

Section IX Cheerleading Competition



2025-2026

SECTION IX CHEERLEADING COMMITTEE

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Section IX Cheerleading Judges

Albano, Regina

President

Keesler, Kelly

Rules Interpreter

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Vice President

Bult, Erin

Secretary

Vacant

Treasurer

Bruno, Samantha

Assignor

Mady, Heather
Lanfrit, Gabrielle

Recreation Liasons

NYSPHSAA

Competitive Cheerleading - Full Implementation

In an effort to assist NYSPHSAA member schools with questions and concerns pertaining to competitive cheerleading, please reference the topics and information included in this document. For additional information, please contact: Todd Nelson, NYSPHSAA Assistant Director at tnelson@nysphsaa.org / (518) 690-0771.

Traditional Cheer vs. Competitive Cheer: The NYSPHSAA Cheerleading Committee has recommended any CHEERLEADING Squad that stunts or tumbles (see definitions below, as per USA Cheer/formerly known as AACCA) be considered a Competitive Cheer Squad and would be subject to all SED and NYSPHSAA rules and regulations. A team that does not stunt and tumble would be a traditional squad and NOT subject to SED and NYSPHSAA rules and regulations.

- **Stunt:** One or more persons supporting one or more top persons off of the ground.
- **Tumbling:** Gymnastic skills that begin and end on the performing surface, including rolls, inverted, extended skills (cartwheels, handstands, walkovers, handsprings, etc.), aerials, twists and flips. NOTE: Jumps, leaps and side rolls on the performing surface are not considered to be tumbling.

NYSED Regulations: All SED regulations (Age, Grade, Bona Fide Student, Duration of Competition, Health exams, et c.) will be followed along with the regulations listed below:

- Mixed Competition: Outlined by SED
- The Athletic Placement Process (for 7th and 8th grade students to be recommended by the head coach for a JV or Varsity level sport). 7th and 8th grade students must be approved through the Athletic Placement Process before tryouts begin. The students take the physical fitness test (Presidents Physical Fitness Test) and they must pass 4 out of 5 of the components. The standards are determined by their age and they must meet at least the 85th percentile for each test component.
- Coaching Certification: All Competitive Cheerleading coaches will have to have the following to be certified coaches for the Winter season as per SED regulations: All non-certified teacher coaches will have to apply for a temporary coaching certificate. Any outside clinician that works with a team for more than 5 days during the season will also have to apply for a temporary coaching certificate.
 - First Aid and CPR/AED
 - Fingerprinting
 - Child Abuse Course
 - Concussion Management Course
 - DASA Training (if applying for a temporary coaching license)
 - USA Cheer Safety (formerly known as AACCA)
 - Cheer and dance Safety Course - <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/cheer-and-dancesafety-certification>
 - All non-PE coaches will have to begin to take the three required courses:
 - Philosophies and Principles of Coaching - first year
 - Theories and Techniques - by 3rd year
 - Health and Sciences - by 5th year

NYSPHSSA Resources

- Several resources are available for coaches on the NYSPHAA website including score sheets, progression sheets, rules and training resources.
- **Although currently not required, trainings are offered and highly encouraged for coaches for both the Fall and Winter Cheer seasons, including Q&A sessions.**
- Link to resources on NYSPHAA website.
<https://nysphsaa.org/sports/2021/9/20/Competitive%20Cheerleading.aspx>

NYSPHSAA General Eligibility:

All current NYSPHSAA eligibility rules (including the transfer rule) will be enforced for all Competitive Cheerleading Squads. Two of those regulations are highlighted below:

- Fall Cheerleading and Winter Cheerleading: The Cheerleading Committee has recommended that students/teams be allowed to compete in both seasons because of well-established league and sectional events. The NYSPHSAA Championship events will be held in the Fall for Game Day Cheer and in the Winter for Traditional Competitive Cheerleading.
- Interstate Sanctioning: Teams will have to follow the sanctioning process if they are attending an out of state event or hosting an event that has out of state schools competing. NY schools may only compete against member/approved schools.

NYSPHSAA Competition Standards:

Competition Standards for the sport of competitive cheerleading.

