

Hello Coaches and ADs!

There are quite a few reminders for the competitions, primarily based on what we've already seen in the first several weekends of competitions. Plus, some game reminders. Since this bulletin is a long one, below is a quick outline of what is mentioned in this issue:

- Basketball game reminders
- OCCA Game Day Division Restrictions
- OCCA Rec Team Restrictions
- Rhinestones/Jewelry/Glitter
- Props
- Choreographing Tumbling
- Crossover Athletes
- Time Deductions
- Knee Drops

Also, reminder, I am the contact person for any questions regarding NFHS rules, safety deductions at competitions, etc. Use the QR code at the end of this bulletin or my email that is also listed below.

Basketball Game Reminders

In the NFHS rulebook there are several rules related to when and where stunts are allowed on a basketball court. Here are some clarifications regarding stunting surfaces:

- Stunting, jumping or tumbling while gym lights are off except for a spotlight on players being introduced, on concrete, close to a wall are not considered appropriate or safe. **(Rule 1-1-7)**
- Consideration of practice/performance surfaces are a vital component of risk minimization. The following skills are only allowed on a mat, grass or rubberized track surface (so not allowed on a basketball court without mats):
 - Basket tosses, elevator/sponge tosses and other similar multi-base tosses. **(Rule 2-5-3)**
 - Partner stunts in which the base uses only one arm to support the top person. **(Rule 2-4-9)**
 - Twisting/tumbling skills (Arabians, full-twisting layouts, etc.) **(Rule 2-8-6)**
EXCEPTION: Cartwheels, round-offs and aerial cartwheels are allowed on surfaces other than a mat, grass or rubberized track.

Here are a few other rules in the NFHS rulebook specific to basketball games:

Rule 1.1.10 - "Participants must not stunt or tumble during a basketball or volleyball game when the ball is in play, including free throws in basketball and just prior to the serve in volleyball."

Rule 1.1.14 - "Spirit participants shall remain outside of the playing area during a 30-second or less time-out during a basketball game."

Rule 1.1.16 - "Spirit participants shall stand outside the free-throw lane lines extended toward the sidelines throughout the basketball game."

OCCA Game Day Division Restrictions

Please review the attached OCCA Game Day Division Rules and Guidelines (revised in October 2025).

Any violation of the Game Day Division skills will result in a 3 point deduction if choreographed; if the violation is inadvertent it will result in a 1 point deduction. Judges will give benefit to the team if it does not seem clearly choreographed.

OCCA Rec Team Restrictions

- Safety rule reminders pulled directly from the OCCA Rec Guidelines and Rules document (revised in June 2025)
- Rec teams will follow the NFHS Spirit Rules across all divisions with the following exceptions:
 - Junior and Senior level teams only: Basket tosses, sponge tosses, elevator tosses, or similar multi based tosses are limited to a straight ride toss for the 2025-26 season.
 - Tiny, Mini, and Youth level teams, basket tosses, sponge tosses, elevator tosses, or similar multi based tosses are not allowed.

Rhinestones/Jewelry

Remember that rhinestones in hair and on faces are both illegal. Please be aware of this rule.

Rule 2.1.1 - Page 17

“Jewelry of any kind is prohibited except for the following: A religious medal without a chain is allowed and must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.”

Situational example - Page 18

“Cheerleaders are wearing: (a) rhinestones woven into their hair; (b) rhinestones glued on their faces; (c) uniforms with rhinestones sewn, punched, or glued on.

Ruling: (a) and (b) illegal; (c) legal”

Reminder on other items that fall under this jewelry rule:

- Earrings, plugs or spacers, navel rings, gauges, dermal piercings, hair ties on wrists, anklets, and more!

Glitter

Glitter was an issue last year. An easy way to know if it is legal or illegal is to run your hands over the glitter that's been applied, if you see it now on your hand, it is illegal. This rule also does not clarify glitter size; so whether it is fine glitter or coarse, this rule is applied the same.

