

## 2024-2025 Spirit Rules Changes

### 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>	B. Separates and clarifies braced and non-braced releases to make it easier to locate.
<b>3-5-6</b>	C. 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>	D. 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>	E. 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>	F. Expanded the exceptions for footwear during airborne tumbling to allow for kip ups and headsprings.
<b>4-4-8</b>	G. Deleted rules that were redundant.
<b>4-4-10</b>	H. Deleted rules that were redundant
<b>4-4-11</b>	I. Deleted rules that were redundant.
<b>4-5-3</b>	J. Prohibits non-braced release skills.
<b>4-10</b>	K. 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.

### 2024-2025 South Dakota Changes/Clarifications/Reminders

- Changes to the Safety Score Sheet.**
- There will be a five (5) minute maximum time limit for warm-up on the competitive floor for each team, with the option for host schools to schedule the time or not.
- Co-ed Revision: If a team has one or less male competitors on the squad, they will compete in the St/Tumbling category. If a team has more than one male competitor, they must compete in the Co-ed Division of St/Tumbling. Cheer would then have two categories: St/Tumbling and Co-ed St/Tumbling. For the category of Co-ed St/Tumbling to compete for the Overall Co-ed Grand Champion, there must be a minimum of four Co-ed teams entered. Awards will be based on the number of teams competing in that category. The Co-ed category will be one class only.
  - Note: St/Tumbling teams during the regular season (both St/Tumbling and Co-ed St/Tumbling) will compete in one category with the team placements in one category.
- Number of judges: 3 performance and 2 safety judges will be used for State Meet (local decision for regular season).
- Inquiry Process: Upon completion of each routine, the safety judge will meet with a designated coach at an area designated by safety judges before the meet begins. A brief explanation will be shared with the coach. If conference becomes confrontational, an unsporting deduction may be assessed.

### South Dakota Modifications

- No glitter hairspray is allowed.
- Head judge will be designated for both cheer and dance. Judges scores from low to high shall be no more than 10 points.

## Number of Judges Required for Regular Season:

Judge Requirements:	Performance Judge	Safety Judge
Cheer (Performance minimum -2)	2-3	2
Dance (Performance minimum- 2)	2-3 (Recommend 3 for larger meets)	1-2

- Judge's Requirements for Regular Season
  - All judges (performance & safety) must be licensed with the SDHSAA.
  - Number of judges will be determined by host management with consideration of the size of the meet.
- Number of Judges Required for State Competition
  - Cheer: 3 performance and 2 safety judges will evaluate the performance at the state competition.
  - Dance: 3 performance judges and 2 safety judges will evaluate the performance at state competition.
  - The SDHSAA will be responsible for securing judges for the state competition.
  - All judges' decisions are final.
- Judges' Qualifications

The following requirements must be met to be eligible for sub-state and/or state competition:

  - View the online the rules meeting for credit
  - Take and pass the online open book test
  - Attend the required judges' training session.
  - All judges (safety and performance) must be registered with the SDHSAA.
  - Registration fee for judges will be \$60 which will include both cheer and dance. Officials are encouraged to register for both sports for one small fee.
    - It makes it much easier to schedule judges for the various roles required at each meet if all judges are ready and able to serve as either dance or cheer judges, in either safety or performance.
- Judges' Uniform
  - Slacks/Skirt – black
  - Shirt – white polo shirt with SDHSAA logo (long or short sleeved)
  - Shoes – dressy, casual

Examples of inappropriate attire include – but are not limited to – shorts, short skirts, bare midriff, shirts with low- cut necklines, flip flops, etc.

- All judges are independent contractors. Schools will contract individual judges. Fees, as well as date and time of contests, will be determined by the contracting schools.

## **SDHSAA CHEER AND DANCE JUDGES TRAINING**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The goal of this course is NOT to remove subjectivity from judging, but to offer consistencies in the ways in which we judge. Subjectivity is one component that keeps cheerleading and dance activities growing. If judges were purely objective, there would not be a need for a panel of judges. One person would be sufficient in determining a winner. Subjectivity sets us apart from our colleagues. Subjectivity is a critical part of judging.

The goal of the South Dakota High School Activities Association is to make the adjudication of cheerleading and dance competitions fair and unbiased through judges' education and certification.

## COMPETITION GUIDELINES

The National Federation Spirit Rules Book and the SDHSAA Competitive Cheer and Dance Guidelines found in the Athletic Handbook section of the SDHSAA website under Competitive Cheer and Competitive Dance will be used for all competitions.

## CLASSES

The teams will be classified according to AA and A

	Cheer	Dance
Class AA	450.000 and above	450.000 and above
Class A	449.999 and below	449.999 and below

## DIVISIONS AND ORDER OF COMPETITION

### Class A:

<u>Cheer</u>	<u>Dance</u>
Small Stunting/Tumbling	Hip Hop
Large Stunting/Tumbling	Jazz
Co-ed Stunting/Tumbling (one size)	Pom

### Class AA:

<u>Cheer</u>	<u>Dance</u>
Stunting/Tumbling	Hip Hop
Coed Stunting/Tumbling (one size)	Jazz
	Pom

Note: Cheer and Dance routines may be alternated, but shall be run in the above order of categories.

If a Cheer team has one or less male competitors, the team will compete in the Stunting/Tumbling Category. If a Cheer team is composed of two or more male competitors, they must compete in the Co-ed Division of Stunting/Tumbling bringing cheer to two categories: Stunting/Tumbling and Co-ed Stunting/Tumbling. The category of Co-ed will be one class only.

For the category of Co-ed Stunting/Tumbling to compete for the Overall Co-ed Grand Champion, there must be a minimum of four Co-ed teams entered. Awards will be based on the number of teams competing in that category.

