

RULES AND REGULATIONS



COLLEGE :: 2025 - 2026



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

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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](#)

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

1. The competition is open to all colleges, universities, and junior colleges in the country and US territories.
2. Individuals may not represent more than one team at the National Championship.
3. All participants must be registered full-time students for the college or university that they are representing in competition and official members of that school's spirit team (no club teams or competition only teams). Official members of the school's spirit team are recognized by their institution as the actual sideline/courtside spirit team that regularly supports their school athletic teams.
4. Graduating seniors or graduate students may be enrolled in less hours if working to graduate in the 2025-2026 season. Verification of eligibility will be required by the school's Registrar's Office (See Eligibility Guidelines for details). Graduating students in the fall would be eligible if the University/College still considers the student part of the team during the Championship.
5. The Dean of Students, Director of Compliance, or Registrar's office must complete the eligibility form and have notarized. The eligibility form must not be dated any earlier than December 1, 2025. Teams violating this rule could forfeit their titles and be prohibited from entering the competition the following year. For any clarification on these rules email College@varsity.com.
6. 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.
7. UCA & UDA strongly recommends that you have an alternate (not a member of another competing team at the same event), who is prepared to substitute in the event of injury, probation, etc. No cheerleader/dancer may represent more than one Team, even in the event of injury or emergency. Once a team checks into the championship, the team will not be allowed to change divisions.

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

A Team Eligibility Form will be required by **(Due January 6, 2026)** all teams/mascots competing in the UCA & UDA College Cheerleading and Dance Team National Championship. One form must be filled out per team with each team member's name, hours currently enrolled, years of completed eligibility and date of birth. This form must be signed by the Coach as well as signed by the school's Registrar's Office and school Administrative Supervisor and returned to UCA & UDA with registration. Teams must meet the following eligibility requirements to participate in the UCA & UDA College Cheerleading and Dance Team National Championship.

1. Any university or college competing in a Varsity College National Championship shall not permit a student-athlete to represent their school unless the student-athlete meets all applicable eligibility requirements, and the coach and program administrative supervisor has certified the student-athletes eligibility.
2. A student-athlete may only represent ONE (1) school in ONE (1) National Championship 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; a student-athlete may also not compete with the same school in separate championships in the same academic year.
3. At the Junior College level, any student-athlete will only be eligible to compete in a maximum of three (3) National Championships during his/her college career.
4. A student-athlete can be a part of the institution's dance/cheer/program 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 they have 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 for 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 National Championship.
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 the above-mentioned rules could forfeit their titles and rankings as well as be prohibited from entering any other Varsity Brands Championship the following year. For any clarification on these rules, please contact College@varsity.com.
10. Any interpretations or decision of eligibility of the 2026 College Cheerleading and Dance Team National Championship will be rendered by the Rules Committee, which will consist of the Tournament Director, the UCA & UDA College Program Director and one other UCA & UDA official appointed by the Tournament Director. The Rules Committee will render a judgement in a manner consistent with the general goals of the championship.

Reminder: The 2021 College Cheerleading and Dance Team National Championship
did not count as a year of eligibility.

UCA & UDA SPIRIT VIDEO (due Monday, December 15, 2025)

Highlights of these videos will be shown at the National Championship.

All cheer and dance teams competing in the 2026 UCA & UDA College Cheerleading and Dance Team National Championship will be required to submit a Spirit Video. This portion of your entry will be due by **5:00pm CST December 15, 2025**. The time limit is a minimum of 30 seconds with a maximum of 45 seconds with a minimum of five (5) different examples. You may edit this portion of your entry.

1. **The Spirit Video no longer counts for 5 points in the total routine score. Failure to submit a Spirit Video that follows the outlined requirements will result in a ONE-POINT deduction. The deduction will apply to each performance.**
2. Film the team so you can see them interacting with the fans. Side angles are also good. Make sure you can see both the cheerleaders/dancers and the audience.
3. Show your team using a variety of material (signs, flags or traditional chants or band cheers/dances) to get the crowd motivated.
4. All video footage must be the current team from the 2025-2026 school year. The video must be recorded video footage- no still shots/pictures.
5. College/University with multiple teams:
 - Teams in different divisions, i.e. Small Coed and All Girl must submit a separate video for each group competing. The primary focus of the video should be the athletes in each specific division.
 - College/University that has one team competing in different divisions/categories - only one video is required for that team.
 - All Cheer and Dance teams must submit videos separately and must be labeled appropriately. Exception: Teams competing only in the Spirit Program can submit one combined video including all athletes competing in the Spirit Program division.
6. Completion of the spirit video is based upon the methods and materials being presented by the cheerleaders/dancers. Cheer teams should avoid doing basket tosses and/or elite stunts that are not being used to effectively "lead the crowd".
7. Do not label each section. Viewers should be able to differentiate the performance opportunity and does not need to be labeled on the video.
8. Music Guidelines for Spirit Video
 - Only music captured incidentally (i.e., in the background of the video) will be permitted.
 - No music can be edited into the video.
 - All music captured from half-times, games, etc. highlighted in the video will need to follow the music guidelines.

SPIRIT VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Community and Campus Involvement / Spirit Raising Techniques

These are examples of team "spirit raising" by various demonstrations of activities within their campus and local community. These examples can be within game day arena/stadium and should include any event that the team participates, such as games, parades, pep rallies, alumni performances, pre-game and post-game events, community service performances, school fundraising events, campus tours or any other "involvement" your team has on campus.

This section should be approximately 30 seconds long up to a maximum 45 seconds and include a minimum of five (5) different examples.

Videos must be uploaded in MP4 or MOV files. Please label the file being uploaded with your College / University name.

For questions, please contact College@varsity.com

Upload your Spirit Video: [UCA Championship Upload - Universal Cheerleaders Association](#)

UCA COLLEGE CHEER DIVISIONS

- 1) College Cheer Performance Routine Divisions:
 - a. Teams may not exceed twenty (20) members in the routine divisions.
 - b. Large Coed Divisions will be limited to a maximum number of 11 male participants.
 - Large Coed division Floating Scale
 - 14 – 15 total participants = 8 maximum males
 - 16 – 17 total participants = 9 maximum males
 - 18 – 19 total participants = 10 maximum males
 - 20 total participants = 11 maximum males
 - c. Performance Routine Cheer Divisions:
 1. Division IA Large Coed (6-11 males, NCAA I – FBS)
 2. Division I Large Coed (6-11 males, NCAA I – FCS & NCAA II)
 3. Open Large Coed (6-11 males, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges, NAIA and all other schools)
 4. Division IA Small Coed (1-5 males, NCAA I-FBS)
 5. Division I Small Coed (1-5 males, NCAA I-FCS & NCAA II)
 6. Open Small Coed (1-5 males, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges, NAIA and all other schools)
 7. Division IA All Girl (NCAA I - FBS)
 8. Division I All Girl (NCAA I – FCS & Division II)
 9. Open All Girl (NCAA III, Jr. Colleges, NAIA and all other schools)
- 2) College Cheer Game Day Divisions:
 - a. Teams may not exceed thirty (30) team members in the Game Day Divisions.
 - b. Teams may add up to 2 (two) mascots in their Game Day Routine. The mascot(s) must meet all the eligibility requirements as the athletes. The mascot(s) must enter the floor with the team **and remain on the floor for the entire routine or an out of bounds penalty will be assessed**. The mascot(s) should be used to raise crowd energy and participation. The mascot(s) is not allowed to be involved in any stunts, **tumbling, or skills with hip over head** rotation and should position themselves away from skills being performed. The mascot(s) will not count towards the total number nor gender of participants allowed in the division. Mascots will only be allowed to use **the following** traditional sideline props – rally towels, signs, pom, megaphones, or flags – any part of the mascot uniform used as a prop must have prior approval here: [UCA Legality Inquiry Form](#)
 - c. Game Day Cheer Divisions:
 1. Division IA Large Coed (6+ males, NCAA I – FBS)
 2. Division I Large Coed (6+ males, NCAA I – FCS & NCAA II)
 3. Open Large Coed (6+ males, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges, NAIA and all other schools)
 4. Division IA Small Coed (1-5 males, NCAA I-FBS)
 5. Division I Small Coed (1-5 males, NCAA I-FCS & NCAA II)
 6. Open Small Coed (1-5 males, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges, NAIA and all other schools)
 7. Division IA All Girl (NCAA I - FBS)
 8. Division I All Girl (NCAA I – FCS & Division II)
 9. Open All Girl (NCAA III, Jr. Colleges, NAIA and all other schools)
- 3) College Cheer Game Day LIVE Divisions (Cheer Team and Band):
 - a. Teams may add a pep band or drumline into their performance. Pep Bands or Drumlines will not count toward the total number of participants allowed. Pep Bands or Drumlines must be registered with the event as participants. Refer to additional Pep Band guidelines.
 - b. Division IA Game Day LIVE (30 Cheer and 30 Band Combined) (NCAA Division I – FBS)
 - c. Open Game Day LIVE (30 Cheer and 30 Band Combined) (NCAA I – FCS, NCAA II, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges & NAIA)
- 4) College Cheer Spirit Program Game Day Divisions (Cheer Team and Dance Team):
 - a. Division IA Game Day LIVE (30 Cheer and 30 Dance Combined) (NCAA Division I – FBS)
 - b. Open Game Day LIVE (30 Cheer and 30 Dance Combined) (NCAA I – FCS, NCAA II, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges & NAIA)

