

# SIDELINE CHEER

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# SIDELINE CHEER

## IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

	Day/Week	2024-2025 (Roll Back Year)	2025-2026	2026-2027
<b>First Date Team Selection</b> (5 days total- does not need to be consecutive)	Monday, Wk. 38	March 18, 2024	March 24, 2025	March 23, 2026
<b>First Practice</b>	Monday, Wk. 5	August 5	August 4	August 3
<b>Summer Moratorium</b>		July 1-7	July 1-7	July 1-7
<b>Winter Moratorium</b>		December 23-26	December 23-26	December 23-26

Participation in school activities teaches that it is a privilege and an honor to represent one's school. Interscholastic activities constitute a part of the right kind of "growing up" experiences for students. Participants learn to accept success and failures, gain poise and confidence, achieve tolerance and understanding of others and gain the self-satisfaction of accomplishing goals. Under a well-administered school program, students and spectators become better citizens through participation and observation of activities conducted under established rules. Please refer to the **Sportsmanship Section of the SDHSAA Athletic Handbook** for policies and statements concerning the following items:

General Sports Objectives and Coaching Responsibility	Athletic Code of Ethics
Fundamentals of Sportsmanship	Code of Sport Ethics for Coaches
Racial Harassment, Violence and Taunting (See General Section)	

### 2024-2025 Spirit Rules Changes

<b>Rule 1</b>	The definition of jewelry was added for clarification.
<b>3-2-10</b>	New language added to Rule 3 to permit a top person in a T-lift to move over a participant in a nugget position.
<b>3-3-5c/d</b>	New language added to clarify a bracer may release the top person or move to a load position during a flip inversion when the top is descending and goes to a cradle.
<b>3-3-6c3</b>	Permits an inverted top person to be moved to the performing surface.
<b>3-5-5</b>	Separates and clarifies braced and non-braced releases to make it easier to locate.
<b>3-5-6</b>	New language added to permit stunts to be released to or from a vertical piked/seated position to a stunt at any level.
<b>3-7-2</b>	Removed requirement of a spotter on dismounts to the performing surface from prep level or above.
<b>3-8-2</b>	New language added to permit soft props to be held during airborne tumbling.
<b>3-10</b>	Several items have been moved from 2-1, 3-1, and 4-1 to align prop rules and provide clarity on the use of props.
<b>4-1-3</b>	Expanded the exceptions for footwear during airborne tumbling to allow for kip ups and headsprings.
<b>4-4-8</b>	Deleted rules that were redundant.
<b>4-4-10</b>	Deleted rules that were redundant
<b>4-4-11</b>	Deleted rules that were redundant.
<b>4-5-3</b>	Prohibits non-braced release skills.
<b>4-10</b>	Several items have been moved from 2-1, 3-1, and 4-1 to align prop rules and provide clarity on the use of props.

### South Dakota Changes/Reminders

1. **Allow football cheerleaders the same number of passes at the dome as the state basketball tournament. Eight passes, plus mascot at post season events for football.**
2. Eliminate the basket toss language for sideline cheer. Coaches must be AACCA Certified to perform basket tosses, will need to use proper matting and activity cannot cause a delay in the game/contest.
3. Change the number of sideline cheerleaders for basketball to 8 cheerleaders PLUS the mascot. The mascot will not be counted in the 8 cheerleaders for the squad limits.
4. Wrestling cheerleaders at state tournament will only be allowed on the floor to cheer during the championship match in which their team is involved.

## South Dakota Modifications

None

### A. GENERAL

1. **MANDATED TEAM PRACTICE.** No member school shall participate in an athletic contest, in any sport, unless the team has had five days of practice. This regulation does not apply to individuals.  
**NOTE:** Two practices in one day is considered one day of practice.
2. **Definition of Sideline Cheer.** Sideline Cheer is not an SDHSAA recognized sport. It is a support activity for a competitive sport sponsored by the SDHSAA. The competitive cheer coach may coach/advise a sideline cheer squad/team; however, the squad/team may NOT compete at any level against any SDHSAA competitive cheer team.  
\*All In-season/Out-of-season rules apply to sideline cheer.
3. **Safety Guidelines.** Cheerleading is reasonably safe as long as certain guidelines are followed, but there is the inherent risk of injury as in any athletic activity. Injuries that can occur in cheerleading include, but are not limited to, the following: blisters, muscle strains, ligament sprains, joint and muscle soreness, abrasions, contusions, stress fractures, broken bones, spinal cord injuries involving paralysis, and even death. However, if each school follows the prescribed safety guidelines, the possibility of such injuries will be largely decreased. Responsibility for safety of all cheerleaders rests with each member school. Each school's cheerleader coach/advisor should modify the safety guidelines to reflect the age, training, experience and athletic ability of the students under his/her charge.
4. **Catastrophic Insurance Coverage.** All cheerleaders are insured for any catastrophic injury that might occur as a result of their cheerleading activities. Member schools must annually report to the SDHSAA the number of cheerleaders from their school who did NOT participate in interscholastic sports. This can easily be done by completing the question that is included on the SDHSAA Annual Report Form that is located in the "Eligibility Reports" section of the SDHSAA Athletic Handbook. This information is needed to determine each member school's total catastrophic insurance premium for the ensuing school year. The Annual Report Form is to be completed at the conclusion of each school year.

### B. THE SPIRIT RULE BOOK

Member schools may purchase the National Federation's Spirit Rule Book from the SDHSAA. Please refer to FORMS on Bound, then Rule Book Orders.

