



**Georgia Independent
Athletic Association**

Cheer Manual

2026 - 2027

www.giaasports.org



TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
SECTION ONE: General Information – Spirit & Competitive Cheer	3
General Dates & Fall Schedule - 2026	4
Spirit and Support Cheer: General Information	5
Uniform Guidelines	6
Miscellaneous Information	7
Sportsmanship	7
GENERAL INFORMATION for Competitive Cheer	8
Competition Guidelines	10
TOURNAMENT SET-UP	11
The Performance Floor – Mats; Mat Placement	13
Routine, Flash Photography, Order of Appearance	14
TOURNAMENT STAFF	16
Announcer, Sound Technician, Team Music Person	17
Script for Announcer	18
Timer, Medical Personnel	19
Officials, Seating of Officials & Timer	20
Panels	21
Officials Pay	21
SECTION TWO: Competitive Cheer	22
PART A – Judging Guide & Responsibilities / Head Judge	23
Safety Judge	26
Timing of Routine, Music Considerations	27
The Timer	28
Timing Infractions	29
Injury / Accident Guidelines	29
PART B – Scoring	31
Scorers, Computerized Scoring	31
Manually Keeping Score, Breaking Ties	32
MASTER SCORE SHEET	34
2-Point Infractions	35
Boundary Violations, Hair Violations, Fingernail Violations	35
Falls, Pyramid, 5-Point Infractions, 10-Point Infractions	37
Disqualifications	38
SAFETY INFRACTION SHEET	38
SECTION THREE: Instructions & Rubrics for Scoring	41
Cheer Introduction, Definitions	42
Panel A – Jumps / Cheer / Dance / ORC, Definitions	42
PANEL A – Jumps / Cheer / Dance / ORC RUBRIC	44
PANEL A – Officials Score Sheet	45
Panel B – Tumbling, Definitions	46
PANEL B – Standing / Tumbling RUBRIC	48
PANEL B – Officials Score Sheet	49
Panel C – Partner Stunts / Pyramids, Definitions	51
Partner Stunts / Tosses	51
Stunt Skills, Body Positions / Flexibility Skills	52
Dismounts	54
Pyramids	54
PANEL C – Partner Stunts RUBRIC	56
PANEL C – Pyramids RUBRIC	57
PANEL C – Officials Score Sheet	58



SECTION ONE

GENERAL INFORMATION

SPIRIT AND COMPETITIVE CHEER





General Dates and Fall Schedule - 2026

The **National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) Rules of Spirit** is the official guide with exceptions as may be noted in this Guide. All cheerleading events must be approved by the GIAA.

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Dates	Descriptions
July 28, 2026	First Day Allowed for Practice
July 1, 2026	All Schools HOSTING a Meet must submit Meet Information
August 15, 2026	Eligibility for Competitive and Game Day Cheer Due
August 15, 2026	All schools participating in Competition Cheer and Game Day Cheer must submit their SCHEDULES (include all GIAA and GHSA competitions)
August 20, 2026	Tournament hosts must notify GIAA regarding confirmation competition. Email amy@giaasports.org
August 22, 2026	Competition Season Begins – 1 st Day Allowed to Compete
June 9, August 8, 11, 15 and 25th and September 5th	Rules Training and Competition Guide Review
October 1, 2026	Intent to Compete at State is due to GIAA Office including Complete Roster of Eligible Athletes and Substitutes
November 7, 2026	GIAA State Cheer Competition at George Walton Academy, Monroe GA
December 5, 2026	GIAA GAME DAY Cheer Competition at Tattnall Square Academy, Macon

For safety reasons NFHS Spirit Guidelines and Rules as well as GIAA Guidelines and Rules must be followed by all teams, which includes support, spirit, or performing and competitive teams. These rules are mandated, not suggested.



SPIRIT AND SUPPORT CHEER

NOTE: It is REQUIRED that all Spirit/Support Teams follow these guidelines for the 2026-2027 Season.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

- A. Schools may choose to have any number of *support/spirit* squad(s) that do(es) not compete. Example: Football, Basketball, Junior Varsity
- B. The number allowed on a non-competitive team is determined by the school.
- C. All Non-competitive Cheerleaders (Spirit and/or Support) must be deemed academically eligible according to GIAA Eligibility Rules.
- D. Non-students are not allowed to be part of a sideline cheerleading group either as mascot or "junior cheerleader" (Per NFHS Safety Rules and Liability). All cheerleaders must be able to meet the physical demands of cheer.
- E. All Cheer Coaches (competitive and non-competitive) must attend a GIAA Rules Clinic. Failure to attend an in-person clinic will result in fines and coach will be expected to complete the rules training course and take and pass a test.
- F. The Coach is responsible for:
 - An appropriate warm-up for all athletes prior to practice or performances.
 - Practice sessions should be held in a location suitable for the activities involved.
 - Performing surfaces must be clear and free from objects or impediments.
 - Props must be appropriate to cheer activities.
- G. At Basketball games, support/spirit squads may perform stunts and/or tumbling without mats, but only if they are allowed by NFHS Spirit Rules. **NOTE: For liability reasons NFHS rules pertaining to safety are to be followed in any cheerleading practice or performance.**
- H. **No "stomping"** of any kind is allowed in the stands or seating area of the gymnasium. Stomping is restricted to the floor of the gymnasium.
- I. **Taunting** of any kind will not be tolerated. Aggressive or challenging cheers must not be performed under any circumstances.
- J. Home teams should provide a safe environment for visiting teams.
All coaches, team members, and parents should always conduct themselves professionally. Should an incident occur, all are subject to removal

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from the event. **Sportsmanship** is of utmost importance to the safety of our athletes. Officials may determine if a sportsmanship violation has occurred, and a deduction may be issued, or a report filed with the GIAA State Coordinator.

K. **Sportsmanship and Team Spirit** are key to the GIAA Cheerleading programs. All programs must respect fellow athletes, coaches, school representatives, administrators, and officials. Please see the **Sportsmanship Section** for additional rules.

L. **Cheerleading Apparel** are restricted as follows:

- Male uniform will be uniform pants and a top which counter parts those worn by the female teammates. Sideline male cheerleaders may include shorts in place of the pants. Tank tops/sleeveless will not be permitted.
- Female cheerleaders (sideline & competition) must wear a uniform (skirt or dress) that fully covers the athlete's entire torso. The skirt or dress should cover the briefs, bloomers or any spandex material.
- All athletes on the same team must wear the same uniform when performing at a game or competition. Uniforms should be respectful.
- Uniforms should be in the school colors and identifiable as representing the school.

**Uniform Guidelines in place for both
Competitive and Non-Competitive Teams**

- When in doubt, all coaches should check with the GIAA State Cheer Coordinator when selecting uniforms.
- Traditional cheerleading uniforms should be selected and appropriate to both the sport and for the athletes.
- Shoes should be appropriate to cheer and safe. Cheerleaders should wear athletic shoes.
- No midriffs showing or cut outs in the uniform unless cleared through the GIAA office. When standing at attention the apparel must cover the midriff.
- All teams must follow the guidelines concerning skirts for female athletes.
- All teams must follow the rules for male athletes.
- All teams must be wearing the appropriate school colors.
- No glitter or hard jewelry/stones/rhinestones of any kind.
- All jewelry of any kind is prohibited.
- A religious medal is allowed but must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.

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**MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION**

Beginning and ending dates for practice and competition can be found at the front of this publication.

Cheerleading teams are allowed to attend camps after the last day of school until **July 31st**. The only exception to this is attendance at the Spirit Clinic hosted by GIAA.

Spirit Cheerleading season ends after the last day of school.

Eligibility for Try-Outs:

All tryouts must be conducted after the official start date of each sport with the exception of all fall sports being allowed a maximum of five consecutive calendar days (meaning 5 days in a row) of tryouts in the spring.

-Students must be enrolled at a school in order to try out for all GIAA-sanctioned sports. A student may be enrolled in only one school at a time.

-Enrolled migrant students may try out for a GIAA-sanctioned sport but may not represent the school at the varsity level during the school year until the migratory sit-out period has ended.

-Students must meet academic eligibility requirements in order to try out.

After consideration of GIAA rules and procedures, each individual school will establish procedures and criteria for tryouts and for the qualifications to be selected for a team and the number of athletes to be placed on a team.

M. Sportsmanship***NFHS Spirit Rules Book: Section 2 SPORTSMANSHIP***

ART. 1. A participant, coach, substitute, trainer or other attendant must not commit an unsporting act. This includes, but is not limited to, acts of conduct such as:

Disrespectfully addressing or contacting an official or gesturing in such a manner as to indicate resentment. Using profanes or inappropriate language, music, or gestures.
Baiting or taunting an opponent.

NOTE: The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule, or demean others under any circumstances including the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin.

SPORTSMANSHIP: Please review the GIAA Code of Good Behavior with your fellow coaches, your team, and your parents/boosters.

If inappropriate behavior occurs after the contest, but while the officials still have jurisdiction the officials may report the incident to the GIAA State Coordinator. Coaches, administrators, contest officials or players should not make comments to the media that are critical of the officials or host.

Penalties, fines, suspensions, and other repercussions such as ejections can occur. Persons who do not behave properly (or who have violated this code or broken laws, etc.) are to be warned and asked to leave the premises. In case of law violations, these matters need to be handled by the security personnel, taking appropriate action as may be deemed necessary. It is the host school's responsibility to provide and ensure that all participants, fans, and officials can attend any event in safety without undue or improper harassment, etc. from opposing school fans, police, etc.



GENERAL INFORMATION for Competitive Cheer

Please review all forms and info on the GIAA website including Physical Forms, Concussion Awareness, Cardiac Arrest Awareness, and Heat Policies. It is the responsibilities of the coach to plan for the safety of all athletes participating in their program. The coach is responsible for practice, performance, and competition and ensuring all rules of the GIAA and the NFHS are followed. Competitive Coaches must also be aware of the GHSA Guidelines. To stay abreast of any changes, visit the GHSA Competition manual, as needed.

2026 Competition Cheerleading Changes and Clarifications

The following updates and clarifications are in effect for the 2026 competitive season in Georgia Independent Athletic Association Competition Cheerleading.

Tumbling Change

- A cartwheel entry into tumbling will be classified as running tumbling.
- A cartwheel is considered forward movement; therefore, all skills performed immediately following a cartwheel will be counted as running tumbling.
- Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - o Cartwheel tuck
 - o Cartwheel full Standing or Running Tumbling

Tuck Jump/Hop Deductions

- During a routine, tuck jumps or tuck hops may not be performed during group tumbling skills.
- If an athlete performs a tuck jump or hop during a group tumbling skill, the team will receive a 1-point deduction per athlete who executes the tuck jump/hop.

Examples:

A squad performs 12 standing tucks, and two other athletes perform a tuck jump/hop. The team will receive a 2-point deduction (1 point per athlete).

An athlete who performs a round-off back handspring rebound will not receive a point deduction. This will be considered an omission or missed tumbling skill, not a tuck jump/hop violation.

Out-of-Bounds Clarification

- An athlete will receive an out-of-bounds deduction only if both feet make contact outside the competition mat.
- Stepping one foot or placing a hand outside the competition mat does not constitute an out-of-bounds violation.



Injury During a Performance

- If an injury occurs during a performance, the routine may be stopped by an official, the coach(s), or the host.

