

COMPETITIVE CHEER Policies

1. Instill the Highest Ideals of Character

The mission of education-based activities is to promote the positive development of our youth. Coaches have a responsibility as educators to use their influence to reinforce valuable life lessons and universal values. Coaches should never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character. As role models, coaches are expected to be an advocate for good sportsmanship and follow all the rules and regulations with the intent for which they were written. See the “Coaches Code of Ethics” in the back of the NFHS Spirit Rule Book for a list of responsibilities.

2. Complete UHSAA Coaches’ Certification and Register My Coach (See UHSAA Handbook) Sideline and Competitive Cheer Coaches must be certified through Register My Coach. All Competitive Cheer athletes must register in Register My Athlete. Certification includes eight components: Background Check, First Aid Training, CPR Training, yearly Concussion Training, yearly Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training, yearly Bullying, Cyber-bullying, Hazing, Harassment, and Retaliation Training; the NFHS “Fundamentals of Coaching” course; and to meet a set of professional standards that are consistent with the Utah Educator Professional Standards as described in USBE Rule R277-515. The training must be completed through an approved or recognized program which complies with USBE requirements. First Aid and CPR components require current certification through an approved or recognized program which complies with USBE requirements. Yearly concussion training requires successful completion of the NFHS Concussion Course. Complete the State Cheer Safety Certification. Contact your Principal or School AD about certification.

3. Complete an Annual UHSAA Competitive Cheer Rules Clinic

On an annual basis, head coaches are required to attend the live UHSAA Competitive Cheer Rules Clinic or complete the online UHSAA Competitive Cheer Rules Clinic prior to the designated deadline. Failure to attend the live rules clinic, watch the Demonstration Clinic, and/or complete the online rules clinic by the deadline will result in a \$100.00 fine to the school. New coaches are strongly encouraged to attend the live rules clinic. Information regarding the live and online UHSAA Competitive Cheer Rules Clinic will be available on the UHSAA Competitive Cheer page at www.uhsaa.org.

4. Adhere to UHSAA and NFHS Rules During Practices and Performances

To maintain participant safety, coaches must adhere to UHSAA and NFHS Spirit Rules during all practices, performances and competitions. For UHSAA rules refer to the Competitive Cheer section of the UHSAA Handbook. Competitive Cheer is considered a co- educational sport. Coaches should bookmark the Competitive Cheer page at www.uhsaa.org for the latest info.

5. Adhere to UHSAA Contest Limitations

Competitive Cheer teams may only compete in a TOTAL of four (4) competitions prior to the divisional and state competition. Participation in a UHSAA Live Judging Practicum does not count towards the contest limitations. Teams are limited to (1) entry per category. Competitive Cheer teams may only participate in UHSAA sanctioned competition.

6. Adhere to UHSAA Budget Restrictions for State Competition Routines

To create a level playing field between all participating programs and to limit the financial burden incurred by the participants, coaches shall operate their programs within the stated limitations. Donated supplies and all monies, including budgeted school funds, out-of-pocket expenses, fund raised or donated funds for costumes and supplies which are used for state competition routines performed during the competitive cheer season (competition start date through the state competition) must not exceed \$800 times the number of team members. The budget must include the following: props, rental transportation, uniforms, accessories, music fees (i.e. Mixing, and Thumb Drives, audio devices), choreography fees, and any costs incurred for state competition routines. The UHSAA budget restrictions exclude expenses that do NOT pertain to the state routines (i.e. travel, camps, day uniforms, auxiliary routines, sideline expenses). Coaches are responsible to monitor the costs associated with their competitive cheer team program. Judging sheets shall not reflect if the uniform is new or used. Routines, props and music may be used from year to year.

7. **Submit a UHSAA Budget Declaration Form**

Coaches are required to submit a “UHSAA Competitive Cheer Budget Declaration Form” by the second Monday in February. Expenses should be recorded and documentation (i.e. receipts, bills, etc.) should be kept on file at the school.