- 5) College Cheer Spirit Program Game Day LIVE Divisions (Cheer Team, Dance Team and Band):
 - a. Teams may add a pep band or drumline into their performance. Pep Bands or Drumlines will not count toward the total number of participants allowed. Pep Bands or Drumlines must be registered with the event as participants.
 - b. Division IA Game Day LIVE (30 Cheer, 30 Dance & 30 Band Combined) (NCAA Division I – FBS)
 - c. Open Game Day LIVE (30 Cheer, 30 Dance & 30 Band Combined) (NCAA I – FCS, NCAA II, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges & NAIA)
- 6) Teams at schools transitioning to a new athletic division (Example: moving from Division I to Division IA) will compete in that new division at our championship as soon as the school’s football/basketball teams begin competing at the new division/conference level. There is no transition period.

For a complete list of divisions please visit [UCA College Cheer Team Divisions](#).

UCA ENTRANCES AND EXITS

1. All introductions (entrances, chants, spellouts, etc.) are considered part of the routine and will be timed as part of the performance. Skills are not allowed during the team’s entry to the floor or any time prior to starting the performance. EXCEPTION – See Game Day Below
2. All team breaks, rituals, and traditions need to take place prior to entering the mat.
3. Teams should not have choreographed movements to enter the stage. Teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm, but without excessive gestures. Example: hugs, handshakes, **choreographed dances, rituals, etc.**
4. Teams have 30 seconds from the team’s introduction to start the routine. If a team exceeds this time limit, a penalty of a .25-point deduction for 1-5 seconds or a .5-point deduction for 6 seconds and over will be assessed.
5. All teams should refrain from any type of excessive celebration following the team’s performance. Any team in violation will receive a ONE-point deduction. **Excessive celebration includes, but is not limited to, team huddles, alternates/coaches entering the competition floor, falling to the ground, dancing, head/hair swinging, split drops, inappropriate gestures, and/or other similar moves.**
6. There should not be any organized **or choreographed** exits or other activities after the official end of the routine.

UCA ROUTINE TIME LIMITATIONS

1. Timing will BEGIN with the first **choreographed** movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first. **Timing will END with the last choreographed movement, voice, or note of music whichever comes last.**
2. If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. One (1) point deduction for 1-5 seconds over, Two (2) point deduction for 6 and over.
3. Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, judges will not issue a deduction until 3 seconds over the allowed time. If a routine is retimed as part of a review, the exact time will be used without the 3 second allowance listed above.
4. Because penalties are severe, it is recommended that all teams time their performance several times prior to competition and leave a several second cushion to allow for variations in sound equipment.

UCA Performance Routines - Each performance routine presentation must include at least one cheer or sideline chant.

- Maximum Overall Time: 2:30 (150 Seconds)
- Maximum Music Portion: 1:45 (105 Seconds)

UCA Game Day Routines - Each Game Day performance must consist of a Fight Song, Situational Sideline, and a Game Day Timeout.

- Maximum Overall Time: 3:00 (180 Seconds)

UCA Game Day LIVE Routines - Each Game Day performance must consist of a Fight Song, Situational Sideline, and a Game Day Timeout.

- Maximum Overall Time: 5:00 (300 Seconds)

For Game Day Routines, timing of the routine will NOT include the team spiring, rallying, or individuals performing jumps, kicks, tumbling, or stunts but will begin with the first group movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first. The entrance time limit of 30 seconds still applies for Game Day routines.

UCA COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA

1. Participants must start in the competition area with at least one foot on the ground.
2. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
3. Approximate cheer floor size will be fifty-four feet wide by forty-two feet deep (9 strips).
4. Any team member stepping outside or touching outside the performance area will cause the team to receive a .5 penalty per occurrence. If a violation is assessed, the judges' decisions are final and will not be reviewed.
 - a. The white line is considered a warning mark.
 - b. A penalty will be assessed when any part of the seat/torso or any combination of two hands and/or feet are completely outside of the performance surface.
 - c. Out of bounds are called by line judges and decisions are final.
 - d. Once a team member takes the floor, they must remain on the floor until the end of the performance.
5. The center will be marked on all performance surfaces. **Center markers will not be allowed. This includes but is not limited to stuffed animals, toys, banners, etc.** Teams are prohibited from bringing any non-used props to the performance area.
6. **Coaching staff, parents, fans and/or other members of the performing team entering the competition boundary before, during or after a performance is not allowed. The only people allowed on the performance floor are the competitors and competition personnel.**
7. Signs or props may be safely placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member who must remain inside the competition area. Please see the deduction explanation sheet for additional Prop Restrictions.
 - a. Approved props include rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for crowd leading and appropriate for crowd response.
 - b. Props may not be thrown into the crowd.
 - c. Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline cheer/dance boxes used at games.
 - d. No air horns or artificial noise makers allowed.
 - e. **All equipment tips on flagpoles must be padded or taped.**
 - f. **All props must be able to fit through a standard size (36") single door.**
 - g. Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area.
 - h. Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to UCARules@varsity.com and must be received at least 2 weeks prior to your event.

UCA COLLEGE CHEER JUDGING CRITERIA

1. UCA Performance Routine Criteria

- a. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the UCA score sheet.
- b. Cheer will count for 30 points, Building Skills will count for 50 points and Overall will count for 20 points. Building and Overall score sheets only judge skills and choreography within the music portion of the routine.
- c. Any deductions or violations will be taken off the final score. For more information on scoring, score sheet and judging criteria, please visit uca.varsity.com.

