



## **National School Spirit Championships**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: What are the dates for the National School Spirit Championships (NSSC)?**

A: DII National School Spirit Championships: Friday, January 30 - Sunday, February 1, 2026

- DII National High School Cheerleading Championship
- DII National Dance Team Championship
- DII National School Band Championship

*DII schools are defined as having school enrollment of 1399 and below*

DI National School Spirit Championships: Friday, February 6, 2026 – Sunday, February 8, 2026

- DI National High School Cheerleading Championship
- DI National Dance Team Championship
- DI National School Band Championship

*DI schools are defined as having school enrollment of 1400 and above*

**Q: Who is eligible to attend NSSC?**

A: NSSC is open to school cheer and dance teams (Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Junior High), band programs and Recreational Cheer teams.

**Q: Will the championships last 3 or 4 days in 2026?**

A: Both DI and DII weekends will last three days in 2026, starting on Friday and ending on Sunday.

**Q: Does my school have to have a cheer team, dance team, and band to attend NSSC?**

A: No. The National School Spirit Championships includes all cheer, dance, band, and spirit program divisions. If your school does not have all three groups (cheer, dance, and band), your teams can still compete in their individual championship designated for the team's activity.

**Q: Will cheer and dance divisions compete on the same days at the NSSC?**

A: Yes. Cheer and dance divisions will compete on the same days at the championship.

[DI Sample Block Schedule](#)

[DII Sample Block Schedule](#)

*The sample block schedules are estimated for illustration purposes only.*

**Q: How does a Junior High team know if they should compete at the DI or DII championship?**

A: A Junior High team must register for the same event as the school the majority of the students feed into based on school zoning. If the school does not feed into a high school, the team will compete in the DII Championship weekend. If you have additional questions, please contact your State Director.

**Q: When and how do I declare my DI or DII status for the season?**

A: All teams must submit a letter from the school administrator, athletic director, or registrar's office declaring enrollment information. Letters must be on official school letterhead, be dated after October 1, and submitted prior to October 31 of each participating school year. The official enrollment at that time will determine a team's division for the championship. Information on additional documentation required will be coming in May.

**Q: If my school is DII, can we elect to compete in DI?**

A: No, teams will not have the option to elect to compete in a division they are not eligible for.

**Q: Will divisions within a competition always remain split, or will they ever combine based on entries?**

A: In the best interest of providing a competitive environment, if/when a competition division has less than three teams, they may be combined in the same size competition division. Competition divisions will be finalized no later than two weeks prior to each championship.

**Q: Will NCA, NDA, and USA be doing the same format with their championships?**

A: At this time, all other Varsity Spirit cheer and dance championships will remain the same as they are today.

**Q: Will an overall winner be crowned at NSSC in 2026?**

A: Yes, at each event, schools will engage in a points race, with points being earned in each respective competition. The school earning the most points overall will be crowned the National School Spirit Champion. More details coming soon.

**Q: Are Junior High teams eligible to be crowned the National School Spirit Champion?**

A: Yes, both a high school and a junior high National School Spirit Champion will be recognized.

**Q: If the dance or cheer team competes at another brand (NCA, NDA) for their performance routines but wants to send some athletes to compete at the NSSC in the Spirit Program Game Day division ONLY, would this be allowed?**

A: No, per Varsity Spirit Championship Rules and Regulations, teams may only participate in one National Championship event each year (Exception: USA Spirit and Dance Nationals).

**Q: Will the World Performance Cheer Championships and World School Cheerleading Championships competition still be offered?**

A: Yes, the World Performance Cheer Championships and the World School Cheerleading Championships will be held at each championship.

**Q: Will open practice still be offered?**

A: Yes. Open practice time will still be offered. Teams will still be required to sign up for a time slot.

**Q: How will this new format impact my overall championship experience?**

A: Each individual championship will remain the prestigious event each is today and will celebrate independent performances within NHSCC, NDTC and NSBC.

In addition, the National School Spirit Championships allow your school's cheer and dance teams, bands and families to travel to *Walt Disney World*® Resort together. Teams will have the opportunity to collaborate with your spirit group and compete in a new division. And there's even up to \$75,000 in prizes and awards.

### **Spirit Program Game Day FAQs:**

#### **Q: What are the NEW Spirit Program Game Day Divisions?**

A: The Spirit Program Game Day division is a combination of spirit teams performing together.

- Spirit Program Game Day: Cheer and Dance Teams
- Spirit Program Game Day Live: The Live format can be any combination of Cheer and Band, Dance and Band, or Cheer, Dance and Band. This is replacing the division formerly known as Game Day Live.

*Teams may only compete in one of the Spirit Program Game Day Divisions.*

#### **Q: Will the Spirit Program Game Day Division be an additional performance opportunity?**

A: Yes, all teams can compete in one of the Spirit Program Game Day Divisions in addition to other performances throughout a Championship event.