8. **Submit “Dead Time Period” Form to UHSAA by January 15**

Head coaches shall submit a completed “Competitive Cheer Moratorium Form” to the UHSAA office by the deadline of January 15 to avoid a school fine. Each head coach shall select the sport specific competitive cheer moratorium, for their team, which shall consist of two, two-week blocks (the blocks may be consecutive). During that time, coaches and facilities shall adhere to UHSAA policies regarding moratoriums (See UHSAA Handbook By-Laws Article 2). Each week of the dead time period must include at least seven (7) consecutive days. Forms available on Competitive Cheer page.

9. **Practice Rule**

There will be a twelve (12) hour practice rule per week beginning August 1st through June 1st.

10. **Limited Team Membership Rule**

A high school competitive cheerleader may compete in up to two (2) national qualifying competitions, not sponsored by their school, with a private cheer organization. The cheer athlete must gain approval after completing an online form on the UHSAA website to participate in these events.

11. **Safety**

Safety is our priority. All Utah cheer teams are required to follow the safety rules in the most current issue of the National Federation of State High School Association Spirit Rules Book and Utah State Risk Management Cheer Restrictions. All cheer teams competing must be NFHS safety certified. Each team is required to use the correct number of spotters while stunting. The competition will provide additional spotters as needed for safety. All participating high school cheer team members and coaches must be 2023-2024 safety certified by Utah State Risk Management. Safety credentials must be worn at all times when supervising teams.

12. **Competitive Cheer Classifications**

Teams must qualify for the UHSAA State Cheer Competition through a division qualifier. Teams who enter all three sanctioned categories and finish in the top seventy percent (70%) of the overall calculated score, in each classification, will advance to the state competition. If a team enters all three sanctioned categories and does not place in the overall top seventy percent (70%) but places first in any one category, they will advance to state in that category only. Teams who enter in less than three sanctioned categories will advance to the state competition in categories where they place first in that category. To be eligible for the overall championship, teams must qualify for state in all three sanctioned categories. Teams will be assigned to a specific division unless there are extenuating circumstances. The goal is to make the invitational and division qualifiers the most important and valued competitions for our Utah schools to compete in and something to be proud of.

13. **Categories**

Show Cheer

- Varsity All Girl Show Cheer
- Varsity Co-Ed Show Cheer: Co-ed divisions consist of one (1) or more male athletes including male mascots
- Varsity Co-Ed Show Cheer: 1A through 6A Schools: Co-ed divisions consist of one (1) or more male athletes including male mascots. **If you are entered in the Co-Ed division, you must have at least one (1) male in each category (Show and both Game time categories).**

Game Time

- Varsity All Girl Game Time
- Varsity Co-Ed Game Time: Co-ed divisions consist of one (1) or more male athletes including male mascots
 - Game Time Categories
 - Sideline/Timeout Cheer
 - Sideline/Timeout Dance

If you are entered in the Co-Ed division, you must have at least one (1) male in each category (Show and all three (3) Game Time categories).

14. **Scoring**

Final scores will be determined using TOTAL POINTS. Three (3) score sheets will be combined for a total of 115 points per show routine, 100 for Sideline/Timeout Cheer and Dance and 300 points per game time routine. All penalties and deductions will be subtracted from the combined scores to provide the FINAL score. The team with the highest final score will be declared the winner. See the TIE BREAKER rule below in case two (2) or more teams earn the same final score.

15. **Tie Breaker**

If there is a tie in a category placement after the final scores have been determined, the TOTAL ADJUSTED SCORE (including deductions and penalties) from all EXECUTION scoresheet columns in the tied category will determine the winner. The school with the highest adjusted total execution score will win. If a tie remains after totaling the execution scores, the team with the highest ADJUSTED STUNTS & PYRAMID SCORE will win the tie. If a tie remains after comparing adjusted Stunts & Pyramid scores, the team with the least amount of DEDUCTIONS in the tied category will win the tie. After that, if a tie still exists, both teams will be awarded the tie and given the same overall placement. In the event that there are more than two teams tied for overall places, the same above process will be followed until one team is awarded the highest or lowest placement. The process will then continue until all teams are awarded a place or deemed tied.