Routine Timing

- Routine timing begins with the first organized motion or the first sound of music.
- Routine timing ends with the last organized motion or the last sound of music.
- Any time exceeding 2 minutes and 30 seconds, even by one second, will be considered overtime and will result in a timing infraction.
 - A. Out-of-Season practices may be held in preparation for tryouts only.
 - B. Competitive Coaches are responsible for explaining GIAA or GHSA procedures, guidelines, and sportsmanship to all athletes and their parents/guardians. Any issues or concerns anyone may have at an invitational or state tournament should be addressed with the local school, coach, and principal; **never** with the officials. Concerns should be expressed to the State Director or Coordinator **by the school** and not the parents.
 - C. The coaches, teams, and parents/guardians must have **no contact** with officials prior to, during or after the competition. Any concerns or issues should be addressed by the school coach, Athletic Director, or principal in writing to GIAA Office or to the GIAA State Cheer Coordinator.
 - D. Teams entering GHSA competitive events are governed by GHSA Rules.
NOTE: GHSA does NOT allow 8th Graders to compete on the varsity level. Should the team fail to follow GHSA or GIAA guidelines and rules, team will be reported to the GIAA Office.
 - E. All decisions of the officials are final. Any concerns or issues should be reported to the GIAA Cheer Coordinator for review.



COMPETITIVE CHEER GUIDELINES

- A. **Competitive Cheerleading** is a State Championship sport.
- All schools compete in one division.
 - All schools are allowed to have only one (1) Varsity competition team.
- B. For liability and safety of the athletes, all cheerleading competitions must be conducted according to the rules of the **"National Federation Spirit Rules Book"** and the **"GIAA Cheerleading Manual."** The **NFHS Rules of Spirit Book** may be purchased from the National Federation of High Schools website at www.nfhs.com. An app is also available for purchase.
- C. **Competition Team Members** must be enrolled in the school to try out for Competitive Cheerleading.

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A **competition team** may have a roster of more than 16 performers and the coach may use any combination of eligible cheerleaders to comprise the maximum competing team of 16.

If a mascot performs with the team, they will count as one of the 16 performers.

The mascot will be subject to NFHS and GIAA** rules.

The athletes must be currently enrolled in the school they are representing.

When performing the team will include all spotters and no additional spotters may enter onto the court.

**If a team competes in GHSA competitions, they must abide by GHSA rules, also.

- D. All team members must be dressed in the appropriate adopted school uniform that displays the school identification (i.e., letter, monogram, mascot symbol, etc.). Team members should all wear the same uniform abiding by uniform rules.

NOTE: The mascot is exempt from this uniform rule.

- E. Teams are encouraged to compete in GIAA events. Teams are eligible to compete in GHSA sanctioned events during the regular cheerleading season. Any teams participating in the GHSA events should submit the events and dates with their competitive calendar.

NOTE: GHSA does NOT allow 8th Graders to compete on the varsity level.

**F. TOURNAMENT SET-UP:**

All tournaments must be conducted by the same procedures. Safety, liability, and consistency are key concerns when hosting a tournament.

- The competition area includes the warm-up as well as the performance floor.
- All tournaments must provide adequate time, space, and mats for warm-ups.
- The use of outside spotters is prohibited. Spotters must be included in the 16 identified team members.
- Exhibitions by GIAA members are not allowed at sanctioned events.
- Host teams performing must count this as a competition and be scored.
- Any performance by a GIAA Team will count as a competition.
- Only approved coaches may assist with GIAA events, including warm-ups, time on mats, or competition rotations. This included Certified Coaches and Community Coaches.

*Up to (3) coaches may enter the warm up room with the team and go on the floor while the routine is being performed. All others remain in the stands. For Liability purposes, credentials must be checked, and coaches cleared. At State, all credentials will be shown at registration. Coaches must have passes to wear at all times.

- No Alternates are allowed in the warm-up areas or on the competition floor. Host should provide priority seating for alternates, additional coaches, and parents where possible.
- Non-GIAA Teams (college teams, youth teams, etc.) must be approved to perform an exhibition PRIOR to the competition.
- The music person may be with the team but should be clearly identifiable and follow the rules posted in the Staff section.
- Coaches should prepare their team for warm-up. Teams should practice specific procedures to follow during warm-ups. Depending upon the number of warm-up mats the host will designate what skill may be executed on each mat. Safety must dictate the procedures in the mat warm-up areas.
- No unauthorized props may be carried into the warm-up area, the music area or competitive area. Doing so will result in a disqualification. Example: The team is the BEARS - (a) the team music person carries a bear into the music area and holds it during the performance; (b) the captain of the team carries a bear out to the front of the mat and sits it down on the floor then returns to line up with the team; (c) the team carries the bear into the warm-up area and does a chant with the bear, (d) the coach carries the bear or a picture of the bear to her designated

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chair and sits it on the floor or shakes it as the team dances.

ALL FOUR are ILLEGAL.

- Only approved GIAA coaches, competitors and officials are allowed in the competitive area.
- Only team members may act as spotters. Non-competitors (i.e., alternates, coaches) may not assist during the routine or in warm-ups.
- It is recommended, but not mandatory, that cheerleaders practice stunting on one or more 6' x 42' cheerleading mats prior to performing stunts in a team routine.
- In the case of an injury or accident, mats must be appropriately cleaned of any bodily fluids before practice or competition may resume.
- Middle school and high school events must be considered separate events. Middle schools may not be placed in rotation with high school teams.
- Tumbling skills may not be performed as a part of the entrance to or exit from the competitive area.
- Poms are the only props allowed in a competitive routine.

**THE PERFORMANCE FLOOR – MATS**

The competitive area is a 42' x 42' blue cheerleading mat, and the routine must be performed within the boundaries of the competitive area. Mats must have a minimum thickness of 1-3/8 inches.

- A full set of cheerleading mats (42' x 42') must be used in all competitions including invitationals, regional, and state competitions. (7 Mats).
- The entire mat is considered the competition floor.
- All mats should be placed on the floor horizontally facing the judges. Center of the mat should be marked with tape. The floor will be considered out-of-bounds.
- **Out-of-Bounds** will be considered as stepping, tumbling, stunting, dancing, jumping, or performing off the mat. To call out-of-bounds a participant must touch the floor. **Out-of-Bounds Clarification** An athlete will receive an out-of-bounds deduction only if both feet make contact outside the competition mat. Stepping one foot or placing a hand outside the competition mat does not constitute an out-of-bounds violation.

Mat Placement: Mats must be placed according to the GHSA rules and failure to do so can result in a penalty for the host school.

Please follow the steps for placing the mats and see the drawing.

Step Action – Follow these steps when laying the mats out.

- 1 Lay the length of the mats parallel to the judges' table. Mat placement: 7 mats wide, 7 mats long.
- 2 Locate the center by measuring front-to-back and side-to-side.
- 3 Mark the center with white tape forming an "X".
- 4 Measure three feet either side of it and this is where the first blue strips will be placed from the back to the front, perpendicular to the judges' table.
- 5 From there measure 6' on either side of that line and continue to do so. There will be six lines of blue tape from back to front.
- 6 White tape may then be placed around the border of the mat to define the ends/edges of the mat. [This does not define the boundary and is a safety precaution only.]

BACK of MAT – Preferred Team entrance on either side.

Center Front of mat – Judges Table
[Safety Judges must remain on the side of the mat.]



H. ROUTINE

- The competitive routine must include both cheer and dance.
- Tumbling skills are permitted only within the body of the routine.
- The length of the routine shall be a maximum of two minutes and thirty seconds (2:30), timed by an official timer.
- The routine must begin within thirty (30) seconds of the head judge's signal.
- Failure to do so shall result in a five-point deduction for delay of the meet.

I. FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY

- Flash photography is **prohibited** while teams are performing.
- The host should post signs at the entrance and in the competitive arena that no flash photography is allowed.
- Anyone using flash photography whether on iPhone, camera, or iPad or spotlights of any kind, may be asked to leave the arena.
- Flash photography is a danger to those performing on the competition floor.

J. ORDER OF APPEARANCE

- At invitationals the Host School is responsible for the order of appearance.
- Middle schools cannot compete in rotation with high school teams. A separate rotation should be set up for middle schools.
- The order of rotation should be sent to schools and officials in advance. All teams should be asked to arrive prior to the start of the competition.
- It is suggested that no more than 6 minutes be allowed between teams and the rotation of the next team. This should be addressed with the Head Judge prior to the tournament.
- If an emergency with an injury occurs, the Host should consult the Head Judge to determine how to proceed and if any changes in rotation need to occur.
- Should a team arrive **after** their competition time, it can result in the elimination from competition.
- Teams incurring music issues should return to the floor immediately. The Head Judge will consult with the music person and host and determine if a **DELAY OF MEET** will be called.
- **Should an injury occur on either the warm-up mat or the floor competition mat**, the team may be placed back in rotation and moved to the end of the division.
 - The **coach** will determine how to proceed:
 - The coach will indicate if the athlete is returning to the floor if the athlete is cleared by the medical personnel to continue.
 - The coach will indicate if a substitute fills in and competes in the place of the injured team member
 - The coach will indicate if the team will continue competition without the team member.
 - The **host** will notify the Head Judge of the decision.
 - If a team is last in a division, the competition will be placed on hold while decisions are made. If a rotation is occurring, the division which follows must wait to start until the team has performed. All teams must perform within their division. Example: Last middle school team out has an injury and is coming



back to perform then Varsity teams must wait to perform.

- For safety reasons, the team with the injury is given a chance to return to warm-up rotations prior to competing again.
- All injuries should be cleared by a medical person prior to the athlete returning to the floor.
- The GIAA Office will determine the order of appearance at the State Competition.
 - Once the order has been determined no changes will be made in rotation prior to competition.
 - All teams participating should make arrangements to be present for the entire tournament.
- **Videos:** Videos from practice may be submitted for review of rules, legalities, and possible scoring. The video must be submitted to the state coordinator in a viewable format. All coaches are reminded that reviews are only of the video. Because it is reviewed prior to performance does not mean it is performed legally in the actual competitions. Teams can perform actual illegal stunts, or it is possible to have an execution error that makes the stunt illegal.

Sample Video Rulings are available at <https://ghsacheerleading.com/videos-rulings>

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- All rulings and scores are final. Once the competition is finished then it is over.
 - There will be no reviews of videos for purposes of scoring reviews.
 - There are no appeals for the results of competitions.
 - **All decisions are final.**
-



TOURNAMENT STAFF

A. Tournament Staff

The Tournament Host should be assigned to oversee the competition. This should not be a parent. If the coach is available and not competing, they may oversee the competition. If the Varsity Coach is competing it is best to assign another coach, a JV coach, freshman coach or an administrator. The Host must remain available to respond to issues or concerns and emergencies in all areas of the competition.

- The Tournament Host should arrange for the staff to include scorekeepers, timers, a sound person, gate and ticket personnel, an announcer, security, clean-up, concessions.
- The Tournament Host should arrange for personnel to run the warm-up area and assist with team rotation.
- The Tournament Host should confirm that all staff is trained. This will include the scorekeepers to make sure that they can follow all guidelines.
- The Tournament Host should have all materials available for use including the officials' and scorekeepers' packets.
- The Tournament Host should ensure that a trainer or emergency medical staff is available to provide care in an emergency.
- The Tournament Host is available to both the staff and the officials should any issues arise.
- The Tournament Host must secure a sound system and a DJ to run the system. It is the responsibility of the Host to train the DJ and request they follow the appropriate procedures.
- The Tournament Host is responsible for the placement of the Mats and for the officials' packets.
- The Tournament Host is responsible for remaining in contact with the coaches/teams to ensure they are aware of registration procedures, schedules/rotations, and other necessary information.
- The Tournament Host is responsible for the Awards Ceremony.
- The Tournament Host will organize clean-up.
- The Tournament Staff may consist of:
 - Medical Personnel or Trainers to work with possible injuries. All tournaments should provide medical personnel for all Invitationals. This could include school trainers, EMT, doctor, other medical emergency personnel to assist.



