



# OFFICIAL CHEER RULES AND PROCEDURES

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In the event of any conflict in language between any past, present or future printed version of these TYFCA Official Rules & Procedures and the TYFA.ORG online version, the TYFA.ORG online version shall have priority.

## AMENDMENTS & CHANGES

**Amendments & Changes are Highlighted**

## **RULE 1 THE CHEERLEADING COMMITTEE**

- 1.1** The cheerleading program is a component of TYFA, known as the Tennessee Youth Football Cheerleading Alliance.  
It will also be known as TYFCA. TYFCA shall be under the direction of the Cheerleading Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Committee of TYFA and governed by the Constitution, By-Laws, and Rulebook of TYFA as administered by the TYFA Executive Board.
- 1.2** The Cheerleading Committee shall elect a Vice President of Cheerleading and Secretary from member communities.
- 1.3** The Vice President of Cheerleading shall appoint an Athletic Director for each Division.
- 1.4** The term of Vice President and Secretary shall be two (2) year terms, with no member community holding more than one (1) of these 2 offices.
- 1.5** The Vice President of Cheerleading shall be at all regular TYFA meetings to report on cheerleading matters.
- 1.6** The Cheerleading Committee may change any rules regarding competition at the April meeting only. Requests for changes will be proposed no later than March 1st and voted on at the April meeting.
- 1.7** Changes in procedures and regulations may be made at any time during the year, with a majority vote of the members where a quorum of voting members is present.
- 1.8** All changes by the Cheerleading Committee must be reported to the TYFA Executive Committee.
- 1.9** The Vice President of Cheerleading shall appoint an Ethics Committee comprised of a Chairman and five Committee members having at least one representative from each Conference. All Ethics complaints will be brought to the attention of the Chair for resolution by the entire Committee. In the event the complaint involves one of the Committee Member's Community, the Vice President of Cheer will take the place of the respective community for that hearing only. The Ethics Committee will be responsible for all information pertaining to the Season Sportsmanship Award. Said committee shall determine the recipient of the Sportsmanship Award based on information received and observations of the members of the committee.

## **RULE 2 ROSTERS & ELIGIBILITY**

- 2.1** All cheerleaders must roster with TYFA in accordance with TYFCA rules for Game Day squads on TYFA Fee Day.  
Game Day squads are to be formed at the discretion of each individual community as to age limitations.
- 2.2** A government issued proof of birth document (copies only-no mother's copy) is required for all cheerleaders and are to be turned in with the game day rosters and a seventeen (17) dollar fee per cheerleader on Fee Day. Rosters and birth documents are to be on file with the TYFA VP of Cheer.

- 2.3** To be eligible for TYFCA Competition/Exhibition and Cheerleading, a cheerleader must be five (5) years old as of July 31 of the current year and may not be fifteen (15) years old or older before August 1 of the current year.
- 2.4** No one under the age of five (5) as of July 31 of the current year is to be rostered and will not be allowed on the sidelines or the approved cheering area (NO MASCOTS). To be eligible for TYFCA Competition a cheerleader must be an active participant on a game day squad for the entire season.
- 2.5** You may not participate simultaneously on a competitive cheer squad, dance team or school squad during TYFA's season (July- November)

### **RULE 3 GAME DAY PROTOCOL AND PRACTICE CRITERIA**

- 3.1** Half-time cheers, dances, or stunts will be limited to three (3) minutes per squad & are to be performed for the opposing crowd. Game day stunts shall follow the height guidelines.
- 3.2** The visiting squad shall be introduced and perform first, followed by the home cheer squad. Dance teams will perform next in the same order as the cheer squads.
- 3.3** At the end of the game, all cheerleaders shall line up behind the football team for the purpose of shaking hands with the opposing team and their cheerleaders.
- 3.4** If a football player becomes injured during a game, both cheerleading squads are to stop cheering, kneel on one knee, or stand quietly, until the player is up or removed from the playing field, at which time the injured player should be applauded.
- 3.5** All cheers, chants, and music are to be free of vulgar words, phrases, and motions. No type of derogatory cheer will be allowed. This includes the Spirit cheer that is shouted across the field. The penalty for violation of this rule shall be: 1st offense – a warning for the coach; 2nd offense – the coach will be called to appear before the TYFCA Ethics Committee; 3rd offense – the coach is removed from TYFCA.
- 3.6** Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated and is subject to go before the Ethics Committee.
- 3.7** Cheerleading coaches are to keep their cheerleaders off the playing field and within the defined sidelines boundaries, as designated by the home team, except at half time.
- 3.8** Each squad must be accompanied by at least one (1) coach on game day. No squad should be on the field without a certified coach.
- 3.9** All participant uniforms must cover the midriff when standing at attention. Covered midriff does include flesh or nude colored body suits and liners; however, fringe would not count as a cover.
- 3.10** Basket tosses, elevator tosses, and similar multi-base tosses are prohibited. Sideline stunting may be done at half time or between 1st & 2nd or 3rd & 4th quarters while the ball is not in play. Competition

