



2023 USA SPIRIT NATIONALS EVENT INFORMATION

This packet includes event information for the **2023 USA Spirit Nationals** weekend in Anaheim, CA on **February 24 - 26, 2023**.

Activities will begin Friday morning and run throughout the day with competition in all Show Cheer, Non-Tumbling, Group Stunt, and Crowdleader™ Teams divisions.

If you are competing in any show cheer or group stunt divisions, please ensure you can be in Anaheim and available to compete as of Friday morning, February 24th. The earliest warm-up begins at 7:00 a.m. Preliminary schedules will be based on event registration and detailed information with order of cheer divisions will be announced closer to Nationals.

Competition in all Song/Pom, Song/Jazz, Pep Flag/Short Flag, and Mascot divisions will take place on Saturday, starting in the morning.

Game Day Divisions will be a part of the 2023 USA Spirit Nationals event and registration will be done as part of your Nationals registration. Game Day Divisions (excluding Crowdleader™ Teams) will take place on Saturday, February 25, 2023.

All divisions have the potential to advance to Saturday/Sunday finals, excluding Group Stunt and Game Day Divisions (excluding Crowdleader™ Teams). Finals for Cheer and Crowdleader™ Teams will take place on Saturday. Song/Pom, Song/Jazz, Pep Flag/Short Flag and Mascot finals will be on Sunday. Please note the above is a tentative schedule of events and is subject to change, depending upon final enrollment for Nationals and the facility requirements.

You may wish to visit the The *Disneyland*® Resort during competition weekend. The *Disneyland*® Resort includes the *Downtown Disney*® District, *Disneyland*® Park, and *Disney California Adventure*® Park. The *Downtown Disney*® District offers dining, entertainment, and shopping. A theme park admission ticket is not necessary to visit the *Downtown Disney*® District. A theme park ticket and a reservation is required to visit *Disneyland*® Park, and *Disney California Adventure*® Park

If you have any questions regarding the 2023 USA Spirit Nationals event, please contact the USA office at 800-886-4872 or USACompetitions@varsity.com.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2023 USA Spirit Nationals in Anaheim!



TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

Prelims Competition for All Cheer Divisions

8:00 am – 11:00 pm

Anaheim Convention Center

Preliminary competition in all Show Cheer, Non-Tumbling and Crowdleader™ Teams divisions

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FINALISTS

Preliminary and finals competition for Group Stunt Advanced and Group Stunt Intermediate divisions

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FINALISTS AND FINAL AWARDS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

Prelims Competition for all Song/Pom, Song/Jazz, Pep Flag/Short Flag and Mascot Divisions

Finals Competition for all Cheer Divisions

8:00 am – 11:00 pm

Anaheim Convention Center

Preliminary competition in all Song/Pom, Song/Jazz, Peg Flag/Short Flag and Mascot divisions

Final competition for Game Day Song/Pom

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FINALISTS & FINAL AWARDS FOR GAME DAY SONG/POM

8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Anaheim Convention Center

Final competition in all Show Cheer, Non-Tumbling and Crowdleader™ Teams divisions

Exhibition of 1st place performances in Group Stunt Advanced and Group Stunt Intermediate divisions

FINAL AWARDS

5:00 pm – 11:00 pm

Anaheim Convention Center

Competition for Game Day Cheer divisions
(excluding Crowdleader™ Teams)

FINAL AWARDS
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

8:00 am – 2:00 pm
Anaheim Convention Center

Final competition in Song/Pom, Song/Jazz, Pep Flag/Short Flag and Mascot divisions

FINAL AWARDS

Please note the information above is a tentative schedule of events and is subject to change depending upon final enrollment for Nationals and facility requirements. **Divisions competing on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in 2023 may be different than 2022.**

All divisions (including Crowdleader™ Teams) have the potential to advance to Saturday/Sunday finals, excluding Group Stunt and Game Day.

Group Stunt Finals take place on Friday.

Announcement of finalists will take place for specific divisions during awards ceremonies scheduled a few times per day or only at the end of the day. This is subject to change depending upon event operational needs.

For ALL Novice including Pep Flag Novice and Intermediate divisions, **35%** of the division will advance to finals with a minimum of two (2) teams advancing.

