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Oregon School Activities Association
Cheerleading Handbook



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How to find information in the Cheerleading Handbook

*This handbook can be found on the OSAA website. Wording that has been changed from previous years is indicated by **bold italic** lettering. Linked references to other sections are **shaded** and Questions and Answers are shaded.*

1. SPIRIT SAFETY RULES	1
1.1. General	1
1.2. <i>Athletic Director and Coach Certification</i>	1
1.3. Coverage	1
1.4. Violations	1
1.5. Questions	1
2. CHEERLEADING STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS RULES	2
2.1. Administration	2
2.2. Eligibility	2
2.3. Entry Form	3
2.4. Entry Fees	3
2.5. Deadline	3
2.6. Divisions	3
2.7. Alternates	3
2.8. Minimum Division Entry	3
2.9. Performance Requirements	4
2.10. Determination of Rules Violations	5
2.11. Performance Procedures	5
2.12. Judges	5
2.13. Determination of Winners	6
2.14. Awards	6
3. OTHER CHEERLEADING COMPETITIONS	6
3.1. Sanctioning	6
3.2. Required Contest Conditions	7
3.3. Contest Recommendations	7

1. Spirit Safety Rules

- 1.1. **General.** Cheerleading squads representing OSAA member schools are required to conform to the rules set forth in the current National Federation Spirit Rules Book. Copies of the rules book are available for purchase from the OSAA, and should be reviewed at least yearly by cheerleading coaches.
 - 1.2. **Athletic Director and Coach Certification.** *The high school principal shall be held accountable for verifying that athletic directors and coaches of all sports sanctioned by OSAA, plus Cheerleading and Dance/Drill, have been certified in the following areas prior to assuming duties as an athletic director or coach. The Executive Board may adopt additional certification requirements for athletic directors and coaches. EXCEPTION: Any emergency exception must be authorized in writing by the OSAA. See **Executive Board Policies, "Certification – Athletic Directors and Coaches"** for additional information.*
 - 1.2.1. **NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching – The OSAA requires that athletic directors and coaches must achieve a passing score on the test included with the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course (<http://nfhslearn.com/coreCourseDetail.aspx?courseID=39000>). This is a one-time requirement.**
 - 1.2.2. **Concussion Recognition and Management Training – The OSAA and Oregon State Law (ORS 336.485) requires that athletic directors and coaches receive training to learn how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion and how to seek proper medical treatment for a person suspected of having a concussion. The NFHS's Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know free course (<http://nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=38000>) satisfies this requirement. This training is required annually.**
 - 1.2.3. **NFHS Heat Acclimatization and Heat Illness Prevention – OSAA requires that athletic directors and coaches must achieve a passing score on the test included with the NFHS's A Guide to Heat Acclimatization free course (<http://nfhslearn.com/coreCourseDetail.aspx?courseID=34000>). This is an every other year requirement.**
 - 1.2.4. **Anabolic Steroids and Performance-Enhancing Substances Training – The OSAA and Oregon State Law (ORS 342.726) requires that athletic directors and coaches receive training on identifying the components of anabolic steroid abuse and use and prevention strategies for the use of performance-enhancing substances. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) hosts the training and assessment on their website at <http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/page/?=2571>. This training is required once every four years.**
 - 1.2.5. **Spirit Safety Clinic (Cheerleading and Dance/Drill Coaches Only) – OSAA requires that any cheerleading or dance/drill coach attend an OSAA Spirit Safety Clinic by the first day of the Association year in which that person serves as a coach. Should a cheerleading/dance drill coach fail to attend an OSAA Spirit Safety Clinic by the first day of the Association Year, the squad of the non-attending coach shall be prohibited from performing partner stunts, lifts or tumbling until the coach has attended a clinic. This training is required annually.**
 - 1.3. **Coverage.** The rules set forth in the current National Federation Spirit Rules Book must be followed regardless of the capacity in which the cheerleading squad is functioning. The rules apply equally to squads performing at competitions and squads performing in a support function at a game or contest.
 - 1.4. **Violations.** In addition to the penalties specified for squads, competing at OSAA sanctioned cheerleading contests (See Cheerleading State Championships Rules section) schools represented by cheerleading squads, which violate the cheerleading safety rules at any time, may be subject to sanctions and penalties as determined by the OSAA Executive Board.
 - 1.5. **Questions.** Questions about the legality of a particular stunt should be addressed to the OSAA prior to practicing or performing the stunt.
1. **Q.** Is attendance at a yearly OSAA Spirit Safety Clinic required of all cheerleading coaches?
- A.** Yes, unless an emergency exception is granted in writing by the OSAA.