#### **Q: Will teams be able to compete in both the Spirit Program Game Day division AND the standalone Game Day division?**

A: Yes, teams can compete in both the Spirit Program Game Day and their standalone Game Day Division.

#### **Q: Does a school have to have all three programs in attendance to compete in the Spirit Program Game Day Divisions?**

A: No, a school can have any combination of two to three programs compete in the Spirit Program Game Day Divisions.

#### **Q: How will teams be scored if they only have two of the three programs in the Spirit Program Game Day Division?**

A: The score sheet has been reimagined to become more inclusive for the entire Spirit Program including cheer, dance, band, and mascot in 2026. It will focus on school spirit and group cohesion. More details, rules, and score sheets are coming in May 2025.

#### **Q: Will there be an additional cost for Spirit Program Game Day Divisions?**

A: Yes, there will be an additional cost for the Spirit Program Game Day Divisions, similar to

how current Game Day pricing is determined. Pricing will be released on the normal timeline.

**Q: When would the new Spirit Program Game Day Divisions take place in 2026?**

A: Spirit Program Game Day divisions will be offered at both the DI and DII Championships.

**Q: Is there a percentage of performers from a team's roster required for the Spirit Program Game Day division?**

A: The intent of Spirit Program is to bring student spirit groups together to drive school spirit. See below for participant requirements:

- Minimum: Five (5) athletes/performers must represent each performance group.
  - Overall minimum of 10 athletes/performers
- Maximum: 75 athletes/performers allowed, including the surrounding floorspace, to represent the entire spirit program.
- Teams are allowed up to two mascots that will not be included in the above numbers.

**Q: Will mascots be able to compete in Spirit Program Game Day and the standalone Game Day divisions?**

A: Yes. Mascots will be allowed to perform in the standalone Game Day divisions with their cheer and/or dance team as well as the Spirit Program Game Day divisions.

**Q: What if I have a question that I can't find an answer to?**

A: Please contact your State Director. If there are questions that still cannot be answered, email [ndtc@varsity.com](mailto:ndtc@varsity.com) for dance customers and [nhsc@varsity.com](mailto:nhsc@varsity.com) for cheer customers, and [performingarts@varsity.com](mailto:performingarts@varsity.com) for band customers.

**Cheer FAQs**

**Q: What competition divisions are being offered for cheer teams?**

A: All competition divisions will be split into DI (school enrollment of 1400+) and DII (school enrollment of 1399 or less) except for Junior High divisions. Junior High team must register for the same event as the school the majority of the students feed into based on school zoning. Some divisions will not be split into size – see division chart for details.

**Q: Which event does a recreational cheer team compete in?**

A: Recreational cheer teams can compete in either DI or DII events. If the recreational cheer team is affiliated with a school cheer team they will compete on the same weekend as that program. If the recreational cheer team is not affiliated with a school, the team would compete in the DII Championship weekend. If you have additional questions, please contact your State Director.

**Q: What is the total number of times a cheer team can compete at NSSC?**

A: Cheer teams are eligible to compete in a traditional performance routine division, a Cheer Game Day division, and a Spirit Program Game Day, for a total of three possible routines.

**Dance FAQs**

**Q: What is the total number of times a dance team can compete at NSSC?**

A: Dance teams will be eligible to compete in two dance performance categories (Pom, Jazz, Hip Hop, High Kick) plus a standalone Dance Game Day division, and a Spirit Program Game Day division, for a total of four possible routines.

**Q: Where will All Star dance competition divisions be offered?**

A: Continuing forward in 2026, All Star Dance Divisions will be in March at the UCA/UDA All Star National Championship at *Walt Disney World* Resort in Orlando, Florida.

**Band FAQs:**

**Q: My cheer team and/ or dance team does not attend NHSCC or NDTC. Can my band still participate at the National School Band Championship?**

A: Yes! Your band's participation at the National School Band Championship is independent of a cheer or dance team's participation. However, schools that have participants in cheer and dance will typically achieve higher placement in the final National School Spirit Championship rankings.

**Q: If my band attends, do we have to participate in the Spirit Program Game Day Live Division?**

A: No, performance in that division is not required. However, schools that have more participation across the various championships will typically achieve higher placement in the final National School Spirit Championship rankings.

**Q: Do you offer regional events to qualify for the National School Band**

**Championship?** A: Regional events are in progress but have not yet been launched. For NSBC's inaugural year, band qualification will not require performance at a regional event. Please stay tuned for more information on regional events.

**Q: Where can I find out more or share what's on my mind?**

A: Please email questions to [performingarts@varsity.com](mailto:performingarts@varsity.com) or visit our webpage [here](#). The National School Band Championship is a new and unique offering, and we are actively shaping the format with our internal team, our external partners, and you! As we plan for our inaugural year, we would love to hear your questions and suggestions.

**Q: How do I get started or sign up?**

A: Bands can reach out to our event representative at [performingarts@varsity.com](mailto:performingarts@varsity.com) or visit our webpage [here](#) for more information and registration links.

***PLEASE NOTE: Information subject to change***