

**2027 OHIO ATHLETIC COMMITTEE
CHEERLEADING STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS
INFORMATIONAL HANDBOOK**



**Ohio Athletic Committee Cheerleading State Championships
Marysville High School
800 Amrine Mill Road
Marysville, OH 43040**



Information for the 2027 OAC Cheerleading State Championships is derived from Best In The State Spirit Association (BITSSA). For questions, please contact Chelsea Sonnhalter at Cheer@ohioathletics.com.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

EVENT: Ohio Athletic Committee Cheerleading State Championships

LOCATION: Marysville High School

DATE: January 10, 2027

EVENT DIRECTORS

Welcome to OAC's Middle School and High School Cheerleading State Championships, hosted by the Ohio Athletic Committee. We're proud of all of Ohio's cheerleaders, especially these athletes who have decided to compete at this year's event. We hope that you enjoy this year's event, and while doing so, remain respectful of all of the competition staff, athletes, coaches, and fans.

We are always searching for ways to improve our OAC events, and welcome your respectful comments and suggestions. Your feedback is critical to our continuing efforts to offer top value competitive events for these athletes. The feedback survey is available anytime by email at info@ohioathletics.com.

On behalf of the Ohio Athletic Committee, I'd like to thank you for your continued support of Ohio cheerleading.

James Guerra
President, Ohio Athletic Committee Board of Trustees

I'd like to thank you for participating in the OAC Cheerleading State Championships! We are looking forward to another exciting event. OAC strives to make this championship memorable for everyone. We'd like to thank Marysville High School for being our host for the 2027 event!

Competition t-shirts, sweatshirts, and many other items will be available to purchase from Gameday Sportswear. Don't forget to buy your athlete their own State Championship t-shirt.

Good luck to all of the athletes that are competing today! Have fun, and do your best!

Kathy Noble
Event Director, Ohio Athletic Committee Cheerleading



PARTICIPATION & ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

EVENT PARTICIPATION

Ohio Athletic Committee's Cheerleading State Championships is an open competition, requiring no qualifier to participate. This event is open to all Ohio Middle Schools and High Schools.

- Athletes must be a current student of the official school spirit squad.
- Cheer for **one** sideline/competition season or be a current member of the team i.e., football/basketball/volleyball (exception: males participating in other sports).
- Male participants must be listed on the cheer team roster. If they are active members of another sport, documentation of participation in that sport must be provided. Male participants must also remain active members of the cheer team and consistently participate in practices. If there are 3 or more teams with 1 or more male athletes, OAC will create one co-ed division for those teams.
- Athletes must attend the school they represent.
- All High School teams are eligible to compete. Varsity team members may include any participants from your sideline school team including, freshman, JV, or Varsity members.
- All Middle School competition teams are eligible to compete. Middle School teams may include any participants from your school team including 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.
- No All-Star teams are eligible to compete.
- Teams must abide by the division and/or squad size (see Divisions).
- Participants may compete with up to three (3) teams at OAC. Athletes may not be listed on more than three rosters.

REGISTRATION FORMS

Due to the close proximity of the holidays and unpredictable weather conditions, all registration forms must be completed and postmarked by December 18, 2026. We recommend that you register as soon as possible, as we may reach capacity before the deadline. Once we reach capacity, registration will close online and will be posted on our website.

Please make checks payable to Ohio Athletic Committee and sent to:

**PO Box 1153
Sandusky, OH 44871**

Upon signing the entry form, you have agreed that you have read, understood, and agreed to the competition rules and regulations, awards, penalties, and accept its content.

REGISTRATION FEES

Traditional Routine

- Registration: \$25.00/athlete. Due by December 1, 2026.
- Late Registration: \$30.00/athlete. December 2, 2026 - December 18, 2026.

Game Day Routine

- Registration: \$25.00/athlete. Due by December 1, 2026.
- Late Registration: \$30.00/athlete. December 2, 2026 - December 18, 2026.

Minimum Team Fee

- Traditional Routine: \$250.00/team (10 or less athletes). Due by December 1, 2026..
 - Late Registration, \$300.00/team. December 2, 2026 - December 18, 2026.
- Game Day Routine: \$250.00/team (10 or less athletes). Due by December 1, 2026..
 - Late Registration, \$300.00/team. December 2, 2026 - December 18, 2026.



CANCELLATION POLICY, CHANGES & REFUNDS

The following cancellation policies shall apply:

- Cancellations prior to December 7, 2026 will receive a Full Refund.
- Cancellations between December 8 and December 31: Funds will be applied to OAC 2028 Event.
- There are absolutely No Refund after December 31. There will be no exceptions.
- There are absolutely No Refunds for teams or participants that no-show to the event.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If OAC chooses to cancel an event due to inclement weather, and it is not rescheduled, you will receive a full refund. Otherwise, if the facility is open, the event will proceed. No refunds will be made for teams that choose not to attend.

