

OMYFA Competitive Cheer Rules

For 2025 Competition

Regulations for Participants:

- 1) A participant on an OMYFA Cheer team may not compete on another competitive cheer, gymnastics, or dance team during the OMYFA season. See In-Season rules; Rule 2(e) for clarification.
- 2) A team consists of any number of athletes whose names appear on the team's roster and must have completed all requirements of participation including 3 practices prior to first game and 5/8 games of cheer prior to competition. Any post season games are mandatory.
- 3) All coaches, asst. coaches, parent volunteers, etc., assisting the 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 the age of 18 years, 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 \$1,000.00 per city required by each city which will be made payable to the host city and presented with all other paperwork.
- 2) If a city chooses to opt out of cheer off, the president of the organization will need to put that in writing (via email) to the Cheer Director by February 1st. (Opting out is by city, not squad). If you opt out of cheer off, you are still responsible for the Cheer Off fees. If you do not opt out by February 1st and you field a team, it will be mandatory for the team to compete.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Competitive cheer competition will consist of 2 performances. Each performance is called a round. 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 and any penalties assessed.
- 5) There will be separate rankings and awards given for each round.

- 6) Officials consist of safety judges, cheer/dance panel judges. There will be one safety judge and (at least) 3 cheer/dance judges. There may be a different panel of judges for each round of competition.
- 7) All judges must submit in writing their qualifications and experience in order to be considered for the OMYFA competition judging. It is recommended that all judges are either MHSAA registered or have competitive cheer experience.
- 8) All judges will receive a majority vote by the OMYFA cheerleading council; comprised of the Cheer General Managers prior to being accepted to judge the OMYFA Competition.
- 9) All judges (including safety judge) shall receive compensation of up to \$400 for the competition day (pay is per judge)
- 10) Heather Steppey will be our safety/penalty judge for the Cheer Off competition, she will also be our go-to for safety and stunting questions throughout the season. Heather will also be available to visit all cities prior to competition.
- 11) 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards will be awarded to each participant on a 1st, 2nd or 3rd place finishing team; for both the cheer and dance rounds. Preferably the day of competition, but in the event the host city runs out of awards they will forward to the winning city as soon as possible.
- 12) There will not be any ties in the top 3 places for cheer or dance. If a tie occurs, the team with the highest cumulative score in the general impression category will determine the place.
- 13) There will be an additional 4 coaches' awards given to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishing teams in both rounds.
- 14) We will announce the Top 5 teams during the awards ceremony. The 4th and 5th place teams should stand to be recognized. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams will receive awards.
- 15) During the awards ceremony, the cheerleaders will sit in front of their city and not on the mat. The awards ceremony will take place on the mat.
- 16) The 10-count precision drill must start in staggered lines. The format to use is: 4 to 12 competitors = 2 staggered lines; 13 to 20 competitors = 3 staggered lines; 21 to 26 competitors = 4 staggered lines; 27 to 35 competitors = 5 staggered lines.
- 17) All Show-n- go's must have a front spot. This applies to all levels.
- 18) Judges must adhere to all OMYFA Cheerleading rules. The judges cannot make any changes to the scoring format used unless voted on by the Cheer General Managers at a GM meeting prior to the start of the competition.

***Voting on "Sportsmanship", "Coaches Award" "AV24 Award" & "Brooklyn Jennings & Summer Earl Award"**

The following award nominations may be presented throughout the season in a way of brief description and account of presented nominee via email to ALL the cheerleading GMs and voting members of the Cheerleading council. Prior to voting, those received will be recapped and

votes taken on prepared ballots with nominated teams and individuals presented. The voting and the tallies will remain anonymous and will be announced at Cheer-Off.

- 19) Each city will submit in writing at the league meeting immediately prior to Cheer-Off their **2-vote nomination** for the “Cheerleading Team Sportsmanship Award”. This award will be 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 events. Nominees will exhibit integrity, fairness, and respect for others.

Cheerleading Team Sportsmanship Awards will be distributed to the team in each division and presented in way of a trophy supplied by the league that will be passed each year with a placard designating the team and year of presentation (supplied by host cities). These awards will be announced and presented at Cheer-Off. **Please note voting is not confined by division.**

- 20) Each city will submit in writing at the League Meeting immediately prior to Cheer-Off, their **2-vote nomination** for the “**Coach’s Award**” this is presented by the league to the Coach(es), one from each level, that the other cities felt best represented sportsmanlike behavior toward their own team and others and personified good coaching ethics. These nominations are given at the league meeting immediately prior to the Cheer-Off Competition. These recipients will be announced, and awards given at Cheer-Off.

