GIAA GAME DAY STATE CHAMPIONSHIP RULES AND REGULATIONS

A. GAME DAY FORMAT

The total number of participants for a school team is determined by counting all spirit-leading participants including cheerleaders, mascots, and flag runners. The use of live band and/or drum line to supplement the Game Day environment is not permitted. Mascots may participate but cannot be involved in the execution of stunts. Mascots executing any jumps or tumbling must do so in accordance with the National Federation of State High School (NFHS) Spirit rules. Flag Runners may not perform cheerleading "technical" skills including stunts, jumps and tumbling

Schools are responsible for registering their squad in the appropriate division based on conference classification. Each school team will be allowed to enter one (1) school team division.

B. SCHOOL REPRESENTATION AND TEAM PARTICIPATION

The school team will consist of students that meet the requirements according to the GIAA Rules and Guidelines.

1. One SIDELINE team per school will be allowed to enter the GIAA Game Day State Championship.
2. All participants must be academically eligible students of the school in which they represent and must be designated by school officials as spirit representatives for participation purposes.
3. The individual students representing a school team may vary in the qualifying round provided each performance does not exceed the maximum number of participants.
4. For teams advancing to the State Championship round, participants that enter the floor must remain the entire length of the State Championship performance. Substituting individuals on and off the floor for the different sections of the State Championship round is not permitted.
5. It is the responsibility of the school coach that each team member, coaches, parents, and other persons affiliated with the school conduct themselves in the appropriate manner.
6. School teams must refrain from taunting, bragging, or suggestive expressions or gestures as well as discrimination of any nature.

C. UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES

1. Traditional game day uniform is required.
2. All National Federation of State High Schools (NFHS) uniform rules apply.
3. School teams must display an overall appearance conducive to serving as public representatives and ambassadors of their school in regards to grooming, traditional and appropriate attire, conservative make-up, and uniformity.
4. The use of signs, poms, flags, rally towels, and megaphones are allowed and encouraged for performances. The use of additional props is not permitted. The use of flags on poles is not permitted by top persons while in stunts.
5. ALTERNATES - Alternates must be dressed in a matching school cheer uniform or team warm-up. Alternates dressed in clothes other than cheer uniform/team warmup will need to purchase a spectator ticket and enter as a spectator.

D. COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA

1. Approximate floor size will be 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 strips).
2. The GIAA Game Day State Championship will comply with the NFHS competition surface rule.
3. Signs or props may be placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member who must remain inside the competition area. See Section IV, E for deductions association with out of bounds.

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E. MUSIC

1. Schools must use recorded marching band music for the fight song and Band Chant categories.
2. All use of music must by compliant with U.S. Copyright Laws.
3. *Neither the GIAA nor Varsity Spirit is responsible for obtaining any necessary permission or licensing of the recorded music used by a school team during the GIAA Game Day State Championship.*
4. Fight Song /Band Music
    a. If a high school marching band records their school's **original** fight song, they will need to get the school's permission to use the song and recording.
    b. If a team legally acquires a recording of a band playing a popular recording from an authorized provider (iTunes, Amazon, etc.), the song can be used as long as no edits are made to the music (other than for timing purposes).
    c. Music from streaming sites (YouTube, Apple Music Subscription) does NOT meet licensing requirements and cannot be used for this competition.
    d. A team cannot use a recording of their band playing a popular song (a cover) or other music without the proper permissions or the band becoming a preferred provider. See Varsity.com/music for more information about preferred providers.

5. Coaches will be required to provide proof of licensing, in the form of a printed copy, during team registration check-in at the event. Examples include:

a. Clementune – provide team's invoice from camp.

b. Authorized Provider (iTunes, Amazon, etc.) – provide a screenshot of the song you are using from your purchased playlist.

c. Music Provider – provide a printed copy of proof of licensing.

d. Recording your school's original fight song - A letter granting permission for the cheer or dance team to use the fight song on school letterhead is enough. It should be signed by your program's administrative supervisor.

e. Recorded Band Music playing a SINGLE Musical Composition – - If your school band has recorded a song for your cheer or dance team to utilize during competition or performance, you will need to show a Compulsory License or Mechanical License that allows you to use the recording of the song. - If your Band Director cannot provide this for you, please follow the instructions on the Quick and Easy Licensing document.

f. If a team does not have the required paperwork, they will be given the option to count the routine verbally.