Rule 2.1.5 - Page 17

“Glitter that does not readily adhere on the hair, face, body, uniform or costume is not permitted”

Situational example - Page 18

“A participant is wearing: (a) loose glitter sprinkled in the hair; (b) glitter-infused makeup that does not easily flake off; (c) glittery eye shadow.

Ruling: (a) illegal; (b) and (c) legal”

Section 10 - Props

- This is a common deduction and typically not intentional. Please remember the rules around discarding props and completing skills around props. Below are the rules and reminders that have been shared already this season. Be sure to share these rules with your athletes, so hopefully they are aware in the moment.

Rule 2.10.1 - Page 35

“When using props made of hard materials or have sharp corners/edges (includes megaphones) the following conditions must be met:

- a. Top person may not release the props to the ground
- b. Person on the ground must gently toss or place prop on the ground
- c. Cannot throw a prop from one person to another person”
- Be sure that flyers hand off props made of hard materials or with sharp corners/edges to a team member that is not required in the stunt or anyone else on the performing surface.
- Ensure to either place props on the ground or gently toss in a downward motion (no flick of the wrist).

Rule 3.10.3 - Page 35

“A participant cannot step on a prop (soft or hard) while being a required spotter or while executing or landing from a stunt, jump, or tumbling skill.”

- Stepping on a prop during transition/walking is no longer a fault unless it causes a fall itself. Then it would only be a 0.5 deduction.
- This rule includes hard AND SOFT props. Make sure to move those poms far enough away from a stunt group so there is not a chance of accidentally stepping on them if the stunt were to travel.
- Please note, this rule includes anyone required in a stunt as well. For example, a required spotter in a single based stunt (i.e. toss to hands), even though the spotter is not actually touching the stunt, they are required and must follow all spotter rules (Rules 3.2.4 to 3.2.8)
- Minor rule violations for this rule would involve executing or landing from a jump or tumbling skill (-3 points).
- Major rule violations for this rule would involve being a required spotter or while executing or landing from a stunt (-6 points).

Choreographing Tumbling

- We have had some collisions and near misses with our standing and cross tumbling. Be careful when choreographing tumbling into your routine to keep the athletes safe and minimize risk of accidents. We all love a great visual, but just be mindful.

Crossover Athletes

- When schools or programs have multiple teams (ex. a rec athlete subbing in a younger age division), the athletes can't cross compete on both teams. If this occurs, both teams are to be disqualified.

Time Deductions

- It is the responsibility of the coach or team representative to ensure the routine is performed in the time allowed. There will be no warnings for time deductions throughout the entire season. --*Times are always double checked before deducting.*
- Reminders on time limits:
 - Traditional – 2 minutes and 30 seconds - Timing for these divisions begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first.
 - Game Day – 3 minutes - Timing will begin with the first note of music for band dance.

If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed:

- 1 point per second over the time limit.
- The maximum amount of points to be deducted would be 5 points

Times will not be stopped if there is an issue with the music mid-performance. Please plan accordingly and teach the athletes what to do if this situation occurs. Start those counts.

Knee Drops

Rule we have seen quite a bit within the first two weeks of 2026 comps. Remember...

Rule 2.9.1 - Page 34

“Drops that go directly to the thighs, splits, knees or seat on the performing surface are not permitted unless most of the weight is first borne on the hands or feet or the descent is controlled.”

Situational examples - Page 35

“Situation A: Participants execute split drops by: (a) jumping into the air and landing on the floor in the split position; (b) jumping into the air, landing on their feet and quickly sliding into the split position.

Ruling: (a) illegal; (b) legal

Situation B: A participant remains in contact with the performing surface during the drop: (a) to the knees, brushing the floor with her fingers at the same time the knees land; (b) to the thighs by spiraling downward before landing on the floor.

Ruling: Both are legal.