2. **Q.** If a school does not have a competitive cheerleading program, is the cheerleading coach still required to attend a yearly OSAA Spirit Safety Clinic?
A. Yes, unless an emergency exception is granted in writing by the OSAA.
3. **Q.** What is the consequence if a cheerleading coach for a school does not attend one of the yearly OSAA Spirit Safety Clinics by *the first day of the Association in which that person serves as a coach*?
A. The coach cannot coach and the squad of the non-attending coach shall be prohibited from performing partner stunts, *lifts* or tumbling until the coach has attended a Spirit Safety Clinic.
4. **Q.** When must a coach be certified?
A. All coaches must be certified prior to assuming coaching duties unless an emergency exception is authorized in writing by the OSAA. This includes cheerleading coaches, dance/drill coaches, and choreographers at schools that do not participate in competitions.
5. **Q.** Is certification required of volunteer coaches?
A. Yes.
6. **Q.** Must a “guest” coach be certified?
A. No, but if the coach has contact with students more than three times in a sport season, the coach shall no longer be considered a “guest” and must be certified. A non-certified “guest” coach may not serve as a coach at a contest.

2. Cheerleading State Championships Rules

2.1. Administration. The Cheerleading State Championships shall be conducted by the OSAA with the cooperation of the Oregon Cheerleading Coaches Association.

2.2. Eligibility.

2.2.1. School Eligibility. Schools that are registered with the OSAA to compete in cheerleading activities are eligible to participate in the Cheerleading State Championships.

2.2.2. Student Eligibility. Students wishing to participate in the Cheerleading State Championships must satisfy the current OSAA Cheerleading eligibility rules. **See also OSAA Handbook, Rules, Rule 8.**

2.2.3. Penalty for use of an ineligible student. Any school for which an ineligible student performs shall be disqualified from consideration for awards, and reported to the OSAA Executive Board for possible further sanctions and penalties.

2.2.4. School Representation. Only one varsity squad from each Oregon high school shall be allowed to compete. The squad may be a combination of two or more varsity squads (i.e., football and basketball squads may be combined for the Cheerleading State Championships.)

2.2.5. Varsity Level Only. In order to represent a school as a participant at the Cheerleading State Championships, a cheerleader must have participated on squads at a majority of VARSITY games for at least one season for the year.

A cheerleader who participates on the varsity during the Winter sport season only must have participated on squads at a majority of the entire Winter sport season’s contests prior to the Cheerleading State Championships in order to be eligible to represent the school at the Cheerleading State Championships.

EXCEPTION: Alternates may be members of a school's junior varsity or freshman squad, and may replace a varsity squad member due to special circumstances (i.e., injury, illness, ineligibility of a varsity team member) if the substitution is reported to and approved by the OSAA prior to participation.

2.2.6. Previous Qualifying Competition: All squads entering the Cheerleading State Championships must have competed in at least two OSAA sanctioned competitions during the school year of

that Cheerleading State Championships unless a specific exception to this rule has been granted in writing by the OSAA. ***Performing in an exhibition does not satisfy this requirement.***

The routine performed at the qualifying competition must include all or most of the team's planned two and one-half minute Cheerleading State Championships routine, including stunts and gymnastics, so that they may be reviewed by a technical judge prior to the Cheerleading State Championships. Neither the OCCA All-State Individual and Stunt Team Competition nor any other invitational competition allowing routines of fewer than two and one-half minutes in length or routines that do not include stunts and gymnastics may be used to satisfy the "previous qualifying competition" requirement.

