



*College* 2025-2026 EVENT

GUIDELINES

**2025 – 2026 USA COLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS**  
**EVENT INFORMATION PACKET**  
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Visit [usa.varsity.com](http://usa.varsity.com) for the most up-to-date competition and camp information this season!

Information is subject to change.

# Save the Date!



**2026 USA Collegiate Championships**  
**Anaheim Convention Center**  
**February 21-22, 2026**

No prior qualification is required to compete at this event. Prelim competition takes place on Saturday. All divisions have the potential to advance to Sunday finals (excluding Game Day Divisions). 50% of all divisions (including Group Stunt and Partner Stunt) will advance to finals with a minimum of two (2) teams advancing.



**2026 USA Collegiate Expo**  
**Anaheim, CA - February 21, 2026**

## 2025 – 2026 USA COLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS GENERAL INFORMATION

### REGISTRATION

Event registration is done on-line at [usa.varsity.com](http://usa.varsity.com). Registration is scheduled to go live in August 2025.

**Registration must be submitted on-line on or before December 1, 2025.** We encourage schools to register for USA Collegiate Championships prior to the deadlines noted above. Championship events often close (due to full enrollment) prior to the registration deadlines. \$350 per team deposit is due by December 15, 2025.

### PAYMENT INFORMATION

**Registrations are not confirmed until payment is received.**

Acceptable forms of payment include school purchase order, school check, cashier's check, money order, or credit card. Personal checks, organizational checks, cash or individual payments are not accepted. The school's name and an authorized signature must appear on the PO. **If you submit a Purchase Order, the balance is due no later than 30 days after the event.**

Registrations, even with payment, do not guarantee event entry as the competition may close prior to the deadlines due to capacity. Registrations that are not paid in full or guaranteed by school purchase order are subject to cancellation at any time but will be cancelled no later than February 4, 2026.

### DEADLINES

**December 1, 2025** – Registration must be submitted online on or before December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**December 15, 2025** – \$350 non-refundable per team deposit is due.

**January 19, 2026** – Deadline for Division and/or Roster changes due. **There are no division changes after January 19, 2026.**

**January 28, 2026** – All digital waivers must be submitted to registration.

**February 4, 2026** – Final balance due.

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

Varsity Spirit requires that all school coaches, choreographers, and personnel wishing to access the warm up area, backstage or coaches' box at our competitions have a USA Cheer Coach, STUNT Coach, Dance Coach or Professional Membership. Visit [usacheer.org/usa-cheer-membership-for-varsity-spirit](http://usacheer.org/usa-cheer-membership-for-varsity-spirit) to learn more and to complete the steps required before your first competition. Each registered cheer team/program must have at least one coach with a Cheer Coach membership and must accompany the team at every competition. Additional coaches can choose to have either a STUNT Coach, Dance Coach or Professional Membership. **The USA Cheer General Membership is not an acceptable membership for restricted area access.**

## ELIGIBILITY

All team members must be registered full-time students at the school they represent (college or university) and must be official members of the school's spirit squad. Club Teams are allowed but cannot compete in the same division as the official squad. The Club Team must have the approval of their administration to represent the school. Schools must submit the Eligibility Form one week prior to the event. Although a team may register for the competition prior to this date, documentation of full-time status must not be dated earlier than December 1, 2025. Any exceptions to the above (e.g., graduating seniors, graduate students, etc.) must be pre-approved in writing by the USA prior to the competition.

A team that violates eligibility rules and/or contains members who are deemed to be ineligible may forfeit any title and/or may be prohibited from entering the competition the following year.

Any interpretations or decisions of eligibility for the 2026 USA Collegiate Championships will be rendered by the Rules Committee, which is comprised of, but not limited to, the Tournament Director, the USA Cheerleading Program Director or Song/Pom/Dance Program director and the Director of Special Events. The Rules Committee will render a judgment in a manner consistent with the general goals of the tournament.

The Eligibility Form must be submitted to the USA office one week prior to the event date. It is the advisor/coach's responsibility to provide this information to the United Spirit Association by the stated deadline in the registration confirmation. If a team fails to produce this proof of eligibility prior to the deadline, they will not be allowed to perform.

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

## ADDITIONAL VARSITY BRANDS TEAM/INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Any university or college competing in a Varsity College National Championship and/or Collegiate Championships shall not permit a student-athlete to represent their school unless the student-athlete meets all the applicable eligibility requirements, and the coach and program administrative supervisor has certified the student athlete's eligibility.
2. **A student-athlete may only represent ONE (1) school in a National Championship and/or Collegiate Championships competition for each academic year.** For example, a student athlete may not compete for one school in January, transfer and compete for another school in April.
3. At the Junior College level, any student-athlete will be only eligible to compete in a **maximum of three (3)** National Championships during the course of his/her college career.
4. A student-athlete can be part of the institution's cheer/dance spirit squad but will only be allowed to compete for a **maximum of five (5)** National Championships during the course of his/her college career, regardless of the number of universities or colleges he/she has attended.
5. A student-athlete may not compete in more than **five (5)** National Championships in combined Junior College and/or 4-year college/university.
6. An alternate or injured student-athlete that does not take the competition floor will not be perceived as a competing member and will not count towards the maximum of five (5) National Championships.
7. This will apply to any student-athlete competing at any one of the Varsity Brands College National Championships (UCA/UDA, NCA/NDA), as well as any other designated College Nationals Championship.

Whether an individual competed at a USA Collegiate Championships and at either UCA or NCA within the same season or the individual competes at USA Collegiate Championships solely, this will count as one year of eligibility/one championships toward that athlete's maximum eligibility permitted during the athlete's collegiate participant.

8. Verification of eligibility will be required by the school's Registrar's Office and the program's administrative supervisor, in addition to the coach. It will be the responsibility of these individuals to verify that all student-provided information and documentation is correct and valid.

9. Teams violating this rule could forfeit their titles and/or rankings, as well as be prohibited from entering any other Varsity Brands Championship the following year.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Varsity Spirit encourages and supports sportsmanship, integrity and fairness among participants and coaches/owners/directors in all facets of team practice and performance. We strive to uphold the highest standards and promote this to the best of our abilities and believe that coaches are instrumental in promoting and instilling this among their respective team members.

To ensure the most positive experience for all attendees, Varsity Spirit asks that all participants, coaches, gym owners, directors and spectators adhere to and know the Code of Conduct and Prohibited Items for all Regional, Virtual, and Championships events.

To review the entire policy please click here: [Varsity Spirit – Safety](#)

## **EVENT ELIGIBILITY**

Varsity Spirit will require that all coaches, directors, choreographers, and personnel wishing to access the warm up area, backstage, coaches' box, or athlete areas at our competitions have required credentialing, background check, and safeguarding as required by each event.

To review the entire eligibility policy please click here: [Varsity Spirit - Event Eligibility](#)

## **EVENT GUIDELINES**

The coach/director of each team is responsible for understanding and following the Event Guidelines. Event Guidelines include:

- General Guidelines
- Safety Guidelines
- Music Guidelines
- Interruption of Performance
- Competition Area
- Warm Up Room Policy
- Spotter Policy

To review additional information, click here: [Varsity Spirit - Event Guidelines](#)

## EVENT POLICIES

All attendees are expected to follow event policies to ensure a respectable and secure environment.

To review the event policies, click here: [Varsity Spirit - Event Policies](#)

## LOGO USAGE

To review, please click here: [Varsity Spirit - Event Policies](#)

## DIVISIONS

The contest director may delete, combine, or divide categories/divisions as deemed necessary. If divisions are altered, adjustments will be made to the awards. Most categories/divisions will be subdivided into 2-year and 4-year institutions. Divisions with 10 or more teams may be subdivided again based upon school size and/or team size.