*PRENOTE: NFHS Rules are the minimum guideline set for spirit teams. Each state association has the option to enforce stricter guidelines as deemed necessary. SDHSAA requires all cheer and dance coaches/advisors to be Cheer and Dance Safety Certified. Therefore, when Cheer and Dance Safety Certification guidelines are more restrictive than the ones set by NFHS, they are the ones to be followed. If you have questions regarding any rule or situation, please do not hesitate to contact the SDHSAA.*

### C. ONLINE RULES MEETING

Sideline cheer coaches shall view the sideline cheer rules meeting which can be found on the SDHSAA website on the Sideline Cheer page. **Sideline coaches are asked to view the meeting prior to the start of your coaching assignment.** Sideline cheer coaches will no longer be fined for missing the deadline. However, it will be each coach's responsibility to view the meeting and understand the rules and regulation set forth by the SDHSAA and NFHS.

All rules meetings will be available online on the SDHSAA website: [www.sdhsaa.com](http://www.sdhsaa.com), then sideline cheer, then SDHSAA rules meeting.

#### **Special Considerations for Stunting Squads:**

1. If a school changes cheer coaches for each season and its teams include tumbling, partner stunts and pyramids in its routines, each coach must have completed The Cheer and Dance Safety Certification Course. This course may be found online at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com).
1. If an assistant coach has not completed the Cheer and Dance Safety Certification course, he/she still may supervise the cheer team at practice, as well as at events, provided the head coach has instructed the assistant in proper coaching procedures for stunting teams. This instruction should be documented and the school administration shall have this documentation on file.
2. If a qualified cheer coach and/or school approved supervisor is NOT in attendance at an activity, that cheer team WILL NOT be allowed to perform stunts.
3. A reminder to schools/coaches: If a cheer team performs stunts without qualified supervision, schools increase their liability should an accident occur.

Schools must monitor/check the educational requirements of their cheer coach(es) which are the same as for other sport coaches.

The rules meeting will be posted on the Sideline Cheer page for viewing by August 1.

#### D. COACHES MUST MEET SDHSAA EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

All the athletic coaches in member schools, head or assistant, paid or volunteer, must meet the education requirements set forth by the SDHSAA prior to starting any coaching assignment.

**NOTE:** See Coaches Education Program tab in the Athletic Handbook for SDHSAA Coaches Education Program.

#### E. GENERAL RISK MANAGEMENT

1. Participation in spirit team activities during interscholastic contests and spirit competitions must be limited to bona fide students of the school who are designated as members of the school's spirit team(s). Only those students may participate in spirit team activities on the sidelines, court, field, or contest area during an interscholastic event, except when exhibitions during a pre-game, half time, or post-game period are authorized by the host school administration. A bona fide student is one who has not graduated and is eligible to participate with and compete for a designated school according to the rules of that state's high school association and/or the local board of education.
2. Practice sessions shall be held in a location suitable for spirit activities, i.e. appropriate matting, reasonably free of obstructions and excessive noise, etc.
3. Performing surfaces must be suitable and free from objects. When discarding props (signs, etc.) that are made of solid material, or have corners or sharp edges, team members must gently toss or place the props.
4. Stunts (mounts, pyramids, tosses and tumbling) shall be modified to be appropriate to the performing surface/area.
5. An adequate warm-up including stretching shall precede all activities.
6. Use of mini-tramps, spring boards or any apparatus used to propel a participant is illegal.
7. Use of mini-tramps, springboards, spring-assisted floors or any height-increasing apparatus is illegal for use during performances/competitions.
8. Stunts shall not be performed during a basketball or volleyball game when the ball is in play, including free throws in basketball and just prior to the serve in volleyball.
9. Spirit participants must not warm-up stunts on the court or sideline area during player warm-up if an alternate area is available. If no appropriate alternate area is available, the coach must take reasonable precautions to minimize the risk to participants. Note: See suggestions under Coaches Responsibilities of the NFHS Spirit Rule Book.
10. Participants are not permitted to chew gum or have candy in their mouths during practice or performance.
11. Cheerleaders must not stand behind the free throw lane extended.
12. Spirit participants must remain outside the playing area during a 30-second time-out in a basketball game.
13. Artificial noisemakers shall not be used at indoor athletic contests except during pregame or halftime performances. EXCEPTION: Megaphones, appropriately used by spirit participants on the sidelines, floor or court, are permitted.
14. When it is detected that a participant is bleeding, has an open wound or an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, the participant shall stop performing to receive proper treatment.
15. Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.
16. Coaches are not to serve as spotters during a performance/game setting. If there are not enough cheerleaders to serve in this capacity, the cheer team should not be stunting.

#### F. PARTICIPANT APPAREL/ACCESSORIES

**Note: These regulations apply for regular season, region, SoDak 16, and state contests.**

1. Jewelry of any kind is prohibited except for the following: A religious medal without a chain is allowed and must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.  
**SD SITUATION:** *At a wrestling match, cheerleaders have safety pins: (a) on their skirts; (b) on seat cushions/pillows; (c) on the floor near them.*  
**RULING:** *All are illegal. COMMENT: Safety pins used for decorative purposes or awards are considered jewelry, and are, therefore, illegal.*
2. Fingernails, including artificial nails, shall be kept at a length appropriate for safe participation and to minimize risk for the participants. The appropriate length for all members of a stunting team means the nails are not visible beyond the end of the fingers when viewed from the palm side of the hands.
3. Hair devices and accessories shall be safe and secure. Hair must be worn in a manner that is appropriate for the activity.  
**COMMENT:** *Hair must be worn in a manner that does not interfere with the safe execution of a stunt or tumbling. Long hair that is not secured during partner stunts, pyramids, tosses and airborne tumbling presents significant risk.*  
**Note: A coach shall not permit a team member to participate if, in his/her judgment, items such as participant's fingernails or hair style may constitute a safety concern.**
4. Apparel/accessories must be appropriate for the activity involved and to minimize risk for the participants. A participant in full head-and-body costume shall not spot or stunt, except for a forward roll or cartwheel. Cheer team members must wear athletic shoes.

