

Illinois 8 Youth Tackle Football League Cheerleading By-Laws

Section 1: Management

- A. A cheer committee will be made up of one representative from each I8YTFL member and organization and follow the same Officers guidelines established for the I8YTFL Board of Directors as defined on page one of the By-Laws.
- B. The cheer committee will establish meeting dates at the first meeting of the calendar year.
- C. At the cheer committee's discretion, meeting dates may be omitted or additional can be scheduled as needed.

Section 2: Guidelines

- A. Grade Requirements:
 - a. Dynamite - 4 years old and kindergarten grade (optional level). If there are 2 or less kindergarten level dynamites by competition date, then they may compete at the superlight level.
 - b. Superlight - First and Second Grade
 - c. Lightweight - Third and Fourth Grade
 - d. Junior Varsity - Fifth and Sixth Grade
 - e. Varsity - Seventh and Eighth Grade
 - f. Participation is governed by the I8YTFL By-Laws and is open to girls and boys age 4 before September 1st and age 14, not to be 15 before September 1.
- B. General Rules Specific to Cheerleading
 - a. Background checks and USA cheer certification required by I8YTFL league board for all coaches and junior coaches 18 years and older.
 - b. As stated by I8YTFL By-Laws, General Rules #5, NO TRYOUTS are allowed.
 - c. A participant may NOT move up in division based on the individual board's discretion with the exception listed in Section 2.
 - d. Participation in the I8YTFL cheer competition will follow the IHSA Cheer Competition Rules and Guidelines.
 - e. Any contagious medication condition must have a medical release to return to the cheer squad. This includes competition.
 - f. Any cheerleader caught using profanity by the game officials or cheer competition judges will be ejected and suspended the next game. A second offense will result in being expelled for the remainder of the season.
 - g. Any coach caught by game officials or cheer competition judges using profanity will be injected and suspended for the next game. A Second offense will result in being expelled for the remainder of the season.
 - h. Taunting by any athlete or team will not be tolerated. The first offense is a warning by the I8YTFL board. A Second offense is a suspension for one game and a third offense is removal from the team for the season.

- i. Squads are to stay on their respective team sidelines during the game.

Section 3: Cheer Competition Rules and Guidelines

A. Participation

- a. All four cheer divisions from each I8YTFL member organization that cheers during the regular season are required to participate.
- b. Up to 2 weeks prior to competition, practices will be mandatory except for graded school events or activities. This is for the safety of our athletes. Exceptions are up to each Cheer AD.
- c. Squads with less than 5 cheerleaders may choose to be exempt from competition or move the entire squad up to the next higher division.
 - i. If the squad with less than 5 cheerleaders is the Varsity level, they may move down to Junior Varsity. A Squad that is moving to another division must move as a whole and cannot be split.
 - ii. If a Lightweight squad must move to Junior Varsity AND Varsity move down to Junior Varsity for the same town, the Varsity level cheerleaders are not able to fly a Lightweight level cheerleader.
- d. An individual cheerleader may only participate in one routine at competition.
- e. Cheerleaders with handicaps will NOT be discouraged from competing. The judges will be advised prior to competition of their status and all handicapped cheerleaders will participate as any other cheerleader.
 - i. Exceptions will be granted for athletes that are approved at the meeting prior to competition. Directors will bring written documentation at the meeting prior to competition.
 - ii. Handicaps are not limited to physical handicaps, could also be diagnosed such as Epilepsy or Type 1 Diabetes.

B. Location and Date

- a. The I8YTFL cheerleading competition will be held on a date/location that is to be designated by the I8YTFL board each year. This is subject to change per year.

C. Competition Host Responsibilities

- a. The hosting team is responsible for coordinating and handling all aspects of hosting I8YTFL cheer competition, this includes but is not limited to securing a venue, schedule, security, videography, and distribution of novelties.
- b. I8YTFL and the event's host will not be responsible for accidents, injuries, or illness that occur before, during, or after competition.
- c. The hosting team overseas finding and securing judges for the competition. Judge selection should begin after the March Meeting and judges should be secured by the September meeting.
 - i. Judges will be IHSA/IRCA licensed.
 - ii. Non-Licensed judges may be used for competition at the discretion of the cheer committee.
 - 1. It will be the responsibility of the hosting team to present the non-licensed judge credentials and .or experience to the cheer

committee for approval. A majority vote from the cheer committee is required for approval of the non-licensed judge to participate in competition.

- iii. Judges may not have any affiliation with I8YTFL or the event host.
- iv. I8YTFL will contribute at total of \$500 to the cost of the IHSA/IRCA licensed judges for competition day; any remaining balance for the the cost of the IHSA/IRCA licensed judges will be the responsibility of the hosting team.
 - 1. If the cheer committee approves non-licensed judges for competition day the cost of the judges will be the responsibility of the hosting team.
 - a. For non-licensed judges, it is up to the discretion of the I8YTFL board to decide if the cost of the judges necessitates a financial contribution from I8YTFL. Should a financial contribution if I8YTFL be necessary for non-licensed judges the amount will not exceed \$500.
- d. If no designated host, all above is to be coordinated collectively by the Cheerleading Athletic Directors from each town.

