



*March 2015
Meaty*

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TO: Member School Superintendents
FROM: Charles Breithaupt
DATE: February 3, 2015
SUBJECT: UIL Spirit Championship

The UIL staff has completed plans for the approved pilot program for a Spirit Championship in January 2016. Included with this memo are the details for the event.

It is important to remember the rationale for the UIL getting involved with cheerleading. The focal point has been centered on safety and education. A letter presented to the UIL Medical Advisory Committee from the Texas Medical Association in April of 2013 provided data they considered to be "alarming." It further stated that national data proved that more injuries per participant occurred in cheer than in any other extracurricular activity. The proposal from the TMA recommended that UIL sanction cheer. The UIL Medical Advisory Committee proposed that the Legislative Council consider the possibility of sanctioning cheerleading at some point. Furthermore, they requested the Council to put into place a statewide system focused on injury prevention under consistent, evidence based safety guidelines.

The Legislative Council has instituted policies and procedures providing direction in the education and health and safety of cheerleaders. These materials have provided helpful information to cheer coaches, sponsors and directors. They have also provided direction to cheerleaders as they perform at UIL activities.

Cheerleaders and their sponsors were then left with the task of adhering to UIL rules without being officially sanctioned. Without a championship or official status as a UIL program it was difficult for education and safety regulations to be taken seriously. Therefore the Council saw the need to provide the opportunity for a one -year pilot program for cheer for 2016.

The eligibility for cheerleaders will fall under Section 400 of the UIL C&CR. These rules apply to all students who participate in any UIL activity. The UIL will provide a championship for each of the six conferences. We will not place schools in districts nor will we require them to qualify at regional. The qualifying round to advance to the state finals will be conducted in the preliminary round at the state venue. In this manner travel is reduced and expenses are held to a minimum. The schedule in most cases allows for schools to compete in the prelims and finals on the same day. This prevents loss of school time, possible conflicts with district basketball games and perhaps semester exams.

We look forward to celebrating the efforts of the young people who work tirelessly to support other programs. With a pilot state championship we can reward these students for their efforts and substantiate the need for safety and education as we move forward. Thanks for your continued support of this endeavor.



Texas State Spirit Championship

Championship Dates:

January 13-16, 2016 — Arlington, TX

*Tentative Conference schedule:

1A-3A, Small Coed — Wed/Thurs, Jan 13-14

4A-6A, Large Coed — Fri/Sat, Jan 15-16

SCHOOL CONFERENCE DIVISIONS

1A— Maximum of 12 participants (2 or fewer males)

2A— Maximum of 12 participants (2 or fewer males)

3A— Maximum of 20 participants (2 or fewer males)

4A— Maximum of 20 participants (2 or fewer males)

5A— Maximum of 30 participants (3 or fewer males)

6A— Maximum of 30 participants (3 or fewer males)

COED DIVISIONS:

Small Coed (teams from schools that are 1A-4A)

Max of 20 participants (3 or more males)

Large Coed (teams from schools that are 5A or 6A)

Max of 30 participants (4 or more males)

GAME DAY FORMAT—PRELIMINARY ROUND

Each team will showcase its best sideline and crowd-leading material in the following categories: Fight Song, Time out Band Dance and Time Out Cheer.

The use crowd-leading tools such as signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones is encouraged.

Finals will be determined by the total combined score from all preliminary categories.

TIME OUT CHEER RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

- 1 minute time limit
- Time will begin and end with Buzzer sound, similar to Time Out at a basketball game
- Emphasis on crowd involvement
- At least 2 components required from the following: cheers, chants, traditional yells
- No music permitted

SKILL RESTRICTIONS

- No basket, sponge or elevator tosses allowed
- No inversions
- No twisting dismounts from stunts
- Single-leg extended stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches
- No running tumbling
- Standing tumbling is limited to back hand-springs and back tucks

FIGHT SONG RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

- 1 minute time limit
- Up to three eight counts may be incorporated with stunts, tumbling and/or jumps, if repeated, incorporation must repeat as initially performed
- Same skill restrictions as listed in Time Out Cheer Rules and Restrictions

TIME OUT DANCE RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

- 1 minute time limit
- Traditional sideline uniforms required
- Emphasis on crowd entertainment
- No stunts or tumbling permitted



2016 Texas State Spirit Championship

GAME DAY FORMAT—FINAL ROUND

Each team will showcase its best sideline and crowd-leading material in a game day presentation that will include an announcer-lead situational game day element in the sideline/cheer portion.

