Dear DSCA Members, August 8, 2026

The **Delaware Spirit Coaches Association** (DSCA) is proud to announce the **32nd Annual Delaware State Cheerleading Championships**. We cordially invite you to attend the competition scheduled for Saturday, March 6th, 2027 at Smyrna High School. Specific information regarding the format of the State Championship will be provided after registration is received. Keep in mind that to compete for placement in the State Championship Competition, your organization affiliation(s) must have attended at least 2 membership meetings prior to States, must have competed at a minimum of two Qualifier Competitions in the same division, and paid DSCA dues prior to these Qualifiers. Teams that wish to perform exhibition must have a DSCA representative who is a member in good standing and they must attend at least 1 qualifier competition. Please see the enclosed document for fees, registration and release forms, etc. Should you need further assistance, please contact the DSCA Board at despiritassociation@gmail.com. The competition will be divided into the divisions listed on the "Divisions, Rules and Regulations" page. Awards will be granted based on the number of teams in each division. Please read and follow the enclosed instructions carefully. Each participant is required to submit a release form signed by a parent or guardian. All release forms must be turned in before the team may compete. A list of Qualifier Competitions is below:

Brandywine Warriors January 31, 2027
Christiana High School - February 6, 2027
Pride Cheerleading - February 13, 2027
Polytech High School - February 20, 2027
Lake Forest High School - February 27, 2027

The registration fee is $250 per team ($200 for exhibition). All fees for registration are nonrefundable. Please make checks payable to "DSCA". Supplier ID# 0000624890. Fill out and mail the registration form to:

ATTN: State Championship
Delaware Spirit Coaches Association
PO Box 1068
Dover, DE 19903

Registration and full payment must be received by February 6, 2027. Any registrations received after February 6, 2027 will be assessed a $100 late fee per registered team.

Participants

Coaches must maintain proof of grade or age documentation for their cheerleaders. For all star/Rec the age of an athlete for the season will be based on the guidelines in place by USASF and the Open Series. For schools, the age or grade of an athlete for the season will be their age or grade as of August 31, 2026. If a coach wishes to challenge another cheerleader's age or grade, the challenging coach must submit the challenge in writing accompanied by a payment of $150.00 for each challenge to DSCA. Challenges will be accepted before or during the competition. The coach who has been challenged is required to submit verification of grade or age prior to awards. If, after reviewing proof of grade or age, the challenge is upheld, the $150.00 payment will be returned to the challenging coach. If, based on proof of grade or age, the challenge is not upheld, the $150.00 payment will be retained by DSCA Any falsification of grade or age may result in a loss of Title from the States. Please see the attached form for registration.

To compete for a placement award at the DSCA State Championship a member of the Delaware team's organization affiliation(s) must have attended at least 2 membership meetings prior to States, must have competed at a minimum of two Qualifier Competitions in the same division, and paid DSCA dues prior to these Qualifiers. In order for a team to receive credit for competing at a DSCA Qualifier, the participating team must have paid their DSCA dues prior to competing at the DSCA Qualifier.

Any team of a Host or Co-Host may compete at their own Qualifier however, they must compete in two additional DSCA approved Qualifiers in order to be eligible to compete at the DSCA State Championship.

School teams must provide the grade level (e.g. 5th, 6th, etc.) of all athletes participating on the roster and have an administrator sign the team roster for accuracy.

All-Stars, Dance, and Recreational teams must provide ages of all athletes participating on the roster and maintain copies of Birth Certificates, Passports or Driver's License.

Liability Forms may be submitted as either an individual form for each participant or as a single group form for each team. Copies of either style can be submitted provided each form has an original signature of the coach.

Sportsmanship

The **Delaware Spirit Coaches Association (DSCA)** is committed to creating a respectful, fair, and positive environment at all DSCA-approved and sponsored events. Good sportsmanship is a fundamental expectation for all athletes, coaches, parents, and spectators. This policy applies **from the moment of arrival to the moment of departure** at every event, and violations will not be taken lightly. Unsportsmanlike conduct refers to any action verbal, physical, or visual that displays disrespect, hostility, or mockery toward another individual, team, or the DSCA organization. This includes behavior such as arrogant or aggressive body language, sarcastic clapping, eye-rolling, or any suggestive hand gestures aimed at others. Confrontational or argumentative behavior directed at judges, coaches, spectators, or other teams also falls under this definition. Inappropriate clothing is also considered a form of unsportsmanlike conduct. This includes T-shirts or apparel with negative slogans, phrases mocking another team or falsifying event results, or suggestive images targeting others. Additionally, any spoken or written comments—whether in person or on social media—that are negative, degrading, or inflammatory about other athletes, teams, or organizations are prohibited. This includes trash talk, rumor spreading, or any attempt to belittle others publicly or privately.

