

# MSECFL

Mountain State Elite Cheer and Football League

# Cheer Manual

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**CHEERLEADING Rules and Regulations Governing All Franchises  
associated with the MSECFL**

## **Rules and Regulations**

**The Mountain State Elite Cheer and Football League Cheer Teams are governed by the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission rules and regulations. As such, requires all cheer teams to abide by the rules and regulations of the National Federation. Cheer and Spirit specific rules will be followed as presented in the National Federation Spirit Rules Book. The updated WVSSAC rules and regulations manual will update on July 1st so any rules changes that are updated will have to be referred back to the WVSSAC manual. All final updates to cheer manual will be completed by August 1st.**

This manual will serve as a guide to the participating teams and will provide for greater consistency.

### **Philosophy**

The philosophy and underlying goal of cheerleading is to support the programs within the franchise. Each team shall strive to boost spirit, promote good sportsmanship, and develop positive crowd involvement. Cheer coaches are reminded that their teams can be extremely instrumental in achieving support for all teams.

### **Sportsmanship and Citizenship**

The promotion of sportsmanship and citizenship is a prime responsibility of cheerleaders. Good sportsmanship is conduct which imposes a type of self-control involving honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of results. Team spirit is a reflection of these attitudes and behavior. If a franchise is to succeed in one of its prime functions, that of developing good citizenship, it is necessary that cheer teams model proper sportsmanship conduct. Sportsmanship is good citizenship in action. It is the coach's responsibility to instill good sportsmanship among team members. Poor sportsmanship during athletic contests or competition will result in MSECFL penalties for the cheer program and, if deemed necessary, the franchise. At competitions, poor sportsmanship may be considered a rule violation (20 points deduction).

### **Supervision**

The MSECFL holds a franchise responsible, both at home and away events, for the conduct of its cheerleaders, coaches, and fans. Coaches are required to supervise their respective teams.

### **Coaching Procedures**

#### **Code of Ethics**

1. The coach shall master the contest rules and is responsible for notifying their team members.
2. Contest judges shall have the respect and support of the coach. The coach shall not engage in conduct which will incite team members or spectators against the official/judge. **Public criticism of judges or team members is unethical.**

### **General Program Regulations**

***It is the responsibility of the cheer coach to provide a program which meets the MSECFL guidelines. All provisions of the MSECFL Cheer Manual shall be in effect for all cheer team activities including practice, games, and competition.***

1. The coach shall be knowledgeable in first aid techniques and emergency procedures. A well-stocked first aid kit should be available at all cheer activities. Coaches should develop an emergency plan for dealing with injuries at practice/games. Cheer teams and parents shall be knowledgeable of these procedures.
2. The coach, assistant coach, or designated franchise board representative shall be in attendance and accessible at all scheduled practices and cheer activities.
3. Coaches must recognize a team's particular ability level and limit its activities accordingly. Coaches and participants must be trained in proper spotting techniques. All new skills must first be reviewed and approved by the coach prior to performing them.
4. A preseason meeting shall be used to review all rules and regulations with the VP of Cheerleading and perspective franchise cheer coordinators/coaches. The session must be held prior to the first day of practice. This orientation is for information only.
5. With accordance to the MSECFL By-laws practices may not exceed more than 4 days a week.

## **Policies and Regulations**

### **Eligibility**

1. All cheerleaders under the supervision of the cheer coach, be included under the jurisdiction of the MSECFL and will be subject to the eligibility requirements as specified by MSECFL By-laws. **This eliminates the use of "little sister" mascots. The cheer team mascot must be eligible for participation. This regulation will be strictly enforced to provide for the safety of all individuals so during competitions mascots are not allowed on the floor before or during routines.** Each franchise will be responsible for implementing a mascot rule for participation at games. If your franchise wishes to allow mascots for a cheer squad then the franchise board will be responsible for providing the proper supervision for the extra girls on the field. The parent or a designated adult will be required to supervise the mascots safety if on the field. This responsibility will not fall on the cheer coaches as they are responsible for the safety of the cheerleaders. **Under no circumstances will any child be allowed on the field if they are under the age of 3 years.**
2. **If any A-Team does not have enough cheerleaders to participate in competition they can move up as many as it would take to get to 5. No more than 5 though if you are taking from B-Team. They must be a second year B-Teamer. You may not switch divisions if you pull from a B-team to form an A-team. If you start as large and you pull, you will stay as large division. You are not allowed to stack a team. This will be decided as a case by case matter.**

3. 1st set of numbers for all competing teams are due to the VP of Cheer on August 11th. The Final set of numbers for all competing teams are due to the VP of Cheer on August 25th. Once the divisions for small and large groups are set, the **cannot** be changed.

### **Out-of-Season Coaching**

Spring cheer will run from April 3<sup>rd</sup>-May 21<sup>st</sup> – Conditioning type practices may be held. The only restriction is **NO STUNTING**.

Each cheer team can begin practice no sooner than the Monday on the last full week of July.

### **Fundraising Regulations**

This will be covered under each individual franchise rules.

### **Conduct and Sportsmanship Regulations**

**These regulations are to be in effect during cheer competitions, games, or anywhere a MSECFL member performs.**

1. The primary factor in sportsmanship for cheerleaders should always cheer positively. This is a judgment call on the cheer coaches and coordinators on the wording of cheers. Cheerleaders are supposed to support and encourage their team and promote crowd participation. Please just use good judgment when referencing the opposing team.
2. Cheerleaders shall be impressed with the importance of accepting the decision of judges.
3. At all times, the cheering teams shall not interrupt the flow of the game or competition, interfere with the responsibilities of the officials/judges, players, or other cheer teams. Cheer Coaches shall pay attention to the game so as to be able to move to prevent collisions or being hit with a ball, players, or officials.
4. Attendance for practice is a requirement for participation on the cheer team. Required practices are mandatory for the proper preparation for the team competition routine and games. If attendance becomes an issue to where it is hindering the progress of the team the cheer coach, along with the cheer coordinator have the discretion to remove the cheerleader from the competition routine.
5. Attendance for competitions and games are mandatory for all participants unless there is a physical or mental handicap that prevents the participant from being able to compete. A cheer team must be present at all scheduled regular season football games or their will be a **\$500 fine** enforced by the league payable to the home franchise.