The use of crowd-leading tools such as signs, poms, flags and/or megaphones is encouraged.

Visit uiltexas.org for more information and for complete rules and regulations.

State Spirit Championship
Event Registration will begin
August 2016.

FINAL ROUND ROUTINE RULES AND RESTRICTIONS

- 3 minute time limit
- One continuous performance demonstrating the compilation of the Game Day elements performed in the preliminary round.
- Performance will follow this order:
 - Band Dance, Cheer, Fight Song
 - Each section should have a designated beginning and end with spirited crowd interaction between.
- The same rules from the preliminary round apply to each section of the finals routine.
- Time will begin with the first beat of band dance music
- Traditional sideline uniforms are required



2016 SPIRIT STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS RULES AND REGULATIONS

I. GENERAL RULES

A. GAME DAY FORMAT

The total number of participants for a school team is determined by counting all spirit-leading participants including cheerleaders, dancers, mascots, and flag runners. The use of live band and/or drum line to supplement the Game Day environment is not permitted.

Each school team will be allowed to enter one (1) conference division for the appropriate UIL Classification. School teams may not enter in more than one division from the designated conference and coed divisions. Schools may choose from the following:

SCHOOL CONFERENCE DIVISIONS:

- 1A – Maximum of 12 participants (2 or fewer males)
- 2A – Maximum of 12 participants (2 or fewer males)
- 3A – Maximum of 20 participants (2 or fewer males)
- 4A – Maximum of 20 participants (2 or fewer males)
- 5A – Maximum of 30 participants (3 or fewer males)
- 6A – Maximum of 30 participants (3 or fewer males)

COED DIVISIONS:

- Small Coed 1A, 2A, 3A, 4A – Maximum of 20 participants (3 or more males)
- Large Coed 5A, 6A – Maximum of 30 participants (4 or more males)

B. SCHOOL REPRESENTATION AND TEAM PARTICIPATION

The school team will consist of students that must meet the requirements according to the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules, Section 400: STUDENT'S ELIGIBILITY FOR ALL UIL CONTESTS. All participants must be academically eligible students of the school in which they represent and must be designated by school officials as spirit representatives for competition and participation purposes.

1. One team per school will be allowed to enter the UIL State Spirit Competition.
2. The individual students representing a school team may vary in the preliminary categories provided each performance does not exceed the maximum number of participants. For teams that advance to the finals, the participants that enter the floor must remain the entire length of the finals performance. Substituting individuals on and off the floor for the different sections of the contest is not permitted.
3. It is the responsibility of the school coach that each team member, coaches, parents, and other persons affiliated with the school conduct themselves in a good sportsmanlike manner. Each individual member and school coach should constantly display good sportsmanship throughout the entire performance in regards to respect for themselves, other teams, and the viewing audience.
4. School teams must refrain from taunting, bragging, or suggestive expressions or gestures as well as discrimination of any nature.
5. School teams must display an overall appearance conducive to serving as public representatives and ambassadors of their school in regards to grooming, traditional and appropriate attire, conservative make-up, and uniformity.



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C. UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT GUIDELINES

1. Traditional game day uniform and appropriate shoes are required.
2. NFHS rules require 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. Any team in violation of the uniform guidelines will be assessed a five (5) point deduction.
3. The use of signs, poms, flags, and megaphones are allowed and encouraged for performances.

D. COMPETITION PERFORMANCE AREA

1. Approximate floor size will be 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 strips).
2. The UIL Spirit State Championship will comply with the NFHS competition surface rule. School based programs may compete on a mat surface only and they may not compete on a spring floor.
3. All participants must start within the designated competition area with at least one foot on the mat and teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
4. Signs or props may be placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member who must remain inside the competition area.
5. Any team member stepping outside or touching outside the performance area will cause the squad to receive a half point (.5) penalty per occurrence.
 - a. The white line is considered a warning mark.
 - b. A penalty will be assessed when any one (1) full hand, foot or body part touches outside of the performance surface.