## ENTRANCE/EXIT

Judges are looking for enthusiasm and showmanship during entrance and exits. Teams are encouraged to move on and off the floor as quickly as possible.

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, handshakes, 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 entrances or exits, or other activities after the official ending of the routine.

## PERFORMANCE AREA

A 54' x 42' carpet bonded foam mat (non-spring) will be used for all cheerleading performances. All stunts and 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. The warm up/practice area will consist of carpet bonded foam mat strips. The size of the warm up floor will be communicated in pre-competition information which is emailed approximately 14 days prior to the event. All dance team divisions will perform on a marley, parquet, stage, basketball/gym court or similar type dance floor.

## PERFORMANCE ORDER

Typically, performance order is based on registration confirmation. Registrations are confirmed when the payment is received. The first registration confirmed will be the last to perform in that division and the last registration confirmed will be the first to perform in that division. Adjustments may be necessary due to division/team conflicts.

**All teams will be given an assigned check-in and warm up time prior to competition.**

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](http://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 director's/coach's responsibility to check the schedule for accuracy of divisions, team size, etc. prior to the day of competition.

## **PENALTIES**

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

**1. Safety Rules:** Two (2) points will be deducted from the final team average for each occurrence of an illegal procedure. For example, if all squad members execute an illegal stunt, the squad will receive one two-point penalty. If the same squad performs the same or another illegal stunt within the same routine, they will receive a second two-point penalty.

You must adhere to the appropriate division limitations and the 2025-2026 USA Cheer safety rules for collegiate school-based cheer and dance programs.

**2. Time:** Timing will begin on the first note of music, the first word of the cheer, the first organized cheer, or the first movement, whichever occurs first, and stop with the end of the cheer or last note of music.

Penalties will be assessed as follows: 1-5 seconds over = 1 point penalty; 6 or more seconds over = 2-point penalty.

For cheer teams, up to 2:15 (135 seconds) of the total routine may be performed to music. There is no restriction as to the proportion of the music section(s) used in relation to the cheer only section(s). Penalties will be deducted from the final averaged score for going over the 2:15 total music time limit. Penalties will be assessed as follows: 1-5 seconds over = 1 point penalty; 6 or more seconds over = 2-point penalty.

Timing for prop set-up in the Mascot division will begin at the drop of the starter's hand. Set-up timing will stop when the routine begins.

## **APPROPRIATENESS OF CHOREOGRAPHY, MUSIC, 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 promote school pride, honor, tradition and sportsmanship in the cheer. Cheers that are negative, insulting to other teams or the judges may reflect a lower score.

In general, performances 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.

## **JUDGING**

The event will utilize professional judges from various spirit organizations and/or backgrounds to create a fair competition for everyone.

## 2025 – 2026 USA COLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIPS DIVISIONS

USA Collegiate Championship Divisions and sample score sheets are available on-line by visiting [Divisions, Rules & Scoring](#).

### SHOW CHEER

**Number on Team:** Five to thirty-six in all divisions.

**Routine Procedure:** Execute a routine of your choice using a combination of music and cheer portion(s). Audience participation and props (spell-out letters; Go, Fight, Win signs, etc.) are encouraged. Please adhere to the appropriate 2025–2026 USA Cheer College Safety Rules [www.usacheer.org/college-cheer](http://www.usacheer.org/college-cheer)

**Time Limit:** Maximum three (3) minutes. For cheer teams, up to 2:15 (135 seconds) of the total routine may be performed to music. There is no restriction as to the proportion of the music section(s) used in relation to the cheer only section(s). Penalties will be deducted from the final averaged score for going over the 2:15 total music time limit. Penalties will be assessed as follows: 1-5 seconds over = 1 point penalty; 6 or more seconds over = 2-point penalty.

### DIVISION RULES: SHOW CHEER - ADVANCED

#### Specialty Skills Restrictions

There are no tumbling or stunt/pyramid/toss restrictions in this division besides those listed in the USA Cheer College Rules found on the USA Cheer website: [www.usacheer.org/college-cheer](http://www.usacheer.org/college-cheer)

### DIVISION RULES: SHOW CHEER – INTERMEDIATE

#### Specialty Skills Restrictions

Teams must adhere to the USA Cheer College Rules found on the USA Cheer website [www.usacheer.org/college-cheer](http://www.usacheer.org/college-cheer) in addition to stunting and tumbling restrictions for the intermediate division. Please refer to the 2025–2026 College Show Cheer Intermediate Division Limitations document for all specialty skill restrictions for this division.

### GROUP STUNT

**Number on Team:** Four/Five members, including spotter (all female or all male).

**Routine Procedure:** The participants all must be from the same school. Execute stunts of your choice. Background music is encouraged but must meet music licensing requirements. You must adhere to the USA Cheer College Rules found on the USA Cheer website [www.usacheer.org/college-cheer](http://www.usacheer.org/college-cheer)

**Time Limit:** 1 minute maximum

### PARTNER STUNT

**Number on Team:** Two members plus a spotter.

**Routine Procedure:** The participants all must be from the same school. Execute single-based partner stunts of your choice. Background music is encouraged but must meet music licensing requirements. You must adhere to the USA Cheer College Rules found on the USA Cheer website [www.usacheer.org/college-cheer](http://www.usacheer.org/college-cheer)

**Time Limit:** 1 minute maximum

## MASCOT

**Number on Team:** Mascots may perform as individuals or as mascot groups. Participants in this division must be the official mascot(s) of the school and must wear their official mascot uniform. Additional team members (e.g. cheerleaders and dancers) are not permitted to be visible and perform as part of this routine.

**Routine Procedure:** Execute any type of skit or novelty routine. Use of a theme and crowd involvement are encouraged. Contestants may use music, props, costumes, and accessories. Please no use of water or other substances that would be harmful to the floor. Individuals assisting with props may not be visible during the routine. Materials that require cleaning up (e.g., confetti, glitter, etc.) are not permitted. All props/sets/accessories must (either assembled or disassembled) be able to fit through a standard door measuring 7' H x 3' W. Stunting and/or tumbling is not allowed.

**Time Limit:** Maximum two (2) minutes for the routine. You will be limited to one (1) minute to set-up props and one (1) minute to break-down props (see time penalty).

## POM

**Number on Team:** Six to thirty

**Routine Procedure:** A pom routine consists of visual effects, synchronization, clean/sharp pom motions and technical skills. Visual effects include level changes, opposition, group work, transitions and formations. Emphasis should be placed on proper pom/motion technique, proper dance technique, timing, and showmanship. All female members must use two pompons for 80% of the routine. You must adhere to the 2025–2026 USA College Dance Safety Rules found on the USA website: [usa.varsity.com](http://usa.varsity.com).

**Time Limit:** Maximum 2 ½ minutes

## JAZZ

**Number on Team:** Six to thirty

**Routine Procedure:** A jazz routine incorporates stylized jazz dance movements and combinations, visual effects, level changes, formation changes and dance technique. Emphasis should be on uniformity of the selected jazz style, proper dance technique, and timing and performance quality. You must adhere to the 2025–2026 USA College Dance Safety Rules found on the USA website: [usa.varsity.com](http://usa.varsity.com).

**Time Limit:** Maximum 2 ½ minutes

## HIP HOP

**Number on Team:** Six to thirty

**Routine Procedure:** A routine where dancers perform street style movement with an emphasis on execution, uniformity, body control, rhythm, creativity, visual effect and musicality. A combination of hip hop styles is permitted. You must adhere to the 2025–2026 USA College Dance Safety Rules found on the USA website: [usa.varsity.com](http://usa.varsity.com).