Comment: (a) This drop is legal because the participant is not airborne before dropping to the knees ”

- This rule is typically inadvertent and therefore a minor deduction. We most commonly see athletes having a lot of energy and jump (becoming airborne) before the drop to the knees. However, if it is clear that most of the team is performing the same way and illegally it would be considered ‘choreographed.’
- The rule specifically says the weight needs to be on the hands or feet first. Which means, from being airborne, if knees land at the same time as hands, it does not meet rule.

As always, feel free to reach out for any questions or legality inquiries to the SRI email or via the Google form (QR code below). Please allow up to 3 days for a response and know that this response may not include the final determination if a creative stunt has to be sent to NFHS for clarification.

Google form QR for all stunt legality / safety inquiries



Spirit Bulletin #5

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GAME DAY DIVISION



RULES AND GUIDELINES

The Game Day divisions showcase what traditional cheerleading is all about – leading the crowd! Teams will be evaluated on their ability to lead the crowd, proper game day skill incorporations/performance, motion/dance, and overall routine.

Divisions:

- Rec Game Day (Affiliated and Non-Affiliated)
 - Tiny - Kinder and under
 - Mini – 3rd grade and under
 - Youth – 6th grade and under
 - Junior – 8th grade and under
 - Senior – 12th grade and under - ***Non Affiliated programs only***
 - *Game Day divisions may be split at events depending on registration*
- High School Game Day
 - *Please note, the high school varsity divisions may be different at the OSAA Cheerleading State Championships.*
 - Freshman Team (All Classifications) - Up to 30 members
 - Junior Varsity Team (All Classifications) Small - 15 members or less
 - Junior Varsity Team (All Classifications) Large - 16-30 members
 - *Please note, all junior varsity divisions may be separated by classification depending on registration.*
 - Varsity teams will be split into 3A/2A/1A, 4A, 5A, 6A Classifications
 - *Small - 15 and under*
 - *Medium - 16 -24*
 - *Large - 25+*
 - *Please note, divisions may be combined within classifications depending on registration.*
 - Game Day Live - All Classifications - No limits on participation
- Stomp & Shake
 - JV - High School - Up to 30 members
 - Varsity - High School - Up to 30 members
- Mascot
 - Rec - All levels
 - High School - All Classifications - Divisions may be separated if there are enough participants.
 - *Mascots are permitted to perform with the team in a game day division, however, this person must meet current OSAA and school district academic eligibility requirements*

Game Day Live/Live Band or Drum Line:

The only division that will allow live bands or drum lines will be the game day live division. Live bands/drum lines are not allowed in the other rec or high school divisions. Schools are encouraged to include other sideline spirit groups (i.e., dance team, song/pom, mascot, etc.) but all members of spirit groups performing must be official members of their school teams. The performance will be judged as one unified team. All high school participants must meet current OSAA and school district academic eligibility requirements. Teams will be allowed to enter another division if participating in game day live. For example: Newberry High School will compete in Game Day Live and the 4A Small Varsity.

Props:

The use of crowd leading tools such as signs, poms, flags, megaphones, and/or banners are encouraged and allowed during ALL elements of the game day performance. If you have any questions regarding the legality of a prop, please submit your question [HERE](#).

Time Limit:

- **All elements together as one performance should not exceed three (3) minutes.** Timing will begin with the first note of band music.

If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation.

- 1 point per second, with a maximum of 5 points

Floor Size:

- OSAA Sanctioned Events must comply with the NFHS 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 of mats.

Team Entrance/Exit/Transitions Between Elements:

- Teams will NOT be allowed to set props prior to the start of routine.
- All team breaks, rituals, traditions need to take place prior to the team being called to the performance floor.
- Once called to the performance floor, teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm. **Stunting and tumbling are not allowed while taking the performance floor.**
- Spirited crowd leading interaction between each element is encouraged to continue the game day feel.
- **Stunts may remain without a reset during the transition between the situational and crowd leading elements only.** A reset is optional between the situational and crowd leading elements. Teams will not be penalized for a reset or choosing not to reset.
- **Stunting is not allowed during the transitions between the elements of:**
 - Band Dance and Situational
 - Crowd Leading and Fight Song
- There should not be an organized exit following the end of the routine.