- Security
- Gate and Ticket Personnel
- Clean up Crews
- Hospitality Room Host (if provided)
- Runners

B. The Announcer, the Sound Technician, and the designated Team Music Person

- The **announcer and the sound technician** may be the same person.
- The music person/sound technician is responsible for following all procedures of the GIAA.
- The announcer must review the procedures of the GIAA Manual prior to the beginning of the competition. *See the script in the box below (page 18).*
- The announcer should meet with the Head Judge and Host to review procedures for rotation of teams. All announcers must use the script for announcing teams as they compete. *See the script in the box below (page 18).*
- The announcer must be prepared for emergencies or considerations given for changes in rotations.
- The announcer must remain in constant contact with the Head Judge for signals to start routines, begin rotations, stop music, etc.
- The **music person/sound technician** will be responsible for the set-up of and the operation of the music system equipment.
- The music person/sound technician will guide the coach or team music person in the use of the music/sound system as needed.
- The music person/sound technician will assist in connecting the device, if needed and removing it from the sound equipment.
- The music person/sound technician will assist the Head Judge and the Host in determining if an error occurred with the sound system or if the error occurred due to a team issue. The music person/sound technician may also assist in determining the time the routine was stopped whether in case of injuries or music issues.
- The music person/sound technician will watch the Head Judge or Safety Judge for a signal to stop the music.
- The coach will designate one person who will go to the music table to play the music during the routine. This person will follow the rules of the GIAA and the Host.
- The **Team Music Person** may go with the team through warm-ups, or the host may select to send the team music person directly to the sound system area.



- The Team Music Person should follow the Host directions. The music person will remain the same if moving through warm-ups and should be provided credentials to indicate they are the music person.
- The Team Music Person cannot stunt, perform, or spot tumbling or stunts while in the warm-up area.

Script to be used by the Announcer or the Sound Technician. The rotational script must be followed in this exact manner.

Sportsmanship Statement This statement is to be read at all GIAA games and events that a speaker system is available.

The GIAA encourages and promotes sportsmanship by student-athletes, coaches, and spectators. We request your cooperation by supporting the participants and officials in a positive manner. Disruptive behavior of any kind, including but not limited to protests, demonstrations, profanity, racial, ethnic, or sexist comments, or other intimidating actions, will not be tolerated and may be grounds for removal from the event

Flash photography is not allowed at GIAA cheer competitions. Please check your camera, video recorder or cell phone camera to ensure the flash is turned off. (repeat during breaks throughout the event)

"In the hole _____, on the deck _____, and performing now _____.

Once the team is ready to take the mat and upon the head judges' signal:
"You may take the floor"

Once the team is set on the floor and upon the judges signal:

"You may begin."

C. TIMER

Please review the Timer's duties and procedures on Page 28 of this manual. Because the Timer is seated with the Officials at the Judging table, keep in mind this must be a professional person who maintains confidentiality before, during, and after the competition. Please make sure to review all procedures with the Timer and introduce the Head Judge to this person.



D. MEDICAL PERSONNEL

- All tournaments must have medical personnel present. The host will determine the type needed (trainer, EMT, doctor, or other emergency personnel).
- A team's trainer must remain with the spectators or additional coaches and alternates unless they are considered one of the two certified coaches.
- First aid and medical supplies should be available.
- Teams needing taping will have to provide their own tape.
- Supplies must be on hand to clean the mats and floors if bodily fluids are on the mats.

OFFICIALS

Panel	Responsible Official	Responsibility and Job
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Panel A	Officials 1 and 2 Official 1 is the Head Judge	✓ Responsible for scoring jumps, dance, cheer and overall. ✓ Assist the Primary Safety Judge in determining violations and deductions which may have occurred during the routine.
Panel B	Officials 3 and 4	✓ Responsible for scoring standing and running tumbling.
Panel C	Officials 5 and 6	✓ Responsible for scoring primary partner stunts, secondary partner stunts, and pyramids.
Primary Safety	Safety Official – Official 7 Floor	✓ Serves as the primary Safety Judge to determine deductions or violations that may have occurred. ✓ Will assist in the counting of team members performing jumps, running tumbling, and standing tumbling as needed.

Seating of Officials and Timer

Official 7 is on the floor – side of mat opposite Judge 1

Panel B		Panel A		Panel C	
Running & Standing Tumbling		Jumps, Dance, Cheer, ORC		Partner Stunts, Pyramids	
Official 3	Official 4	Official 1	Official 2	Official 5	Official 6
			Timer		

Panels:

- All Panels are composed of seven officials. There are three separate panels with two judges on each one - safety judges.
- Host may contact April Smith at giaacheer@gmail.com if they wish to obtain GHSA Judges. Every effort will be made to locate judges that are within a reasonable distance from your school.

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- A final list of judges must be submitted to the GIAA for approval.
- If any variations in the number of officials used occurs, the host must notify the GIAA Cheer Coordinator for approval. Procedures are established to follow when the host is unable to obtain 7 officials.
 - In the case of six officials – Use one Safety Judge at the table seated with the Head Judge.
 - In the case of five officials – Use Two panel members on Panel A, one on Panel B, and Two on Panel C.
 - Every attempt should be made to fill the panel completely.
 - Teams should be informed when changes are made in the number of officials

COMPETITION OFFICIALS PAY

GHSA PAY: When negotiating pay for your tournament please work with the Booking Agent in determining the final pay.

The Host should obtain information concerning pay directly from the Booking Agent and determine how and when officials will be paid.

If no middle schools or Jr Pro teams are competing, each official will receive \$15 travel pay for a regular event.

Officials are paid \$12.50 per team up to 12 teams.
Officials are paid \$10 per team for each team over the 12 teams.
The fee is based on total teams in all divisions.

Officials are paid for a minimum of 12 teams. (\$150 plus any agreed upon mileage.)

*Pay is agreed upon in advance by the Booking Agent who will inform both the school and the officials of the amount. Mileage is paid only for officials who drive their car to the event. GIAA has a maximum mileage rate of \$50 per judge

SECTION TWO

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COMPETITIVE CHEER



SECTION TWO – PART A

JUDGING JUDGING GUIDE and RESPONSIBILITIES

HEAD JUDGE
Pre-Competition



- Is assigned by the Booking Agent and to Panel A.
- Will coordinate the panel and assist the Booking Agent to determine the area of expertise and judging assignments for each routine judge.
- Remains in communication with the Host School and Tournament Director communicating information to the panel and the Booking Agent.
- Will have all needed competition items including GIAA Competition Guide, NFHS Safety Rules, sticky notes, a clean copy of the Master Score Sheet, Safety Infraction Sheet and a clean copy of Panel A, Panel B, and Panel C Score sheets in the event these forms must be used or needed for copying.
- Attends a Pre-Competition Meeting with host as needed.
- Meets with the scorekeepers, timers, and the announcer/music person. Ensures they understand their responsibilities and the GIAA guidelines. Discuss confidentiality with each group.
- Remind the scorekeepers you will sign the Master Score Sheet prior to them making any copies.
- Remind all staff, including the scorekeepers, that cell phones are not permitted at the scoring table.
- Remind the announcer/music person to follow the GIAA prescribed script: *"In the hole _____, on the deck _____, and performing now _____". You may take the floor* at your signal. (See Script Box (B) page 18.)
- Review braces, cast, or uniforms as necessary, but do not review the rules.
- Check all materials to make sure they are available, current versions, and everything is in order.
- Check competition order for any changes that may have occurred.
- Review www.ghsachieerleading.com on a weekly basis to understand new interpretations and updated material. Share with the panel.
- Check your email the morning of the competition for any new interpretations or special emails from the Competitive Cheer Coordinator and/or Booking Agent.
- Always conduct yourself in an appropriate professional manner.

DURING THE COMPETITION

Once the Competition begins:

- Sit near the timer and signal when to start and stop the clock.
- Signal the announcer/music person when to bring the team on the floor and to begin the routine.
- Use the **NFHS Rules of Spirit** and GIAA Guidelines in cooperation with the Safety Judges to determine what infractions may have occurred and sign-off on the Safety Infraction sheet.
- Ensure the Safety Judge records the rule number, page, or reference upon which the violation was based upon.
- Validate all rule violations immediately following the team's performance.
- Determine if the routine needs to be stopped due to an injury, sound problems, or other reason. After conferring with the Tournament Host who will address the option with the school coach, trainer/medical technicians, sound technicians,



and/or other necessary personnel – the Tournament Host and Head Judge will determine the best way to proceed. They will consider if the order of appearance needs to be altered. They must also consider the time element and how long teams have waited. Time should be allowed for all teams in the rotation to participate in their allotted time rotational and warm-up activities. If too much time passes between the time of the injury and the next team in rotation, then all remaining teams should return to the warm-up area and rotate back through. This is for safety reasons.

- Send all scores and safety infraction sheets to the Scorer's table after they have been checked and signed.
- Reviews and ensures that the Master Score Sheet(s) are complete and signed before they are copied for the coaches.
- Use the GIAA Tracking Sheet to ensure consistency and accuracy in scoring – Only Head Judge.

FOLLOWING THE COMPETITION:

- Do not communicate and respond to coaches' questions after the tournament. All coaches will be advised to contact the GIAA Office should questions arise.
- Parents must not approach any tournament personnel.
- Refer all concerns and issues to the Booking Agent and/or GIAA Office immediately following the tournament.
- Complete all tournament report forms requested by the Booking Agent and/or GIAA Office.

ROUTINE JUDGES INFORMATION

- Provide all contact information and background information to the Booking Agent and notify the Booking Agent of any changes in information.
- Work with the Booking Agent by providing key data which will enable the Booking Agent to coordinate the assignments for all officials. Provide information concerning school contacts, site of employment, contact with gyms and schools, contact with teams, and other items which could affect the placement of an official.
- Provide all contact information and any required school forms (i.e., W-9) to the Tournament Host and/or Head Judge to enable the dissemination of competition information and to schedule payment.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Withdraws from judging when conflicts of interest exist, or the possibility exist that an official may not be able to judge a team fairly. This would include, but not limited to, affiliation with any competing team or gym where the judge works, relatives competing any team or coaching a team, teams who are rival teams in an



area school or gym, the parent of an athlete on a rival team or competing team. The Booking Agent will be provided with this information and will determine if the judge has a conflict of interest or may remain on the judging list. Failure to disclose all or any of the above information can lead to dismissal from judging.

DAY OF COMPETITION

- Know the **GIAA Rules & Regulations** and the NFHS Rules concerning competition. Be prepared to judge in whatever position is needed.
- Have all materials needed including the GIAA Cheer Manual, **NFHS Rules of Spirit**, and other forms needed for competition along with pens, sticky notes, and paper to take notes on during the competition.
- Be ready to call violations for sportsmanship, jewelry, inappropriate hair devices, uniforms, shoes, glitter, nails, and indicate the team member who is in violation of the GIAA Rules.
- Identify boundary violations and infractions involving the performance surface.
- Any fall or error which occurs after the stunt or pyramid hit the highest point will not count against the team. The officials will determine if the stunt or pyramid hit long enough to count as an extended skill.
- Use the appropriate guide when scoring the team and remain consistent in scoring.
- Always sign the score sheet(s) legibly with full name where it can be read.
- Always dress and conduct yourself in an appropriate and professional manner.

THE SAFETY JUDGE

PREPARATION

- Know the **NFHS Rules of Spirit** and interpretations and any exceptions of GIAA.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of all situations and rules. Review www.ghsacheerleading.com for rules interpretations and updates on a weekly basis during the competition season.
- Know the Safety Infraction Sheet and the guide for calling violations.
- Carry the **NFHS Rules of Spirit** and the **GIAA Cheer Manual** with you to the competition along with pen and paper to take notes.

BASICS

- To call a violation the officials must be able to identify the specific rule that has been violated and where it occurred during the routine.
- The primary Safety Judge will maintain notes on all violations.
- All teams will be warned of any concerns or possible rule violations that have not been called so that the coach may question and attempt to correct any issues prior to the next competition.



