



Special Olympics Ohio

Competitive Cheer Rules Manual (Rev. 8/2023)

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Competitive Cheer shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon the International Cheer Union (ICU) rules for Special Abilities cheerleading found at www.cheerunion.org. ICU rules shall be employed along with the following added Special Olympics guidelines: Team Size, Unified Sports®, Individual Skills Competition and Divisioning. In all cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules Article 1 shall apply.

Special Olympics Ohio will follow the safety rules, as well as skill levels defined as Introductory, Beginner, Novice and Intermediate, as set forth by ICU. The ICU Rules and regulations have already instated modifications specifically for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics has created additional provisions to compliment the ICU's Special Abilities Rules. Coaches are responsible for following the safety rules and following the skills progression for athletes and Unified partners.

OFFICIAL EVENTS

The SOOH Competitive Cheer season runs October through February. The State Tournament is held during the first quarter of each year.

Special Olympics Ohio provides a range of events to offer athletes of varying abilities the opportunity to compete. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each athlete's skill and interest. Official score sheets can be found below in Appendix C & D. The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics Ohio. Each team event is also available as a Unified event.

- Individual
- Team Non-Mount & Non-Tumble
- Team Not-Mount
- Team Non-Tumble
- Team Mount & Tumble

DIVISIONING

The purpose of Divisioning is grouping Competitive Cheer athletes or teams by age, gender and ability giving everyone a reasonable chance to win. Refer to SOI Divisioning found at:

<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/divisioning>



TEAM COMPETITION

The purpose of cheerleading is to entertain and motivate a crowd to cheer for a team. These routines incorporate cheer, dance, stunts, and/or tumbling in a routine.

Team Size

Special Olympics Ohio recommended team sizes are as follows:

- Small: Minimum of four (4) and maximum of fifteen (15)
- Large: Minimum of sixteen (16) and maximum of twenty-four (24)

Skill Levels (See Appendix A for further definitions of skill levels & Appendix B for routine guide)

Introductory (Pre-Level 0 | Non-Build & Non-Tumble)

- Routine
- Game Day
 - Sideline
 - Time Out
 - Fight Song
 - Cheer
 - Band Chant

Beginner (Level 0)

- Routine
- Game Day
 - Sideline
 - Time Out
 - Fight Song
 - Cheer
 - Band Chant

Novice (Level 1)

- Routine
- Game Day
 - Sideline
 - Time Out
 - Fight Song
 - Cheer
 - Band Chant



Intermediate (Level 2)

- Routine
- Game Day
 - Sideline
 - Time Out
 - Fight Song
 - Cheer
 - Band Chant

UNIFIED SPORTS® TEAM COMPETITION

Teams competing in this category should follow the Unified Sports Competitive Model. The ratio of athletes to Unified partners must be 1:1. In the event of an odd-numbered team, there must be one less Unified partner than total number of athletes.

Team Size

Special Olympics Ohio recommended team sizes are as follows:

- Small: Minimum of four (4) and maximum of fifteen (15)
- Large: Minimum of sixteen (16) and maximum of twenty-four (24)

Special Olympics Unified partners should not perform any skills above the level of the Special Olympics athletes on the team.

Skill Levels (See Appendix A for further definitions of skill levels & Appendix B for routine guide)

Introductory (Pre-Level 0 | Non-Build & Non-Tumble)

- Routine
- Game Day
 - Sideline
 - Time Out
 - Fight Song
 - Cheer
 - Band Chant

Beginner (Level 0)

- Routine
- Game Day
 - Sideline
 - Time Out
 - Fight Song



- Cheer
- Band Chant

Novice (Level 1)

- Routine
- Game Day
 - Sideline
 - Time Out
 - Fight Song
 - Cheer
 - Band Chant

Intermediate (Level 2)

- Routine
- Game Day
 - Sideline
 - Time Out
 - Fight Song
 - Cheer
 - Band Chant

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS COMPETITION

The purpose of the individual skills competition is to allow athletes to train and compete in basic Cheer skills in the following categories:

- Introductory
- Beginner
- Novice
- Intermediate

The skills assessed are as follows:

- Motion
- Crowd Leading: Game Day – Sideline
 - Athlete performs a situational and repetitive chant with motions and simple skills to encourage the crowd.
- Incorporation
 - Use of poms, signs, or megaphones.
 - Use of skills as jumps, tumbling, motions, and dance.