16. **Qualifying for the State Championship**

Overall Champions: Overall classification and division champions will be awarded at the UHSAA Division Qualifiers and State Cheer Competition. There will be separate classification champions for the All Girl and Co-Ed show divisions. Overall classification and division winners will be determined by:

Possible Points <i>(a perfect score)</i>	Stunts & Pyramids	Jumps, Tumbling, & Dance	Cheer & Overall	TOTAL	SHOW 115
	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3		
	45	35	35	115	
Possible Points <i>(a perfect score)</i>	Choreography	Execution	Crowd Leading & Overall	TOTAL CHEER	Total GAMETIME 200
	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3		
	20	40	40	100	
Possible Points <i>(a perfect score)</i>	Choreography	Execution	Engagement & Overall	TOTAL DANCE	
	Judge 1	Judge 2	Judge 3		
	20	40	40	100	

SHOW	115 x 40 =	4600	70% of SHOW(40) + 30% of TOTAL GAMETIME(23) = OVERALL PLACEMENT
GAMETIME	200 x 23 =	4600	

To make the Show and Game Time categories equally weighted, each will need to be multiplied by the numbers above. After that, a true 70% and 30% can be determined for the overall calculations.

In case of an **overall classification tie**, the team with the better Show category placement will be awarded overall champion. After that, the tie-breaking system outlined above will be utilized except the total execution scores and deductions from ALL score sheets will be combined to determine placement.

CAPTION SCORING SHOW CATEGORY CLARIFICATION

17. **Team Majority**

(3A-6A) Majority is 50% of any team doing the skills. This means that if a team is competing with 15 athletes, 50% would be 7.5. Round UP. To have majority, this team will need at least eight (8) participating in stunts or tumbling to get the difficulty points. For example: If you have a team of 12 athletes with 3 stunt groups, the majority rule of 50% puts them at 1.5 stunt groups. The requirement would be to round the number UP to two (2) stunt groups

(1A-2A) Majority is 40% of any team doing the skills. For example: This means that if a team is competing with 16 athletes, 40% would be 6.4, rounding down to 6. To have majority, this team will need at least eight (6) participating in stunts or tumbling to get the difficulty points. If 17 athletes are competing, 40% would be 6.8, rounding up to 7. To have majority, this team will need at least eight (7) participating in stunts or tumbling to get the difficulty points.

***BASKET TOSS MAJORITY RULE CHANGE* A front spot (5th athlete) will no longer count towards team majority number. A front spot may be used but will not be included in your majority**

18. **Pyramids/Stunts (one judge, one score sheet)**

This judge scores stunts and pyramids throughout a show routine **EXCEPT** for those that are in the cheer section. To earn points on the Stunts/Pyramid score sheet teams must perform them in the music section. The judge will give a score for the difficulty of the stunts/pyramids as well as an execution score for the stunts/pyramids. They will also work with the cheer judge as the second set of eyes to help determine the cheer score.

19. **Cheer**

The Cheer judge will score stunts (DIFFICULTY) and technique in the cheer and overall cheer execution. (*stunting is a required skill in the cheer caption and must be used to lead the crowd*). **Example: If a team does: Full Ups that end in an extension in their cheer, they will earn points for that stunt in the cheer caption scoresheet NOT THE STUNTS AND PYRAMIDS SCORESHEET! Another example: If a team does a pyramid in their cheer, there are no difficulty points available for that on the cheer score sheet so they would not get difficulty credit for a pyramid unless it is in the music section NOT THE CHEER.**

20. **Jumps, Tumbling, Dance (two judges, one scoresheet):**

These judges will be judging jumps, tumbling, and dance throughout the entire show routine. **Example: If a team does running, tumbling during their music section, this judge will score it. Example: If a team jumps or tumbles in the cheer, this judge will score it. IMPORTANT:** If teams want to be guaranteed majority difficulty points for running tumbling and standing tumbling, **the majority of the team must execute these skills at the same time and majority running tumbling and standing tumbling need to be performed separately.** This judge will also score execution for all jumps, tumbling, and dance.

Co-ed Difficulty is the SAME as above.

21. **Tumbling Definitions**

“Running” means a forward motion - roundoff, cartwheel, aerials, either a power hurdle or running a few steps.

“Tumbling” means an additional skill(s) such as a handspring, multiple handsprings, whip, etc.