DAY OF COMPETITION

- Specifically watch for and call violations for safety, boundary, and illegal performance.
- Walk the floor on either side of the mat, but not behind the mat, to observe safety violations that may occur.
- Assist in counting the number of team members performing and assist in counting the number team members tumbling/stunting/jumping.
- Meet with Panel A immediately after the team performs to determine violations. The Head Judge will coordinate the discussion and it will **not** consist of a debate.
- Record the routine time on the Infraction Sheet.

CITING VIOLATIONS

When the Head Judge and the **two** Safety Judges have determined that a violation has occurred, **the officials must cite the rule number** from the ***NFHS Rules of Spirit***, the **GIAA Cheer Manual**, or the ***GIAA Rules & Regulations***.

- To call a major violation, two of the three officials must be in total agreement that the **violation occurred**.
- The location of skills violations **must be marked in the block of time** it occurred on the Safety Infraction Sheet – this **includes warnings**. Boxes are provided at the top of the page for the officials to provide information concerning all safety violations, falls, and out-of-bounds.
- The page or the rules section should be listed on the Safety Infraction Sheet.
- If the officials cannot cite the rule or identify the violation, they should only give a warning.
- Records should be maintained by the Head Judge and all Safety Judges on the location of all violations and warnings noting when and where it was observed for potential inquiries.
- **When calling rules, only call what you saw! Do not read into a rule.** When in doubt and if there is not an agreement on what was seen, or the rule cannot be identified, then do not make the call. Only warn the team!

SAFETY – ALL OFFICIALS

- All out-of-bounds, uniform violations, loss of shoes/hair devices, jewelry violations, etc. can be called by any one judge. Warnings are not given for these types of violations. They are called. The Head Judge should be informed by any judge on the panel who identifies a possible violation.
- See the Deductions Topic in the Scoring and Deductions section for detailed information.



TIMING of ROUTINE

The following outlines when the timing of the routine begins and ends.

- The timing of the routine will **begin** with the first movement, first word, or first musical sound in the routine.
- Teams may not come onto the floor chanting or cheering in an organized fashion. They may enter the floor and leave the floor showing spirit.
- The timing of the routine **ends** with the last motion or word of the routine.
- If a routine ends with a stunt or pyramid, the timing will end with the highest point of the stunt or pyramid.

MUSIC CONSIDERATIONS

- The length of the routine shall be **two minutes and thirty seconds (2:30)**. However, there is no limit to how much of that can be music. Music may be a part of the entire routine but should not exceed two minutes and thirty seconds.
- **Heads of School and/or Athletic Directors** must review the music to be used for the school's routine. Music cannot contain profanity, suggestive or inappropriate language.
- The music (CD) should be furnished by the school and labeled with the school's name. The coach should maintain **two copies**. Both copies should be with the coach in the competition area.
- All music should be of professional quality. It is suggested that all of your music is recorded on CD-R discs and have two copies. The use of paper labels is not recommended. A soft sharpie marker should be used to write the name of the school on the disc.
- **Cell phones** can only be used to play music. Personal calls and texts are not permitted in the music area.
- **Music must be submitted through the ClicknClear portal <https://music.clicknclear.com/> to ensure adequate licensing is in place.**
- Music in poor taste will result in a **sportsmanship deduction of ten (10) points**.
- No unauthorized props may be carried into the competition area, which includes warm-ups, the music area, or the competition floor. This is a **disqualification** for the competition.
- Competitions cannot be responsible for music played off an iPad and/or phone. There are issues with start times and phones ringing in the middle of the performance. Should these occur, they will be determined to be **delay of meet**



deductions and the team will remain on the floor to begin where they were in the routine. The team will not be allowed to start over.

THE TIMER

- The Timer will work with the judging panel and time the routine following GIAA procedures in timing.
- The Timer will meet with the Tournament Host and the Head Judge to review instructions.
- Prior to the beginning of the competition the Timer will check all stop watches/clocks to make sure they are operational. Cell phones are not permitted to time the routine.
- The Timer should sit by the Safety Judge and help maintain the Safety Infraction Sheet by assisting in the recording of the time a violation occurs.
- The Timer will verify the exact time that a routine stops and verify start times with the officials when a routine has been stopped for any reason.
- The Timer may confer with the sound technician concerning the time a routine was stopped or an injury occurred if there are any concerns with the clock. If the sound technician has no way to monitor time, then the Head Judge and Safety Judge will determine the starting point for judging the remainder of the routine.
- The Timer will ensure the routine time is recorded on the Safety Infraction Sheet.
- After a reasonable time and if a team has not reported to the competition floor, the rotation will continue, and the team will be eliminated from the competition.
- The Tournament Host is responsible for communicating any issues which may be occurring in warm-ups to help prevent the elimination of a team.

MECHANICAL FAILURE

If needed, when a mechanical failure occurs during the music portion of the routine, the Head Judge will determine when the error occurred, the time it occurred, at what point the routine/music stopped, and when the scoring stopped.

- The routine should continue at this point with no altering of the rotation.
- The Head Judge and Timer will then determine a signal to let all officials know that they are to begin wherein their scoring will resume.
- The Head Judge will provide instructions to the panel.

TIMING INFRACTIONS

Good judgement should be used when calling overtime violations. If a team is three seconds or less over the time limit, consideration should be given to when the clock was stopped, and the Head Judge may select not to impose a penalty.

Routine Timing



Routine timing begins with the first organized motion or the first sound of music.

Routine timing ends with the last organized motion or the last sound of music.

Any time exceeding 2 minutes and 30 seconds, even by one second, will be considered overtime and will result in a timing infraction

- Timing infractions occur for overtime of the competition routine or delay of meet.
- **Overtime of Competition Routine:** For each 10-seconds, or portion thereof, a five (5) point deduction is assessed.
- **Delay of Meet:** There will be a **five (5) point deduction** for delay of meet.
- There will be a **five (5) point delay of meet deduction** if a team fails to line up at the mat when the announcer calls the name of the team.
- A team will have **thirty (30) seconds** to line up at the mat. Teams must be in position to begin the rotation for competition and ready to perform when their name is called.
- Teams must have music ready to begin the routine. It should be cued prior to coming to the floor.
- A team has thirty (30) seconds to begin once the announcer says, "You may begin" which must be stated upon the signal of the Head Judge.

INJURY / ACCIDENT GUIDELINES

- The Tournament Host should have a list of emergency telephone numbers for paramedics, hospitals, or doctors in the area. An emergency plan should be in place and all tournament personnel must be made aware of the plan and procedures.
- When an emergency or injury occurs the coach, host and/or officials should stop the competition until the injured person can be removed from the warm-up mat or competition floor. **Injury During a Performance** If an injury occurs during a performance, the routine may be stopped by an official, the coach(s), or the host.
- The same procedures that are followed for a mechanical (music) failure or other routine stopping event will be followed in performing, timing, and scoring of the routine.
- Correct procedures should be followed in the handling of the injury and resuming the competition.
- An injury can result in a change in the order of appearance. All teams must compete within their division.
- Teams must be allowed to warm-up and the rotation should be adjusted so that teams' warm-up prior to competing on the floor. The Host and Head Judge will determine how long teams had to wait and how to resume. If an extended amount of time was taken, then the teams will be backed up and rotate through the warm-ups again.
- The coach must determine if the team will proceed, withdraw, or use a substitute. The coach must notify the Tournament Host and the Head Judge of their decision.
- After an injury has occurred, the Tournament Host will consult with the Head Judge to determine the order of rotation and when the team with the injury will return. Should the team with the injury select to compete again, the Head Judge



will determine the start time for judging the routine and follow timing rules. (See *Timer Section*.)

- An athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as a loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall immediately be removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate healthcare professional (*NFHS Spirit Rules: 2-1-18; Refer to NFHS Suggested Guidelines of Management of Concussions*). Coaches are responsible for following safety guidelines for all athletes on the team.
- Using the professional judgment of the medical personnel on site, the Tournament Host, under the guidance of the Head Judge, will not allow a team member who has experienced unconsciousness to return to the floor without the written consent of the physician.
- Severe injuries of any kind are considered extremely serious and a team member who has experienced a serious injury should not return to the floor or compete. The appropriate medical action should be taken, and an emergency plan put into place. A **substitute** may be sent in for the injured team member. *Refer to NFHS Spirit Rules: 2-1-18.*
- A team member who has a minor injury should **not** be allowed to return without the release of medical personnel who are on site.
- Team members who are bleeding, have an open wound, or have excessive amounts of blood, may **not** participate in any event until the appropriate treatment is administered and the uniform and/or body has been cleansed. *Refer to NFHS Spirit Rule: 2-1-17.*

SECTION TWO – PART B SCORING

SCORERS and SCOREKEEPING GUIDELINES

The Scorers will meet with the Head Judge prior to the competition to review procedures and guidelines for scoring.

- A competition may select to score manually or computerized.

COMPUTERIZED SCORING

- The competition must use the program provided by GIAA. You may request the program from GIAA. Competitions cannot create their own programs.
- All scorekeepers using the computer program must be trained in advance and not the day of the competition.
- Teams competing and the order of competition should be entered into the program prior to the actual competition.



- Competitions must provide computers and a back-up system should any issues arise.
- Directions must be followed for the program to work properly.

KEYS TO COMPUTERIZED SCORING

Step	Action
1	Macros must be enabled to run the program properly. You must Enable Editing and Enable Content .
2	The EXCEL file is a Read Only file. The users will have to Save As a new file name. It is recommended that you open the Read Only file and immediately Save As the competition name plus the classification. • Naming examples: Class A; Class AA; Class AAA; Class AAAA
3	Important: Save after entering each team's scores.
4	Recommended: Only have one file/division open at a time. • If you are running a competition and alternating between divisions – it would be wise to have multiple computers. • Example: Your completion order is AA – Team #1, AAA – Team #1, AAAA – Team #1, AA – Team #2, AAA – Team #2, AAAA – Team #2. You will need 6 computers. There would be 3 main computers each connect each connected to a printer for each division and one back up for redundancy.
5	Suggestion: Remove the Formula Bar to minimize mistakes. You can do this by selecting the View tab on the top menu bar in EXCEL.
6	EXCEL will <u>not</u> calculate unless you advance to the next cell by pressing ENTER . • If you select a cell with your cursor to edit a score, you must ENTER to advance to the next cell. This will allow EXCEL to calculate the adjusted score.
7	Deductions: You do not have to enter a (-) negative sign before the number. • Example: A team has 5 points taken off for a fall – the user would just enter a 5 in Deduction total for that team.
8	Tie Breakers: The program automatically breaks the ties. (<i>See Breaking Ties</i>).

MANUALLY KEEPING SCORE

Should there be a failure in the electronic system, the manual keeping scoring process should be followed. The Scorers will add all officials' scores and record totals on the Master Score Sheet and on the individual officials' score sheets. The Scorers will follow GIAA procedures when adding the score sheets. The max score possible is 108 or 113 for coed squads.

Step	Action
1	Each individual panel's sheet will be tallied, making sure all areas are scored.
2	The Scorers will transfer the Panel A, Panel B, and Panel C's Subtotal scores to the Master Score Sheet to the specified boxes.
3	The Scorers will add Panel A Subtotal, Panel B Subtotal, and Panel C Subtotal to obtain the Master Score Sheet Subtotal for the team.
4	Deductions from the Safety Infraction Score Sheet will be added and recorded on the Master Score Sheet. The deductions will be taken from the Teams' subtotal to obtain the Total score.
5	The Master Scorekeeper will enter the placement on the Master Score Sheet for each division then sign it.



6	The Head Judge will review and validate placements on the Master Score Sheet, then sign it.
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BREAKING TIES

Use the table below to break ties. When using the computerized method of scoring, the program automatically breaks Tie Breaker A and Tie Breaker B.

