

*The American Championships*

# **Rule Book**



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*We Care. We Listen. We Deliver.*

**2016-17  
Season**

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## GREAT SPORTSMANSHIP IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Victory is most sweet when those you compete against do their very best and your team does its very best and a win is gained under that circumstance. Fans and competitors that practice great sportsmanship, have the ability to look past their own teams, to honestly admire the skill and talent demonstrated by other teams and squad members. True ambassadors of cheer and dance sincerely hope that all competitors perform well. Coaches of classy, well-rounded programs take the time to educate their team members and the parents of their team members to practice Great Sportsmanship.

### The Role of the Coach

In a competition setting, it is the job of the coach to prepare his/her teams and fans for whatever the outcome—this makes perfect sense because, as we all know, judging is not a perfect science—it is subjective and based on judge's opinions. By adequately preparing team members to win as well as lose, coaches teach their kids lessons that will serve them well in life. As adults we all know that events in our lives don't often turn out exactly as we expect. When coaches allow their students to disrespect their fellow competitors (by pouting about results, for instance), they are forgetting the big picture. Instead of taking a golden opportunity to show class, many teams, spectators and coaches search for any reason for the outcome other than the obvious: the judges thought the other team was better.

### Teach Your Kids Important Lessons

For a large percentage of today's competitors, understanding what classy behavior is and choosing to practice it are definitely two different things. The right choice is often the one that is the most difficult to make or the one that involves the most personal sacrifice. Peer pressure to look cool or to follow the crowd is in many cases stronger than the core values of "do unto others" and simply being polite—this often leads to mean-spirited behavior. If all team members make more of an effort to sincerely wish others "good luck" and cheer for the other competing teams, the positive effect will be contagious. In any competition setting, please encourage your team members to treat other competitors as they would hope to be treated.

### Educate Your Championship Chaperones

The lessons taught by practicing good sportsmanship and showing respect for fellow competitors, are so important in today's volatile, highly competitive society. A look at the big picture reveals this: what is truly important about competition is what is learned from it rather than who wins and who loses. Parents play such a big part in the lives of children when it comes to putting the "big picture" in focus. Please encourage your parents, spectators and chaperones that attend competitions, to lead by example by supporting all competitors.

### The Sportsmanship Hall of Fame

We have designed the following reward system to recognize programs that emphasize and practice great sportsmanship at select tournaments. In order to be effective, recognition has to be given to all groups involved: the coaches, the parents and spectators as well as the team members—this is because each element is important to developing and sustaining a program characterized by "Great Sportsmanship".

When a team is selected to receive our highest award, induction into The American Championships Sportsmanship Hall of Fame, here is what happens: 1) during the awards ceremony the coach will come forward to receive our most prestigious award we give out, 2) each team member will receive an individual sportsmanship award, 3) spectators/parents who support the program will receive a standing ovation from the entire crowd and all participants, and 4) a contribution will be donated to STOP! Children's Cancer in the name of that team.

## LEGAL VERIFICATION

As a coach, it is important to stay up to date on current safety guidelines. Squad disqualification and deductions almost always take place due to the coach not being aware of the rules or misunderstanding the terminology. If you have any questions concerning the guidelines or questions regarding specific stunts and/or pyramids, follow the steps below. Please do not send us entire routines. If you do, please send time stamps and the specific element we are analyzing. **WE WILL NOT LOOK AT ENTIRE ROUTINES.**

### ALL STAR CHEER VERIFICATIONS

All legality verifications must be sent through the USASF. Be sure to allow for at least 15 business days to secure a ruling prior to your chosen event. For details: <http://usasfrules.com/cheerquestions/>.

### ALL STAR DANCE VERIFICATIONS

All legality verifications must be sent through the USASF. Be sure to allow for at least 15 business days to secure a ruling prior to your chosen event. For details: <http://usaf.net/safety/dance/legal/>.

**ALL OTHER LEGALITY VERIFICATIONS**

- 1) All correspondence must be in writing. Due to differences in interpretation and terminology, no phone calls will be accepted.
- 2) Verification of Legality of specific elements will be done by video review only. Whole routines will NOT be reviewed. DVD or video clip(s) (no larger than 10 mb) that contains the load, execution and dismount of the stunt/pyramid in question or the preflight, execution and landing of tumbling is accepted. DVDs/USB Drives will not be returned.
- 3) The American Championships will address all inquiries in writing regarding the clip in question. Hint: Do not depend on your choreographer or coach to determine if something is legal. It is better to be safe than sorry - if you have any questions whatsoever about the legality of any part of your routine, send The American Championships a video for verification.

