

Competitive Cheerleading

Sport Manual

2024-25 Edition

4.4 Competitive Cheerleading

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4.4.1 Regular Season Procedures

4.4.1.1 Rules of Competition

4.4.1.1.1 Competition Rules

(a) All NFHS Spirit Rules as found in the NFHS Spirit Rules Book are applicable.

(b) Each squad's presentation must include at least one cheer or sideline chant. The musical portion must not exceed one minute and thirty seconds, total time is two minutes and thirty seconds. Timing will begin with the first organized movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first as determined by the judges.

(c) If a squad exceeds either time limit, a one (1) point deduction will be assessed for 3-5 seconds over, a two (2) point deduction will be assessed for 6 seconds or more over. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT ALL SQUADS TIME THEIR PERFORMANCE SEVERAL TIMES PRIOR TO ATTENDING THE COMPETITION AND LEAVE A SEVERAL SECOND CUSHION TO ALLOW FOR VARIATIONS IN SOUND EQUIPMENT.

(d) Participants must start in the competition area with at least one foot, or both hands, on the ground. Squads may line up anywhere inside the competition area. The tournament director, according to the size of the facility being used, will determine the competition area. Approximate floor size will be fifty-four (54) feet wide by forty-two (42) feet deep (9 strips).

(e) All organized introductions (including, but not limited to, tumbling, entrances, chants, spell-outs, or any other entrance deemed 'organized' by the judges etc.) are considered part of the routine and are timed as part of the performance. There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official ending of the routine.

(f) Any squad in violation of the general rules will be assessed a two (2) point deduction for each violation. Any squad in violation of specific safety regulations will be assessed a five-point (5) deduction for each violation, unless otherwise noted.

(g) The association assumes no responsibility for the payment of copyright, royalty, or any other fees connected to the performances of any material in the cheer/dance competitive series.

(h) All head coaches are required to complete the Cheer and Dance Safety Certification course once every four years and certificates will be provided to the FHSAA office upon request.

4.4.1.1.2 Uniform Guidelines. All NFHS Spirit Rules apply. Any squad in violation of the uniform guidelines will be assessed a two (2) point deduction for each violation.

4.4.2 Florida High School State Championship Series Procedures

4.4.2.1 Commitment to Participate. All teams must commit to participate by submitting an Add/Drop Form prior to the roster due date listed on the FHSAA Competitive Cheer website. If a team wishes to withdraw from the Florida High School State Championship Series, an Add/Drop Form must be submitted to the FHSAA prior to the roster due date listed on the FHSAA Competitive Cheer website to avoid late withdrawal penalties. All participating teams can be found on the Competitive Cheerleading webpage under "Classifications"

4.4.2.2 Championship Series Roster. Up to forty (40) participants may participate during the championship series. Should changes need to be made to the roster, they must be made prior to the next championship series competition.

4.4.2.2.1 Division Selection. Coaches will be responsible for selecting and submitting their desired division via a web form. Once coaches submit their Division Selection Form and schedules have been proofed, no changes will be made to the schedule and no teams will be permitted to move divisions regardless of the circumstances.

4.4.2.3 Competition Structure and Time Schedule

4.4.2.3.1 Region Competition. One region competition will be held in each FHSAA Administrative Section. Each site and date are posted at FHSAA.com on the Competitive Cheerleading page.

4.4.2.3.2 Florida High School State Championship Finals

(a) Time Schedule. The schedule will be available on the Competitive Cheerleading webpage at FHSAA.com once all Division Selection Forms have been received.

(b) Pass Gate Lists. The number of warm-up passes for participating teams at regional and state competitions shall not exceed the maximum number of participants for a team's selected division plus six (6) to be used by coaches, alternates, Athletic Trainers, etc. Teams will be required to submit a Pass Gate List to the FHSAA Office before their regional competition. Those lists will be provided to the hosts and only those listed on a team's Pass Gate List will be permitted entry with the team. No additional coaches, team members, school personnel, etc. will be permitted. Any school member functioning in a media capacity (i.e. yearbook, school newspaper, etc.) must complete a media credential request form. Team photographers, videographers and reporters must also apply for media credentials. Media credential request forms are available at FHSAA.com.

4.4.2.4 Competition Regulations

4.4.2.4.1 Squads

(a) Squad Size. There will be two classifications (1A and 2A) for each division based on the student population reported to the FHSAA by school administration and the number of teams in each division.

(1) All-Girl Divisions:

- Small: up to 12 female participants
- Medium: 13-16 female participants
- Large: 17-20 female participants
- Extra-Large: 21-30 female participants

(2) Non-Tumbling Divisions:

- Small Non-Tumbling: up to 12 participants (0-2 Males allowed)
- Medium Non-Tumbling: 13-16 participants (0-2 Males allowed)
- Large Non-Tumbling: 17-20 participants (0-2 Males allowed)
- Extra Large Non-Tumbling: 21-30 participants (0-2 Males allowed)

(3) Co-Ed Divisions:

- Small: 1-2 male squad members, maximum of 20 participants
- Medium: 3-4 male squad members, maximum of 25 participants
- Large: 5 or more male squad members, maximum of 30 participants

(4) Game Day Division:

- Small Game Day: up to 12 participants (0-2 Males allowed)
  - Stunt Requirements: Teams will only be able to do shoulder sits, straight up preps, and straight up extensions. (No single leg stunts, spinning, or releases will be allowed)
  - Tumbling Requirements: Teams will only be allowed to do Back Handsprings.

