



PERFORMANCE
RECREATIONAL
RULES
& REGULATIONS

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These Rules and Regulations are the exclusive property of Varsity Spirit and may not be reproduced, in part or in whole,
for events not sponsored and approved by Varsity Spirit.

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](#)

DIVISIONS

1. Performance Rec is an all music competitive division in recreational cheerleading, where teams can perform dynamic choreographed routines. In this setting, teams are assessed based on their skill level, degree of difficulty/execution, and the creativity of their routines. Different levels allow teams to showcase their abilities, from fundamentals to more advanced skills. Teams will be scored on the Varsity Performance Rec score sheet, follow USASF rules and typically compete on a spring floor. Teams may or may not be affiliated or governed by an organization. Participation in these competitions not only helps athletes improve their cheerleading skills but also fosters teamwork, discipline, and a sense of community.
2. **Performance Elite**
 - Formerly known as “Performance Rec”
 - No Cheer/Crowd Leading section is allowed
 - Tosses may be performed
 - Routines are all music with a maximum time of 2:30
 - All routines will follow USASF Skill rules
3. **Performance Advanced**
 - Formerly known as “Traditional Rec”
 - A Cheer/Crowd Leading section may be performed but will not be scored
 - Tosses are NOT allowed
 - Routines are all music with a maximum time of 2:30
 - All routines will follow USASF Skill rules
4. Performance Recreational - Varsity Spirit will offer all Performance Rec divisions. See Divisions Chart for 2025-2026 [25-26 Performance Rec Divisions](#)
5. **Note: Traditional Rec**

Traditional Rec divisions will be offered at select NCA, UCA & USA brand events. Traditional Rec provides an opportunity for teams with a more traditional sideline format. Teams have an opportunity to compete with the brand that best fits the athletes’ level of skills and the team’s choreography style.

 - Compete on a foam floor
 - Follow USA Cheer/NFHS Rules.
 - Divisions include Affiliated and Non-Affiliated, Game Day (Affiliated only) and more.
 - Score sheets and guidelines are specific to each brand
 - Traditional Rec divisions are not eligible for The Quest and The Recreational Summit Bids

Please visit the Youth Recreational website for additional information [Varsity - Youth Recreational Website](#)

RECREATIONAL CLASSIFICATION

1. Teams must submit a Recreational Verification form at least one month prior to the first event and no later than December 31, 2025.
2. Recreational Verification will be used to determine the recreational classification of each team.
3. **AFFILIATED** - The program must be affiliated with, report to, and be governed by an organization such as; YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, City/County Parks and Recreational Program, American Youth Cheer, Pop Warner Association, or other community run program not associated with All Star. Each team must cheer for a sport during the 2025-2026 cheer season
4. **NON-AFFILIATED** - Organization may be independent of town/city organization/clubs. Team does not necessarily cheer for or support a sports program. The team is not affiliated with an All Star program.
5. Recreational Verification Required Form: [Recreational Verification Form](#)

GENERAL RULES

1. Coaches, personnel and spectator credentials (i.e. wristbands, shoe tags, etc.) provided as part of your admissions / registration. The credential must be worn by the individual to whom it was issued for the duration of the event and may not be shared or transferred for ANY REASON. No one will be allowed to enter the warm up area and/or Coaches Hospitality Room (if applicable) without this identification. Credentials attached to bags are not valid.
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. 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.
10. 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>
3. It is the coach's responsibility to read and understand the Safety Rules appropriate to your team type.

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, 2025 through May 31, 2026.

RECREATIONAL CROSSOVERS AND ROSTERING

1. Team must submit a roster with birthdates for each athlete. A copy of this roster must be submitted prior to the event.
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. Affiliated and Non-Affiliated Performance Recreational divisions will be combined during registration and for some events. Affiliated and Non-Affiliated divisions *may* be split based on the number of event registrations.
2. Affiliated & Non-Affiliated will be a combined division
 - 1st Split: When there are at least 3 teams within each of the respective categories. i.e. 3 Affiliated & 3 Non-Affiliated

- 2nd Split: Will be by team size when there are at least 3 teams in those respective divisions. The division sizes, small and large will be as follows:
 - Performance Elite Small: 5-22
 - Performance Elite Large: 23-36
 - Performance Advanced Small: 5-19
 - Performance Advanced Large: 20-36
- 3. 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.)
- 4. 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 AND UNIFORM GUIDELINES

1. All music guidelines listed in the Varsity Spirit Event Guidelines must be followed (Page 2).
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.'
3. **Uniform**: must adhere to the USASF athlete performance standards. See USASF rules for details.
4. Teams may not use Disney themes, nor may they have costumes that resemble a Disney character. However, Disney music is acceptable if it follows the music guidelines.

PERFORMANCE 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. Teams that exceed the allotted time by 1 or more seconds are subject to a .05 deduction.
3. Judges will use a stopwatch/clock to measure the official time.
4. Judges will not issue a deduction until their stopwatch/clock shows a time that exceeds 3 seconds over the allotted time, acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations.

PERFORMANCE ELITE:

- Routines are all music
- Routine Max: 2:30 minutes (all music)

PERFORMANCE ADVANCED:

- Routines may consist of Cheer & Music combination.
- Routine Max: 2:30 minutes (all music)

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. A .05 deduction will be assessed per occurrence for an athlete that makes contact with both feet outside the competition boundary.
5. Stepping on, or just past the white tape is not a boundary violation.
6. 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 Performance Recreational (Elite & Advanced) teams hosted in Orlando, Florida March 13-14, 2026. 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 Website](#)

THE RECREATIONAL 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 23-24, 2026. 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 Website](#)

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 Recreational Rules and Regulations, as well as, the Event Specific guidelines for each event.