Rules & Regulations 2027 | Page 1 of 7

I. General Guidelines

The Cheerleading Worlds competition will follow the most recent version of the USASF and IASF general rules and age grids. Refer to USASF.net/rules or IASFworlds.com for details.

II. Competition Area

- Participants must begin and end their routine within the competition boundary.
- Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area to begin their routine.
- The competition area will be determined by the event director according to facility size. Approximate floor size will be 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 panels).
- All skills must originate and be completed within the competition boundary. Lineups, skills or transitions are not permitted outside the competition boundary.
- The competition boundary includes the competition floor/spring floor, the carpet-bonded foam panels connected to it and any additional border supporting or surrounding the floor.
- A deduction will be assessed each time an athlete makes contact outside the competition boundary.

III. Music and Limitations

A. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first. Timing will end with the last movement, last voice, or note of music, whichever comes last.

B. Routine performance times:
   1. Senior Divisions: 2:30 maximum
   2. IASF U18 L5, Open L5, L6 and L7: 2:30 maximum
   3. IASF Non-Tumble L6 and L7: 2:00 maximum

C. All introductions (tumbling, entrances, 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.

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

G. Routine music used at The Cheerleading Worlds must comply with applicable copyright law. At Worlds, all teams must provide proof of licensing. This will be reviewed during roster check appointments (see page 21). This may include:
   1. proof of purchase from an approved music provider.
   2. if using a single song, the receipt from the song's purchase.
   3. if using an editor, proof-of-purchase from an approved provider and proof of licensing for all sound effects and voice-overs included in the mix. Editors do not have to be on the preferred provider list but must be able to provide teams these required proofs of purchase and licensing.

H. Teams may not use Disney themes nor costumes that resemble Disney characters. However, Disney music is acceptable if the music licensing guidelines are followed.

I. Each team is required to assign a responsible adult who knows the routine and music to stay at the music station during the team's performance. This representative is responsible for starting the music and stopping the music in case of technical malfunction or injury. Please make sure that all devices are fully charged, placed in airplane mode, and the volume is turned up.

IV. Athlete Behavior

A. Athletes participating in The Cheerleading Worlds are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of sportsmanship, respect and support throughout the event, including before, during and after their performances. These same standards apply to club members and fans while watching teams compete.

B. Teams are expected to take the floor and assume their starting positions within 30 seconds of being introduced. At the end of the routine, athletes are expected to exit promptly, clearing the performance floor within 30 seconds.

C. From the time the team is announced the protocol for entering and leaving the competition floor is expected to reflect a team environment.

D. Actions that demonstrate excessive boasting, delay competition or reflect poor sportsmanship or unprofessional behavior may result in penalties assessed by event judges. Examples include, but are not limited to:
   1. **Taunting another team** — verbal or physical actions that bait or engender ill will between teams.
   2. **Drawing unnecessary attention to oneself** — such as exaggerated celebrations, high fives, or chest bumps.
   3. **Excessive team rituals** — pre/post-competition team bonding activities must take place offstage, not on the competition area.
   4. **Public displays of affection** while on the competition floor.
   5. **Stepping outside the competition boundary** to approach coaching staff, crowd members and/or other members of the audience.
   6. **Excessive celebrations** — prolonged, premeditated or overly physical displays (e.g., athletes jumping on or wrapping legs around others, victory dances, etc.).
   7. **Unauthorized floor access** — coaching staff, parents, fans and/or other non-competitors entering the competition boundary before, during or after a performance (unless in response to an obvious injury). Only competing athletes and competition personnel are allowed on the floor.
   8. **Collapsing on the floor without injury** — athletes must remain standing at the conclusion of a routine unless medical attention is clearly required.

E. Teams will be assessed a point deduction for any unsportsmanlike, unprofessional, disrespectful and/or unsupportive behavior. The amount of the penalty will be determined by the competition officials. **NOTE:** Deduction values can be found on TheCheerleadingWorlds.net.

V. Athletic Performance Standards

A. **Appropriate Choreography** — Judges reserve the right to assess warnings and/or deductions when a team's choreography does not meet the appropriate standards.
   1. All facets of a performance/routine, including both choreography and music selection, should be appropriate and suitable for family viewing and listening.
   2. Examples of inappropriate choreography may include, but are not limited to: mocking the use of a gun to display violence against a person/people and/or the promotion of gun violence of any type; movements such as hip thrusting and inappropriate touching, gestures, hand/arm movements and signals; slapping; positioning of body parts; and positioning to one another.

B. **Music Guidelines** — Music must be suitable for family listening. Inappropriate content includes, but is not limited to, profanity, references to sexual acts or behavior, drugs, explicit references to body parts and violent acts or behavior. Replacing inappropriate language with sound effects or other words may still leave the content unsuitable.

C. **Appropriateness of music or movement** — If coaches are unsure whether music or choreography is appropriate, they should consider it inappropriate and remove it to avoid placing their team in an unfortunate situation.