Send a DVD/FLASH DRIVE

to:

Legality Department  
118 NW 14<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite A  
Gainesville, FL 32601

Email video clips (10MB limit)

to:

Subject: Legality Department  
[braxton@varsitygainesville.com](mailto:braxton@varsitygainesville.com)

**IMPORTANT NOTICES**

1. Coaches should carefully read the Disqualifications, Challenges, & Disputes AND Deduction/Infraction Criteria section (in the Scoring Guidelines) in case there are new requirements, procedures, and penalties.
2. In order to receive all pertinent competition information, coaches should ensure The American Championships has a functional email address on file AT ALL TIMES and check that email account frequently for new information regarding the event from The American Championships.
3. All competition registration changes MUST be submitted by online registration or in writing (Email, Fax, or USPS – listed in order of preference). It is the coaches' responsibility to ensure competition registration changes are received in a timely manner and processed correctly.
4. All participants are required to have proof of eligibility to be carried by the coach each day of competition. See "Proof of Eligibility" clause for your division type. Several teams/groups/individuals per division may be asked to produce this documentation at random—Failure to provide the above items upon request will subject teams to disqualification. In the event of disqualification, fees will not be returned.
5. We reserve the right to add, combine, delete or split divisions if necessary as well as move teams to appropriate divisions Team coaches should avoid attempting to have their squad compete in a division which would provide their team an unfair competitive advantage. No team is guaranteed another team to compete against.
6. We are not responsible for teams placed in the wrong division by their coach. There is a penalty for changing divisions within 14 days of the tournament. Changing divisions within 5 days of the tournament will not be processed, as a matter of general procedure. For example, if the number of members on your team changes, and as a result your team should be in a different division, small instead of large, it is the coach's responsibility to request a division change. Coaches should carefully read the Division Guidelines in the event brochure and section of this booklet. If at all possible, the Tournament Director(s) will attempt to place the team in the correct division. However, if insertion is not possible, the team will have to be disqualified. In the event of disqualification, fees will not be returned. Please consult event registration form for exact divisional structure as they may differ slightly for different tournaments.
7. **Routine Interruption:** In case of routine interruption, the team may perform the routine again in its entirety or let the performance stand as-is. If the team performs again, the routine must be performed full out from the beginning and the judges will begin evaluating the routine from the point of interruption—in effect, the team's score will be a combination of 1) the first performance up until the interruption and 2) the second performance from the point of interruption until the end of the routine. The timeframe within which the routine is performed again is at the sole discretion of the tournament officials. All Coaches should take necessary precautions to ensure their music will play without incident (clean CD free from smudges/scratches, MP3 player with new/fully charged battery with volume at maximum setting, personnel familiar with routine and the music media, etc).
8. **Injury in Backstage Warm-up:** If an injury occurs in the warm up room just prior to team performance, the coach should inform the tournament officials immediately. Tournament officials will assess the situation and determine the appropriate course of action. In most circumstances, if the injury is severe to the point that the athlete must be removed from the routine (for at least the day), the team may be moved to an open slot in the schedule as determined by tournament officials. However, if the athlete is to remain in the day's routine, the team should compete in their assigned slot. The injured participant may not return to compete for the remainder of the competition unless:
  - a. The competition officials receive clearance from, first, the medical personnel attending to that participant, and then the head