**Time Limit:** Maximum 2 ½ minutes

## **SAFETY RULES REVIEW CHEER/DANCE**

Cheer routines must follow the 2025–2026 USA Cheer College Rules: <https://www.usacheer.org/college-cheer>

Dance routines must follow the USA College Dance Safety Rules.

For all legality, division limitations, or questions regarding specific performance elements, you may submit a video that contains the skill in question.

Submitting a video is the only way to review a routine for potential safety violations. All video inquiries for safety rule legalities, for one-day events, must be submitted 14 days or more prior to the competition date.

These cheerleading videos and any specific cheerleading stunt and safety questions that pertain to the USA Cheer College Rules or the 2025- 26 USA College Show Cheer Intermediate Division Limitations should be submitted using the following link: [USA Legality Inquiry Form](#).

Note that submission of a routine and/or its elements does not preclude a team from being assessed a penalty while at a specific USA competition, as performances from the video submission may differ from those executed on the competition floor. Submission of a routine does not guarantee that it can be reviewed.

USA rules and division limitations may be downloaded at Divisions, Rules & Scoring

Dance videos should be emailed to [USADanceRules@varsity.com](mailto:USADanceRules@varsity.com).

For specific college dance questions please email [USADanceRules@varsity.com](mailto:USADanceRules@varsity.com).

## 2025-2026 COLLEGE SHOW CHEER INTERMEDIATE DIVISION LIMITATIONS

In addition to following all rules listed in the USA Cheer College Rules on the USA Cheer website [www.usacheer.org/college-cheer](http://www.usacheer.org/college-cheer) the following restrictions also apply to teams entering these intermediate divisions:

All Girl Show Cheer – Intermediate  
Small Co-Ed Show Cheer – Intermediate  
Large Co-Ed Show Cheer – Intermediate

### INTERMEDIATE DIVISION LIMITATIONS

#### GENERAL TUMBLING

- No twisting while airborne. (Exception: Aerial cartwheels are allowed)

#### STANDING TUMBLING

- Series front and back handsprings **are allowed**.
- Jump handspring (s) combinations **are allowed**.
- Flips are **NOT allowed**.

#### RUNNING TUMBLING

- Airborne flips **are allowed**.
- Back flips are **ONLY** allowed from a roundoff, cartwheel, or roundoff BHS.
- Other skills with hand support prior to the cartwheel or roundoff are allowed.
- Aerial Cartwheels are allowed
- No tumbling is allowed after a back flip or aerial cartwheel.
- Front flips are not allowed.

#### STUNTS

- Stunts in which the base uses only one arm for support are not allowed.
- Free flipping stunts **are NOT allowed** (ex: leg pitch, walk-in, sponge, rewinds, and straddle catch flips).

#### TWISTING

- Up to 1 ¼ twists **are allowed** in released twisting skills (load-ins, dismounts, and transitions).

#### RELEASES

- Released inversions into stunts **are allowed** but may not exceed prep level and may not exceed a ½ twist. This includes released inversions in a stunt to an upright position.

#### INVERSIONS

- Extended static inverted stunts are not allowed (ex: extended handstand is not allowed).

#### PYRAMIDS

- Up to 2 persons high **are allowed**.
- Free flipping pyramid skills (including load-ins and dismounts) **are NOT allowed**.

#### PYRAMID RELEASES

- Flips must be braced by at least one bracer at or below prep level.

## **PYRAMID INVERSIONS**

- All pyramid inversions require at least one bracer at prep level or below.
- Top person cannot land inverted.

## **TOSSES**

- Tosses must be directed vertically and caught by the original bases who remain stationary.
- Up to 2 tricks during a toss (ex: kick full, ball X).
- Up to 1 ¼ twisting is allowed.
- Flips are **NOT allowed**.

## 2025-2026 USA COLLEGE DEDUCTIONS SCORING GUIDELINES

### SHOW CHEER AND GAME DAY DIVISIONS (Does not include Group Stunt or Partner Stunt divisions)

#### ATHLETE FALL .50- Drops to the performance surface DURING tumbling and/or jump skills

Includes	Would Not Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand or hands down in tumbling or jump skills</li> <li>• Knee or knees down in tumbling or jump skills</li> <li>• Head, shoulders, back, seat down, or other compromising position during tumbling or jump skill</li> <li>• Tumbling transitions in and/or out of a building skill</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An athlete that trips while walking during a transition</li> <li>• An athlete trips/falls following a controlled completion of a tumbling or jump skill</li> </ul>

#### BUILDING BOBBLE .50- Building skills that almost drop but are saved

Includes	Would Not Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Base or spotter drops to performance surface during building skill</li> <li>• Top person leans and/or bears weight on a base/spotter and is pushed back up into the stunt/skill</li> <li>• Lowering of a stunt from extended position to prep level (not a timing issue)</li> <li>• Pyramid skills that would fall without the bracer or bracer's support</li> <li>• Both feet and/or both hands come in contact with performance surface during a cradle/prone</li> <li>• Drops to the performing surface from a nugget, thigh stand and/or waist level style stunt on to their feet (not a timing issue)</li> <li>• Incomplete twisting dismount that lands in a prone (stomach) position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An omitted skill</li> <li>• Drop in a body position by the top person</li> <li>• Excessive movement by the bases</li> <li>• Balance checks by the top person</li> <li>• A single hand/foot in contact with performance surface during a cradle/prone</li> <li>• Single based/coed style skill that never results in contact beyond a toss grip (omitted skill)</li> </ul>

#### BUILDING FALL 1.0- Drops or falls from a building skill or transition

Includes	Would Not Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drops to a cradle position/ load in/ prone position</li> <li>• Drops/lowering of a stunt, including single based/coed style skills (assisted or unassisted) in a controlled manner to the performance surface with assistance from the base and/or spotter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stunts that almost fall but are saved and return to a stunting position</li> <li>• All other items listed in the building bobble or major building fall sections</li> </ul>

#### MAJOR BUILDING FALL 1.5- Drops to the performance surface from a building skill by the top person and/or base(s)/spotter(s)

Includes	Would Not Include
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple bases and/or spotters drop to the performance surface</li> <li>• Top person lands on a base and/or spotter who drops to the performance surface</li> <li>• Tosses that land in a prone (on stomach), upright (feet down) or inverted (head down) position</li> <li>• Skills in which the event spotter is the primary catcher/saves an athlete while falling.</li> <li>• Drops to a compromising position not included in building falls.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top person comes in contact with the performance surface during a transitional stunt and/or pyramid but without interrupting or stopping</li> <li>• Top person is set out of a building skill or transition and drops to the performance surface (this includes tripping while walking)</li> </ul>

**PYRAMID MAXIMUM 2.0-** When multiple deductions should be assessed during a pyramid skill, then the sum of those deductions will not be greater than 2.0. During pyramids where a fall continues to affect other portions of the pyramid, the deduction will not exceed 2.0. Two separate pyramids will result in separate deductions.

**Deductions may be given before and following the routine.**

# **2025-2026 USA COLLEGE VIOLATION DEDUCTIONS**

**Deductions may be given before and following the routine**

## **USA CHEER COLLEGE RULES / DIVISION LIMITATION SKILL VIOLATIONS – 2.0 per occurrence**

- Skills performed in violation of USA Cheer College Rules and/or Division Limitation requirements.