REMINDER: (3A-6A) The point values on the difficulty sheet are awarded when 50% of the team performs the skill AT THE SAME TIME OR IN THE SAME PHRASE. STANDING TUMBLING AND RUNNING TUMBLING NEED TO BE PERFORMED SEPARATELY. THIS WILL ALLOW MAJORITY SKILLS TO BE CLEAR FOR THE OFFICIALS.

(1A-2A) The point values on the difficulty sheet are awarded when 40% of the team performs the skill AT THE SAME TIME OR IN THE SAME PHRASE. STANDING TUMBLING AND RUNNING TUMBLING NEED TO BE PERFORMED SEPARATELY. THIS WILL ALLOW MAJORITY SKILLS TO BE CLEAR FOR THE OFFICIALS.

PYRAMID DEFINITIONS:

Pyramid Majority: Must use more than 50% of top girls involved in Elite Skills and Transitions for Elite Pyramid. Whatever your majority is for your stunts applies for your Pyramid. ex: Majority Number is 15 equals 4 stunt groups, must use more than 50% which equals 3 stunt groups executing the elite skills or transitions. **This Pyramid Majority is for all classifications.**

Structure: A structure is the connected stunt skill from the STUNT section boxes on the Stunts & Pyramids scoresheet, executed during the pyramid.

Transitions: A transition is a transitional skill performed before or after a structure. Transitions do not need to be connected.

1. Depending on which section you wish to score in, use skills from that stunt box section and execute them in your pyramid. For example, an “Elite” structure would come from the “Elite” stunt box section of the scoresheet and “Superior” from the “Superior” section, etc. For Superior and Elite pyramids, you must execute at least two of these skills. For a Standard pyramid, you only need one structure.
2. Transition difficulty: Elite transition examples would be flips, rolls, inversions, twisting, etc. All other transitions that are more simplified such as straight up and down and show and goes would be considered in the Standard and Superior pyramids. For Superior and Elite pyramids, you must execute at least two of these transitions. For a Standard pyramid, transitions are not required.
3. An Elite pyramid is required to have at least two elite structures and elite transitions using the majority of top girls.
4. A Superior pyramid must have at least two superior structures and transitions using the minimum number of top girls.
5. A Standard pyramid is required to have at least one standard structure and transitions are not required.

22. Deduction Scoring

- **Stunt Fall:** Everyone is safely caught, and athletes don't hit the ground
- **Stunt Drop:** Any athlete hits the ground
- **Pyramids Collapse:** When the pyramid structure is complete, one deduction for a fall for each structure. If the pyramid never hits or hits, then falls, it is a collapse. Double deductions (a structure falling and a pyramid collapse) will not be given.

23. Show Cheer

Teams will be judged on execution, difficulty, incorporated skills, strength of motions, overall entertainment, and crowd effect. Deductions will be given for falls etc. please make yourself familiar with the deduction sheet on the website(s).

24. Game Time

There will be two categories in this division for teams to enter;

Sideline/Timeout Cheer, Sideline/Timeout Dance. Majority will not apply in these categories. *2024 2025 UHSAA GAME TIME CATEGORIES WILL BE (SIDELINE/TIMEOUT CHEER AND SIDELINE/TIMEOUT DANCE.*

25. Sideline/Timeout Cheer: Caption Scoring

Your best sideline, crowd-leading material. Only the use of signs, poms, flags, and megaphones are allowed. Jumps are no longer required but you can still perform them.

1. Forty-five (45) seconds to one (1) minute **time limit**
2. Emphasis on crowd involvement
3. At least two components are required from the following: cheers, chants, traditional yells, and/or drum cadences
4. No music permitted, but a single drummer allowed
5. No baskets, sponge, elevator, or similar type tosses permitted
6. No inversions
7. Single leg stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitch body positions (you may go straight up, full up or switch up)
8. Maximum difficulty in tumbling is limited to standing tumbling
9. Running tumbling is permitted only during team entrance
10. Performed on a mat
11. Incorporation of Specialties needs to enhance crowd leading and not take away from it.

