



RECREATIONAL GUIDELINES

24 25

TABLE OF CONTENTS

*All updates and changes displayed in **RED** font*

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
DIVISIONS	2
GENERAL RULES	2
ROUTINE LEGALITY RULES	3
RECREATIONAL ELIGIBILITY CHALLENGE	3
USA CHEER COACH MEMBERSHIP	3
RECREATIONAL CROSSOVERS AND ROSTERING	4
RECREATIONAL EXHIBITION PERFORMANCES	4
RECREATIONAL SPLITTING & COMBINING DIVISIONS	4
UNPLANNED ATHLETE REPLACEMENT	5
MUSIC GUIDELINES	5
PERFORMANCE & TRADITIONAL RECREATIONAL ROUTINE TIMING	5
OPEN RECREATIONAL ROUTINE TIMING	5
COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA	5
SCORES AND RANKINGS	6
THE QUEST	6
THE YOUTH SUMMIT	6
VARSITY COMPETITION RULES	6

DIVISIONS

1. Recreational - Varsity Spirit will offer all Performance Rec & Traditional Rec divisions. See Divisions Chart for 2024-2025 [Performance Rec & Traditional Rec Divisions](#) .
2. Open Recreational Divisions – Varsity Spirit will offer Open Recreational Divisions at all UCA School Regional competitions and the NHSCC for the 2024-2025 competition season. [UCA Recreational Divisions](#).
3. USA Open Recreational Divisions – Varsity Spirit will offer limited Affiliated Recreational Divisions at all USA Spirit Regional competitions and USA Junior Spirit Nationals. [USA Recreational Divisions](#)

GENERAL RULES

1. Coaches' wristbands/credentials must always be worn. No one will be allowed to enter the warm up area and/or Coaches Hospitality Room (if applicable) without this identification. Wristbands or lanyards attached to bags do not count.
2. All participating teams must comply with the following rules and regulations and event guidelines depending on the event in which the team is participating.
3. Any violation of these event guidelines could result in a penalty, point deduction and/or disqualification.
4. All Varsity Spirit registration and competition guidelines applicable to each specific event will always be followed and complied with.
5. A coach must supervise athletes throughout warm-ups, while on the competition floor, and during awards. It is recommended that athletes also remain with a coach, team representative, or parent during the competition event when not competing.
6. All teams within an organization should have a separate emergency response plan for practices and competitions.
7. It is illegal for athletes to consume alcohol, narcotics, and performance enhancing substances. If an athlete is taking medication, it is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that the athlete is still capable of executing the routine safely before allowing them to compete. All coaches should be sober when checking into registration and remain free of alcohol and drugs until awards are over. (If a venue is serving alcohol to adults, coaches should not be purchasing or consuming alcohol.)
8. Athletes at competitions may only practice on grass, foam mats, or a spring floor. Skills should not be performed on concrete, asphalt, brick, or tile surfaces. All appropriate surfaces should also be flat and dry. (Athletes may also perform skills on Velcro that is adhered to the competition surface.)
9. Prop Rules
 - Trampolines and springboards are not allowed to be brought onto the performance surface to be used during the competition.
 - Props should be simple, clear, and appropriately include organization, team, mascot, logo, or team colors on it.
 - Athletes may not bear weight on the prop for any reason.
 - A prop may not obstruct an athlete's vision. Athletes may not step on or off of the competition floor to get prop(s) or discard prop(s).
 - All props must be safely discarded. (Ex. Teams may not throw a hard sign from a stunt or across the floor.)
 - Traditional and Performance Rec teams must follow additional USASF prop rules.
 - Open Rec teams must follow additional prop rules listed in the Event Guidelines for the brand (UCA or USA) at which they are competing.
10. Performance and Traditional Recreational athletes must start with at least 1 body part on the performance surface when the routine begins. Open Recreational athletes must start with at least 1 foot on the ground.
11. Athletes cannot be exchanged during the routine. Any athlete who begins the routine must stay within the performance surface boundaries during the routine. A team cannot have one athlete start the routine and replace that athlete with a different athlete part of the way through the routine.
12. Athletes may not have items in their mouth during warm ups or while competing, to prevent choking.