height restrictions apply for game day also.

- 3.11** During the pre-season and prior to the first season game played on the Official TYFA Schedule there is no limit to the number of days a squad or member community may practice.
- 3.12** Once the first regular season game of the Official TYFA Schedule is played practice is limited to three (3) days per calendar week with the exception of the two (2) weeks prior to Competition in which there will be no limit to the number of practice days.
- 3.13** All camps and clinics must be held no less than 14 days before the start of practice. They must be open to all and advertised on the TYFA website prior to camp dates.

#### **RULE 4 GUIDELINES FOR CHEERLEADING COACHES**

- 4.1** All coaches and directors that enter the playing field on game day or for competition/exhibition must be listed on the squad's roster and be NYSCA or TYFCA certified. Anyone not rostered and wearing their TYFCA or NYSCA badge along with a photo ID will not be permitted in approved cheerleading area. Only two cheer coaches are allowed on the sidelines during games.
- 4.2** All cheerleading coaches shall be prohibited from using any form of tobacco, alcohol, or illegal drugs as well as any form of profanity while on the playing field or practice field, or at any time while in contact with children.
- 4.3** Coaches are to be familiar with cheerleading techniques, stunts, and jumps.
- 4.4** Coaches are to be on time and should set a good example for their squads and communities at all times.
- 4.5** Coaches are to be in control at all times, whether at a game or practice.
- 4.6** Coaches are to treat all cheerleaders, parents, and other coaches (football and cheerleading) with respect.
- 4.7** Coaches should always look the part by dressing appropriately and with spirit in mind at games and practices.
- 4.8** Cheerleading coaches are to treat all cheerleaders fairly, teach all cheerleaders equally, and make them feel a part of the squad.
- 4.9** Cheerleading coaches are to present themselves in a positive manner, even when critiquing their squad.
- 4.10** Coaches and Directors are to carry certification badges at all games, practices, and competition/exhibition.

## **RULE 5 CHEERLEADING NOTES AND DEFINITIONS**

- 5.1** NO SQUAD should perform any stunts without first performing skill progression drills and proper step and lock procedures. All skills should be mastered before progressing to the next skill level to ensure safety to the cheerleaders.
- 5.2** TOP PERSON – a person who is held off the floor by another person or persons
- 5.3** BASE – a person who supports the majority of a top person’s weight while the top person is off the ground.
- 5.4** SPOTTER – a person who is responsible for assisting or catching the top person in a partner stunt or pyramid. This person cannot be in a position of providing primary support for a top person but must be in a position to protect the top person coming off of a stunt or pyramid.
- 5.5** CRADLE- a dismount form a partner stunt, pyramid or toss in which the top person is caught in a face-up, piked position before being placed on the performance area or remounting into another stunt, pyramid or loading position.
- 5.6** LOADING POSITION – a position in which the top person is off the ground in continuous movement that puts the bases and top in a position to end the movement in a stunt.
- 5.7** STUNT – one or more bases supporting one or more top persons of off the ground.
- 5.8** CUPIE – a stunt in which both feet of the top person are in one hand of a base.
- 5.9** BASKET TOSS – a stunt in which a top person is tossed by bases whose hands are interlocked.
- 5.10** ELEVATOR TOSS – a stunt in which the top person loads into an elevator loading position and is then tossed into the air.
- 5.11** DOUBLE BASED SUSPENDED ROLL- dismount with a foot-over-head rotation where the top person has continuous hand-to-hand contact with two bases who are controlling the top person onto the performance surface or into a cradle.

## **RULE 6 COMPETITION JUDGES**

- 6.1** The judges used in TYFCA competition shall not have any ties with TYFA and shall be UCA or NCA certified.
- 6.2** There shall be four (4) judges for the TYFCA competition. One judge will serve as the violation judge and will keep the music time. They will be paid \$100 each.