- 2.3. Entry Form.** Entry forms and Cheerleading State Championships information shall be posted on the OSAA website <http://www.osaa.org>, the Cheer homepage by early December. School athletic directors shall be notified by the OSAA when the entry form and Cheerleading State Championships information is posted.
- 2.4. Entry Fees.** Neither team nor individual entry fees shall be charged to schools competing in the Cheerleading State Championships. Funds for administration of the Cheerleading State Championships shall be generated from school membership dues, activity fees, contest gate receipts and corporate sponsorship agreements.
- 2.5. Deadline.** The deadline for online receipt by the OSAA of entry forms for the Cheerleading State Championships shall be clearly marked on the entry forms available on the OSAA website, <http://www.osaa.org>, on the Cheer homepage.
- 2.6. Divisions.** The divisions at the Cheerleading State Championships shall include varsity level squads based upon school classification, squad size and squad gender as indicated below. NOTE: Squads with one or more male squad members shall participate in a Coeducational Division.

<u>Division Title</u>	<u>Squad Size</u>	<u>Squad Gender</u>
3A/2A/1A	20 or fewer	Females
4A (Small)	12 or fewer	Females
4A (Large)	13 to 20	Females
5A (Small)	12 or fewer	Females
5A (Large)	13 to 20	Females
6A (Small)	12 or fewer	Females
6A (Large)	13 to 20	Females
Coed (Small; 1-3 males)	20 or fewer	Coeducational
Coed (Large; 4 or more males)	20 or fewer	Coeducational

- 2.7. Alternates.** Each squad may bring two alternates to the Cheerleading State Championships in addition to the maximum number of participants allowed by the division constraints. Alternates must be listed on the entry form and shall satisfy the same eligibility requirements as other Cheerleading State Championships participants, except that alternates may be members of the junior varsity or freshman squads.
- 2.8. Minimum Division Entry.** If fewer than eight squads register to compete in a 6A or 5A female division, or fewer than five teams register to compete in a Small or Large Coed division or a 4A or 3A/2A/1A female division, that division shall be canceled. Any squad entered in the canceled division shall compete in the higher classification of the same team size.
- 2.8.1. 6A or 5A Female Divisions.** If fewer than eight squads register to compete in a 6A or 5A female division, that division shall be canceled. Any squad entered in the canceled division shall compete in the higher classification of the same team size.

- 2.8.2. 4A Female Divisions.** If fewer than five squads register to compete in a 4A female division, the 4A divisions shall be combined.
- 2.8.3. 3A/2A/1A Divisions.** If fewer than five squads register to compete in a 3A/2A/1A female division, that division shall be canceled. Any squad entered in the canceled division shall compete in the higher classification of the same team size.
- 2.8.4. COED Divisions.** If fewer than five squads register to compete in a Small or Large Coed division, the Coed divisions shall be combined.

2.9. Performance Requirements.

- 2.9.1. Content of the Routine.** Each squad shall perform a routine containing at least the following elements within the specified time limit. Elements may be presented in any order.

(a) One cheer.

(b) Dance routine.

Penalty for Violation: Any squad that performs a routine that does not include both of the required elements shall be disqualified from consideration for awards.

- 2.9.2. Time Limit.** A two and one-half minute maximum time limit shall be allowed each squad; there shall be no minimum time limit. The timing shall begin at the first word, motion or note of music; timing shall end when the advisor or designee signals the timekeeper.

Entrances on to the performance floor are neither timed nor judged. To help keep the Cheerleading State Championships on schedule, it is requested that teams be prepared to take the floor immediately when introduced, and to vacate the floor quickly at the conclusion of the performance.

Penalty for Violation: Any squad whose performance exceeds the maximum time limit shall have points deducted from the final average score prior to determining placement ***based on the following graduated scale:***

(a) ***1-3 seconds over = 3 point deduction from the final average score.***

(b) ***4-6 seconds over = 5 point deduction from the final average score.***

(c) ***Any over 6 seconds = 10 point deduction from the final average score.***

- 2.9.3. Safety Rules.** Squads are required to conform to the rules set forth in the current National Federation Spirit Rules Book. Copies of the Rules Book are available for purchase from the OSAA, and should be reviewed carefully prior to the Cheerleading State Championships.

Penalty for Violation: Any squad that performs a stunt in violation of the rules set forth in the current National Federation Spirit Rules Book shall have 10 points, 5 points, or 3 points deducted at the discretion of the technical judges from the final average score prior to determining placement.

Tumbling and Stunt Faults: The technical judges shall deduct .5 for each fall from a stunt, deduct .5 for each landing of tumbling on anything other than the feet and deduct .5 for each head or body part hitting the floor during or after a tumbling trick. Tumbling and stunt fault deductions shall be subtracted from the average score prior to determining placement.