### **Sportsmanship**

A participant shall not commit an unsporting act. This includes, but is not limited to, acts or conduct such as:

- Disrespectfully addressing or contacting an official/judge or gesturing in such a manner as to indicate resentment.
- Using profane or inappropriate language or gestures or suggestive words.
- Baiting or taunting an opponent. NOTE: The MSECFL disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances including on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin.
- Use of an opponent's name or mascot during competition. If you would like to reference a mascot name in a competition cheer then please use one that is not related to a franchise you are competing against.
- **If a Safety Judge determines blatant unsportsmanlike conduct in competition, the result will be a rule violation with a 20 point deduction for each infraction.**
- **Excessive celebration when leaving the floor will result in point deduction!! (WVSSAC rule)**

### **Uniforms and Appearance for competitions and games**

A team member shall not be allowed to participate if in the judgment of the coach, the participant's hairstyle or fingernails do not conform to NFHS, WVSSAC, and MSECFL rules, if the provisions for jewelry, glitter, or the makeup rules are not met, or if a support or brace is not legal.

1. Uniforms shall be functional and meet the MSECFL approval. Apparel must also be safe and conducive to safe physical activity. **All midriffs/torsos are to remain covered even when arms are raised.**

2. For safety reasons, sequins/glitter is not allowed on uniforms or hair bows. During any MSECFL cheer competition spray glitter will not be allowed in the hair or anywhere on the uniform. If it is determined by the safety judge and/or the VP of Cheerleading glitter has been sprayed the participant will have to remove the hair piece before competing.

3. **Jewelry is prohibited.** This includes all jewelry worn on any part of the body. No body piercing jewelry is allowed. Jewelry must be removed completely, covering with Band-Aids is not sufficient. Leather, string, etc., placed in the holes created by body piercing are not allowed. If religious or medical medals are worn, they shall be taped to the body under the uniform. Teams proven (video, photographed or observed by a judge or board member) wearing jewelry during games or competition and reported to the MSECFL Board shall be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Hair devices, which are safe and completely secure, may be worn. These hair devices shall have no sharp edges. Hair pieces are permitted, but must be secure. Hair pieces with metal clips are not permitted. **Bobby Pins are allowed.** During competition **Hair pieces and devices that fall out shall incur a safety deduction during competition. (See Pom/Hair Device/Hair Piece Rule)** The wearing of hats while competing is prohibited. During outdoor events such as football, head cover may be worn if the covering is for the purpose of warmth or protection from weather elements. When such head covering is allowed, no tumbling stunts, pyramids, etc., allowed. **Bows may only have glitter that is part of the material; NO RHINESTONES.**

5. Hair Regulations - All members of the cheer team must have hair off the shoulders and away from the face regardless if he/she is a base, flyer, or spotter. This includes on the sidelines at games. It is considered unsafe for any team member to have their hair in their eyes or lying on their shoulders. **This includes the participation of Open Categories at Cheer Competitions.** Specific hair pieces such as cheer curls are not required by the league but can be required on the franchise level.

6. Fingernails - Fingernails shall be kept at a length appropriate for safe participation. The appropriate length for all members of a team means the nails are not visible beyond the end of the fingers when viewed from the palm side of the hands. Long fingernails present a safety hazard to all members of the cheer team. **Artificial nails are not allowed.**

7. Permanent body marking(s) shall be properly covered. Temporary body marking(s) and paint are not allowed. Limited makeup will be allowed during competitions including items such as foundation/concealer, to cover skin problems/acne, and lip gloss. If the safety judge determines there is a safety hazard with any of the above after inspection and it is worn during competition there will be a 20 point deduction.

8. Hats, body paint, face paint, and facial mascot stickers are not allowed during competition. Of the four items listed, temporary facial stickers and face paint are allowed during game participation.

9. Uniforms shall be functional and meet the leagues approval. Apparel must also be safe and conducive to safe physical activity. All midriiffs and torsos (front and back) must be covered. No cutouts are permitted (unless purchased before 2016 season) and uniforms must have a standard front and back neckline (V-neck, scoop or square). Sheer material is not permitted on the torso.

10. Athletes are allowed to wear a brace for support if they have an injury to their wrist, knee, ankle etc. The brace **MUST NOT** have any metal in the material. Athletic tape is also allowed to be worn during competition. **If a child is in a cast or metal splint they may still participate in competition and games; HOWEVER, the child CANNOT be involved in any stunt or tumbling (dance only)**

### Stunts and Spotting Regulations

**The following pyramid/partner stunts are prohibited by MSECFL: Totem Pole, Double Cartwheel, Basket Toss, Cartwheel Dismounts, Drops, or Chorus Line flips.**

**\*\*West Virginia State Rule\*\*** All single leg stunts above shoulder level must have a person (spotter) not involved in the stunt to act as a spotter. **MSECFL will abide by WVSSAC rules regarding mounts/dismounts. This applies to extensions also.**

**\*\*This is not an all-inclusive list but a description of the more common stunts used. All stunting regulations will revert to the WVSSAC Cheer stunting regulations.**