5. Glitter that does not readily adhere on the face, uniform, costume or the body is illegal. Glitter may be used on signs, props or backdrops if laminated or sealed. Glitter hairspray is illegal. (SD Rule 2009-10)
6. Supports, braces, soft casts, etc. that are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding. Supports/braces that have been altered from the manufacturer's original design/production must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than one-half inch thick if the participant is involved in partner stunts, pyramids, or tosses. A participant wearing a plaster cast or a walking boot must not be involved in partner stunts, pyramids, or tosses.
7. **SITUATION:** *A team is stunting at an outdoor event in temperatures of: (a) 40 degree; (b) 20 degrees; (c) 60 degrees. **RULING:** Appropriate apparel and modification of stunts to fit the weather are the determining factors at outdoor events.*
8. Each State Association may authorize the use of artificial limbs.
9. A uniform may have a single partial/whole manufacturer's logo/ trademark (no more than 2 1/4 square inches with no dimension exceeding 2 1/4 inches).
10. An American flag, not to exceed 2 by 3 inches, and either a commemorative or memorial patch, not to exceed 4 square inches and with written state association approval, may be worn on the uniform top.
11. A coach shall not permit a team member to participate if, in the judgment of the coach, the participant's hairstyle or fingernails do not conform to NFHS rules, or if the provisions for jewelry or glitter rules are not met, or if support or brace is not legal.

#### **G. COMMENTS ON THE RULES**

1. **When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff.**
2. Cheer teams must wear/cheer in appropriate school issued/sponsored uniforms, for ALL indoor sports during the regular season, sub-state and state events. (Exception: in the DakotaDome at football play-offs.) No camp wear is acceptable.
3. The wearing of self adhesive spirit tattoos is permitted. Face paint, stickers that peel off, or any type of sticker that can fall off and/or be deemed as a safety violation or one that questions good sportsmanship is NOT permitted.
4. Glitter hairspray is prohibited.
5. If a qualified cheer coach and/or school approved supervisor is NOT in attendance at an activity, cheer teams WILL NOT be allowed to perform stunts.
6. **Progressions.** As with any athletic activity, the coach is responsible for enforcing general risk management rules, recognizing a team's particular ability level, and ensuring that team members follow progressions. Only those skills mastered in practice by being consistently executed safely and correctly should be performed in public. Coaches are accountable for approving and documenting mastery of skills before allowing participants to progress to the next level or to perform skills in public. Elite-level stunts can be performed safely when appropriate progressions are followed and team members are properly trained and prepared.

*Rationale: All spirit stunts should be learned according to accepted progressions which means from lower to higher and from easy to more complex.*

##### **Partner Stunt Progressions**

- Step-up drills
- Double-base thigh stand
- Double-base shoulder stand
- Single-base shoulder stand
- Extension prep, step off dismount
- Cradle drills
- Extension prep, cradle dismount
- Press extension, return to shoulders, cradle dismount
- Press extension, cradle dismount
- A full extension step-up liberty
- Ground-up liberty
- Braced liberty tick-tock
- Skills to cradles (i.e. toe touches and twists)

*NOTE: No partner stunt should be attempted until each individual skill in the progression is mastered.*

Coaches must recognize a team's particular ability level and limit its activities accordingly. "Ability level" refers to the team's talents as a whole, and to individuals who should not be pressed to perform specific activities nor be limited by the ability level of the team.

7. **Height Limitations** – All partner stunts and/or pyramids are limited to two levels high, meaning that the top person(s) receive(s) primary support from one or more bases who is/are in direct, weight-bearing contact with the performing surface.

8. **Jewelry** - Jewelry of any kind is prohibited except for the following: A religious medal without a chain is allowed and must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible. In addition, taping over jewelry is not permitted.
9. **Fingernails** - Long fingernails present a safety hazard to all members of the spirit team. The appropriate length for nails for all members of stunting and non-stunting teams means the nails are not visible beyond the end of the fingers when viewed from palm side of the hands.
10. **Hair** – Hair must be worn in a manner that is appropriate for the activity involved. Hair devices and accessories must be secure. **It is the coach's responsibility to be certain hair is worn in a manner that will be safe for all participants.**
11. **Glitter** – Glitter that does not readily adhere on the face, uniform, costume or the body is illegal. Glitter may be used on signs, props or backdrops if laminated or sealed. This relaxes the rule to permit shimmery creams, lotions, etc. to be used. No glitter hairspray may be used. (South Dakota Rule-09-10)
12. **Spotters** - The primary responsibility of a spotter is to watch for safety hazards and be prepared to protect the top person/flyer's head, neck and back area in case of a fall.
13. **In South Dakota, all cheerleaders must be in grades 7-12. Sixth grade or below shall not participate with high school spirit teams.**
14. Coaches must recognize a team's particular ability level and limit its activities accordingly. "Ability level" refers to the team's talents as a whole, and to individuals who should not be pressed to perform specific activities nor be limited by the ability level of the team.