For ALL Advanced divisions, Crowdleader™ Teams , Song/Jazz, Pep Flag 1 Flag and Pep Flag 2 Flag divisions, and the Mascot division, **45%** of the division will advance to finals with a minimum of two (2) teams advancing.

Please note the percentage of teams advancing to finals is subject to change pending final enrollment for Nationals. Any changes made will be noted no later than the posting of the first draft performance schedule.

The USA reserves the right to combine, split, delete, and/or add divisions for Nationals and to adjust the percentage of teams advancing to finals based upon competition enrollment. The USA reserves the right to adjust days of performance, performance venues, and/or times of competition for all divisions based upon final competition enrollment and the facility requirements.



GENERAL EVENT INFORMATION

COVID-19 VARSITY COMPETITION RULES

Safety is our priority for your competition experience. We are deeply committed to the safety and well-being of our athletes, performers, coaches, and spectators. We are prepared to administer a competition that will meet the state and local guidelines related to COVID-19 at the time of the event. While the final details and schedule of any competition could require up to the day of adjustments, and all guidelines are subject to change based on Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”), federal, state and local guidance, please be assured that Varsity Spirit is committed to delivering the same quality of competition experience for which we are known. We appreciate your understanding of the flexibility this will require. By accepting the Terms and Conditions as the authorized person from my program I agree and acknowledge to abide by the COVID-19 Varsity Competition Rules.

SPIRIT NATIONALS QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Show Cheer, Group Stunt and Game Day (Cheer) Divisions: It is required that at least 75% of the cheer members competing at 2023 USA Spirit Nationals in cheer divisions must have completed the summer 2022 Varsity Spirit/NFHS Squad Credentialing Program.

All Divisions, including Game Day - Prior qualification through a USA Regional competition, Classic competition or other sanctioned event/process is required in order to attend Spirit Nationals in any division.

Bids to Nationals are awarded to teams receiving 80% of total possible points for all cheer, group stunt and game day cheer divisions and 75% of total possible points for all song, pep flag, mascot, and game day song divisions, regardless of any penalties received.

USA CHEER – CHEER COACH, STUNT COACH DANCE COACH OR PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

In a continuing effort to better protect athletes and coaches Varsity Spirit has partnered with USA Cheer, the USA Federation for Sport Cheer. A USA Cheer Coach, STUNT Coach, Dance Coach or Professional Membership will now be required for all school coaches, choreographers, and personnel attending a Varsity Spirit cheer or dance competition to gain access to the warmup, backstage or coaches’ box areas. **Each registered cheer team/program must have at least one coach with a Cheer Coach membership. Additional coaches can choose to have either a STUNT Coach, Dance Coach or Professional Membership.**

HOTEL INFORMATION

USA is happy to work with our housing partner, Team Travel Source, to provide hotel arrangements for your team. Although it is not a requirement to go through Team Travel Source to attend the event, we highly recommend this as they are experts in working with teams to meet your housing needs.

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to book hotel rooms through Team Travel Source.

DISNEY TICKETS

Additional information will be sent separately to schools registered for Spirit Nationals once it is finalized.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

The USA is working in conjunction with *ALTOUR* to arrange the most convenient flights for you at the best possible prices. They will research the cost of flights to and from the airports that are nearest to Anaheim and that will best accommodate your needs. They will then contact your school representative with possible cost and payment procedures. We advise you to contact the travel agency early as many airline rates are based on 7, 14, and 21-day advance purchases and the best fares sell out quickly. In most cases, flights are full by the end of January. In addition, working through *ALTOUR* may allow you to receive a group travel discount. *ALTOUR* will work with all major airlines. **For a quote contact ALTOUR at 1-866-719-0379 or submit an on-line request at varsity@aitvl.com.**

EVENT ADMISSION – PARTICIPANTS AND COACHES

All participant wristbands will be included in the team's registration packet.

All coaches attending the event must be on a team roster. Proof of the Cheer Coach, STUNT Coach, Dance Coach or Professional Membership is required to gain access into the warmup/backstage area. Up to two (2) complimentary Coach/Advisor wristbands per team (excluding group stunt, mascot and Crowdleader™ Teams, unless that is the only team competing) will be provided based on the number of coaches on the registration.

Additional coaches above the two complimentary per team need to purchase a coach wristband as part of the team registration. All coaches will check in at the Coach Check In and show proof of USA Cheer Membership to receive their wristband.