2. UCA Game Day Routine Criteria

- a. The College Game Day Divisions and the Spirit Program Divisions showcase what traditional cheerleading is all about – leading the crowd! Teams will be evaluated on their ability to lead the crowd, proper game day skill incorporations, execution of skills, motion technique and overall routine.
- b. The use of crowd leading tools is recommended (All are not required).
 1. Approved props include rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for crowd leading and appropriate for crowd response.
 2. Props may not be thrown into the crowd.
 3. Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline cheer/dance boxes used at games.
 4. No air horns or artificial noise makers allowed.
 5. **All equipment tips on flagpoles must be padded or taped.**
 6. **All props must be able to fit through a standard size (36") single door.**
 7. Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area.
 8. Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to UCARules@varsity.com and must be received at least 2 weeks prior to your event.
 9. **Mascots will only be allowed to use the approved props listed above. Any part of the mascot uniform that is used as a prop must have prior approval here: [UCA Legality Inquiry Form](#)**
- c. The order for the College Game Day Championship will be Fight Song, Situational Sideline, and a Game Day Timeout (in this order).
- d. The judge score teams using the criteria listed on the UCA Game Day score sheets. For detailed score sheets please visit uca.varsity.com. In Spirit Program Divisions – cheer and dance scores will be averaged together.
- e. Fight Song
 1. Should represent the traditional Fight Song your school has always done at games.
 2. Skills should be minimal and practical.
 3. You should start from your sideline formation.
- f. Situational Sideline
 1. **There will NOT be a verbal cue given for this section.**
 2. **Teams should perform a sideline chant appropriate for a specific game situation.**
 3. Skills should be minimal and practical.
- g. Game Day Timeout
 1. Similar to a 60 second extended band chant that is designed for crowd interaction/involves crowd response.
 2. This is the best time to showcase your team's energy, leadership, visual appeal and connection to the crowd.
- h. Skills must be practical for Game Day and executed with strong technique while providing a visual effect that influences the crowd's participation. The incorporation of skills will be allowed with the following restrictions:
 1. Flips into or from partner stunts and pyramids will be prohibited.
 2. Twisting stunts and dismounts may not exceed 1 ¼ rotation.
 3. Flipping tosses are permitted with zero twisting rotations.
 4. No twisting airborne tumbling is allowed. Exception – Aerials are allowed.
- i. Any deductions or violations will be taken off of the raw score. For more information on scoring, score sheets and judging criteria, please visit uca.varsity.com.
- j. Traditional game day uniform is required.
- k. No voice-overs or words may be recorded and overlaid on the music **tracks for Game Day at all. Any voices captured in the original recording are allowed.**

UCA LEGALITY REVIEW AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PARTNER STUNTS, PYRAMIDS AND TOSSES

All teams attending the UCA College Cheerleading Championship will follow the USA Cheer Guidelines. Rules are subject to change by USA Cheer. For the most recent safety rules and information, visit the [USA Cheer - College Cheer](#) website.

Universal Cheerleaders Association offers a service to help teams with legality questions. Teams are able to submit skills throughout the year to receive a legality response. This service will help teams get a response to use in situations where the skill may be in question.

To submit a video:

1. All reviews must be submitted through [UCA Legality Inquiry Form](#).
2. The skill in question must be recorded by the team at practice. We are unable to accept videos of performances, competitions, or of other teams.
3. All submissions must include the coach, team, and division.
4. The recording will be reviewed as if every person in the video is included in the skill. This would include additional spotters.
5. Videos are limited to 30 seconds and must be able to be viewed upright without rotating.
6. All videos will receive either a "legal" or "illegal" response. If the video receives an "illegal" response, the entire video will not be reviewed but stopped at the point that the video was illegal. *If the video is inconclusive, you will receive a response as to why we were unable to make a judgement on the video. It is up to you as a coach to resubmit the video to be re-reviewed.
7. Please note: Only submitting the skill will make the skill eligible for a warning. UCA can only guarantee this process will be accepted at UCA-branded events. This would not include other Varsity-branded events.
8. Videos via text message or facetime will not be reviewed. If you know that your video does not meet all the requirements above, please refilm/resubmit the video. Only videos that meet the above requirements will be reviewed.
9. Inquiries need to be submitted 2 weeks before your team's performance to guarantee a response.
10. Video submissions will only be accepted by the official coach of the team.

If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please email UCARules@varsity.com. Due to volume, please allow up to 5 business days to get back to you. Include your team's name, your name, division, and contact phone number. Legality questions must be submitted by **January 6, 2026**. If received after the deadline, the video is not guaranteed a response. Videos from choreographers will not be allowed. Videos sent via text message will not be allowed.

UDA COLLEGE DANCE DIVISIONS AND SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

UDA Performance Dance and Game Day Divisions:

1. **Division IA** - NCAA I-FBS
2. **Division I** - NCAA I-FCS
3. **Open Division** - NCAA II, III, Jr. College, NAIA and all other schools

Teams at schools transitioning to a new athletic division (Example: moving from Division I to Division IA) will compete in that new division at our championship as soon as the school's football/basketball teams begin competing at the new division/conference level. There is no transition period.

For a complete list of divisions please visit [UDA College Dance Team Divisions](#).

DANCE TEAM PARTICIPANTS

- A. The minimum number of dancers a team may compete with at Regionals is five (5).
- B. The minimum number of dancers a team may compete with at Nationals is seven (7).
- C. The maximum number of dancers a team may compete with in each performance routine is twenty (20).
- D. **A minimum of 25% of the dancers must be the same in both routines. If dancing different numbers in each routine, 25% will be based on the largest number of dancers in the routine performed.**
- E. The maximum number of dancers a team may compete with in Game Day is thirty (30).
- F. If your team chooses pom as one of your categories, male dancers are not required to use poms. Teams will follow the dance team participant guidelines listed here for all regional competitions throughout the season.

*NOTE: If your team drops below the minimum, please contact udarules@varsity.com

NUMBER OF DANCE PERFORMANCES

- A. Teams can enter two of the following three performance categories: pom, jazz, and/or hip hop.
- B. Teams who are also entering a Game Day division may do so as a third performance.
- C. Teams may not compete in one performance category and two game day divisions.

UDA ROUTINE TIME LIMITATIONS

1. Timing will begin with the first choreographed movement or note of music, whichever is first. Timing will end with the last choreographed movement or note of music, whichever is last.
2. If a team exceeds the time limit by 1-5 seconds, they will be issued a 0.5 penalty. If a team exceeds the time limit by (6) six or more seconds, they will be issued a 1.5 penalty.
3. Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, judges will not issue a deduction until 3 seconds over the allowed time. If a routine is retimed as part of a review, the exact time will be used without the 3 second allowance listed above.
4. Because penalties are severe, it is recommended that all teams time their performance several times prior to competition and leave a several second cushion to allow for variations in sound equipment.

UDA Performance Routines

- a. Teams will have a **maximum** of 2:00 minutes for performance routines (pom, jazz, hip hop)

UDA Game Day Routines

- a. Each Game Day performance should consist of a Fight Song, Game Situation and a Performance Routine.
- b. The maximum performance time must not exceed (3) three minutes.
- c. The overall time limit (including transitions) should not exceed 3 minutes (3:00). Timing will begin with your fight song music, any choreographed movement/chants or after exceeding the 30 seconds allotted after team introduction - whichever happens first.

UDA Game Day LIVE Routines

- a. Each Game Day LIVE performance should consist of a Fight Song, Situational Sideline and a Game Day Timeout.
- b. The maximum performance time must not exceed (5) five minutes.

UDA ENTRANCES AND EXITS

1. Formal entrances which involve dance, technical skills, and all traditions/chants are not permitted. Dancers should enter the performance area in a timely fashion.
2. All entry and rules guidelines apply. The team's entry to the floor will not be judged; however, deductions will still be assessed.
3. Teams have 30 seconds from the team's introduction to start the routine. If a team exceeds this time limit, a penalty of a .25-point deduction for 1-5 seconds or a .5-point deduction for 6 or more seconds will be assessed. This 30 second time limit is not included in your two (2) minute max routine time limit.
4. All teams should refrain from any type of excessive celebration following the team's performance. Any team in violation will receive a 1.0 deduction. Excessive celebration includes, but is not limited to, team huddles, alternates/coaches entering the competition floor, falling to the ground, dancing, head/hair swinging, split drops, inappropriate gestures, and/or other similar moves.

UDA GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. All programs should have, and review, an emergency action plan in the event of an injury.
2. Coaches must recognize the entire team's ability level and limit the team's activities accordingly.
3. No technical skills should be performed when a coach is not present or providing direct supervision.
4. All practice sessions should be held in a location suitable for the activities of dance, and away from noise and distractions.
5. Warm-up and stretching should precede and conclude all practice sessions, pep rallies, games, competitions, performances, and other physical activities.
6. 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
7. The dance team coach or other knowledgeable designated representative should attend all practices, functions, and games.