ROUTINE LEGALITY RULES

1. All legality rules pertaining to each division (athlete eligibility, safety) must always be followed and complied with.
2. Please refer to the appropriate Safety Guidelines / Rules. Clarifications and updates may be made during the season.
 - Varsity Recreational Safety Guidelines <https://www.usASF.net/rules>
 - If Traditional and Performance Rec teams are competing at a UCA or USA All Star Event they will follow the USASF rules and United Scoring
 - Open Recreational Teams will follow <https://usacheer.org/>
 - If an Open Rec team is competing at a UCA or USA School Event they will follow the USA Cheer rules and comparative scoring for that brand.
3. It is the coach's responsibility to read and understand the Safety Rules appropriate to your team type.
4. For additional safety information including Fan Code of Conduct and Prohibited Items please visit [Varsity Spirit Safety](#).

RECREATIONAL ELIGIBILITY CHALLENGE

Coaches are required to bring documentation of ages for every athlete. If there is a concern regarding the eligibility of an athlete, a Challenge Form must be completed. A challenge can only be made by the official coach, advisor, or director of a team competing at the event in which the challenge is being made.

Challenge Process:

- a. All athlete eligibility challenges must be submitted in writing to the event director.
- b. There will be a \$100 fee to request an athlete eligibility challenge, which must be in the form of a check made payable to St Jude Children's Research Hospital.
- c. Challenges will be reviewed and finalized prior to awards for the division in which the athlete is competing.
- d. If the challenge is correct, fees collected will be voided. If the challenge is incorrect, fees will be donated to St. Jude.

USA CHEER COACH MEMBERSHIP

1. USA Cheer has developed a comprehensive [Membership Program](#), which includes a background check, athlete protection training, acknowledgement of concussion training with return to participation guidance, a member code of conduct, and safety training courses on risk management and safety rules.
2. Varsity Spirit will require that all school coaches, band directors, choreographers, and personnel wishing to access the warmup area, backstage or coaches' box at our competitions have a USA Cheer Coach or Professional Membership. At least one coach must have the USA Cheer Coach Membership that include the USA Cheer Youth Risk Management certification course and must accompany the team at every competition.
3. You must complete your membership requirements before your first competition. Please note that the background check will take 2-10 days to be processed and returned. Coaches without an approved Membership will not be allowed access to the warmup area, backstage or coaches' box.
4. When checking in at Varsity Spirit competitions, you will provide proof of membership for each coach from your organization who wishes to go into the warmup area, backstage or coaches' box. Upon proof of membership, each coach will receive a wristband that will allow them access. **Individuals whose names are listed on the USA Cheer temporary or permanent ineligible list are prohibited from attending Varsity Spirit Events, including all camps and competitions.**
5. The USA Cheer Membership is available on the USA Cheer [website](#). Once your membership is complete, you can print your membership card, or save and display it on your mobile device at event registration along with your photo ID. This season's membership will be active **June 1, 2024 through May 31, 2025**.

RECREATIONAL CROSSOVERS AND ROSTERING

1. Team must submit a roster with birthdates for each athlete. A copy of this roster must also be brought to registration at each competition.
2. Team members must fulfill the age requirement for the division that they are entering meeting the birth year requirement. Proof of Age must be readily available in hard copy or as a pdf at each competition. If a question or protest arises, teams must be able to immediately produce this information to event management or risk disqualification and/or suspension.
3. Team must submit a digital release waiver/form for each athlete for each event.
4. Crossovers
 - Recreational Cheer athlete will not be allowed to compete on more than 3 cheer teams within their organization per competition.
5. A participant may only represent one Recreational organization at a competition.
6. No more than 25% of your team may crossover from an All Star program at a particular event. An athlete should not compete more than 3 times on any given event day.
7. Any violation of the rules and regulations can result in a penalty, point deduction, or disqualification.

RECREATIONAL EXHIBITION PERFORMANCES

1. Teams that exhibition must adhere to the Recreation Division document and Level Safety Rules.
2. A team of less than 5 participants or **that does not meet the age requirements** may perform as exhibition only.
3. Exhibition performances will NOT compete against another team and will NOT be scored.

RECREATIONAL SPLITTING & COMBINING DIVISIONS

1. Teams will compete in the division in which they register. Small and Large teams of the same type, routine style, age division, and level may be combined.
COMBINED EXAMPLE:
 - 'Affiliated – Performance Rec- 12 & Younger – Level 2 – Small' can be combined with an
 - 'Affiliated – Performance Rec- 12 & Younger – Level 2 – Large.'CANNOT COMBINE:
 - Traditional Rec with Performance Rec
 - A team of a different age group; *i.e. 14 & Younger with 8 & Younger*
 - A team of a different level; *i.e. Level 1 with Level 2*
2. An Affiliated team may move into a Non-Affiliated division if they are the only team in the Affiliated division.
3. A team may move into a higher age division if they are the only team in that age division – Clarification, a team must still meet the age division requirement of the NEW division.
4. Recreation cheer divisions may be split into Small and Large divisions provided there are at least 2 teams left in each division.
 - Small = 5-15 team members
 - Large = 16-36 members
 - Split Exception: If an organization has 2 teams competing in the same division, but one team is small and one team is large, a mandatory split will occur. (If an organization has 2 teams competing in the same division, but both teams are the same size, they will compete against each other.)
 - An event producer may further split a division by squad size, if there are at least 10 or more teams in the division. The event producer must clearly identify the number range for the split, and label the two groups, "A", and "B". This split may not occur unless a minimum of 2 teams are left in group A and B.