Toss Faults: The technical judges shall deduct .5 for each toss fault. Toss fault deductions shall be subtracted from the average score prior to determining placement.

- 2.9.4. Sportsmanship/Conduct Rules.** Squads are required to conform to the Sportsmanship/Conduct rules set forth in the current National Federation Spirit Rules Book. Copies of the Rules Book are available for purchase from the OSAA, and should be reviewed carefully prior to the Cheerleading State Championships.

Penalty for Violation: If the technical judges or competition staff determine that a participant, coach, substitute, trainer or other person affiliated with a team commits an unsporting act as set forth in the current National Federation Spirit Rules Book. The team shall have 10 points deducted from the final average score prior to determining placement.

- 2.9.5. Props.** Pom-poms, megaphones, hand-held signs and flags or the equivalent are the only acceptable props.

Penalty for Violation: Any school using props other than pom-poms, megaphones, hand-held signs and flags or the equivalent shall have 10 points deducted from the final average score prior to determining placement.

- 2.9.6. Spotters.** Qualified and experienced spotters shall be provided on the performance floor to help reduce the chance of injury to participants.

- 2.9.7. Practice Area.** When feasible, a supervised practice area shall be maintained at which all squads shall be scheduled for equal practice time. A separate supervised practice area shall be available for warming up tosses.

Teams shall not practice stunts in the team rooms, nor shall teams practice on the actual performance floor prior to the Cheerleading State Championships or during breaks.

Penalty for Violation: Any team practicing stunts in the team rooms, or practicing on the actual performance floor prior to the Cheerleading State Championships or during breaks shall have 10 points deducted from the final average score prior to determining placement.

- 2.10. Determination of Rules Violations.** The OSAA representative (or his designee) at the Cheerleading State Championships has the authority and responsibility to determine if the Cheerleading State Championships rules have been violated. If it is determined that a Cheerleading State Championships rule has been violated, the consequence listed in the "Penalty for Violation" section following each rule shall be imposed upon the offending school.

The decision by the OSAA representative (or his designee) regarding violations and deductions is final and is not open to review, debate or appeal.

- 2.11. Performance Procedures.**

- 2.11.1. Music.** Music should be recorded on a high quality CD or iPod. Recordings should be labeled with the name of the school, and the music should start at the beginning. A squad representative shall be responsible for starting and stopping the recording during the routine; the volume shall be controlled by the venue technician. The squad representative should have a "back-up" recording in-hand in case of the failure of the original.

- 2.11.2. Performance Order.** The order of performance shall be randomly drawn by the OSAA prior to the Cheerleading State Championships and posted on the OSAA website, <http://www.osaa.org>, on the Cheer homepage.

- 2.11.3. Performance Surface.** A wrestling or cheerleading mat shall be required for all levels of competition.

- 2.12. Judges**

- 2.12.1. Qualifications**

(a) Judges must be out of high school for at least three years or have been recommended by their coach.

(b) Judges must be currently unaffiliated with any participating squad in the division they are judging.

- (c) Judges must have experience as cheerleading coaches, squad members and / or camp instructors and must have completed the OCCA Judges' Workshop.
- 2.12.2. Selection.** Judges for the Cheerleading State Championships shall be nominated by the OCCA and approved by the OSAA.
- 2.13. Determination of Winners.** The Official Scorer shall compute the score for each squad by computing the average of the judges' scores.
- 2.13.1.** Deductions due to violations, if any, shall be subtracted from the average score prior to determining placement.
- 2.13.2.** The highest average score in each division shall be first, the second highest score shall be second, and so on.
- 2.13.3.** In the case of a tie, duplicate trophies shall be awarded for that position, and the following position shall not receive an award.
- 2.14. Awards.** School awards shall be provided to 50% of the teams in a division up to a maximum of five awards per division. Individual medallions shall be provided to the members of the top two squads in each division.

3. Other Cheerleading Competitions

- 3.1. Sanctioning.** Any organization wishing to host a cheerleading competition in the state of Oregon must apply for sanction of the competition by the OSAA. Form is available for download from the OSAA website, <http://www.osaa.org>, Handbook and Forms section.