- **Free spotters must have arms fully extended with hands open and their eyes must remain on flyers at all times. The Free spotter's hands must remain fully extended until both of the flyers feet are on the ground!!!! This goes for ALL TEAMS!!!!**

**NO STUNT INVERSIONS WILL BE PERMITTED. NO EXCEPTIONS!!!**

**A Cheer Team Specific:**

- **All cradles must have a free spot!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Fly A-ways are legal provided the following restrictions are followed:

- A stunt is performed prior to the toss to dismount
- Limited to 2 bases
- Bases may not interlock hands
- Sponge to toss may not go below waist level
- Must have a hands-on back spotter who must maintain contact with the top Person's ankles or above
- May use a front spotter who may either be free standing or hands-on. If Hands-on, must follow back spot restrictions
- stunts that do not include an inversion are allowed

**Double Twist** – not allowed

**Twist Downs** – not allowed

**Basket Toss** – not allowed

**Table Tops** – not allowed

**Pendulums** – allowed – must have 10 people mandatory (2 bases, 1 flyer, 1 back spot, 1 free spot, 4 girls locking arms, and 1 front spot to assist in pushing up)

**Twist Ups** – allowed

**Show & Go** - legal provided the following restrictions are followed:

- Bases and spotters follow the same restrictions as the Fly Away
- If a toss is incorporated, the show must hit prep or extended level prior to Toss

**Up & Over** - transitions must have a back spotter for the top person(s)

**Dead Man, Face down & Side Lifts** – allowed - if rotated must have 4 bases

**Barrel rolls** - allowed

**Cradles** – allowed from a full or half extension, free spotter mandatory front touching spotter optional. All cradles must have free spot.

**One Leg Stunts** – allowed must have two bases, back spotter, front touching spotter is optional. Cradles allowed from full extension one leg stunts with a free spot. One leg stunts may move from full extension if adding a free spot.

**Full Extensions** – allowed must have 2 bases and 1 back spotter. Full extension stunts may move with a free spot. Full extension hitches allowed must follow one leg stunt rules. Free Spot is required for all Full Extensions.

**Half Extensions** – allowed must have 2 bases and 1 back spotter

**Half Extension one leg stunts** – may move but must have 2 bases, 1 back spotter, and a free spotter.

**Helicopters** - allowed

All one-man stunts require a hands-on back spotter and a free standing spotter (4) **AND** if cradled require 2 catchers, a back hands-on spotter and a free standing spotter (5).

**B Cheer Team Specific:**

- **All cradles must have a free spot!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Fly A-ways are legal provided the following restrictions are followed:

- A stunt is performed prior to the toss to dismount
- Limited to 2 bases

- Bases may not interlock hands
- Sponge to toss may not go below waist level
- Must have a hands-on back spotter who must maintain contact with the top Person's ankles or above
- May use a front spotter who may either be free standing or hands-on. If Hands-on, must follow back spot restrictions
- stunts that do not include an inversion (toe touch, ball out, pencil) allowed

**Barrel Rolls** are legal provided the following restrictions are followed

**Double Twist** – not allowed, **Twist Downs** – not allowed, **Basket Toss** – not allowed

**Table Tops** – not allowed, **Pendulums** – allowed – must have 10 people mandatory (2 bases, 1 flyer, 1 back spot, 1 free spot, 4 girls locking arms, and 1 front spot to assist in pushing up)

**Twist Ups** – allowed, **Show & Go** - legal provided the following restrictions are followed:

- Bases and spotters follow the same restrictions as the Fly Away
- If a toss is incorporated, the show must hit prep or extended level prior to the toss

**Up & Over** - transitions must have a back spotter for the top person(s)

**Dead Man, Face Down & Side Lifts** – allowed - if rotated must have 4 bases

**Cradles** – allowed from half and full extensions but all cradles must have free spot.

**One Leg Stunts** – allowed from half or full extension and must have two bases, back spotter, with front touching spotter optional. Cradles allowed from one leg full extension but must have free spot. May move but must have free spotter.

**Full Extensions** – allowed must have 2 bases and 1 back spotter. Full extension stunts may move with a free spot. Full Extensions must have free spot. Full extension hitches allowed must follow one leg stunt rules.

**Half Extensions** – allowed – may move but free spotter required and front touching spotter optional. Half extension hitches allowed must follow one leg stunt rules.

**Helicopters** – allowed

- Stunts with locking arms may move as long as both feet of the flyer are in the bases hands.
- Back Spotters may not assist in the height of the stunt in any way. They may only use ankles and cannot place hands under bottom of flyer.
- No leaning on stunts and stunts may not go 3 people high.
- Feet over head stunts and dismounts will be allowed as long as the flyer never losses contact with the bases until her feet are completely on the floor and has regained balance.
- No walking under a stunt or between the legs of a stunt.
- **Required for all teams – all moving stunts must have a free spotter. Please understand that if the whole stunt group takes ONE step while the flyer is up, it is considered a moving stunt!!!! Even if it was an accident for the stunt group to take a step, it is still considered moving. Please make sure that your teams have free spotters when needed to prevent any deductions!!!!**

All one-man stunts require a hands-on back spotter and a free standing spotter (4) **AND** if cradled require 2 catchers, a back hands-on spotter and a free standing spotter (5).

**C Cheer Team Specific:**

- **All cradles must have a free spot!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**Fly a-ways** – not allowed

**Double Twist** – not allowed

**Twist Downs** – not allowed



**Basket Toss** – not allowed

**Table Tops** – not allowed

**Twist Ups** – not allowed

**Shoulder Stands** – not allowed

**Full Extensions** – not allowed

**Helicopters** - not allowed

**Pendulums** – allowed from chest high only – must have 10 people mandatory (2 bases, 1 flyer, 1 back spot, 1 free spot, 4 girls locking arms, and 1 front spot to assist in pushing up)

**Show & Go** – allowed only to chest high level position. Free spotter and front touching spotter is optional.

**Up & Over** – allowed

**Dead Man, Face Down, & Side Lifts** – allowed but only from half extension position

**Cradles** – allowed from a half extension only and must have a free spotter.

**One Leg Stunts** – allowed from half extension only and must have two bases, (The base that does not have the weight must grab the other foot or leg to help with support), front touching spotter, one back spotter, with free spotter optional. One leg stunts may move with mandatory free spotter.