## **BOUNDARY VIOLATION- *National events ONLY* (Excludes Game Day divisions) – 0.5 per occurrence**

- Any part of the seat/torso or any combination of two hands and/or feet completely outside of the performance surface.
- Judges' decisions are final and will not be reviewed.

## **PROP VIOLATION – 0.5 per occurrence**

- Hard props/megaphones released from an athlete while loading, dismounting or stationary in a stunt.
- A person on the ground throwing to another person or discarding a hard prop/megaphone with the intent of distance.
- Athletes performing/landing stunts, tumbling or jumps on props.

## **EXCESSIVE CELEBRATION/ENTRANCE AND EXITS – 0.5 per occurrence**

- Teams should enter and exit the performing surface quickly. Any entrance/exit more than 30 seconds will result in a deduction. In all divisions including Game Day. Timing will begin once the first participant has stepped onto the performing surface.
- Introductions (organized entrances, chants, spell outs, etc.) are considered part of the routine and will be timed as part of the performance. 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.
- Teams should refrain from any type of excessive celebration after the performance (head swings, breakdancing, alternates/coaches on the mat, drops to the mat, etc.).

## **UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT – 1.0**

- When a coach is in discussion with an official, other coaches, athletes, or parents/spectators they must maintain professional conduct. Unsportsmanlike behavior could result in a deduction, removal of coach, or disqualification.

## **INAPPROPRIATE CHOREOGRAPHY/MUSIC/WORDS – 1.0**

- A deduction will be given for vulgar or suggestive choreography, and/or music and words unsuitable for family viewing. Removing improper language or words from a song and replacing with sound effects constitutes inappropriate.

## **COSTUMING/FOOTWEAR – 1.0**

- 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", and a deduction will be taken. (Exception: Costuming is allowed in the Jazz category and for mascots).
- Improper footwear. All participants must wear soft-soled, non-marking shoes on both feet while competing.
- Appropriate and suitable attire will follow Varsity uniform guidelines and deductions will be given accordingly.

## **DIVISION/PARTICIPATION VIOLATIONS – 3.0, or DISQUALIFICATION**

- Unnecessary change in performance order/ Delay of Contest (determined by competition officials) – **3.0**
- Disqualification: Examples include violation of eligibility requirements, age/grade requirements, participating on two or more teams within the same category type and/or divisions, entering/performing in the incorrect division/category, failing to provide proof of music licensing, and severe sportsmanlike conduct.

## **TIME LIMIT VIOLATIONS FOR ROUTINE LENGTH – 1.0/2.0**

- Timing begins with the first movement, voice or note of music, whichever comes first. Timing will END with the last movement, voice or note of music, whichever comes last.
  - 1 – 5 seconds over = 1.0 deduction; 6+ seconds over = 2.0

## **TIME LIMIT VIOLATION FOR SHOW CHEER MUSIC LENGTH – 1.0 / 2.0**

- 1 – 5 seconds over = 1.0 deduction; 6+ seconds over = 2.0

## **GAME DAY FORMAT VIOLATIONS – 2.0**

- Tumbling and/or stunting is prohibited during the Band Chant section (Excludes College Teams). Band music must be used.
- During the Fight Song, teams can incorporate up to 3 consecutive 8-counts of skills (kicks and jumps will not be counted as skills) including load and dismount (unless routine finished in a stunt/pyramid). Skills may be repeated, if performed identically.
- Stunting beyond the restrictions listed for Game Day routines.
- Auxiliary Groups on performance mat.

## 2025-26 COLLEGE DANCE SAFETY RULES

Changes/updates from the 2025-2026 competition season are in **RED**.

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the event. The coach of each team is responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents, and any other person affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly.
2. All programs should have, and review, an emergency action plan in the event of an injury.
3. Coaches must recognize the entire team's particular ability level and limit the team's activities accordingly.
4. No technical skills should be performed when a coach is not present or providing direct Supervision.
5. All practice sessions should be held in a location suitable for the activities of dance, and away from noise and distractions.
6. Warm up and stretching should precede and conclude all practice sessions, pep rallies, games, competitions, performances, and other physical activities.
7. The performance surface should be taken into consideration before engaging in any technical aspect of dance. The performance area should be reasonably free of obstructions. Dancers should not perform technical skills on:
  - A) Concrete, asphalt, or any other hard or uncovered surface
  - B) Wet surfaces
  - C) Uneven surfaces
  - D) Surfaces with obstructions
8. The dance team coach or other knowledgeable designated representative should be in attendance at all practices, functions, and games.

### COMPETITION ROUTINE REQUIREMENTS

1. Teams must have at least 6 (six) members. The maximum is 30 (thirty) members.
2. Each team will have a maximum of 2 minutes and 30 seconds (2:30) to demonstrate their style and expertise. Timing will begin with the first choreographed movement or note of the music. Timing will end with the last choreographed movement or note the music, whichever comes first.
3. Footwear is recommended but not required. Wearing socks and/or footed tights only is prohibited. Participants that wear shoes must have soft, non-marking soles. Penalty of marking floor is disqualification. The performing school will be responsible for any charges that may occur as a result of damage to any floor. Performers who do not wear shoes while performing do so at their own risk. Shoes are required at all other times when not directly performing.

4. Jewelry as part of a costume is allowed. All jewelry (including hair accessories) must be securely affixed to the performers' body, hair or uniform and should not interfere with the safe execution of any dance movement.
5. Hands Free Poms: The use of hands-free poms will be allowed. Hands-free Poms are specifically made so that performers do not have to hold the poms but rather the poms are affixed to the performers hand. "Proper use" means bars cannot be in palm of the hand and only an elastic band can be between the supporting hand and performance surface making it possible to safely execute skills. A hair tie, rubber band, or tying pom strings/pieces together will not be counted as a hands free pom.

## **PROPS**

1. Wearable and/or handheld items are allowed in all categories and can be removed and discarded from the body.
2. Standing props are not allowed. Any item that bears weight of the participant is a standing prop (Examples: chairs, stools, benches, ladders, boxes, stairs, etc.).

## **EXECUTED BY INDIVIDUALS - TUMBLING & STREET STYLE SKILLS**

**Please note that any or all inverted skills and tumbling are not required in any category. If choreographed into routine, please be sure to follow the guidelines below.**

1. Inverted Skills:
  - A) Non-airborne skills are allowed (Example: Headstand)
  - B) Airborne skills with or without hand support that land in a perpendicular inversion may not have backward momentum in the approach.
2. Skills with hip over-head rotation:
  - A) With hand support are not allowed while holding poms or props in supporting hand(s). (Exception: Forward rolls, backward rolls and the proper use of hands-free poms. See "Hands Free Poms" Competition Routine Requirements, rule #5).
  - B) Non-airborne skills are allowed and are limited to 3 connected skills. Example: 3 consecutive cartwheels are allowed; 4 consecutive cartwheels are not allowed.
  - C) Hip over-head rotation skills with hand support that are airborne in approach or hip over-head rotation skills without hand support are allowed provided the following.
    - i. Can only connect to one other hip over-head rotation skill with or without hand support. (Example: Aerial into a standing back tuck is allowed).
    - ii. Involves no more than one twisting transition.
    - iii. Standing full twisting back flip will not be permitted.
3. Simultaneous tumbling over or under another dancer that includes hip over-head rotation by both dancers is not allowed.
4. Drops (from being completely airborne) to the knee, thigh, back, shoulder, seat, front or head onto the performing surface are not allowed unless the dancer first bears weight on the hand(s) or foot/feet.

5. Landing in a push up position onto the performance surface from a jump in which the legs are in front of the body and swing behind are not allowed. All variations of a Shushanova are not allowed.