UNPLANNED ATHLETE REPLACEMENT

In the event of an absent/injured member of a team, a team may replace that athlete with another athlete from the same organization for the current season, who was not initially on the team's roster. The replacement athlete must meet the age requirements for that division. If the replacement athlete does not meet the age requirements for that division, then the team is not permitted to compete and may only perform in the exhibition division.

MUSIC GUIDELINES

1. All music guidelines as listed in the Varsity Spirit Rules and Regulations must be followed.
2. **Music Appropriateness:** 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, explicit mention of specific parts of the body, and/or violent acts or behavior are other examples of inappropriate. Removing improper language or words from a song and replacing with sound effects or other words may still constitute 'inappropriate.'

PERFORMANCE & TRADITIONAL RECREATIONAL ROUTINE TIMING

1. Timing will begin with the first word, movement, or beat of music, and end with the last word, movement or beat of music.
2. Affiliated and Non-Affiliated Recreational cheerleading organizations can register teams in Traditional and/or Performance divisions.

TRADITIONAL:

- Routines must consist of Cheer & Music combination.
- Routine Max: 2:30 minutes Music Max: 1:30 minutes

PERFORMANCE:

- Routine Max: 2:30 minutes

OPEN RECREATIONAL ROUTINE TIMING

1. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first.
2. Open Recreational Routines - Each performance routine presentation must include at least one cheer or sideline chant.
 - Maximum Overall Time: 2:30 (150 Seconds)
 - Maximum Musical Portion: 1:45 (105 Seconds)
3. Recreational Game Day Routines - Each Game Day performance must consist of a Band Chant, Crowd Leading section, and Fight Song.
 - Maximum Overall Time: 3:00 (180 Seconds)

COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA

1. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
2. The performance surface is defined as the 42' X 54' (9 Panels) competition floor.
3. The competition boundary is defined as the performance surface and any immediate adjacent safety border.
4. Deductions for out of bounds will be assessed based on the appropriate scoring system. Stepping on, or just past the white tape is not a boundary violation.
5. All skills must originate and be completed within the competition boundary. No lineups, skills, or transitions are allowed outside of the competition boundary.

SCORES AND RANKINGS

1. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his/her final scores and rankings prior to the calculation of final scores. Scores and rankings will be available only to gym owners or coaches at the conclusion of the competition.
2. Scoring officials will only discuss my routine and scores. Coaches/program directors may not challenge scores and/or deductions of another team(s).
3. FINAL PLACEMENT TIES: In the event that there is a tie for the final placements at any Varsity Spirit competition, the tie will not be broken and both/all teams will share the placement.

THE QUEST

Varsity All Star is proud to host The Quest Championship, a Premier competition, specifically celebrating the accomplishments of Rec teams hosted in Orlando, Florida March 7-8, 2025. You can expect the same great event experience you have come to know and love with a specific focus on bringing high-caliber competition to Rec athletes.

[The Quest - Event Information](#)

THE YOUTH SUMMIT

Varsity All Star is proud to host The Recreational Summit Championship, a Premier End-of-Season competition, specifically celebrating the accomplishments of Recreation teams hosted in Tampa, Florida April 26-27, 2025. You can expect the same great Summit event experience you have come to know and love with a specific focus on bringing high-caliber competition to Rec athletes.

[The Recreational Summit - Event Information](#)

VARSITY COMPETITION RULES

By accepting the Terms and Conditions as the authorized person from my program I agree and acknowledge that (i) I am the sponsor/director of the team (ii) I have read and understand the foregoing, (iii) I will be solely responsible for communicating the foregoing to all coaches/directors in my program that will coaching and directing teams at the Regional and National Competitions, (iv) I will ensure that my teams will comply with all rules and regulations at all times, and (v) my team will support the results of the competition, as I am a role model for my programs. I acknowledge that my team must comply with these Varsity Spirit Rules and Regulations, as well as, the Event Specific guidelines for each event.