- coach of the competing team.
- b. If the medical personnel do not clear the participant, the participant can only return to the competition if a parent or legal guardian in attendance signs a return to participation waiver.
  - c. In the event of a suspected concussion, the participant cannot return to perform.
9. **Performance Stoppage due to Injury or Sickness:** The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed at a later time, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. During the re-performance, the team must perform the routine again full out from the beginning in its entirety, but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the injury occurred—in effect, the team's score will be a combination of 1) the first performance up until the point of injury as determined by tournament officials and 2) the second performance from the point of stoppage until the end of the routine. During the second performance, the team may or may not substitute another legally eligible participant from their organization in place of the injured participant. The injured participant may not return to compete for the remainder of the competition unless:
- a. The competition officials receive clearance from, first, the medical personnel attending to that participant, and then the head coach of the competing team.
  - b. If the medical personnel do not clear the participant, the participant can only return to the competition if a parent or legal guardian in attendance signs a return to participation waiver.
  - c. In the event of a suspected concussion, the participant cannot return to perform.
10. A Championship Official reserves the right to stop a routine, assess a deduction, and/or disqualify a team for a uniform distraction (e.g. garment not being securely fastened/attached, straps break, pants split, etc.). Each performer is required to take the necessary steps to avoid inappropriate exposure prior to the performance. If an official stops the routine or a performer leaves the floor to adjust a uniform a 2.0 penalty or disqualification may result. The team may or may not be given an opportunity to return to complete their performance.
11. The American Championships is NOT responsible for cancelled flights or any other unforeseen changes to your travel plans due to inclement weather or any other reason. We will, however, make every effort to help you, should your travel plans require changing. In the event these changes prevent your party or any subset from attending, no refunds will be granted.
12. Mascots are included in squad size for determining division – fees must be paid by mascots.
13. All team members should be prepared to perform in their scheduled time slot. If it is necessary to alter the order of competition because a team is not ready to perform, that team will be assessed a two point penalty at the discretion of the tournament director.
14. Order of performance schedules will be available online approximately 10 days prior to all championships at [ac.varsity.com](http://ac.varsity.com). Schedules will be updated frequently, please utilize to ensure proper division placement.
15. The American Championships has the authority to make a decision on any issue, protest, penalty or rule that is unclear or not specifically addressed in this book. The American Championships will render a judgment in an effort to ensure that the competition is conducted in a manner consistent with the general spirit and goals of the competition and The American Championships.
16. At an Event, questions or concerns regarding score sheets, legalities and other issues should be addressed exclusively by the coach/advisor/gym owner. Please direct such inquiries to Championship Check-In. The appropriate competition official will be contacted to discuss any questions or concerns.
17. Coaches who feel that another team has ineligible team members may issue a formal challenge in writing. All challenges must be made at the competition and prior to the award ceremony for the division of the team being challenged. In an effort to eliminate fraudulent challenges, the written challenge must be accompanied by a \$100 cash or money order deposit and actual proof of ineligibility. Please keep in mind that “she's too tall to be in the 4th grade/8 years old” is not proof. You must provide first-hand knowledge of ineligibility. If the challenge is upheld, the \$100 will be returned. If the challenge proves to be unwarranted, the \$100 may be forfeited. In addition, the team of the coach who presents the challenge will be subject to the same scrutiny as the team being investigated. Challenges issued by anyone other than a registered coach or by a coach in a division other than the one in question will not be processed.
18. **MUSIC POLICY:** The American Championships will only provide **MP3** compatible equipment in lieu of CDs to avoid the risk of skipping. Coaches using their phones to play routine music must place their phone in *airplane mode* prior to reporting to the sound table. The MP3 player should not be in a case to avoid the audio cable not making a complete connection and adversely affecting the successful playback. *Be sure to turn the sound all the way up on your MP3 player AFTER plugging in the audio cable and BEFORE pressing play.*

**GENERAL ALLSTAR CHEER TEAM INFORMATION****CHEER TEAM REQUIREMENTS**

1. All-Star gyms must compete in the appropriate All-Star division.
2. **PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY:** All team members are required to have proof of eligibility to be carried by the coach: copy of the current, OFFICIAL USASF ROSTERS printed from the USASF website.
3. Failure to provide the above items upon request will subject teams to disqualification. In the event of a disqualification, registration fees and deposits will not be returned.
4. Mascots are welcome to perform with their squads as long as they are registered participants and are included in the squad size.
5. Register your team in the appropriate division offered at your chosen championship based on the skills performed in your routine (See USASF Level Rules).
6. **Compete Restrictions -** An all-star cheerleader is limited to crossing over to 2 (two) additional cheer teams from their gym per competition. Therefore, an athlete may compete on one team and crossover to two more teams from the same gym during the competition.

**SET-UP GUIDELINES**

1. All team members must start within the competition area and the pre-building of partner stunts or pyramids will not be allowed before the timing starts. Teams may line up anywhere in the competition area. The competition area will be determined by the Championship Director; however, you will generally have an area which is 54' x 42' and a 5' buffer around the competition surface.
2. All stunt and tumbling skills must be performed (completed) on the performance floor. During the routine, team members may not leave the competition area. If this occurs, the team is subject to a penalty.
3. Cheer teams may use signs, megaphones, and poms. No other props. Flags are considered signs.
4. Introductions, spell-outs or organized entrances are considered part of the routine and are timed as part of the routine. Teams should walk on to the floor, place their props and immediately go to their starting position.
5. **TIME LIMIT:** Routine performance time may not exceed 2 minutes 30 seconds (2:30). 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.  
Clarification: All Star Prep routines shall not exceed 2:00.
6. Time your routine several times before using it at the competition. Penalties can be severe.
7. One representative from your group will be responsible for running your music during the competition. This person must remain at the sound table throughout the performance. Timing will begin with the first note of music, the first motion or the building of any stunt or pyramid. The American Championships will only provide MP3 compatible equipment in lieu of CDs to avoid the risk of skipping. Coaches using their phones to play routine music must place their phone in airplane mode prior to reporting to the sound table. The MP3 player should not be in a case to avoid the audio cable not making a complete connection and adversely affecting the successful playback. Be sure to turn the sound all the way up on your MP3 player AFTER plugging in the audio cable and BEFORE pressing play.

**ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES**

1. The Tournament Director may disqualify teams and/or individual competitors that do not adhere to the divisional requirements. In the event of a disqualification, registration fees will not be returned.
2. **Vulgar/Inappropriate Content:** Please consult the Penalties, Disqualifications & Disputes section of the Scoring Guidelines for details.
3. The American Championships will not provide additional spotters at our events. The guidelines of the USASF outline the number of spotters that are required to safely perform the various stunts and pyramids that are choreographed into routines. Since we follow these guidelines, squads have already incorporated the proper number of spotters into their routines. And since these spotters are familiar with the flow of the routine their capacity for inadvertent interference is greatly reduced. Coaches may supply a reasonable number (given team size and routine complexity) of their own additional, qualified spotters that are familiar with the routine as long as they agree to adhere to the following parameters: 1) The spotters may be anyone included on the team's registration form (coaches or members from other teams also competing at the event). 2) Spotters must wear clothing to distinguish them as designated spotters and not part of the team that is performing. 3) Spotters may not perform or help hold/brace any skills. Any skill that a spotter touches will be considered a fall (exception: spotters may reach under the cradle but may not be counted as catcher required by the safety guidelines). 4) Spotters should take reasonable steps to not block the view of the judges and spectators. 5) The coach assumes all responsibility and liability with regard to the training and performance of their additional spotters.
4. The age of the competitor as of August 31, 2016 will be the age used for competition purposes throughout the season for all divisions. The USASF recognizes the concern with fielding teams of a broad age range and will continue to address this, with the

goal of bottom and top age restrictions for all divisions in the future. It highly recommends that individual gyms/programs be vigilant in monitoring participants of various ages on the same team and that, whenever possible, a team's composition is made up of participants of similar ages.

5. Be sure to read the Important Notices section (page 3) carefully.

## AGE GRID & SPLITTING DIVISIONS

Please go to [www.usasf.net](http://www.usasf.net) for more details or click on the Age Grid Link below.

Age Grid in printable pdf format <http://usasfrules.com/>

## USASF LEVEL RULES

The American Championships, as a member of the USASF, will use the Level Guidelines and All Star Prep/Special Athlete guidelines posted at [www.usasf.net](http://www.usasf.net). There is a link below to make it easier to navigate to their website. You can also print out a full copy of the rules in pdf format.

Cheer Rules & Glossary in printable pdf format <http://usasfrules.com/>

Please keep in mind that all special athlete divisions offered by the American Championships are exhibition only. No score will be given; however, judges will provide feedback on the score sheets.

Be sure to read through the **USASF Image Policy** to be sure your uniforms and routine(s) are in compliance.

## GENERAL SCHOOL & REC CHEER TEAM INFORMATION

### CHEER TEAM REQUIREMENTS

1. School team members must be currently enrolled at the school the team represents.
2. **PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY:** All team members are required to have proof of eligibility to be carried by the coach.
  - a. **SCHOOL:** a copy of most recent report card.
  - b. **REC:** Official Team Game Roster
3. Failure to provide the above items upon request will subject teams to disqualification. In the event of a disqualification, registration fees and deposits will not be returned.
4. Mascots are welcome to perform with their squads as long as they are registered participants and are included in the squad size.
5. No Cross Compete Restrictions - Team members may compete on different teams from the same organization (provided they meet the appropriate grade requirements) without restriction.

### SET-UP GUIDELINES

1. All team members must start within the competition area and the pre-building of partner stunts or pyramids will not be allowed before the timing starts. Teams may line up anywhere in the competition area. The competition area will be determined by the Championship Director; however, you will generally have an area which is 54' x 42' and a 5' buffer around the competition surface.
2. All stunt and tumbling skills must be performed (completed) on the performance floor. During the routine, team members may not leave the competition area. If this occurs, the team is subject to a penalty.
3. Cheer teams may use signs, megaphones, and poms. No other props. Flags are considered signs.
4. Introductions, spell-outs or organized entrances are considered part of the routine and are timed as part of the routine. Teams should walk on to the floor, place their props and immediately go to their starting position.
5. **TIME LIMIT:** Routines cannot exceed 2 minutes and 30 seconds (2:30). Cheerleaders must have at least one foot on the performing surface when the routine starts. The routine may include a cheer portion or may be choreographed entirely to music. **EXCEPTION:** In FHSAA compliant divisions (where offered), the musical portion must not exceed 1 minute and 30 seconds (1:30), total time is 2 minutes and 30 seconds (2:30). Timing will begin with the first note of music, the first motion or the building of any stunt or pyramid. Competitors may do a spirited tumbling exit. The timing of the routine will end at the moment

prior to this exit when the squad hits its final motion. Time your routine several times before using it at the competition. Penalties can be severe.

