



A VARSITY BRAND

**2011-12 JR. HIGH/MIDDLE &
YOUTH TEAMS COMPETITONS
GENERAL INFORMATION**

ELIGIBILITY --- NEW!!!!

Entrants must be registered students in the school they are representing and/or official full-time members of their team at the time of competition. No members shall be older than 12th grade. The penalty for an eligibility violation may be team disqualification.

NEW!!!! YOUTH SPORTS SQUADS - Entrants for youth sports squads must represent a youth sports team. To compete in this category, a team must adhere to these guidelines:

- The team is affiliated with a governing youth organization (i.e. Pop Warner Football, P.A.L., local youth basketball or football league, etc.). The youth organization must include cheerleading bi-laws and follow a standardized set of cheerleading safety rules as part of the organization's charter. The cheerleading team must support, be affiliated with and be required to cheer for games in their organized sport (i.e. football, basketball) during the regular season.
- The advisor/coach of a youth sports squad must have in her/his possession at the USA competition a copy of their official league roster, which includes proof of registration/age of each of the competitors on the cheerleading team. It may or may not be asked for by the competition officials, but must be available.
- The participant's age as of August 1, 2011 will be used throughout the 2011-12 competition season. All team members must be within the age range for each division. For example, Midget Show Cheer is 11-15yrs. Therefore, you cannot be 10 years old and compete in this division.
- Affiliated youth teams will be referred to as Youth Sports on the competition schedule.

Any exceptions to the above must be pre-approved in writing by the USA office prior to the event.

NEW!!!! YOUTH OPEN SQUADS - Entrants for youth open squads are not associated with a youth organization (as defined above), or with an all star cheer gym/dance studio. To compete in this category, a team must adhere to these guidelines:

- The team is not affiliated with an all star cheer gym/dance studio or youth sports organization that includes cheer safety rules and cheer bi-laws as part of its charter.
- It is not mandatory that this team supports, is affiliated with, or cheer for an organized sport
- Youth Open teams are required to provide a team roster for USA events.
- The participant's age as of August 1, 2011 will be used throughout the 2011-12 competition season.
- Non-affiliated youth teams will be referred to as Youth Open on the competition schedule.

Any exceptions to the above must be pre-approved in writing by the USA office prior to the event.

CATEGORIES/DIVISIONS

The USA and/or its competition personnel reserves the right to delete, combine and/or divide categories and divisions as deemed necessary. If categories/divisions are altered, adjustments will be made in the awards.

An individual may not compete against her/himself in the same division/category (i.e. two Group Stunt teams). An individual may not compete on two teams within the same category type and/or divisions within a category when separated by size, stunt/tumbling limitations and/or age group [i.e. 1) Small and Large Jr. High Show Cheer divisions 2) Show Cheer

Novice and Show Cheer Advanced categories 3) Jr. Show Cheer Novice and Elementary Show Cheer Novice]. The penalty for this violation will be disqualification of one of the routines.

A team must compete in the same category/division at Nationals for which it qualified in at a Regional or Classic, unless prior written approval is received from the USA. (i.e. If you qualify for Show Cheer at a Regional or Classic, you may not compete in Co-Ed Show Cheer at Nationals unless you also qualify for that category at a Regional or Classic. Or if you qualify for Show Cheer - Novice at a Regional or Classic, you may not compete in Show Cheer - Advanced at Nationals unless you also qualify for that category at a Regional or Classic.)

If a team qualifies two or more times with a Superior rating in the Advanced level at a Regional or Classic competition, then that team may not move down to a lower technical division at Nationals.

Jr. High/Middle School Teams – All teams must represent a jr. high/middle school. 9th grade teams representing a high school may not compete in the jr. high/middle school categories/divisions.

Categories may not be divided if there are less than 10 teams competing in that division. If there are 10 or more teams entered, the category will be split at the discretion of competition officials into Small and Large accordingly, with team size for each division to be determined from the registration for that particular event. If a team participates in more than one category, routine and/or cheers must be different. For example, a team cannot repeat their Performance Cheer in the Show Cheer category. The penalty for this violation will be disqualification of one of the routines.

The limit to the number of individuals permitted on a team is 36 members.

Any exceptions to the above must be pre-approved in writing by the USA office prior to the event.

MUSIC

Music is defined as any recorded sound amplified through the competition sound system.