EVENT ADMISSION – FAMILY AND GUESTS

No cash admission purchases will take place on-site during the event. Admission **must be** pre-purchased for spectators. The link to purchase Spectator tickets will be available on the USA website Spirit Nationals page once we get closer to the event start date. Additional fees for online ticket purchases may apply. Please either print a copy of your confirmed admission purchase or have your smart phone available for scanning. We highly recommend pre-purchasing your admission to the event, as purchase on-site by cash is not available and electronic purchase the day of may not be available and/or may delay your entry.

PERFORMANCE ORDER/SCHEDULES

Typically, performance order is based on the registration date. The first registration entered will be the last to perform in that division and the last registration entered will be the first to perform in that division. Adjustments may be necessary due to division/team conflicts.

If payment is not received by the deadline, then performance order will be affected and determined by when payment is received.

All teams will be given an assigned check-in and warm-up time prior to competition. Warm-up areas will vary depending on the competition location.

The contact on the registration will be emailed a tentative line up with performance times at least 2 weeks prior to the competition. These times are subject to change. The final schedule will be available by checking usa.varsity.com after 5:00 PM (PST) the Wednesday prior to the competition. As of this day, performance times usually remain the same regardless of scratches. **It is the advisor/coach's responsibility to check the schedule for accuracy of divisions, team size, etc. prior to the day of competition.**

PERFORMANCE AREA

All Show Cheer and Crowdleader™ Teams will perform on a carpet bonded foam mat measuring 42' (front to back) x 54' (side to side). All stunts and/or tumbling must be **completed** on the mat surface. There will be a three-point deduction off your final averaged score for each infraction of this rule. Group Stunt teams will perform on carpet bonded foam mat, measuring at least 28' (front to back) x 42' (side to side) – four (4) strips. Song/Pom, Song/Jazz, Pep Flag, and Mascot categories/divisions will perform on a basketball court, dance floor, or similar surface measuring at least 42' x 42'. Performance areas may change as a result of final registration. Warm up surfaces may differ.

SAFETY RULES/ PENALTIES

Routines at all USA competitions must follow the NFHS Spirit Rules Book (cheer), 2022-23 USA High School Teams Show Cheer and Group Stunt Division Limitations (cheer), 2022-23 USA Song/Pom and Pep/Short Flag General Safety Rules and the 2022-23 USA High School Teams Song/Pom Division Limitations.

Points will be deducted from the final team average for violations of safety rules and/or time limits.

For specific safety rules for divisions, as well as time restrictions, skill restrictions, and other rules, please refer to the USA website at usa.varsity.com.

MUSIC

Teams may use as many songs in the music portion of their routine as they like. Music rules are being followed at all USA and Varsity Brands events. Competition music must be properly licensed, and a team must be able to provide proof of licensing at any event where the music is used. If a team cannot provide proof of licensing immediately upon request, the team may be disqualified from the event. For further details visit varsity.com/music.

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. Advisors/coaches are 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 if necessary) 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 will need to acquire an adapter in advance if your player does not have a headphone jack. One or several selections of music may be used, if they follow the music licensing rules.

FINALS – GROUP STUNT

Group Stunt finals will take place on the same day as the preliminaries. If either Group Stunt category has 10 or more entries for preliminaries, then finals will take place with 25% of that division advancing. If either category reaches 40 entries or more for preliminaries, the category will be randomly subdivided into two groups for preliminaries (A and B or A, B, and C, etc.). 25% of each subdivided group will be selected to perform again in finals.

FINALS – TEAM DIVISIONS

All divisions have the potential to advance to Saturday/Sunday finals, excluding Group Stunt and Game Day divisions. For **All** Novice including Pep Flag Novice and Intermediate, **35%** of the division will advance to finals with a minimum of two (2) teams advancing. For **All** Advanced divisions, Song/Jazz, Pep Flag 1 Flag, Pep Flag 2 Flags, and the Mascot division, **45%** of the division will advance to finals, with a minimum of two (2) teams advancing. For Crowleader™ Teams division, 50% of the teams will advance to finals. Please note the percentage of teams advancing to finals is subject to change pending final enrollment for Nationals.

AWARDS

At the conclusion of the Group Stunt divisions, awards will be presented to the top teams. The teams receiving first place in both Group Stunt Advanced and Group Stunt Intermediate will be invited to present an exhibition performance during finals on Saturday.