UDA COMPETITION GUIDELINES

1. Formal entrances which involve dance, technical skills, and all traditions/chants are not permitted. Dancers should enter the performance area in a timely fashion.
2. All staging, backdrops, special effects, or any items that may damage or otherwise alter the performance floor or environment are prohibited (water, powder, glitter, fire, sliding oil, etc.).
3. The center will be marked on all performance surfaces. Center markers will not be allowed. This includes but is not limited to stuffed animals, toys, alternate dancers, spacing ropes, etc. Teams are prohibited from bringing any non-used props to the performance area.
4. All performers (unless injured) must remain within the performance area throughout the entire routine. Dancers can only enter the performance area through the designated entry at the beginning of the routine and exit at the designated exit at the end of the routine. Athletes will not be penalized for leaving the performance surface but must stay within the performance area throughout the duration of the routine.

5. All teams should refrain from any type of excessive celebration following the team's performance. Any team in violation will receive a 1-point deduction. **Excessive celebration includes, but is not limited to, team huddles/break, alternates/coaches entering the competition floor, falling to the ground, dancing, head/hair swinging, split drops, inappropriate gestures, and/or other similar moves.**

UDA CHOREOGRAPHY AND COSTUMING

- A. All facets of a performance/routine, including both choreography and music selection, should be appropriate and suitable for family viewing and listening. Examples of inappropriate choreography may include, but are not limited to, vulgar or suggestive movement appearing offensive or sexual in content, displaying acts of violence, and/or relaying lewd or profane gestures. Music containing words unsuitable for family listening is not allowed. This includes, but is not limited to, swearwords and connotations of any type of sexual act or behavior, drugs, and/or violent acts or behavior. Removing improper language or words from a song and replacing them with sound effects or other words may still constitute 'inappropriate.' Music or movement in which the appropriateness is questionable or with which uncertainty exists should be assumed by the coach to be inappropriate and removed to not put their team in an unfortunate situation.
- B. Shoes, on both feet, are recommended but not required while on the performance surface. Please note that should dancers choose to wear shoes, anything with wheels is not allowed (example: roller skate, roller blades, Heelys, etc.). Wearing socks and or footed tights only is not allowed.
- C. Teams competing at the College Cheerleading and Dance Team Championships and/or any competition at Walt Disney World may NOT use Disney costumes that resemble a Disney character or movie. Any use of Disney music requires prior approval and must be sent to musicinfo@varsity.com at least one month prior to your first competition. Any use of Disney theme and costuming requires prior approval and must be sent to udarules@varsity.com at least one month prior to your first competition.
- D. All male dancers' costumes must include a shirt that is fastened; however, it can be sleeveless.
- E. Jewelry as part of the costume is allowed.

DANCE PROPS

1. Props are allowed in all performance divisions as well as Game Day divisions.
2. Props must fit through a standard 36-inch single door **in all directions**.
3. Handheld props of soft material ONLY are allowed. (Examples – roses, scarf, etc.)
4. Props cannot be tossed or thrown (dancer to dancer or into the crowd).
 - a. Clarification: any soft material handheld prop such as a bandana, towel, scarf, etc. may be tossed or thrown dancer to dancer ONLY.
5. Props cannot have the ability to bear the weight of the dancer. **Props that could be used to bear the weight of the dancer, whether it is intended to be used that way or not, are not allowed.** (Examples- chairs, stools, benches, ladders, boxes, stairs, etc.)
6. Hip over-head rotation skills (with or without hand support) including props will be prohibited.
7. **Props cannot be used to conceal or cover any portion of choreography, movement, skills, tricks, or lifts that need to be viewable by a legality official. A 0.5 deduction will be given for any prop that intentionally conceals or covers any portion of choreography, movement, skills, tricks, or lifts.**

Any props used must first be approved through the UDA National Office. To get them approved, please send a video of the prop in use to udarules@varsity.com. **Deadline to submit props is January 6, 2026.** For prop rules and guidelines as they pertain to Game Day categories, please visit the Game Day section beginning on page 16.

UDA ROUTINE SAFETY RULES

TUMBLING AND SKILLS (EXECUTED BY INDIVIDUALS)

1. Hip over-head rotation skills with hand support are not allowed while holding poms in the supporting hand.
 - a. Exception: Forward rolls and backward rolls are allowed-
 - b. **Exception: Poms are allowed in hip over head rotation skills provided they are used correctly. If a non hands free pom touches down during a hip over head rotation skill (with or without hand support) a 0.5 deduction will be given.** The proper use of hands-free poms for hip over head skills is allowed. *Please reference the Hands-Free Poms section for more details*
2. Hip over-head rotation skills with hand support that are not airborne in approach are limited to 3 connected skills. (Example: 3 consecutive headsprings are allowed; 4 are not allowed).
3. 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:
 - a. **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).**
 - b. Involves no more than one twisting transition.
 - c. **Full twisting back flips are not permitted.**
 - d. Clarification: Dive rolls are allowed if peak does not surpass shoulder height, and the dancer first bears weight on the hand(s) before head/neck/shoulders contact performance surface.
4. Simultaneous tumbling over or under another dancer that includes hip over-head rotation by both dancers is not allowed.
5. Choreographed drops to the knee, thigh, back, front, head, shoulder, or seat onto the performing surface are not allowed unless the dancer first bears weight on the hand(s) or foot/feet.
6. Landing in a push-up position on the performance surface is allowed from a standing or kneeling position or from a jump with forward momentum. All variations of a shushanova are not allowed.

***Below are some examples of commonly known dance skills. This does NOT mean that they are required for your routine, nor does this list encompass all skills that are legal/illegal. The above rules still apply ***

SKILLS ALLOWED:

Aerial Cartwheels	Standing Back Tucks
Front Aerials	Back Handsprings
Front Handsprings	Standing Front Tucks
Front/Back Walkovers	Round Offs (with or without hands)
Side Somi	Head spins
Forward Rolls	Windmills
Backward Rolls	Kip Ups
Cartwheels	Shoulder Rolls
Headstands	Headsprings (with hands)
Handstands	Backbends
Stalls/Freezes	Dive Rolls
Layouts	

SKILLS NOT ALLOWED:

Shushanova	Toe Pitch Back Tucks
No Handed Headspring	Full Twisting Back Flips
Arabian	

DANCE LIFTS AND PARTNERING (Executed in pairs or groups)

1. The Executing Dancer must receive support from a Supporting Dancer who is in direct contact with the performance surface through the entire skill. (Exception: Kick Line Leaps).
2. At least one Supporting Dancer must maintain contact with the Executing Dancer(s) throughout the entire skill.
 - a. Lifting with poms is allowed.
 - b. Extensions, pyramids, and basket tosses are NOT allowed.
3. Swinging in and out of lifts and tricks is allowed in the prone and/or supine positions; swinging forwards, backwards, or making a complete circular rotation will not be allowed if the Executing Dancer is in a prone position (body facing the ground).
4. Hip over-head rotation of the Executing Dancer(s) may occur if a Supporting Dancer maintains contact until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or is returning to the upright position.
5. Vertical Inversions are allowed if:
 - a. The Supporting Dancer(s) maintain contact until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or returns to the upright position.
 - b. When the height of the Executing Dancers shoulders exceeds shoulder level of the Supporting dancer, there is at least one additional dancer to spot who does not bear weight.

RELEASE MOVES/UNASSISTED DISMOUNTS TO THE PERFORMANCE SURFACE

1. An Executing Dancer may jump, leap, step, or push off a Supporting Dancer if:
 - a. The highest point of the released skill does not elevate the Executing Dancer's feet above head level of the Supporting Dancer.