Please note that skill restrictions applicable to all elements are outlined following the Game Day elements section.

Required Performance Order:

Rec Game Day Division: Band Dance, Situational Chant, and Crowd Leading Cheer

High School Game Day Division: Band Dance, Situational Chant, Crowd Leading Cheer, and Fight Song

Band Dance:

- Teams will begin with the band dance element.
- No stunting or tumbling during this element **or while the band music is playing.**
- Teams may perform jumps and kicks.
- **Music in this element should be music played by a pep band/jazz band/drum line/marching band.**

Situational Chant:

- Following the completion of the band dance element, the announcer will give teams a game scenario indicating an offense or defense situation. **All possible situational cues can be found at the end of this document. Please note, cues have changed to add Mascot.**
- Teams will NOT be informed of the situational cue ahead of the event.
- Teams should show their definitive understanding of the situation with an offensive or defensive crowd leading response.
- No music is allowed during this element.
- Incorporated skills should be utilized to lead the crowd and include stunts, **standing tumbling**, jumps, and kicks. Any number of skills can be performed and used to encourage crowd response. Certain skills are not required. **Running tumbling skills are not allowed.**

Crowd Leading Cheer:

- Following completion of the situational chant element, teams will transition to the crowd leading/cheer element.
- No music is allowed during this element.
- Incorporated skills should be utilized to lead the crowd and include stunts, **standing tumbling**, jumps, and kicks. Any number of skills can be performed and used to encourage crowd response. Certain skills are not required. **Running tumbling skills are not allowed.**
- This is a separate crowd leading cheer that is not related to the situational chant.
- Teams should utilize their crowd leading strengths. The use of props is HIGHLY ENCOURAGED.

Fight Song: (Rec team performances do not include this element)

- Following the completion of the crowd-leading cheer element, teams will transition to the fight song element.
- Incorporated skills should be utilized to lead the crowd and include stunts, **standing tumbling**, jumps, and kicks. Any number of skills can be performed and used to encourage crowd response. Certain skills are not required. **Running tumbling skills are not allowed.**

Skill Restrictions – APPLIES TO ALL ELEMENTS

Skills that are performed outside of the restrictions below will

- No baskets, sponge, elevator, or similar type tosses permitted.
- No inversions are allowed.
- No twisting released dismounts are allowed.
- Single leg stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.
- **Running tumbling is not allowed in any Game Day section. This includes tumbling with forward momentum, such as round-offs or cartwheels that are part of a running series.**
- Standing tumbling is limited to a single tumbling skill and a back tuck is the most elite standing tumbling skill allowed. A single tumbling skill may be connected to a single jump.
 - Examples: (A) Standing full, (B) consecutive (without pause) back handsprings performed by one athlete, (C) Toe touch back handspring. **A and B are both illegal. C is legal.**

Game Day Scoring:

- Teams will be scored following the criteria listed [HERE](#) during all elements of the performance.
- Emphasis should be placed on practicality and crowd involvement. All material should be suitable and able to be performed multiple times during a game or pep rally.
- No difficulty points in the game day divisions for skills. Skills can include stunting, **standing** tumbling, jumps, and kicks. Scoring is based on the execution and **incorporation of these skills**.
- Any deductions or violations will be taken off the final **total** score. For more information on deductions, [CLICK HERE](#)

Music:

- Coaches are responsible for playing music or designating a representative.
 - A sound system will be provided.
 - A representative must be present at the sound system at the time of performance.
 - The appointed representative should know your routine and be familiar with the music start/stop points.
 - Download all music directly to your device/phone
 - Turn your device/phone onto “Airplane” mode so your playback will not be interrupted by a text, email, or phone call.
 - Remove phone cover to ensure connectivity to the cord.

Situational Chant Cues: The “MASCOT” will be read at events as each program’s mascot.