Tie Breaker	Action	
A	If a tie occurs, then perform the following:	
	Step	Action
	1	Add all execution (EXE) scores for each skills area (Jumps, Running Tumbling, Standing Tumbling, Partner Stunts, Secondary Stunts, Pyramids).
	2	The team with the highest score breaks the tie and determines the order of placement for the tied teams.
B	If a tie remains after completing Tie Breaker A, then perform the following:	
	Step	Action
	1	Add the cheer, dance, and ORC.
	2	The team with the highest score breaks the tie and determines the order of placement for the tied teams.
C	If a tie remains after completing Tie Breaker A and B; the officials will determine the order of placement for the tied teams.	



2026 COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADING MASTER SCORE SHEET

CLASS / REGION		TOTAL NUMBER OF SQUADS		PAGE
				___ of ___
The Subtotal is Panel A Subtotal, Panel B Subtotal, and Panel C Subtotal added together.				
SCHOOL	TEAM ____	TEAM ____	TEAM ____	TEAM ____
Panel A Subtotal				
Panel B Subtotal				
Panel C Subtotal				
SUBTOTAL				
Deductions				
TOTAL SCORE				
PLACEMENT				
SCHOOL	TEAM ____	TEAM ____	TEAM ____	TEAM ____
Panel A Subtotal				
Panel B Subtotal				
Panel C Subtotal				
SUBTOTAL				
Deductions				
TOTAL SCORE				
PLACEMENT				
Head Officials' Signature			Score Keeper's Signature	



The **Competitive Cheerleading Safety Infraction Sheet** is for safety infractions and warnings only. A team may have a deduction due to an NFHS or GIAA safety infraction. Do not write personal comments on the Competitive Cheerleading Safety Infraction Sheet.

2 POINT INFRACTIONS – NFHS / GIAA

Two (2) points per each individual violation will be incurred and may be called by any official on the panel.

2 Point Safety Violations
When beginning with a stunt or pyramid, the team may set up and prepare to build prior to beginning the routine. Only at the beginning of the routine, a flyer must have one foot on the floor, ready to begin the stunt, and in preparation for the signal to begin. Routines cannot begin in a stunt per GHSA rules. It is a 2-point deduction per top person who does not have one foot on the floor.
Tumbling outside of a routine is illegal and will result in a violation as well as a penalty. If the team member tumbles while coming onto the floor, time will begin when the team member tumbles. A team member cannot tumble on or off the mat. It will be a GHSA violation. It is a 2-point deduction per team member who tumbles outside of the routine.
Items from this list that interfere with the execution of a skill. Loss of hair devices, loss of hair pieces, or inappropriate hair pieces, inappropriate fingernails, jewelry, glitter, etc. Inappropriate uniform. Failure to follow GHSA, GIAA and NFHS rules. Beginning the routine off the mat. Falls to the floor while performing a skill from beginning to completion – jumps, tumbling, stunts, and pyramids; not walking.
Unsafe performing surface – Loss of shoe or loss of hair device: Should a performer step on the bow or walk over a bow or other item it is not a violation. However, if the performer executes a skill(s); such as tumbles, jumps or stunts/builds pyramid; onto the bow, hair device, shoe, pom etc., it is a violation. The loss of a shoe or another part of the uniform would be considered a violation of NFHS Rule 2-1-Shoes must remain on the foot to be considered safe and an appropriate uniform. Untied shoelaces are not a deduction



Inattentive spotter. Only one official is needed to call this violation.
Only call shoes that are inappropriate for cheer. Cheerleaders may have on various types of shoes. For example, it is okay if some of the squad chooses to wear high top cheer shoes and the other part of the team wears regular cheer shoes.

BOUNDARY VIOLATIONS

The entire mat is considered the performing surface/competition floor. A white or blue line of tape may be placed around the outside of the entire mat to indicate the edge of the mat.

- If mats are of unequal length, the entire mat is still the performing surface and the boundary tape around the outside of the mat does not define the performing surface.
- An athlete will receive an out-of-bounds deduction only if both feet make contact outside the competition mat or if the athlete is entirely off the performing surface. Stepping just one foot or placing a hand outside the competition mat does not constitute an out-of-bounds violation. An athlete who falls and at the same time both feet goes out of bounds is called for both violations.

HAIR VIOLATIONS

The key to calling any hair violations is that the hair must not interfere with the execution of the skill or cause an issue on the performing surface (**NFHS 2-1-5 plus Situations**). Stunt can refer to stunting, pyramids, and tumbling.

- The officials will make the final determination in how to score the issues created by hair.
- A ponytail touching the back of the neck and back, including the shoulders, is not a violation unless it interferes with the execution of the skill.
- Hair must be secured above the waist.
- If a team member runs into another team member while tumbling and it is felt the hair caused the issue, then a violation may be called.
- If a flyer steps on a base's hair or a base tangles her hand in the hair while stunting, then a violation may be called.
- Any judge may call a violation if a team member tumbles, jumps, or builds a stunt on the hair device or piece. It is unsafe performing surface. Stunts would include all members of a stunt group including the spotter.
- If a member drops a hair bow or hair piece and it falls on the floor, for safety reasons, a team member may pick it up and throw it off the floor or away from the performance area. This would not be a violation of floor safety. However, it is a 2-point deduction for an unsafe uniform.
- If a team member steps on the bow but is not executing a skill, it is not a violation.

FINGERNAIL CLARIFICATIONS

When does the length of the nail constitute an inappropriate nail?



- The nails need to be safe. If you can see the nail over the tip of the finger, then it becomes a safety issue.
- The color of the nails is a coaching decision. Colors can become distracting and so motions, violations, etc. are much easier to see from the official's perspective.

FALLS

A stunt group is dependent on one another to perform or execute the element/skill and must work as a team. It will be considered one fall whether one member of the stunt group or more falls. The same would be true if a stunt group is in a pyramid.

PYRAMID

When determining the number of falls in a pyramid, consider the number of possible stunt groups that may fall.

Examples:

- If one side of a pyramid falls, it is one fall.
- If two sides fall or a center and a side, it is two falls.

5 POINT INFRACTIONS: NFHS / GIAA

TYPE	VIOLATION
Violations of stunting rules	Rule 3 Section 2-10 located in the <i>NFHS Safety Spirit Rules Book</i> .
Delay of Meet	See <i>Timing Infractions</i> – Delay of Meet instructions in the <i>Timer and Timing Guidelines</i> section of this manual. A team failing to report for rotation may be removed from rotation and will not be allowed to participate in the competition.
Timing Infractions involving routine timing or music timing	• See <i>Timing Infractions</i> – Routine Timing instructions in the <i>Timer and Timing Guidelines</i> section of this manual. • 5 points per each 10-seconds.

10 POINT INFRACTIONS: NFHS / GIAA

TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Sportsmanship	As defined by the GIAA, acts of sportsmanship will be a 10-point deduction per act. The new rules specifically give the officials the responsibility for calling unsportsmanlike acts throughout the competition time. • Music cannot contain profanity, suggestive or inappropriate language. Music in poor taste will result in a sportsmanship deduction of 10-points.



DISQUALIFICATIONS

DQ	DESCRIPTION
1	Too many team members.
2	Illegal substitutions.
3	Ineligible student participating on the team.
4	Unauthorized props. Props will be defined as the use of any item other than pom-poms to initiate crowd response. • No part of a uniform may be used as a sign, to include briefs, socks, items worn as a part of the uniform or under the uniform such as t-shirts. • No signs allowed. • No unauthorized props may be carried into the competition area, which includes warm-ups, the music area, or the competition floor.

***ALL SCORES ARE FINAL.
NO PROTESTS ALLOWED.***

**2026 Competitive Cheerleading Official's Score Sheet**
Safety Infraction

SCHOOL		COMPETITION	
CLASS/REGION		DATE	

Indicate in the correct time box below when and where on the mat the infraction occurred by using the correct symbol or combination of symbols.

PS – Partner Stunt	T – Tumbling	PY – Pyramid	X – Fall	O – Out-of-bounds	W – Warning
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0 to 30 sec.

30 sec. to 1 min.

1 min. to 1:30 min.

1:30 to 2:00 min.

2:00 to 2:30 min.

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FRONT OF MAT

<u>1-POINT INFRACTIONS</u>			<u>WARNING(S)</u>
GHSA Competitive Manual: 1-point deduction per athlete who executes the tuck jump/hop during tumbling			Include Rule Number & Section
RULE NUMBER	QTY	TOTAL DEDUCTION	
TUCK JUMP/HOP DURING TUMBLING			
<u>2-POINT INFRACTIONS</u>			
NFHS – Rule 2 Section 1; Rule 3 Section 1 and 2; GHSA Competitive Manual. Minus 2 point each			
RULE NUMBER	QTY	TOTAL DEDUCTION	
Rule: __ Sect: __			
Rule: __ Sect: __			
Rule: __ Sect: __			
FALLS: Total for tumbling ____; Total for stunting ____			
OUT-OF-BOUNDS			
<u>5-POINT INFRACTIONS</u>			
NFHS – Rule 3 Sections 2 – 10; Safety Infractions. Minus 5 points each			
RULE NUMBER	QTY	TOTAL DEDUCTION	
Rule: __ Sect: __			
Rule: __ Sect: __			
Rule: __ Sect: __			
			☐ Send video to ghsacompetitivecheer@gmail.com
			<u>DISQUALIFICATIONS</u>



DELAY OF MEET					GHS A Violation
TIME OF ROUTINE: _____	TIMING INFRACTIONS (<u>5</u> points per 10 seconds or portion over)	_____ seconds over			Explanation
10-POINT INFRACTIONS GHS A Competitive Manual; NFHS – Rule 2 Section 2 - Sportsmanship; Minus 10 points each					_____
RULE NUMBER/EXPLANATION			QTY	TOTAL DEDUCTION	_____

Head Judge _____

Table Safety _____

Floor Safety _____

TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	
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SECTION THREE

INSTRUCTIONS AND RUBRICS FOR SCORING



**CHEER INTRODUCTION**

The key to this rubric and scoring system is to perform within the means of the squad's skill level, execute all skills soundly, and score high in the execution categories.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Majority	51% or more of the team members execute a required skill. Half of the team plus one. 15 members would need 8 members completing the skill to fall in the majority range.
Less than majority	50% or fewer of the team members execute a required skill. Half of the team or less. A team of 15 members have 7 members complete a skill, then they would fall in the less than majority range.

TOTAL TEAM MINUS

The Total Team members performing the skill is used to determine the DOD in jumps, standing and running tumbling.

The following table identifies the number of team members who are not required to perform the skill.

If the rubric reads...	Then...
Total Team # - 0	All team members must perform the skill.
Total Team # - 2	1 and/or 2 team members are not required to perform the skill.
Total Team # - 4	3 and/or 4 team members are not required to perform the skill.
Total Team # - 6	5 and/or 6 team members are not required to perform the skill.
Total Team # - 8	7 and/or 8 team members are not required to perform the skill.

CHECK BOXES

Check boxes on the score sheet define the areas for improvement for a team's execution scores. This provides coaches with information to assist them on working to improve their execution scores week-to-week.

- Make sure that the boxes you check match your score.

PANEL A – Jumps / Cheer / Dance / ORC

Jumps should be performed as a team.

- Squads may complete jumps connected to tumbling. However, the jumps will be scored in jumps and the tumbling portion will be scored in standing tumbling.

TERM	DESCRIPTION
------	-------------



Combo	Connected jumps without a pause in between. All approaches within the jumps must use a whip approach to be connected. - A double toe touch. - A toe touch, pike, hurdler that are all connected.
Variety	Involves different jumps. A right herkie, toe touch, left herkie all connected would complete the 3-jump triple combo requirement.