- 21) The “**AV24**” Award is presented by the league and voted on by the awards committee. This award is given to the Cheer General Manager that is nominated by their president, who has a selfless attitude, full of talent, drive, love and kindness. They love serving others and show compassion. Someone who is creative, hard-working and gives it their all, all of the time.

- 22) The “**The Brooklyn Jennings & Summer Earl Award**” is presented by the referees. This award is given to the participant that is nominated by their GM or coach, who has exemplified cheerleading at its best, has overcome some personal adversity, or exhibited outstanding sportsmanlike and teamwork behavior during the 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 Cheer-Off. These recipients will be announced, and awards given at Cheer-Off.

Length of Rounds:

- 1) The Cheer round will be 1 ½ to 2 ½ minutes in length and will begin with the first word, motion or movement in the first formation on the mat and ends when the last cheerleader exits off the competition mat.
- 2) The Dance Round will be 1 ½ to 2 minutes 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 time violation penalty (see penalty sheet).

Order of Competition:

- 1) Prior to the day of competition, the Cheer Director will conduct a blind draw for each round to determine the order in which the teams will perform. The blind draw for order of competition will be done at an OMYFA Cheer meeting, date will be determined by the Cheer Director. Teams will be aware of their order of performance after the blind draw meeting, and it should appear in the competition program.
- 2) Prior to and during the competition, teams should be provided with an area free of obstacles and with enough ceiling clearance in order to warm up stunting.
- 3) Cheer Director will conduct a pre-meet GM 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 38x38. The matted area can be exercise mats, a wrestling mat, a floor exercise mat or a gymnastics base mat. The surface should be on one piece. If this is not possible, each padded section shall be fastened together securely to create a smooth surface. Additionally, the front and back mats must be taped down.

Coaches Area during Performance:

- 1) All coaches can direct/encourage their team during its performance. No signs or posters are permitted in this area. In an area in front of the spectators, yet not in direct conflict with the judge's 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 this 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 the performance in the coaching or judges' area.
- 3) No cheer competitors are permitted in the competition arena during their individual age level performance.
- 4) A coach can question the addition of scores or to check for areas left blank on the score sheet. Coaches are allowed to question penalties imposed by a safety judge within 15 minutes of receiving their scoresheet. In order to question your penalty, The GM will need to advise the Cheer Director within the appropriate time, and she will facilitate the request. 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 and GM, up to 2 may approach the score table area to review score sheets any time after the routine scores are verified, but no later than 10 minutes after all scores for that level are recorded. **The GM must be present and sign off on the scoresheet.**
- 7) All scores are final after they have been signed off by the Cheer GM.
- 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. Team penalties will be marked and highlighted. Designated with a large P (for each penalty awarded and circled).
- 9) Copies of score sheets, penalty sheets, and other turned in paperwork are returned to each city's GM for each competing team at the end of the competition.

Procedure for Team to Enter and Exit Competition Floor:

- 1) The 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 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.
- 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. A team will be able to complete the routine from the beginning, but judges will start judging where the original performance stopped and use the scores they already judged up to that point. The order of performance will be determined by the Cheer Director.

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. Bodysuit that does not have buttons, snaps or zippers that may cause it to be unsafe during stunting or tumbling.
- 2) Bottom: Skirts, 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. Socks must be worn which shall be a footie, ankle, or calf-length and shall be the same color for all team members.
- 4) Hair which is shoulder length or longer must be tied back and secured for safety reasons (off shoulders during cheer round), hair control/adornment devices must be secure in hair, cannot be shoulder length, and must be made of soft material. These adornments may be different than the adornments used during the regular season.
- 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 the following are prohibited during competition: jewelry, friendship wristbands, gum, face and body glitter, unsafe fingernails, nail polish, safety pins, spirit buttons, bobbie pins and/or metal, hard plastic, etc., hair-control devices.
- 7) Competitors can 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 participant to wear a cast except for 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 any unyielding surfaces.
- 5) When a participant is found to be bleeding, has an uncovered wound, or there is blood on themselves or the 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, and is not limited to:
 - a. A coach/athlete/spectator making unauthorized approach to a judge concerning a score or rules infraction, or at anytime while competition is ongoing.
 - b. Undisciplined or inappropriate conduct of an athlete/coach.
 - c. Verbally abusing or disrespectfully addressing a judge or meet official by anyone from one city's organization.
 - d. Using profane or foul language
 - e. Taunting
 - f. Delay of meet
 - g. Use of flash photography while competition (judging) is ongoing.
 - h. Inappropriate social media posts.