## **SUBSTATE AND STATE TOURNAMENTS**

### **A. ROSTERS MUST BE POSTED ON THE SDHSAA WEB SITE**

1. Cheer teams for football, girls' basketball, boys' basketball, and wrestling must be listed on the final roster posted on Bound. Cheerleaders not listed will not be allowed to cheer in post season (region, SoDak 16 and state) events. **This includes mascot.**
2. Substitutions may be made for injury, illness, or school disciplinary action.
3. Due dates for listing of cheerleaders on the SDHSAA web site:

<b>Football</b>	<b>October 15</b>
<b>Basketball and Wrestling</b>	<b>February 15</b>

- If cheerleaders and mascot are not listed by the above dates, the school is not to have cheerleaders for substate and state events.

### **B. SUPERVISION FORMS REQUIRED**

Forms with contact numbers for individuals responsible for cheerleaders will be required for all basketball and wrestling state tournaments. If these supervision forms are not turned in by deadline, cheer passes for the event will not be provided.

### **C. CHEER REGULATIONS AT ALL POST-SEASON FOOTBALL PLAY-OFFS**

1. Cheer teams must wear/cheer in appropriate school issued/sponsored uniforms during all football play-offs. No camp wear is acceptable.
2. All cheer teams must be supervised by a school sponsored/appointed cheer coach at all state events. SDHSAA state events should take precedence over regular and/or sub-state events.
3. Cheer team members, including mascot, must be listed on the football team's final roster posted on Bound. Cheerleaders not listed by October 15 will not be allowed to cheer at sub-state or state events.
4. Only varsity cheerleaders in uniform shall be admitted free at all First Round, Quarter-Final and Semi-Final games. It is not necessary to issue cheerleader passes at these three levels of Play-Off competition. For the final games at the DakotaDome, a maximum of eight passes will be issued to varsity cheerleaders, plus a mascot, as listed on the Team Roster and School Information Form on Bound. Cheer coaches will receive a maximum of two passes as listed on the same form.

### **D. CHEER REGULATIONS AT SUBSTATE AND STATE WRESTLING TOURNAMENT**

1. At State Wrestling due to space limitations, wrestling cheerleaders will not be allowed to cheer on the main floor until the championship match of their team's wrestler on Saturday evening.
2. Wrestling cheer squads should be no larger than six members.
3. Stunting is not allowed at all sub-state wrestling tournaments, as well as at the State A/B Wrestling Tournament.
4. Placement of cheerleaders: When teams cheer at the State Wrestling Tournament, they should be ten feet from the edge of the wrestling mat, unless the facility does not permit.  
The mat area should be free of spectators, photographers, and cheerleaders. It should be maintained as an open space around the mat so that everyone can have a full view of the wrestling area.
5. Many times, wrestling action will cause the wrestlers to leave the mat itself. It is felt that by having this area clear, it will be a much safer environment for the wrestlers and cheerleaders.

6. During many of the tournaments where more than one mat is being used, space may be limited. If it is not possible to have the 10 foot area around the mat clear, an effort needs to be made to keep cheerleaders, etc. back away from the mat as much as possible.
7. All cheerleaders are to refrain from beating the mat or floor while wrestling is in progress. Any time there is a hand slapping the mat it simulates the same sound as that of the official when he is calling a pin. This would include not only the wrestling on the mat where the cheerleaders are located but also while any wrestling may be occurring on another mat during a tournament situation.
8. Cheer teams must wear/cheer in appropriate school issued/sponsored uniforms for ALL indoor sports during the regular season, sub-state and state events. No camp wear is acceptable.
9. All cheer teams must be supervised by a school sponsored/appointed cheer coach at all state events. SDHSAA state events should take precedence over regular and/or sub-state events.

#### **E. CHEER REGULATIONS AT STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENTS**

1. Basketball cheerleaders are limited to 8 varsity cheerleaders, plus the mascot, for any given contest.
2. In some instances cheerleaders remain too close to the playing floor during play. Cheerleaders, for the protection of all, shall take a position that will not interfere with the game as played.
3. Only varsity basketball cheerleaders will be permitted on the playing floor at the state tournaments. This means that "B" team cheerleaders will not be allowed to assist in leading cheers at any state tournament game.
4. Spirit or yell leaders will be allowed provided they are so designated by their school and appear in a school approved uniform.
5. Cheer teams must wear/cheer in appropriate school issued/sponsored uniforms for ALL indoor sports during the regular season, sub-state and state events. No camp wear is acceptable.
6. All cheer teams must be supervised by a school sponsored/appointed cheer coach at all state events. SDHSAA state events should take precedence over regular and/or sub-state events.
7. Cheer team members (including mascot) must be listed on the basketball team's final roster posted on Bound. Cheerleaders not listed will not be allowed to cheer in post season (region, SoDak 16 and state) events.
8. A maximum of eight passes will be issued to varsity cheerleaders as listed on the Team Roster and School Information Form on Bound. Cheer coaches will receive a maximum of two passes as listed on the same form.

#### **F. LODGING**

SDHSAA will reserve up to 12 rooms for each state qualifying team (to include cheerleaders) for the state event provided hotel has accommodations.