Scoring will be based on team scoring fundamentals.



NON-COMPETITIVE CHEER

A Local Special Olympics Program may choose to offer a non-competitive cheer option, for Special Olympics Traditional and/or Unified Teams, which provides the opportunity for cheering and performing at Special Olympics competitions, special events, all sporting events, and community-based events such as walks, races, high school games, etc. Providing non-competitive cheer opportunities can help generate awareness and contribute to the growth of a Competitive Cheer program.

Non-Competitive Cheerleading

- All safety rules apply; team size & composition is open to the discretion of the team director within Special Olympics Guidelines. Team skill levels may range from the Introductory - Intermediate within accordance of the ICU Rules.



Appendix A

COMPETITIVE CHEER - SKILLS QUICK REFERENCE SHEET FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND UNIFIED

ONE-PAGE

<u>Introductory</u>	<u>Beginner</u> (LEVEL 0)	<u>Novice</u> (LEVEL 1)	<u>Intermediate</u> (LEVEL 2)
STANDING / RUNNING TUMBLING			
Standing/Running tumbling is not allowed.	Ex: Forward roll, cartwheels, round offs, forward and back walkovers	Ex: Forward roll, cartwheels, round offs, forward and back walkovers	EX: STANDING: Back walkovers back handspring. Back handspring. RUNNING TUMBLING: Series front and back handsprings are allowed. Toe touch cartwheels.
STUNTS			
Stunting is not allowed.	WAIST LEVEL ONLY: Ex: Thigh stands, ground stunts, knee stunts (e.g. a knee table top) are examples of stunts above ground level.	PREP LEVEL: Ex: Suspended splits, flat-bodied positions and preps Extended arm stunts that are not in the upright position (e.g. v-sits, extended flats backs, etc.) Shoulder stand*	Single leg prep level, barrel roll.
	Single leg, waist level.	Single leg waist level, Single leg prep level connected.	
		1/4 twisting transition	1/2 twisting transition
STUNTS-INVERSIONS			
Inversions are not allowed.	Inversions are not allowed. Exception: Supported handstand	Inversions are not allowed. Exception: Supported handstand	Ex: Handstand to shoulder sit
PYRAMIDS			
Pyramids are not allowed.	Braced prep level stunt.	Braced extension, braced prep level single leg.	Braced extended single leg.
DISMOUNTS			
Dismounts are not allowed.	Straight pop downs	Straight pop downs, basic straight cradle	Straight pop downs, basic straight cradle, 1/4 turns
			Cradles from extended single-leg stunts in pyramids are allowed.