D: Additional Competition Items

- a. Competition order forms (i.e. flowers, t-shirts, etc) will be given to all athletic directors no less than 21 days prior to the due date.
- b. Practice and performance “unofficial” schedules will be available at the i8YTFL board meeting prior to the competition. A map of the gym clearly labeled with mat direction, entrance and exit doors will also be provided at this time.
- c. Only Head Coaches, Assistant Coaches, Jr. Coaches and Football Presidents and Football Athletic Directors will be allowed back with the teams.
- d. Directors meetings will be scheduled on competition day.
- e. At the directors meeting prior to the awards ceremony, all scores and placements will be announced and verified before presenting trophies to the teams, if a meeting is held.
 - i. Envelopes with score sheets from competing towns will be distributed to each Cheer AD, by the end of the competition day.
- f. Competition division classification will be decided two months prior to competition.

E: I8YTFL Responsibilities

- a. I8YTFL will provide trophies for the placing teams in addition to their financial contribution to judges outlined in Section 3, C, c, iv.

F: Rules

- a. Each squad must always be under the supervision of a coach or an adult.
- b. Practice: may be 4 days per week or collectively 8 hours per week.

c. Cheer competition will follow the Illinois 8 Youth Tackle Football League official rules and regulations as established by the cheer committee and the IHSA Spirit Rules Handbook and must be approved by the I8YTFL board of directors. The rules will be revised yearly, and any changes will require a two third majority vote by the cheer committee.

d. Conduct

- i. Non-performing squads are to remain orderly and quiet (outside of normal cheering for a squad) while another team is performing. Good sportsmanship is required.
- ii. Coaches will be required to stand/sit in designated locations set by the host.
- iii. There is no coaching from the sideline during a squads performance.
 1. Dynamite and Superlightweight are an exception to this rule.
 - a. Spot placing at dynamite level is allowed
 - b. Counting and motions at dynamite and Superlightweight is allowed.

e. Routines

- i. Routines for competition MAY NOT exceed 3 minutes in length. But they may be under 3 minutes. The routine must consist of a minimum 30 seconds of full cheer and total music CANNOT exceed 2:30. If a routine is judged to have exceeded the maximum time and/or does not include a full 30 seconds of cheer a five (5) point deduction will occur.
- ii. Judging and timing will begin once your music or original motion starts and will end when the cheer or organized motion stops. ALL music and wording of music and cheers must be age appropriate and approved by an I8YTFL Cheer Director.
 1. Setting up a stunt between cheer and music is counted into your time.
- iii. Each team is responsible for their own music. You should test your music upon arrival in the morning. Please have an extra copy for your back-up.
 1. Subject to Hosting teams format and if they have full control of all music.
- iv. Squads will perform and practice in the order that their names were drawn prior to competition. The competition will not be delayed for late squads (No exceptions). This includes floor practice time prior to the start of competition.
- v. Poms and Signs are allowed to be used during the competition at all levels. A squad choosing to use these props must carry them during the performance.

f. Stunting and Tumbling

- i. The IHSA Rule book is to be used as a guideline for mounting. Since this is a recreational league, final mounting approval must come from the cheer directors. If there is a question regarding a mount, DON'T DO IT.
- ii. Superlight Level
 1. Does not need a front spot for thigh stand or gut stand.
 2. Front Spot is required for half.
 3. No Full extensions. No Basket Tosses
- iii. Lightweight Level
 1. Does not need a front spot for half.

2. Front spot required for Full extension. No basket tosses.
- iv. Junior Varsity/Varsity
 1. Does not need a front spot for half, full extension, or basket toss.
 2. Any 1-man stunt requires a spotter. Per stunt.
- v. The following cheerleading actions are allowed. Cheers, partner stunting, pyramids, dance, jumps, kicks, splits, leaps, turns, and tumbling
- vi. The following: splits, forward and backward rolls, round-offs, cartwheels, front and back walk overs, back handsprings, back tucks, layouts, halves/fulls, and aerials are considered tumbling.
- vii. All stunting and tumbling must be performed completely on the mat. All tumbling approaches must also begin and end on the mat. Deduction(s) will be taken for any tumbling and/or stunting off the mat.
- viii. All pyramids are limited to a maximum of 2 high. Base+1. No participant below the Junior Varsity/Varsity level is allowed to individually support the weight of 1 or more teammates. A pyramid of more than 2 high will result in an immediate disqualification. Each participant above the shoulder or expansion must have their own back spotters. All bases and spotters must be competing squad members on the floor.

g. Appearance

- i. The following items are not allowed: costume/dark makeup, glitter, jewelry, nail polish, hair combs, hair clips, metal barretts, or costumes.
- ii. Taping and/or soft braces will be allowed on any body part. No casts or metal braces are allowed for athletes involved in stunting.
- iii. Tape and/brace should match athletes skin tone.
- iv. Squats may use temporary facial tattoos if they are spirit/cheer related. The tattoos must be matching for each squad.
- v. No loose glitter.
- vi. Jr. Varsity and Varsity Cheerleaders may wear natural looking make up. Dark makeup and costume make up is not allowed.

Original agreement of bylaws February 2020

Amendments/updates of bylaws agreement January 2022

Amendments/updates of bylaws agreement March 2023

Amendments/updates of bylaws agreement April 2023

Amendments/updates of bylaws agreement March 2024

Amendments/updates of bylaws agreement February 2026