Violations and Penalties:

- 1) Time infractions: defined as when the routine is not completed with the last team member off the mat within the maximum/minimum time allotted.
- 2) Mat violations: stepping off the mat while performing a stunt during a performance. Penalty will be assessed each time an infraction occurs. Therefore, if more than one person steps off the mat from the same stunt group during the same stunt one penalty will be assessed. If competitors step off the mat doing different stunt groups during the routine a penalty will be assessed each time someone steps off the mat while stunting.
- 3) Misc. Violation: Points will be deducted from the total points earned in the round each time an infraction occurs. Example of miscellaneous violations include: gum chewing, glitter, hair violations, wearing illegal hair devices, a safety pin, an illegal uniform, wearing jewelry. Each time a miscellaneous is observed an additional penalty will be assessed.
- 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 an assessed penalty for each occurrence. Detached eyeglasses or 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 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 GM's are allowed in this area. Excessive number or "non" coaching staff in the designated area will receive a fine of \$25 per occurrence.
- 7) Spotting techniques are described in the MHSAA rules and regulations handbook, these must be adhered to along with the "Touch Watch and Away" technique.
- 8) There will be a penalty when team members make inappropriate unsafe contact with each other when executing gymnastics 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 the spotter must attempt to touch, hold or break the fall. If there is no attempt to assist the flyer by anyone a penalty will be assessed.
- 10) In the Cheer round, there will be 3 pre-selected skills and the sequence must be presented in writing to the judges in advance of the performance. The first skill in each category will be the skill that is judged, the team jump must be the first skill performed. ***A penalty will be assessed if skills are not submitted in the order performed or not performed in the order submitted.***
- 11) In the dance round, there will be 3 pre-selected skills, a jump, kick, and a ripple. These skills can be performed in any order but all 3 skills must be completed or the team will receive a penalty.
- 12) There will be a minimum of 5 formation changes made during the cheer round (3 formation changes for flag).

- 13) Each team will perform at the beginning of their performance for cheer the current MHSAA sanctioned 10-Count precision drill. This must be performed in staggered lines.
- 14) See the OMYFA Cheer Coaches Handbook for a listing of prohibited and permissible stunts. If a JV team has 4 or less participants, then it shall be allowed to perform the stunts listed in the JV section of the OMYFA Coaches Handbook, without a back spot, except for a shoulder sit.
- 15) Teams must submit all required items necessary for competition to the cheer director no sooner than and no later than the date specified by the cheer director within a 2-week limit prior to competition. Late or missing entries will result in a team penalty. This penalty will be in the form of a monetary fine of \$50.00 per missing item. Missing music will result in a \$100.00 fine. These fines will be paid directly to the host city of Cheer Off (prior to the day of competition).
- 16) Any changes made to any paperwork/items for competition must be initialed by the GM and presented physically to the cheer director by 10pm the Wednesday before competition. There will be a \$100.00 fine per level per routine for paperwork that is turned in after 10:00pm the Wednesday before competition.
- 17) Cities must submit their team's music to cheer director no sooner than and no later than the date specified by cheer director within a 2-week limit prior to competition and there will be NO changes made to music after initial music turn-in.
- 18) Any spectator/person that is not listed on the backstage list provided to the cheer director that tries to come backstage will be asked to leave the facility and not be allowed back in due to safety issues.

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" but difficulty points will be amended. Failure to notify the safety judge of performing with a hole will result in a penalty.

If paperwork is turned in on time, a team with a "hole" may opt out of the cheer portion if they choose to. If a team chooses to opt out of the cheer round, they will automatically place last in that round. The team will still be able to compete in the dance round and place appropriately based on their scores. The GM must notify the Cheer Director in writing (email or text) if they have a hole and whether they are opting out of the cheer round or not.

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 5 formation changes made during the dance (3 formation changes for flag).
- 2) All participants will wear identical and matching uniforms (that they wore for the cheer round, exception for socks and bows) 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 penalty. This will be assessed for each violation. Poms are NOT permitted to leave hands or touch the ground without being consistently handheld.
- 4) Stepping on a dropped pom constitutes a safety violation and additional penalty will be awarded each time the violation occurs.
- 5) Footwear may be changed during the dance round from the cheer round. This may include athletic shoes or dance shoes (no hard soles permitted). These should be of the same color for all competitors performing. Footwear must be worn during the dance portion of the competition.
- 6) Hair may be worn differently than in the cheer round and may be worn loose rather than tied back.
- 7) 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 penalty.
- 8) Stunting and gymnastics tumbling are prohibited during the dance round. There will be a penalty assessed from the total points earned for each time a stunt or gymnastics infraction occurs.
- 9) All music and dance movements are for the viewing of the general public. All music should be of a PG version. Any dance movements or music that the safety judge finds offensive will result in a penalty. It is advisable any questions regarding what constitutes “offensive” material be brought to the OMYFA cheer board for direction.
- 10) Flag performances must be under 2 minutes.
- 11) Flag can do any routine that they are comfortable performing. They will be allowed to use poms along with stunting and tumbling but must follow all OMYFA rules.