6. One representative from your group will be responsible for running your music during the competition. This person must remain at the sound table throughout the performance. Timing will begin with the first note of music, the first motion or the building of any stunt or pyramid. The American Championships will only provide MP3 compatible equipment in lieu of CDs to avoid the risk of skipping. Coaches using their phones to play routine music must place their phone in airplane mode prior to reporting to the sound table. The MP3 player should not be in a case to avoid the audio cable not making a complete connection and adversely affecting the successful playback. Be sure to turn the sound all the way up on your MP3 player AFTER plugging in the audio cable and BEFORE pressing play.

#### ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

1. The Tournament Director may disqualify teams and/or individual competitors that do not adhere to the divisional requirements. In the event of a disqualification, registration fees will not be returned.
2. Vulgar/Inappropriate Content: Please consult the Penalties, Disqualifications & Disputes section of the Scoring Guidelines for details.
3. The American Championships will provide additional spotters at our events. The guidelines of the AACCA outline the number of spotters that are required to safely perform the various stunts and pyramids that are choreographed into routines. The American Championships spotters DO NOT SATISFY those guidelines. Squads must incorporate the proper number of spotters from the existing members of the registered team into their routines. Coaches may supply a reasonable number (given team size and routine complexity) of their own additional, qualified spotters that are familiar with the routine as long as they agree to adhere to the following parameters:
  - a. The spotters may be anyone included on the team's registration form (coaches or members from other teams also competing at the event).
  - b. Spotters must wear clothing to distinguish them as designated spotters and not part of the team that is performing.
  - c. Spotters may not perform or help hold/brace any skills. Any skill that a spotter touches will be considered a fall (exception: spotters may reach under the cradle but may not be counted as catcher required by the safety guidelines).
  - d. Spotters should take reasonable steps to not block the view of the judges and spectators.
  - e. The coach assumes all responsibility and liability with regard to the training and performance of their additional spotters.
4. The age of the competitor as of August 31, 2016 will be the age used for competition purposes throughout the season for all rec divisions. The USASF recognizes the concern with fielding teams of a broad age range and will continue to address this, with the goal of bottom and top age restrictions for all divisions in the future. It highly recommends that individual gyms/programs be vigilant in monitoring participants of various ages on the same team and that, whenever possible, a team's composition is made up of participants of similar ages.
5. Be sure to read the Important Notices section (page 3) carefully.

#### AACCA RULES

The American Championships will use the guidelines posted at [www.aacca.org](http://www.aacca.org) for School and Rec Cheer divisions. You can also print out a full copy of the rules in pdf format.

<http://cheerrules.com>

**PLEASE NOTE:** JH/MS & Rec cheer team divisions will follow AACCA Guidelines with the following restrictions: All basket tosses, elevator tosses and similar multi-based tosses are prohibited on all surfaces. **EXCEPTION: Rec Senior divisions are the only Rec divisions allowed to include tosses in their routines.**



## GENERAL DANCE TEAM INFORMATION

### DANCE TEAM REQUIREMENTS

1. School team members must be currently enrolled at the school the team represents.
2. If your team represents an All-Star gym, you must compete in the appropriate All-Star division.
3. **PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY:** All team members are required to have proof of eligibility to be carried by the coach.
  - All-Star Teams: copy of birth certificate (Open Adult All-Star teams may substitute a state issued photo ID such as a drivers license).
  - School Dance: copy of most recent report card (College teams may substitute a college photo ID)
4. Failure to provide the above items upon request will subject teams to disqualification. In the event of a disqualification, registration fees and deposits will not be returned.
5. No Cross Compete Restrictions -Team members may compete on different teams from the same organization (provided they meet the appropriate age/grade requirements) without restriction.

### SET-UP GUIDELINES

1. All team members must start within the competition area. Teams may line up anywhere in the competition area. The competition area will be determined by the Championship Director; however, you will generally have an area which is at least 54' x 42' and a 5' buffer around the competition surface.
2. During the routine, team members may not leave the competition area. If this occurs, the team is subject to a penalty.
3. Dance teams should walk on to the floor and immediately go to their starting position.
4. One representative from your group will be responsible for running your music during the competition. This person must remain at the sound table throughout the performance. Timing will begin with the first note of music, the first motion or the building of any stunt or pyramid. The American Championships will only provide **MP3** compatible equipment in lieu of CDs to avoid the risk of skipping. Coaches using their phones to play routine music must place their phone in airplane mode prior to reporting to the sound table. The MP3 player should not be in a case to avoid the audio cable not making a complete connection and adversely affecting the successful playback. Be sure to turn the sound all the way up on your MP3 player **AFTER** plugging in the audio cable and **BEFORE** pressing play.
5. Coaches should read division descriptions thoroughly to be sure they are placing their teams in the appropriate division.