SPECIALTY EXAMPLES: STUNTS, STANDING TUMBLING, KICKS, JUMPS, VISUALS WITH POMS, FLAGS, PROPS (refer to video and live training)

26. Sideline/Timeout Dance: Caption Scoring

Perform your favorite time-out dance. Only the use of signs, poms, flags and megaphones are allowed, but not required.

1. Forty-five (45) seconds to one (1) minute time limit
2. Traditional sideline uniforms required, (i.e. skirt and top)
3. **Emphasis on Crowd Engagement with Entertainment or Crowd Leading**
4. No stunts or tumbling permitted, including Aerials
5. Performed on the Mat
6. **Only recorded music is permitted (you may chose the style of music that you want)**
7. **Props can be used but are not required.**

27. General Rules

- DIVISION QUALIFIERS

- > Any medical accommodations such as Daith piercings etc. must receive an accommodation from UHSAA prior to participation. The head coach must request an accommodation and present medical documentation to UHSAA and receive a waiver for participation. Failure to get approval for that athlete will prohibit them from performing.
- > In all categories, routines will be performed on a competition area of 54' x 42' with approximately a 5' buffer around the competition surface. This buffer space may vary depending on the facility at the host school. Teams may line up anywhere outside the competition area. During the routine team members may not leave the competition area/boundaries. All stunting and tumbling must be completed in the competition area. If a team member goes out of bounds, they are subject to a penalty. The following will be the only exception: **Injury of a Cheer Athlete on the performance surface, during a routine:** Coaches and competition directors should take every precaution to ensure the safety of participants. Should an injury or sudden illness occur during a routine, the following protocol should take place:
 1. Stop the music and attend to the injured participant
 2. Determine the care the injured participant may need (first aid, athletic trainer, EMT services).
 3. ALL NFHS page 14 Rule 2 Art 17, 18, 19 must be strictly adhered to.
 4. Competition directors at the site will determine when/if the team will be allowed to continue/finish the routine.
 5. An injured participant that wishes to perform, may not return to the competition unless the competition officials receive clearance from the on site medical personnel.
 - In categories where allowed, teams may use signs, megaphones, cheer flags, and poms, but no other props will be allowed.
 - Before teams compete, they should walk into the competition area and place their poms or signs down, then go quickly to their starting positions. If teams enter the floor with introductions, spell-outs, they will be considered part of the routine and the timing will start. You may do a quick chant off to the side of the floor in place before moving onto the floor, please make it clear it is not part of the competition routine.
 - **SPORTSMANSHIP:** A participant, coach, substitute, trainer, or other team attendants must not commit an unsporting act. They must not disrespect or contact an official and indicate resentment. They must not use profane or inappropriate language, music, or gestures.
 - **TIME LIMITS:** All routines (*with the exception of Game Time routines – see above for details*) must have a minimum duration of two (2) minutes and up to a maximum duration of two (2) minutes and 30 seconds. Timing will begin with the first note of music, the first motion, (excluding a set-motion), or the building of any stunt or pyramid. Timing will end the instant the team starts to exit (after hitting their ending position). Pre-building, partner stunts, or pyramids will not be allowed before the timing starts.

Teams will be allowed 30 seconds for set up if needed (signs, poms, etc.) and 30 seconds to exit (last cheerleader leaves the floor). The routine may include a cheer portion and choreography to music, but may also be choreographed entirely to music. All routines must have a cheer section. PLEASE REVIEW THE SCORESHEETS TO MAKE SURE ALL ELEMENTS/REQUIREMENTS ARE INCLUDED!

If teams choose to enter the Show category and perform straight through with music, they must still have a cheer section, or will lose those points.

- A representative of each team must be present at the announcer's table when their team is performing to cue the music. The sound crew takes no responsibility if a team representative is not present (penalty is two (2) points for disrupting the flow of competition). This person must remain at the sound table for the duration of the performance. **The sound crew will not turn off your music or start it over.** Music should be recorded on a MP3 player with a backup in case of incompatibility or lack of battery power. If using a phone, you must place your phones on airplane mode. We strongly suggest setting phones (if using them) to a manner in which that does not happen. No live music is allowed.
 - > Inappropriate content or vulgar music lyrics are not allowed and the point deduction will be left to the discretion of the routine judges (maximum is disqualification).
- Appropriate cheer shoes are required and all NFHS uniform requirements must be followed. No costuming will be allowed.