At the conclusion of the Game Day divisions (excluding Crowdleader™ Teams), awards will be presented to the top teams. Trophies will be presented to 50% of the teams competing in each division. For teams placing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, individual medallions will be given to each participant. First place teams will also receive a Nationals banner.

At the conclusion of all other divisions, preliminary awards will be presented based on scores for the preliminary performances and finalists will be announced. The number of teams in the various divisions will determine the number of teams chosen to participate in the finals. Changes in the number of teams performing in prelims, up to and including the day of prelims, will impact the number of teams advancing to finals. These teams will compete again for final placement and awards. Preliminary scores will count for 30% and finals scores will count for 70% toward final competition results in all divisions. Scoresheets will be made available following the Friday and Saturday performances. A ranking of teams will be provided following preliminaries at the event.

For the 2023 USA High School Spirit Nationals competition, trophies will be presented to 50% of the teams competing in each division. For teams placing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, individual medallions will be given to each participant. First place teams will also receive a Nationals banner and each individual team participant will receive a National Champions gift.



2023 USA SPIRIT NATIONALS PRICING

Entrance Fees

Competitor Entrance Fees

1st Performance (Including Crowdleader™ Teams and excluding Group Stunt and Game Day)	\$149.00 per person
2nd Performance (Group Stunt and Jazz divisions)	\$28.00 per person

Game Day Divisions

(Including Crowdleader™ Teams when it is the 2nd performance after Show Cheer)

\$330.00 per division/team fee

Registrations for teams/participants competing only in Group Stunt or Game Day (Excluding Crowdleader™ Teams) **may need to be manually adjusted by the USA office.**

Extra Coaches Admission

Each Team will Receive Two (2) Complimentary Coach Wristbands.

\$56.00 per person



2023 SPIRIT NATIONALS RULES AND REGULATIONS

I) **GENERAL RULES**

The competition will follow the NFHS Spirit Rules Book (cheer), 2022-23 USA High School Teams Show Cheer and Group Stunt Division Limitations (cheer), 2022-23 USA High School Teams Song/Pom Division Limitations, 2022-23 USA Song/Pom and Pep/Short Flag General Safety Rules, and General Information. (Available on-line at usa.varsity.com)

The competition will consist of the categories/divisions listed on the 2022-23 USA Spirit Nationals Division Grid posted at usa.varsity.com.

Categories/divisions may be subdivided or combined at the discretion of the competition director if the total number of teams in a division warrant this. **The USA reserves the right to adjust days of performance for all divisions based upon final competition enrollment.**

An individual may not compete against her/himself in the same division/category (i.e., two Group Stunt teams). An individual may not participate on two teams within the same category type and/or divisions within a category when separated by size, stunt/tumbling limitations, or team level. [i.e., 1) Small and Large Varsity Show Cheer divisions 2) Show Cheer Novice and Show Cheer Advanced categories 3) All-Girl Cheer and Co-Ed Cheer division 4) JV Song/Pom and Varsity Song/Pom division]. The penalty for this violation will be disqualification of one of the routines. Any exceptions to the above must be pre-approved in writing by the USA office prior to the event.

Athlete Eligibility

Any team or participant proven to be in violation of the age/grade requirements for any USA competition will be subject to disqualification from that competition. Requirements are as follows:

- a) Entrants must be registered students in the school they are representing and receiving credit for schoolwork at the time of the competition.
- b) No competitor shall have received a diploma for graduation from the 12th grade.
- c) Each competitor must be under the age of 19.

Any exceptions to the above must be pre-approved in writing by the USA office prior to the event.

Routine Violations

For a list of routine violations refer to the “2022-2023 USA Deductions Scoring System – Cheer” and the “2022-2023 USA Rules Scoring System – Song/Pom, Song/Jazz, Pep/Short Flag, Mascot” found at usa.varsity.com.

All teams must compete in the same categories in which they qualified for Spirit Nationals through a Regional or Classic (Show Cheer-Advanced, Song/Pom - Intermediate, etc.). Any exceptions to the above must be pre-approved in writing by the USA office prior to the event.