NO OSAA MEMBER SCHOOL MAY ATTEND A CHEERLEADING COMPETITION IN OREGON, WHICH HAS NOT RECEIVED OFFICIAL SANCTION BY THE OSAA PRIOR TO THE CONTEST. Schools wishing to confirm sanction of a specific event may consult the "OSAA Sanctioned Cheer Competition Calendar" on the OSAA website, <http://www.osaa.org>, on the Cheer homepage.

- 3.1.1. Timeline.** Any school or organization may submit a single Sanction Application for the following school year by **April 1** of the preceding school year after which the OSAA shall post a preliminary calendar on the OSAA website with events received prior to **April 1** being the only events listed. If more than one sponsor has requested the same date, sanctions shall be granted using the criteria listed below. Following the release of the preliminary calendar, OSAA will consider other requests for sanctioned events to be added to the calendar.

Incomplete sanction applications (missing location, etc.) shall not be accepted.

- 3.1.2. Maximum number of events per date.** The OSAA shall grant a maximum of TWO event sanctions for any particular date with the option of a third competition on a particular date at the discretion of the OSAA and the Advisory OCCA Calendar Subcommittee.

If more than two contest sponsors request sanction for events on the same date, sanctions shall be granted to only two contests except as indicated above using the following criteria the order of priority listed:

- (a) Priority shall be given to events for which the sponsor has previously hosted a contest on that date. In order to receive priority, the event must have actually been held the previous year (with the exception of a weather related cancellation), and the previous host shall be required to apply for an event sanction by **April 1** prior to the school year during which the event is to be held.
- (b) To the extent possible, avoid sanctioning more than one contest in the same region of the state on the same date.
- (c) Priority shall be given to sponsors from whom the fewest requests for sanction have been received this season.

- 3.1.3. Advisory OCCA Calendar Subcommittee.** A subcommittee of the Oregon Cheerleading Coaches Association (OCCA) Executive Board shall advise the OSAA in resolving cheerleading date conflicts, but the OSAA shall retain final decision making authority.
- 3.2. Required Contest Conditions.** Organizations applying for OSAA sanction shall agree to the following contest conditions.
- 3.2.1. Safety Rules.** Participating squads must be required to conform to the rules set forth in the current National Federation Spirit Rules Book.
- 3.2.2. Eligibility.** Participating squads must represent high schools registered with the OSAA to compete in cheerleading, and the individual squad members must satisfy the OSAA student eligibility rules for cheerleading. The signature of the school principal on the entry form for the competition shall constitute fulfillment of this requirement.
- 3.2.3. Rules Interpretations.** An OSAA representative or designee shall be named as Technical Judge prior to the competition. That person or a committee formed by that person shall be the only and final interpreter of the safety rules at the competition.
- A decision of the Technical Judge is final and is not open to review, debate or appeal.**
- 3.2.4. Judges.** Judges for locally sponsored contests (including the Technical Judge) shall be assigned from the "OCCA Judges List" available from the current OCCA Judge Coordinator. Any exception must be granted in writing by the OSAA.
- Scores assigned by the Performance Judges are final and are not open to review, debate or appeal.**
- 3.2.5. Spotters.** At least two qualified and experienced spotters shall be provided on the performance floor by the competition sponsor to help reduce the chance of injury to participants, and shall be assigned from the "OCCA Spotter List" available from the OCCA Spotter Coordinator. In addition, a team with multiple stunt groups may also provide a designated team member or coach to serve as a spotter to help reduce the chance of injury to participants so long as the additional spotter does not coach the team from the floor while serving as a spotter.
- 3.2.6. Performance Surface.** A wrestling or cheerleading mat is required for all levels of competition.
- 3.2.7. Awards.** Students may only accept awards of a symbolic nature without resale value such as letters, medals, ribbons, certificates, plaques, trophies and other emblems. Awards with monetary or resale value must be presented to the school.
- 3.3. Contest Recommendations.** The following are suggestions which sponsoring organizations may wish to include in their competitions.
- 3.3.1.** Coaches appreciate a short meeting on the morning of the competition to introduce competition personnel, answer last minute questions, etc.
- 3.3.2.** Depending upon the quantity of squads entered, divisions may be subdivided based upon school size, squad size and / or squad gender.
- 3.3.3.** Coaches appreciate having score sheets and specific competition results available to them immediately following the competition.