

OMYFA Competitive Cheer Rules  
(approved for 2009; 2/09)

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Regulations for Participants:

1. A participant on an OMYFA Cheer team may not compete on another competitive cheer or dance team during the OMYFA season.  
Out of season a participant may participate or be involved in another competitive team activity including an "All Star" team, however during regular season, up to and including Cheer-Off any participant is restricted to being involved in only the OMYFA cheer team.
2. A team consists of any number of athletes whose names appear on the teams' roster and must have completed all requirements of participation meaning 3 practices prior to first game and 5 games of cheer prior to competition.
3. All coaches, asst. coaches, parent volunteers, etc.; assisting cheerleaders "backstage" during the competition must have on file with each city a background check that does not include any sexual or assault charges. Any infractions in question will be brought to the OMYFA board for direction.
4. No background checks will be required for any assistants under 18 yrs. Of age, with proof of age and parental signed approval for the position.
5. Each person coaching or assisting cheerleaders during competition will have a name tag provided and must show proper I.D. in order to secure their name tag

Competition Format:

1. There will be a registration fee of \$80.00 per squad or \$200.00 per city required by each city which will be made payable to the host city presented with all other paperwork. (check list attached)
2. Host cities shall adhere to the rules/regulations presented and adopted by the OMYFA regarding in season, competition and day of events. All "day of" rules and procedures are subject to recommendation by the cheerleading members/committee of the OMYFA and will be approved by the league.
3. Competitive cheer competition will consist of 2 performances. Each performance is called a round and each round contains requirements as well as restrictions. Points are earned in each round. The winning team is the team that has accumulated the most points during each round after all points have been tallied.
4. There will separate rankings and awards given for each round.
5. Officials consist of safety judges, cheer and dance judges. There will be one safety judge and (at least) 3 cheer judges. There may a different panel of judges for the dance portion of the competition.
6. All judges must submit in writing their qualifications and experience in order to be considered for OMYFA competitive judging. It is recommended that all judges are either MHSAA registered or have competitive cheer experience.

7. All judges will receive a majority vote by the OMYFA cheerleading council; comprised of cheer GM's and coaches, prior to being accepted to judge the OMYFA Competition event.
8. All judges including the safety judge shall receive compensation consistent with state regulations regarding MHSAA sanctioned events. This compensation being the minimum allowable compensation and the maximum compensation shall not exceed 35% of the minimum allowable compensation for an event.
9. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place awards will be awarded to each participant on a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishing team; for both the cheer and the dance rounds. Preferably the day of competition, but in the event host city runs out they will forward to winning city as soon as possible.
10. There will be an additional 4 coaches' awards given to each 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishing team in both rounds.
11. Each city will submit in writing at the league meeting immediately prior to Cheer-Off their 2 vote nomination for the "Team Sportsmanship Award" This award is given to the city whose overall cheerleading program receives the most votes by the other OMYFA cities.

Criteria will include but is not limited to Respect, fairness, courtesy and a graceful acceptance of the results at any OMYFA sanctioned event.  
Nominees will exhibit integrity, fairness and respect for others.

Team Sportsmanship Awards will be distributed by way of certificates or other awards presented by the host city during the award ceremony at the end of the entire competition. The nominations will be turned into the Director of Cheerleading of the OMYFA.

12. The "Coaches Award" is presented by the league at Super bowl to the coach(es) (one from each level, not flag) that other cities have felt best represented sportsmanlike behavior toward their own team and others and also personified good coaching ethics. These nominations are given at league meeting immediately prior to the Cheer-Off Competition.
13. The "Spirit Award" is presented by the referees at the Superbowl. This award goes to a girl(s) from each level (excluding Flag) that is nominated by their own G.M. or their coach who has exemplified cheerleading at its best. Has overcome some personal adversity or exhibited outstanding sportsmanlike and teamwork behavior this season. Those nominations are submitted to the Director of Cheerleading at any time throughout the season and are voted on by the cheerleading board at the meeting directly prior to Play-Offs.

#### Length of Rounds:

1. The cheer round will be 1 ½ to 2 min in length and will begin with the first vocal or movement of the team and ends when the last cheerleader exists off the competition mat.
2. The dance round will be 1 ½ to 2 min. in length and will begin with the first sound of music.

3. Any portion of these times is permitted however any team that goes over or under the allotted times will receive a 1 point penalty per second of infraction. (see penalty sheet)

#### Order of Competition:

1. Prior to the day of the competition the host team will conduct a blind draw for each round to determine the order in which the teams will perform. Teams should be notified of the order of competition prior to the competition and it should appear in the competition program.
2. Prior to and during the competition, teams shall be provided an area free of obstacles and with enough ceiling clearance in order to warm-up stunting.
3. Hosting teams will conduct a pre-meet coaches meeting at a designated time and place prior to the start of the meet to provide coaches with information about warm-up procedures, and any relative information to the day's competition.
4. It is appropriate for a judge to be present at this meeting to answer any technical questions.
5. All routines will be performed on a matted surface. The performance area shall be padded with a mat of uniform thickness which shall cover a recommended minimum area of 42' x 42'. The matted area can be exercise mats, a wrestling mat, a floor exercise mat or a gymnastics base mat. The surface should be of one piece. If this is not possible, each padded section shall be fastened together securely to create a smooth uniform surface.