Appendix B

COMPETITIVE CHEER - GAME DAY REFERENCE SHEET FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS AND UNIFIED

CHEER	SIDELINE	BAND CHANT	FIGHT SONG	TIME OUT PERFORMANCE
:30 TO 1:00 in length	The Sideline is a situational and repetitive chant with motions and simple skills, to encourage the crowd to yell, for each team performing.	:30	Up to 3 consecutive 8-counts of crowd effective stunts, tumbling and / or jumps to a sport team's recorded music.	:30 TO 1:00 in length
Time Out-style Cheer without music- where the Cheer Team leads and motivates the crowd in a Cheer to yell for their team and/or nation, with a focus on their team's/nation's colors, name, mascot, or common yell.	With either an Offensive or Defensive scenario, the squad will determine which Sideline to do based on the cues. (The Sidelines can also be pre-established- depending on the event organizer).	Chant with music that can incorporate (or can be restricted to not incorporate other than kicks and jumps)	The Fight Song should represent the traditional Fight Song (e.g. to music that is unique to the specific team) that is commonly performed at a Team's sporting event, usually following a Score/Goal, etc.	Commonly performed to a popular crowd leading songs of Sporting events (e.g. songs similar to Dr. Who, Hey, Zombie Nation, etc.).
The Cheer should remain consistent with a Time Out of a Sporting event.	Skills should be minimal and simple.	Cheerleading skills (e.g. stunts, simple pyramids, dances, simple tumbling) and should showcase the Team's sharp motions, high energy and synchronization.		Cheerleading teams can incorporate crowd effective stunts, tumbling, and/or jumps to a sport team's recorded music.
Teams are highly encouraged to use signs, poms and flags to enhance crowd effectiveness, as well as incorporate crowd- effective skills.	The teams will perform one of the situational Sidelines they have prepared and are encouraged to use crowd-motivating props such as signs, poms and megaphones.	Teams can choose to use signs, flags, and other crowd motivating props to help encourage crowd response.		Teams can choose to use signs, flags, and other crowd motivating props to help encourage crowd response.
Native language is encouraged.	Native language is encouraged.	Native language is encouraged.	Should any chants be included, native language is encouraged.	Should any chants be included, native language is encouraged.

Note: Subject to the discretion of an event organizer, as a guideline- four (4) elements of the five (5) elements combined, the Game Day Routine traditionally does not exceed 3 minutes.



Appendix C

Competitive Cheer Scoresheet Team Non-Mount and Non-Tumble

Team Name	Level	Division	Team Size

CROWD LEADING	Points	Score
Crowd Effectiveness	5	

COMMENTS:

INCORPORATIONS	Points	Score
Proper Use of Skills to Lead Crowd	5	
Use of Poms, signs, and megaphones	5	
Execution of incorporations	5	

COMMENTS:

OVERALL	Points	Score
Uniform Appearance	5	
Overall Impression	10	

COMMENTS:



Competitive Cheer Scoresheet Team Non-Mount and Non-Tumble

Team Name	Level	Division	Team Size

JUMPS	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

DANCE	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

TIME LIMIT	Points	Score
Under 3:00	1	

COMMENTS:

TOTAL	Points	Score
	56	



Competitive Cheer Scoresheet Team Non-Mount

Team Name	Level	Division	Team Size

CROWD LEADING	Points	Score
Crowd Effectiveness	5	

COMMENTS:

INCORPORATIONS	Points	Score
Proper Use of Skills to Lead Crowd	5	
Use of Poms, signs, and megaphones	5	
Execution of incorporations	5	

COMMENTS:

OVERALL	Points	Score
Uniform Appearance	5	
Overall Impression	10	

COMMENTS:



Competitive Cheer Scoresheet Team Non-Mount

Team Name	Level	Division	Team Size

JUMPS	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

DANCE	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

GROUP TUMBLING	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

TIME LIMIT	Points	Score
Under 3:00	1	

COMMENTS:



TOTAL	Points	Score
	66	



Competitive Cheer Scoresheet Team Non Tumble

Team Name	Level	Division	Team Size

CROWD LEADING	Points	Score
Crowd Effectiveness	5	

COMMENTS:

INCORPORATIONS	Points	Score
Proper Use of Skills to Lead Crowd	5	
Use of Poms, signs, and megaphones	5	
Execution of incorporations	5	

COMMENTS:

OVERALL	Points	Score
Uniform Appearance	5	
Overall Impression	10	

COMMENTS:



Competitive Cheer Scoresheet Team Non Tumble

Team Name	Level	Division	Team Size

JUMPS	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

DANCE	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

PARTNER STUNTS	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

PYRAMIDS	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

TIME LIMIT	Points	Score
Under 3:00	1	



TOTAL	Points	Score
	76	



Competitive Cheer Scoresheet Team Mount and Tumble

Team Name	Level	Division	Team Size

CROWD LEADING	Points	Score
Crowd Effectiveness	5	

COMMENTS:

INCORPORATIONS	Points	Score
Proper Use of Skills to Lead Crowd	5	
Use of Poms, signs, and megaphones	5	
Execution of incorporations	5	

COMMENTS:

OVERALL	Points	Score
Uniform Appearance	5	
Overall Impression	10	

COMMENTS:



Competitive Cheer Scoresheet Team Non-Mount and Non-Tumble

Team Name	Level	Division	Team Size

JUMPS	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

DANCE	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

PARTNER STUNTS	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

PYRAMIDS	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:



Competitive Cheer Scoresheet Team Non-Mount and Non-Tumble

Team Name	Level	Division	Team Size

GROUP TUMBLING	Points	Score
Execution	5	
Difficulty	5	

COMMENTS:

TIME LIMIT	Points	Score
Under 3:00	1	

COMMENTS:

TOTAL	Points	Score
	86	



Competitive Cheer Team Scoresheet Explanation

Please note that all elements must be present on the applicable score sheet in order to maximize points. For example, partner stunts, pyramids, tumbling, etc. must be present during the music portion of the routine to maximize points. These elements are welcome in the cheer and will be scored under “Incorporations,” and potentially “crowd leading.”

Crowd Leading	Engaging routine that effectively leads crowd while using motions, voice, props, etc.
Incorporations	Ability to incorporate a variety of materials or skills within a routine. A variety of motions adds interest to any cheer including motions of the legs, arms, head, etc. Both spacing of the entire squad on the floor and spacing between squad members should be considered.
Partner Stunts	Variety of partner stunts and difficulty.
Pyramids	Complexity of pyramid.
Tumbling	Should be well-executed and fit within the routine.
Jumps	Should be well-executed and synchronized.
Execution	Refers to the accuracy to which a skill or skill set was performed.
Dance	Dance should be well-timed, incorporate formation changes, level changes, and be appropriate for competition.
Appearance	Hair neat and pulled back (if necessary). For safety reasons it is recommended to secure long hair in some way. Uniforms alike in style and color.
Overall Impression	Originality of routine, energy and enthusiasm, poise, confidence, timing, and voice modulation. The speed of a cheer should be fast enough to be peppy, but slow enough to understand the words.
Sportsmanship	It is expected that all athletes/squads/coaches display good sportsmanship. Therefore, points will <u>deducted</u> for poor sportsmanship. Each squad will be judged continually throughout the competition. A squad which is not performing may still have points deducted for unsportsmanlike conduct.



Appendix D

COMPETITIVE CHEER – SCORING RUBRIC

<u>Scoresheet Component</u>	<u>Low</u> 0-1 Points Possible	<u>Medium</u> 2-3 Points Possible	<u>High</u> 4-5 Points Possible
CROWD LEADING AND INCORPORATIONS			
Crowd Effectiveness	Cheer does not effectively lead the crowd.	Cheer effectively leads the crowd.	Cheer very effectively lead the crowd.
Proper Use of Skills to Lead Crowd	Skills - stunts, tumble, jumps, etc. - are not used in the cheer.	Skills - stunts, tumble, jumps, etc. - are used in the cheer but not properly to lead the crowd.	Skills - stunts, tumble, jumps, etc. - are used properly in the cheer to lead the crowd
Use of Signs, Poms, Megaphones, or Flags	Props are not present and/or not used during the cheer.	Props are present and not used during the cheer OR do not enhance the cheer performance.	Props are present and used during the cheer to enhance the cheer performance.
Execution of Incorporations	Incorporations not utilized to full potential.	Incorporations present but not well executed.	Incorporations very well executed and performed.
OVERALL CHEER			
Uniform Appearance	Less than 50% of the team displays uniformed appearance	At least 50% of the team displays uniformed appearance	Majority of the team displays uniformed appearance
Overall Routine Impression	Routine components lacked to be displayed; AND lacked originality or creativity; OR did not utilized all <u>athletes</u> abilities.	Routine components lacked to be displayed OR were present but lacked originality or creativity; OR did not utilized all <u>athletes</u> abilities.	All routine components were displayed with originality, creativity, and utilized all <u>athletes</u> abilities.
GROUP TUMBLING			
Technique	Less than 50% of the team performs a level appropriate pass - standing or running.	Most of the team performs a level appropriate pass - standing or running.	Majority of the team performs a level appropriate pass - standing or running.
Execution	Less than 50% of the athletes execute average precision, form and synchronization.	Majority of the athletes execute average precision, form and synchronization.	Majority of the athletes execute excellent precision, form and synchronization.
GROUP JUMPS			
Execution & Variety	Less than 50% of the team performs jumps. Must be synchronized and include a variety.	Most of the team performs jumps. Must be synchronized and include a variety.	Majority of the team performs jumps. Must be synchronized and include a variety.
GROUP DANCE			
Execution & Synchronization	Team does not <u>demonstrates</u> a high level of energy and entertainment value which incorporates multiple visual elements.	Team somewhat demonstrates a high level of energy and entertainment value which incorporates multiple visual elements.	Team demonstrates a high level of energy and entertainment value which incorporates multiple visual elements.