### **EXECUTED BY GROUPS OR PAIRS - LIFTS & PARTNERING**

**Please note that any or all lifts and partnering are not required in any category. If choreographed into routine, please be sure to follow the guidelines below.**

1. The Executing Dancer must receive support from a Supporting Dancer who is in direct contact with the performance surface (exception: kick line leaps, partner aerial cartwheels and partner kip ups).
2. When a skill is above shoulder level, at least one Supporting Dancer must maintain contact with the Executing Dancer until the Executing dancer returns to the performance surface.
3. Hip over-head rotation of the Executing Dancer(s) is allowed provided:
  - a) Contact between the Executing Dancer and at least one Supporting Dancer(s) must be maintained until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or is returning to the upright position.
4. Elevators, thigh stands, shoulder sits, and chair sits are allowed. Extensions, pyramids, and basket tosses are not allowed.
5. A Vertical Inversion is allowed provided:
  - a) Contact between the Executing Dancer and at least one Supporting Dancer(s) must be maintained until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or is returning to the upright position.
  - b) When the height of the Executing Dancer's shoulders exceed shoulder-level there is at least one additional dancer to spot who does not bear the weight of the Executing Dancer. (Clarification: When there are 3 Supporting Dancers an additional spot is not required).

### **GROUPS & PAIRS - DISMOUNTS TO THE PERFORMANCE SURFACE**

**(CLARIFICATION: MAY BE ASSISTED BUT NOT REQUIRED)**

**Please note that any or all dismounts to the performance surface are not required in any category. If choreographed into routine, please be sure to follow the guidelines below.**

1. An Executing Dancer may jump, leap, step or push off a Supporting Dancer(s) if:
  - a) The highest point of the released skill does not elevate the Executing Dancer's hips above head level.
  - b) The Executing Dancer's hips may not cross the vertical axis after the release if airborne and/or inverted.
  - c) Toe pitches are not allowed.
2. The Supporting Dancer(s) may toss an Executing Dancer if:
  - a) The highest point of the toss does not elevate the Executing Dancer's hips above head level.
  - b) The Executing Dancer may be supine or inverted when released but s/he must land on their foot/feet.
  - c) The Executing dancer's hips may not cross the vertical axis while airborne and/or inverted.
  - d) Toe pitches are not allowed.

## 2025-26 COLLEGE DANCE GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This glossary of terms is divided into rules terminology and skills terminology.

### Rules Terminology

**Airborne (Executed by Individuals, Groups or Pairs):** A state in which the dancer is free of contact from a person and the performing surface.

**Airborne Hip Over Head Rotation (Executed by Individuals):** A tumbling skill in which the hips continuously rotate over the head and there is a moment of no contact with the performance surface (Example: Round Off or a Back Handspring).

**Axis Rotation:** An action in which a dancer rotates around his/her vertical or horizontal center.

**Connected/Consecutive Skills:** An action in which the dancer executes skills without a step, pause or break in between. (Example: Double Pirouette or Double Toe Touch)

**Contact (Executed by Groups or Pairs):** When two (or more) people physically touch each other. Touching hair and clothing does not qualify as contact.

**Costuming:** An accessory or an article of clothing that adds to the overall effect and/or theme of the routine.

**Dismount (executed by Groups or Pairs):** An action in which the Executing Dancer(s) returns to the performance surface or upright position with or without assistance from a Supporting Dancer(s) with whom there was prior contact.

**Drop:** An action in which an airborne dancer lands on a body part other than his/her hand(s) or feet without first bearing weight on the hands/feet.

**Elevate/Elevated:** An action in which a dancer is moved to a higher position or place from a lower one.

**Executing Dancer:** A dancer who performs a skill as a part of Groups or Pairs who use(s) support from another dancer(s).

**Head Level:** A designated and averaged height: the crown of the head of a standing dancer while standing upright with straight legs. (Clarification: this is an approximate height to measure space, and is not changed by bending, inverting, etc.)

**Hip Level:** A designated and averaged height; the height of a standing dancer's hips while standing upright with straight legs. (Clarification: this is an approximate height to measure space, and is not changed by bending, inverting, etc.)

**Hip Over Head Rotation (Executed by Individuals):** An action characterized by continuous movement where a dancer's hips rotate over the head in a tumbling skill (Example: Back Walkover or Cartwheel).

**Hip Over Head Rotation (Executed by Groups or Pairs):** An action characterized by continuous movement where the Executing Dancer's hips rotate over their own head in a lift or partnering skill.

**Inversion/Inverted:** A position in which the dancer's waist, hips and feet are higher than his/her head and shoulders.

**Inverted Skills (Executed by individuals):** A skill in which a dancer's waist and hips and feet are higher than his/her head and shoulders and there is a stop, stall, or change in momentum.

**Lift (executed by Groups or Pairs):** A skill in which a dancer(s) is elevated from the performance surface by one or more dancers and set down. A Dance Lift is comprised of an Executing Dancer(s) and a Supporting Dancer(s).

**Partnering (Executed by Pairs):** A skill in which two dancers use support from one another. Partnering can involve both Supporting and Executing skills.

**Perpendicular Inversion (executed by individuals):** A skill that begins with backward airborne momentum and lands on the hands and head in an inverted position in which the dancer's head, neck and shoulders are directly aligned with the performance surface, creating a 90 degree angle between the head and floor.

**Prop:** Any physical object used to enhance the overall effect and/or theme of your routine.

**Prone:** A position in which the front of the dancer's body is facing the ground and the back of the dancer's body is facing up.

**Release (executed by Groups or Pairs):** An action that results in a moment of time when the Executing Dancer is free of contact from the performance floor and the Supporting Dancer(s) with whom there was prior contact.

**Shoulder Inversion (executed by individuals):** A skill that begins with backward airborne momentum and lands on the hands /shoulders /upper back area on the performance surface and the dancer's waist and hips and feet are higher than his/her head and shoulders.

**Shoulder Level:** A designated and averaged height; the height of a standing dancers' shoulders while standing upright with straight legs. (Clarification: this is an approximate height to measure space, and is not changed by bending, inverting, etc.)

**Supporting Leg:** The leg of a dancer that supports the weight of the body, during a skill.

**Supporting Dancer:** A dancer who performs a skill as a part of a group or pair who supports or maintains contact with an Executing Dancer.

**Supine:** A position in which the back of the dancer's body is facing the ground, and the front of the dancer's body is facing up.

**Tumbling:** A collection of skills that emphasize acrobatic or gymnastic ability, are executed by an individual dancer without contact, assistance or support of another dancer(s) and begin and end on the performance surface. (Clarification: tumbling skills do not have to include hip over head rotation)

**Vertical Axis:** (executed by Groups or Pairs): a designated line in space that goes straight up and down and has no slope.

**Vertical Inversion (executed by Groups or Pairs):** A skill in which the Executing Dancer's waist, hips and feet are higher than his/her own head and shoulders and bears direct weight on the Supporting Dancer(s) by a stop, stall or change in momentum.

**Working Leg:** The leg of a dancer that is responsible for momentum and/or position, during a skill.

### Skills Terminology

**A la Secondé Leap (Second Leap):** A leap in which the legs open to second position in turnout, so that the dancer's heels are visible.

**A la Seconde Turn (Second Turn):** Pirouette a la seconde is a classical ballet term meaning a "spin with leg to the side" or "spin with leg in second position." A dancer performing a pirouette a la seconde will be turning on their supporting leg with their other leg to the side and straight with a pointed foot.