#### **G. RECOMMENDED CHEER COACH UNIFORM RULE**

The SDHSAA reminds all coaches of their professional responsibility to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules and regulations of the sport and maintain proper appearance befitting the importance of the game. It is a matter of cooperation of people as a unit showing common courtesy, patience, pride, and respect. **Coaches are asked to dress appropriately (comfortable, but not sloppy; NO hats, t-shirts, denim jeans, or sweat pants). Coaches are in the spotlight, not a fan in the stands. BOD action: April 2008.**

### **CHEERLEADING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

1. What SDHSAA eligibility rules are applicable to cheerleaders? None
2. Do transfer rules apply to cheerleaders? No
3. Are there any special rules for sideline cheerleaders going to competitions established by the SDHSAA? The SDHSAA does not sponsor, regulate, or support sideline cheerleaders entering competitions. The SDHSAA sanctions a competitive cheer program designed for cheer competition and encourages schools to adopt competitive cheer if the school supports competition. Schools that do not adopt a competitive cheer program may compete against other sideline cheer programs. NFHS rules must be followed.
4. Can schools count sideline cheerleading as one of the sport offerings for girls? No. Schools may only count a school board adopted competitive cheer program as a sport.
5. Do cheerleaders have to pass a physical examination as required for athletes? Yes
6. Should member schools adopt local rules, regulations, code of conduct, etc., that is expected of their cheerleaders? Such a practice is highly recommended.
7. Are cheerleaders covered by the SDHSAA Catastrophic Insurance program? Yes.
8. If a team does not stunt, do they need to have a physical? Yes, under the guidelines, all cheerleaders must have a physical prior to cheering.
9. Does the 5 day practice rule apply to cheerleaders? Yes, cheerleaders must have 5 days of practice the same as any sport activity. The 5 days applies to the team as a whole, not each individual participant.
10. Do sideline cheerleaders/coaches for various sports need to follow out of season rules? Yes, coaches are limited to 4 competitive contacts during the summer out of season time period.
11. When can sideline cheerleaders begin practice? Sideline cheer can begin practice on the first allowable date that competitive cheer practice may begin.

## ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT TEAM AWARD

In an attempt to recognize the academic excellence of the athletic teams and fine arts groups in each school, the SDHSAA created the "Academic Achievement Team Award". The "Academic Achievement Team Award" is designed to recognize "varsity" level "teams" that achieve a combined GPA of 3.0 or higher.

For additional information about the "Academic Achievement Team Award", refer to the "Academic Achievement Team Award" section of either the ATHLETIC or FINE ARTS HANDBOOK.

## PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

### GENERAL:

1. Spirit team members should be present at all games to which they are assigned, and initiate positive crowd involvement.
2. Spirit teams should be in their assigned places throughout contest.
3. As representatives of the school, proper and positive behavior should be required at all times.
4. Spirit teams should be required to arrive in a sufficient amount of time before games begin. Their duties should include: (a) meeting and greeting the visiting teams and making them feel welcome; (b) assisting visiting teams with questions such as where they are to be located during the contest, where they can change, etc; (c) allowing adequate time for their warm-up period.
5. Prior to the start of a game, a plan between the home and visiting cheerleaders, pep bands and other spirit groups should be devised whereby all groups have the opportunity to cheer/perform during non-injury time-outs and intermissions. This will help eliminate confusion and prevent delays in the game while the officials wait for the spirit teams to get off the field or floor.
6. At games away from home, spirit teams should arrive as a group and meet the host teams.
7. Participants should know the game rules and officials' signals to the extent of understanding when and what type of cheers are appropriate. Spirit team members should always pay attention to the game or contest.
8. When the official signals for the game to begin after a time-out, the spirit teams should leave the floor immediately. Spirit teams shall stay clear of the playing area prior to and during the contest so as not to interfere with the players or officials or increase the possibility of injury.
9. Spirit teams should accept the decisions of officials and discourage disagreement of fans by initiating positive chants or cheers.
10. Spirit teams should realize the importance of actively influencing the positive conduct of the spectators.
11. Spirit teams should adapt their routines to the environmental conditions and playing surfaces for which stunts, pyramids and routines are used (i.e. mounts, pyramids or gymnastics shall not be permitted during rain, strong wind, or extreme cold, on slippery or uneven surfaces, or where there is not enough space. Hot and humid weather also may present problems.)
12. After performing or cheering, spirit team members should clear the playing area of any materials that could hinder play, i.e. pom fragments, signs, hair bows, apparel or props.
13. Spirit team members should use appropriate and positive language throughout all practices, games, performances and competition.

### SPORTSMANSHIP:

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

Good sportsmanship is conduct which imposes a type of self-control involving honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of results. School spirit is a reflection of these attitudes and behavior. If a school is to succeed in one of its prime functions, that of developing good citizenship, it is necessary that student groups radiate proper sportsmanlike conduct. Sportsmanship is good citizenship in action. The promotion of sportsmanship is a primary responsibility of spirit groups.

1. Spirit teams always should cheer in a positive manner. It is inappropriate to cheer against the other team or to cheer in response to an opposing player's mistake. Initiating response cheers between home and opposing spirit teams or fans is strongly discouraged.
2. Cheers and chants with suggestive words and/or motions (ex. pointing at opposing teams or fans) shall not be used because in many situations they bring about an inappropriate response.
3. Spirit leaders should call attention to the importance of sportsmanship at all pep rallies. When permitted, placing sportsmanship posters promoting good sportsmanship on the wall of the gym or throughout the school is helpful.
4. Spirit leaders should discourage their followers from yelling or cheering while an opponent is shooting free throws. Intimidation of opponents has no place in high school athletics.
5. Spirit leaders are in a position to preview spirit signs that will be posted for their school's contests (when permitted). Prohibiting inappropriate signs from ever being posted can greatly assist the administration and helps students or school personnel understand the importance for positive signage which is to create and maintain a positive crowd atmosphere.