- Minimum Practice Requirement: 6 team/6 individual
- Representation: minimum of 3 required competitions before post season/Sectional Championship.
- Maximum number of Contests: 12
- Nights rest: 1 night per competition. Note: *Cheering or performing during a sport event is not considered competition.*
- Spirit Standards: NFHS Spirit Rule Book
- Limitations per Day: 1 competition per day
- Competition Standards: Routine – 2 min and 30 seconds and must include Cheer and Dance and preptime. Cheer must be a minimum of 30 seconds.
- Judges: Minimum of 4 judges and 1 safety judge per panel.

NYSPHSAA Divisions for Traditional Competitive Cheer

Class A – 1025 and up – 75 schools
Class B – 555 to 1024 – 127 schools
Class C – 250 to 554 – 127 schools
Class D – 249 and below - 100 schools
Co-Ed – One Class

The classifications also include the following for minimum and maximum number of athletes and stunt groups for the State Championship, and will be implemented in Section IX for Varsity Teams Only (includes invitationals and the Section IX Championship).

- The minimum of 2 stunt groups (8 athletes) and maximum of 20 athletes for Class C and Class D.
- The minimum of 3 stunt groups (12 athletes) and a maximum of 24 athletes for Class A and Class B.
- Co-Ed is minimum of 2 stunt groups (8 athletes) and a maximum of 24 athletes.

NYSPHSAA Cheerleading Championship:

Teams will qualify for the championship event through a process established by the SECTION. The Cheerleading Committee has recommended the following qualifying process and championship format:

- Qualifying Process: Each section will send the winner of each class to the Championship event. A maximum of 10% of the teams competing in each class will qualify for the championship event. A section could be more restrictive and only send the winner of each class to the championship event.
- Format: Each will have a preliminary and finals round at the championship event.

****Section IX has chosen to send only the winner of each division to the championship event.****

CHEERLEADING SECTION IX COMPETITIONS

Section IX – Team Size: NYSPHSAA Divisions and Classes. 5 Divisions that are divided mainly by school size. Section IX Competitive Cheerleading teams will submit/confirm its' team's classification to the Section IX Cheerleading Chairperson three weeks after the first practice (by December 8, 2025) and will remain in that division for the duration of the competitive season.

Sportsmanship Matters: Prior to each competition, the following announcement should be made. "The NYS Public High School Athletic Association supports and encourages coaches, athletes and spectators to enjoy the competition between our student-athletes and cheer for their teams in a positive manner. Negative comments and behavior will be addressed by the appropriate site personnel. Spectators should "Be Loud, Be proud, Be Positive" toward all players, coaches, officials and spectators. Thank you for your support and enjoy the competition."

Promoting participation and sportsmanship to develop good citizens through interscholastic activities which provide equitable opportunities, positive recognition and learning experiences to students while maximizing the achievement of education goals.

2025-26 CHEERLEADING SECTIONALS COMPETITION

FEBRURAY 21, 2026

Location: Monroe Woodbury High School, 155 Dunderberg Road, Central Valley, NY 10917

The top teams (1st place) from Sectionals will compete at STATES.

Each school must provide a copy of their music licensing agreement (this is obtained from your respective DJ/Music Producer). It is to be submitted with your Sectional and State Entry.

1. DIVISIONS (based on "Beds" Numbers)

Class A – 1025 and up – 75 schools

Class B – 555 to 1024 – 127 schools

Class C – 250 to 554 – 127 schools

Class D – 249 and below - 100 schools

Co-Ed – One Class

The classifications also include the following for minimum and maximum number of athletes and stunt groups for Varsity Teams attending all Section IX Invitationals, Section IX Championship and those attending the NYSPHAA State Championship.

Team Size Requirements

- **Class A & B:** Utilize 3 stunt groups (min), at some point in the routine, and a maximum number of 24 athletes on the mat
- **Class C & D:** Utilize 2 stunts groups (min), at some point in the routine and a maximum number of 20 athletes on the mat
- **COED:** Utilize 2 stunts groups (min), at some point in the routine and a maximum number of 24 athletes on the mat
- These stunt groups are based on double based groups containing 4 athletes in each group.

- The requirement means that at some point in the routine, the minimum number of groups required must perform stunts or pyramid skills at the same time but are NOT required to perform the same exact skill.

Class Size Violation

- Teams that do not meet their class size with either the minimum stunt groups or exceed the maximum number of participants will receive a **3 point Choreographed Violation**.
2. Procedure for weather delays or cancellations of Section IX Championships
In Sectional competition involving multiple schools, the respective Sports Chair will advise the Executive Director or designee of any adverse conditions. The Executive Director or Designee will consult with the participating schools then decide whether to hold or cancel the competition. The snow date is ***February 22, 2026***
 3. Admission:
 - \$8.00 Adults and Seniors
 4. Awards:
 - Plaques and Medals will be awarded to the Section IX Champion for each division.

2026 NYSPHSAA STATES COMPETITION

MARCH 7, 2026

Location: Visions Federal Credit Union Veterans Memorial Arena, Binghamton, NY

- ONLINE TICKET PURCHASE ONLY FOR STATE CONTESTS
 - Tickets, \$11.50 per person
- Schedule as of 10/14/25
 - Doors open at 8 am.
 - Session 1 begins at 9 am; Class B & Co-Ed
 - 12:00 pm Finals for Session 1
 - Session 2 begins at 2 pm; Class A, C & D
 - 6:00 pm Finals for Session 2

NYSPHSAA

Frequently Asked Questions - Competitive Cheerleading

Now that the Board of Regents has recognized Competitive Cheerleading as a sport, the State Education Department and the NYSPHSAA has finalized the exact rules and regulations that will govern the sport of Competitive Cheerleading. Below are some questions we have received regarding how cheerleading may look as we move forward.

Q - What is the difference between Traditional Cheerleading and Competitive Cheerleading? Will schools be able to just have traditional cheerleading?

A - Schools will be able to just offer traditional cheerleading squads. These squads will not follow the rules and regulations of SED or the NYSPHSAA. If a traditional squad incorporates stunting/tumbling into a sideline or halftime routine they will be considered a competitive cheerleading squad and will have to follow the rules and regulations of SED and NYSPHSAA. Schools can choose to be both.

Q - Will coaches have to be certified to coach competitive cheerleading?

A - All competitive cheer squads will have to have a properly certified coach per SEO regulation. All SEO coaching certifications will have to be followed. Please contact your athletic administrator for the exact requirements to coach competitive cheerleading

Q - Will teams be able to be selected in the Spring for the following year?

A - Teams will have to be selected at the beginning of the season established in the same manner other sports are selected. The NYSPHSAA allows only the membership of the NYSPHSAA the direction of Competitive Cheerleading will be determined out of season activities as long as it is open to all students and it is not mandatory by the coaches. Some sections and leagues can be more restrictive, please check with your athletic administrator.

Q - Will teams be able to compete in both the Fall and Winter seasons?

A - The NYSPHSAA Competitive Cheerleading season will be during the Winter season. The NYSPHSAA will NOT hold any state level events in the Fall for Competitive Cheerleading.

Q - Can teams bring in experts to work with the Competitive Cheerleading squads?

A - Teams can bring in clinicians to work with their teams if this is a permissible practice of the school district. Clinicians work with the teams sporadically and not on a consistent basis. Clinicians do not have to be certified to work with the teams.

Q - Can teams travel out of state or host out of state teams for competitions?

A- Any competitions that our schools participate in would have to be properly sanctioned by the NYSPHAA office. New York schools may only compete against member/approved schools.

Q- Would student athletes and teams have to have a minimum number of practices before competing in a competition?

A - Students and teams will have to have a minimum number of practices before competing. 6 team/6 individual

Q - Will the Selection Classification process be used for Competitive Cheerleading?

A- The gymnastics standards of the Selection Classification process will be used to selectively classify 7th and 8th graders to the high school level as per SED regulations.

Q- Will Competitive Cheerleading teams be eligible for the NYSPHSAA Scholar Athlete program?

A-As a recognized sport, Competitive Cheerleading squads will be eligible for the scholar athlete program and state scholar athlete championship.

Q - Who can I contact as a coach or athletic director to give my input on the direction of Competitive Cheerleading?