- **OFFENSE:**
 - And that's another first down for the **MASCOT**
 - The **MASCOT** keep the drive alive with that first down play.
 - What a catch! That sets the **MASCOT** up in the red zone ready to score.
 - It's a close game and the **MASCOT** are driving down the field for a score.
- **DEFENSE:**
 - The **MASCOT** need a big stop here, let's push em back.
 - The **MASCOT** are digging in to get the stop on our own goal line.
 - The **MASCOT** need to make a stop here to seal the win.
 - After that home team turnover, the **MASCOT** need to make a stand.

REC TEAM DIVISIONS



RULES AND GUIDELINES

Divisions:

- Rec Game Day - Affiliated
- Rec Game Day - Non-Affiliated
- Rec Traditional - Affiliated
- Rec Traditional - Non-Affiliated

Affiliated and non-affiliated divisions (traditional and game day) will never be combined.

Division Size (Traditional):

- Small: up to 12
- Medium: 13-16
- Large: 17+

Local event hosts will be advised to not combine divisions. In the event of low registration, local hosts may choose to combine traditional divisions. *Coed divisions may be available with enough teams registered.*

Age Groups:

- Tiny – Kindergarten and under
- Mini – 3rd grade and under
- Youth – 6th grade and under
- Junior – 8th grade and under
- Senior – 12th grade and under with a minimum of 5th grade (for non-affiliated programs only)
 - ***Note – The oldest athlete on the team will set your age group.***

At the beginning of the season an organization must classify if they are Affiliated or Non-Affiliated. Once the organization's status has been declared for the 2025-2026 season, changes will not be allowed. All rec programs are required to complete the OCCA Rec Program Form declaring status and providing *current* insurance certificate. **All teams within a program will be classified the same.** [Rec Program Information Form](#)

In addition, all Rec coaches (including volunteers) must complete the [OCCA Rec Coach Certification Form](#) showing proof of completion of all certifications.

Affiliated:

The affiliated divisions will consist of tiny, mini, youth, and junior teams only. Please see above for age ranges.

To compete as an affiliated recreational team in Oregon, teams must meet **one** of the following criteria. Please note rec cheerleaders (regardless of age) are not permitted to cheer for high school-level games per OSAA and NFHS Spirit Rules. Halftime performances do not count as sideline participation.

Option #1: Cheering sideline for school or community-based athletic team games (i.e., Pop Warner, area youth sports teams, middle school teams, etc.) Each team in the program must cheer for a sport during the 2025-2026 cheer season. The program must provide a letter confirming sideline participation. The team is not affiliated with an All Star program and does not compete under All Star divisions outside of Oregon.

Option #2: The program must be affiliated with, report to, and be governed by an organization (all three) such as; YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, City/County Parks and Recreation Program, American Youth Cheer, Pop Warner Association, or other community run program **not** associated with an All-Star gym. The program must provide a letter confirming the program's affiliation.

Non-Affiliated:

The Non-Affiliated divisions will consist of tiny, mini, youth, junior, and senior teams. Please see above for age ranges. All programs offering a senior level team will automatically classify as a non-affiliated program. All Non-Affiliated programs will compete in music only routines in the traditional division.

To compete as an non-affiliated recreational team in Oregon, teams must meet the following criteria:

Option #1: Organization may be independent of town/city organization/clubs. The team does not necessarily cheer for a supported, sports program. The team is **not** affiliated with an All Star program and does not compete under All Star divisions outside of Oregon.

Senior Rec athletes who are also on an OSAA high school team, are not allowed to compete at the same event or venue. Athletes may **not** compete twice in one day, at the same event/venue, while representing two programs. See below from OSAA Handbook:

3. **ATTACHED AND UNATTACHED COMPETITION / EXHIBITION** (OSAA Handbook, Executive Board Policies)

(Revised August 2012)

Following is the policy regarding attached and unattached competition:

- A. A high school team shall not compete against an unattached team (e.g., club team).
- B. Students representing a high school shall not compete against unattached individuals.
- C. Students shall not represent a high school and participate in a competition or exhibition as unattached on the same day at the same venue/facility.