(b) Non-Tumbling. Teams in Non-Tumbling divisions will be prohibited from using any and all forms of tumbling with feet over head rotation (i.e., rolls and walkovers) during their routine. Legal inversions into or from stunts will not be considered tumbling and are allowed in this division.

The FHSAA reserves the right to combine divisions and/or classifications as deemed necessary due to the number of competing teams in two or more divisions/classifications. The FHSAA reserves the right to have 'Finals only' if there are not enough teams in the semifinals to meet the advancement criteria.

4.4.2.4.2 Interruption of Performance

(a) If, in the opinion of the competition officials, a squad's routine is interrupted because of failure of the competition equipment, facilities, or other factors attributable to the competition rather than the squad, the squad affected should stop the routine. The squad will be allowed to present its routine from the place in the routine where the interruption occurred. The competition officials will determine the degree and effect of the interruption.

(b) In the event a squad's routine is interrupted because of failure of the squad's own equipment (including but not limited to skipping CDs, text messages, emails, phone calls or air drops received during performances, songs not downloading from the internet, etc.), the squad must either continue the routine or withdraw from the competition.

(c) In the event that an injury causes the squads routine to be interrupted, the squad must either continue the routine or withdraw from the competition. Competition officials reserve the right to stop the routine if an injury occurs. The competition officials will determine if the squad will be allowed to perform again from the point of interruption. If the squad is allowed to begin again, they will be evaluated only from the point in the routine where the interruption occurred.

4.4.2.4.3 Deductions and Disqualifications. Any squad in violation of the "FHSAA Rules and Regulations" will be assessed a two (2) point deduction for each violation. Any squad that does not adhere to the terms and conditions in the "FHSAA Competitive Cheerleading Rules and Regulations" may be disqualified from the competition and automatically forfeit the right to any awards and is subject to further sanctions or penalties.

4.4.2.4.4 Scores and Rankings. Individual judges score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his/her final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores for all squads. Scores and rankings will be available only to head coaches at the conclusion of the competition. Onsite review of score sheets will not be permitted. If a coach has a question about his/her scores, they will need to contact the Competitive Cheer Administrator no sooner than 24 hours after the conclusion of the competition.

At the FHSAA Competitive Cheerleading State Championships, semi-finals and finals may be conducted in each division; the FHSAA maintains the right to create finals only if there are not enough teams in the semifinal round to allow for proper advancement protocol. When calculating the number of teams that will advance from semi-finals to finals in a given division, the FHSAA will advance 1 team for every 3 teams entered. The FHSAA reserves the right to combine divisions and/or classifications when deemed necessary.

4.4.2.4.5 Judging Criteria. The judges will score the squads according to the judging criteria on a 100-point system. The music portion of the routine will be worth a total of 65 possible points; of the 65 points from the music portion, 40 points will come from the building and 25 points will come from the overall portion. The cheer portion will be worth a total of 35 possible points.

4.4.2.4.6 Tie Break Procedure. If in the event there is a tie in a place for advancement at Regionals or States, the team with the lessor deductions will be awarded first place. If the deductions remain equal, the tie will be broken as follows: among the 3 scoresheets used to score a team, the scoring manager will review the win/loss outcome of each scoresheet. The team that wins 2/3 scoresheets will break the tie and be the winner. If in the event there is still a tie, the highest cheer score between the teams will break the tie.

4.4.2.5 Advancement of Teams

(a) **Region Competitions to Florida High School State Championship Series.** All Region Champions and Region Runners-Up in each division earning a minimum raw score (point deductions not included) of 70 points or higher, will advance directly from Regionals to the "finals" round of competition at the State Championships in their respective division. Regional Champions and Regional Runners-Up earning a raw score (point deductions not included) of 60 points, and any additional team earning a minimum raw score (point deductions not included) of 60 points, will advance from Regionals to the "semifinals" round of competition at the State Championships. Teams that do not earn a raw score of 60 points or higher, will be eliminated from competition and will not advance to the State Championships.

(b) **Florida High School State Championship Series.** At the Florida High School State Championship Series, semifinals and finals will be conducted. If there are not enough teams in the semifinal round of a given division to follow the advancement protocol, that division will have a Final round only. When calculating the number of teams that will advance from semifinals to finals in a given division, the FHSAA will advance 1 team for every 3 teams competing in the semifinals. The teams advancing from semifinals to finals will be in addition to the teams that qualified for finals at each region competition. The FHSAA reserves the right to combine divisions and/or classifications when deemed necessary. The FHSAA reserves the right to have 'Finals Only' in a given division.