**Half Extensions** – allowed with free spotter mandatory – may move

**Shoulder sits** – allowed

**Thigh Stands** – allowed

- Stunts with locking arms may not move as long as both feet of the flyer are in the bases hands.
- No leaning on stunts and stunts may **not** go 3 people high.
- No feet over head or upside down stunts allowed and this includes the dismount.
- No walking under a stunt or between the legs of a stunt.
- **Required for all teams – all moving stunts must have a free spotter**

### **D Cheer Team Specific:**

**Fly a-ways** – not allowed

**Double Twist** – not allowed

**Twist Downs** – not allowed

**Basket Toss** – not allowed

**Table Tops** – not allowed

**Twist Ups** – not allowed

**Shoulder Stands** – not allowed

**Full Extensions** – not allowed

**Pendulums** – not allowed

**Show & Go** – not allowed

**Up & Over** – not allowed

**Dead Man, Face Down, & Side Lifts** – not allowed.

**Cradles** – not allowed.

**One Leg Stunts** – allowed from half extension only and must have two bases, (The base that does not have the weight must grab the other foot or leg to help with support), front touching spotter, one back spotter, with free spotter mandatory. One leg stunts may NOT move.

**Half Extensions** – allowed. MAY NOT MOVE.

**Helicopters** – not allowed

**Shoulder sits** – not allowed

**Thigh Stands** – allowed

- **Coaches CAN NOT help the girls during competition (No motions on the sidelines, No mouthing the words!!!!)**
- D Cheer Team stunts may go to half extension. All stunts MUST have a hands on and a free spotter.
- **Stunts at waist level-** can move
- **Thigh Stands** - allowed
- **Pony sits** - allowed
- D Team only will NOT be disqualified if a girl leaves the floor during competition. Just continue the routine but there will be a 5 point deduction.
- D Team coach and/or an assistant coach may place the girls in their position for the technical portion and the dance portion. Coaches may place Poms before competition and may retrieve them after the girls perform!!

The active spotter is an integral part of the safety of a program. Therefore, **an inattentive person is not considered a spotter.**

- Stunts with locking arms may move as long as both feet of the flyer are in the bases hands.
- Back Spotters may not assist in the height of the stunt in any way. They may only use ankles or calves.
- No leaning on stunts
- Feet over head stunts and dismounts are allowed as long as the flyer never loses contact with the bases until her feet are completely on the floor and she has regained balance.
- No walking under a stunt or between the legs of a stunt.
- **Hands on spotter** - is a person who assists in the building of, or dismounting from, a partner stunt or pyramid. The primary responsibility of a spotter is to watch for safety hazards and be in a position to prevent injuries with special emphasis on the head, neck, and shoulder areas. This person(s) shall not provide primary support of (weight-bearing contact with) another person.
- **Free standing spotter** - is a person who stands within arm's length of a stunt. In the free standing spotter may not have any physical contact with the stunt participants. This includes no assistance in the building or dismounting of the stunt. The free standing spotter must have, **throughout the stunt; arms fully extended** toward the flyer and are in the appropriate position and location to ensure safety.
- **Base(s)** using hand(s) to support the flyer in an upright position must have the hand(s) positioned under and supporting the foot/feet.

1. A spotter is required until a tumbling, partner stunt or pyramid/mount is mastered.

2. Tip Toes - A spotter is not an effective spotter if he/she is on tip toes. Hands on spotter's feet may leave the floor to assist in the building of the stunt (ex: on toes or balls of feet). However, once the stunt is built, one of the spotter's feet must be flat on the floor so that he/she is in a stable position to properly support the stunt, maintain balance, and remain in control.

3. Feet Positioning - Feet apart, one foot in front, very important to maintain balance.

~~4-~~A Team specific – All full extension dismounts will require a free standing spot

5. All multi-base stunts to a cradle dismount shall have at least 2 catchers and a separate head-and-shoulders spotter. *Therefore, a multi-base extended stunt requires five (5) participants.*

6. All cheer teams may use as many spotters as necessary to keep your stunts safe.

**\*\*\*\*Safety Tips for all Teams - SAFETY IS TOP PRIORITY \*\*\*\***

**Spotters are MANDATORY:** A spotter is defined as a cheerleader in direct contact with the cheering surface, who assists with any tumbling stunt or assists in the building of or dismounting from a partner stunt or pyramid.

- Always spot head and shoulders first.
- Use full body to absorb falling person's weight (bear hug to upper torso).
- Spotters shall keep quiet and listen for cues and keep eyes on the flyer.
- Do not abandon the stunt/pyramid even if it appears steady.
- It is better to come down from a poorly built stunt than to force it to stay up.

Hand Held Signs are not allowed during performances at competitions for competitors and fans unless they are incorporated into the routine.

Flash Cards, trampolines, or other special equipment is prohibited. Pom poms are optional and may be placed on the competition surface only by members of that particular squad. By the WVSSAC guidelines and the NFHS handbook, pom poms are considered to be a prop and **cannot** be used during the technical (cheer) component of the routine.

**Crowd Participation** is a wonderful support tool for the participants but must show respect for all teams. Crowd/Fan involvement is allowed during your team's routine and should be incorporated into the routine as much as possible.