E. MUSIC

1. All teams must provide their own recorded fight song and band cadence music. The number of songs used in routines is not limited provided it is within the time requirement.
2. All music used by teams competing must be licensed by either ASCAP, BMI or SESAC according to United States Copyright Law identified here:
<http://music.ed.nafme.org/resources/copyright-center/united-states-copyright-law-a-guide-for-music-educators/>
3. Performances must use recorded marching band music for the fight song and band dance categories. **Teams will not be required to have ASCAP Licensing on their school's marching band recorded Fight Song or Band Cadence.**
4. Any team in violation of the licensing requirement is subject to disqualification from the contest and will be omitted from any associated broadcast or television programming.
5. *The University Interscholastic League is not responsible for obtaining any necessary permission or licensing of the recorded music used by a school team during the course of the UIL Spirit State Championships.*

F. HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATIONS

1. UIL rules require cheer and spirit performances shall be in accordance with safety standards prescribed by the National Federation High School Spirit Rules. NFHS rules may be purchased in electronic form <http://www.nfhs.org/articles/rules-books-and-case-books-available-as-e-books/> or in print form <http://www.nfhs.org/sports-resource-content/buy-nfhs-rules-publications/>



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2. The UIL Constitution and Contest Rules section 1208 (y) and (z) apply to any person designated by the school as a cheer coach, supervisor or sponsor.
3. The designated school cheer coach must complete the described UIL training and educational with written documentation to the school district personnel annually.
4. All school cheerleading team members and spirit participants must complete the UIL Concussion Acknowledgment Form and file it with the school district personnel for the current school year.
5. Any student participating in a UIL member school cheerleading program, suspected of having a concussion, must be evaluated by his or her treating physician. The participant's treating physician must provide a written statement that in his or her professional judgment it is safe for the student to return-to-play before the participant may begin the school districts COT return-to-play designated protocol.

G. ADDITIONAL SAFETY PROCEDURES

To ensure that the safety of participants is not compromised due to limited number spotters available to travel with a school team and to promote a higher level of safety for competing participants, the UIL will provide additional spotters at the state competition. A limited number of additional spotters may be available upon coaches' request in warm up sessions and during performances. Schools may also provide additional spotters in warm up areas only.

Definition of Additional Spotter: Individuals on the competition floor provided as a safety precaution to spot specific elements of a routine. To provide the safest competitive environment, teams should not attempt skills beyond their ability level.

UIL competition will provide additional spotters that follow the listed guidelines:

1. Will be used during the stunt or pyramid sections only. Additional spotters are present for added safety and will stand at the back of the floor when not spotting those sections.
2. Will not touch, assist, or save skills being performed. Additional spotters will only be used to prevent a fall to the competition floor.
3. Will be dressed so that they are presentable, professional, and distinguishable from the performing athletes.
4. Will be identified by experience and be familiar with spotting the skills of the performing team.

II. PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

The UIL Spirit State Championship showcases what traditional cheerleading is all about – leading the crowd! Teams will be evaluated on their ability to lead the crowd, proper skill incorporations and performance, motions, dance and overall routine.

A. GAME DAY ROUTINES

The competition will consist of three categories:

- 1 - **Band Dance / Chant** - Music based performance that encourages crowd response and interaction
- 2 - **Crowd Leading** - Offense / Defense / General Sideline / Cheer
- 3 - **Fight Song** – Traditional school fight song performed to recorded marching band music



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PRELIMS - Each performance will consist of one preliminary round of each of the three identified categories above. Each round will have a time limit of one (1) minute. Each of the three category prelim performance rounds will be preceded by a designated warm-up session.

FINALS - Teams with the highest cumulative scores from the three preliminary categories will advance to finals. The number of teams advancing to finals will be determined based on the number of teams participating in the preliminary rounds in each conference.

Each performance will have an overall maximum performance time limit of three (3) minutes. The entire performance will be executed in a continuous order and should consist of the three categories identified in the preceding section. Each category should have a beginning and end. Spirited crowd leading interaction between each category is encouraged to continue the game day environment.

Teams will respond to audio cues by a game announcer, as heard at football and basketball games. In order to imitate the Game Day environment, audio cues will be given based on the designated order: (1) Band Dance/Chant; (2) **situational** Crowd Leading Offense / Defense / General Sideline/Cheer; (3) Fight Song. The final performance round will be preceded by one designated warm-up session.

