

CROWDLEADER™ TEAMS

A Crowdleader™ Team may consist of a combination of separate groups (cheer, song/pom, pep flags, mascot, dance team, band), working together, or a single team that does both cheer and pom. At least 50% of the total number of participants on the team must be comprised of cheerleaders and the cheerleaders must follow the rules set forth in the Cheer Game Day Rules & Guidelines as it pertains to division requirements, routine elements, restrictions, etc. Band members are welcome to be in this division; however, the number of band participants does not count in the total number of participants in the Crowdleader™ Team routine.

Teams will be required to quantify the number of different programs that make up their routine (i.e. 25 cheer, 10 song/pom, 4 pep flag, 1 mascot).

You will perform in this order: 1) a **Band Chant**, followed by 2) **Situational Sideline** response with a game-action cheer/sideline cheer, followed by 3) a crowd-oriented **Cheer** and ending with 4) a **Fight Song Routine**. These elements are directly from the Cheer Game Day Divisions (see 2021-22 Cheer Game Day Rules & Guidelines for specific definitions, restrictions, etc).

Scoring for the 4 elements above will be conducted on the Crowdleader™ Team scoresheets which are derived from the Game Day scoresheets for **1) Band Chant, 2/3) Situational Sideline/Cheer and 4) Fight Song** with a total of 300 points possible. These score sheets may be found by visiting usa.varsity.com under Competitions / Divisions, Rules & Scoring

QUALIFICATION

As for all other divisions with a prelims/finals at USA Spirit Nationals, all teams wishing to perform in the 2022 USA Spirit Nationals in the Crowdleader™ Teams division are required to pre-qualify at a Regional or Classic one-day competition by receiving 80% or higher of the total points possible for the division.

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DIVISIONS

Refer to division grid on usa.varsity.com under Competitions/Divisions, Rules & Scoring

SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATION

The team and each participating member/coach should constantly display good sportsmanship throughout the entire performance regarding 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, make-up, uniformity, etc.

All Crowdleader™ Team 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.

UNIFORMS

Appropriate attire suitable for all athletes should be worn.

In all divisions (excluding mascots), an official school uniform that is worn for game/sideline cheering or performing must be worn (i.e. skirt and top). Costuming is not allowed. If an accessory (i.e. hair bows) or an article of clothing adds to the overall effect and/or theme of the routine, it will be considered "costuming." A deduction of 3 points will be taken if "costuming" is used.

All participant uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention. Covered midriff includes nude/skin-tone mesh, uniforms with colored mesh, body suits and liners. Fringe or other such uniform designs are not considered a cover. If a violation occurs, a 3 point deduction will be incurred.

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UNIFORM DISTRACTIONS

The Legality Official, Head Judge or other competition official reserves the right to stop a routine, assess a deduction, and/or disqualify a team for a uniform distraction (e.g. garment not being securely fastened/attached, straps break, pants split, etc.). Each performer is required to take the necessary steps to avoid inappropriate exposure prior to the performance.

SHOES

All participants must wear soft-soled shoes on both feet while competing. Shoes must have a solid sole and cover the toe and heel. This is a safety rule and if a violation occurs, a 3 point deduction will be incurred.

MAKE-UP

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

HAIR

Hair for all athletes does not have to be worn the same but must be secured off the face (cheer teams) with a simple and unexaggerated style that is acceptable to all diversities.

BOWS

Bows are not required, however if worn, 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.

APPROPRIATENESS OF CHOREOGRAPHY, MUSIC, WORDS AND OUTFITTING

All facets of a performance or routine, including choreography, music selection, outfitting and cheer words should be suitable for family viewing and listening. Uniforms for all team types should be appropriate for the age of the participants performing the routine.

Cheer words should incorporate school pride, honor, tradition and sportsmanship. Cheers that are negative, insulting to other teams, or the judges, may reflect a lower score.

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In general, performances from school-based teams, including but not limited to the actual routine, signs, cheers, chants and hand signals/gestures, should adhere to outfitting, performance and music guidelines and criteria in place and approved by the administration or institution which the team represents.

Deductions will be given for vulgar or suggestive choreography, which includes, but is not limited to, movements such as hip thrusting and inappropriate touching, gestures, hand/arm movements and signals, slapping, positioning of body parts and positioning to one another. Deductions will be given for music or words unsuitable for family listening, which includes, but is not limited, to profanity and connotations of any type of sexual act or behavior, drugs, mention of specific parts of the body, and/or violent acts or behavior. Removing improper language or words from a song and/or replacing with sound effects or other words may be considered inappropriate, and deductions will be made accordingly.

Any uniform, choreography, words or music in which the appropriateness is questionable or with which uncertainty exists should be submitted to the USA for approval prior to competing.

ROUTINE PROCEDURE

The Crowdleader™ Team routine weaves together the three separate stand-alone categories offered as part of USA Game Day Competition divisions. A Crowdleader™ Team does not have to compete in one or more of the USA Game Day categories, but all elements from those categories make up the overall Crowdleader™ Team routine. The elements are performed in the same order for each routine in the Crowdleader™ Team category. Props may be set-up prior to a Crowdleader™ Team taking the floor. You will be limited to 30 seconds to set-up your props and props must be removed immediately at the conclusion of your routine.