**Pom/Hair Device/Hair Piece Safety Rule (*Exception to 20 Pt. Violation Rule*)**

When poms are used in a routine, every effort must be made to choreograph their placement, use, and release to ensure that the pom(s) is not stepped upon by any cheerleader. A pom, hair device and/or a hair piece under foot is a safety hazard; therefore the following deduction(s) will be taken by the technical/safety judge when competition participants step on a pom, hair device, and/or hair piece:

**STEP ON WITH NO SLIP OR FALL = 5 PT. DEDUCTION**

**STEP ON WITH A SLIP = 6 TO 9 PT. DEDUCTION** (depending upon severity)

**STEP ON WITH A FALL = 10 PT. DEDUCTION**

**Incidental Touching Rule (*Exception to the 20 point Violation Rule*)**

Choreographed touching during the Technical portion of the routine remains illegal with a 20 point deduction. However, incidental touching will be penalized as bobbles or falls:

**Touching = 1 to 5 PT. DEDUCTION** (depending upon severity of the contact)

**Touching resulting in a FALL = 6 to 10 PT. DEDUCTION** (depending upon the severity of the fall)

**Competition Policies**

Each cheer team is required to attend the mandatory competitions set by the MSECFL Executive Board. To be considered a valid competing team you will have no less than 5 members. If you have less

than 5 members you have the choice to compete. If you have a team status then competitions are required. If you fail to attend then penalties will be given to the team franchise and you will be disqualified from the Grand Champion eligibility. There will be **\$500 fine** per valid competing squad that does not attend a mandatory competition.

1. **The MSECFL VP of Cheerleading will secure four WVSSAC approved judges for the mandatory cheer competitions.** ALL approved judges should have no affiliation to any of the competing franchises. **The MSEYCFL will secure eight (8) judges and one (2) of the eight (8) judges must be a safety judges. The host team will incur the cost for judges. Judges are required to be WVSSAC approved. Cheer and safety cheer judges will be paid \$150.00 each.**
2. Any cheerleader arriving after the official start of judging of the team will not be allowed to participate. Any cheerleader arriving after the conclusion of judging for an open category will not be judged and the cost will not be refunded by the hosting franchise.
3. Failure to have a MSECFL registered coach in attendance at a competition shall result in the team's disqualification from that competition.
4. No coach/trainer is permitted near the judges or judging table. No coach/trainer is permitted to help/show their squad while they are performing. **In the event of this happening a 50% deduction will be taken off the total score.** The VP of Cheerleading along with another MSECFL Executive Board Member will assess the penalty and there must be appropriate proof submitted for any penalty. D Team coaches CAN NOT help the girls during competition!!!!
5. Coaches only may sit in a designated area of the competition surface when their squad is performing.
6. Prior to competition, the safety judge will verify that all team members are following all uniform and appearance regulations.
7. **Drums, musical instruments and mechanical noisemakers are prohibited at all mandatory MSECFL cheer competitions.**
8. All banners, helium balloons, and posters are prohibited by the cheer teams at mandatory cheer competitions.
9. **The Order of Appearance:** will be drawn randomly by the cheer coordinators at the meeting prior to the competition. Teams will not be allowed to trade position unless an emergency situation arises and both coaches consent.
10. **Starting Time:** is determined by the hosting franchise.
11. All squads have the option of what type of entrance they choose. However, the squad must go directly to their starting positions.
12. Music shall be provided by each cheer team and must be recorded to a CD. A back-up CD **must be** available. One designated franchise board member of the hosting competition or

executive board member will control the music start/stop. Only one start/stop is permitted per team. **Music must have appropriate lyrics or the cheer team could be disqualified. IF technical problems occur with the CD, ONE start over will be allowed using the BACK UP copy of your music. Your CD must contain ONE TRACK on the disc and will be played to completion (NO EARLY STOPPING of music)**

13. If needed, there will be a coach's meeting before competition begins with the safety judge. One coach from each franchise is required but all may attend.

14. **Entering the floor:** each squad waiting to perform is to take their place at the back of the competition surface until they are introduced and permitted to enter the floor. No team may come onto the floor prior to the announcement of their team name. **D Team Specific: Coaches may place cheerleaders in the starting position for cheer portion and then for dance portion of the routine.**

15. Coaches need to provide a list of team member's full names to the music station which is clearly labeled with franchise name and level of squad. Each girl will be introduced before performing.

16. In a tie-breaking situation the Technical portion of the routine will be used to determine the winner. The scores of all judges will be totaled to determine the highest score. If a tie still exists, the Perfection and Overall Effect Categories of the routine will be used to determine the winner. The scores of all judges will be totaled in the tie-breaking procedure.

17. A MSECFL Executive Board Member and/or a member of the hosting franchise's board will be responsible for adding all scores. Score sheets with tally results will be available for any coach that requests them directly after the final awards have been given. The VP of cheer will be responsible for announcing the winners during the awards ceremony.

**There will not be any tolerance for arguments or disruptive behavior when reviewing score sheets. A meeting can be requested with the VP of Cheerleading if there are questions/concerns with the score sheets.**

18. All mandatory MSECFL Cheer competitions must be held **inside** a facility with a protective surface (gym floor) for the girls to compete on to remain in accordance with the WVSSAC Guidelines.