Note: Stunting/Tumbling teams during the regular season (both Stunting/Tumbling and Co-ed Stunting/Tumbling) will compete in one category with the team placements in one category.

No athlete may compete in more than 3 routines in a day and only for one school. An athlete may compete in both cheer and dance. An athlete may not compete in both Stunting/Tumbling and Co-ed Stunting/Tumbling.

## TEAM SIZE

The number of participating team members are as follows:

### Cheer

Class A: 6 – 12 (Small)

13 – 26 (Large)

Class AA: 6 – 26 (One size only)

Co-ed Stunting/Tumbling: 6 – 26 (One size only and one class only)

### Dance

Class A: 6 – 26 (One size only)

Class AA: 6 – 26 (One size only)

If the number of competitors falls below the number required to compete in that division due to injury or illness, the team will be allowed to compete in the division they have entered without penalty. Written documentation needs to be supplied to the meet manager.

## **INQUIRY PROCESS**

Upon completion of each routine, the safety judges will meet with the coach(es) at an area designated by the safety judges before the meet begins. The safety judges will inform the coach(es) of any safety violations with a brief explanation. If the discussion becomes confrontational, an unsporting deduction may be assessed. If there are no deductions, the safety judges will simply give a "thumbs up" to let the coach know there were no major deductions. Coaches should remain in the vicinity until the safety judges have had the opportunity to converse with each other.

Note: It is often better not to meet for the inquiry process in front of the performance judges' table, so that the performance judges can discuss difficulty scoring together without the coaches listening in.

## **INJURY PROCEDURES**

The host school is responsible for the availability of medical services in the same manner as at any other SDHSAA sponsored activity hosted by the school. First aid and medical supplies should be made available in case of injury. The tournament director is responsible for emergency medical telephone numbers.

If an injury occurs during the routine, only a judge can stop the competition until the injured person is removed from the competitive area. The procedure for stopping the competition is for any judge to hold up a red flag/sign/card signaling that the routine should stop.

A team with an injured person will be given the opportunity to perform the entire routine at the end of their classification competition without the injured person. Depending on how much of the routine was performed, the team may be offered to have the judges complete the scoring for what was performed instead. Performance judges should complete scoring based on the portion of the routine that they saw in case the team decides not to perform again without the injured person.

When a participant exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) the participant shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

When it is detected that a participant is bleeding, has an open wound, or has any amount of blood on the uniform or person, the participant must stop performing to receive proper treatment. A participant may return to the activity only when the body and/or uniform is appropriately cleaned (treated with solution) or changed.

## **DISQUALIFICATION PROCEDURE**

For a team to be disqualified, the judges must all agree that the offense is serious enough for disqualification. Any judge, safety or performance, may make a ruling for disqualification. The disqualified school will not be allowed to compete for the remainder of the day.

Upon judge's ruling for disqualification, the judges will inform the hosting Athletic Director and coaches prior to final results being announced to explain the disqualification. Judges must fill out the disqualification form and send it to the SDHSAA office explaining the circumstances surrounding the disqualification. SDHSAA will then contact the disqualified school to ensure knowledge and reason for the disqualification.

## **JUDGES AT THE MEET**

1. Seating
  - Performance judges must be seated away from fans and elevated.
  - If possible, the area should be roped off or security provided to keep fans away from judges, etc.
2. Tabulations
  - After individual score sheets are completed, performance judges will check individual total scores to ensure the highest and lowest scores are less than 10 points apart.
  - All performance judge scoring sheets are submitted to the tabulator after completing the scoring and verifying scores are within the 10-point range for each team.
  - Safety judges should hand one deduction sheet to the tabulator as soon as they complete scoring for each team.
    - Once the score sheets have been submitted to the tabulator, the judges will not see the score sheets again.

- If the score sheet is incomplete or a calculation error is found, the tabulator may return the sheet for completion. The judge should verify the error/correction, initial the sheet, and return it to the tabulator.
3. Responsibilities
- Judges should arrive at the competition site at least 30-45 minutes prior to the start of competition.
  - Judges will bring along their rubrics, their National Federation Spirit Rules Book, scratch paper for notes, pencils, a calculator, extra score sheets in case of errors, and a glossary of terms for correct spelling.
  - Judge what you see that day and avoid simple common errors such as:
    - Judging "harder" in the beginning or in the end.
    - Losing focus as the routine or day wears on.
    - Judging certain styles of dance harder than others.
  - Judges should not interact with teams, coaches, or fans at any time except for the coach's meeting and the inquiry process.
  - Judges should leave the facility as soon as all scores have been tabulated. Verify with the tabulators that this is complete before leaving the facility. Judges should leave the facility before any final results are announced.

## **GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF JUDGES**

It is the responsibility of a judge to rank each team with an appropriate score. These scores are very important to the coaches and the individual team members. The training and handbook can teach judges to rank and score. The evaluations will help improve a judge's technical skills. However, communication skills are the most essential skills that a judge must develop. The score sheet comments, scores, and any casual conversations a judge might have with a coach or team are critical.

### **WHAT SDHSAA EXPECTS OF JUDGES:**

- To be prepared as best they can to evaluate the teams fairly.
- To use the rubrics for judging difficulty to help provide consistencies.
- To create an atmosphere of respect for all the coaches, judges, students, and parents.
- To reinforce the objectives of the SDHSAA.
- To approach each judging opportunity in a professional manner and by dressing and behaving appropriately.
- To use recorded comments to reinforce the scores given on the score sheets.

### **GENERAL CRITICISM**

Our comments on the score sheet should deal more with basic technique, encouragement, and enthusiasm. Emphasis should be placed on minor successes.

All that our coaches and teams ask is that we, as judges, come to the competition without prejudice, with enthusiasm and concern for the activity, and with a desire to sense the choreographer's intent. Being human, this is sometimes difficult. We have our own likes, dislikes, and preferences. This often produces conflicting opinions.