**Aerial Cartwheel:** (airborne hip over head rotation skill without hand support) A skill which emulates a cartwheel executed without placing hands on the ground.

**Attitude:** A position where the working leg is lifted in the air to the front (devant), side (a la secondé) or to the back (derrière). The leg in the air is bent and is most often turned out so that the knee is higher than the foot.

**Axel:** (airborne skill with axis rotation) A turn in which the working leg makes a circle in the air to passé as the supporting leg lifts off the ground enabling the dancer to perform a rotation in the air and then lands on the original supporting leg.

**Back Walkover:** (non-airborne hip over head rotation skill with hand support) A skill in which the dancer moves backward into an arched position, with the hands making contact with the ground first, then rotates the hips over the head and lands on one foot/leg at a time.

**Backward Roll:** (non-airborne hip over head rotation skill with hand support) A skill in which the dancer rotates backward, rotating the hips over the head while curving the spine (a tucked position) to create a motion similar to a ball "rolling" across the floor.

**C Jump:** A jump in which a dancer uses a deep plie, the legs pull behind the body and are bent, the head is released and arms are pulled back. The body forms the shape of a "C".

**Calypso:** (airborne skill) A turning leap in which the working leg extends making a circle in the air as the supporting leg lifts off the ground enabling the dancer to perform a rotation in the air then the supporting (back) leg reaches behind the body, often in an attitude, and then lands on the original working leg.

**Cartwheel:** (non-airborne hip over head rotation skill with hand support) A skill where the dancer supports the weight of the body with the arm(s) while rotating sideways through an inverted position landing on one foot at a time.

**Chassé:** A connecting step in which one foot remains in advance of the other; meaning to chase.

**Chaines/Chaine Turn:** Chaînés or “chaîné turns” is when a dancer is performing a series of turns on both feet, picking up each foot back and forth in order to keep moving in a line or circle.

**Coupé:** A position in which one foot is held lifted and close to the ankle. Also known as Coup de Pied: quickly takes the place of the other; meaning to cut or cutting.

**Developpé:** An action in which the working leg moves through passé (bends) before extending into position; meaning to develop.

**Dive Roll:** (airborne hip over head rotation skill with hand support) A forward roll where the dancer’s feet leave the ground before the dancer’s hands reach the ground.

**Elevator:** When the top person is being held at shoulder level by the base(s). Also known as Extension Prep, Prep or Half.

**Extension:** A fully-extended stunt above head level where the Executing Dancer stands with both legs locked out (shoulder-width apart) and one foot in each hand of the base (partner stunt) or each foot is held by a different base (group stunt).

**Forward Roll:** (non-airborne hip over head rotation skill with hand support) A skill in which the dancer rotates forward, rotating the hips over the head while curving the spine (a tucked position) to create a motion similar to a ball “rolling” across the floor.

**Fouetté:** A turning step, usually done in a series, in which the working leg makes a circle in the air and then into passé as the dancer turns bending (plié) and rising (relevé) at each revolution; meaning to whip. Fouetté turns can also be done to the side or in second position (fouetté à la seconde).

**Fouetté à la Seconde:** A turning step done in a series in which the working leg makes a circle in the air and extends at a 90° angle from the supporting leg remaining parallel to the ground as the dancer turns with a plié and relevé at each revolution.

**Front Aerial:** (an airborne hip over head rotation skill without hand support) A skill which emulates a front walkover but is executed without placing hands on the ground.

**Front Walkover:** (a non-airborne hip over head rotation skill with hand support) A skill where the dancer moves forward with the hands making contact with the ground first, then rotates the hips over the head passing through an arched position and lands on one foot/leg at a time.

**Glissade:** A connecting step that transfers weight from one foot to the other; meaning to glide.

**Handstand:** (a non-airborne inverted skill with hand support) A non-airborne, nonrotating, skill where the dancer supports him/herself vertically on his/her hands in an inverted position and the arms are extended straight by the head and ears.

**Headspring:** (an airborne hip over head rotation skill with hand support) A skill where a dancer moves forward with the hands then head, making contact with the performance surface, then rotates the hips over the head passing through an arched position. It is non-airborne in approach but airborne in descent after hips pass through perpendicular.

**Headstand:** (an non-airborne inverted skill with hand support) A non-airborne, nonrotating, skill where the dancer supports him/herself vertically on his/her head in an inverted position with hands in contact with the floor to support the body.

**Illusion:** (a stationary turn) A skill where a dancer steps onto a standing leg, releasing the upper body all the way forward, lifting the working leg as close to 90 degrees as possible while rotating on the standing foot.

**Jeté:** A skill in which the dancer takes off from one foot by brushing the feet into the ground and swiftly 'whipping' them into the position and then landing on one foot. A jetté can be executed in various directions, sizes and positions.

**Jump:** Movement taking off and landing on same foot or both feet.

**Kick:** Throwing the working leg in the air in a controlled manner, while the supporting leg and body stay properly aligned in the position of choice. Jazz equivalent of a grand battement in ballet.

**Kip Up:** (non-airborne in approach, airborne in decent, inverted skill) A skill where the dancer begins in a supine position, rolls back onto their shoulders elevating their hips off the performance surface and into an inverted position. Using their arms and/or legs, core, and momentum, the dancer thrusts their body in an upward direction away from the floor. The movement is completed by bringing the feet to the performance surface keeping the body inline and following to an upright position.

**Leap:** (airborne skill) A skill in which the dancer pushes from a plié (bend) off of one foot, becomes airborne, and lands on one foot.

**Leg hold/Leg Hold Turn:** A skill in which a dancer extends one leg upward showing flexibility. When executing this skill, the dancer grabs the leg and/or foot of the leg that is extended. To make the skill more advanced, rotations can be incorporated making it a leg hold turn.

**Passé:** A position or movement in which the working leg bends connecting the pointed foot to or near the knee of the supporting leg; meaning to pass. Passé can be executed with the hips parallel or turned out.

**Pencil:** A position of the working leg during a pirouette turn in which the leg is forward, turned out and pointed to the floor. The foot is a couple inches off the floor.

**Pique/Pique Turn:** "Pricked" a step in which a dancer transfers weight onto the pointe or demi pointe of the supporting leg. The working leg is in passé position and turned out. This action can be immediately followed by a turning motion, known as a pique turn.

**Pirouette:** (axis rotation) A skill in which the dancer bends (plié) with one foot in front of the other (fourth position) and rises (relevé) to one supporting leg making a complete rotation of the body; meaning to whirl. A pirouette can be executed in a variety of positions.

**Plié:** A preparatory and landing skill in which the dancer bends, softens his/her knees; meaning to bend.

**Relevé:** An executing skill in which the dancer lifts up to the ball of his/her feet; meaning to rise.

**Reverse Leap:** A leap in which a dancer begins facing back and travels toward the back (with steps or a chasse), then rotates the shoulders and hips to the front/direction the dancer came from and hits the split leap position facing the front/the direction the dancer came from.

**Round Off (Executed by Individuals):** (airborne hip over head rotation skill with hand support) An airborne hip over head rotation skill that takes off on one foot and lands on two feet simultaneously. (Clarification: the skill becomes airborne after the hips have rotated over the head).

**Scissor Leap/Switch Leap:** A leap in which the legs exchange positions (by swinging past each other while in the air), showing a split with both legs in one jump.

**Shoulder Roll (forward/back):** A non-airborne tumbling skill where the dancer rolls with the back of the shoulder and maintains contact with the floor and the head is tilted to the side to avoid contact with the floor.

**Shushunova:** A jump variation in which the dancer lifts extended legs to a toe touch or pike position and then circles them behind the body dropping the chest and landing in a prone support (push up position).