If a team qualifies two or more times for Spirit Nationals in the Intermediate or Advanced level at a Regional or Classic, then that team may not move to a lower technical division at Spirit Nationals. Any exceptions to the above must be pre-approved in writing by the USA office prior to the event.

To compete in the Varsity Jazz division, the school must compete at the same competition in the Varsity Song/Pom division. To compete in the JV Jazz division, the school must compete at the same competition in the JV Song/Pom division.

Time Limitations

The timing of a routine will begin on the first note of music, the first vocal command (for cheer teams), or the first cheer movement, and will stop with the end of the cheer or the last note of music. Timing for prop set-up in the Mascot category will begin at the drop of the starter's hand. Set-up timing will stop when the routine begins. For the Crowdleader™ Teams division, timing begins with the first note of music for the band chant section and ends at the conclusion of the fight song section. Penalties for exceeding the total routine time limit will be deducted from the final averaged score. In Show Cheer, up to 1:30 (90 seconds) of the routine may be performed to music. In the Song/Pom categories, females must use two poms for at least half of the total routine. Please refer to the General Information for time limits in each category.

(Available on-line at usa.varsity.com) **We recommend that you “time” your performance several times prior to the competition and give yourself at least five seconds of “cushion” to allow for speed variations in sound equipment.**

Judges are looking for enthusiasm and showmanship during entrances and exits. Teams are encouraged to move on and off the floor as quickly as possible. Set-ups and break-downs will be timed in the Mascot category.

Music Guidelines

- a) 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.
- b) For the most up to date music information, visit varsity.com/music. If you have any questions, teams should email musicinfo@varsity.com. Please periodically check the provider list for updates and changes.
- c) Teams must be able to provide proof of licensing, in the form of a printed copy, during registration at the event they are attending.
- d) If your team is featured in a TV and/or virtual broadcast and uses an original composition created for your performance, your routine music will 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.
- e) 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.
- f) 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 enough. It should be signed by your program's administrative supervisor. Go to varsity.com/music for more details.
- g) If a team does not have the 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).
- h) 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.
- i) If there are concerns regarding a certain team's use of music, a Challenge Form must be completed immediately following the team's performance.
- j) A challenge can only be made by the official coach of a team competing at the event at which the challenge is being made.
- k) Challenge Process
 - i) All music challenges must be submitted in writing to the event director.
 - ii) 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.
 - iii) Fees collected will be voided if the challenge is correct.
 - iv) If the team challenged can provide documentation during the event and can be verified, the fees will be donated to St. Jude.

- v) If the team challenged can provide documentation that requires further review, a decision will be finalized within 48 hours of the event.
 - vi) Each team is required to have a responsible adult that knows the routine and music as a representative remain at the music station (no alternates or team members allowed). This representative is responsible for starting the music and stopping the music at the routine's end, or in case of technical malfunction or injury. Should an adult choose not to stay at the music station for the duration of the routine, and a malfunction occurs, the team may or may not be permitted to perform the routine again. Please hold on to your music until the time of your performance. If using an MP3, smart phone, etc. please ensure that there is no case on the device which will obstruct the jack from plugging into the sound system. Please ensure that jacks are clean and free of any debris which may impact connectivity. Note that you may need to acquire an adapter in advance if your player does not have a headphone jack. If you are using a smart phone, please ensure that no interruptions (i.e., phone call, alarm, etc.) occur during your performance. Place the smart phone in "airplane mode," ensure that the volume is turned up and the phone is fully charged. Interference caused by a smart phone that results in routine delay may receive an overtime or delay of contest penalty.
- l) Virtual Competitions Music Guidelines
- i) The USA Cheer Music Copyrights Educational Initiative will govern all sound recordings used at the event 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.
 - ii) For the most up to date music information, visit varsity.com/music-guidelines/. If you have any questions, teams should email musicinfo@varsity.com. Please periodically check the provider list for updates and changes.
 - iii) All routines will be judged with sound and available for Varsity TV subscriber viewing with sound for 48 hours once the event goes live. After 48 hours, the routines will be available without sound for Varsity TV subscribers. After 5 days, routines will be available free of charge without sound for the duration of the competition season.

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. Any team traveling with a video crew may be disqualified.

Logo Usage

Teams will not be allowed to use any Varsity Spirit Brand logo, the USA Logo or the Spirit Nationals logo including banners, rings, bows, t-shirts, etc. without prior approval from the USA office. However, the use of USA letters (not unique to the USA logo) will be allowed.