LEVEL OF JUMPS DOD

JUMP LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	DOD
Basic	Tuck jumps, spread eagles, banana jumps	1-2
Advanced	Herkie, hurdler, pike, double nine, toe touch	2-6

CHEER REQUIREMENTS

- A minimum of **3** eight counts of cheer with an incorporation(s).
- The entire team must participate in cheer to be eligible to receive **maximum** points.
- Athletes must say the words in the cheer.
- Cheer words should be distinct and have a high volume.

CHEER INCORPORATIONS

One of the following must be incorporated into the cheer to be eligible to receive **maximum** points.

- Jumps, tumbling, stunts, tosses, pyramids, or any combination.

DANCE

- To be eligible to receive the **maximum** points, **all** must dance the entire **four (4) eight** counts.
- Dance should have level changes, transitions, footwork, and floor choreography to max out.
- Lifts and rolls are permitted as part of the choreography.

OVERALL ROUTINE COMPOSITION

Overall routine will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Showmanship, energy level, excitement, crowd appeal, uniformity, genuine enthusiasm, and athletic sportsmanship.
- A team's ability to demonstrate precise spacing and seamless patterns of movement performed throughout the routine. This includes innovative, visual, and intricate ideas; as well as any additional skills performed to enhance the overall appeal. (*Source: Varsity All Star Scoring guide*).

Panel A – Jumps / Cheer / Dance / ORC Rubric

DOD	1	2	3	4	5	6
				Total Team#-4	Total Team#-2	Total Team#-0



			Triple Combo of 3 different advanced jumps. Must be connected	
		Total Team#-4	Total Team#-2	Total Team#-0
		Double Combo advanced jumps with variety or triple combo advanced jumps with no variety		
		Total Team#-2	Total Team#-0	
		Single or non-connected basic jumps		
EXE	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-8
	Below average technique, height, synchronization, uniformed arm placement, poor form, timing, and missed jumps Majority dropped chest, bent legs, flexed toes, and bad landings.	Average technique, height, synchronization, uniformed arm placement, and form, very little timing off. Very few missed jumps. Minimal dropped chest, flexed toes, and bad landings.	Above average technique, height, synchronization, uniformed arm placement, and form, and good timing. No missed jumps. Minimal dropped chest, flexed toes, or bad landings.	Excellent technique, height, synchronization, uniformed arm placement, and form, perfect timing. No missed jumps or dropped chest, all toes pointed, perfect landings.
DOD	1-2	3	4	5
	Less than majority squad incorporations. Basic transitions , lacking complexity. Slung motions , words not said by entire team. Little creativity and lacking visual.	Half squad to full squad incorporations. Intermediate transitions . Majority sharp intermediate / advanced motions, words said by most of the team. Moderate creativity and somewhat visual.	Majority to full squad incorporations. Advanced transitions . Sharp advanced motions, words said by entire team. Creative and visual.	Full squad incorporations. Multiple advanced transitions. Very sharp precise advanced motions, words said by entire team. Highly creative and very visual.
EXE	Poor technique , poor timing, sloppy transitions, and formations. No volume .	Average technique , good timing, transitions, and formations need very little clean up. Low volume .	Above average technique, very good timing, clean transitions and formations. Good volume .	Excellent technique , perfect timing, very clean transitions and formations. Excellent volume .
DOD	1-2	3-4	5-6	7
	Basic motions and transitions. Very few level changes. Lacks energy, little creativity, lacks originality, and lacking visually.	Intermediate motions and transitions. Few level changes. Average energy. Moderate creativity, with some originality and somewhat visual.	Advanced motions with advanced transitions and several level changes. Very good energy, creative original, and visual.	Multiple advanced motions with advanced transitions and several level changes. Excellent energy, highly creative and original, and very visual.
EXE	Poor technique, poor timing, sloppy transitions and formations. Poor rhythm.	Average technique, good timing, not very clean on transitions and formations. Average rhythm.	Above average technique, very good timing, clean transitions and formations. Good rhythm.	Excellent technique, perfect timing, very clean transitions and formations. Excellent rhythm.
	1-2	3-4	5	6-7
	Below average overall impression, cleanliness of routine and pacing throughout. 5+ falls or dropped skills . Below average routine layout, choreography with skills and use of the floor space. Little to no creative or smooth formations, transitions, no moments of innovative, visual, and intricate choreography. Below average level of energy, excitement, enthusiasm, and showmanship.	Average overall impression and cleanliness of routine, pacing throughout. 3-4 falls or dropped skills . Average routine layout, choreography with skills and use of floor space. Limited creative or smooth formations, transitions, moments of innovative, visual, and intricate choreography. Average level of energy and excitement, enthusiasm, and showmanship.	Clean routine and good overall impression. Good pacing throughout. 1-2 falls or dropped skills . Solid routine layout and good use of choreography with skills and of floor space. Some creative or smooth formations and transitions. Some innovative, visual, and intricate choreography. Mid to high level of energy and excitement. Genuine enthusiasm and showmanship.	Very clean routine and excellent overall impression. Excellent pacing throughout. No falls or dropped skills . Solid routine layout and excellent use of choreography with skills and use of floor space. Creative or smooth formations and transitions. Innovative, visual, and intricate choreography. Highest level of energy and excitement. Genuine enthusiasm and showmanship.

2026 COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADING OFFICIALS SCORE SHEET

PANEL A – JUMPS / CHEER / DANCE / ORC

SCHOOL	NUMBER ON SQUAD	CLASS/ REGION	PANEL
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						A
JUMPS						
Areas of EXE Improvement						SCORE
☐ Landings	☐ Height	☐ Form	☐ Synchronized	DOD	6	
☐ Pointed Toes	☐ Dropped Chest	☐ Formation	☐ Arm Placement			
☐ Straight Legs	☐ Timing	☐ Missed Jumps	☐ Legs Not Horizontal	EXE	8	
				Decimal of .5 permitted		
CHEER/CHANT						
Areas of EXE Improvement						
☐ Creative & Visual	☐ Add Motions	☐ Formations	☐ Synchronization	DOD/EXE	5	
☐ Transitions	☐ Projection	☐ Energy	☐ Involve Total Team			
☐ Sharpness	☐ Volume	☐ Say Words	☐ Needs More Counts	Decimal of .5 permitted		
☐ Pace	☐ Timing	☐ No Incorporations	☐ Partial Incorporations			
DANCE						
Areas of EXE Improvement						
☐ Creative & Visual	☐ Rhythm	☐ Motions	☐ Synchronization	DOD/EXE	7	
☐ Formations	☐ Choreography	☐ Pace	☐ Needs More Counts			
☐ Energy	☐ Transitions	☐ Level Changes	☐ Knowledge of routine	Decimal of .5 permitted		
☐ Showmanship	☐ Intricacy	☐ Involve Total Team				
OVERALL ROUTINE COMPOSITION						
Areas of EXE Improvement						
☐ Creative & Visual	☐ Clean up	☐ Use of floor	☐ Synchronization	EXE	7	
☐ Crowd appeal	☐ Flow/Pace	☐ Variations	☐ Intricate choreography			
☐ Transitions	☐ Innovative	☐ Formations	☐ Structure/layout of routine	Decimal of .5 permitted		
☐ Showmanship	☐ Energy	☐ Enthusiasm	☐ Falls or Dropped Skills			
☐ Tumbling Technique/Performance		☐ Stunting Technique/Performance				
SUBTOTAL SCORE						
LEGIBLY SIGN YOUR FULL NAME						
OFFICIAL 1 SIGNATURE		OFFICIAL 2 SIGNATURE				

PANEL B – TUMBLING

The officials need to see what the Squad can do as a team.

- Teams should tumble in sections of the routine as a squad and not randomly throughout the routine.



- If squads reuse/repeat the same tumbler, officials will not be able to distinguish what the squad can do as a group.
- An official will assume that if an athlete performs a high-level skill, then that athlete can also perform the lower-level skill and give credit for that skill.
- Split the floor with your partner and use the floor safety to verify your numbers.

Examples:

- If an athlete performs a round off back handspring full, then an official must assume that the athlete can also perform a round off back handspring tuck or layout.
- If an athlete performs a standing tuck, an official must assume that the athlete can also perform a standing back handspring.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Standing Tumbling	A tumbling skill (series of skills) performed from a standing position without any previous forward momentum. Any number of steps backward prior to execution of tumbling skill(s) is defined as standing tumbling. (Source: usasf.net)
Running Tumbling	Tumbling that is performed with a running start and/or involves a step or a hurdle (etc.) used to gain momentum as an entry to another skill. Any type of forward momentum/movement prior to execution of the tumbling skill(s) is defined as running tumbling. (Source: usasf.net)
Entry	Any forward movement before executing a skill is considered running tumbling, not standing tumbling. Round-off/Cartwheel: Defined as running tumbling because of the momentum it generates.
Full thru to Full	A team member performing a full through to full tumbling pass will count as 2 fulls. Two (2) will be the maximum credit given per athlete.
Specialty Pass	Running tumbling across the mat that contains skills from the following during the pass. 1. Contains possibly: back handspring, step outs, whips, Arabians, front walkover/handspring, aerial, or punch front 2. Ends: A tuck or higher.

*Any forward movement before executing a skill is considered running tumbling, not standing tumbling. Hops, hurdles, sashays, or any movement thereof makes the skill running tumbling

EXECUTION – FALL

Execution – Fall When a team member executes a back-handspring with the hands touching the floor the judge cannot assume that the team member intended to execute a tuck. Placing one's hands on the floor during the execution of a tuck is not a fall to the floor. It is an execution error. Based on how the skill is executed, it may be scored as a back-handspring. When tumbling, a fall is considered a fall to the floor when the tumbler lands on their legs, knees,



back, head, rear, elbows, and so on, that was not considered a part of the original landing.

CREDIT EXAMPLES

Scoring will lack accuracy if elements are scattered out in several segments of the routine. These examples apply to both running and standing tumbling. The tumbling DOD for a routine is not cumulative.

TEAM	EXAMPLE	The official give credit for...
A	A team executes 3 standing fulls on the 2 nd eight count of the routine, then during the 10 th eight count into the routine the team executes 15 standing tucks and 1 standing full.	3 standing fulls, not 4, plus 15 standing tucks.
B	A team executes 2 standing fulls on the 3 rd eight count of the routine. Later in the routine, the team executes 1 standing full and 15 standing tucks.	2 standing fulls, not 3, plus 15 standing tucks.
C	A team executes one standing full in the 1 st eight count of the routine. 15 eight counts later, the team executes 3 back handsprings-to-fulls and 12 standing tucks.	3 back handsprings-to-fulls, plus 12 standing tucks. Not 4 fulls
D	A team executes 2 running full-through-to-fulls (total of 4 fulls) in the 2 nd eight count of the routine. 12 eight counts later, the team executes 2 round-off handspring fulls and 14 round-off handspring layouts	4 fulls plus 14 layouts.
E	A team executes 1 round-off full in the 1 st eight count of the routine. 7 eight counts later, the team executes 3 round-off fulls and 13 round-off tucks.	3 fulls plus 13 round-off tucks.

Tumbling Clarification

A cartwheel entry into tumbling will be classified as running tumbling.

A cartwheel is considered forward movement; therefore, all skills performed immediately following a cartwheel will be counted as running tumbling.

Examples include, but are not limited to: Cartwheel tuck, Cartwheel full Standing or Running Tumbling

Tuck Jump/Hop Deductions

During a routine, tuck jumps or tuck hops may not be performed during group tumbling skills. If an athlete performs a tuck jump or hop during a group tumbling skill, the team will receive a 1-point deduction per athlete who executes the tuck jump/hop.

Example A squad performs 12 standing tucks, and two other athletes perform a tuck jump/hop. The team will receive a 2-point deduction (1 point per athlete).