When judging difficulty of the routine, always use the rubric and reward teams for their effort. For cheer, if the appropriate number of team members performs a skill, the team should be given the corresponding difficulty score. For dance, if the majority of the team performs a skill, the team should be given the higher end of the points allotted for that specific skill. If the team does not execute the skill well, points are deducted from the execution score, not the difficulty.

### **AFFILIATION (no bias)**

A judge should not accept the offer to judge a contest if he/she has a direct personal affiliation with the coach or any member of the team (this would include teams you have choreographed for or have taught recently). It is the meet director's decision as to the viability of a judge. It is the judge's responsibility to notify the competition of any conflict of interest far enough in advance to make any necessary changes. A judge should excuse him/herself from judging whenever there is a conflict of interest and there is a possibility of bias toward or against a certain team. Recuse yourself if you:

- Coach the team
- Former member of the team – can't always avoid this, but typically require 3 years before judging a former team
- Choreographed the dance or routine.

## CONSULTATIONS

An active judge should not give a consultation to any team competing in a contest he/she will be judging. Any consultation or comments regarding other judges' performance to coaches, parents, or athletes outside of competition is unprofessional. It is unethical to comment on a performance for which you were not officially contracted or were not present. If approached regarding another judge's performance, the question should be referred to those who were judging that day.

If a coach is wondering whether something in a routine would be legal, direct them to submit the question, with video if possible, to the SDHSAA Coordinator. The SDHSAA will get a determination from the cheer or dance rules committee.

## CONDUCT

Judges should never display a preference toward any competing team. This would include making comments in public or on social media. A judge should not make any comments to coaches or parents about judging results at a competition. A judge should be sequestered before and after the competition to avoid this.

## DISQUALIFYING YOURSELF FROM JUDGING A TEAM (no bias)

### SCORING ETHICS

- If asked about the competition, refer any questions to tournament officials.
- If a tournament official asks you to discuss a team's performance with a coach, explain that you are one of (number) judges and that the other judges may have seen something different—better or worse.
- If you have questions about another judge's scores, bring that to the attention of the tournament officials only.
- Never allow the competition to change your scores without your approval. If this happens, resign your position.
- Judges may leave the competition only after all the final tabulations are completed.

## SCORING

A judge will be a part of a judging panel, all of whom will be seated on one side of the competition floor facing the competitors. A panel is used to help minimize bias, not only toward or against a specific team, but also in terms of preferences. The judges will be allowed to interact after each routine to be sure difficulty scores are consistent and that scores are in range.

Each judge should score each routine individually and write down their score on the tabulation sheet to ensure accuracy of the scores. A head judge should be determined at each meet to record the scores of all judges and ensure accuracy. Coaches must realize that scoring may be different from judge to judge based on the performances.

Judges should strive to fill out scores quickly, while still being accurate and consistent. The goal is to score an entire routine, confirm range of judges' scores, and turn in sheets to the tabulator within just a couple minutes.

Judges will inevitably see some of the same teams repeatedly over the course of the season. Be sure to judge each team on their performance for that day, not as to what you have seen in the past in comparison.

Judges must realize that their decisions join together to create a fair consensus. The final order of results for one judge may not match perfectly with those of another judge on the panel.

# South Dakota High School Activities Association

## DISQUALIFICATION FORM

Judges Filing Form: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Disqualified: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check One:**      Competitive Cheer      Competitive Dance

Contest where disqualification took place: \_\_\_\_\_

Site: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Disqualification:

Email to: [kristina.sage@sdhsaa.com](mailto:kristina.sage@sdhsaa.com) or mail to: SDHSAA

P.O. Box 1217

Pierre, SD

57501

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### FOR SDHSAA USE ONLY:

Administration was contacted:

Yes

No

Date contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

SDHSAA:

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PO Box 1217

Pierre, SD 57501

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Contact:

Kristina Sage: Rule Interpretations, etc. [kristina.sage@sdhsaa.com](mailto:kristina.sage@sdhsaa.com)

Marsha Karst: Judges Registration [marsha.karst@sdhsaa.com](mailto:marsha.karst@sdhsaa.com)

Cheer Rules Committee:

Kristina Sage

Brandy Gangle

Krista Inman

Christina Bennett

Dance Rules Committee:

Kristina Sage

Tammy Griffith

Christina Bennett



# **COMPETITIVE CHEER COMPETITION GUIDELINES**

## **Competition Area for Cheer**

Performance mats:

42' x 42' – with a maximum of 12 participants

42' x 54' – with a maximum of 26 participants

Wrestling/tumbling mats will not be used for competitions; however, they may be used in a limited manner for practice. (Wrestling mats are too slippery for use in competition.)

Only coaches, competitors, and officials are permitted in the competitive area.

## **Uniforms for Cheer**

All team members must be dressed in the school issued uniform that complies with the National Federation uniform guidelines. 1 point will be deducted per uniform violation. The school must also have on file the SDHSAA “Uniform-Choreography-Music” School Approval Form.

## **Performance Requirements for Cheer**

- The length of the routine shall be a maximum of two minutes-thirty seconds (2:30).
- The routine must include cheer and dance.
- There will be a maximum of one minute-thirty seconds (1:30) of music allowed in the routine.
- Props are not allowed except for poms, signs, flags, and megaphones.
- Mascots will not be part of the routine.
- Tumbling skills are only permitted within the body of the routine. Tumbling cannot be performed beyond the competitive area. Tumbling on to the competitive area when called to perform is not allowed.

## **Performance Order**

Class A: Stunting/Tumbling – small squad

Class A: Stunting/Tumbling – large squad

Class AA: Stunting/Tumbling

Both Class: Co-ed Stunting Tumbling (one size squad)

# **COMPETITIVE DANCE COMPETITION GUIDELINES**

## **Competition Area for Dance**

A wood or dance floor is required. Concrete and tile floors are prohibited.