- **PENALTIES:** Make sure music is timed accordingly to prevent overtime penalties. Teams must know and follow all copyright laws. UHSAA will not be held accountable for any music played that does not follow the law. Copyright laws have not changed since 2016. NFHS offers a free copyright short training if you have questions (www.nfhslern.org).
 - > There will be a two (2) point penalty deduction for every ten seconds over the time limit or ten seconds under the time limit. This will be assessed by the penalty judge (i.e. 2:33= 2 points penalty, 2:41 = 4 points penalty). Teams should give themselves a timing leeway because of the variability in sound systems. There will be a three (3) second leeway before a penalty is given.
 - > Coaches will not be allowed to “take the penalty.” Athletes will not be allowed on the floor with intentional safety violations.
 - > There will be a two (2) point penalty deduction for any team or coach that disrupts the flow of the competition due to but not limited to: teams that have long fingernails that have to be clipped or jewelry that has to be removed, coaches that approach floor judges during the competition, e.g.
 - > A two (2) point penalty deduction will be given for each safety infraction. If the penalty judges feel that a team does not have a clear understanding of the safety rules due to excessive rule infractions, they can disqualify a team.
 - > Minor safety infractions: A (.5) penalty for each of the following: boundary violations, stepping on signs or poms, and wardrobe malfunctions.
 - > Every effort must be made to gently set down a sign or pom in a routine but in the event the judges feel it is excessive, a (.5) deduction will be given (follow the new NFHS prop discard rule).
 - > A two (2) point deduction for UHSAA Rules Violation.
- **VIDEO REVIEW:** There will be a new video review process implemented. Video review of SAFETY RULES, DEDUCTIONS and DIFFICULTY SKILLS (not including execution) will be allowed at the Divisional and the State Championships. Coaches will have access to **their** scoresheets during the competition. Challenges will be made electronically via a QR code given at check in. If a coach requests a video review the following could happen: 1) If the review was successful, then the scoresheet will be adjusted. 2) If other (non-documented) violations are seen during the review, they will be added to the scoresheet. 3) The judge’s initial decision will stand!!! Execution and Overall Impressions scores cannot be challenged *See training for detailed challenge rules.
- Host school information will be sent out (such as entrances, exits, parking, etc.) prior to each competition.
- UHSAA WILL SEND OUT A DECLARATION SHEET TO BE COMPLETED BY SEPTEMBER 5TH FOR SCHOOLS TO DECLARE WHICH DIVISION (CO-ED OR ALL-GIRL) THEY ARE ENTERING IN, THEN QUALIFYING SITE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE MADE.
- For all UHSAA Divisionals, you will pay your entry fee directly to UHSAA. More information on how to do that will be coming at a later time. SCHOOLS WILL STILL GET YOUR LOG IN AND SUBMIT A ROSTER AND WAIVERS. ON THE RC COMPETES WEBSITE.

30. Judges

Judges must register and certify with the UHSAA on an annual basis. For information on the registration process and the training required for certification, go to the Competitive Cheer page at www.uhsaa.org. Judges will be required to attend a UHSAA Competitive Cheer Judges Clinic or view the online clinic at www.uhsaa.org. Judges must attend the UHSAA live Judging Practicum.

31. Tabulation Protest

A team has 24 hours after the conclusion of the competition to PROTEST TABULATION ERRORS. That protest must be received by the UHSAA office, in writing, to be valid for the State Competition. Protests for Divisional competitions shall be sent to the competition director. Only tabulation errors may be protested after the competition. Tabulators are required to email the final spreadsheet results to the UHSAA by 7 a.m. the morning following a competition.

32. Awards

Dates for Academic All-State nominations can be found on the UHSAA calendar at uhsaa.org. The UHSAA will present first and second place trophies to the overall winners and first and second place plaques in each category and classification will be awarded at the UHSAA State Competitive Cheer Competition. For the 2024 2025 season awards will be given in both Sideline Timeout Dance and Sideline Timeout Cheer. The UHSAA will also award medals (first, second and third place) in each classification to the winners in the Jump Off competition. The academic all-state award will be mailed to the recipients.