6. A coach or team representative MUST remain at the music table to push play and manage the music. This representative is responsible for pressing "play". Should an adult choose not to stay at the music table for the duration of the routine, and a malfunction occurs, teams may or may not be permitted to perform the routine again.

7. All coaches must bring their own DONGLE adaptor to connect it to the aux cord attached to the sound systems provided on the main competition floor. This is to ensure there are no meet delays should there be a failure in what is provided by the host site.

F. HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

1. GIAA rules require cheer and spirit performances shall be in accordance with safety standards prescribed by the National Federation High School Spirit Rules.
2. The GIAA rules and regulations requiring annual education and training applies to any person designated by the school as a cheerleading coach, supervisor or sponsor.
3. School participants must comply with the GIAA Constitution and Contest Rules section 1205(a)(6) GIAA Concussion Acknowledgment Form and file it with the school district personnel for the current school year.

4. Any student participating in a GIAA member school cheerleading program, suspected of having a concussion, must be evaluated by his or her treating physician. The participant's treating physician must provide a written statement that in his or her professional judgment it is safe for the student to return-to-play before the participant many begin the school districts COT return-to-play designated protocol.

II. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Teams will be evaluated on their ability to lead the crowd, proper skill incorporations and performance, motions, dance and overall routine. Game Day practicality is heavily emphasized. Performances should be prepared as they would for sideline leading at a school sporting event.

A. GAME DAY ROUTINES

The competition will consist of three categories. There should be no "organized" entrances when taking the floor for any of the performances. Teams cannot build stunts or execute skills off the performance floor prior to the beginning of the routine—all skills must be executed DURING the routine and on the mat. Mascots and flag runners must enter the floor with the team and should be used to raise crowd energy and participation.

1 - Band Chant:

- One-minute time **LIMIT**
- Should have emphasis on crowd appeal and practicality.
- **QUALIFYING ROUND**: Teams will be announced, take the floor, and timing will begin with the first beat of music or organized movement. To clearly mark the end of the Band Chant, music should end, then teams should show spirit. Teams are discouraged from adding any words or organized movement following the end of the Band Chant music.
- Marching band music that encourages crowd interaction.
- No stunts or tumbling are permitted in this section. Jumps and kicks are allowed.

2-Crowd Leading:

- One-minute time **LIMIT**
- Sideline leadership that engages crowd response
- **QUALIFYING ROUND**: Timing begins with the sound of a **BUZZER**, which will occur within 10 seconds following the completion of the team's BAND CHANT routine and while the team is spiriting on the floor. Timing begins immediately when the buzzer sounds, and the team should then execute its Crowd Leading performance.
- There will not be a buzzer to signify the **END** of this section.
- Skill restrictions:
    - o No basket, sponge or elevator tosses allowed (cradles are considered dismounts, not tosses). Coed and "quick" tosses are permitted.
    - o No inversions
    - o No twisting dismounts from stunts
    - o Single leg extended stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
    - o No running tumbling.
    - o Standing tumbling is limited to one tumbling skill at a time. A back tuck is the most elite standing tumbling skill allowed.

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3- Fight Song:

- One-minute time **LIMIT**
- Traditional school fight songs performed to recorded marching band music.
- **QUALIFYING ROUND**: Within 10 seconds of the completion of the Crowd Leading Section and while the team is spiriting on the floor, the coach or team representative will be responsible for starting Fight Song music. Timing for Fight Song will begin with the first beat of music or organized movement, whichever comes first.
- Added or "Incorporated" skills (stunts, jumps and/or tumbling) are a component of the Fight Song score sheet. Up to three **CONSECUTIVE** eight-counts may be incorporated with stunts, tumbling and/or jumps. The three 8 counts of added skills (incorporation) can take place at any point in the routine and can (but does not have to be) repeated once if desired. IF repeated, the incorporated skills must repeat exactly as initially performed. Exception: Repeated skills that must dismount to the floor during the routine to meet the 8-count restriction rule, may end "up" at the end of a routine. To properly count any incorporation, start counting the 8-counts with the "dips" of the added skill(s)—the dip to jump, dip to tumble, dip of top person to load stunt, etc.). **REGARDLESS OF WHEN THE MUSIC ENDS**, the counting of incorporated 8 counts will continue until the routine is complete, or the skills are completed and back on the ground.
- Skill restrictions:
    - o No basket, sponge or elevator tosses allowed (cradles are considered dismounts, not tosses)
    - o No inversions
    - o No twisting dismounts from stunts
    - o Single-leg extended stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches
    - o No running tumbling o Standing tumbling is limited to one skill at a time. A back tuck is the most elite tumbling skill allowed.