6. Obnoxious behavior should not be encouraged nor permitted under the guise of school spirit. Opposing players, officials and fans should be treated with respect and dignity. If inappropriate crowd behavior exists, assistance should be obtained from a school administrator or game management.

### **TECHNIQUES FOR LEADING CHEERS:**

1. Stimulate and control crowd response.
2. Choose the right cheers at the right time.
3. Be certain that words used in a cheer do not suggest, inflame, or taunt an audience.
4. For indoor event, do not use artificial noisemakers or noise enhancers, including, but not limited to cowbells, sirens, clackers, cans with marbles or rocks inside, air horns, or any other noisemaking apparatus. Megaphones may be used only by cheerleaders, directed only toward one's own fans.
5. Divert the crowd's attention by starting a crowd cheer when booing develops.
6. Cheerleaders should get the crowd to respond to their lead by preparing them during pregame warm-ups.
7. It is important that the cheerleaders make eye contact with the crowd while leading a cheer; his/her facial expressions are very important in generating enthusiasm and a strong response.
8. Emphasize each word so that each is distinct and the cheer may be understood and followed easily.

### **WHEN TO CHEER:**

1. As your team comes on the floor or field.
2. When your team or a player makes an exceptional play.
3. When a substitution is made on your team. When appropriate, cheer outgoing player and incoming player.
4. As encouragement and tribute to an injured player when that player leaves the game.
5. When an opponent, who has played spectacularly, leaves the game.
6. As encouragement to own team in its drive for a score.
7. As encouragement to own team in defense of its goal.

### **WHEN NOT TO CHEER:**

1. When an opposing player makes a mistake or the opposing team is being penalized.
2. When an opposing player is injured.
3. As important announcements are being made over the public-address system.
4. When an unsportsmanlike act has occurred or is occurring.

**Note:** Negative or demeaning cheering is never acceptable. Chanting or cheering for the purpose of taunting the opponents is also never appropriate.

### **WHEN TO PERFORM:**

Spirit teams should be aware of the time available to perform. Appropriate situations for routines are: pregame, full 60-second time-outs, between quarters, at half-time, and postgame.

## **SD SIDELINE CHEER GUIDELINES FOR STUNTING AND NON-STUNTING TEAMS**

Cheerleading has become one of the most popular activities for young people in America. The increased emphasis on athleticism and specifically the expanded inclusion of tumbling, partner stunts and pyramids have been important contributors to its growth. Cheer coaches and school administrators/boards must recognize that stunting carries inherent risk and that this risk must be minimized during practices and during performances/competitions. This means all safety rules must be adhered to at every spirit activity, including practice. Recognizing this increased level of athleticism and in an effort to encourage safety awareness, the following regulations have been formulated to provide an invaluable guide to the SDHSAA member schools.

### **The following cheer guidelines are to be followed:**

Note: Schools are responsible for establishing their own policy for stunting or not stunting.

- A. All teams, stunting and non-stunting, must have **5 DAYS** of practice prior to their first cheerleading date.
- B. All teams, stunting and non-stunting, must have a physical prior to the start of practice.
- C. All head cheer coaches of football, girls' basketball, boys' basketball, and wrestling should view on-line rules meeting on an annual basis. The rules meeting will be found on the Sideline Cheer page.
- D. A stunting team practice area must have adequate ceiling clearance and have mats available. It is recommended that mats be used during any cheer performance/competition.
- E. The coach and/or the assistant should be present to supervise his/her own team at practice.
- F. The cheer coach of any team wishing to perform any drops, pendulums, pyramids/mounts, rolls/tumbling, dismounts, suspended splits, tosses, transitional stunts and vaults must successfully complete the Cheer and Dance Safety Certification Course (American Association for Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors) safety certification course in cheerleading. This course can be found on the [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com) website.

G. Special Considerations

- If a qualified cheer coach and/or school approved supervisor is NOT in attendance at an activity, the cheer squad WILL NOT be allowed to stunt.

H. Schools must monitor/check the requirements of their cheer coaches the same as they do for other sport coaches.

I. All in-season and out-of-season rules apply.

## **GENERAL SPORT CHEER GUIDELINES**

### **General (applies to all cheering, any sport):**

- NO JEWELRY – If you were not born with it, it is jewelry, and you cannot wear it while cheering. Only religious or medical medals may be taped to the body (no chains).
- The hair shall be worn in a manner to ensure safety while performing. Bows, ribbons, and hair extensions must be secure at all times.
- All members of a cheerleading team, stunting or non-stunting, shall wear their hair in a manner that is appropriate for the activity involved. Hair devices and accessories must be secure.
- Shoes and socks must be worn at all times during a game, match or practice.
- Fingernails, including artificial nails, shall be kept at a length appropriate for safe participation. The appropriate length means the fingernails are not visible beyond the end of the fingers when viewed from the palm side of the hands.
- Glitter that does not readily adhere on the face, uniform, costume or the body is illegal. Glitter may be used on signs, props or backdrops if laminated or sealed. The use of glitter hairspray is prohibited.
- A participant wearing a cast (excluding a properly covered air cast) shall not be involved in a stunt except a legal forward roll.
- No gum chewing or candy in the mouth during practice or performance.
- In South Dakota, all cheerleaders must be in grades 7-12. Sixth graders or below shall not participate with high school spirit teams.
- Cheer teams must wear/cheer in appropriate school issued/sponsored uniforms for ALL indoor sports during the regular season, sub-state, and state events. No camp wear is acceptable.
- All cheer teams must be supervised by a school sponsored/appointed cheer coach at all state tournaments. SDHSAA state events should take precedence over regular and/or sub-state events.
- Coaches must be present for a team to perform stunts.