Scoresheet Component	Low 1-3 Points Possible	Medium 4-7 Points Possible	High 8-10 Points Possible
GROUP STUNTS			
Difficulty	Majority of stunts are below prep level.	Majority of stunts are at prep level and include transitions and dismounts.	Majority of stunts are extended and/or include a variety of transitions, dismounts, and releases.
Performance & Execution	Less than 50% of the team demonstrates excellent precision, form and synchronization.	Majority of the team demonstrates excellent precision, form and synchronization.	Most to all of the team demonstrates excellent precision, form and synchronization.
PYRAMIDS			
Difficulty	Team performs one structure.	Team performs more than one structure, or performs one structure plus transitions, releases, and/or <u>dismounts</u> .	Team performs more than one structure with transitions, releases, and/or dismounts.
Creativity & Execution	Less than 50% of the team demonstrates excellent precision, form and synchronization.	Majority of the team demonstrates excellent precision, form and synchronization.	Most to all of the team demonstrates excellent precision, form and synchronization.



COMPETITIVE CHEER – SCORING DEDUCTIONS & INFRACTIONS

DEDUCTION	PENALTY POINTS	EXPLANATION
Time Limitation	3 points: 3-5 sec 5 points: 6-10 sec 7 points: 11 sec +	Each competition performance must not exceed three minutes (3:00). Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first. If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation.
Competition Performance Area	0.5 points per occurrence	Approximate floor size will be 54 feet wide by 42 feet deep (9 strips of cheer floor/non-spring). Any team member stepping outside or touching outside of the performance area with a full step/hand/body part will cause the team to receive a penalty per occurrence.
Safety Violations	10 points per occurrence	Any team in violation of the Rules and Regulations will be assessed a deduction for each violation.
Individual Athlete Minor Fall(s)	0.25 points per occurrence	Examples include: Hands down on tumbling, knees touching the ground on tumbling.
Individual Athlete Major Fall(s)	0.50 points per occurrence	Examples include head, shoulders, or back of an individual falling down on tumbling, an athlete tripping/falling on the floor during a transition.
Stunt Fall(s)	1 point per occurrence	Examples include: Drop from an individual stunt to a load in, cradle or on the ground in a controlled manner.
Stunt Drop(s)	1.5 points per occurrence	Examples: drop from individual stunt to the ground in a compromising position (this includes top, base, or spot).
Pyramid Collapse	2 points per occurrence	Examples: Multiple connected stunts falling from the intended position.

Deduction Notes:

1. 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 3:03.
2. Any deductions/penalties will be taken from a team's FINAL average score.
3. The maximum number of points that will be deducted on attempts to rebuild skills that continue to fall will be 2 points.