Minimum floor space is 45' x 45'. The performance area at state competition is 45' x 45'. Two-inch contrasting tape must be laid to define boundaries along all four sides.

Only coaches, performing members of the dance team, and officials are permitted in the competitive area.

## **Uniforms for Dance**

All team members must be dressed in the school-issued, administration approved uniform that complies with the National Federation uniform guidelines. Uniforms must be like in color, but do not need to be identical.

- Apparel must be appropriate for the activity to minimize risk to the participants.
- Length of skirt shall be no longer than mid-calf.
- Undergarments are recommended as follows:
  - When wearing skirts and dresses, tights should be worn that either match the uniform or are flesh colored.
  - Leotards that either match the uniform or are flesh colored should be worn under all uniforms.

- Any uniform worn in competition where the midriff and skin are showing below the bra-line, a leo or body tight must be worn to cover the exposed area.
- Uniform must cover midriff and anything below bra line while standing at attention before dance starts. Body tights cannot be a substitute for the sheer material. If wearing sheer material across the front of the midriff, there must be two layers, one of which is not a nude color.
- A nude leo may be used to cover areas below the bra line on the back of the midriff.
- Wearing tights and a leotard provides modesty, support, helps with fast uniform changes, and ensures the uniform presents a continuous line and will cover the midriff.
- The front of the midriff and the back of the midriff are divided by the arms when the arms are directly by the dancer's side.

1 point will be deducted per uniform violation. For further clarification, see the addendum at the end of this competitive dance section, particularly the midriff section. Glitter hairspray is prohibited.

### **Performance Requirements for Dance**

- The length of the routines shall be a minimum of one minute-thirty seconds (1:30) to a maximum of two minutes-thirty seconds (2:30).
- Teams may begin from any position on the floor.
- The time of the routine will begin with the first word, musical sound, or movement of any team member and will stop with the last word or movement of any team member.

### **Performance Order**

Class A & Class AA: one size squad (6 – 26)

- Hip Hop
- Jazz
- Pom

## **COMPETITIVE CHEER & DANCE COMPETITION GUIDELINES**

### **Performance Procedures**

Teams will be called to the competitive area by the announcer prior to their performance. Three teams will be announced each time – “In the hole,” “on deck,” and “now performing.”

A 10 point “unnecessary delay” deduction will be taken if a team is not in the on-deck area when called. Once a team is called to the on-deck area, points may be deducted for various violations, such as, jewelry, hair, nails, glitter, etc. **ONLY PERFORMING MEMBERS OF THE CHEER TEAM AND THEIR COACH MAY BE IN THE “ON-DECK AREA” FOR COMPETITION OR 10 POINTS WILL BE DEDUCTED.**

A practice/warm-up area should be made available. Schools should furnish their own equipment and music for use in the practice/warm-up area.

### **Music**

Equipment such as iPods, cell phones, auxiliary cords, etc. for music must be furnished by the participating schools, be of production-quality, and be presented to the sound technician at the competition. Schools must have backup music available. Working with the sound technician, the coach or representative for the team is responsible for starting and stopping the music during the routine.

### **Time Infractions**

Time infractions occur for overtime of competition and violation of length of music.

- 1-3 seconds over time: warning
- 4-8 seconds over time: 5 pts
- 9 or more seconds over time: 10 pts

## **Coaches' Seating**

A "VIP coaching section" will be provided during a team's performance. There must be coaching seats available for the team's designated coaches. Only TWO coaches who are listed on each specific team's roster are allowed in the VIP seating. Coaches will need to be seated in the VIP section or standing by the music sound system during competition (if they choose to put in music). Designated coaches must be wearing name badges to be in the VIP seating. Competitive teams not performing will need to be seated in the bleachers. There will be a 10-point team deduction for not being in the designated areas during the team's performance.

## **SDHSAA SCORESHEET CATEGORIES AND BREAK DOWN**

It is vital that judges are acutely aware of the efforts many have made for the performers to be standing on the floor in front of them. Judges are given a huge amount of power. With that comes an equal amount of responsibility. Judges owe it to the performers to be focused on judging them fairly. As Steve Prefontaine said, "To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift."

## **Cheerleading Fundamentals**

Execution: This is about SKILLS. This is about how a team performs the skills they have in the routine. It is NOT about how much you like it.

Remember, if the team is only doing lower level skills, it does not mean their execution is lower. Look at the execution of the skill performed. A few people may be performing each skill really well, but some others may not be performing so well. The execution score should be a balance of everything that was performed. And you're judging what you see that night, not what you know they can do or what you've seen at a previous competition.

Difficulty: Difficulty (or lack thereof) is a key determinant in a team's ranking. Thus, of particular importance is a judge's knowledge of the progression of difficulty in competitive cheerleading elements – jumps, tumbling, stunts, pyramids, tosses, dance elements, and even motions.

The most important thing is to use the rubric to determine the appropriate point level for scoring a team's difficulty in each category. Judges should document the skills they see and the number of team members performing these skills, so they are able to review them at the end of the routine to score accurately.

Just as the lack of difficulty may prevent a superior reward, a challenging performance, executed flawlessly, should earn maximum points. Likewise, errors in simple skills should be weighted differently than minor flaws in elite skills. A judge should also be keen to squad "readiness" in attempting difficult skills.

## **Motion Technique**

Motions should be sharp, moving quickly from one motion to another. Everyone performing a motion should have same level of angle of motion and the motions should be at the correct angle.

## **Jumps**

Jumps should be evaluated for:

Technique and form – toes pointed, backs straight, arm positions, landing with feet together, etc.

Togetherness – preps are the same, all go up together, reach heights together, same height, land together, style the same (hand, arms, legs, etc.).

