



UCA/KHSAA COMPETITIVE CHEER COMPETITION ROUTINE RULES

Effective September 1, 2025

****These rules apply to KHSAA events ONLY****

SCORES AND RANKINGS

- ☐ The judges for the event will be appointed at the sole discretion of Universal Cheer Association.
- ☐ Individual score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his or her final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores for all teams. Scores and rankings will be available only to coaches at the conclusion of the competition (within 48 hours). Judges' decisions are final.
- ☐ Any deductions or violations will be taken off the raw score. For more information on scoring, score sheet and judging criteria, please visit uca.varsity.com. Ties will only be broken for FIRST PLACE in the FINAL ROUND of competition at the State (if needed). The team with the lessor deductions will be awarded first place. If the deductions remain equal, the tie will not be broken, and both teams will be awarded first place.

FINALITY OF DECISIONS

By participating in this competition, each team agrees that all decisions by the judges will be final; questions concerning comments on the score sheet will be allowed, however scores and judges decisions will remain final. Each team acknowledges the necessity for the judges to make prompt and fair decisions in this competition and each team therefore expressly waives any legal, equitable, administrative, or procedural review of such decisions.

- ☐ **Visit the following link for more Scoring Information:**
- ☐ <https://www.varsity.com/uca/school/competitions/rules-scoring/>

HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

- ☐ RULES & PROCEDURES – Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the advisor/head coach of the team and will be directed to the Sarah Bridenbaugh (sbridenbaugh@khsaa.org). Such questions should be made prior to the event.
- ☐ Deduction sheets for the region and state competition can be reviewed after the competition.

DIVISION GUIDELINES

The minimum number of participants a team can have for a regional competition is five (5).

- ☐ All-Girls Divisions (4 divisions):
 - ☐ Small (Traditional 2.5 Minute): minimum 5, maximum of 15
 - ☐ Medium (Traditional 2.5 Minute): minimum 16, maximum of 19
 - ☐ Large (Traditional 2.5 Minute): minimum 20, maximum of 23,
 - ☐ Super Large (Traditional 2.5 Minute): minimum 24, maximum of 30
- ☐ Coed (1 division):
 - ☐ Coed (Traditional 2.5 Minute): 1 or more boys; minimum 5, maximum of 30
- ☐ Game Day (2 divisions not separated by gender) –
 - ☐ Game Day Small – minimum of 5, maximum of 19
 - ☐ Game Day Large – minimum of 20, maximum of 30
- ☐ A school can enter the same competitor on two squads as long as one is in the Game Day Division.
- ☐ A school cannot enter the same competitor on any two squads (i.e., Student A on All-Girls Medium cannot also be on the Coed squad, or Student B on the All-Girls Large Squad cannot also be on the All-Girls Small Squad).

UNIFORM GUIDELINES

□ UNIFORMS

- All participant uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention. Sheer, mesh, fringe and other “see through” material is not a legal midriff covering. Does not apply to color guard that attends with the Pep Band.
- A traditional sideline uniform (that covers the midriff when standing at attention and has an element that is identifiable to your school – colors, logos, letters, mascot, etc.) should be worn in all divisions. Costuming is not allowed.
- Cheerleaders must wear athletic shoes.

□ MAKE-UP

- If worn, make-up should be appropriate for both the performance and age of the athletes.

□ HAIR

- Hair for all athletes must be secured off the face.
- Bows are not required. If worn, bows must:
 - Must be securely fastened and appropriate for the activity.
 - Be positioned in a manner to minimize risk for all participants.

All facets of a performance/routine, including choreography, music selection, uniforms and cheer words, should be appropriate and suitable for family viewing and listening. Examples of inappropriate choreography may include, but are not limited to, vulgar or suggestive movement appearing offensive or sexual in content, displaying acts of violence, and/or relaying lewd or profane gestures. Music, words, or sound effects unsuitable for family listening which includes, but is not limited, to swear words and connotations of any type of sexual act or behavior, drugs, and/or violent acts or behavior. Removing improper language or words from a song and replacing with sound effects or other words may still constitute ‘inappropriate.’ Cheer words should promote school pride, honor, tradition, and sportsmanship. Cheers that are negative, insulting to other teams or the judges may reflect a lower score. Music, movements, or cheer words in which the appropriateness is questionable or with which uncertainty exists should be assumed by the coach to be inappropriate and removed as to not put their team in an unfortunate situation. If you have any questions, please email UCArules@varsity.com.