Infraction #1- A penalty of $250.00 will be assessed for violation of the DSCA Sportsmanship Clause. Until this obligation is met, the violating team/program participating at Qualifying Events may participate in the competition, however, it will not count towards States Qualification until this obligation has been met. If the violation occurs at the Delaware State Championship, the financial obligation will roll over to the following season (meaning, Qualifiers will not count towards State Championship Qualification until the obligation has been fulfilled.)

Infraction #2- After the first infraction has been founded, and penalties have been assessed, a subsequent infraction within 12 month period will result in the violating organization/program being suspended from the upcoming Delaware State

Championship tournament.

Procedures and Operating Timeline for Filing a Sportsmanship Complaint:
1. Complaints must be emailed to the DSCA Secretary within 24 hours of the occurrence. (despiritassociation@gmail.com)
2. The Executive Board will review the issue and render a decision within 48 hours of receipt.
3. If the guilty party is wishing to appeal it must be e-mailed to the DSCA Secretary within 24 hours of receiving the decision.
4. The appealed issue will then be re-evaluated and presented to the entire DSCA Board of Directors for final decision within 48 hours.

Sportsmanship is not just a guideline, it is a requirement for participation in DSCA events. The DSCA holds every athlete, coach, parent, and supporter to high standards of respect, integrity, and professionalism. Violations of this policy can impact a team's eligibility, reputation, and future in competition. By upholding these values, we can create a safe and positive environment where all athletes are encouraged to perform their best and support one another in a spirit of healthy competition.

Scoring & Awards

All DSCA Qualifying competitions must use the current DSCA School, DSCA All-Star, Recreational, Dance score sheets and DSCA safety score sheets.
Scores will be calculated as follows:

- Each judge's score sheet will be totaled.
- The total of all judges' score sheets (excluding the safety judge) will be calculated.
- Any safety or timing penalties will be subtracted from the combined total of all judges' score sheets, to determine the final score.
- The safety judge will advise any team charged with a Major Safety Violation as soon as possible after completing their performance.

At the DSCA State Championship, any team competing in a category with only one team will also compete against a set score in order to be recognized as a State Champion. To become a State Champion a team's score must be equal to or better than **85%** of their attainable score. If the team does not accomplish that score, they will be awarded a Second- Place trophy.

All decisions by the judges are final.

Music Policy

The use of music and other elements of the recording in your cheer and dance routine, as well as the right to perform your routine to that recording, must be properly licensed. You are responsible to and must obtain those licenses at your sole cost and expense, and agree to provide written confirmation and copies of all required licenses to DSCA upon request. Failure to obtain the appropriate licenses may be a violation of U.S. copyright law. By registering your team to participate in a competition, you warrant and represent that you have properly obtained and will continue to maintain all of such licenses, and relieve DSCA of any copyright liability.

Cheer and Dance Divisions

Recreational	***School***	***All-Stars***	***Collegiate***
See next page For Divisions	**Elementary** **1st-5th grades** **Small Middle/ Junior High** ▪ **15 members or less** ▪ **6th– 8th grades** **Large Middle/ Junior High** ▪ **16-25 members** ▪ **6th – 8th grades** **Freshman** ▪ **9th grade only** **Small Junior Varsity** ▪ **15 members or less** ▪ **8th – 12th grades**** **note: Majority + 1 must be 8th-11th**** **Large Junior Varsity** ▪ **16-25 members** ▪ **8th –12th grades**** **note: Majority + 1 must be 8th-11th**** **Small Varsity** **15 members or less** **8th – 12th grades**** **Large Varsity** ▪ **16-25 members** ▪ **8th – 12th grades**** **Co-ed Varsity** ▪ **25 members or less** ▪ **8th – 12th grades**** ▪ **2 or more males** ▪ **# Males not more than 50% of team**	**See USASF.NET for divisions or Varsity.com**	**All-Girl** ▪ **20 or less members and one (1) mascot** **Co-ed** ▪ **2 or more males**