**Stag:** A grand jete in which the front and back leg bend as the body travels through the air. It can also be performed with the back leg extended.

**Surprise Leap:** A leap in which a dancer begins facing back and travels to the side (with steps or chasse) and then rotates the shoulders and hips to the front while also bringing the leg through passé and hits the split leap position facing front.

**Thigh Stand:** Stunt in which the top person stands on two bases' lunged thighs.

**Toe Pitch (executed by Groups or Pairs):** A skill in which the Executing Dancer(s) starts in an upright position with one foot in the hand(s) of a Supporting Dancer(s) and is propelled upward. (Clarification: this is not the definition of a toe pitch back tuck).

**Toe Touch:** (airborne skill) A jump in which the dancer lifts the legs through a straddle position. Hips externally rotate to turn out the legs and the chest is upright. Arms are typically held in a T position.

**Tour Jete:** (airborne skill with axis rotation) A skill in which the dancer takes off from one leg, executes a half turn and lands on the other leg.

**Turning C Jump:** A jump in which a dancer uses a chaine turn to prep into a C jump and the jump is performed while turning.

# COLLEGIATE CHEER GAME DAY RULES & GUIDELINES

## GENERAL RULES

*All permitted cheerleading specialty skills, including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps for the Game Day Divisions must follow the 2025-26 USA Cheer College Cheerleading Safety Rules. Please see additional specific skill restrictions below for each category. All skills should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified advisor/director/coach.*

### A. 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.
- 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, mascot, 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. dance members must follow the specific 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 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 regarding grooming, traditional and appropriate attire, conservative make-up, uniformity, etc.

### B. DIVISIONS:

5+ Members

#### Stand-Alone Categories

- Band Chant
- Situational Sideline/Cheer
- Fight Song

### C. UNIFORM RULES:

- Sideline/traditional school uniforms must be worn. Thematic costuming is not allowed.
- No tear-away uniforms and/or removal of clothing are permitted.

### D. COMPETITION AREA – Unique to Game Day

- Participants may stand or enter 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 USA Cheer surface ruling that school-based programs may not compete on a spring floor. The 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 outside the competition area by a team member.

**E. MUSIC RULES/RESTRICTIONS:** Refer to [Varsity Spirit - Event Guidelines](#)

**F. TIME LIMITATIONS/ENTRANCE/EXIT:**

- Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 1 minute.
- See specific category for details on the start and stop of each type of routine.
- Teams may not set up props in advance.
- 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, handshakes, 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 entrances, exits, or other activities after the official ending of the routine.

**G. VIDEO MEDIA POLICY:** Refer to [Varsity Spirit - Event Guidelines](#)

**H. LOGO USAGE:** Refer to [Varsity Spirit - Event Policies](#)

## **BAND CHANT CATEGORY**

### **ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS**

Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 1 minute.

- Emphasis should be placed on crowd involvement and interaction, as well as entertaining the crowd.
  - All material should be suitable and able to be performed multiple times during a game or rally/assembly.
  - Incorporated skills are used to cue and encourage participation.
- The use of props (i.e. poms, signs, flags, megaphones, banners, foam fingers, and/or rally towels) to lead the crowd is required.
  - Tossing, throwing or other projecting of any type of object outside the competition floor and/or into the crowd is not allowed.
  - No use of water, glitter, or other substances that would be harmful to the floor and/or to another competitor.
- The Band Chant music must be an instrumental band version that is traditionally played by a school band.
- Camp material may easily be adapted to fit this category. For example, any band chant learned at a 2025 Varsity Brands camp could be used for this routine. Examples might include “Rock ‘N Roll Part II,” “Land of A Thousand Dances,” etc.
- Judging will be based on the following criteria, as well as elements noted on the score sheet:
  - Ability to lead the crowd and encourage participation from all audience members.
  - Material is appropriate to the sideline, but also elevated to enhance the entertainment value.
  - Visual effects, variety, creativity, and musicality.
  - Execution (placement, synchronization, spacing, etc.)
  - Crowd appeal, showmanship, and confidence.
- Band Chant performance must be made up of at least 50% cheerleaders. Non-cheerleaders may participate (i.e. song/pom, dance) but may not comprise more than 50% of the total team members.
  - 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.
- A team may begin on or off the performance floor.
- Timing will begin with the first organized movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first.
- Timing will end with the last beat of music or organized movement.
- Sideline/traditional school uniforms are required. Thematic/specialized costuming is not allowed.

### **SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – BAND CHANT CATEGORY**

Skill incorporation should promote and encourage crowd involvement, and the practicality of the skills for a game day environment should be a priority.

- Tumbling – twisting flips are not permitted.
- Twisting stunts may not exceed 1¼ twisting rotation.
- Flipping tosses are permitted with 0 twisting rotation.

## FIGHT SONG CATEGORY

### ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS

- Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 1 minute.
- Emphasis should be placed on crowd involvement and interaction, as well as entertaining the crowd.
  - All material should be suitable and able to be performed multiple times during a game or pep rally/assembly.
  - Incorporated skills are used to cue and encourage participation.
- The use of props (i.e. poms, signs, flags, megaphones, banners, foam fingers, and/or rally towels) to lead the crowd is required.
  - Tossing, throwing or other projecting of any type of object outside the competition floor and/or into the crowd is not allowed.
  - No use of water, glitter, or other substances that would be harmful to the floor and/or to another competitor.
- 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 for approval.
- Judging will be based on the following criteria, as well as elements noted on the score sheet:
  - Ability to lead the crowd and encourage participation from all audience members.
  - Material is appropriate to the sideline, but also elevated to enhance the entertainment value.
  - Visual effects, variety, creativity, and musicality.
  - Execution (placement, synchronization, spacing, etc.)
  - Crowd appeal, showmanship, and confidence.
- 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.
- Sideline/traditional school uniforms are required. Thematic/specialized costuming is not allowed.

### SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – FIGHT SONG CATEGORY

- Tumbling – twisting flips are not permitted.
- Twisting stunts may not exceed 1¼ twisting rotation.
- Flipping tosses are permitted with 0 twisting rotation.

## SITUATIONAL SIDELINE/CHEER CATEGORY (2 elements to this routine)

### ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS

- Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 1 minute.
- This routine requires TWO elements: a sideline cheer and a crowd-oriented cheer/chant/traditional yell/drum cadence.
  - Sideline cheer: response to a game time sideline situation (presented by the announcer). Announcer sideline script will be posted on the USA website.
  - Cheer/chant/traditional yell/drum cadence: a separate crowd-oriented cheer that is not directly related to the situational cheer, but rather an add-on following the situation cheer.
  - The total routine length for both of these elements is one minute.
- Emphasis should be placed on crowd involvement and interaction, as well as entertaining the crowd.
  - All material should be suitable and able to be performed multiple times during a game or pep rally/assembly.
  - Incorporated skills (kick, turns, jumps, tumbling, stunts, etc.) are used to cue and encourage participation.
- The use of props (i.e. poms, signs, flags, megaphones, banners, foam fingers, and/or rally towels) to lead the crowd is required.
  - Tossing, throwing or other projecting of any type of object outside the competition floor and/or into the crowd is not allowed.
  - No use of water, glitter, or other substances that would be harmful to the floor and/or to another competitor.
  - Props (other than megaphones) used for rhythm/back beats are not allowed on the mats.
- Judging will be based on the following criteria, as well as elements noted on the score sheet:
  - Ability to lead the crowd and encourage participation from all audience members.
  - Material is appropriate to the sideline, but also elevated to enhance the entertainment value.
  - Visual effects, variety, creativity, and musicality.
  - Execution (placement, synchronization, spacing, etc.)
  - Crowd appeal, showmanship, and confidence.
  - Accurate response to the game situation.
- The team may start their routine on or off the mat for the reading of their game sideline situation.
- Timing begins once the situation is read and ends at the conclusion of the second element of the routine (cheer/chant/traditional yell/drum cadence).
- Music is not permitted except for a drum cadence. A live drummer, or a drum track is allowed.
  - Auxiliary groups (i.e. drummers) must remain on the gym floor and are not permitted on the carpet bonded performance mat.
- Sideline/traditional school uniforms are required. Thematic/specialized costuming is not allowed.

### SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – SITUATIONAL SIDELINE/CHEER CATEGORY

- Tumbling – twisting flips are not permitted.
- Twisting stunts may not exceed 1¼ twisting rotation.
- Flipping tosses are permitted with 0 twisting rotations.

# COLLEGIATE DANCE GAME DAY RULES & GUIDELINES

## GENERAL RULES

*All permitted dance specialty skills, including leaps, turns, jumps, etc. for the Game Day Divisions must follow the 2025-26 Competition Season College Dance Rules. Please see additional specific skill restrictions below for each category. These restrictions must be followed whether a dance competitor is in a College Dance Game Day category or a combined routine under one of the College Cheer Game Day categories. All skills should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified adult advisor/director/coach.*

### A. CATEGORIES/DIVISIONS:

There is one category.

- All-In-One Performance  
(Performed in this order -- Fight Song/ Spirit Raising /Performance Routine)

### DIVISIONS

College (offered during Game Day categories at Collegiate Championships only) – 6-30 Members

### B. SCHOOL REPRESENTATION:

- All members of the performing squad must be current members of the official college dance team. These must be individuals who performed for games during the appropriate season.
- All College Dance Game Day routines are required to be comprised entirely of members of the school's dance team. Other performance-based and/or spirit groups **may not** enter the college dance only divisions.
- 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 regards 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 regards to grooming, traditional and appropriate attire, conservative make up, uniformity, etc.

### C. UNIFORM RULES/POM USAGE:

- Sideline/traditional school uniforms must be worn.
- No tear-away uniforms and/or removal of clothing are permitted.
- Teams may use poms, but they are not required in the Performance Routine category. Poms are required for all female team members for the Fight Song and Spirit Raising (Band Chant) categories.
- The use of signs, flags, banners or other spirit related props are permitted but not required.
- 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." Costuming is not allowed.

### D. COMPETITION AREA:

- Participants may stand or enter outside the competition area for their performance.

- Tossing, throwing or other projecting of any type of object outside the competition floor and/or into the crowd is not allowed.
- The performance floor will measure at least 42' x 42' and be on top of a basketball court, parquet dance floor, or similar type of surface.

**E. MUSIC RULES/RESTRICTIONS:** Refer to [Varsity Spirit - Event Guidelines](#)

**F. TIME LIMITATIONS/ENTRANCE/EXIT:**

- **All In One division - Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 3 minutes, including transitioning from section to section. Each component has a maximum time limit of 1:00 per section.**
- 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, handshakes, 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:** Refer to [Varsity Spirit - Event Guidelines](#)

**H. LOGO USAGE:** Refer to [Varsity Spirit - Event Policies](#)

## GAME DAY “ALL-IN-ONE” PERFORMANCE

### ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS

- This category combines all 3 divisions from above into one performance.
- Teams will perform the following routines in the below order to fulfill the “All-In-One” category:
  - Fight Song
  - Spirit Raising
  - Performance Routine
- **Time limitations: All In One division - Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 3 minutes, including transitioning from section to section. Each component has a maximum time limit of 1:00 per section.**
- A team may begin on or off the performance floor for the start of the Fight Song. They must remain on the performance floor for the start of the Spirit Raising and Performance Routine.
- Each routine will have a beginning and an end. Teams are encouraged to show spirit to the crowd between each routine.
- The use of poms is required for all female members during the Fight Song and Spirit Raising (Band Chant). For the Performance Routine, the use of poms is permitted, but not required.
- The use of signs, flags, banners or other spirit related props are permitted but not required.
- 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.” Costuming is not allowed.
- For each routine, see category description above for routine/judging requirements and specialty skill restrictions.
- It is encouraged that teams use the same routines performed in the individual categories for the Game Day “All-In-One” performance.

For specific College Dance Game Day questions, please email [USACompetitions@varsity.com](mailto:USACompetitions@varsity.com).

## FIGHT SONG SECTION

### ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS

- 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 for approval.
- 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 use of poms is required for all female members.
- The use of signs, flags, banners or other spirit related props are permitted but not required.
- Choreography should represent a traditional Fight Song that your team performs at games or community events.
- Costuming is not allowed.
- Judging will be based on the following criteria, as well as elements noted on the score sheet:
  - Game Day oriented material
  - Crowd communication skills
  - Incorporation of game day/sideline appropriate skills
  - Formations/transitions
  - Motion strength and placement
  - Spacing
  - Execution of skills
  - Crowd appeal and overall impression

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.

### SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – FIGHT SONG CATEGORY

There are no additional restrictions besides those listed in the 2025-26 USA College Dance Safety Rules for this category.

## **SPIRIT RAISING SECTION**

### **ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS**

- A team must start on 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 use of poms is required for all female members. The use of signs, flags, banners or other spirit related props are permitted but not required.
- The performance should have an emphasis on crowd appeal, encourage crowd interaction and involvement (i.e., yell backs, spell outs, school colors, etc.), and display excitement and genuine school spirit.
- The performance should consist of one or more of the following types of material:
  - Band Chant
  - Drum Cadence
  - Sideline Routine
  - Stand Routine
- Camp material may easily be adapted to fit this category. For example, any band chant learned at a 2025 Varsity Brands camp could be used for this routine. Examples might include “Party in the USA”, “Rock ‘N Roll Part II”, “Land of A Thousand Dances,” etc.
- 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.” Costuming is not permitted.
- Judging will be based on the following criteria, as well as elements noted on the scoresheet:
  - Game Day oriented material
  - Crowd communication skills
  - Incorporation of game day/sideline appropriate skills
  - Formations/transitions
  - Motion strength and placement
  - Spacing
  - Execution of skills
  - Crowd appeal and overall impression

These routines are intended for quick, spur-of-the-moment game day situations. There may or may not be a repeated sequence of choreography. 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.

### **SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – SPIRIT RAISING CATEGORY**

There are no additional restrictions besides those listed in the 2025-26 USA College Dance Safety Rules for this category.

## PERFORMANCE ROUTINE SECTION

### ROUTINE AND JUDGING REQUIREMENTS

- A team must start on 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 use of poms is permitted, but not required.
- The use of signs, flags, banners or other spirit related props are permitted, but not required.
- 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.” Costuming is not allowed.
- The Performance Routine must be in the style of pom, jazz, hip hop, kick or combination of any of these styles.
- Judging will be based on the following criteria, as well as elements noted on the scoresheet:
  - Game Day oriented material
  - Crowd communication skills
  - Incorporation of game day/sideline appropriate skills
  - Formations/transitions
  - Motion strength and placement
  - Spacing
  - Execution of skills
  - Crowd appeal and overall impression

Emphasis should be placed on crowd entertainment.

### SPECIFIC SKILL RESTRICTIONS – PERFORMANCE ROUTINE CATEGORY

There are no additional restrictions besides those listed in the 2025-26 USA College Dance Safety Rules for this category.