Ease – jumps completed without evidence of difficulty, height attained by entire squad, and ease when landing. Just as with other skills, the level of difficulty of jumps and the performance quality of such skills are the key elements in the judge's reward.

## **Tumbling**

A judge must determine the quality of execution of such skills purely from a gymnastics viewpoint. They must also consider the effectiveness of such skills based on their placement in the routine. This also relates to their incorporation in cheer elements, where vocal quality can be affected by the timing of preparation, execution, and recovery. A repetition of similar skills may indicate an unwise use of time where different skills may have been more effective. A judge must first assess the degree of difficulty of skills, both those performed by the entire squad as well as individuals. A judge should

consider the score of tumbling as it relates to the squad or individual performance. If a handful of individuals demonstrate tumbling while others are stationary, the “teamwork” becomes an issue. Tumbling should be executed correctly, with clean landings.

The majority of the team must perform the skills listed in a category to earn the difficulty score for that category. Majority is determined by taking the total number of team members divided in half and rounded down. For example, for a team of 13, majority is 6. Teams will earn an extra 0.5 point if less than a majority performs a skill in a higher category.

### **Stunting/Tosses**

A knowledge of stunt progression and a sense of technical elements involved in execution and transitions are a judge’s best allies. A judge must consider not only the positions held by top person(s), but also the work of the base(s) and proper stunting technique. Teams should be performing at a level where they can safely execute the stunts. The number of bases used to support stunts is an element of difficulty. The fewer number of bases, the more difficult the stunt.

### **Pyramids**

In order to receive points in this category, any two or more stunt skills **MUST** connect at some point during the routine.

### **Cheer**

Voice, Pace, Flow: Voice control – loud for the size of the group, pitch, fading (happens a lot during movement), speed and tone of the cheer – too fast to understand or too slow, timing/togetherness, no breaks or “dead spots.” The words should be clear and LOUD! Are their voices low with correct articulation?

Energy/Spirit: Fun, exciting, good energy, genuine smiles, confidence. Does the team look like they’re having fun with the cheer performance? Do they make eye contact? Facial expressions should be enthusiastic and encouraging, not taunting and unsportsmanlike.

Proper Use of Skill Incorporations (Jumps, Stunts, Props, Tumbling): Were props incorporated into the cheer and did they work, did they add to the cheer? Were stunts and/or tosses incorporated into the cheer and did they work to improve the cheer? Look for teams highlighting skills without taking away from the cheer itself, smooth transitions with skills used, not just walking to a new location.

Motion Technique: Sharp, clean motions that HIT their position. Watch angles and wrists.

### **Dance**

Timing/Execution: Timing – is everyone together? Good dance technique, clean motions, fun energy, confidence.

Levels/Formations: Use of different levels, ripples, and a variety of formations with correct spacing.

### **Overall**

Creativity: Good or unique ideas in the cheer, variety of formations and transitions, use of different levels and ripples, use of creative stunts, etc. A judge’s opinion of creativity may include unusual formations, difficulty flairs, transitions, and preps. Creativity in moving from one skill to another.

Spacing/Formations/Synchronization: Good use of the entire floor for the size of the team, correct spacing in formations, timing and synchronization of stunts and skills throughout the routine.

Effective choreography found in most cheerleading competitions demands formation changes. Formation changes are probably most effective when least noticeable and disruptive. A good design eliminates team members crossing the performance area repeatedly by incorporating their talents in an area more accessible to them. Spacing may be the most critical ingredient in formations and their overall appeal. The position of judges in relation to a performance area may not allow for much assessment front to back, but side-to-side spacing, as well as a clear center, is a necessary part of spacing.

Did the choreography flow and was it unique? Did they transition from one formation to another smoothly? Were they running into each other or around each other to get from formation to formation? Did they transition at all? Did they set accurate formations? Was their spacing correct in formations?

Synchronization is entirely an element of movement and timing. Thus, every element of a competitive routine affects the quality of synchronization, from the simplest motions to the flawless unity of multiple partner stunts, squad back tuck,

mirror-image pyramids, dismounts, cradles, formation changes, and words, synchronization is a factor. Are their motions together? Are stunts, pyramids and tumbling “hitting” at the same time?

**Key Points to Remember:** Count the individual tumblers and number of stunts, load-ins, transitions, and dismounts of each type or skill. Keep track of the skills that were performed, and the level performed at. Look for solid, clean execution.

## **General Comments for Cheer Safety Judges**

- Try to monitor athletes in the on-deck area for violations such as jewelry, hair, uniform, etc., PRIOR to taking the performing floor.
- Focus on your area. Prior to the beginning of the competition, discuss with the other safety judge which area of the performing surface you will focus on (e.g., left/front, right/back).
- Remember, you aren't watching for performance (motions, facials, etc.); you're there to watch out for safety violations.
- Check for attentive eyes.
- Double base prep level stunts do NOT require an attentive spotter. Extensions and moving stunts do.
- If someone assumes the role of a spotter position, they need to fulfill that role.
- Check grips on spotters. Make sure they are not under the top person's foot or the base's hands.
  - Grips on ankles and wrist are acceptable.
- A spotter should not be in a weight-bearing position or under the stunt (check torso).
- Performers cannot move under a stunt.
- Half pendulums need a front spot.
- A straddle sit may have 2 or 3 bases but must have a separate back spotter who is not involved in basing the stunt when it is extended.
- Split catches must have constant hand-to-hand contact, but do not need back spotters.
- Be aware of prop placement, usage, discard, etc.

## **Dance Fundamentals**

There are three categories:

1. Hip Hop – Emphasis on execution, synchronization, body control, and rhythm. Jazzy style movements should be kept to a minimum. No props.
2. Jazz – Emphasis on jazz dance movements, flexibility, and technique. No more than 50% of the routine may be kick or kicklines. No props.
3. Pom – Emphasis on synchronization and visual effect. Pom Poms must be used 80% of the routine. No other props.