Exception: toe touches off a dancers back/leapfrog jumps will be allowed
 - b. The Executing Dancer may not pass through the prone or inverted position after the release.
 - c. Toe pitch back tucks are not allowed.
2. A Supporting Dancer may release/toss an Executing Dancer if:
 - a. The highest point of the release/toss does not elevate the Executing Dancer's hips above head level of the Supporting Dancer.
 - b. The Executing Dancer is not supine or inverted when released.
 - c. The Executing Dancer does not pass through a prone or inverted position after release.
 - d. Toe Pitch back tucks are not allowed.

Please see UDA Glossary for definitions of skills and props: [UDA Glossary of Dance Terminology](#)

UDA COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA

1. All floors will have 10 panels of Marley floor, each panel approximately 5 feet 3.5 inches wide making the full floor approximately 53.5 x 53.5.
2. Jumping on or off a raised performance surface is prohibited. This rule applies in all categories, including Game Day and Game Day Live.
3. All performers (unless injured or sick) must remain within the performance area throughout the entire routine. Dancers can only enter the performance area through the designated entry at the beginning of the routine and exit at the designated exit at the end of the routine. Athletes will not be penalized for leaving the performance surface but must stay within the performance area throughout the duration of the routine.

UDA LEGALITIES AND DEDUCTIONS

A deduction will be given for EACH safety/general competition rule violation. The point value of this deduction will be as follows:

- 0.25 points – failing to start the routine within 30 seconds of being announced by 1-5 seconds, costume/shoe rules.

- 0.5 points- Performance error- any skill or trick executed incorrectly that then makes it an illegal skill/trick (example: touching down on an aerial cartwheel with non- hands-free poms in hand), failing to start the routine within 30 seconds of being announced by 6 or more seconds, routine timing infractions of 3-5 seconds over time, prop rules.
- 1.0 points- General rules violations including (but not limited to) prop rules, excessive celebration following the team's performance, music during Game Day transitions, recorded or overlaid voice-overs on the music tracks during Game Day routines (Fight Song & Spirit Raising), etc.
- 1.5 points- Timing infractions of 6 or more seconds over time, routine safety rule violations.

Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, judges will not issue a deduction until **3 seconds over the allowed time**. If a routine is retimed as part of a review, the exact time will be used without the 3 second allowance listed above.

If you have any questions concerning the legality of a trick or move, please email the video to udarules@varsity.com. Include your team's name, your name, contact phone number, and the event attending. It must be received by **January 6, 2026** and will only be accepted by the head coach of the team. If received after the deadline, the video is not guaranteed a response. Videos from choreographers will not be allowed. Videos sent via text message will not be allowed. For questions, please contact udarules@varsity.com.

*****Please note: Performing the skill at a prior event does not ensure that a skill is legal nor that it would have warranted a legality warning. Only submitting the skill will make the skill eligible for a warning. UDA can only guarantee this process will be accepted at UDA-branded events. This would not include other Varsity-branded event.*****

UDA COLLEGE GAME DAY AND GAME DAY LIVE FORMAT GUIDELINES

1. There are FIVE separate UDA Game Day divisions:
 - a. Division IA Dance Game Day (NCAA Division I – FBS) – Male/ Female (Max 30 Members)
 - b. Division I Dance Game Day (NCAA Division I – FCS & NCAA DI) – Male/ Female (Max 30 Members)
 - c. Open Dance Game Day (NCAA II, Division III, Jr. Colleges, NAIA and all other schools) – Male/ Female Only (Max 30 Members)
 - d. Division IA Spirit Program Game Day (NCAA Division I – FBS) (Max 30 members)
 - e. Open Spirit Program Game Day (NCAA I – FCS, NCAA II, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges & NAIA) (Max 30 Members)
2. There are FOUR separate UDA Game Day Live divisions:
 - a. Teams may add a pep band or drumline into their performance. Pep Bands or Drumlines will not count toward the total number of participants allowed. Pep Bands or Drumlines must be registered with the event as participants. Refer to additional Pep Band guidelines (page 20) for Game Day Live specifics.
 - b. Division IA Dance Game Day Live (NCAA Division I – FBS) (Max 30 members)
 - c. Open Dance Game Day Live (NCAA I – FCS, NCAA II, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges, NAIA, and all other schools) (Max 30 Members)
 - d. Division IA Spirit Program Game Day Live (NCAA Division I – FBS) (Max 30 members)
 - e. Open Spirit Program Game Day Live (NCAA I – FCS, NCAA II, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges, NAIA, and all other schools) (Max 30 Members)
3. The order for the Dance Game Day and Game Day Live Divisions **will be** Fight Song, Game Situation, Performance Routine.
 - a. Fight Song
 1. Skills and choreography should represent a traditional fight song your team performs at games.
 - b. Game Situation
 1. This component of the Game Day Championship includes two elements.
 1. Situational Sideline – **There will NOT be a verbal cue given for this component. Teams should perform a sideline chant appropriate for a specific game situation.**
 2. Timeout – A Game Day Timeout (band music/traditional team music) designed for crowd interaction.

- c. Performance Routine
1. A routine (any style) that is designed for crowd entertainment. This routine has a max time limit of 30 seconds. **There will NOT be a verbal cue given for this component.**
 2. This is the best time to showcase your team's energy and connection to the crowd.
4. Teams must show a clear separation between elements **with no music, voice-overs/recorded or overlaid words being played during these transitions.**
 5. No voice-overs or words may be recorded and overlaid on the music tracks for **Game Day routines in Fight Song or Game Situation. Any voices captured in the original recording are allowed.**
 6. Teams will be evaluated and scored on each section of the Game Day Competition. Within each section, performances will be scored on synchronization, execution of motions/skills and overall effect. In addition, other components that pertain specifically to each section will be judged. For more information visit uda.varsity.com.
 7. The use of spirit raising props is recommended but not required. The following props are allowed: signs, poms, megaphones, flags, and rally towels. No other props, musical instruments, etc. may be used by anyone on the performance floor. Props cannot be tossed or thrown except for a pom toss. Props cannot be tossed or thrown (dancer to dancer or into the crowd). **All equipment tips on flagpoles must be padded or taped.**
 - a. Additionally, hip over head rotation skills (with or without hand support) including props will be prohibited. **Exception: Poms are allowed in hip over head rotation skills provided they are used correctly. If a non hands free pom touches down during a hip over head rotation skill (with or without hand support) a .5 deduction will be given.** Props may not conceal or cover any portion of choreography, movement, skills, tricks, or lifts.
 8. For dance teams competing in the Game Day divisions, we will allow teams to have up to a maximum of 30 seconds to enter the floor and set their props. All entry and rules guidelines will still apply, and keep in mind that your entry to the floor will not be judged; however, deductions will still be assessed. The overall time limit is 3:00.
 9. Teams may add up to 2 (two) mascots in their Game Day Routine. **The mascot(s) must meet all the eligibility requirements as the athletes.** The mascot(s) must enter the performance area with the team **and remain on the performance area for the entire routine.** The mascot(s) should be used to raise crowd energy and participation. The mascot(s) is not allowed to be involved in any stunts, **tumbling, or skills with hip over head** rotation and should position themselves away from skills being performed. The mascot(s) will not count towards the total number nor gender of participants allowed in the division but may impact the overall impression score. Mascots will only be allowed to use **the following** traditional sideline props – rally towels, signs, pom, megaphones, or flags – any part of the mascot uniform used as a prop must have prior approval from UDARules@varsity.com.
 10. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the UDA Game Day Championship score sheet. Each team will be evaluated on a 100-point system. For detailed score sheets please visit uda.varsity.com.
 11. All teams attending the UDA College Dance Team Championship will follow UDA College Nationals Rules and Regulation.
 12. Any deductions or violations will be taken off the final average score. For more information on scoring, score sheets and judging criteria, please visit uda.varsity.com.
 13. Traditional game day uniform is required.

DANCE GAME DAY ROUTINE SAFETY RULES

Teams competing in the game day divisions must follow all the routine safety rules and regulations at any regional or championship event. Refer to pages 13-14 for more information.