### DIVISION DESCRIPTIONS

**Jazz:** A jazz routine incorporates stylized dance movements and combinations, formation changes, group work, leaps and turns.

Emphasis is placed on proper technical execution, extension, control, body placement and team uniformity.

**Hip-Hop:** Routines emphasize the street style movements with an emphasis on execution, style, creativity, body isolations and control, rhythm, uniformity and musical interpretation. Teams may also put an additional focus on athletic incorporations such as jumps, jump variations, combo jumps and other tricks. (*Examples: Dance Crew, Krumping, Breaking, Stepping, etc.*)

**Pom:** Pom poms must be used 80% of the routine. Important characteristics of a pom routine include synchronization and visual effect, clean and precise motions, strong pom technique, and incorporate dance technical elements. Visual effect includes level changes, group work, formation changes, the use of different color poms, etc.

**Kick:** Routines emphasize control, height uniformity, extension, toe points, timing and creativity of a variety of kick series. 50 kicks must be performed in the routine. For a kick to be counted, at least half of the team must perform the kick. A kick is defined as one foot remaining on the floor while the other foot lifts with force at least one inch from the floor.

**Contemporary/Lyrical:** A contemporary or lyrical routine uses organic, pedestrian and/or traditional modern or ballet vocabulary as it complements the lyric and/or rhythmic value of the music. Emphasis is placed on control, sustained, expressive movement, body placement, contraction/release, use of breath, uniformity, communication and technical skills.

**Variety:** Routines will incorporate a blend of jazz, pom and hip hop styles. Emphasis should be placed on overall creativity and flow of routine and successful technical execution of the dance styles performed.

**Open:** Can represent Rec, school, all-star, or studio organizations. A routine in this category may incorporate any one style or combination of styles outlined in the USASF category listings. All styles will be judged against each other in this category. Emphasis is placed on choreography, proper technical execution, visual effect, creativity, staging and team uniformity.

### ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES

1. The Tournament Director may disqualify teams and/or individual competitors that do not adhere to the divisional requirements. In the event of a disqualification, registration fees will not be returned.
2. **Vulgar/Inappropriate Content:** Please consult the Deduction/Infraction Criteria section for details.
3. The age of the competitor as of **August 31, 2015** will be the age used for competition purposes throughout the season for all

divisions. The USASF recognizes the concern with fielding teams of a broad age range and will continue to address this, with the goal of bottom and top age restrictions for all divisions in the future. It highly recommends that individual gyms/programs be vigilant in monitoring participants of various ages on the same team and that, whenever possible, a teams com position is made up of participants of similar ages.

4. Be sure to read the Important Notices section (page 3) carefully.

### **AGE GRID, COMBINING/SPLITTING DIVISIONS, & WORLDS SPLITS**

Please go to [USASF Dance Divisions and Categories](http://usasf.net/safety/dance/rules/) for more details. Visit: <http://usasf.net/safety/dance/rules/>

### **USASF DANCE TEAM RULES**

The American Championships, as a member of the USASF, will enforce the Guidelines posted at <http://usasf.net/safety/dance/rules/> for all dance divisions (team and solos/groups).