## **Competition Rules**

### **Uniform and Appearance**

**All uniform and appearance rules apply at all cheer activities. During the awards ceremony, participants must be legally attired upon receiving their award and all team members MUST remain in UNIFORM and will not be permitted to carry any gifts, accessories, flowers, etc. onto the floor during the awards ceremony.**

**\*\*Coaches and Parents – please do not present your cheerleaders with gifts of any kind on the floor during the awards ceremony.**

### **Format**

Each squad will be expected to do a cheer and dance combination routine. The cheer/ technical portion must be performed at the beginning with the minimum time limit. **There will be a deduction off total score if over or under either time limit listed below.**

**Deductions as follows: 1-5 seconds = 5 pt. deduction**

**6-10 seconds = 10 pt. deduction**

**11-15 seconds = 15 pt. deduction**

**over 15 seconds = 20 pt. deduction**

Technical (CHEER ONLY) Time Limits    Routine (CHEER + DANCE) Time Limits

A Team – 30 second minimum    A Team – 2:30 to 3:00 minutes

B Team – 25 second minimum    B Team – 2:15 to 2:45 minutes

C Team – 20 second minimum    C Team – 1:45 to 2:30 minutes

D Team – 15 second minimum    D Team – 1:30 to 2:15 minutes

**\*\*FOR CLARIFICATION ON THE TIME LIMITS: TECHNICAL CHEER MUST MEET MINIMUM REQUIRED; THE FULL ROUTINE (CHEER AND DANCE COMBINED) MUST BE BETWEEN THE ALLOTTED ROUTINE TIME LIMITS\*\***

### 1. Cheer/Technical portion:

The cheer/technical portion of the routine will comprise 30% of the total score. The cheer portion is comprised of words, motions, jumps, and transitions in formation.

- Requirements: 2 different jumps. The two jumps may be performed by any number of team members. (Responsibility of the judges to check for jumps). Failure to perform the required jumps will result in a 5 point deduction for each jump not included. **\*\*JUMPS MUST BE DIFFERENT ex: cannot do 2 toe touches\*\***

2. **Dance portion:** The dance portion of the routine may include words, motions, jumps, transitions in formation, touching, bracing, tumbling, pyramids, partner stunts, poms, dance and music.

- Requirement: If music is used, a quality copy (with back-up) must be available and edited for the entire length of routine. (Only one start and stop permitted when using the CD).
- **Prohibited by the WVSSAC and MSECFL:** In an effort to provide appropriate material being incorporated into the cheer routines, **repetitive** pelvic thrusts or hunching movements (pivoting motion of the hips) must be eliminated during cheer competitions. Please note: this does not mean the cheerleaders cannot move their hips at all. This simply means coaches need to keep good judgment when creating your choreography. **\*\*\*\*If there is a question on the sidelines of games please address it with your individual cheer coordinator and/or franchise president first and the VP of cheer can make final determination if needed.\*\*\*\***

### Timing Procedure –

Time limits shall be imposed at all mandatory MSECFL competitions. Hosting franchise of the competition is asked to have a backup time piece available if needed. **The time of the Technical/Safety Judge is the official time.** *The time limits are listed under the FORMAT section.*

- **Beginning:** To indicate the beginning of the time, each team will designate one member who will deliver the arm signal to the Safety Judge. The right arm is to be fully extended from the shoulder and located beside the head. The arm must drop forward immediately and

**sharply saying READY. When the hand hits the right leg, the time will begin. No motions, words, actions, etc., may begin before this time. All competitors will start from a standing position on the floor.**

- **Note:** There will be announcing of each participants name before the cheer begins. Please have a list of names to the sound station before they are scheduled to go onto the floor. The list needs to be clearly labeled with the franchise name and level of the team.
- **D Team Specific: May but will not be required to use the arm signal. The designated person may say READY to begin the time.**
- Time stops when ALL cheerleaders have returned to the cheer surface (this means BOTH feet solid on the floor).
- No restarting of time will be allowed unless there is a mechanical problem or injury.

### **Changing Uniforms**

Changing uniforms or accessories during judging is not allowed. Changing also refers to altering the uniform in any way during the judging.

### **Entering and Exiting Floor**

There shall be no gymnastics when entering or exiting the floor. At the end of the routine the team needs to exit the performing floor immediately. The name of each participant will be announced and you may choose what movement you would perform to identify each girl to the crowd. Once the competition has begun, no coach, fan, parent, etc., are allowed on the floor. Maximum of 2 coaches will be allowed at the designated area while their respective team is performing.

### **Safety**

#### **1. Rules**

Refer to *Nation Federation Spirit* rule book and *Cheer Manual*, “Rules and Regulations Governing All School”, Part V.

**2. Technical/Safety Judge Deductions** - The following penalty points shall be deducted from the total score:

- Bobbles: 1-5 points
- Falls: 6-10 points
- Time violation: 5-20 points (per violation)
- Rule violation: 20 points (per violation)
- Pom/hair piece/device violation: 5-10 points
- One jump omitted: 5 points
- Two jumps omitted: 10 points

### **Judging Information**

**\*\*\*It is the responsibility of the hosting franchise to copy all score sheets for the judges to use at competitions.**

**General Rules and Regulations:**

In all cheer competitions, every attempt will be made to hire judges from outside the county to prevent conflicts of interest. Every effort will be made to assure that judges shall have no ties with any team they are judging. Judges shall be familiar with WVSSAC and National Federation cheer rules and regulations. Rules and regulations for judging shall be followed by all member franchises and all cheer competitions.

1. **Guidelines for Cheer Judges:**

- Memorize the score sheet to be able to concentrate totally on the routine.
- Judges should not confer during the time of judging. The only exception is a competition procedural question directed to the Technical Judge.
- Coaches shall have no communication with judges concerning the judging. Any questions which arise should be conveyed through the director of the competition and/or the VP of Cheerleading. Coaches are not permitted in the judging area.
- Judges **must** sign or initial their judging sheets.
- Study the Cheer Manual - Competition Policies and Judging Information.
- Arrive at the competition 30 minutes before start time of competition and be ready to judge
- Dress appropriately for the judging assignment.
- Refrain from watching warm-ups before competition.
- Give undivided attention to the entire routine. Write down judging comments and score after the routine is finished.
- Judge technique of the performers rather than style or music selection. Remember, the quality of jump, stunts, tumbling, etc., determines the point value, not the quantity.
- The cheering style is entirely up to the discretion of the team and its coach. The WVSSAC and the MSECFL in no way dictates or encourages any particular style of cheering.
- Do not allow crowd reactions to influence judging scores.
- Do not confer with the general public, coaches, or participants prior to the competition.
- Use the comment box on the score sheet to explain point deductions and to compliment strengths.
- Keep a positive facial expression.