ENTRANCES AND EXITS

1. All introductions (entrances, chants, spellouts, etc.) are considered part of the routine and will be timed as part of the performance. Skills are not allowed during the team’s entry to the floor or any time prior to starting the performance. **EXCEPTION** – See Game Day Below
2. All team breaks, rituals, and traditions need to take place prior to entering the mat.
3. Teams should not have choreographed movements to enter the stage. Teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm, but without excessive gestures. Example: hugs, handshakes, choreographed dances, rituals, etc.
4. Teams have 30 seconds from the team’s introduction to start the routine and **30 seconds after routine completion to exit the performance area**. If a team exceeds this time limit, a penalty of a .25-point deduction for 1-5 seconds or a .5-point deduction for 6 seconds and over will be assessed. **Official entrance timing will begin when the first athlete touches the mat or performance area.**
5. All teams should refrain from any type of excessive celebration following the team’s performance. Any team in violation will receive a **ONE-point deduction**. Excessive celebration includes, but is not limited to, team huddles, alternates/coaches entering the competition floor, falling to the ground, dancing, head/hair swinging, split drops, inappropriate gestures, and/or other similar moves.
6. There should not be any organized or choreographed exits or other activities after the official end of the routine.

ROUTINE TIME LIMITATIONS

1. Timing will BEGIN with the first choreographed movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first. Timing will END with the last choreographed movement, voice, or note of music whichever comes last.
2. If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. One (1) point deduction for 1-5 seconds over, Two (2) point deduction for 6 and over.

3. Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, judges will not issue a deduction until 3 seconds over the allowed time. If a routine is retimed as part of a review, the exact time will be used without the 3 second allowance listed above.
4. Because penalties are severe, it is recommended that all teams time their performance several times prior to competition and leave a several second cushion to allow for variations in sound equipment.
 - **Performance Routines** – (all-girl divisions and coed division)
 - Each performance routine presentation must include at least one cheer or sideline chant.
 - Maximum Overall Time: 2:30 (150 Seconds)
 - Maximum Music Portion: 1:45 (105 Seconds)
 - **Game Day Routines**
 - Each Game Day performance must consist of a Band Chant, Crowd Leading section, and Fight Song.
 - Maximum Overall Time: 3:00 (180 Seconds)

For Game Day Routines, timing of the routine will NOT include the team spiriting, rallying, or individuals performing jumps, kicks, tumbling, or single-based lifts but will begin with the first group movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first. The entrance time limit of 30 seconds still applies for Game Day routines.

COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA

1. Participants must start in the competition area with at least one foot on the ground.
2. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
3. UCA Competitions comply with the NFHS surface ruling that school-based programs may not compete on a spring floor.
4. Approximate floor size will be 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 strips).
5. Any team member stepping outside or touching outside the performance area will cause the squad to receive a .5 penalty per occurrence. If a violation is assessed, the judges' decisions are final and will not be reviewed.
 - a. The white line is considered a warning mark.
 - b. A penalty will be assessed when any part of the seat/torso or any combination of two hands and/or feet are completely outside of the performance surface.
 - c. Out of bounds are called by line judges and decisions are final.
 - d. Once a team member takes the floor, they must remain on the floor until the end of the performance.
6. The center will be marked on all performance surfaces. Center markers will not be allowed. This includes but is not limited to stuffed animals, toys, banners, etc. Teams are prohibited from bringing any non-used props to the performance area.
7. Coaching staff, parents, fans and/or other members of the performing team entering the competition boundary before, during or after a performance is not allowed. The only people allowed on the performance floor are the competitors and competition personnel.
8. Signs or props may be safely placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member who must remain inside the competition area. Please see the deduction explanation sheet for additional Prop Restrictions. (See Game Day division rules for additional mascot prop guidelines.)
 - a. Approved props include foam fingers, rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for crowd leading and appropriate for crowd response.
 - b. Props may not be thrown into the crowd.
 - c. Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline cheer/dance boxes used at games.
 - d. No air horns or artificial noise makers are allowed.
 - e. All equipment tips on flagpoles must be padded or taped.
 - f. All props must be able to fit through a standard size (36") single door.
 - g. Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area.
 - h. Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to UCARules@varsity.com and must be received at least 2 weeks prior to your event.

PERFORMANCE ROUTINE DIVISIONS

1. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the UCA performance routine score sheet.
2. Cheer will count for 30 points, Building Skills will count for 50 points and Overall will count for 20 points. Building and Overall score sheets only judge skills and choreography within the music portion of the routine.
3. Any deductions or violations will be taken off the final score. For more information on scoring, score sheet and judging criteria, please visit uca.varsity.com.