An athlete who performs a round-off back handspring rebound will not receive a point deduction. This will be considered an omission or missed tumbling skill, not a tuck jump/hop violation

PANEL B – STANDING / RUNNING TUMBLING RUBRIC

STANDING TUMBLING						
DOD	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Forward rolls, back extension rolls, standing cartwheels			Total Team # - 6	Total Team # - 4	Total Team # - 2
				Tucks or handspring tucks or handsprings to layouts		
				Including 1 standing series to full / standing full	Including 2 standing series to full / standing full(s)	Including 3 or more standing series to full / standing full(s)
				Total Team # - 4	Total Team # - 2	



				Tucks and/or handspring tucks or handsprings to layouts		
		Less than Majority	Majority	Total Team # - 0		
		Handsprings, Tucks, or handspring tucks or higher skill		Handsprings		
EXE	1-2	3-4		5-6		7-8
	POOR form, technique, timing, synchronization, and precision. Majority bent legs/body	AVERAGE form, technique, timing, synchronization, and precision. Multiple bent legs/body		ABOVE AVERAGE form, technique, timing, synchronization, and precision. Minimal bent legs/body		PERFECT form, excellent technique, timing, synchronization, and precision. NO bent legs/body
	3 or more falls or missed tumbling; majority athletes taking a step on landing; multiple / majority or more hands-down	1-2 falls or missed tumbling; half of athletes taking a step on landing; multiple to few hands-down		0-1 falls or missed tumbling; 2-4 athletes taking a step on landing; few to minimal hands-down		0 falls or missed tumbling; 0-1 athletes taking a step on landing; minimal to no hands-down
RUNNING TUMBLING						
DOD	1	2	3	4	5	6
Running cartwheels and Round-offs		Total Team # - 6	Total Team # -4	Total Team # - 6	Total Team # - 4	Total Team # -2
				Round-off tucks or handspring tucks or layouts or specialty passes		
				Including 1 full	Including 2-3 fulls	Including 4 or more fulls
		Round-off tucks and/or handspring tucks				
		Total Team # - 8	Total Team # - 6	Total Team # -4	Total Team # -2	
		Layouts and/or specialty passes				
	Less than Majority	Majority				
	Round-off handsprings, limited tucks					
EXE	1-2	3-4		5-6		7-8
	POOR form, technique, timing, synchronization, and precision. Majority bent legs/body	AVERAGE form, technique, timing, synchronization, and precision. Multiple bent legs/body		ABOVE AVERAGE form, technique, timing, synchronization, and precision. Minimal bent legs/body		PERFECT form, excellent technique, timing, synchronization, and precision. NO bent legs/body
	3 or more falls or missed tumbling; majority athletes taking a step on landing; multiple / majority or more hands-down	1-2 falls or missed tumbling; half of athletes taking a step on landing; multiple to few hands-down		0-1 falls or missed tumbling; 2-4 athletes taking a step on landing; few to minimal hands-down		0 falls or missed tumbling; 0-1 athletes taking a step on landing; minimal to no hands-down



**2023 COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADING OFFICIAL'S SCORE SHEET
PANEL B – STANDING / RUNNING TUMBLING**

SCHOOL				NUMBER ON SQUAD	CLASS/ REGION	PANEL
						B
STANDING TUMBLING						
Areas of EXE Improvement						SCORE
☐ Technique	☐ Landings	☐ Form/Stability	☐ Timing	DOD	6	
☐ Choreography	☐ Precision	☐ Straighten Legs	☐ Hands Down			
☐ Synchronization	☐ Formation/Spacing	☐ Missed Tumbling	☐ Multiple Steps	EXE	8	
☐ Height	☐ Legs Together	☐ Falls		Decimal of .5 permitted		
RUNNING TUMBLING						
Areas of EXE Improvement						
☐ Technique	☐ Landings	☐ Form/Stability	☐ Timing	DOD	6	
☐ Choreography	☐ Precision	☐ Straighten Legs	☐ Hands Down			
☐ Synchronization	☐ Formation/Spacing	☐ Missed Tumbling	☐ Multiple Steps	EXE	8	
☐ Height	☐ Legs Together	☐ Falls	☐ Use of Floor	Decimal of .5 permitted		
SUBTOTAL SCORE						
LEGIBLY SIGN YOUR FULL NAME						
OFFICIAL 3 SIGNATURE			OFFICIAL 4 SIGNATURE			

Panel B Checkboxes

Checkboxes based on Execution (EXE), not DOD. Checkboxes should match your scores. Only maximum scores do not require checked boxes. Only check a box that refers to an Area of Improvement

Tumbling Checkbox Explanations**STANDING/RUNNING TUMBLING**

Technique	Does not show skillful completion of a tumbling move, correct form, control of movement, or solid follow through to landing
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Landings	End of a tumbling skill not solid; knees slightly bent; back not straight; feet not together; uncontrolled, showing steps, bent knees, or poor body position
Form/Stability	Wobbly form, not well-placed body positions or properly executed skills
Synchronization/Timing	All parts of the routine were not performed in unison with other team members. Skill(s) performed too early, too late, rushed, or delayed within the routine or music
Choreography	Lack of good elements in the design of tumbling skills, pattern, order, or uniqueness
Precision	Lack of good elements in the design of tumbling skills, pattern, order, or uniqueness
Straighten Legs	No bent knees on back handsprings, layouts, running fulls
Hands Down	Touching the floor with hands during a flipping skill
Legs Apart	Legs and knees are not together during and at the end of a tumbling skill
Formation/Spacing	Lines not straight or evenly spaced
Missed Tumbling	Not completing a tumbling skill at all or in part
Multiple Steps	Taking several steps at the completion of a tumbling skill
Height	Low distance from the ground; skill executed too low
Falls	Tumbling fall is considered a fall to the floor when the tumbler lands on their legs, knees, back, head, rear, elbows, and so on, that was not considered a part of the original landing
Use of Floor-Running tumbling only	Does not make good use of the floor for visual effects and transitions from one set of skills to another

**PANEL C – PARTNER STUNT / PYRAMIDS**

The officials need to see what the squad can do as a team. If the squad reuse/repeat stunts elsewhere in the routine, officials will not be able to distinguish what the squad can do as a group. Therefore, it is imperative that teams' stunt in sections of the routine as a squad and not randomly throughout the routine.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Fall	A body part, other than the sole of the shoe, coming into contact with the performance surface during the execution of a stunt/skill. Falling to the floor with a body part landing on the floor, such as hands, knees, legs, back, head, rear, elbow, and so on. A stunt group falling to the floor will count as 1 Fall.
Drop	A stunt/skill being attempted that comes down early. It may then be put up again; however, it is clear to the officials that the stunt was not executed as intended.
Missed Stunt	A skill is attempted but does not hit the appropriate position or height as the other stunts. Failure to hit a heel stretch and instead remaining in a platform or liberty.
Bobble	When a flyer hits a stunt/skill and wobbles, shakes, swings their arms; but the stunt remains in the air.
True Full Up	Bases remain stationary and flyer rotates 360°
Stunt Movement	When a stunt is moved due to an unintended and un-choreographed shift or adjustment by the base(s).
Structure	A place in a pyramid where flyers connect (hand-hand or hand-foot) and pause to show a defined position. This is also known as a picture.
Extended Stunt / Position	The supporting hand(s) of the base(s) is/are above the head. (Source: NFHS)

DOD – INTENDED HEIGHT

A judge will give credit for those stunts that go to the intended height of the stunts. Stunts that do not go to the intended height will ~~not~~ be factored into the scoring of the Degree of Difficulty. This is in Primary and Secondary Stunts as well as Pyramids.

- A team attempts to execute four liberty heel stretches. One does not make it up and the second one dismounts to the floor prior to hitting the highest point. Hence, two of the four of the stunts did not make it to the intended height. Thus, the team is only given credit for the two stunts that reached the intended height/hit.



PARTNER STUNTS / TOSSES

All groups must **demonstrate stability** at the extended point of the executed stunt. This **cannot** be a show and go style execution. The secondary stunt must be held for at least **four (4) counts** once it reaches the intended height.

All stunts must have the required spotters and bases.

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION		
Primary Stunts	A squad's best and most creative stunts. More than one person working together as a team to execute the skill. All required elements should be executed during one section of the routine to receive full credit.		
Secondary Stunts	Basic two-legged stunts, to one-legged extended stunts, and high-flying basket tosses. EXAMPLES: Coed style extensions, extended single leg stunts.		
Tosses	Tosses can be used in place of the Secondary Stunt.		
	TOSSES		
	BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
	Straight Rides	Single Full	Kick Single or 1 ¼
	Blow Outs	X-Outs	Hitch-kick Single or 1 ¼
	Pose	Toe Touch	Star Single or 1 ¼
		Pike	Toe Touch Full Down
		Ball Up Star	Full Up Toe Touch
Dismounts	The ending movement from a stunt or pyramid to a cradle or the performing surface. Movements are only considered dismounts if released to a cradle or released and assisted to the performing surface. Movement from a cradle to the ground is not considered a dismount. (Source: USAF) Specific dismounts are not necessary in secondary stunts.		
Load-In	A stunting position in which the top person has at least one foot in the base(s) hands. The base(s) hands are at waist level (<i>USASF: 2016-17 Cheer Glossary</i>). The manner by which you get the flyer to the top. Load-In Position: the two-foot entry position for an elevator; a hang drill. Only at the beginning of the routine, a flyer must have one foot on the floor ready to begin the stunt and in preparation of the signal to begin. Routines cannot begin in a stunt per GIAA Rules.		

STUNT SKILLS

If a squad performs the **same** skill multiple times, it will still only count as one skill.

- A full-up from load and a full up from straddle position will count as **one** advanced skill. The full-up is the repeated skill.
- All groups must perform the same skill(s) to receive credit.



The table below represents a **limited list** of stunt skills a squad may perform. The officials are responsible for determining the level of difficulty for any stunt skills not listed.

STUNT SKILLS		
BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
Prep Level Stunts	Faux full-up to extended position	True full-up (cross-leg/traditional grip) to extended position
Half-up to Prep Level	True full-up (cross-leg/traditional grip) to prep level	Ball-up to extended position
Straight-up Stunt to Prep Level (single or double leg)	Half-up to extended position	Switch-up to extended position
	Switch-up to prep level	Inversion to extended position
	Inversion from below prep level to prep level	Unbraced tick-tock (low-to-high) to extended position
Double Leg Extension	Quick toss to prep level	Quick toss to the extended position
	Inversion from prep level to prep level	High-to-high extended
	Ball-up, tick-tock, or low-to-high to prep level	1 ¼ full-up to extended position
	1 ¼ full-up to prep level	
	Straight up single leg extension	
	Non-released ball-up, tick-tock, or low-to-high to extended position	

Any release skill to the extended position that is not fully released is considered an intermediate skill.

BODY POSITIONS / FLEXIBILITY SKILLS

A front and side stretch counts as only one body position. They will no longer be considered two different positions.