### **Basketball:**

- Basketball cheerleaders are limited to 8 cheerleaders, plus a mascot, for any contest.
- Stunts shall not be performed during a basketball game when the ball is in play.
- Spirit participants must not stunt on the court or sideline area during player warm-up if an alternate area is available. If no appropriate alternate area is available, the coach must take reasonable precautions to minimize the risk to participants. Suggestions for stunting warm-ups at basketball game when an alternate area is not available may include:
  1. Arrive early to warm up stunts before player warm-ups begin.
  2. The coach could enlist others to stand between player warm-up and stunting warm-ups on the sidelines to deflect balls or individuals.
  3. Warm-up stunts when players return to dressing room after their warm-ups.
  4. Stunting might have to be delayed until after halftime of the first game if halftime is the first time an appropriate warm-up area is available.

Cheerleaders shall remain outside the playing area during a 30-second time-out in a basketball game.

- When a player is shooting free throws, cheerleaders shall not cheer.
- Stunting during the school song – cheerleading is a secondary activity during the basketball game, the warm-ups for the teams take precedence, if the teams don't go into the locker room until the 20 minutes has expired, then the cheer teams do the school songs without stunts – if the teams do go in the locker rooms early, then the cheer teams may stunt.
- Whenever possible, cheerleaders should be at least 6-8 feet from any boundary line. Please stay far enough away from the end line and sideline, so not to interfere with the officials who are officiating the game. If the official is right next to you, you are too close.
- Along the end line at a basketball game, cheerleaders shall not stand within the area of the free throw lane extended.
- Basketball cheer team members, (including mascot) must be listed on the final roster posted on Bound. Cheerleaders not listed will not be allowed to cheer in post season (region, SoDak16 and state) events. (Exception: Substitutions may be made for illness or injury.)
- Reminder: No children younger than 7<sup>th</sup> grade are permitted to cheer at a basketball game.

### **Wrestling:**

- Wrestling cheer teams are limited to six members due to space constraints.
- Stunting is not allowed at the State Wrestling Tournaments.

- At State Individual Wrestling, cheerleaders will only be allowed to cheer on the floor during the individual championship matches in which their individual team member is involved in on Saturday All other cheering at state wrestling will be done in stands.
- At the Dual State Wrestling, cheerleaders will be allowed to cheer.
- Cheer teams must wear/cheer in appropriate school issued/sponsored uniforms for ALL indoor sports during the regular season, sub-state, and state events. No camp wear is acceptable.
- Wrestling cheerleaders shall refrain from hitting the mat or floor while cheering for a wrestling match.
- No safety pins on pillows at a wrestling match (considered jewelry).
- At a wrestling match, cheer teams shall be ten feet from the edge of the wrestling mat unless the facility does not permit.
- Wrestling cheer team members must be listed on the final roster posted on Bound. Cheerleaders not listed will not be allowed to cheer in post season (region and state) events. (Exception: Substitutions may be made for illness or injury.)
- Reminder: No children younger than 7<sup>th</sup> grade are permitted to cheer at a wrestling match.

#### **Football:**

- Prior to any cheering, both weather conditions and cheering surfaces must be considered.
- Cheerleaders shall not stunt on a wet track/surface.
- Stunts shall be modified to be appropriate to the performing surface/area. Stunting should be performed only on appropriate surfaces and where there is adequate space and lighting and surfaces are not wet or uneven.
- It is not recommended to stunt while wearing long pants.
- Cheer Boxes: Stunting **ON** a box is **not** permitted. Tumbling (except a legal forward roll) onto or over a prop is not permitted. Dismounts (such as jumping) to the performing surface from boxes higher than 3 feet shall have assisted landing.
- Football cheer team members, including mascot, must be listed on the final roster posted on the SDHSAA website. Cheerleaders not listed will not be allowed to cheer in post season (substate and state) events. (Exception: Substitutions may be made for illness or injury.)
- Reminder: No children younger than 7<sup>th</sup> grade are permitted to cheer at a football game.

#### **Volleyball**

Stunts shall not be performed during a volleyball game when the ball is in play. Spirit participants must not stunt on the court area during warm up if an alternate area is available. (See suggestions in basketball if an alternate area is not available).

## **SDHSAA TOURNAMENT TEAM AND SPECTATOR CONDUCT RULES**

The following rules apply to all substate and state events.

All member schools, conferences, etc. are encouraged to adopt these rules for all regular season contests.

### **A. Conduct of spectators, coaches and players.**

1. There must be sufficient planning, not only by the tournament manager but also by all participating schools which have qualified for the tournament, relative to appropriate crowd control during the duration of the event.
2. All participating schools will be expected to emphasize the necessity for proper crowd behavior. Administrators from member schools are expected to position themselves near their student cheering section whenever their team is playing.
3. Coaches will be expected at all times to display the type of conduct which contributes to good sportsmanship and which does not incite the spectators in attendance.
4. Coaches will be expected to impress upon their athletes the importance of displaying good sportsmanship at all times, including players on the court, substitutes sitting on the bench, or following the conclusion of a game.
5. Administrators will be expected to impress upon their coaches the importance of displaying good sportsmanship at all times.
6. All fans will be expected to remain off the playing area until after the awarding of medals and trophies. Failure to remain off the playing floor will result in the offending team not being recognized by the public address announcer. Medals and trophy will be awarded to school personnel following the awards ceremony. Fans will be allowed on to the playing area following the presentation of all awards.
7. All fans must wear shirts.