II) PERFORMANCE AREA

All Cheer and Crowdleader™ Teams will perform on a carpet bonded foam mat measuring 42' (front to back) x 54' (side to side). Group Stunt teams may perform on a smaller carpet bonded foam mat surface measuring at least 28' (front to back) x 42' (side to side) (4 strips). All stunts and/or tumbling must be performed on the mat surface. There will be a **three-point** deduction off your final averaged score for each infraction of the rule.

All Song/Pom, Song/Jazz, Mascot and Pep Flag teams will perform on a Marley, parquet, basketball court or similar type of dance floor measuring at least 42' (front to back) x 42' (side to side).

II) SPOTTER POLICY

Guidelines

- a) USA competition-provided additional spotters will be mandatory on the competition floor.
- b) School-based teams may provide additional spotters in rehearsal/warm-up.

“**Team Spotters**” = are part of the performing team and required as part of specific types of stunting/pyramid/tosses, etc. skills.

III) INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE

Unforeseen Circumstances

- a) 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.
- b) 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.

Fault of Team

- a) 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.
- b) 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.

Injury

- a) The only persons that may stop a routine for injury are: i) competition officials, ii) the director/advisor/coach from the team performing or iii) an injured individual.
- b) The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform later. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed later, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. The team may perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated **ONLY** from the point where the interruption occurred.
- c) The injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless:
 - i) The competition officials receive clearance from, first, the medical personnel attending to that participant, the parent (if present) **AND THEN** the head coach/advisor/director of the competing team.
 - ii) 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.
 - iii) Any athlete who exhibits signs or symptoms consistent with concussion will be removed from the activity immediately and will not be allowed to participate (a) within 24 hours of the incident **AND** without first being cleared by a medical professional trained in concussion management.
- d) In addition, the advisor/sponsor/director and all 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.

Uniform Distractions

- a) The Legality Official, Head Judge or any 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.).
- b) Each performer is required to take the necessary steps to avoid inappropriate exposure prior to the performance.
- c) If a judge stops the routine the penalty will vary from 3 three points to possible disqualification of the routine.

IV) APPROPRIATENESS OF CHOREOGRAPHY, MUSIC, OUTFITTING

All facets of a performance or routine, including choreography, music selection and outfitting, 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.

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 participant while performing.

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 to which the school team belongs.

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 swearwords and connotations of any type of sexual act or behavior, drugs, mention of specific parts of the body torso, and/or violent acts or behavior. Removing improper language or words from a song and replacing them with sound effects or other words constitutes inappropriate, and deductions will be made accordingly.

Any uniform or music in which the appropriateness is questionable or with which uncertainty exists should be submitted to the USA for approval prior to the performance taking place.

VI) PRELIMINARY COMPETITIONS

All divisions (Including Crowdleader™ Teams) will advance to Saturday/Sunday finals if preliminary registrations warrant, excluding Group Stunt and Game Day. The judges and tournament officials have full authority to make final determination of the number of teams selected for the finals in each division.

VII) TELEVISION COVERAGE

The 2023 USA Spirit Nationals may be televised. Because of the format of the television shows not all finalist teams would be shown on the telecast, nor could the length of routine coverage be guaranteed.

VIII) HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the captain or the advisor of the team and will be directed only to the Competition/Venue Director or their designee. Such questions must be asked prior to the team's competition performance. Any questions concerning the performance of the team must be made to the Competition/Venue Director immediately after the performance. **Should a director or coach wish to lodge a formal complaint against another team in the competition for any violation of "Policies & Procedures" or competition rules, this complaint must be submitted in writing, signed, dated and presented to the Competition/Venue Director prior to any awards ceremony for which the team in question may be eligible to receive an award. It is to the discretion of the Competition/Venue Director whether investigation into the complaint will be completed prior to or after the awards ceremony.**

IX) SPORTSMANSHIP

All participants and spectators affiliated with a team must conduct themselves in a manner displaying positive sportsmanship throughout the competition. The advisor, head coach and/or captain of each team is responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents/guardians, and any other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly. Unsportsmanlike conduct may include, but is not limited to, taunting, bragging, suggestive expressions/gestures, discriminatory comments/actions, approaching other teams, competition judges and/or any competition personnel with inappropriate comments, outbursts or gestures; confrontation with members of another team and/or between spectators of teams. Unruly, aggressive, or belligerent behavior by participants, coaches or spectators toward any other attendee or Event Staff are also considered unsportsmanlike conduct. Cases of unsportsmanlike conduct at any time during the event are grounds to receive a 1-point penalty per occurrence, up to and including disqualification. The USA also has the right to deny entrance to or to remove an individual from the competition site. Additionally, barring a school/team and/or individual from future USA events may occur.