All teams who use music must provide their own CD or MP3 device for use on the event provided sound system. Music must be recorded at the correct tempo on a high quality CD or loaded onto an MP3 device. Music must be labeled with the team name, division, team size and be ready to play. One or several selections of music may be used. A sound system will be provided. Due to variability in sound systems, a back-up MP3 device must be available and present at the time of performance. Speed control is not available. Music checks on the main sound system are not permitted. A representative must be present at the sound system at the time of performance. Directors/coaches are asked to hold onto their own music until the time of performance and to take music back following the performance. Due to greater room for technical error with some CDs you must have a back-up MP3 of your routine available.

In an effort to comply with music licensing rules, all music for USA Junior Nationals must be registered with ASCAP, BMI, SESAC or a combination of ASCAP, BMI and/or SESAC should you qualify and choose to participate in the USA Junior Nationals event. A combination of ASCAP, BMI or SESAC with any other agency will not be permitted (i.e. ASCAP and EMI will not be allowed.) European titles are not allowed. Check the following websites to ensure that your music is registered with ASCAP, BMI or SESAC: www.ascap.com , www.bmi.com, www.sesac.com.

ENTRANCE/EXIT

Judges are looking for enthusiasm and showmanship during entrances and exits. Teams and individuals are encouraged to move on and off the floor as quickly as possible.

PERFORMANCE AREA

Performance boundaries at competitions will be a regulation basketball court (unless otherwise noted). All Regionals, Classics and Opens will have a carpet bonded foam mat on the performance area that measures 54'x42'. The mat may or may not be removed for the songleading/pom divisions. There will be no practicing on the performance floor prior to the competition.

Spring floors will **not** be used for school-based and/or youth cheer divisions.

All stunts and tumbling must be completed on the mat. At a Regional or Classic, a warning will be given for any infraction of this rule.

At Junior Spirit Nationals and Opens, a 3-point penalty will be assessed for any stunting or tumbling performed off of the mat. Mats at Junior Spirit Nationals and Opens will be removed for the songleading/pom divisions.

You will not receive a penalty if you step off of the mat at any USA competition (not tumbling or stunting related).

PERFORMANCE ORDER/SCHEDULES

Typically, performance order is based on the receipt of registrations. The first registration received will be the last to perform in that division and the last registration received will be the first to perform. Adjustments may be necessary due to division/team conflicts.

All teams will be given an assigned check-in and warm-up time prior to competition. Warm up areas will vary depending on the competition location.

The "Person to Receive Correspondence" will be sent/emailed a tentative line up with performance times at least 1 1/2 weeks prior to the competition. These times are subject to change. The final schedule will be available by checking <http://usa.varsity.com> after 5:00 p.m. (PST) the Wednesday prior to your competition. As of this day, performance times will remain the same regardless of scratches. It is the advisor's/coach's responsibility to check the schedule for accuracy of your competing division prior to the team taking the performance floor.

PENALTIES

Points will be deducted from the final team average for violations of safety rules and/or time limits. See below in addition to the 2011-12 Jr. High/Middle School/Youth Teams Show Cheer Division Limitations, the 2011-12 AACCA School Cheer Safety Rules and the 2011-12 USA Song/Pom/Pep Flag Safety Rules. See <http://usa.varsity.com> for these documents.

A) Safety Rules

3 points will be deducted from the final team average score for EACH occurrence of a safety rule violation or specialty skill/level restriction.

Competition Standard for Spotters

"Team Spotters" = are part of the performing team and required as part of specific types of stunting/pyramid/toss, etc. skills.

"Additional (Routine) Spotters" = Individuals on the competition floor provided as a safety precaution to spot certain elements of a routine. These are in addition to the team and do not take the place of "team spotters" required by specific types of stunting/pyramid/toss, etc. skills.

In an effort to promote a higher level of safety for competing athletes, USA will provide additional spotters at all USA school and recreational/youth cheer competitions. School and recreational/youth cheer programs do not always have a large number of staff and coaches available to spot routines. To ensure that the safety of participants is not compromised due to limited number of team provided spotters, "additional (routine) spotters" will be provided by the USA. Additional (routine) spotters cannot be provided by the performing team, they must be provided by the USA.

These USA-provided "additional (routine) spotters" will be mandatory on the competition floor.

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

B) Time

Timing will begin on the first note of music, the first word of the cheer, the first organized cheer or the first cheer movement, and will stop with the end of the cheer or last note of the music.

Penalties will be deducted from the final averaged score for going over the total routine time limit. Penalties will be assessed as follows: 1-10 seconds over = 1 point penalty; 11-20 seconds over = 2 point penalty, etc.