- Please be legible when writing your comments and when signing your name.
- Technical/Safety Judge must have a working knowledge and understanding of National Federation Rules and the MSECFL Cheer Manual with Competition Policies and Judging Information.
- Contact the Competition Director and/or VP of Cheerleading several weeks before competition to verify they will be judging.
- Check timing devices, scoring areas for Safety and Cheer Judges, and tabulator equipment.
- Conduct a meeting with all judges on the day of the competition. Score sheets, levels of tumbling, stunts and pyramids, degree of difficulty, and scoring procedures should be thoroughly discussed.
- Conduct a meeting with all coaches prior to the start of the competition.
- Verify the Awards Announcement prior to presentation of awards by conferring with cheer judges and VP of Cheerleading and reviewing score sheets.

### **Technical Judges**

1. Technical/Safety Judges shall conduct all communication concerning rule violations or routine violations with the coach. Safety Judges should not communicate with any cheerleader unless the coach is present.
2. Prior to the start of a competition, Technical/Safety Judges will review a team's routine and notify the coach of any safety/rule violation. This is Mandatory and must be before the competition begins. However, the Safety Judge will not assist in changing the routine to make it legal; this is a coach's responsibility.
3. Prior to the start of a competition, the Safety/Technical Judge may ask the coach to verify that all team members are legal in uniform attire and appearance by signing the TECHNICAL JUDGE ROUTINE/TEAM CHECKLIST.
4. Prior to the start of a competition, the Safety/Technical Judge will meet with all cheer judges to review judging procedures and score sheet completion.
5. Technical Judge is not to interfere with the judges' scoring of routine(s).
6. The Technical Judge is NOT allowed to view a video tape to determine a violation. This will be done by the VP of Cheerleading and another Executive Board Member.

### **Competition Score Sheet Explanation**

#### **TECHNICAL/CHEER:**

**Motion Technique:** Clean motion technique (arms, legs) placement, levels, sharpness, arms, wrist, and fists.

**Precision of Motions:** Synchronization, unity, placement of motions as a team (same).

**Formations Spacing/Use of Floor:** Change of formations, flow, variety, creativity, transitions. Correct spacing, utilization of floor, creativity.

**Voice:** Clarity of words, voice, inflection, enunciation, and audible.

**Jumps:** Preps together, timing of jumps, landing, pointed toes, proper technique, height, synchronization.

**Choreography/Creativity:** Variety of moves, incorporation, transition/flow, formation, and line work compliments the cheer.

#### **OPEN/DANCE:**

**Variety/Rhythm:** Variety of moves, styles, steps, synchronization, timing with the music.

**Music Interpretation:** Moves go with the music, variety of formations, and delivery to audience.

**Execution:** Clean technique, flashy, exciting, synchronization, formation/spacing perfected, execution of dance movements.

#### **OVERALL APPEAL:**

**Choreography/Creativity:** Variety of moves, incorporation, transition/flow, formation, and line work compliments the music.

**Degree of Difficulty:** Should be considered in judging tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, and choreography.

#### **PROJECTION:**

**Expression/Spirit:** Facial, expressions coincide with cheer/music, eye contact, smiles, attitude, and personality.

**Showmanship/Spirit:** Routine exciting, flashy, fun to watch, communicates enthusiasm to the crowd, overall visual effect, team personality, words and actions exhibit good sportsmanship.

#### **OVERALL EFFECT:**

1. Timing for stunts, jumps, cradles, pyramid building and dismounting, and missed motions.
2. Perfected transitions and formations
3. Synchronization throughout routine
4. Perfection of routine

#### **Judges Scoring Procedures:**

A. **Concentration:** Give undivided attention to the performing team. Mark the score after the performance of a team, not during the performance.

B. **Consistency:** It is the responsibility of the judge and the integrity of the tournament to be fair and consistent.

C. **Score Sheets:** There will be a one page score sheet system. Everything the judges are scoring for the team will be on this sheet and it will be provided to the judges by the VP of Cheerleading or Competition Director from hosting franchise.

D. **Scoring:**

1) Individual criteria with a possible point value of **five:** average 3; above average 4; perfect 5.

2) Individual criteria with a point value of **ten:** average 6; above average 8; perfect 10.

3) When scoring, judges may use either whole numbers (1,2,3,4,5) or the decimal equivalents of tenths of a whole number (3.3, 3.5, 3.8, 4.2, 4.5 etc.) DO NOT use common fractions (1/4, 2/5, 1/2, 5/8, 3/4 etc..)

4) Changing a score: **Draw a line through the score, initial the change and write in the new score. Do not blacken the original score.**

5) Be legible when writing comments and signing your name.

6) **Confidentiality** is of the utmost importance.