BODY POSITIONS	NON-BODY POSITIONS
Stretch (Side/Front)	Liberty
Bow & Arrow	Torch
Scale	Dangle/Platform
Scorpion	
Chin Chin/Cry Baby/No-hands	
Needle	
Cobra	
Arabesque	

DISMOUNTS

DISMOUNTS



BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
Straight cradles from any skill/level	1 - 1 ¼ rotation (twist) from prep level single leg position	1 - 1 ¼ rotation (twist) from extended single leg position
Pop downs	360 down (corkscrew) from extended (two legged) position to a squish or floor	360 down (corkscrew) from extended (single leg) position to a squish or floor
Squish	360 down (corkscrew) from prep level to a squish or floor	Power press prep level kick/toe/pike full
Prone from prep level	Full down from prep or extended position	
	Forward suspended roll	
	Prone from extended level	
	Half turn cradle	
	Yoyo	

MAXING OUT IN PRIMARY PARTNER STUNT

- A team with 16 members will be expected to stunt 4 primary stunts executing the max DOD requirements to receive an 8.
- A team of 16 members stunts 3 primary stunt groups, if the squad maxes DOD requirement, the highest DOD the squad will receive is a 7. The groups must complete all skills outlined in the rubric to receive the highest score in DOD.
- If a team has a total of 15 members, they are expected to stunt 3 primary stunt groups. 3 stunt groups executing the max DOD requirement would receive a 7. However, if a team has a total of 15 members and stunt 4 main groups with the required skills, they can receive a maximum of 8 for DOD points.

MAXING OUT IN SECONDARY PARTNER STUNT / TOSSES

- To max out DOD in secondary stunt/tosses, a team of 16 will be expected to do 5 secondary extended single leg stunts or throw 4 advanced tosses to receive a 5.
- If a team has total of 15 members, they are expected to stunt 4 secondary extended single leg stunts or throw 3 advanced tosses to receive a maximum score of 4 for DOD.
- A team of 15 could max out DOD of 5 if they perform 5 single leg extended stunts. However, a team of 15 members would be unable to legally complete 4 tosses.

PYRAMIDS

Two or more connected stunt groups built no more than two body lengths high. A squad of 16 will likely have a more intricate pyramid than a squad of 12.

SKILLS

If a squad performs the same skill multiple times, it will still only count as one skill.

- A full-up from load and a full-up from straddle position will count as one advanced skill. The full-up is the repeated skill.



A suspended roll (intermediate skill) is when the hand is in contact with someone with both feet on the performing surface.

BASIC	INTERMEDIATE	ADVANCED
Straight-up stunt to prep level or extension	Inversion from below prep level to prep level	True full-up to extended position
Prep level stunts	True full-up to prep level	Ball-up to extended position
Half-up to prep	Switch-up to prep level	Switch-up to extended position
Show and go	Quick toss to prep level	Inversion to extended position
Single leg show-and-go	Invert from prep level to prep level	Quick toss to the extended position
Straddle sit	Half-up to extended position	1 ¼ full up to extended position
Splits	Faux full-up to extended position	1½ around back to squish
Half around back to squish	Power press and other similarly difficult skills	Release skills in a pyramid such as a braced • High-to-high tick tock • Low-to-high tick tock • Ball-up • Toe touch • Full around • Baja flip • Side-somi • One or two-armed braced front or back flip
	Full around back to squish	
Flat back into stunt	One or two-handed suspended roll	
	Helicopter	
	Ball-up to prep level	
	Invert from prep level to prep level or load position	
	Up and over (leapfrog)	
	1 ¼ full up to prep level	

PYRAMID EXECUTION

When a pyramid is attempted, and part of the pyramid is executed appropriately, then the team is given credit for any portion of the pyramid that hits. Provided the pyramid reached the intended height, a fall in one stunt group of the pyramid would not prevent the team from scoring a Degree of Difficulty (DOD) score. Spacing issues, falls/missed elements on one side, and timing issues would be an example of elements that would be scored in the execution of the pyramid. Either side falling may result in a fall deduction if the fall goes to the floor.

PANEL C – PARTNER STUNTS RUBRIC

GEORGIA INDEPENDENT ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



Primary Partner Stunts								
DOD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		2 Total Groups Less than majority squad basic dismounts Must include 1 basic skill to prep level or higher plus 2 body positions	3 Total Groups Squad intermediate dismounts	4 Total Groups Must include 1 basic skill plus 2 body positions	2 Total Groups Majority squad advanced dismounts	3 Total Groups Squad advanced dismounts	3 Total Groups Squad advanced dismounts	4 Total Groups
	½ Total Groups	¾ Total Groups		2 Total Groups Squad intermediate dismounts	3 Total Groups Majority advanced dismounts	4 Total Groups Squad advanced dismounts		
	Must include 1 basic skill with limited or no body positions			Must include 2 advanced skills to the extended position plus 2 body positions executed at extended position				
			2 Total Groups Majority intermediate dismount Must include 2 intermediate skills plus 2 body positions	3 Total Groups	4 Total Groups Squad advanced dismounts			
EXE	1-2		3-5		6-8		9-10	
	Poor technique and timing, poor synchronization, poor dismounts, lacks flexibility of body positions, poor precision		Average technique, good timing and synchronization, not very clean dismounts, average flexibility of body positions, average/fair precision		Above average technique, timing, and synchronization; very good precision, very clean dismounts, above average flexibility of body positions		Excellent technique, timing, synchronization, and precision; perfect flexibility of body positions, majority perfectly clean dismounts	
	3 or more dropped stunts; 7+ bobbles, falls, or missed stunts. Lots of stunt movement		1-2 dropped stunts; 5-6 bobbles, multiple falls, or missed stunts. Some stunt movement		0-1 dropped stunt; 3-4 bobbles, minimal falls, or missed stunts. Minimal stunt movement		0 dropped stunts; 1-2 bobbles; no falls or missed stunts. Minimal to no stunt movement	
Secondary Stunts/ Tosses								
DOD	1	2	3	4	5			
	1 Total Group extended single leg	2 Total Groups extended single leg	3 Total Groups extended single leg	4 Total Groups extended single leg	5 Total Groups extended single leg			
	1-2 Total Groups double leg extended	3 Total Groups double leg extended	4 Total Groups double leg extended	5 Total Groups double leg extended				
	1-2 Total Groups prep-level	3-4 Total Groups prep-level	5 Total Groups prep-level					
		1 Total Group advanced tosses	2 Total Groups advanced tosses	3 Total Groups advanced tosses	4 Total Groups advanced tosses			
	1 Total Group intermediate tosses	2 Total Groups intermediate tosses	3 Total Groups intermediate tosses	4 Total Groups intermediate tosses				
	1-2 Total Groups basic tosses	3 Total Groups basic tosses	4 Total Groups basic tosses					
DOD COED Secondary Stunts								
The team must execute the required number of coed stunt groups to receive the points in the category below.								
	1	2	3	4	5			
	Assisted or unassisted to hands/prep level.	Assisted or unassisted to hands/prep level. Then assisted or unassisted extension .	Unassisted to hands/prep level. Then assisted or unassisted extended single leg/one-arm skill. OR	Fully unassisted completed to the extended position. Then assisted to extended single leg/one-arm skill.	Fully unassisted completed to the extended position. then unassisted extended single leg/one-arm skill. Can toss directly to extended skill .			
			Fully unassisted completed to extended double-leg position.					
EXE	1	2-3	4-5	6				
	Poor technique and timing, poor synchronization, poor dismounts, lacks flexibility of body positions, poor precision	Average technique, good timing and synchronization, not very clean dismounts, average flexibility of body positions, average/fair precision		Above average technique, timing, and synchronization; very good precision, very clean dismounts, above average flexibility of body positions		Excellent technique, timing, synchronization, and precision; perfect flexibility of body positions, majority perfectly clean dismounts		
	3 or more dropped stunts; 7+ bobbles, falls, or missed stunts. Lots of stunt movement	1-2 dropped stunts; 5-6 bobbles, multiple falls, or missed stunts. Some stunt movement		0-1 dropped stunt; 3-4 bobbles, minimal falls, or missed stunts. Minimal stunt movement		0 dropped stunts; 1-2 bobbles; no falls or missed stunts. Minimal to no stunt movement		



PANEL C – PYRAMIDS RUBRIC

PYRAMIDS								
DOD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Basic pyramid that includes		Intermediate pyramid that includes		Advanced Pyramid that includes		Highly advanced pyramid that includes	
	1 structure with	2 or more structures with	1 or more structures with	2 or more structures with	2 or more structures with	3 or more structures with	3 or more structures with	4 or more structures with
	1 basic skills to the prep level position or above, lacking complexity Synchronized flyers not required	2 or more basic skills to the prep level position or above, lacking complexity Synchronized flyers not required OR 1 intermediate skill to the prep level position or above Synchronized flyers not required	2 or more intermediate skills to the prep level position or above Synchronized flyers not required	3 or more intermediate skills performed to the prep level position performed by 2 or more synchronized flyers OR 1-2 advanced skills performed with 1 flyer 1 of the 2 skills being executed to the extended position	advanced skills performed with 2 flyers 1 of the 2 skills being executed to the extended position by 2 or more synchronized flyers OR advanced skills performed with 1 flyer 2 of the 3 skills being executed to the extended position	2 advanced skills with 2 of the 2 skills being executed to the extended position all performed by 2 or more synchronized flyers	3 advanced with 2 of the 3 skills being executed to the extended position all performed by 2 or more synchronized flyers	4 advanced skills with 2 of the 4 skills being executed to the extended position all performed by 2 or more synchronized flyers
EXE	1-2		3-5		6-8		9-10	
	Poor technique and timing, poor synchronization, poor dismounts, lacks flexibility of body positions, poor precision Poor transitions		Average technique, good timing and synchronization, not very clean dismounts, average flexibility of body positions, average/fair precision Not very clean transitions		Above average technique, timing, and synchronization; very good precision, very clean dismounts, above average flexibility of body positions Very clean transitions		Excellent technique, timing, synchronization, and precision; perfect flexibility of body positions, majority perfectly clean dismounts Perfectly clean transitions	
	3 or more dropped stunts; 7+ bobbles, falls, or missed stunts. Lots of stunt movement.		1-2 dropped stunts; 5-6 bobbles, multiple falls, or missed stunts. Some stunt movement.		0-1 dropped stunt; 3-4 bobbles, minimal falls, or missed stunts. Minimal stunt movement.		0 dropped stunts; 1-2 bobbles; no falls or missed stunts. Minimal to no stunt movement.	

**2026 COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADING OFFICIAL'S SCORE SHEET
PANEL C – PARTNER STUNTS / PYRAMIDS**

SCHOOL	NUMBER ON SQUAD	CLASS/ REGION	PANEL
			C
PRIMARY PARTNER STUNTS			
Areas of EXE Improvement			SCORE
☐ Missed Stunts ☐ Bobbles	☐ Flyer Form	☐ Formations	DOD 8
☐ Dropped Stunts ☐ Precision	☐ Flexibility	☐ Synchronization	
☐ Cleanup Dismounts ☐ Timing	☐ Stability	☐ Falls	EXE 10
☐ Missed Dismounts ☐ Stunt Movement	☐ Stunt Technique		Decimal of .5 permitted
SECONDARY STUNTS / TOSSES/ COED			
Areas of EXE Improvement			
☐ Missed Stunts ☐ Bobbles	☐ Flyer Form	☐ Formations	SQUAD DOD 5
☐ Dropped Stunts ☐ Precision	☐ Flexibility	☐ Synchronization	
☐ Cleanup Dismounts ☐ Timing	☐ Stability	☐ Falls	EXE 6
☐ Toss Technique ☐ Toss Height	☐ Stunt Movement	☐ Stunt Technique	Decimal of .5 permitted
☐ Did not meet coed requirements	☐ Coed Technique		COED DOD 5
PYRAMIDS			
Areas of EXE Improvement			
☐ Flyer Form ☐ Flow	☐ Improve Transitions	☐ Synchronized	DOD 8
☐ Precision ☐ Missed Elements	☐ Cleanup Releases	☐ Timing	
☐ Drops ☐ Bobbles	☐ Pace	☐ Connections	EXE 10
☐ Stability ☐ Falls	☐ Stunt Movement	☐ Stunt Technique	Decimal of .5 permitted
SUBTOTAL SCORE			
LEGIBLY SIGN YOUR FULL NAME			
OFFICIAL 5 SIGNATURE		OFFICIAL 6 SIGNATURE	