In all categories of dance:

Basic t-lifts may be used, with leg variations allowed as long as top person remains vertical. Bases of a t-lift may walk only. Must be two bases for each (one) person lifted. No other partner stunts are allowed.

The following tumbling skills will be allowed: cartwheels, round offs, aerials (front and side with bent or straight legs), front and back handsprings as long as the feet or hands land first. Any flipping movement that takes off or lands on two feet are illegal with the exception of round offs, front and back handsprings. Front and back tucks are illegal. Tumbling passes that connect different or same skills remain illegal. A tumbling series is defined as executing more than one tumbling skill consecutively or same skill repetitively and is not allowed. Illegal examples include but are not limited to a cartwheel followed by a round-off or two cartwheels.

## Definitions:

1. Props – a prop is defined as anything that you dance with that is not attached to your costume (gloves will be considered a prop). Hats are not considered a prop unless they are taken off and danced with.
2. Partner stunts – any position where the weight of a person is completely supported by another person.
3. Tumbling series – executing more than one tumbling skill consecutively, or the same skill repetitively.
4. Collision: The unintended contact with another dancer that causes their balance to be compromised and disrupts the intended choreography.

## **Shoes**

- Dance teams must wear footwear that is appropriate for the activity involved.
- At a minimum, footwear must cover the ball of the foot.

## **Hair and Nails**

- Hair must be worn in a manner to minimize risk for participants.
- Hair devices must be secure and appropriate for the activity.
- If glitter is used, it must adhere readily. NO GLITTER HAIRSPRAY.
- Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept short, near the end of the fingers to minimize risk for participants.

## **Jewelry**

- Wearing “hard” jewelry is illegal except when such items are securely affixed to a costume or the hair. 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. Body piercings are considered “hard” jewelry and must be removed.
  - Rationale: Performance Safety

## **Spacing and Formations**

- To avoid injury or contact with another dancer, it is crucial that the spacing and formations be uniform throughout a routine.
- It is recommended that dancers use their peripheral vision to be aware of the space around them.

## **Gum and Candy**

- Participants are not permitted to chew gum or have candy in their mouths during any practice or performance.
- Dancers should guard against having gum anywhere near the performance floor.

## **Dance Technique**

### Basic Jazz Technique

- Jazz style is represented with technical skills and flexibility. A team may choose their overall stylistic preferences.
  - Examples include lyrical, contemporary, or Broadway styles.
- Proper technique is always important.
- A jazz routine includes a showcase of flexibility through the use of splits, leaps, heel stretches and extensions.
- A jazz routine includes appropriate use of the performance floor space.
- The technique in the routine should be displayed uniformly by the entire team rather than a select few.
- Level changes, transitions and creative combinations are extremely important.
- Expressive musical interpretation is the backbone of a good jazz routine.

### Basic Pom Technique

- The following should be followed in Pom Routines:
  - Thumbs are wrapped on the outside of each fist – no thumbs sticking out.
  - Squeeze the fist as tightly as possible for power and strength.

- Elbows locked and straight, but not over-extended.
- Do not hyperextend motions.
- Focus, precision, and sharpness of each motion. Each motion should “freeze” before moving to next count.
- Deep fists in line with the wrists and elbows – do not break them.

### Basic Hip Hop Technique

- Hip hop style utilizes a low, wide center of gravity.
  - An example would be the use of a wide second parallel position.
  - A deep plié allows the dancer to drop their weight into the floor to aid in the low center of gravity.
- Tricks and stalls should be incorporated into the routine.
  - One example of a stall is a scorpion.
- Care should be taken to ensure that music and movements selected for the hip hop routine are appropriate for family audiences.

### **Scoring**

All competitions must use the SDHSAA Score Sheets.

- Hip Hop Performance Score Sheet
- Jazz Performance Score Sheet
- Pom Performance Score Sheet
- Technical/Safety Score Sheet

# SDHSAA TECHNICAL/SAFETY SCORESHEET: CATEGORIES & BREAK DOWN

This handout is for informational purposes only. It does not cover every NFHS or SDHSAA rule or guideline. It is the safety judge's responsibility to know ALL the rules of the NFHS and the SDHSAA. Judges should refer to the location of the rule in each of the manuals when giving a team any technical/safety deduction. Judges need to discipline themselves not to look at the faces, arm motions, etc. and focus on the fundamental of safety. Be sure to be looking at grips, spotting, bracing stunts, etc.

Coaches must understand that teams need to be "performance ready" once they step into the "On Deck" area to avoid deductions. Once the competitive team steps into the "On Deck" area, the coach is verifying legality of team uniform, equipment, and compliance of NFHS and SDHSAA rules which govern this sport. All participants need to be "performance ready" to avoid deductions.

INFRACTION	EXPLANATION/DESCRIPTION
<b>Any Fall(s) – Non-Stunting Individual Athlete</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Dance moves:</b> Athlete makes unchoreographed contact with performing surface</li> <li>❖ <b>Tumbling:</b> Athlete touches the performing surface, such as a touch down with hands or a fall back to the ground after executing a skill.</li> </ul>
<b>Dance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Incorrect/illegal dance skills are performed.</li> </ul>
<b>Jewelry or Improper Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ All performers must wear footwear that is appropriate for the activity. At minimum footwear must cover ball of foot.</li> <li>❖ Performers may wear supports/braces which are NOT hard, unyielding, or have rough edges or surfaces. If the support/brace is hard, unyielding, or rough, it must be covered appropriately with padded material.</li> <li>❖ A performer wearing a cast cannot be involved in a stunt. An appropriately covered air cast is the only exception to this rule.</li> <li>❖ Jewelry is prohibited. The only exception is medical tags and/or religious medals. These items must be taped to the body (without a chain) under the performer's uniform.</li> <li>❖ Spacers, fishing line, tape, or any other item used to keep pierced parts from closing are not allowed.</li> </ul>
<b>Fingernails, hair, glitter, hair ties on wrist, Improper Uniforms, undergarments, etc.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ NFHS and SDHSAA require that teams wear appropriate school issued/sponsored uniforms that fit so that the midriff is covered while the performer is standing at attention. It must not restrict or interfere with the performer's mobility or vision.</li> <li>❖ Uniforms should be like in color, but not identical and should be age appropriate as well as follow traditional dress standards.</li> <li>❖ "Camp" wear is not allowed.</li> <li>❖ Fingernails, including artificial nails that are longer than the fingertip when viewed from the palm side are illegal.</li> <li>❖ Hair must be worn in the manner that is appropriate for the activity involved.</li> <li>❖ Glitter is allowed only if it readily adheres to the face, uniform, costume, or body. Glitter may be used on props (signs, backdrops) if laminated or sealed. Glitter hairspray is illegal.</li> </ul>
<b>Boundary Violation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Cheerleaders have a set amount of space in which to perform. If any part of performer's foot goes <i>off the mat</i>, this is considered a violation and the team will receive the deduction.</li> <li>❖ A performer may REACH over the boundary to grab a prop, but if he or she steps completely outside boundary, the deduction will be assessed.</li> <li>❖ If a performer's toe or heel is on the line, there is no penalty. However, if his or her foot goes completely beyond the boundary, a deduction shall be given.</li> </ul>
<b>Props/Poms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ For cheer purposes, a prop is defined as something that can be manipulated. Any uniform piece purposefully removed from the body and used for visual effect will be considered a prop.</li> <li>❖ Flags, banners, signs, poms, and megaphones are the only props allowed for cheer</li> </ul>



	<p>teams. Mascots are considered props and should not be used in a routine. Props with poles or similar support apparatus may not be used in conjunction with any kind of stunt or tumbling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Tumbling onto, over or under a prop is illegal.</li> <li>❖ Signs must not be thrown in a manner that could injure someone, like being thrown with the flick of a wrist.</li> <li>❖ Stepping on a sign, poms, or props when coming out of or falling from a skill or stunt.</li> <li>❖ For dance purposes, a prop is defined as anything that you dance with that is not attached to your costume (gloves will be considered a prop). Any uniform piece purposefully removed from the body and used for visual effect will be considered a prop. Hats typically are not considered a prop unless they are taken off and danced with.</li> <li>❖ Dance teams may only use poms in a pom routine, and they must be used for 80% of the routine. They may not use any prop in jazz or hip hop.</li> <li>❖ All props must be safely discarded out of harm's way. When discarding props (signs) that are made of solid material, or have corners or sharp edges, performers must gently toss or place the prop in order to minimize the risk of injury to others (e.g., throwing a hard sign across the mat from a stunt would be illegal).</li> </ul>
<b>Unnecessary Delay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ This is assessed if a team is not in the on-deck area when announced.</li> </ul>
<b>Time Limits (Music &amp; Overall)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Entire Routine – 2:30</li> <li>❖ Music (Cheer) – 1:30</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Cheer and dance teams must perform their choreographed routine within 2 minutes and 30 seconds. Cheer teams can use music, but it must not be used for more than 1 minute and 30 seconds.</li> <li>❖ Timing begins on the first word, musical sound, or choreographed movement and ends with the last word or movement. If a cheer team ends with a pyramid/stunt, the final dismount is not timed.</li> <li>❖ There will be a 3 second allotment for human error. A 1-3 second overtime of music or entire routine will be a warning. See score sheet.</li> </ul>
<b>Major Fall(s) – Stunting (Cheer)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ A team will receive this deduction if a top person makes an uncontrolled or unassisted decent to the floor.</li> <li>❖ <b>Stunt:</b> <i>Top person</i> touches performing surface with anything other than feet</li> <li>❖ <b>If a cheer team ends in a pyramid/stunt and there is a fall on the dismount, a safety deduction should NOT be given because the judging period ended at the conclusion of the routine.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Safety Violation (Cheer)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Incorrect/Illegal skill performed</li> <li>❖ Inattentive spotting</li> <li>❖ Weight bearing bracers/supports/posts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ An incorrect/illegal skill would be any skill that is illegal according to the NFHS rules or by the SDHSAA rules. (e.g., A tumbler performs a double full. The team will receive the deduction because tumbling skills are limited to one flip and one twist rotation). This is a 5 pt. deduction.</li> <li>❖ A spotter must keep her/his eyes on the top person (specifically the head, neck &amp; shoulders) at all times. The spotter may look away briefly <u>only</u> if she is looking to oversee the safety of other stunting performers. If she is looking away as a choreographed movement, or to wave to the audience, she has become inattentive so a deduction should be assessed. <i>Stunts at or below shoulder level do not require spotters.</i> This is a 1 pt. deduction.</li> <li>❖ A spotter must not step underneath the stunt/top person (<i>look at the placement of the spotter's torso in order to determine his/her position</i>). This is a 1 pt. deduction.</li> <li>❖ Spotters are encouraged to reach as high as they can and can grab just about anywhere but may not provide primary support for the top person(s). In other words, <b>spotters are not allowed to grab the bases hands under the top person's foot or grab the sole of the top person's foot.</b> Spotters may grab the wrist or forearm of the bases, the ankle or lower part of the top person's leg, or may stand with his/her arms above his/her head reaching for the top person's head and shoulders (if s/he is not touching a base nor the top person). This is a 1 pt. deduction.</li> <li>❖ Certain skills require a bracer (a.k.a. support or post) and/or a specific type of bracer (how the top person is being supported). <b>Bracers are not allowed to provide primary support to the top person. It is the safety judge's responsibility to know all the skills that require bracers, how many, and what kind of support.</b> This is a 1 pt.</li> </ul>

	deduction.
<b>Unacceptable Conduct</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Being disrespectful, profanity not directed towards someone, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Athletes swearing while performing.</li> </ul>
<b>Unsportsmanlike Conduct</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Being disrespectful, profanity or actions directed towards another</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The NFHS and SDHSAA disapprove 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. Any team that displays this type of behavior will be disqualified from the event and from the day of competition. Any use of profanity that is heard by judges will result in a 40-pt. deduction. If profanity is directed at someone or vulgar, a disqualification could result.</li> <li>❖ All performers and coaches must conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the competition with positive presentation upon entry and exit from the performance area as well as throughout the routine. The coach is responsible for seeing that the team, parents, and other team staff conduct themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike behavior are grounds for disqualification.</li> <li>❖ Choreography that is inappropriate for the age of the performers, family viewing, or is demeaning will result in disqualification. This includes choreography that is vulgar or suggestive which includes, but not limited to, movements such as hip thrusting, inappropriate touching, gestures, hand/arm movements, signals, slapping, positioning of body parts, and positioning of one another.</li> <li>❖ Coaches are responsible for the music their teams perform to and the movements choreographed. Using music that is unsuitable for family listening is grounds for disqualification. This type of music may include profanity (swear words), connotations of any type of sexual act or behavior, drugs/alcohol, mention of specific body parts, or violent acts or behaviors.</li> <li>❖ If a coach removes the improper language and replaces with sound effect on the words still constitutes the music as inappropriate and unsuitable. Therefore, deductions or disqualification should be made accordingly. Once your team is DQ from an event, they will not be allowed to compete the remainder of the day.</li> </ul>
<b>Disqualification Procedure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ For a team to be disqualified, the judges must all agree that the offense is serious enough for disqualification. Any judge, safety or performance, may make a ruling for disqualification. Upon judge's ruling for disqualification, judges will inform the hosting Athletic Director and coaches prior to the awards ceremony to explain the disqualification. Judges must fill out the disqualification form and send it to the SDHSAA office explaining the circumstances surrounding the disqualification. SDHSAA will then contact the school to ensure knowledge and reason for the disqualification. That school will not be allowed to compete the remainder of the day.</li> <li>❖ Any form of taunting which is intended or designed to intimidate others or call egotistical attention to the performing squad is not allowed.</li> <li>❖ Examples of this behavior include, but not limited to: Unsportsmanlike facials (e.g., sticking out tongues), shouting at the crowd or other teams, underlining or pointing out a team's mascot or name on the uniform with hands, "come on" gesture with the hands (not to be mistaken with "spirit fingers").</li> </ul>

## **SDHSAA JUDGES: TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

### **DAY OF CONTEST**

- Report to the contest director at the specified time, at least 30-45 minutes prior to contest start time.
- Dress in professional attire. Judges' uniform consists of black slacks/pants and a white SDHSAA Official top. (Examples of inappropriate attire: shorts, short skirts, bare midriff, shirts with low-cut necklines, flip-flops.)
- Maintain a professional attitude.

- Refrain from unnecessary discussions during or after the contest if you are within earshot of participants or spectators.
- Check the judges' seating area for proper viewing and adequate space (away from spectators). Notify the contest director if there is a problem.
- Sit in the judges' area and check if the spectator rows in front of you are low enough so you can see if someone stands up.
- Set up your judging area. Things to include are rubric, scoresheets, water bottle, calculator, extra pencils, note paper, and misc. materials.
- Initial all the blank score sheets and cross check the categories/teams with the contest program. Check the order of performance & organize your score sheets in that order.
- Meet and discuss any final safety questions and contest procedures with the head judge.

#### **DURING THE CONTEST: PERFORMANCE JUDGES**

- Judges should visit briefly to discuss difficulty scores and to determine whether scores are in range, but each judge's scores should be their own.
- Follow the rubric for difficulty. If enough team members perform the skill listed, they should get credit for the skill within that point category. If they perform it poorly, points are deducted from the execution for that element.
- Write as many brief comments as you can. **BE POSITIVE.**
- Remember that education is your goal...not excessive criticism.
- Finish your score sheets as rapidly as you can. Try not to hold up the contest but do complete the job.
- Boundaries: All competition directors will set the boundary markings for their own competition.

#### **AFTER THE CONTEST**

- Turn in any extra score sheets or materials provided by the host school to the runners or contest director.
- Collect any papers you may have written notes or scores on and do not leave any of your materials open to be looked at by spectators. It is a good idea to save your notes in a file.
- Leave the judges' seating area and move to a less noticeable place or sequestered area.
- Be sure to stay until final tabulations are complete.
- Keep conversations private as you exit and exit quickly to eliminate the possibility of a confrontation with a coach.
- If you are approached about a score, be a good listener but don't get into a debate. You do not have to defend your scores.

#### **TRICKS OF THE TRADE**

- Judging a competition will always be subjective.
- Score difficulty by using the rubric.
- Back your scores up with your comments.
  - Write specific comments related to the section you score.
  - Stay away from the obvious comments and concentrate on feedback that coaches need to improve their squad.
  - Make suggestions of different things to incorporate into a routine that would assist coaches and teams. Be specific.
  - State what you like, but also state the things that aren't working.
- Track what you are scoring all the teams, and make sure you are being consistent.
  - You can't change score sheets to reflect your error in scoring so pay attention to what scores you've given and where each team is standing.
- **KNOW YOUR CHEER AND DANCE!**
  - Be committed to understanding the fundamental and safety rules. If you aren't up on the latest skills it might be difficult to accurately score the teams.
- If you don't think you are qualified, do NOT judge!