Payment for any damage caused by participants, parents, family and/or friends to hotel property and/or event will be the sole responsibility of the individual(s) and/or the school involved. School administration may be notified of any damage that occurs.

X) SCORES AND RANKINGS

Individual judge's 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 prior to the final results of each division being announced. Score sheets will be available **only** to the person designated on the team registration at the conclusion of the competitions on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. No scores or rankings will be given over the phone. Scoring officials will only discuss my routines and/or scores/deductions. Coaches/directors may not challenge scores/deductions of other teams.

XI) APPEARANCES, ENDORSEMENTS AND PUBLICITY

All teams winning titles, awards or prizes agree to have all appearances, endorsements and publicity approved through the USA office. Teams will not be permitted to use the USA and/or Varsity logos without the express written permission of the United Spirit Association. This includes usage on items such as banners, rings, T-shirts, bows, etc.

XII) INTERPRETATIONS AND RULINGS

Any interpretation of any aspect of these Policies & Procedures or any decision involving any other aspect of the competition will be rendered by the Competition Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will render a judgement 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 but is not limited to the Event Director(s), the Head Panel Judge, the Head Legality Official and the Director of Special Events.

XII) FINALTY OF DECISIONS

By participating in this competition, each team agrees that decisions by the judges will be final and will not be subject for review. 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.

Any school/team and/or individual that does not adhere to the terms and procedures in the "Policies & Procedures" may receive a penalty, up to disqualification from the competition, and automatically forfeit the right to any awards presented by the competition. In addition, the school/team and/or individual may also forfeit the opportunity to participate in any competition produced by the United Spirit Association the following season or subsequent seasons. Any fees (team and/or spectator based) associated with participation in the event will be forfeited in the event of disqualification. The USA reserves the right to deny registration to any team.



VIDEO OF STUNTS AND TUMBLING

We recommend that every team send a video of the stunts and tumbling that are choreographed in the routine that will be performed at Nationals.

It is the coach's responsibility to ensure a routine is penalty-free. Do not rely on choreographers, or prior rulings from USA, or other Varsity competitions, to be your final determination on legalities. Unfortunately, penalties are not always caught during live Regional/Open/Classic performances. Emailing a video is the best method to avoid these oversights.

It is the policy of the United Spirit Association not to give any final rule interpretations over the phone and/or via e-mail without a video of the stunt(s) or tumbling in question.

All videos must be emailed to the USA office by **January 20, 2023**.

All videos must include the following:

1. Name of the *School* and *Division Level* in the *Subject Line* of the email.
2. Videos should be in either Windows Media Player or Quicktime formats
3. Clear, close-up view of skill(s) in question
4. Include your name, team name, USA competitive division, e-mail address and phone number in the body of the email.

Cheerleading videos should be emailed to USARules@varsity.com
Song/Pom and Pep Flag videos should be emailed to USADanceRules@varsity.com

If any of your skills are of major concern, please communicate that in the email and video that portion of the routine from different angles, so we get a complete view.

USA will contact you by **February 10, 2023**, to inform you of the results of your "safety rules" video review. If you do not hear from us by **February 10, 2023**, please call the USA office to ensure that your email was received.

If you make changes in your routine after the video has been approved, you may send a second video following the same procedure. These emails will be viewed as first come, first served and all videos may not be able to be addressed before the event.

For specific cheerleading stunt and safety questions that pertain to the NFHS Spirit Rules Book, or to the 2022-23 High School Teams Show Cheer and Group Stunt Division Limitations please email USARules@varsity.com.

For specific song/pom, song/jazz or pep flag/short flag safety questions that only pertain to the USA Song/Pom/Jazz Pep Flag Safety Rules, or to the 2022-23 Song/Pom, Pep Flag Division Limitations please email USADanceRules@varsity.com.