A- Coaches and athletic directors can contact their Section Executive Director, Section Cheerleading Representative, or the NYSPHSAA office staff The NYSPHSAA is a membership led organization.

Thank you all for your passion and commitment to the outstanding student athletes that participate in Competitive Cheerleading. We look forward to ensuring the safety of those student athletes and highlighting and promoting these student athletes.

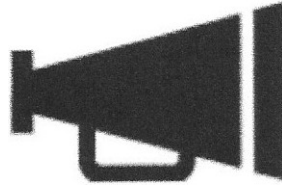
Questions:

Robert Zayas, NYSPHSAA, Executive Director

rzayas@nysphsaa.org 518-690-0771

Todd Nelson, NYSPHSA, Assistant Director

tnelson@nysphsaa.org 518-690-0771



NYSPHSAA

Section IX Executive Director: Gregory Ransom

Section IX Athletic Co-Directors for Competitive Cheer:

Suzanne Lendzian

Section IX Secretary: Jim Osborne

Section IX Treasurer: Linda Trapani

2024-2025 Section IX Cheerleading Championship

Cheerleading Sections Committee

Jen Simmons – State Coordinator

Section 1 – Alice Ganger

Section 2 – Rhiannah Johnson

Section 3 – Tiffany Rutledge & Tanya VanOmum

Section 4 – Andrea Guccia

Section 5 – Stacey Pike

Section 6 – Justina Grudzinski

Section 7 – Vicki Nephew

Section 8 – Jennifer Keane

Section 9 – Patti Archiere

Section 10 – Melissa Cutler

Section 11 – Brianne Hyer

NYSCJA – Casey Goll

Modified Representative – Justina Grudzinski

**2025-2026 Section IX Cheerleading Championship
REGISTRATION FORM FOR
CLASS A (1025 & up)**

Name of School _____

Name of Coach: _____ Email: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 23. _____ |
| 12. _____ | 24. _____ |

Please list THREE (3) required competitions that you attended during the season:

- | SITE | DATE |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |

Roster should be submitted by **February 10, 2026 to heather.walsh@ouboces.org**

Date

Signature of Athletic Director

**REGISTRATION FORM FOR
CLASS B (555 - 1024)**

Name of School _____

Name of Coach: _____ Email: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 23. _____ |
| 12. _____ | 24. _____ |

Please list THREE (3) required competitions that you attended during the season:

	SITE	DATE
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____

Roster should be submitted by **February 10, 2026** to heather.walsh@ouboces.org

Date

Signature of Athletic Director

**2025-2026 Section IX Cheerleading Championship
REGISTRATION FORM FOR
CLASS C (250 - 554)**

Name of School _____

Name of Coach: _____ Email: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 23. _____ |
| 12. _____ | 24. _____ |

Please list THREE (3) required competitions that you attended during the season:

1	SITE	DATE
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____

Roster should be submitted by **February 10, 2026** to heather.walsh@ouboces.org

Date

Signature of Athletic Director

**2025-2026 Section IX Cheerleading Championship
REGISTRATION FORM FOR
CLASS D (249 and below)**

Name of School _____

Name of Coach: _____ Email: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 20. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 21. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 22. _____ |
| 11. _____ | 23. _____ |
| 12. _____ | 24. _____ |

Please list THREE (3) required competitions that you attended during the season:

	SITE	DATE
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____

Roster should be submitted by **February 10, 2026** to heather.walsh@ouboces.org

Date

Signature of Athletic Director

**2025-2026 Section IX Cheerleading Championship
REGISTRATION FORM – CO-ED**

Name of School _____

Name of Coach: _____ Email: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

CO-ED ROSTER – Please print or type names

1. _____	13. _____
2. _____	14. _____
3. _____	15. _____
4. _____	16. _____
5. _____	17. _____
6. _____	18. _____
7. _____	19. _____
8. _____	20. _____
9. _____	21. _____
10. _____	22. _____
11. _____	23. _____
12. _____	24. _____

Please list THREE (3) required competitions that you attended during the season:

	SITE	DATE
1	_____	_____
2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____

Roster should be submitted by **February 10, 2026** to heather.walsh@ouboces.org

Date

Signature of Athletic Director