- 6.3** The judges will give scores in the following categories:
- 6.3.A** Spirit
  - 6.3.B** Cheer
  - 6.3.C** Stunts/Jumps
  - 6.3.D** Dance
  - 6.3.E** Presentation
- 6.4** Individual trophies will be awarded to each first place overall cheerleader with a plaque/trophy for the winning coach.
- 6.5** Each cheerleader will receive an award for participation.
- 6.6** All score sheets are to be in triplicate. The original will be on file with the Vice President of Cheer, one copy will be given to the respective coach, the third copy to the Community Director. There will be a sample score sheet in the back of this rulebook to keep it uniform from year to year.
- 6.7** The judges will make their final tabulations and send them to the scorer's table. They will then be entered into the computer before any awards are presented.
- 6.8** In the event of a 1st place tie in total score both squads will receive trophies for 1st place.
- 6.9** By participating in this Competition, each squad agrees that the decision by the judges will be final and will not be subject for review. Each squad acknowledges the necessity for the judges to make prompt and fair decisions in this competition and each squad expressly waives any legal, equitable, administrative or procedural review of such decisions.
- 6.10** There will be a trophy presented to the Community exhibiting the Best Sportsmanship for the entire Season. The Ethics Committee will receive information for the entire season and Competition from all members of TYFA Cheer and base their decision upon all received information.

## **RULE 7 CHEERLEADING COMPETITION/EXHIBITION RULES**

- 7.1** TYFCA shall hold a competition/exhibition for all squads, to be scheduled by the Cheerleading Committee and approved by the Executive Committee. The registration fee to be paid on Competition Fee Day will be twenty (20) dollars which will include a t-shirt for each participant. The fee will apply to competition and exhibition. No one can cheer down. No one can cheer up more than 1 Division. 7/8 year old's will not combine with 9/10 year old's.
- 7.2** Competition squads will be formed by age divisions.



**7.3** The Age divisions for the TYFCA Cheer Competition will be as follows;

Pee-Wee Div.	5-6
C Division	7-8
C Mix	5-6-7-8
B Division	9-10
A Division	11-12
A Mix	9-10-11-12
Varsity	13-14
Varsity Mix	11-12-13-14

- 7.4** To insure a sense of fairness between communities, no squad is to procure professional assistance. Such professional assistance includes, but is not limited to: coaching and professionally prepared routines, cheers, dances, stunts, tumbling, etc. Any professional assistance should be limited to coach's clinics and any community cheer clinics held before Jamboree. This does not apply to cheerleaders taking individual tumbling or gymnastic lessons.
- 7.5** Competition/Exhibition Fee Day will be at the regular September meeting of TYFCA.
- 7.6** A squad may participate in competition or exhibition – but not both.
- 7.7** Each squad's presentation must include at least one cheer or sideline chant. The musical portion must be a minimum of 30 seconds & not exceed one minute and thirty seconds, total time limit is three minutes. A dance routine is required from all squads participating. Stunts may be performed during music but will not be included in dance score. In order to meet judging criteria, it is strongly recommended that each squad devote ample time to the dance. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first – after the squad is in place on the mat. If a squad exceeds either time limit, a 5 point per judge penalty will be assessed for each violation. Because penalties are severe, it is recommended that all squads time their routine several times prior to the competition and leave a several second cushion to allow for variations in sound equipment
- 7.8** Community directors are responsible for the content of each squad's music. Vulgar or obscene music will not be allowed and any squad using such will receive a zero (0) for dance score. The TYFCA Ethics Committee will monitor all music. Anything in question will be reviewed immediately after the squad's performance and a determination reached before the scoring is completed.
- 7.9** The use of mats is required for competition and exhibition. The mat size will be at least 40'x40' with no special markings.
- 7.10** Cheerleaders will be allowed to place signs/poms/etc. on the mat prior to beginning of routine. Time starts when the music starts or at the first movement after taking places on the mat (squads will be allowed to spirit onto the mat with that not counting toward their time). Time ends upon completion of the routine. However, it is recommended that the ending position be held for several seconds. Then all signs etc. may be removed from the mat upon exit.
- 7.11** Team mothers, assistant coaches, and coaches will NOT be allowed to place poms on the floor for

any squad.

