



Rules for Spirit and Cheerleading

- 1) AAMSL CHEERLEADING follows the guidelines set by the NFHS.
 - a) This includes the MIDDLE SCHOOL add-on guidelines from the USA Cheer Federation.
 - b) The NFHS Spirit Rules are produced by the National Federation of State High School Associations and USA CHEER and are written with high school cheerleading in mind. USA Cheer recommends that Elementary, Junior High, and Middle School cheerleaders follow the NFHS Spirit Rules with the additional restriction below:
 - i) *Effective 2023-24*
 - ii) *Rule 3.5.10 (USA Cheer Add-on): All tosses other than Switch-Ups are prohibited for Elementary, Middle School, and Junior High cheerleading teams.*
 - c) It is the responsibility of the Athletic Directors and Coaches to ensure that these guidelines for copyright compliance, sportsmanship, performing surfaces, risk management, and the Coaches' Code of Ethics are followed during all AAMSL games and the annual championship.

- 2) It is advised that coaches understand these guidelines. Yearly courses are offered through NFHS and USA Cheer. All coaches are encouraged to take these courses.
 - a) <https://nfhslearn.com/courses>
 - b) <https://usacheer.org>
 - i) **The Comprehensive Course** for coaches covers the entire cheer section of the NFHS Rules Book (Rules 1, 2, and 3) including the new rules changes for the current year. This course is ideal for new coaches or coaches who want a refresher course for all rules. Both courses are \$15 for non-members \$10 for members.
 - ii) **The “Changes Only”** course for coaches covers the significant rule changes for the current year. This course is ideal for veteran coaches who are already familiar with the current rules.
 - iii) **The Rules Interpreters** course is now a standalone course that requires completion of either the comprehensive course or the Rules Changes course. It covers methods and techniques to help interpret rules and includes video testing on rule interpretations.
 - iv) **There is also a Video Rules Interpretation page:**
 - (1) [USA Cheer/NFHS Rule Videos](#)

- 3) While the high school guidelines are appropriate for older squads, younger squads should have more restrictive rules to reflect their ability and skill level.
 - a) *Perfection before Progression.*
 - i) The middle school guidelines are designed to help ensure that younger cheerleaders learn proper fundamental techniques before progressing to more advanced skills. This allows the coaches to focus on one of the most important preventative measures for cheerleading safety known as skill progression. The



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intent is to keep younger school cheerleaders performing more fundamental skills. This will improve safety at these levels as well as at the high school level where they will be allowed to progress to more advanced skills if they have demonstrated proficiency.

- ii) Adhering to these guidelines will ensure better skills development.
- 4) Please make sure all coaches have the required NFHS SPIRIT RULES book. Coaches are responsible for knowing and following changes made for each new year. These changes will always be available on the NFHS and USA Cheer sites.

From AAMSL By-Laws - Section XII: TOURNAMENT ELIGIBILITY

- A. All athletes must be on the team roster and participate in at least half of the regular season schedule in order to participate in the tournament.
 - a. Player Participation is defined as dressed in the team uniform and in the team area and/or named in the scorebook.