***Note: If there is only one team from a school, that team will be required to compete in the Varsity division and meet the Varsity Division grade restrictions unless they are a bona fide JV team that cheers for primarily JV events.**

****Note: Any High School team that contains 8th grade participants must provide written documentation prior to the commencement of the competition season via the athletic director from a certified district e-mail affirming the participant is a member of the sideline team and attends school on the same campus under the same administration as the team they represent. Any teams found out of compliance with these requirements face 2 year suspension from competitive DSCA events.**

Recreational Cheer and Dance Rules & Regulations

DSCA recognizes that Rec cheerleading does not have an official governing body to refer to, and that Rec cheer teams may have different guidelines to follow within their individual organizations. Please refer to https://openchampionshipseries.com/scoring/ for Divisions, rules and guidelines for each level. The Competitive Rec/All-star Rec designation will not factor into DSCA division splits.

Timing & Penalties:

- Routines must be no more than two and one half minutes. Rec teams may use music for all or part of the two and one half minutes. The timing shall begin at the first word, motion, or note of music. Traditional (Cheer) Rec will consist of a 2:30 time limit with a maximum of 1:30 of music, the remaining 1:00 consisting of a cheer.

Elementary, Middle, Junior High and High School Cheer/Dance Rules and Regulations

The 2026-2027 Spirit Rules published by USA Cheer will be followed.

- Elementary, Middle and Junior High Schools will follow USA Cheer guidelines.
- High Schools will follow USA Cheer guidelines.
- Failure to follow those rules will result in safety violations and possible disqualification.

Timing & Penalties:

- Traditional Routines must be no more than two and one half minutes. Game Day routines must be no more than three minutes. Traditional Routines must include one (1) cheer or sideline chant. Music is permitted no longer than one minute and forty-five seconds. The timing shall begin at the first word, motion, or note of music. Game Day routines will follow the game day format outlined below under the section 'The Game Day Championship'.

All-Star Cheer & Dance Competitive Rules and Regulations

All-Star Cheer & Dance Divisions:

- Every All-Star Cheer & Dance team will follow the **USASF** guidelines regarding divisions and level. Details may be found at www.usasf.net.
- USASF rules, levels and divisions may change each year so please visit the website for divisions, levels and instructions on how to combine divisions.
- Failure to follow those rules will result in safety violations and possible disqualification.

Timing & Penalties:

- Elite Routines must be no more than two and one half minutes. Prep Routines must be no more than two minutes. Novice routines must be no more than one and one half minutes. All-Star squads may use music for all or part of the two and one half minutes. The timing shall begin at the first word, motion, or note of music.

Collegiate Rules and Regulations

Collegiate Divisions:

All Collegiate levels must follow UCA Collegiate rules, and will use the DSCA School Score Sheets.
See website UCA website for the collegiate rules- www.varsity.com.

Timing & Penalties:

- Routines must be no more than two- and one-half minutes. Routines must include one (1) cheer or sideline chant. Music is permitted no longer than one minute and forty-five seconds. The timing shall begin at the first word, motion, or note of music.

*****DSCA host sponsors reserve the right to add/combine divisions in order to create a fair yet competitive competition.***
***** Crossover Policy: The Delaware Spirit Coaches Association (DSCA) does not separate competition divisions based on whether a recreation program is affiliated with an all-star program. However, to preserve the integrity of both recreation and all-star divisions, crossover between these divisions is prohibited. Athletes designated as recreation (rec) athletes and competing on a recreation team may not compete on an all-star team. Likewise, athletes competing on an all-star team may not compete on a recreation team.***

In extenuating circumstances where a program believes a crossover is necessary, a written request must be submitted to the DSCA Board for review prior to the team competing with the athlete substitution. Approval is granted solely at the discretion of the DSCA Board and is not guaranteed.