QUALIFYING ROUND - Each performance will consist of one of the three identified categories above. Each element will have a time limit of one (1) minute. Each of the three qualifying round performances will be preceded by a designated warm-up session. *Each element would still be timed and scored individually.*

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STATE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND - Teams with the highest cumulative scores from the Qualifying Round will advance to the Finals. The number of teams advancing to the State Championships will be determined based on the number of teams participating in the Qualifying Round in each classification/division. The State Championship Round will be preceded by a designated warm-up session.

Each STATE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND performance will have an overall maximum performance time limit of three (3) minutes and will be performed in the following order: 1. Band Chant 2. Crowd Leading *Beginning with Situational Response* (see description below) 3. Fight Song The entire performance will be executed in continuous order, like the Qualifying Round. To continue the feel of a Game Day environment, spirited crowd-leading interaction between each section is encouraged.

SITUATIONAL RESPONSE: To imitate the Game Day environment, each team will respond to audio cues by a game announcer, as heard at a football or, by request only, a basketball game. Following the completion of the band chant, the announcer will give squads a game scenario indicating an offense or defense situation. Teams should show their definitive understanding of the situation with an OFFENSE or DEFENSE crowd-leading response. Squads should focus on crowd effectiveness, motion technique, and skills relevant to game day. A general response would not meet the criteria. The Situational Response replaces the buzzer from the Qualifying Round.

INTERFERENCE: Coaches and/or athletes not on the performance floor may NOT assist or direct the squad (either verbally or nonverbally) with the situational response.

B. SCORES AND RANKINGS

1. In the qualifying round, each team will be scored by multiple judges in each of the three categories.
2. The cumulative scores from the three elements will determine which teams advance to the State Championship Round. If a tie occurs within the designated numbers of teams advancing to the State Championship Round, both teams will advance. If a tie occurs outside the number of teams advancing to the State Championship Round, the tie will stand.
3. The official results and team placements will be determined by the cumulative scores from the STATE CHAMPIONSHIP round only. Qualifying round scores will not carry over to determine final team standings. However, if a tie occurs in the State Championship round, the cumulative qualifying round scores will be utilized to break any ties.

Tie Breaker A: The Crowd Leading score from the State Championship round will be utilized to break the tie.
Tie Breaker B: In the event of a tie when utilizing the Crowd Leading score from the State Championship round, the Fight Song score from the State Championship round will be utilized to break the tie.
*If a tie remains after completing Tie Breaker A and B, the officials will determine the order of placement for tied teams.

4. Scores and rankings will be available only to coaches as follows:
    - Qualifying Round - score sheets will be made available to all teams following the qualifying round.
    - State Championship Round- Score sheets will be available to all teams after the State Championship Round awards ceremony.
    - Comprehensive scores and rankings will be posted on the GIAA website after the competition.
5. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the GIAA Game Day State Championship score sheet.

6. All scores and judges decisions are considered final. There is no process to protest the scores.

C. TIME LIMITATIONS

1. Timing will begin with the first group movement, voice, or beat of music, whichever comes first.
2. Acknowledging the potential variance in sound system and timing devices, a three (3) second allowance is given for the Qualifying Round. Judges will issue deductions as follows:
   • 3 points for a time of 1:04-1:08
   • 5 points for a time of 1:09-1:13
   • 7 points for a time of 1:14+
   A five (5) second allowance is given for the State Championship Round. Judges will issue deductions as follows:
   • 3 points for a time of 3:06-3:10
   • 5 points for a time of 3:11-3:15
   • 7 points for a time of 3:16+
   It is recommended that all teams practice and time performances prior to competition to allow for variations in sound equipment. Introductions and exits:
   a. All team breaks, rituals, and traditions need to take place backstage before a team is in the "on deck" or next to perform position.
   b. Teams should take the floor immediately **with spirit and enthusiasm**, but without excessive gestures i.e. teams must refrain from chest bumps, hugs, and handshakes.
   c. All teams should refrain from any type of excessive celebration following the team's performance. Any team in violation will receive a ONE-point deduction.
   d. There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official ending of the routine.

III. INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE

A. UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

1. If, in the opinion of the competition officials, a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the competition equipment, facilities, or other factors attributable to the competition rather than the team, the team affected will be directed to **STOP** the routine.
2. If directed to stop a routine in the Qualifying Round, the team will perform the impacted section again as directed and will only be evaluated from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. If directed to stop a routine in the State Championship Round, the team will perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred.

B. FAULT OF TEAM

1. In the event a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the team's own equipment, the team must either continue the routine or withdraw from the competition.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If decided by officials, the team will perform the routine again in its entirety, but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred.

C. INJURY

1. All participants must follow the GIAA safety regulations identified in this document. The only persons that may stop a routine for injury are: a) competition officials, or b) the school coach from the team performing.

2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed at a later time, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. The team may perform the routine again in its entirety, but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. The injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless the competition officials receive clearance from the on-site medical personnel and the school head coach of the competing team.
4. Any injured participant suspected of a concussion is required to follow the GIAA Concussion Policy regarding the treatment of concussions and must be removed immediately from the competition.

IV. INTERPRETATIONS AND RULINGS

A. RULES & PROCEDURES

Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the school coach of the team and will be directed to the Competition Director. Such questions should be made **prior** to the team's competition performance.

The GIAA Game Day State Championship Rules Committee will consist of a designated Competition Director, Head Judge and GIAA staff. The school team and school coach must abide by all decisions made by the judges and Rules Committee. Any interpretation of the GIAA Game Day State Championship rules and regulations or any decision involving any other aspect of the competition will be rendered by the Rules Committee.

B. AWARDS

Each classification/division will receive the following:

1. A first place trophy will be awarded to the top team score in band chant, crowd leading and fight song categories.
2. The top teams will be awarded and designated with a 2nd place with a runner-up silver trophy and 1st place with a championship gold trophy.

C. JUDGING PANELS

Judges will be provided by the GIAA and they will be responsible for scoring each school performance according to the GIAA competition score sheets.

1. Head Judge - A Head Judge is responsible for overseeing a designated panel of judges. The Head Judge will also fill out his/her own score sheet for each performance.
2. Panel Judge - Panel Judges are responsible for scoring each team's performance based on the GIAA score sheets. Each Panel Judge will fill out a score sheet for each performance.
3. Safety Judge - The Safety Judge is responsible for administering all safety violations, time violations, and boundary violations.
4. Quality Judge - The Quality Judge is responsible for overseeing the entire Judging Panel that consists of Head Panel Judges, Panel Judges, and Safety Judge.
5. **ALL JUDGES' DECISIONS ARE FINAL. THERE IS NO PROCESS FOR PROTEST REGARDING SCORING, DEDUCTIONS, OR JUDGES FEEDBACK.**

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D. DISQUALIFICATION

Any team that does not adhere to the terms and procedures of the GIAA Game Day State Championship rules and regulations defined in this document will be subject to disqualification from the competition and will automatically forfeit any award.

E. DEDUCTIONS

Deduction points will be subtracted from the final score. The following is a sample of potential rule infractions and point deductions. Teams should refer to the Time and Deduction Sheet for each performance on any deductions given. (See below)

Area	Specific	Deduction Points
Participant allowance (Section I, A)	Exceed maximum participants	Disqualification from contest
Music licensing (Section I, E)	Failure to meet licensing requirement	Disqualification from contest
NFHS Spirit Rules (Section I, F, 1)	Utilization of skill or stunt not permitted by rule	3 points per rule violation
Time limit* *3 second window to allow for variance (Section II, C) *5 second window to allow for variance (Section II, C)	Each violation	**Qualifying Round:** 3 points for a time of 1:04- 1:08 5 points for a time of 1:09- 1:13 7 points for a time of 1:14+ *3 second window considered above **State Championship Round:** 3 points for a time of 3:06-3:10 5 points for a time of 3:11-3:15 7 points for a time of 3:16+ *5 second window considered above
Time limit (Section II, C)	Excessive celebration or organized entrance or exit	1 point
Performance floor (Section I, D, 3)	Any team member stepping with both feet outside the designated performance area	.5 Half of one point
Procedure or General Rule Violation (not a safety violation)	Team exceeds 8-count allowances in fight song Team adds stunts or tumbling in Band Chant Team uses music, which does not meet the music requirements outlined in the Game Day Rules and Regulations.	3 points per rule violation