B. SCORES AND RANKINGS

1. In the preliminary rounds, each team will be scored in three categories by multiple judges serving as a panel in each of those categories.
2. For each category in prelims, the team's score will be based on a computation of scores awarded by judges in the designated panel.
3. The official final results and team places will be determined by the average scores from the finals round only. Preliminary round scores will not carry over to determine final team standings. However, if a tie occurs in the final round, the cumulative preliminary scores will be utilized to break any ties.
4. Individual score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his or her final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores for all teams.
5. Scores and rankings will be available only to coaches at the conclusion of the competition.
6. The judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the UIL State Spirit Championship score sheet.
7. Any deductions or violations will be taken off of the final score.
8. Any team in violation of the NFHS Spirit Safety Rules and Regulations will be assessed a ten point (10) deduction for each violation in addition to any other penalties assessed as stated in the UIL Spirit State Championship Rules and Regulations.

C. TIME LIMITATIONS

The music portion must not exceed a total time of two (2) minutes of music during the performances when music is allowed. Time will begin after the first audio cue is given.

1. If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. Three (3) point deduction for 1-5 seconds over the limit; five (5) point deduction for 6-10 seconds over the limit; and seven (7) point deduction for 11 seconds or more over the limit.



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2. Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, judges will not issue a deduction until their stopwatches show a time of three (3) seconds over the time limit.
3. It is recommended that all teams practice and specifically time their performances prior to competition to allow for variations in sound equipment.
4. Introductions:
 - a. All introductions including tumbling, entrances, chants, and spell-outs are considered part of the routine and will be timed as part of the performance.
 - b. All team breaks, rituals, and traditions need to take place prior to entering the mat.
 - c. Teams should take the floor immediately with spirit and enthusiasm, but without excessive gestures i.e. teams must refrain from chest bumps, hugs, and hand shakes.
 - d. All teams should refrain from any type of excessive celebration following the team's performance. Any team in violation will receive a one (1) point deduction.
 - e. There should not be any organized exits or other activities after the official ending of the routine.

III. INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE

A. UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

1. If, in the opinion of the competition officials, a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the competition equipment, facilities, or other factors attributable to the competition rather than the team, the team affected should **STOP** the routine.
2. The team will perform the routine again in its entirety, but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred. The degree and effect of the interruption will be determined by the competition officials.

B. FAULT OF TEAM

1. In the event a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the team's own equipment, the team must either continue the routine or withdraw from the competition.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If decided by officials, the team will perform the routine again in its entirety, but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred.

C. INJURY

1. All participants must follow the UIL safety regulations identified in section XIII of this document. The only persons that may stop a routine for injury are: a) competition officials, b) the school coach from the team performing or c) an injured individual.
2. 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. The team may perform the routine again in its entirety, but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. The injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless the competition officials receive clearance from the on site medical personnel and the school head coach of the competing team.



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4. Any injured participant suspected of a concussion is required to follow the UIL Concussion Policy regarding the treatment of concussions and must be removed immediately from the competition.

IV. INTERPRETATIONS AND RULINGS

A. RULES & PROCEDURES

Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the school coach of the team and will be directed to the Competition Director. Such questions should be made prior to the team's competition performance.

The UIL Spirit State Championship Rules Committee will consist of a designated Competition Director, Head Judge and UIL staff. The school team and school coach must abide by all decisions made by the judges and Rules Committee. Any interpretation of the UIL Spirit State Championship rules and regulations or any decision involving any other aspect of the competition will be rendered by the Rules Committee.

Unofficial results will be posted on site for one thirty (30) minute time period during which a school coach must present any protest in writing to the Competition Director regarding the posted results. The Rules Committee will render a judgment to ensure that the competition proceeds in a manner consistent with the rules and regulations of the competition. At the end of the thirty (30) minute time period, results will be declared as official standings and awarded accordingly.

All official results will be declared final.

B. JUDGING PANELS

Judges will be provided by the UIL and they will be responsible for scoring each school performance according to the UIL competition score sheets.

1. Head Judge - The Head Judge is responsible for overseeing the entire Judging Panel that consists of Panel Judges, Point Deduction Judge, and Safety Judge. The Head Judge will also fill out his/her own score sheet for each performance.
2. Panel Judge - Panel Judges are responsible for scoring each team's performance based on the UIL score sheets. Each Panel Judge will fill out a score sheet for each performance.
3. Safety Judge - The Safety Judge is responsible for administering all safety violations, time violations, and boundary violations.
4. **ALL JUDGES' DECISIONS ARE FINAL.**

C. DISQUALIFICATION

Any team that does not adhere to the terms and procedures of the UIL Spirit State Championship rules and regulations defined in this document will be subject to disqualification from the competition and will automatically forfeit any award.

D. SPORTSMANSHIP

All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the competition with positive presentation upon entry and exit from the performance area as well as throughout the routine. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification.