



## Memorandum

TO: School Principals, Athletic Directors and Drill Team Coaches  
FROM: Becky Anderson, Assistant Director  
SUBJECT: Headstands Prohibited for 2012-13  
DATE: Updated September 18, 2012

On April 25, the UHSAA Executive Committee voted to **prohibit headstands for one year, effective immediately.** During the one year suspension, teams are prohibited from practicing or performing any headstands, whether unassisted or assisted.

For purposes of this ruling, the UHSAA will define headstands as ***“an inverted position in which the top of the head bears the weight; the hips are directly over the shoulder and the feet are off the ground.”***

Teams must not include headstands in their routines and drill judges have been instructed to penalize any that do. There are some skills causing concern among coaches and judges because of the similarities they have to headstands, like “stalls.” We encourage coaches to use their best judgment when deciding what skills to include in their routines not only for the safety of the participants but also because of the confusion it may cause this year. When a coach includes skills or moves that are in that gray area, it makes it difficult for a technical judge to know whether or not the skill should be penalized. In general, a “stall” would not fall under our definition of a traditional “headstand,” but coaches are encouraged to stay out of the gray area to eliminate any questions.

The Executive Committee reviewed concerns from coaches, parents and a physical therapist regarding safety issues, inherent risks, and potential for injury and decided on a one year suspension to allow for additional research and input from participating parties. The amount of time that drill team members may spend practicing headstands at school and then again at home is a concern given the potential for injury when weight is put on the cervical spine of an adolescent for extended periods of time for weeks on end.