For school-based teams, up to 1:30 (90 seconds) of the routine may be performed to music. There is no restriction as to the proportion of the music section(s) used in relation to the cheer only section(s). Penalties will be deducted from the final

averaged score for going over the 1:30 total music time limit. Penalties will be assessed as follows: 1-10 seconds over = 1 point penalty; 11-20 seconds over = 2 point penalty, etc.

Exception – in Show Cheer, youth sports/open squads may use music for the entire routine length. School-based teams may not use music for the entire routine length.

In Songleading/Pom Pon, all female members must use two poms for at least half of the routine. There will be a 1 point penalty for every 5 seconds under the time requirement for pom use. (1-5 seconds under = 1 point penalty; 6-10 seconds under = 2 point penalty, etc.)

Due to the variability in sound systems, you should build in leeway in your routine to avoid timing penalties. It is suggested that routines end 3-5 seconds prior to the routine length time limit.

C) Performance Order/Division Changes

Preliminary competition schedules will be posted on the <http://usa.varsity.com> website by 5:00 p.m. (PST) 10 days prior to your competition date. It is the advisor's/director's responsibility to check all performance schedules for accuracy of your competing division prior to the team taking the performance floor.

Any changes to your original competition registration must be submitted in writing and faxed to 1.866.761.9365 or e-mailed to competitions@usacamps.com. **In order to avoid a possible penalty, any changes must be received in the USA office in writing by 5:00 p.m. (PST) the Friday one week prior to your competition date.**

Division changes may not be made the day of a Regional or Classic. At a Regional or Classic, a team performing in an incorrect division will be disqualified from competition, but may perform "Evaluation Only" to qualify for Nationals.

Division changes made the day of competition at an Open or National event may incur a 3-point penalty.

D) Uniforms

In all divisions, a school/team uniform that is worn for game/sideline cheering or performing must be worn (i.e. skirt and top). Costuming is not allowed. If an accessory or an article of clothing adds to the overall effect and/or theme of the routine, it will be considered "costuming". A deduction of 3 points will be taken if "costuming" is used.

In Cheer and Songleading/Pom Pon, props are not allowed. A deduction of 3 points will be taken if props are used. A prop is any physical object used to enhance the overall effect and/or theme of your routine. Hand-held signs, flags, poms or megaphones **are** permitted.

Shoes - All participants must wear shoes. This is a safety rule and if a violation occurs, 3 points will be deducted from the final team average score. All footwear must have soft soles and be non-marking.

When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff. If a violation occurs, 3 points will be deducted from the final team average score.

Uniform Distractions – The Safety Judge, Head Judge or other competition 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 a judge/competition official stops the routine the penalty will vary from 3 points to possible disqualification of the routine.

E) Appropriateness of Choreography, Music, Outfitting - All facets of a performance or routine, including choreography, music selection and outfitting, should be suitable for family viewing and listening. Uniforms for all team types should be appropriate for the age of the participants performing the routine.

In general, performances from school-based teams, including but not limited to the actual routine, signs, cheers, chants and hand signals/gestures, should adhere to outfitting, performance and music guidelines and criteria in place and approved by the administration or institution which the team represents.

Deductions will be given for vulgar or suggestive choreography, which includes, but is not limited to, movements such as hip thrusting and inappropriate touching, gestures, hand/arm movements and signals, slapping, positioning of body parts and positioning to one another. Deductions will be given for music or words unsuitable for family listening, which includes, but is not limited, to profanity and connotations of any type of sexual act or behavior, drugs, mention of specific parts of the

body torso, and/or violent acts or behavior. Removing improper language or words from a song and replacing with sound effects or other words may be considered inappropriate, and deductions will be made accordingly.

Any uniform or music in which the appropriateness is questionable or with which uncertainty exists should be submitted to the USA for approval prior to competing.

INSURANCE

Each participant must have his/her own personal insurance. All competitors must submit a USA Medical Release and Appearance Form at each competition in order to compete. The host facility, the host facility district, the directors/sponsors and/or the USA will not be responsible or held liable for any injuries occurring at a USA competition.

First aid staff will be on site at all competitions to provide assistance for emergencies only. Taping of wrists/ankles for individual performers **will not be provided**, unless medically necessary to treat an injury.

FOOD

At most locations, food and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the competition. Food purchased at the competition venue may or may not be permitted inside the performance venue. Food purchased outside of the competition venue is not permitted inside the performance venue at any location.