Satellite Teams, i.e., teams operating under one name but with multiple locations or sub-teams under the main program with a different name, will not qualify under the rec criteria and must register in the all-star division. Rec teams should not be inviting cheerleaders from multiple programs/locations to form one competitive team.

Rec Team Information Form/OCCA Membership:

Competing rec teams (in all divisions) must complete the "Rec Team Information Form" and provide proof of insurance annually, prior to competing or participating in OCCA events. [Rec Team Information Form](#). At least one coach per program must be a current OCCA Member to participate in OCCA sponsored events (OCCA Game Day Championships and OCCA Cheer Championships)

Coach Certifications:

Rec coaches (paid and volunteer) must complete the required certifications prior to competing at a OSAA Sanctioned Event. [Rec Coach Certification Form](#)

Sideline Participation at High School Level:

Per NFHS and OSAA rules, any rec cheerleader representing a rec cheerleading program, regardless of age or team level, may not participate during any high school level game. Rec cheerleaders may participate or perform before the game, during halftime, or after the game's end.

Safety Rules:

Rec teams will follow the NFHS Spirit Rules across all divisions with the following exceptions:

Junior and Senior level teams only: Basket tosses, sponge tosses, elevator tosses, or similar multi based tosses are limited to a straight ride toss for the 2025-26 season.

Tiny, Mini, and Youth level teams, basket tosses, sponge tosses, elevator tosses, or similar multi based tosses are not allowed.

Crossovers:

Rec athletes are allowed to crossover up to twice each school year. Athletes may not compete and crossover outside of their age range. Example: An 8th grader may not fill in for a youth team member. An athlete may only represent one program at a competition. Teams found using athletes more than twice in a season on multiple teams could forfeit any placings and not be allowed to continue to compete. Coaches or Program Directors may be required to declare the use and list names of crossovers on competition registrations.

Safety Deductions and Penalties:

For information regarding safety deductions and penalties, [CLICK HERE](#)

Event Qualification:

For information regarding specific event qualification, [CLICK HERE](#)

Rec Game Day Division:

For information regarding Rec Game Day division, [CLICK HERE](#)

Traditional Division:

For information regarding the Traditional Building division, [CLICK HERE](#)

Rec Stunt Group Division*:

- All routines must be “Music Only”, and performance time may not exceed one minute in length.
- Music must be licensed ([Music Providers](#)) or a single song may be used without alteration.
- Stunt groups could be made up of athletes from different teams within your program, but the oldest athlete will set your age division. For any senior level group stunt, athletes must be between 12th grade and 5th grade.
- Stunt/Coed stunt groups should not exceed 5 participants and partner stunt groups should not exceed 3 participants. For any senior level group stunt, athletes must be between 12th grade and 5th grade.
- Participants may not represent more than one stunt group but are allowed to compete in one stunt group and one partner stunt.
- Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first.
- You are required to have a spotter throughout your routine. Spotters will be provided at the event.
- All NFHS rules should be followed. Basket tosses, sponge tosses, elevator tosses, or similar multi based tosses are limited to a straight ride toss for the 2025-26 season.
- If teams choose to wear a group outfit that is not a traditional uniform, NFHS apparel rules still apply.
- All groups will be scored following the group stunt/partner stunt rubric and score sheet.

Rec Individual Division*:

- All individual performances include a cheer and music section and may not exceed one minute in length.
- Timing begins when the athlete takes the mat; this includes any tumbling or spiriting onto the performance floor. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first.
- Music must be licensed ([Music Providers](#)) or a single song may be used without alteration.
- OCCA All-State choreography should not be used for rec individual performances.
- Individuals will be scored based on the individual rubric and score sheet.

Questions:

For questions regarding rec teams and competition season, please email Corrinda Craig, OCCA Rec Liaison at recliaison@occa.net.