



Dear DSCA Members,

September 27, 2024

The **Delaware Spirit Coaches Association (DSCA)** is proud to announce the **29th Annual Delaware State Cheerleading Championships**. We cordially invite you to attend the competition scheduled for Saturday, March 1st, 2025 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, must have competed at a minimum of two Qualifier Competitions in the same division, and paid DSCA dues prior to these Qualifiers. 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. You can use *either* the group liability form or the individual form. Forms can be duplicated but the coach’s signature must be original for each event. All release forms must be turned in before the team may compete. A list of Qualifier Competitions is below:

Dickinson High School- January 19, 2025
Dover High School- January 25, 2025
Christiana High School - February 1, 2025
Polytech High School - February 8, 2025
Pride Cheerleading - February 15, 2025
Lake Forest High School - February 23, 2025

The registration fee is \$200 per team (\$125 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 payments must be received by **February 14, 2025**. Any registrations received after February 14, 2024 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. For schools, the age or grade of an athlete for the season will be their age or grade as of August 31, 2024. 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, during or after the competition. The coach who has been challenged is required to submit verification of grade or age within 3 days of receiving notice of the challenge. 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 first-place award at the DSCA State Championship a Delaware team must have competed in the same division at two DSCA approved 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.

Recreational, Elementary, Middle/Junior High, and High School teams cannot compete in the All-Star category. Recreation teams must submit a letter with their registration, signed by their organization's board of directors, stating that each cheerleader registering for the event participated on a recreation team during the 2024-2025 season and stating which sport(s) they cheer for, to be eligible for the recreation division. Competitive only Recreational teams are considered an All-Star program and must compete as an All-Star team and follow the All-Star rules and regulations.

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 believes that good sportsmanship is essential to foster the growth of our sport. At every DSCA approved and/or sponsored event any participant, coach, parent or spectator displaying unsportsmanship like conduct may be subject to a sportsmanship penalty, as outlined below. This Sportsmanship Clause is in effect from the time of arrival until the time of departure from each event. This includes, but is not limited to: arrogant, aggressive, suggestive behavior, hand gestures, or body movements towards any member of another team, the entire team, or the organization. Additionally, T-shirts must not have any inappropriate words, slogans, or pictures relating to any member of another team, the entire team or organization, or falsifying/mockingly the results of the event. No team, team member, coach, parent or spectators should negatively talk about another athlete, the entire team, or organization (including but not limited to: engaging in negative or argumentative encounters with spectators). Any DSCA Member can email a report or complaint of unsportsmanlike conduct to the DSCA Secretary, and at that time the DSCA Executive Board (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) will review every report and render a decision that may include a penalty as outlined below.

Infraction #1- A penalty of up to \$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 48 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 24 hours.

Scoring & Awards

All DSCA Qualifying competitions must use the current DSCA School, DSCA All-Star and 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.**

Divisions

<u>Recreational</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>All-Stars</u>	<u>Dance Team</u>	<u>Collegiate</u>
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-Star and Dance Company: Hip Hop Tiny: 5 yrs & Younger Mini: 8 yrs & Younger Youth: 11 yrs & Younger Junior: 14 yrs & Younger Senior: 18yrs & Younger Open: 14 yrs & Older School Dance: Hip Hop Middle/Junior High High School	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 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 the Varsity.com for rules and guidelines for level appropriate skills for each level. Divisions will be grouped together based on age and skill level and will follow Varsity (linked here [24-25-Varsity-All-Star-Recreation-Divisions.pdf](#)) for age divisions. The Affiliated/Non-Affiliated designation will not factor into DSCA division splits. Affiliated and Non-Affiliated Recreation cheerleading organizations can register teams in Traditional and/or Performance divisions. Rec teams will perform on a spring floor.

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

The 2024-2025 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:

- Routines must be no more than two 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.***

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.

Uniform Guidelines:

- All participant uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention. Covered midriff does include flesh or nude colored body suits and liners.
- No tear-away uniforms and/or removal of clothing are permitted.

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 or 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