7) **Keep a running total of each team's score.**

**Other Competition Regulations:**

1. Trophy Regulations

A. Open Categories

1. 1<sup>st</sup> place will receive a **gold medal.**
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> place will receive a **silver medal.**
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> place will receive a **bronze medal.**

B. Cheer and Dance Category (entire routine is awarded) 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> will be awarded for BOTH small and large divisions

1. 1<sup>st</sup> place will receive a **12** inch trophy
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> place will receive a **9** inch trophy

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**NO PARENTS will be permitted on gym floor during award ceremony!**

**MSECFL REGISTERED COACHES and CHEERLEADERS ONLY!!!**

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**Note: Team members must have participated in the competition to receive a trophy. If team member participated but left before awards ceremony, then it is the coach's responsibility to pick up any awards.**

2. **Open Categories –**

There will be open categories at all the mandatory MSECFL cheerleading competitions. It is the responsibility of each franchise's Cheer Coordinator to have all open category entries and money to the hosting franchise 2 weeks before the competition. The cost is \$5.00 for each participant in

each category. There will be **NO double entry in the open categories example: girl A and girl B are registered in partner dance together, girl B may not register in partner dance with girl C!**

\*\*\*If your team has less than 5 members and cannot compete in the team category these cheerleaders may still compete in the open categories. If a team with less than 5 members chooses to compete in team competition they will not be combined with the other team scores.

**Open Cheer** - this is single participation and we encourage the cheerleaders be responsible for choreographing the words and movements themselves. Technical rules apply; no tumbling however, 2 jumps will not be required in open category. **Time length for cheer will be no longer than 20 seconds.**

**Partner Dance** - this will be double participation **ONLY** and we encourage the cheerleaders be responsible for choreographing the words and movements themselves. Tumbling is allowed, but must remain in the corner in which judging occurs. Participants must keep on cheer uniform, they cannot change clothes. All music and moves must follow the appropriate WVSSAC guidelines. **Time length for Dance will be no longer than 90 seconds.**

**Open Jumps-** A series of 3 jumps performed. The areas you will be judged on are motions, difficulty, sharpness, enthusiasm, and variety.

**Open Stunts-** A series of 3 stunts performed by 5 or 6 participants for the judges and must follow the proper WVSSAC stunt safety rules. To have a valid entry into this category you must have 5 or 6 participants! No more and no less

**Open Gymnast** – this is an open category and will not go for or against the team score. The areas you will be judged on are the following Execution, Form, Flexibility, Variety, and Difficulty. *This will consist of using half of the gym floor and only doing **ONE** pass.* For D teamers, there is no requirements, C, B, A team must be able to do a walkover and higher!

\*\*\*\*\* (music will no longer be used as this is not routine format any longer, it will be 1 tumbling pass of the competitor's choice) \*\*\*\*\*

## Competition Format

### 35.0 CHEERLEADERING COMPETITIOINS

- a. There will be five (5) mandatory competitions broken down into four (4) Regular Competitions and one (1) Grand Champion Competition.
- b. The Regular Competitions will consist of the following:
  - i. There will be two (2) Regular Competitions in which only MSEYCFL Members from the Blue Conference will be competing.
  - ii. There will be two (2) Regular Competitions in which only MSEYCFL Members from the Gold Conference will be competing.
  - iii. There will be individual open categories at the Regular Competitions.
- c. The Grand Champion Competition will consist of the following:

- i. The 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishing team for each division and each group size from the Blue and Gold Conference will advance to compete in the Grand Champion Competition.
        - ii. Scores from the previous Regular Competitions will not carryover or factor into the scoring to determine the Grand Champion.
        - iii. There will be no individual open categories at the Grand Champion Competition.
      - d. Squads will be divided into large and small groups based on an average number of cheerleaders per squad.
    - e. The dates for cheer competitions will be set by the MSEYCFL Executive Board immediately upon completion of the MSEYCFL Football Schedule.
    - f. Teams will abide by all MSEYCFL Cheer Rules as set forth in the MSEYCFL Cheer Manual.
    - g. The following floor restrictions will be adhered to all times during all MSEYCFL Cheer Competitions:
      - i. Only MSEYCFL Badge Holders are permitted on the competition floor. No parents/guardians or non-badge holders shall be on the floor at any time except for the “Dance Party” following the completion of the Cheer Competition. The event announcer will invite parents and non-badge holders onto floor at the appropriate time.
      - ii. In the event that a participant is injured during a routine, parents/guardians or non- badge holder will be permitted onto the competition floor after an MSEYCFL Executive Officer has invited them to do so.
      - iii. If a parent/guardian or non-badge enters the competition floor at any time of the competition without being invited by a MSEYCFL Executive Officer, the cheerleader or cheer squad associated with the parent/guardian or non-badge holder will receive a 50% point deduction penalty to their individual or squad score.
      - iv. Any infraction must be witnessed by a MSEYCFL official before a score reduction may occur. MSEYCFL officials will have a meeting immediately to determine if a reduction in score is warranted.
    - h. Video evidence of any cheer violation will not be permissible for review.
      - i. The MSEYCFL will secure eight (8) judges and one (1) of the eight (8) judges must be a safety judge. The host team will incur the cost for judges. Judges are required to be WVSSAC approved. Cheer and safety cheer judges will be paid \$150.00 each.
      - j. Winners of the Grand Champion Competition will be announced at the end of the competition; however, trophies will be presented on Elite Bowl Sunday. Winners will perform during games and half time at the Elite Bowl game for their team’s appropriate age division.
      - k. Cheerleading Competition Team Awards will consist of the following:

- i. 1<sup>st</sup> place Team – 12-inch trophies
  - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> place Team – 9-inch trophies
- l. Cheerleading Competition Open Awards will consist of the following:
  - i. 1<sup>st</sup> place gold medal
  - ii. 2<sup>nd</sup> place silver medal
  - iii. 3<sup>rd</sup> place bronze medal

m. The hosting MSEYCFL Member will receive the gate receipts and all other money making projects and concessions for cheer competitions.

n. Visiting MSEYCFL Members will not fundraise at another MSEYCFL Member's venue without permission from the hosting MSEYCFL Member's President or designee.