UCA & UDA SPIRIT PROGRAM DIVISION GUIDELINES

1. College Cheer/Dance Spirit Program Game Day Divisions (Cheer Team and Dance Team):
 - a. Division IA Game Day (30 Cheer and 30 Dance Combined) (NCAA Division I – FBS)
 - b. Open Game Day (30 Cheer and 30 Dance Combined) (NCAA I – FCS, NCAA II, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges & NAIA)
2. College Cheer/Dance Spirit Program Game Day LIVE Divisions (Cheer Team, Dance Team and Band):
 - a. Teams may add a pep band or drumline into their performance. Pep Bands or Drumlines will not count toward the total number of participants allowed. Pep Bands or Drumlines must be registered with the event as participants.
 - b. Division IA Game Day LIVE (30 Cheer, 30 Dance & 30 Band Combined) (NCAA Division I – FBS)
 - c. Open Game Day LIVE (30 Cheer, 30 Dance & 30 Band Combined) (NCAA I – FCS, NCAA II, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges & NAIA)
3. In the Spirit Program and Spirit Program LIVE divisions - the performance surface will be split 1/2 mat (approx. 24 feet deep and 54 feet wide - 4 strips lengthened to approx. the width of the marley floor) and 1/2 marley (approx. 25 feet deep and 53.5 feet wide).
 - a) Cheerleaders, dancers, and Pep Band/Color Guard members may stand or perform on either surface and must stay within the performance area.
 - b) Skills must be performed on the surface that is legal for the skill being performed.
 - c) Athletes must follow the specific Safety Rules and Regulations for their team (cheer/dance).
 - d) All athletes/performers must enter from the same location and exit from the same location.
4. The order for the Spirit Program Game Day and Spirit Program Game Day Live Divisions will be Fight Song, Situational Sideline, and a Game Day Timeout.
 - a. Fight Song
 1. Should represent the traditional Fight Song your school has always done at games.
 2. Skills should be minimal and practical.
 3. You should start from your sideline formation.
 - b. Situational Sideline
 1. **There will NOT be a verbal cue given for this component.**
 2. **Teams should perform a sideline chant appropriate for a specific game situation.**
 3. Skills should be minimal and practical.
 - c. Game Day Timeout
 1. Similar to a 60 second extended band chant that is designed for crowd interaction and involves crowd response.
 2. This is the best time to showcase your team's energy, leadership, visual appeal and connection to the crowd.
5. The use of crowd leading tools is recommended (All are not required).
 - a) Approved props include rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for crowd leading and appropriate for crowd response.
 - b) Props may not be thrown into the crowd.
 - c) Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline cheer/dance boxes used at games.
 - d) No air horns or artificial noise makers allowed.
 - e) **All equipment tips on flagpoles must be padded or taped.**
 - f) **All props must be able to fit through a standard size (36") single door.**
 - g) Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area. F
 - h) Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to UCARules@varsity.com and must be received at least 2 weeks prior to your event.
 - i) **Mascots will only be allowed to use the approved props listed above. Any part of the mascot uniform that is used as a prop must have prior approval here: [UCA Legality Inquiry Form](#)**
6. Teams may add up to 2 (two) mascots in their Game Day Routine. **The mascot(s) must meet all the eligibility requirements as the athletes.** The mascot(s) must enter the performance area with the team **and remain on the performance area for the entire routine.** The mascot(s) should be used to raise crowd energy and participation. The

mascot(s) is not allowed to be involved in any stunts, **tumbling, or skills with hip over head** rotation and should position themselves away from skills being performed. The mascot(s) will not count towards the total number nor gender of participants allowed in the division but may impact the overall impression score. Mascots will only be allowed to use **the following** traditional sideline props – rally towels, signs, pom, megaphones, or flags – any part of the mascot uniform used as a prop must have prior approval from UCARules@varsity.com.

Spirit Program Game Day Routines

- Maximum Overall Time: 3:00 (180 Seconds)

Spirit Program Game Day LIVE Routines

- Maximum Overall Time: 5:00 (300 Seconds)

PEP BAND GUIDELINES (GAME DAY LIVE DIVISIONS WITH CHEER OR DANCE)

1. Pep Band members will be allowed to play for multiple performances; however, they may only play for the school they attend. The pep band must be current members of the official pep band for the school they are representing.
2. The pep band must be in a school-related, coordinated outfit (i.e., traditional team uniform, coordinated outfit representing your school colors, letters, mascot, etc.).
3. The entire performance may not exceed 5 minutes with entry and exit of all performers. Teams must enter from the same location.
4. Pep Bands/Color Guard may use props.
 - a. Props allowed include those listed for cheer and dance teams competing in Game Day.
 - b. Flyovers are allowed but cannot be done over any technical cheer or dance skills
 - c. Swing flags are restricted to spins only.
 - d. Flag tosses are not allowed.
 - e. Batons tosses are limited to 3 revolutions and must remain central on the body.
*Tosses cannot exceed the height of the performer's extended arm position.
 - f. Bayonets, sabers, knives, rifles, or fire batons are not permitted.
 - g. All equipment tips on batons and flagpoles must be padded or taped.
5. Pep Band/Color Guard instrument rules:
 - a. ONLY Handheld or harnessed instruments allowed by the pep band.
 - b. Pep Bands/Color Guard will be responsible for transportation of all equipment to and from the event.
6. Pep band/Color Guard members may not be involved in any stunts, tumbling, or skills with hip over head rotation. Members should position themselves a safe distance from skills being performed.
7. Pep Band Performance Area
 - a. Pep Bands will line up anywhere within the performance surface and their timing will begin the first beat of music.
 - b. Throughout the Game Day routine, pep bands may integrate with the cheer/dance teams but must stay a safe distance of any skills being performed. Pep bands must remain within the performance surface OR can be on the raised stage in the designated areas of approximately 5 feet wide by 42 feet deep on either side of the performance surface.
 - c. Pep Bands will be limited to 30 total band members. Teams may place those members to the side only with a maximum of 20 members in each location.
 - d. Once a team member takes the floor, they must remain on the floor until the end of the performance.
8. Game Day LIVE Format
 - a. Pep Band/Color Guard and/or Cheer/Dance will have 30 (thirty) seconds to preset for their Game Day LIVE performance. Athletes/performers must all enter from the same location.
 - b. The Pep Band will have 1 (one) minute to play any cadence or song.
 - Only the Pep Band/Color Guard is scored at this time.
 - The cheer/dance team should be positioned so that the Pep Band can adequately be scored but may rally the crowd during this time. NO skills are allowed at this time.
 - The performance will start with the first beat of music.
 - c. FIGHT SONG: The fight song should reflect your school's traditional Fight Song. For teams that do not have an official Fight Song, it is recommended to use a second selection of band chant music. When performing the fight song, the pep band should focus on sound quality, technical accuracy, musicality and engagement. They should lead the cheerleaders/dancers and the crowd with their performance, as well as participate in call-backs, if applicable.
 - d. SITUATIONAL SIDELINE: The pep band should provide a cadence that the team and crowd back home could easily yell along with, eliciting a crowd response.
 - e. TIMEOUT ROUTINE: The pep band should focus on playing spirited music that reflects a game day environment, and that the cheerleaders/dancers can incorporate visual movements to.
 - f. PERFORMANCE ROUTINE (Dance Game Day Live ONLY): The pep band should provide music that is upbeat, engaging, reflects a game day environment and focuses on overall entertainment value.

- g. RUN OFF: The pep band has 30 seconds to play original, spirited music while the cheerleaders/dancers exit the competition floor. Once the piece ends, the pep band may exit. Only the pep band is scored during this time. Cheer and Pep Band/Color Guard must exit to the same location.
- h. The use of pre-recorded tracks is not prohibited. However, it is recommended that the Pep Band members provide the music live for the entirety of the routine.