The Game Day State Championship

Game Day Divisions:
****No team size limit for all Divisions**

High School Division:
Varsity
Junior Varsity
Freshman

Middle School/ Jr. High Division:
Middle School/Jr High

Elementary Division:
Elementary

Participation Requirements:

- All members of the cheerleading squad must be current members of the official school spirit squad and must attend the school they are representing. These must be individuals who cheered on the sidelines for games during the appropriate season. If you are a recreation team wishing to compete in Game Day, you must cheer for a sport in your league.
- MASCOTS are limited to the same props as cheerleaders (poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners) and are **NOT** allowed to stunt.
- Routines must be appropriate for family viewing. Any vulgar and/or suggestive movements or words will result in a score deduction.
- The team and each participating member/coach should constantly display good sportsmanship throughout the entire performance in regards to respect for themselves, other teams and the viewing audience of all ages. Teams should refrain from any taunting or suggestive expressions or gestures as well as discrimination of any nature.
- We recommend that the team and each of its members display an overall appearance conducive to serving as public representatives and ambassadors of their school in regards to grooming, traditional and appropriate attire, conservative make-up, uniformity, etc.

Competition Area:

- Participants may stand or enter outside the competition area.
- All permitted skills (stunts, pyramids, tumbling etc.) must be performed on the competition mat.
- Competitions comply with the USA Cheer surface ruling that school-based programs may not compete on a spring floor.
- Approximate floor size will be a traditional mat of 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 strips).
- Objects cannot be thrown outside the competition floor.
- After the use of poms, Signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners they may be placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member to prevent any safety violations.

Time Limitations:

- Each team will perform a routine not to exceed 3 minutes combined for all 4 elements
- Time will start from first choreographed movement including skills
- Teams **may not** set up props in advance of any category.
- All introductions (chants, spell-outs, 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.

Routine and Judging Requirements:

- Each team's routine will include a band chant, situational sideline, crowd leading cheer and fight song.
- Teams should utilize all areas of their squad's crowd-leading strengths. The use of poms, signs, flags, megaphones and/or banners is encouraged.
- The DSCA Safety Score sheet will be used to assess any safety violations/concerns during each team's performance.

Judging will be based on the following criteria:

- Band Chant
    - Team should demonstrate spirit and enthusiasm while entering the performance floor and before the music begins.
    - A cue will **NOT** be given to start the Band Chant.
    - Once the music begins, the teams cannot incorporate any skills other than jumps and kicks.
    - Teams should utilize spirit raising props and focus on creative movements including but not limited to level changes/ripples, execution of the material and encouraging the crowd to participate.
- Situational Sideline
    - Will follow the Band Chant.
    - The announcer will provide a cue for offense ("It's 1st and 10 for the home team") or defense ("Our team needs to make a stop here to steal the win").
    - Teams should wait until the announcer finishes the cue to show the proper response to the game day situation.
    - It is a requirement to incorporate skills into the sideline (stunts and/or tumbling).
    - Teams should focus on crowd effectiveness, motion technique and skills relevant to a game day environment.
- Crowd Leading
    - Will follow the situational sideline. Teams must return to the performance surface and show a clear separation between elements.
    - Teams can show spirited interaction as a clear transition into the Crowd Leading material but are not allowed to stunt.
    - Crowd Leading can include a cheer reflective of a timeout, general sideline/spell-out or other cheer material with minimal words, inciting a response and encouraging a crowd to yell along.
    - Teams should incorporate spirit props and practical skills (stunts and/or tumbling)
- Fight Song
    - Should reflect your school's traditional Fight Song.
    - Fight Song is limited to three (3) consecutive 8-counts of stunts and/or tumbling. Counts will begin with the initiation of a skill and continue until either the incorporation is complete or the 3rd 8-count. (If the Fight Song repeats, the incorporation will only be permitted both times if the skills are repeated exactly the same.
    - Teams should incorporate crowd effective skills (stunts and/or tumbling) and can include spirit raising props to enhance the overall effect.
    - If a team does not have an official Fight Song, it is recommended to use a second selection of band chant music. Music guidelines are available at varisty.com/music.

Specific Skill Restrictions:

- No tosses (basket, sponge or elevator)
- No inversions and/or twisting released dismounts are permitted.
- Single leg stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
- No running tumbling is allowed. Standing tumbling is limited to one tumbling skill, which can include back handsprings or back tucks. Rippled single back handsprings are permitted. Jump tumble (single skills) is also permitted.
- During the Band Chant, only kicks and jumps are permitted