DRESSING ROOMS

Limited dressing rooms and/or restrooms will be available. The USA and/or the host facility will not be responsible for any lost or stolen articles.

GENERAL ADMISSION

At Regionals, Classics and Opens, two complimentary admissions will be allotted at registration to each competing school/team for advisors and/or coaches. Additional tickets for spectators, advisors, coaches and/or "routine spotters" may be purchased at the door for each competition.

CATEGORIES/DIVISIONS RULES

Sample scoresheets for all USA competitions will be available on-line by visiting <http://usa.varsity.com> after September 1, 2011.

You must visit the USA website at <http://usa.varsity.com> for a complete listing of the following:

- 2011-12 USA Junior Spirit Nationals Divisions
- 2011-12 USA Jr. High/Middle School/Youth Teams Show Cheer Division Limitations
- 2011-12 AACCA School Cheer Safety Rules
- 2011-12 USA Song/Pom and Pep Flag General Safety Rules for School and Youth Teams

SHOW CHEER – ADVANCED

NUMBER ON TEAM

6-36 members

DIVISIONS

Refer to division grid at <http://usa.varsity.com>.

ROUTINE PROCEDURE

Execute routine of your choice using a combination of music and words. Audience participation is encouraged. Props and costuming are not allowed. Signs and/or flags are permitted but may not be worn as an article of clothing or accessory. **For school-based teams** - Up to 1:30 (90 seconds) of the routine may be performed to music. There is no restriction as to the proportion of the music section(s) used in relation to the cheer only section(s). Penalties will be deducted from the final averaged score for going over the 1:30 total music time limit. Penalties will be assessed as follows: 1-10 seconds over = 1 point penalty; 11-20 seconds over = 2 point penalty, etc. **For youth squads** - Music may be used for the entire length of the routine.

SAFETY RULES: As with all categories, routines in these divisions must follow the 2011-12 AACCA School Cheer Safety Rules. In addition to these rules, you must follow the restrictions listed on the 2011-12 Jr. High/Middle School/Youth Teams

Show Cheer Division Limitations which may be found on-line at <http://usa.varsity.com>. No more than 1 “routine spotter” per 8 performers recommended – up to a maximum of 4 “routine spotters.”

SPECIALTY SKILL RETRICTIONS

1) Free from contact twist dismounts and/or free from contact twist skills to/from a stunt of any type (i.e. full down/full twist cradles, single log rolls, etc.) are limited to one twist. Exception: 1¼ dismounts to cradle are permitted from side facing stunts. 2) Basket, sponge, elevator or similar type of tosses are not permitted.

TOTAL ROUTINE TIME LIMIT

2 ½ minutes maximum

SHOW CHEER – NOVICE

NUMBER ON TEAM

6-36 members

DIVISIONS

Refer to division grid at <http://usa.varsity.com>.

ROUTINE PROCEDURE

Execute routine of your choice using a combination of music and words. Audience participation is encouraged. Props and costuming are not allowed. Signs and flags are permitted but may not be worn as an article of clothing or accessory. **For school-based teams** - Up to 1:30 (90 seconds) of the routine may be performed to music. There is no restriction as to the proportion of the music section(s) used in relation to the cheer only section(s). Penalties will be deducted from the final averaged score for going over the 1:30 total music time limit. Penalties will be assessed as follows: 1-10 seconds over = 1 point penalty; 11-20 seconds over = 2 point penalty, etc. **For youth teams** - Music may be used for the entire length of the routine.

SAFETY RULES: As with all categories, routines in these divisions must follow the 2011-12 AACCA School Cheer Safety Rules. In addition to these rules, you must follow the restrictions listed on the 2011-12 Jr. High/Middle School/Youth Sports Teams Show Cheer Division Limitations which may be found on-line at <http://usa.varsity.com>. No more than 1 “routine spotter” per 8 performers recommended – up to a maximum of 4 “routine spotters.”

SPECIALTY SKILL RETRICTIONS

Tumbling: 1) All tumbling, both standing and running must have both hands and/or feet on the performance surface at all times. Therefore, skills including, but not limited to the following are not permitted: aerials, back tucks, punch fronts, layouts, fulls, etc. Back handsprings are allowed.