1. The routine starts with a Band Chant (see description/requirements below). 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. The Band Chant will be performed on carpet bond foam mats for this division.
2. At the conclusion of the Band Chant portion of the routine, a team will be presented a randomly selected game situation (from one of the 10 listed at <https://www.varsity.com/usa/school/competitions/rulesandscoring/>). Once the situation is presented, the team will continue their Crowdleader™ Team routine with a Situational Sideline (see description/requirements below), followed by a second element of a crowd-oriented Cheer. You should select and perform an appropriate game-action/sideline cheer for the situation read.

You may huddle or use another method of communication to make your decision in how to respond to the situation; however, the overall Crowdleader™ Team routine timing continues. No music may be used during the Situational Sideline and/or crowd-oriented Cheer portion of the performance, with the exception of live drummer(s), other band members and/or drum track which is allowed during these sections.

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ROUTINE PROCEDURE (CONT'D)

3. Following and/or during the crowd-oriented Cheer portion begin the transition to your Fight Song.
4. After your transition, your music will begin for your Fight Song portion of the Crowdleader™ Team routine. Teams are encouraged to use their school's traditional fight song. If the school does not have a fight song, then a fight song from another school may be used. In either case, only fight song music may be used.
5. Limited stunts and/or tumbling are allowed in the Situational Sideline/Cheer and/or Fight Song (see each element's description/limitations below) but they should enhance, not distract from, your crowd involvement. Remember that this is a crowd LEADER competition, and we are looking for performances and transitions that would be effective at a game. Practicality will be considered in this division.
6. Game day appropriate props are permitted and encouraged. (i.e. signs, megaphones, flags, banners). See score sheets for where use of these items is rewarded.
7. Overall Crowdleader™ Team division timing begins as soon as the Band Chant music starts and will end at the conclusion of the Fight Song. Organized entrances prior to the Band Chant are not permitted.
8. Auxiliary groups (i.e. drummers, band members, etc.) may perform with the spirit squad. These "auxiliary groups" must remain on the gym floor and are not permitted on the carpet bonded performance mat.
9. 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).
10. Tossing, throwing or other projecting of any type of object outside the competition floor and/or into the crowd is not allowed.
11. No use of water, glitter or other substances that would be harmful to the floor and/or to another competitor.

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CHEER SAFETY RULES: Tumbling and/or stunting of any kind is prohibited during the Band Chant section of the routine, including during entrance/exit. Turns, leaps, kicks and/or jumps are permitted during the Band Chant section. For the Situational Sideline/Crowd Leading Cheer and Fight Song sections of the routine, the following restrictions apply:

- 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.

There are additional restrictions to choreographing skills in the Fight Song section – see below.

As with all categories, cheerleaders in the Crowdleader™ Teams division must follow rules in the 2021-22 NFHS Spirit Rules Book in addition to restrictions listed for each element as part of the 2021-22 Cheer Game Day Rules & Guidelines and the 2021-22 High School Spirit Competitions General Information. This includes restrictions on technical skills, choreography, etc.

Song/pom, dance or pep flag team members that are part of the Crowdleader™ Teams division with their cheerleaders must follow the 2021-22 USA Song/Pom/Pep Flag Safety Rules in addition to restrictions listed for each element of Band Chant and Fight Song as part of the 2021-22 Song/Pom Game Day Rules & Guidelines and the 2021-22 High School Spirit Competitions General Information.

Mascots that are part of the Crowdleader™ Team division with their cheerleaders are not permitted to be involved in stunts/pyramids and must follow the 2021-22 Cheer Game Day Rules & Guidelines and the 2021-22 High School Spirit Competitions General Information.

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CROWLEADER™ TEAM ROUTINE ELEMENTS DESCRIPTION/REQUIREMENTS

[performed in this order – 1) Band Chant, 2) Situational Sideline/Cheer & 3) Fight Song]

1) BAND CHANT SECTION

- 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.
- The Band Chant must be one traditionally played by a 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 2020 Varsity Brands camp could be used for this section of the 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:
 - 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.
 - Creativity and musicality, variety and the execution of transitions and formations.
 - 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.

SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – BAND CHANT SECTION

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

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2) SITUATIONAL SIDELINE/CHEER SECTION

- 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.
- No music may be used during this section of the routine. Live drummer, 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 band members. Drummers 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 crowd-oriented 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 score sheet:
 - 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 on crowd involvement and practicality. All material should be suitable for a game or pep rally.

SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – SITUATIONAL SIDELINE/CHEER SECTION

- 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.

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3) FIGHT SONG SECTION

- Teams are encouraged to use their traditional school fight song.
- Props (poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners) are permitted in this section and encouraged.
- 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.
- 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 will be placed on practicality. All material should be suitable and able to be performed multiple times during a game or pep rally.

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 kick/jump will not be considered 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.

TOTAL CROWDLEADER™ TEAM ROUTINE TIME LIMIT

4 minutes maximum (start of the Band Chant section through end of Fight Song section). Props may be set-up prior to a Crowdleader™ Team taking the floor. You will be limited to 30 seconds to set-up your props and props must be removed immediately at the conclusion of your routine. (See “Time” section penalty)