Coaches are to stay behind their squad to alleviate any prompting by the coaches

- 7.12** Coaches or a designated representative may start their squad's music or may elect to have a representative of TYFCA do so. Coaches are asked to provide two (2) forms of music (CD and Cassette) in case of equipment failure. Coaches that are concerned about the timing of their music are encouraged to start the music themselves as no protests or appeals will be tolerated concerning this matter.
- 7.13** Squads will be limited to a maximum of 24 unless approved by the Board of TYFA Cheer prior to Competition.  
Requests shall be made on or before Competition Fee Day.
- 7.14** All squads are to check-in one (1) hour prior to their scheduled performance time. Failure to do so may result in forfeiture of practice time. No squad will be allowed on the floor of the competition site before or during competition, except during their actual time to compete.
- 7.15** Cheerleaders and coaches of performing squads are to be in their designated areas at all times.
- 7.16** Poms, flash cards, and megaphones are allowed. All other items considered as props are not allowed. Glitter is allowed provided that it has been applied prior to entry to the competition building. Judges will be advised that this penalty will be enforced by the TYFCA Board. Hats, gloves etc. are not considered props if worn the entire time. As long as they are not removed, they are considered a part of the uniform. A penalty of five (5) points will be assessed to a squad's overall score for any violation of this rule.
- 7.17** Basket tosses are no longer allowed.
- 7.18** Stunts and pyramids must follow NCA or UCA safety guidelines.
- 7.19** Height limits are as follows:  
Ages 5 & 8 may go to shoulder  
Ages 9 – 14 may go full extension
- 7.20** Any violation of these limits will result in a score of 0 (zero) for the stunt category and the coach of the squad violating these height limits will be suspended from TYFA for a length of time as determined by the TYFCA Board following a recommendation by the TYFCA Ethics Committee.
- 7.21** If stunts are performed ABOVE WAIST HIGH, continuous spotters shall be required. Thigh stands and shoulder sits DO NOT require spotters. A penalty of five (5) points will be assessed against the overall score of any squad violating this rule.
- 7.22** Any squad performing an illegal stunt (as defined by UCA and AACCA for High School) will be disqualified and the coaches will be suspended from TYFCA for a length of time as determined by the TYFCA Board following a recommendation by the TYFCA Ethics Committee.

## **RULE 8 COMPETITION FEES AND OTHER RULES**

- 8.1** Admission to TYFCA Competition/Exhibition shall be \$5.00 at the door or \$3.00 by purchase of a wristband prior to the Competition date. These will be available for purchase from any cheerleader up until the Sunday before Competition.
- 8.2** Admission is free to all rostered TYFA football players wearing their game jerseys and to all children twelve (12) and under.
- 8.3** All TYFA certified coaches will be admitted to the Competition for no fee if they present a valid certification card.
- 8.04** Until such time as the TYFCA Board shall vote otherwise, the site of Competition will be Blackman High School in Murfreesboro.
- 8.05** The cheer director of each community participating in Competition/Exhibition will be required to be there all day on Saturday. Each Community Director will be assigned a specific area of responsibility (for example, t-shirt sales, trophies, etc.), which will be attended by the Director or workers from their community at all times. Any community in violation of this rule will forfeit their Competition profit share. The profit shares will be distributed according to the number of girls participating from each community.

## **RULE 9 DANCE TEAMS**

- 9.1** A community may elect to form Dance Teams to perform at half time.
- 9.2** Each Dance Team must be rostered with TYFA on Fee Day.
- 9.3** All dances must be limited to 3 minutes at half time and shall follow the Cheer Squad performances.
- 9.4** Professional dance instruction shall be limited to the rostered Dance Team only. No such instruction is to be shared with any Cheer Squad.
- 9.5** No more than 2 members of the same Dance Team may be rostered on a Competition Cheer Squad.

### **TYFCA OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

Shannon Reeder, Vice President Cheerleading  
Heather Faracci, Secretary  
Karmen Whitaker, Athletic Director  
Tamara Llano, Ethics Chairman

### **CHECKLIST FOR COMPETITION/EXHIBITION**

Make envelopes for score sheets – on the outside, write each category, the squad and division. Make badges for coaches.

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Secure announcer and sound equipment.

Trophies and awards. Contact video person. T-shirts

Decorations

Print enough score sheets for the judges and fill in squad name, etc. Hospitality room (be sure to have bottled water for judges). Computer operator.

Beginning cash for gate.

Print forms for announcer (winners) Contact Premier for mats and spotters Secure judges