Stunts/Pyramids/Tosses: 1) Extended freestanding one-legged stunts are limited to a liberty only. 2) All other extended one-legged stunts (i.e. arabesque, hitch, heel stretch, etc.) must be braced on at least one side by another top person who is at shoulder stand height or lower. 3) Free from contact twist dismounts and/or free from contact twist skills to/from a stunt of any type are prohibited (i.e. full down/full twist cradles, single log rolls, etc.). Exception: ¼ dismounts to cradle are permitted. 4) Basket, sponge, elevator or similar type of tosses are not permitted.

TOTAL ROUTINE TIME LIMIT

2 ½ minutes maximum

PERFORMANCE CHEER

NUMBER ON TEAM

6-36 members

DIVISIONS

Refer to division grid at <http://usa.varsity.com>.

ROUTINE PROCEDURE

Execute cheers of your choice. Audience participation is encouraged. Music is not allowed in this category.

SAFETY RULES: As with all categories, routines in these divisions must follow the 2011-12 AACCA School Cheer Safety Rules. In addition to these rules, you must follow the restrictions listed on the 2011-12 Jr. High/Middle School/Youth Teams Show Cheer Division Limitations which may be found on-line at <http://usa.varsity.com>. No more than 1 “routine spotter” per 8 performers recommended – up to a maximum of 4 “routine spotters.”

SPECIALTY SKILL RETRICTIONS

1) Free from contact twist dismounts and/or free from contact twist skills to/from a stunt of any type (i.e. full down/full twist cradles, single log rolls, etc.) are limited to one twist. Exception: 1¼ dismounts to cradle are permitted from side facing stunts. 2) Basket, sponge, elevator or similar type of tosses are not permitted.

TOTAL ROUTINE TIME LIMIT

2 minutes maximum

SONGLEADER/POM PON

NUMBER ON TEAM

3-36 members

DIVISIONS

Refer to division grid at <http://usa.varsity.com>.

ROUTINE PROCEDURE

Execute any type of pompon/songleading routine. All female members must use two pompons for at least half of the routine. (See time penalty.) Props are not allowed in this division. A deduction of 3 points will be taken if props are used. A prop is any physical object used to enhance the overall effect and/or theme of your routine.

SAFETY RULES

Routines in these divisions must also follow all the 2011-12 USA Song/Pom and Pep Flag General Safety Rules for School and Youth Teams. No additional restrictions besides those listed in the 2011-12 USA Song/Pom and Pep Flag General Safety Rules for School and Youth Teams apply for this category.

ALL TEAMS

School/team uniform must be worn (i.e. skirt and top). Pants are not allowed. Costuming is not allowed. If an accessory or an article of clothing adds to the overall effect and/or theme of the routine, it will be considered "costuming". A deduction of 3 points will be taken if "costuming" is used.

TOTAL ROUTINE TIME LIMIT

2 ½ minutes maximum

GROUP STUNT

NUMBER ON TEAM

Four - Five members, including spotter (all female or all male).

DIVISIONS

There will be one division.

ROUTINE PROCEDURE

The participants all must be from the same school. Execute stunts of your choice. Background music is encouraged. Additional spotters are not permitted.

SAFETY RULES: As with all categories, routines in these divisions must follow the 2011-12 AACCA School Cheer Safety Rules. No tumbling or stunt/pyramid/toss restrictions besides those listed in the 2011-12 AACCA School Cheer Safety Rules apply for this category. 1 "routine spotter" is permitted for this division.

TOTAL ROUTINE TIME LIMIT

1 minute maximum

TUMBLING, STUNT AND SAFETY RULES

Routines at all USA competitions must follow the 2011-12 AACCA School Cheer Safety Rules, 2011-12 USA Show Cheer Division Limitations for School and Youth Teams and the 2011-12 USA Song/Pom and Pep Flag General Safety Rules for School and Youth Teams.

For specific cheerleading stunt and safety questions that only pertain to the AACCA School Cheer Safety Rules, or to the 2011-12 Jr. High/Middle School/Youth Teams Show Cheer Division Limitations please call 1-800-686-5718.

For specific song/pom or pep flag/short flag safety questions that only pertain to the 2011-12 USA Song/Pom/Pep Flag Safety Rules for School and Youth Teams, please call 1-800-886-4872 ext. 2004.

Submitting a DVD is the only way to review a routine for potential safety violations prior to a competition.

Submission of a routine does not guarantee that it can be reviewed.

All rules and division limitations may be downloaded at <http://usa.varsity.com>.

FOR COMPETITION DIVISION QUESTIONS, CALL:

1.800.886.4USA(4872)