COLLEGE MASCOT ENTRY GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

MASCOT DIVISIONS

1. Mascot Division IA (NCAA I – FBS)
2. Open Mascot (NCAA I – FCS, NCAA II, NCAA III, Jr. Colleges & NAIA)

ENTRY GUIDELINES

1. The competition is open to all officially recognized mascots.
2. 50% of the video entry score will carry over for the National Finals.
3. Mascots will upload a two-minute highlight segment from the current season in MP4 or MOV format with their registration to qualify for the College Mascot National Championship by 5:00 pm CST **Monday November 10, 2025**.
4. Highlights must be actual speed and cannot be sped up for visual effect.
5. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of the music, whichever comes first. Judges will not issue a deduction until their stopwatches show a time of three (3) seconds over the allotted time.
6. If a mascot exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. One (1) point deduction for 1-5 seconds over and Two (2) point deduction for 6 seconds over.
7. Please include highlights from school events, games, community activities and/or public appearances, etc. Be sure to follow the judging sheet below to ensure you meet all judging criteria.
8. Schools with more than one student playing the role of the same character may submit tapes together but only one mascot per character may compete. If both or all want to compete, each mascot must send in separate tapes and will be judged and ranked separately.
9. Safety Guidelines for Highlight Video:
 - a. The use of mini-tramps and /or springboards is prohibited.
 - b. Tumbling or flipping skills will NOT be allowed off a prop or over a prop.
 - c. No pyrotechnics, discharge of arms, pressurized canisters, dangerous materials, flammable liquids or animals will be permitted. The exception for live animals would be community events and official university mascots.

MUSIC GUIDELINES FOR MASCOT ENTRY TAPE

All music will need to follow the music guidelines listed in the Varsity Spirit Rules.

1. Only music capture incidentally will be permitted (i.e., in the background of the video). No music can be edited into the video.
2. Teams who edit music into the video will receive a general 1-point penalty.

BIDS AWARDED

The top 10 Division IA Mascots and the Top 5 Open Mascots will advance to The Mascot Championship in Orlando, FL. Paid bids will be awarded to the top four (4) Division IA and the top (1) Open Mascots to compete.

SAMPLE OF MASCOT ENTRY SCORE SHEET

Overall Character Development	30 points
Game Situations	15 points
Crowd Involvement	15 points
Cheer/Dance/Band Integration	10 points
Community Service	10 points
School Activities (Non-Sporting)	10 points
Overall Impression	10 points

Mascot can register online at myVarsity.com

Upload your video to:

[UCA Championship Upload - Universal Cheerleaders Association](#)

COLLEGE MASCOT CHAMPIONSHIP GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

1. The competition is open to all officially recognized mascots that qualified from the video entry preliminaries.
2. Mascots who officially qualified for the Championship must submit skit themes for pre-approval by 5:00 pm CST on **December 15, 2025**, to College@varsity.com. Mascots with similar skit themes may be asked to select a new theme.
3. Skits should be appropriate for all audiences. Any vulgar or suggestive movements, words, or music will result in a 2.0 deduction. Skits should represent good sportsmanship with competing mascots.
4. 50% of the video entry score will carry over for the National Finals.
5. Mascots will have 1 minute to set up and 1 minute to take down their set. Mascots may have TWO assistants to set up and take down props, but you may not use live assistance in your skit. The assistants must be appropriately dressed in their school's spirit program t-shirts and/or warmups.
6. Each mascot will perform a 1 minute and 30 second skit to music. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of the music, whichever comes first. Judges will not issue a deduction until their stopwatches show a time of three (3) seconds over the allotted time.
7. If a mascot exceeds either time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. One (1) point deduction for 1-5 seconds over and Two (2) point deduction for 6 seconds over. If a skit is retimed as part of a review, the exact time will be used with the 3 second allowance.
8. Mascots must have a representative to play their music.
9. Specific Rules for props:
 - a. Mascots are limited to no more than 5 props.
 - b. Each prop may not exceed 36" in height, width or depth and must be able to fit through a standard size (72") double door. Props will be measured at their largest size so any flips or mechanics should be considered in the measurement of the height and width of the props. Wheels can be used on the bottom of props for ease of movement and will not be considered an attachment; however, they will count in the overall height of the prop.
 - c. Props can be stacked but cannot be attached or bound together. Each prop must enter the stage separately and then be stacked to show a clear separation of props.
 - d. Hinges and connections can be used but when expanded must be part of the original prop measurement and cannot exceed the maximum prop measurements (36" in height, width or depth)
 - e. The bottom of all props, flats and scenery made of wood, metal or PVC type plastic must be padded or taped. To avoid damage to the competition floor, props should be constructed so that they may easily be carried or moved to the performance area.
 - f. Wood, metal, PVC, screws, zip ties, tape, and other adhesives may be used for the purpose of constructing a base or supporting structure for the above props.
 - g. All equipment tips on batons, flagpoles, and prop sabres must be padded or taped.
 - h. Clapping hands or poms are considered one prop.
 - i. If any part of your uniform / costume is taken off it must be immediately put down. If you use it in your skit it becomes one of your props.
10. Safety Guidelines for Props:
 - a. The use of mini-tramps and /or springboards is prohibited.
 - b. Tumbling or flipping skills will **NOT** be allowed off of a prop or over a prop.
 - c. No pyrotechnics, discharge of arms, pressurized canisters, dangerous materials, flammable liquids or animals will be permitted.
 - d. **Bayonets, sabers, knives, rifles, or fire batons are not permitted.**
 - e. Electrical (plug-in or battery operated) or compressed air apparatuses, including lights, lasers, and flashcubes (electrical or chemical) will not be allowed.
 - f. Smoke machines will not be allowed.
 - g. The use of powder, dirt or any other airborne substance that lingers in the competition area shall be strictly prohibited.
 - h. Balloons, confetti, dry ice, water guns, motorized devices, fire extinguishers or noise-making devices will not be allowed.

11. Mascots are responsible for transporting props to and from the competition venue.
12. Mascots will be required to bring any necessary tools to properly disassemble and discard all props after the final competition.
13. Mascots in costume will not be allowed outside of the competition venues.
14. Any violation of the specific Rules and Regulations will result in a three 3.0 point deduction.

SAMPLE OF JUDGING MASCOT SCORE SHEET (CHAMPIONSHIP)

SAMPLE OF JUDGING SCORE SHEET	
Crowd Appeal & Crowd Interaction	10 points
Creativity	10 points
Animation / Enthusiasm	10 points
Prop Usage	10 points
Overall Impression	10 points

COLLEGE PARTNER/GROUP STUNT ENTRY INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

The competition is open to all coed partner and all girl stunt groups who are presently registered full-time students and members of their school's official 2025-2026 College/University cheerleading team. All entries must follow the eligibility guidelines listed above.

1. Divisions

- a. Coed Partner Stunt Division must be one male and one female.
- b. All Girl Group Stunt division may have four female team members.
- c. Participants may not represent more than one stunt group.

2. How to register

- a. Submit a 45 second, **unedited** video along with a \$25 entry fee per couple/group. Payment must be included with your video entry to qualify.
- b. All Videos must be uploaded to uca.varsity.com and should be submitted in MP4 or MOV files.
- c. Complete and return the registration form.
- d. Your video and entry fee must be submitted no later than 5:00pm CST on **Monday, November 10, 2025**.

3. College Partner/Group Stunt Qualification

- a. The top partners/groups in each division will qualify to compete in the Partner/Group Stunt Championship in Orlando, FL.
- b. Paid Bids will not be awarded from the video entry. Partner/group stunt qualifiers will compete in reverse ranking order for the Finals in Orlando based on the video entry placement.