D. **Makeup** — If worn, makeup should be uniform and appropriate for both the performance and the age of the athlete. Face/eyelid rhinestones are not allowed. False eyelashes are allowed but may not be decorated in rhinestones or additional jewelry.

E. **Bows** — Bows should not be excessive in size (acceptable bows are generally no more than 4" in width) and should not be a distraction to the performance. Bows should be worn in a manner to minimize risk for the athletes, should be adequately secured and should not fall over the forehead into the athlete's eyes, or block the view of the athlete while performing.

F. **General Uniform Guidelines** —
   - Risqué, sexually provocative or lingerie-like or lingerie-inspired uniforms and garments are prohibited.
   - All uniform pieces should adequately cover the athlete and must be secured to prevent wardrobe malfunctions.
   - Appropriate undergarments must be worn and remain covered throughout the routine.
   - In addition to meeting guidelines G-I below, uniform pieces must be considered together, as their combined appearance may make a uniform appropriate or inappropriate.

   Visit USASF.net for more information about Athlete Performance Standards (APS).

G. **Uniform Skirt/Bottom Guidelines** — Uniform skirts must fully cover the hips and extend at least 1 inch below the required briefs, whether regular or boy-cut. Shorts worn as part of the uniform must have a minimum 2-inch inseam.

H. **Uniform Top Guidelines** — Uniform tops must be secured with straps or material over at least one shoulder or around the neck. Tube tops are not allowed.

I. **Cover-up Guidelines** — Athletes with non-full top uniforms must wear t-shirts or other suitable cover ups over their uniforms unless they are in warm-up areas, traveling as a group directly to or from warmups, or on the performance stage.

VI. Spotter Policy on Competition Floors

The Cheerleading Worlds WILL provide spotters for all competition floors for ALL divisions. All teams during this time MUST use the provided spotters on the competition floor.

VII. Spotter Policy in Rehearsal Areas

A. Teams must follow the level rules and have the required team member spotters in place during the execution of skills while in the rehearsal area.

B. **USASF/Club Divisions** — The Cheerleading Worlds will have event spotters available upon request in all rehearsal areas. The Cheerleading Worlds WILL NOT require event spotters to be used in the rehearsal areas. USASF/Club division teams may choose to provide their own spotters in the rehearsal area (referred to as additional spotters), request to use The Cheerleading Worlds event spotters or elect not to use spotters in the rehearsal. The use of provided spotters or additional spotters is not mandatory and will be at the discretion of the USASF division team coach or club owner. Additional spotters must meet the requirements as listed in item VII D below.

C. **IASF Divisions** — The Cheerleading Worlds will provide spotters in the rehearsal areas, upon request, for all teams competing in the International Level 5, 6 and 7 divisions. Teams may also elect to use additional spotters. Additional spotters must meet the requirements as listed in item VII D3 below. Teams are required to confirm the request for spotters and/or confirm their own spotters in the registration form.

D. **Additional Spotters** — Team-provided individuals who serve as a safety precaution on the rehearsal floor **in the warm-up room only**. Additional spotters:

1. must meet the eligibility requirements for warm-up room entry.
2. should be used only during stunt, pyramid and/or basket toss sections and stand at the back of the floor when not spotting.
3. should intervene only to prevent a fall to the rehearsal floor, not to touch, assist or save skills being performed.
4. should wear presentable, professional attire that clearly distinguishes them from the athletes and does not resemble the team's uniform.
5. should not dress or act in a way that distracts from the athletes or their performance.
6. should be at least 18 years old and familiar with spotting the team's skills.

NOTE: To provide the safest competitive environment, teams should not attempt skills beyond their ability level.

VIII. Interruption of Performance

A. Unforeseen Circumstances

If competition officials determine that a routine is interrupted by equipment failure, facility issues or other factors attributable to the competition rather than the team, either the team or competition officials may stop the routine. Officials will assess the interruption and its impact to determine whether the team may perform again. If approved, the team will repeat its entire routine but will be evaluated **only from the point of interruption.** Competition officials have sole discretion over when the team performs again.

B. **Fault of Team**
   1. If a routine is interrupted by an error by the team's representative, an issue with the team's equipment or music, or another non-injury-related issue attributable to the team, the team must continue the routine.
   2. Competition officials will assess the interruption and its impact, determine whether a penalty applies and decide whether the team may perform again. If approved, the team will repeat its entire routine but will be evaluated **only from the point of interruption.** Competition officials have sole discretion over when the team performs again.

C. **Injury**
   1. The only individuals that may stop a routine for injury are: competition officials, the club owner/head coach from the team performing, or an injured individual.
   2. Competition officials will determine whether the team may perform again and have sole discretion over when the re-performance takes place. If approved, the team must repeat its entire routine, subject to the injury's impact, but will be evaluated **only from the point of interruption**.
   3. A team that does not repeat its routine in full, including the skills originally performed, may receive a penalty at the discretion of competition officials. For example, performing a back tuck in place of the original full twist may result in a penalty.
   4. An injured athlete may return to the competition floor only under the following conditions:
      a. Competition officials must receive clearance first from the medical personnel attending to the athlete, then from the parent/guardian (if present) and finally from the team's head coach/director.
      b. If medical personnel do not clear the athlete, a parent or legal guardian in attendance must sign a return-to-participation waiver. **This option does not apply to a suspected concussion.**
      c. An athlete with a suspected concussion may return only with clearance from a licensed medical professional trained in head injuries, such as a medical doctor or designated official specifically trained in concussion management. A parent or guardian waiver does not replace this clearance. Teams are encouraged to familiarize themselves with applicable concussion laws in the state where the competition is held.

IX. How to Handle Procedural Questions

Any question concerning the rules or procedures of the championship will be handled exclusively by one designated representative of the team (i.e. club owner/director, coach or captain) and will be directed only to a competition official. Such questions should be made prior to the team's competition performance. Any questions concerning the team's performance should be made to a competition official immediately after the team's performance.

X. **Interpretations and Rulings**

Any interpretation of any aspect of these Rules & Regulations or any decision involving any other aspect of the championship will be rendered by the Worlds Competition Rules Committee. The Worlds Competition Rules Committee will render a judgment in an effort to uphold the general spirit and goals of the competition. The Rules Committee will consist at minimum of the Event Director, Head Judge, the USASF Rules Committee Chair and/or a competition official designated by the Chair. The Event Director may appoint additional qualified members to those listed above to be members of the Worlds Competition Rules Committee.

XI. **Finality of Decisions**

By participating in this championship, each team agrees that the decisions by the judges will be final and will not be subject to review. 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.

XII. **Sportsmanship**

All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout and following the competition. The directors, coaches and club owners of each team are responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents and any other persons affiliated with the team conducting themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification as explained in this document above.

XIII. **Deductions and Disqualifications**

Any team violating The Cheerleading Worlds Rules & Regulations will incur a deduction for each infraction (including athlete behavior violations as outlined in Section IV). Teams failing to follow competition rules will be disqualified, forfeiting eligibility for prizes or awards. Additionally, they may forfeit the opportunity to participate in The Cheerleading Worlds the following year and may be required to repay any funds received through a 2027 bid.

XIV. **Scores and Rankings**

A. Individual judges' score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit their final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores in a particular division. Scores and rankings will be available only to club owners and coaches at the conclusion of each division.

B. **In the event of a tie**

1. **USASF Senior Divisions** will NOT break ties for teams advancing to the next round or final placements, including Bronze, Silver and Gold. Instead, the placement will reflect the tie. For example, if two teams are tied for 2nd place, the standings will be listed as: 1st, 2nd, 2nd, 3rd.
2. If **USASF Senior Division** teams are tied when moving on to the next round or the Finals, they will perform in the opposite order from their previous round performance.
3. **IASF International Open Divisions** will NOT break ties for Finals placements including Bronze, Silver and Gold.
4. **IASF International Open Divisions** WILL break ties for teams advancing to Semifinals or Finals. In such cases, these steps will be followed until the tie is broken:
   Step 1: The team with the least amount of total performance error deductions will win the tiebreaker.
   Step 2: The team with the highest total score adding up the stunt/pyramid score sheet and the tumbling/ jump scores will win the tiebreaker.
   Step 3: Technique-only scores (does not include combination difficulty/technique categories scores such as dance) on each score sheet will be added and the highest total will win the tiebreaker.
   Step 4: A panel including the head judge, competition officials, etc. will review both routines and select the winner of the tiebreaker.

XV. Competition Facility

The competition is scheduled to be held at ESPN Wide World of Sports® Complex. The competition officials shall have the right to alter the time and location of the competition in the event changes become necessary due to final registration, inclement weather, facility problems or other situation deemed by the competition officials to be essential to the success of the championship.

XVI. Appearances, Endorsements, Publicity

All teams winning titles, awards or prizes agree to have all appearances, endorsements, and publicity approved through the USASF office.

XVII. USASF Logo Usage

Teams will not be allowed to use the USASF logo or The Cheerleading Worlds logo on items or apparel including banners, rings, bows, t-shirts, etc.

XVIII. General Safety Rules and Routine Requirements

The Cheerleading Worlds follows USASF and/or IASF cheerleading rules and guidelines, depending upon the division. Rules clarifications MAY be made during the season. The Cheerleading Worlds 2027 will follow the most recent posting of the USASF and IASF rules. Please refer to USASF.net or IASFworlds.com for any changes.

XIX. Penalties

A penalty will be assessed at the discretion of competition officials to any team violating any of the specific rules as stated at TheCheerleadingWorlds.net. This deduction does not apply to violations mentioned above that are designated a lesser point value. If you have any questions concerning the legality of a skill, please visit USASF.net or IASFworlds.com.