#### Coaches Area during Performance:

1. Coaches are allowed to direct/encourage their team during its performance. In an area in front of the spectators yet not in direct conflict with the judges area. This does not include entrances and/or exits from the mat and no coach may have direct contact with any participant on the mat or may result in a penalty ("non-competitor in the competition area")
2. Area for Non-competing Cheerers; Any non-competitors are not allowed to stand sit before during or after a performance in the coaching or judges area. It is recommended that non-competing cheerers are allowed no closer than 10 feet from the judges' area.
3. No cheer competitors are permitted in the Competition arena during their individual age level performance.
4. A coach is allowed to question the addition of scores or check for areas left blank on the score sheet. Coaches are not allowed to refute penalties imposed by a safety judge or a time infraction.
5. Coaches are allowed to check at the score table to determine penalties but are not permitted to remove score sheets from the score table area.
6. A coach may approach the score table area to review score sheets anytime after the routine scores are verified, but no later than 10 min. after all scores are recorded.

7. All scores are final after the allowable 10 min. for coaches to review the score sheets.
8. A large Poster Board will be placed for public viewing in a convenient location so the general public may view the scores and places, at the end of the competition and **after** the awards ceremony.
9. Copies of score sheets, penalty sheets and other turned in paperwork is returned to each cities G.M. for each competing team at the end of the competition.

Procedure for Team to Enter and Exit Competition floor:

1. A standard entrance and exit for all teams will allow consistency and equity to judging each team as well as eliminate confusion and time wasting.
2. The announcer will request the team by full name of the city and nickname to approach the competition area and take its position behind the mat. At this time the team must move without delay to this area.
3. The announcer will announce the team to "take the mat and begin when ready". As consistent with MHSAA procedure. While entering onto the competition mat, vocal and arm movements only are allowed. A team that enters the competition mat performing kicks, jumps or tumbling will receive a 7 point penalty.
4. Upon completion of the routine, the team may exit the competition area from either side of the mat or the rear of the mat, but may not exit off the front of the mat (Mat violation).
5. The team must complete the routine once it has begun. Exception- In the case of a severe injury of a competitor during the routine a judge will stop the routine.

Competitive Cheer Uniforms and Accessories:

All participants must wear identical and matching uniforms that they have worn during regular season play; consisting of:

1. Top: Sweater, Shell, turtleneck, body suit that does not have buttons, snaps or zippers that may cause it to be unsafe during stunting or tumbling.
2. Bottom Skirts or jumpers with matching briefs or pants. It is illegal to wear bottoms that expose the belly button or lower torso area. No purposeful attempt to expose this area is permitted.
3. Footwear, athletic shoes, including dance shoes (no hard soles) shall be worn all of the same color. No nylons may be worn.
4. Hair shoulder length or longer must be tied back and secured for safety reasons, hair control/adornment devices must be secure in hair, cannot be shoulder length and must be made of a soft material. These adornments may be different than adornments used during regular season play.
5. If a judge finds a tattoo to be offensive, it is appropriate for a judge to request the tattoo be covered during competition.

6. All of the following are prohibited during competition; jewelry, friendship wristbands, gum, face and body glitter, unsafe fingernails, nail polish, safety pins, spirit buttons, and bobbie pins.
7. Competitors are allowed to wear a medical I.D. tag or religious medal if it is taped on the body underneath the uniform. If the medal is on a chain, the chain must be removed.

#### Team Management:

1. Participants must adhere to all eligibility rules set forth by the OMYFA.
2. All manufactured or homemade equipment is illegal in competitive cheer and dance, such as mini tramps, vaulting boards, balls, flags, scarves, megaphones, horns, rattles or signs.
3. Pom-poms are permitted in the dance round only.
4. It is illegal for a cheerer to wear a cast with the exception of a properly covered air cast. It is permissible to wear a support or brace if it is appropriately covered to pad rough edges or hard and unyielding surfaces.
5. When a participant is found to be bleeding, has an uncovered wound or there is blood on herself or uniform, the competition shall be stopped to render proper treatment. Judges have the authority to restart the routine at their discretion.
6. When a participant is thought to have received a head injury that caused unconsciousness, the participant shall not be permitted to resume participation during that competition.
7. Unsportsmanlike Conduct includes but is not limited to:
  - A coach/athlete making an unauthorized approach to a judge concerning a score or rules infraction
  - Undisciplined or inappropriate conduct of an athlete/coach
  - Verbally abusing or disrespectively addressing a judge or meet official by anyone from one city's organization
  - Using profane or foul language
  - Taunting
  - Delay of meet

#### Violations and Penalties:

1. Time infractions; is one where the routine is not completed with the last team member off the mat within the maximum/minimum time limit allotted. There will be a 1 point penalty for each second under or over allotted time.
2. Mat violations; stepping off the mat while performing a stunt during a performance will be awarded a 7 point penalty each time an infraction occurs. Therefore if more than one person steps off the mat from the same stunt group during the same stunt, it is a 7 point deduction. If competitors step off the mat doing different stunts or in a different stunt groups during the routine it is a 7 point deduction each time someone steps off or touches the floor off the mat while stunting.

3. Miscellaneous Violations, 7 points will be deducted from the total points earned in the round each time the infraction occurs. Examples of miscellaneous violations include; gum chewing, glitter, hair violation, wearing illegal hair devices, a safety pin, an illegal uniform, wearing jewelry, wearing buttons. Furthermore if one competitor is wearing jewelry it is a 7 point deduction however, if one competitor has glitter on her body and another competitor has a hair violation 14 points will be deducted in this round of competition.
4. Detached hair devices. Legal hair devices worn during competition must remain secure. Loss of a hair device onto the competition surface becomes a safety concern. There will be a 3 point deduction assessed for each occurrence. Detached eyeglasses and a shoe(s) lost by a competitor would receive the same deduction.
5. While entering onto the competition mat, vocal and arm movements only are allowed. A team that enters the competition mat performing kicks, jumps or tumbling will receive a 7 point penalty.
6. A coaching area will be designated by the host team. No more than 4 coaches are allowed in the coaching area during a performance. No one other than coaches or G.M.'s are allowed in this area. A 3 point penalty will be assessed for excessive number of coaches or non-coaches in the coaches' area.
7. Spotting techniques are described in the MHSAA rules and regulations hand book these must be adhered to along with the "**Touch, Watch and Away**" technique. 7 points will be deducted from the total points earned in the round each time the infraction occurs.
8. There will be a 7 point deduction when team members make inappropriate unsafe contact with each other when executing gymnastic skills, tumbling, jumps and stunts (excluding splits).
9. It is paramount that spotters understand their responsibility to protect the flyer when the stunt is falling apart. If a stunt is falling apart the spotter must attempt to touch, hold or break the fall. If there is no attempt to assist the flyer by anyone, the safety judge will assess a 7 point deduction each time the infraction occurs.
10. There will be 3 pre-selected skills and their sequence must be presented in writing to the judges in advance of the performance. A 7 point penalty will be assessed if skills are not submitted in the order performed or not performed in the order submitted.
11. See the 2009 MHSAA Competitive Cheer Manual for a listing of prohibited and permissible stunts.
12. Failure of team to submit all required items necessary for competition must be turned into host city no sooner than and no later than date specified by host city within a 2 week limit prior to competition.. Late entries will result in a 14 pt. per team penalty
13. Any changes made to any paperwork/items for competition must be initialed (by the G.M.) and presented to the host city by 5:00p.m. The day directly previous to the competition.

#### Performance of Illegal Stunts/Skill:

1. The jump must be performed and is required by each competitor in unison. The first jump performed will be the jump which is judged. If one or more competitors perform a different jump than what was designated by the coach in writing a 3 point penalty will be assessed.
2. There are requirements that must be performed by each team member in unison. Should one or more team member(s) does not at least attempt to perform the requirement necessary in that round, the safety judge will award a penalty of no points' for that requirement.

#### Performing with a "Hole":

If a team must perform a routine without a competitor because of a last minute injury or illness that occurs prior to the competition, the team may continue to compete with notification to the safety judge. Loss of a competitor creates a "hole" in the routine. No penalty shall be assessed to a team competing with a "hole", however failure to notify the safety judge will result in a 3 point penalty.

#### Competitive Dance Regulations:

All aforementioned rules and regulations shall apply to the dance performance round. In addition to the previously mentioned rules the following dance specific regulations shall apply.

1. There will be a minimum of 3 formation changes made during the dance
2. All participants will wear identical and matching uniforms (that they wore for the cheer round) for the dance round of the competition. No costuming is allowed.
3. Pom-poms are allowed in the dance round however the dropping of a pom on the competition mat is viewed as a violation and will result in a 3 point penalty, assessed for each occurrence.
4. Stepping on a dropped pom constitutes a safety violation and an additional 3 point penalty will be assessed for each violation.
5. Footwear may be changed during the dance round from the cheer round. This may include athletic shoes or dance shoes (no hard soles are permitted). These should be of the same color for all competitors performing. Footwear must be worn during the dance portion of the competition.
6. No props of any kind are permitted in the dance round. Use of any props other than pom-poms during the dance round will result in a 7 point penalty.
7. Stunting and gymnastic tumbling is prohibited during the dance round. There will be a 7 point deduction from the total points earned for each time a stunt or gymnastic infraction occurs.
8. All music and dance movements are for the viewing of the general public. All music should be of a P.G. version. Any dance movements or music that the safety judge finds offensive will result in a 7 point penalty. It is advisable any questions

regarding what constitutes “offensive” material be brought to the OMYFA board for direction.