All Partner/Group Stunt entries MUST complete the Online Registration Form. Registration form, entry fee and video are due by **Monday, November 10, 2025.**

COLLEGE PARTNER/GROUP STUNT COMPETITION RULES

GENERAL RULES FOR VIDEO ENTRY AND CHAMPIONSHIP ROUTINES

1. All participants must begin their routine with both feet on the ground.
2. Partner/Group Stunt participants must wear a school uniform. (No bra tops or shorts).
3. You are required to have a spotter throughout your routine. Spotters must wear a school uniform or team warmup. Additional spotters will be provided for the National Finals.
4. Tumbling into a stunt is allowed. (i.e. back handspring toss to extension).
5. Participants are required to follow the National Championship Safety Rules and Regulations. All skills that require an additional spotter are allowed; however, skills that require two bases to perform are not allowed for coed partner stunt groups.
6. **Additional spotters may not assist the skills performed. Additional spotters for Coed may only assist in the catch of a cradle or prone for both video entry and championship routines.**

ROUTINE MUSIC AND TIME LIMITATIONS

1. All routines must be "Music Only", and performance time may not exceed 45 seconds in length.
2. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first.
3. There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official ending of the routine.
4. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of the music, whichever comes first. Judges will not issue a deduction until their stopwatches show a time of three (3) seconds over the allotted time.
5. If a partner/group stunt routine exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. One (1) point deduction for 1-5 seconds over and Two (2) point deduction for 6 seconds over. If a partner/group stunt routine is retimed as part of a review, the exact time will be used without the 3 second allowance.

ADDITIONAL MUSIC GUIDELINES FOR ENTRY TAPE

1. Only music captured incidentally (i.e., in the background of the video) will be permitted.
2. No music can be edited into the video.
3. All music captured from half-times, games, etc. highlighted in the video will need to follow the music guidelines.
4. Any violation of these music guidelines will result in a 1-point penalty.

VIOLATIONS

1. Please refer to the deduction explanation for all penalties that will be assessed.
2. Any partner/group stunt routine in violation of any of the Specific Safety Guidelines or these Rules and Regulations will be assessed a three (3) point deduction for each violation. This deduction does not apply to violations mentioned above that are designated a lesser point value.
3. Any team that does not adhere to the terms and procedures of these “Rules and Regulations” will be subject to deductions and/or disqualification from the competition, will automatically forfeit any right to any prizes or awards presented by the competition, and may also forfeit the opportunity to participate in the competition or the National Championship the following year.

COLLEGE PARTNER/GROUP STUNT SCORING

Updated score sheets for Partner/Group Stunt divisions can be found on the [UCA Scoring Page](#)

PRIZES AND AWARDS

1. Each partner/group routine will receive a critique of their performance.
2. Finalists will have the opportunity to compete in the College Partner Stunt Competition at the **Walt Disney World® Resort** in Florida.
3. Winners will receive medals and trophies.

VIDEO UPLOAD LINK

[UCA Championship Upload - Universal Cheerleaders Association](#)

UCA & UDA COLLEGE CHAMPIONSHIP PARTICIPATION

TOURNAMENT FACILITY

The competition is scheduled to be held at ESPN's Wide World of Sports® Complex. The tournament officials shall have the right to alter the time and location of the competition in the event changes become necessary due to inclement weather, facility problems, television production requirements, or any other situation deemed by the tournament officials to be essential to the successful execution of the championship.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP PARTICIPATION

1. It is understood that teams that participate in the College Cheerleading and Dance Team Championship will NOT knowingly and willingly participate in any other cheer or dance event promoted as a national or international championship for the 2025-2026 school year. (Exception: USA National Championship) This includes all prizes and awards labeled as National or International Champions.
2. Teams cannot compete in another event promoted as a national or international championship (Exception: ICU World Cheerleading Championships and World University Cheerleading Championships) for the 2025-2026 school year within a school division or category regardless of team name. This excludes conference championships i.e. NAIA Nationals.
3. A school can compete at UCA and NCA if that team is recognized as a separate team by the school and no athletes are the same. (No athletes can compete at both events)
4. Teams who violate this rule will be subject to disqualification and will forfeit the opportunity to participate in the subsequent College Cheerleading and Dance Team Championship the following year.

PRELIMINARIES, SEMI-FINALS, AND FINALS

1. UCA & UDA reserve the right to determine if a preliminary, semi-final, or final round will be necessary. There may be a preliminary competition held in some categories. All divisions with only one round prior to the finals will be classified as a semi-final.
2. Teams will be placed in random order in their first round of competition. Adjustments may be made for conflicts.
3. Preliminary rounds will advance 65% of the teams into Saturday's Semi-Finals round.
 - a. Preliminary groups will be split based on previous placement and geography.
 - b. **Semi-Finalists will draw for performance order for the semi-final round of competition.**
4. Semi-Finals rounds will advance 50% of the teams to the Finals round and teams will perform in reverse rank order for Finals. A minimum of 3 teams will advance to the finals round of competition.
5. Tournament officials will have full authority to make the final determination of the number of teams selected to advance to the next round.
6. No ties in a preliminary or semi-final round will be broken. In the event of a tie for teams advancing to the next round, the tied teams will compete in reserve order of the previous order of competition. In the event of a tie for the final spot advancing, both teams that are tied will move on.
7. **FINALS TIE BREAKER POLICY**
 - a. **CHEER/STUNT/MASCOT** - In the event of a first-place tie in the final round of competition, the team with the lesser deductions will be awarded first place. If the deductions remain equal, the tie will not be broken and both teams will be awarded first place.
 - b. **DANCE** – In the event of a first-place tie, event officials will look at the raw scores per judge to see which team was ranked higher most often in each caption. Should a tie remain, the ranking points from the "overall impression" portion of the score sheet will be used to break the tie.

SCORES AND RANKINGS

1. The judges for the event will be appointed at the sole discretion of Universal Cheerleaders Association and Universal Dance Association. The judges will score each team according to the judging criteria to determine their total score. The judges' scores will be combined with deductions being taken off the total scores.

2. Individual score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his or her final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores for all teams. Scores and rankings will be available only to coaches or captains at the conclusion of the competition. Judges' decisions are final.
3. Any deductions or violations will be taken off the raw score. For more information on scoring, score sheet and judging criteria, please visit uca.varsity.com.
4. Questions regarding deductions can be made by the head coach of the team only and must be done within 15 minutes from the time the team's deduction/legality sheets are time stamped and available. Once results have been announced, no deduction challenges will be accepted.
5. By participating in a Varsity event, teams give their consent for performances and scores to be made public.
6. Varsity TV publishes and makes available all competition routine videos from live-streamed events to recognize the hard work and talent of the athletes competing, and ultimately, to serve and grow the cheerleading and dance community. Due to the number of teams and routines published, Varsity Spirit is unable to accommodate requests for removal.

TELEVISION COVERAGE

The College Cheerleading and Dance Team Championship will be nationally televised on an ESPN and ESPN2 network. Because of the format of the show, not all finalist teams will be shown on the telecast. Out of respect for the copyrights of others, original music will be composed for all routines featured in the show, to meet broadcast licensing requirements. If your team is featured in the TV broadcast and uses an original composition created for your performance, your routine music will be used in the show if you also secured synchronization rights. Teams must be able to provide written documentation that synchronization rights were properly secured during registration at the event for the original routine music to be included in the show.

Please be aware that you may be interviewed and/or appear on television during an event. With that, appropriate attire is always required, including during officially designated practice times, performance, and awards ceremonies.

PRIZES AND AWARDS

1. All teams in the final round of competition will receive a trophy.
2. Teams who rank first, second, or third place will additionally receive a bronze, silver, or gold medallions for each athlete who performed on the floor plus two coaches and up to 5 additional rostered alternates.
3. National Champion teams will receive a champion banner.

APPEARANCES, ENDORSEMENTS AND PUBLICITY

All teams winning titles, awards or prizes agree to have all appearances, endorsements and publicity approved through the UCA & UDA office.

UCA & UDA COLLEGE RULES & REGULATIONS AGREEMENT

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 College Cheerleading and Dance Team National Championship, (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 have read and reviewed both these specific UCA & UDA College Championship Rules and Regulations.

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