



Special Olympics Iowa Cheerleading and Dance Competition Rules & Regulations



All Special Olympics Iowa Cheerleading and Dance Competitions will be ran according to the rules and guidelines in this manual.



Special Olympics Mission

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Coaching Guidelines

All practice sessions must be supervised by the coach and held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders (i.e. use of appropriate mats, away from excessive noise and distractions, suitable athlete to coach ratio, etc.)

Coaches should recognize a cheerleader's ability level and focus on providing fundamentals. Athletes should not be pressed to perform activities until everyone has a fundamental understanding of safety requirements.

All cheerleading squads should adopt a comprehensive conditioning and strength-building program.

Tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps should be limited to appropriate surfaces during practice and competition.

Entries

Entries will be sent to the state office, 551 SE Dovetail Road, PO Box 620, Grimes, IA or can be emailed to hgross@soiowa.org.

Entry forms will be available online www.soiowa.org as part of the Mid-Winter Tournament.

A delegation may sign up more than one team for cheer or dance; however, an athlete or partner can only participate on one team.



Appropriate Attire

Uniforms- Team members must wear outfits alike in style and color. All team members must have athletic shoes with non-marking sole. Dignify the athlete when choosing uniforms (No boots may be worn). A deduction of 5 points will be given for uniform violations.

- Women-
 - Bottoms: pants, shorts, skorts or skirts (**must be at least mid-thigh in length**). NO slit allowed in skorts, shorts or skirts. (if a slit exist in uniform it must be sewed up or fabric behind the slit). Briefs or bloomers must be worn with all skirts.
 - Tops: tank-top, collared shirts or tee shirts (no pockets). No halter tops will be allowed. Straps must be at least 1" inch wide. Spaghetti straps will not be permitted. When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff.

Jewelry- No jewelry of any kind including but not limited to ear, nose, tongue, belly button and facial rings, clear plastic jewelry, bracelets, necklaces, stickers or glitter is allowed. Pins on uniforms are prohibited. Jewelry must be removed and may not be taped over. (a 4 point deduction will be given if the judges see jewelry).

- Exceptions: medical ID tags/bracelets, and temporary tattoos are allowed.

Hair- For safety reasons, long hair should be out of the face and secured (if possible).

Traditional vs Unified Team

Traditional Special Olympics teams are made up of all athletes (people with an intellectual disability) And all athletes competing must have a current physical form on file at the state office by the registration date.

For a Unified team, the number of Special Olympics Athletes must be equal to, or exceed by one, the number of Unified Partners. If at any time during the competition, the number of Unified Partners exceeds the number of Special Olympics Athletes; the squad will compete for participation ribbons only. Registration forms will not be accepted without the proper ratio of athletes and Unified Partners. To compete as a Unified team you must have at least 5 members on your team (3 athletes and 2 partners). Athletes must have a current physical on file and partners must have a current Class A on file at the state office at the time of registration.



Cheer Competition

There is no music allowed in this competition. A team must perform 2 chants/yells. If a team performs only 1 short cheer and repeats, there will be a 10 point deduction. If a team performs 1 long cheer totaling 3 minutes, there will be a 5 point deduction. If a team exceed two cheers there will be a 10 point deduction.

Divisioning: Divisioning will be based on ability, group size, and age.

- Size:
 - Individual
 - Small group 2-8 members
 - Large group 9-16 members
 - No group should exceed 16 members for safety reasons
- Age:
 - Junior: 8-21
 - Senior: 22 and over
- Ability: (see appendix for definition of ability levels)
 - Team non-mount & non-tumble
 - Team mount & tumble
 - Unified Team

Time: A team has a maximum performance time of 3 minutes. This performance time includes changes in signs, set-up, pompoms or other props. If you exceed the allotted time the following deductions will be made:

- For every 10 seconds over a deduction of 5 points will be made. Example: time 3 minutes 10 seconds-a deduction of 5 points, a time of 3 minutes 20 seconds-a deduction of 10 points, etc.

Coaches Box: two coaches will be allowed to coach the team from the coaches' box in between the judges' tables.

See appendix for Judges sheet.

Performance Space

Performance space should measure at least 40ft x 25ft and be free of an objects that could cause harm. The competition floor will be a plain gym floor. If you need a mate for safety reasons please provide those. While practicing please keep safety in mind.



Dance Competition

A team must perform 2 different dance routines to 2 different songs. If a team performs only 1 short routine and repeat, there will be a 10 point deduction. If a team performs 1 long routine totaling 3 minutes, there will be a 5 point deduction. There will be a 10 point deduction for exceeding to songs.

Divisioning: Divisioning will be based on ability, group size and age.

- Size:
 - Individual
 - Small group 2-8 members
 - Large group 9-16 members
 - No group should exceed 16 members for safety reasons
- Age:
 - Junior: 8-21
 - Senior: 22 and over
- Ability: (see appendix for definition of ability levels)
 - Team non-mount & non-tumble
 - Team mount & tumble
 - Unified Team

Time: A team has a maximum performance time of 3 minutes. The time will begin once the music starts. If you exceed the allotted time the following deductions will be made:

- For every 10 seconds over a deduction of 5 points will be made. Example: time 3 minutes 10 sec-a deduction of 5 points, a time of 3 minutes 20 sec-a deduction of 10 points, etc.

Music: Music must be appropriate for all ages. Music must be in a CD format. Hand signals will be used to indicate when the music should be started and stopped.

Coaches Box: One coach will be allowed to coach the team from the coaches box in between the judges tables.

See appendix for Judges sheet.



Performance Space

Performance space should measure at least 40ft x 25ft and be free of an objects that could cause harm. The competition floor will be a plain gym floor. If you need mats for safety reasons please provide those. While practicing please keep safety in mind.

Helpful Suggestions

- Having a 5 second pause between cheers/dances will help the judges identify where one cheer/dance ends and the other begins.
- Having your music on one CD back to back will help with starting and stopping your music in the correct spots.
- For safety of athletes make sure you have a spotter for any lifts or stunts above floor level.

Appendix

Team Non-mount & Non-tumble: “beginner.” There are no tumbling, stunts or mounts allowed in this level, however jumps and kicks are allowed

Team mount & tumble: “advanced.” Tumbling, stunts, and pyramids are allowed.

Cheer: A long phrase that involves motions, pompoms, stunts, jumps and/or tumbling.

Dance: A routine performed to music with no verbal chants, cheers, etc. May incorporate props, pom poms, gymnastics and/or stunts. A dance routine is **NOT** a cheer or chant.

Mount: any skill in which a top person is supported above the performance surface by one or more persons. (mounts can only be 1 ½ persons high) also known as stunt. All stunts above floor level must have a back spotter.

Tumbling: a gymnastic or acrobatic skill that begins and ends on the performing surface.