind is prohibited, including during entrances and exits.
- Turns, leaps, kicks and/or jumps are permitted.

### III. SITUATIONAL SIDELINE/CROWDLEADING CHEER CATEGORY

(2 elements to this routine)

#### A. ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS:

- Each team will respond to a game situation (presented by the announcer), followed by a second element of an additional crowd-oriented cheer/chant/traditional yell/drum cadence, etc. not to exceed 1 minute in total routine length for the two elements that are required.
- Situational Sideline/Crowdleading Cheer will begin with the presentation of a game time sideline situation.
- Timing starts once the game situation has been presented and ends at the conclusion of the second element of the routine – the crowdleading cheer section of the routine. (this is the overall end of the routine)
- The team may start their routine on or off the mat for the reading of their game time sideline situation. Once the situation is read, timing begins.
- No music may be used during the performance. Live drummer(s), other band members and/or drum track is allowed. All specialty skills (i.e. jumps, stunts and/or tumbling) must be performed within a safe distance of all drummers and/or other band members. Drummer(s) and/or any other band members cannot be involved in any type of specialty skill and must be positioned off the cheerleading mat.
- Each team's crowdleading cheer presentation (the second element of the overall routine) must include at least one component required from the following: cheers, chants, traditional yells, and/or drum cadences. This is a separate crowd-oriented cheer that is not directly related to the situational cheer, but rather is an add-on following the situational cheer.
- Teams should utilize all areas of their squad's crowd-leading strengths. The use of poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners is **required**.
- Judging will be based on the following criteria, as well as elements noted on the scoresheet:
  - Crowd communication, including; crowd effective material, spacing and formations, voice and pace, crowd leading skills and use of poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners.
  - Placement, synchronization and strength of motions.
  - Overall impression and crowd appeal.

Emphasis should be placed on crowd involvement and practicality. All material should be suitable for a game or pep rally.

#### B. SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – SITUATIONAL SIDELINE/CROWDLEADING CHEER CATEGORY

- No baskets, sponge, elevator, or similar type tosses permitted.
- No stunt/pyramid inversions are allowed.
- No twisting dismounts are allowed.
- Single leg extended stunts are limited to liberties and/or liberty hitches.
- No running tumbling is allowed.
- Standing tumbling skills are limited to single skills. No connections and/or jump-tumble combinations are permitted.

## IV. FIGHT SONG CATEGORY

### A. ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS:

- Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 1 minute.
- Teams are encouraged to use their traditional school fight song. Should your school fight song exceed 1 minute, and no reasonable way to edit the routine is possible, please contact the USA office.
- Timing will begin with the first organized movement, voice or note music, whichever comes first. Timing will end with the last beat of music or organized movement.
- Props (poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners) are permitted in this category and encouraged.
- Performances can incorporate up to three (3) eight counts of skills (stunts, tumbling and/or jumps). The three (3) eight counts must be consecutive and the same three (3) eight counts can be repeated if the fight song is repeated. The three (3) eight counts of skills includes loading into and dismounting from stunts (unless the routine finishes in a stunt/pyramid).
- Judging will be based on the following criteria, as well as elements noted on the scoresheet:
  - Crowd oriented material, fit to music, using effective spacing and formations, and incorporating visual effects.
  - Placement, synchronization and strength of motions.
  - Overall impression and crowd appeal.
  - Emphasis should be placed on practicality and crowd involvement. All material should be suitable and able to be performed multiple times during a game or pep rally.

### B. SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – FIGHT SONG CATEGORY

- No baskets, sponge, elevator, or similar type tosses permitted
- No stunt/pyramid inversions are allowed
- No twisting dismounts are allowed
- Single leg extended stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
- A jump is considered a skill and can only be performed in the three (3) eight count segment
- A kick will not be considered as a skill and can be performed at any time during the routine
- No running tumbling is allowed.
- Standing tumbling skills are limited to single skills. No connections and/or jump-tumble combinations are permitted.