## CHEER SOLO & DUO/TRIO GUIDELINES

1. All competitors must start within the competition area and may line up anywhere in the competition area. The competition area will be determined by the Championship Director; however, you will generally have an area which is 54' x 42' and a 5' buffer around the competition surface.
2. All tumbling skills should be completed on the performance floor. During the routine, competitors may not leave the competition area. If this occurs, the performance is subject to a penalty.
3. Performances cannot exceed 2 minutes (2:00). Timing will begin with the first motion or word within a cheer or chant or the first note of music. The timing of the routine will end when the individual hits his/her final motion. Time your routine several times before using it at the competition. A penalty will be assessed for exceeding the time limit.
4. Introductions, spell-outs or organized entrances are considered part of the routine and are timed as part of the routine. Competitors should walk on to the floor, place their signs, megaphones, and/or poms and immediately go to their starting position.
5. A formal cheer is not required; however, proper motion technique must still be demonstrated.
6. One representative from your group will be responsible for running your music during the competition. This person must remain at the sound table throughout the performance. Timing will begin with the first note of music, the first motion or the building of any stunt or pyramid. The American Championships will only provide MP3 compatible equipment in lieu of CDs to avoid the risk of skipping. Coaches using their phones to play routine music must place their phone in airplane mode prior to reporting to the sound table. The MP3 player should not be in a case to avoid the audio cable not making a complete connection and adversely affecting the successful playback. Be sure to turn the sound all the way up on your MP3 player AFTER plugging in the audio cable and BEFORE pressing play.
7. Competitors may use signs, megaphones, and poms. No other props. Flags are considered signs.
8. The following are not allowed:
  - Mini-tramps or any height increasing apparatus
  - Drops including but not limited to knee, seat, thigh, front, back, and split drops from a jump or inverted position are prohibited unless the majority of the weight is first borne on the hands/feet, which breaks the impact of the drop. Shushinovas are allowed.
9. No stunting/lifts of any kind will be scored in the Cheer Duo/Trio routines.
10. Vulgar/Inappropriate content is not allowed.
11. Send in a video of questionable moves. Penalties are costly.
12. Tumbling skills follow the appropriate USASF Level Rules.

## PARTNER STUNT & STUNT GROUP GUIDELINES

1. All competitors must start within the competition area and may line up anywhere in the competition area. The competition area will be determined by the Championship Director; however, you will generally have an area which is 54' x 42' and a 5' buffer around the competition surface.
2. All stunts must be performed (completed) on the performance floor. During the routine, competitors may not leave the competition area. If this occurs, the performance is subject to a penalty.
3. Performances cannot exceed 1 minute and 15 seconds (1:15). The entire routine may be choreographed to music. The stunt divisions are scored solely on the group's/couple's abilities in the area of stunting. Timing will generally begin with the first note of music or the first stunt. The timing and scoring of the routine will end when the team/couple hits their final stunt or motion. Time your routine several times before using at the competition. A penalty will be assessed for exceeding time limit.
4. Introductions, spell-outs or organized entrances are considered part of the routine and are timed as part of the routine. Individuals should walk on to the floor and immediately go to their starting position.
5. One representative from your group will be responsible for running your music during the competition. This person must remain at the sound table throughout the performance. Timing will begin with the first note of music, the first motion or the building of any stunt or pyramid. The American Championships will only provide MP3 compatible equipment in lieu of CDs to avoid the risk of skipping. Coaches using their phones to play routine music must place their phone in airplane mode prior to reporting to the sound table. The MP3 player should not be in a case to avoid the audio cable not making a complete connection and adversely affecting the successful playback. Be sure to turn the sound all the way up on your MP3 player AFTER plugging in the audio cable and BEFORE pressing play.
6. Prebuilding of stunts is not allowed. All performers must start the routine with at least one foot on the floor.
7. Send in a video of questionable moves. Penalties are costly.
8. Partner Stunt Divisions

- Competitors must provide their own additional spotter who is familiar with the routine.
  - All partner stunt couples follow the appropriate USASF Level Rules.
9. Stunt Group Divisions
    - Must be all female (exception: 11 years & younger groups may include up to 1 male or unless otherwise noted).
    - Competitors may provide their own additional spotter who is familiar with the routine.
    - Are limited to a maximum of 5 competitors.
    - Open stunt groups follow Level 6 guidelines.
    - School stunt groups and All-Star stunt groups compete in separate divisions.
    - School stunt groups follow AACCA guidelines.
    - All-Star Star stunt groups follow the appropriate USASF Level Rules.
  10. Vulgar/Inappropriate content is not allowed.
  11. Mini-tramps or any height increasing apparatus are not allowed.

## AACCA RULES

The American Championships will use the guidelines posted at [www.aacca.org](http://www.aacca.org) for school stunt divisions. You can print out a full copy of the rules in pdf format.

<http://cheerrules.com>

**PLEASE NOTE:** *JH/MS & Rec cheer team divisions will follow AACCA Guidelines with the following restrictions: All basket tosses, elevator tosses and similar multi-based tosses are prohibited on all surfaces. EXCEPTION: Rec Senior divisions are the only Rec divisions allowed to include tosses in their routines.*

## USASF LEVEL RULES

The American Championships, as a member of the USASF, will use the Level Guidelines posted at [www.usasf.net](http://www.usasf.net). Use the link below to make it easier to navigate to their website. You can also print out a full copy of the rules in pdf format.