### **B. Equipment and facilities.**

1. Removal of the nets following the championship game will be under the direction and supervision of the tournament manager.
2. The breaking of a backboard will become the financial liability of the school whose student(s) caused the damage.
3. Vandalism to locker room facilities, motel rooms, etc. shall be the responsibility of the member school whose player/team was responsible for the damage.

### **C. No banners - no signs - no noisemakers**

1. Temporary banners and signs of all kinds, including fatheads, are prohibited except those displayed by the SDHSAA, the Association's corporate partners, the tournament band, the arena, the tournament manager, and licensed radio and television stations. Cheer cards displayed by cheerleaders are permissible.
2. All types of noisemakers are prohibited. This includes plastic hand shakers, thunder sticks, as well as all sorts of projectiles.
3. Paper confetti and silly string are prohibited, because they are difficult to clean up, as well as being a fire hazard.
4. Balloons are prohibited.
5. Megaphones are prohibited except when used by a cheerleader.
6. Musical instruments are prohibited except when the band is performing.
7. Host management may provide music that may be played during warm-ups, quarter and half-time breaks, or breaks in the action such as dead balls, etc.)

### **D. Hoops, mini-tramps and tunnels.**

1. The use of "break-through" hoops, mini-tramps, rebounding devices & related pieces of equipment is prohibited.
2. Human tunnels created by student and/or adult fans are prohibited.

### **E. Pennants, Number 1 Fingers, Foam Noodles, Homer Hankies, Rooter Poms, etc. will be permitted.**

### **F. Laser Pointers are prohibited.** If used, the laser pointers will be permanently confiscated.

### **G. Re-Entry.** As per local venue policy, individuals wishing to leave the venue during a session will receive a hand stamp/accommodation pass for re-admittance to the venue for that session only.

### **H. Smoking is not allowed inside the venue.** As per local venue policy, adult smokers will be given a hand stamp/accommodation pass for re-admittance to the venue for that session only.

### **I. The management will designate each participating team's section of the bleachers.**

### **J. Students are asked not to stand on the seats.** Students may stand in the foot wells in the student section.

### **K. Jumping up and down in unison is prohibited.**

### **L. Adult cheerleaders are not permitted in the student cheering sections.** However, adults will be permitted to sit in the student section if space allows.

### **M. Cheerleaders, spirit or yell leaders** will be allowed, provided they are so designated by their school and appear in a school approved uniform.

### **N. All fans must wear shirts.** Body paint is not allowed for either students or adults. Face paint is allowed.

### **O. Face masks are prohibited.**

### **P. Gambling and alcoholic beverages are prohibited.**

## **SDHSAA ARENA RULES**

The following rules and regulation are applicable to all venues hosting SDHSAA State Events:

1. All fans must wear shirts.
2. Face masks are prohibited.
3. Fans are not prohibited from wearing face paint.
4. Human tunnels and/or break through hoops are prohibited.
5. Signs, banners, and noisemakers are prohibited.
6. Smoking inside the venue is not allowed. Adults wishing to smoke will be issued an accommodation pass or stamp to exit through a specific door and re-enter through said door.
7. There will be no other passes issued, except in dire emergencies, for fans to leave the venue and re-enter.
8. Spectators must remain off the playing floor at all times.
9. No one is allowed to sit, stand or hang on the basket or the basket supports.
10. Students with bleacher tickets must use the facilities on the main floor. Except for important reasons, no one will be allowed to cross the railing between the bleachers and the balcony.
11. The throwing of objects of any kind onto the playing floor is prohibited.
12. Gambling or use of intoxicating beverages is not permitted in the arena. Anyone found indulging in either would be required to leave the building.
13. Laser pointers are prohibited and will be confiscated by meet management.
14. During all championship round games, adults are not permitted to sit on the main floor in the student sections. However, an exception is made in certain venues, such as the Barnett Center in Aberdeen, where both students and adults are allowed on the main floor.
15. Jumping up and down on the bleachers, in unison, is prohibited.
16. All fans will be expected to remain off the playing area until after the awarding of medals and trophies. Failure to remain off the playing area will result in the offending team not being recognized by the public address announcer. Medals and trophy will be awarded to school personnel following the awards ceremony. Fans will be allowed on to the playing floor following the presentation of all awards.

**NOTE:** This policy is applicable to football, volleyball, and basketball.

### **Damage to Bleachers at a State Event**

Damage to bleachers can be caused when the entire student body jumps up and down in unison on the bleachers. The SDHSAA cannot condone or overlook behavior that causes physical damage to a rented venue.

Therefore, the SDHSAA suggests the following:

- Member schools should prohibit this type of behavior from occurring at all regular season basketball games
- District and region committees should prohibit this type of behavior from occurring at all district and region basketball tournaments.
- All member schools that qualify a basketball team to the state tournament should make an announcement at a pep assembly informing the student body that this type of behavior is prohibited by the SDHSAA.
- All member schools should solicit the support and leadership of the cheerleaders to stop this behavior.
- Administrators from each of the participating schools should position themselves in close proximity to the student cheering section so they can immediately assist management to stop the jumping if and when it occurs.