GAME DAY ROUTINE DIVISIONS

1. The performance will follow this order: Band Chant, Crowd Leading, Fight Song.
2. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the UCA Game Day score sheets. For detailed score sheets please visit uca.varsity.com.
3. The use of crowd leading tools is recommended (All are not required).
 - a. Approved props include foam fingers, rally towels, signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones. Props should be used for crowd leading and appropriate for crowd response.
 - b. Props may not be thrown into the crowd.
 - c. Props cannot bear the weight of the performer. This includes sideline cheer/dance boxes used at games.
 - d. No air horns or artificial noise makers allowed.
 - e. All equipment tips on flagpoles must be padded or taped.
 - f. All props must be able to fit through a standard size (36") single door.
 - g. Props may be discarded off the performance surface but not hit/banged on the floor outside the performance area.
 - h. Prop approvals or prop questions can be submitted to UCARules@varsity.com and must be received at least 2 weeks prior to your event.
 - i. Mascots will only be allowed to use the approved props listed above.
4. The incorporation of stunts/tumbling is required in the Crowd Leading and Fight Song sections if the division permits. If there are no skills (stunts and/or tumbling) performed, a score of 0 will be given for the skills categories.
5. **Band Chant** should have an emphasis on crowd appeal and practicality – No stunting or tumbling is permitted, jumps and kicks are allowed. Squads should focus on crowd engagement and visual appeal and use creative movements such as level changes and ripples.
6. **Crowd Leading** - **At ALL Regional events**, teams must give time for the announcer to give squads a game scenario indicating an offense or defense situation. Teams should show their definitive understanding of the situation with an offensive or defensive Sideline. After the Situational Sideline. **Teams may not stunt until the sideline has been started by the athletes.** After the Situational Sideline, teams will move into their Cheer which can include one reflective of a timeout, general sideline/spell-out or other cheer material that incites a response and encourages the crowd to yell along. Teams will be evaluated on their ability to lead the crowd, crowd effectiveness, proper use of motions/crowd leading tools and execution of stunts/tumbling relevant to a game day environment. **No music is allowed during the crowd leading section.**
7. **Fight Song** should represent the traditional Fight Song the school does at games. Incorporation is limited to three (3) consecutive 8-counts of stunts and/or tumbling. If the fight song repeats, the incorporation will only be allowed both times if it is repeated exactly the same both times. Counting will begin with the first initiation of a skill (stunt or tumbling) until one of the following:
 - a. The routine ends within the 3 consecutive 8 counts.
 - b. Building Skills must be stationary prior to the end of the 3rd 8-count and may remain stationary until the end of the routine.
 - c. Dismounts following the completion of the routine will not be included for timing purposes. Any choreographed discount will continue the timing of the routine. Example – Coed toe touch pop offs performed together, in unison would be considered choreographed.
8. Each section should have a beginning and end. Note: Spirited crowd leading interaction between each section is encouraged to continue the game day feel. Stunts are not allowed as a transition before/between sections, including the team's entry to the floor and any time before starting the performance. Tumbling and single-based lifts are allowed anytime during the performance except during the Band Chant and still must be within the 3 8-count limit in Fight Song.
9. **Additional Skill Restrictions** • Basket and waist level tosses are NOT allowed. Examples of toss skills allowed are quick toss stunts, toss coed skills, and toss toe touches.

- a. Inversions are NOT allowed.
 - b. Twisting Released Dismounts are NOT allowed.
 - c. Twisting Released Stunt Transitions are NOT allowed.
 - d. Single leg stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
 - e. Running Tumbling is NOT allowed.
 - f. Single standing tumbling is allowed and cannot be connected. A single tumbling skill can only be connected to a single jump. The only standing tumbling skills that are allowed include back handspring, back tuck, forward roll, front walkover, cartwheel, standing aerial, jump back handspring, and jump tuck.
10. Any deductions or violations will be taken off the raw score. For more information on scoring, score sheets and judging criteria, please visit uca.varsity.com.
11. For Game Day routines, voice-overs and words may not be recorded or overlayed on the music tracks at all. Any voices captured in the original recording are allowed.

VIOLATIONS

Any team in violation of these UCA Rules and Regulations or any of the above-mentioned guidelines will be assessed a one (1) point general deduction. This deduction does not apply to deduction or violations within the point deduction system or already assigned a lower/higher point value. Go to uca.varsity.com for more specifics.