Cheer Rules & Glossary in printable pdf format <http://usasf.net/safety/>

## DANCE SOLO & DUO/TRIO GUIDELINES

1. All competitors must start within the competition area. The competition area will be determined by the Championship Director; however, you will generally have an area which is 54' x 42' and a 5' buffer around the competition surface.
2. During the routine, competitors may not leave the competition area. If this occurs, the performance is subject to a penalty.
3. Performances cannot exceed 2 minutes (2:00). Timing will begin with the first note of music or the first movement. Timing will end with the last note of music or the last movement. Time your routine several times before using it at the competition; A penalty will be assessed for exceeding the time limit.
4. One representative from your group will be responsible for running your music during the competition. This person must remain at the sound table throughout the performance. Timing will begin with the first note of music, the first motion or the building of any stunt or pyramid. The American Championships will only provide MP3 compatible equipment in lieu of CDs to avoid the risk of skipping. Coaches using their phones to play routine music must place their phone in airplane mode prior to reporting to the sound table. The MP3 player should not be in a case to avoid the audio cable not making a complete connection and adversely affecting the successful playback. Be sure to turn the sound all the way up on your MP3 player AFTER plugging in the audio cable and BEFORE pressing play.
5. Please be advised that not all players will be compatible and batteries do fail, so please have hard copy backups in CD format.
6. Dance Solos & Groups follow USASF dance rules.
7. Send in a video of questionable moves. Penalties are costly.
8. Vulgar/Inappropriate content is not allowed.

## USASF DANCE RULES

The American Championships, as a member of the USASF, will enforce the Guidelines posted at <http://usasf.net/safety/dance/rules/> for all dance divisions (team and solos/groups).

## **DISQUALIFICATIONS, CHALLENGES & DISPUTES**

### **Entering an Incorrect Division**

Coaches choosing to change divisions less than 14 days but more than 5 days before the start of competition check-in will be subject to a \$500.00 processing fee per performance division changed. To avoid this fee, all requests to change divisions must be received at least 14 days prior to the start of competition check-in. The American Championships, as a matter of general procedure, WILL NOT process division changes within 5 days of the start of competition check-in. Exceptions to these rules may, at times, be granted by the Tournament Director (new registrations, for example, may be treated differently), and may involve additional fees. If the number of members on your team changes, and as a result your team should be in a different division, for example small instead of large, it is the coach's responsibility to request a division change.

### **Inappropriate Behavior**

Abusive treatment of event staff by coaches, participants, and guests will NOT be tolerated. Coaches, team members, and guests who use abusive or offensive language towards event staff will be escorted from the arena. Coaches and team members who behave in this manner will subject their team to disqualification from the competition (no refunds) and exclusion from future events.

### **Disputes & Questions**

Tournament Director(s) is/are concerned with questions, complaints, and disputes that coaches may have during a tournament. However, the primary responsibility of the directors is administering present tournament activities. Therefore, all disputes, questions, etc. to the Tournament Director(s) must be received in writing (COACHES ONLY- Parents should direct all complaints/concerns to their coaches). If after reading a question or dispute, it is deemed necessary to address that question during the course of the competition, a tournament director will contact the coach. In many cases, disputes have to be handled after the championships.

### **Eligibility Challenges**

Coaches who feel that another team has ineligible team members may issue a formal challenge in writing. All challenges must be made at the competition and prior to the award ceremony for the division of the team being challenged. In an effort to eliminate fraudulent challenges, the written challenge must be accompanied by a \$100 cash or money order deposit and actual proof of ineligibility. Please keep in mind that "She's too tall to be in the 4th grade/8 years old" or "She looks too old to be in that division" is not proof. You must provide first-hand knowledge of ineligibility. If the challenge is upheld, the \$100 will be returned. If the challenge proves to be unwarranted, the \$100 may be forfeited. In addition, the team of the coach who presents the challenge will be subject to the same scrutiny as the team being investigated. Challenges issued by anyone other than a registered coach or by a coach in a division other than the one in question will not be processed.

### **Penalties for Violating Eligibility Rules**

1st Offense: All winnings, awards, and ranking are forfeited and that team is suspended from competing at the event the following year. The team is listed as "disqualified for ineligible members." Team coaches must present eligibility materials at check-in for all future events indefinitely. Team must pay \$500 fine before being allowed to compete again.

2nd Offense: Same penalties as above. In addition, suspension term is extended to three years and fine is raised to \$2000.

3rd Offense: Teams are suspended from competition participation indefinitely.

### **Grounds for Disqualification at the Discretion of Tournament Director:**

- Competing an ineligible member
- Competing with more members on a team than was registered
- Routine exceeding time limit by more than 45 seconds
- Gross display of un-sportsmanlike conduct witnessed by Tournament Official
- Found violating any rules on the hotel code of conduct form, or other registration materials.
- Failure to produce eligibility documentation
- Failure to follow divisional requirements