CHEER EVENTS & DIVISIONS

****Please be sure to submit a music release form.**

There is a 36-member limit on all Middle School and High School teams. No cheerleader may represent more than one school team. Ohio Athletic Committee (OAC) reserves the right to separate, combine, or close divisions based on registrations.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- All competing teams will be judged with score sheets and rubrics created by BITSSA.
- **Middle School Cheer Events**
 - Building/ Non-Building/ Non-Tumble Non-Building/ Game Day (Building and Non-Building)
 - Divisions will be divided into Small and Large - based on number of teams registered
- **High School Cheer Events**
 - Building/ Non-Building/ Non-Tumble Non-Building/ Game Day (Building and Non-Building)
 - Divisions will be divided into Small, Medium, and Large - based on the number of teams registered
- Awards will be given to the top 3 teams in each division.
- A trophy will be given to the top team in each division.
- A High Point banner and champion gift will be given to the highest scoring team in each division.
 - High School Large Traditional
 - High School Medium Traditional
 - High School Small Traditional
 - Middle School Traditional
 - High School Game Day
 - Middle School Game Day

SCHOOL DIVISIONS

High School enrollment is based on the number of females in the school. You can check on enrollment numbers by visiting the OHSAA website and use the "School Directory" feature found below.

<http://officials.myohsaa.org/Outside/SearchSchool>.

Please note, divisions may be combined based on the number of registered teams at the discretion of OAC.

- **High School Small:** 175 females and under registered in grades 9-11.
- **High School Medium:** 176-450 females registered in grades 9-11.
- **High School Large:** 451+ females and under registered in grades 9-11.



- **Middle School Small:** TBD
- **Middle School Large:** TBD
 - Middle School Small and Large will be broken down based on the sizes of each registered team. Divisions will be divided so that equal numbers of teams are participating in each division. Numbers will be announced at the close of registration.

GUIDELINES FOR COMBINATIONS/SPLITS

OAC provides guidelines for COMBINING and/or SPLITTING teams in the best interest of providing a competitive environment. Whenever possible, there should be at least two teams in any given division. However, where there are not permissible combinations thus having a situation where there is only one team.

When To Combine

- There must be two teams per division or they will be combined.
- After the combination, OAC must follow the mandatory split guidelines if applicable.

Prohibited Combinations

- Teams of different divisions **will not** be combined into one (i.e. Building vs. Non-Building).
- High School and Middle School teams **will not** be combined into one.

When To Split

- If there are 10 or more teams in any of the Cheer Events, it will be split further by team size within the previous splits. OAC may use a name such as “Group A” or “Group B” to denote the split and must clearly define the number of competitors permitted on the team for each of these particular groups.
 - Numbers will be determined upon registration and teams will be notified of the division change following the closing of registration.
- If any athletes are dropped/added to the roster after January 2, the groups will stay combined or split.
- If there are nine teams or less in a particular group, it will not split into Group A and Group B.

OAC GENERAL INFORMATION

MUSIC COPYRIGHT/MUSIC STATION

- Coaches must confirm that they have read and understand the USA Cheer “Music Copyrights Educational Initiative” and to OAC Cheer that all sound recordings used in their teams’s music shall only be used with written license from the owner(s) of the sound recordings. ***Please include a copy of your Proof of Purchase or Certificate of Authenticity.***
- For the most up-to-date music copyright information, visit the “Music Copyrights Educational Initiative” webpage at www.usacheer.org/music.
- If you have questions, please email info@usacheer.net for guidance.
- Each team should have a responsible adult remain at the music station that knows the routine and music. Athletes and/or alternates are not permitted.
- All teams must provide their own device for use on the event provided sound system. Music must be recorded at the correct tempo on a device. **NO CDs.**
- Make sure that all devices have a headphone jack to connect to a sound system. They must be fully charged, volume turned up, and placed in airplane mode.
- Due to greater room for technical error, you must have a back-up of your music available.



PERFORMANCE ORDER

A block schedule will be shared with all coaches on the BAND communication app approximately three weeks prior to the event. All performance order updates will also be shared on BAND. The final performance order will be shared the week of the event. If any changes take place, we will let you know. We encourage you to not print or post any schedules to your school until the word "FINAL" appears on the performance order.

WARM-UP

Each team will receive an official warm-up time slot. Teams are encouraged to report to the practice area no sooner than 10 minutes prior to the listed time. All teams will receive a specific timed warm-up on 2-3 sections. To ensure that all teams receive their full warmup time, please enter/exit the warm-up mats quickly.

PERFORMANCE AREA

- All teams will perform on a 42 feet deep by 54 feet wide non-spring floor (9 strips).
- Participants must start on the competition floor with at least one foot on the ground.
- Props may be placed off the mat. These include poms, megaphones, flags, banners, rally towels, and signs.
- OAC does not have an out of bounds rule. Athletes may step off the mat if necessary.

TIME LIMITATIONS/ENTRANCES

- Each routine must include a cheer section that may include a cheer and/or chant or combination of both. **The music portion must not exceed 1:45. Total time limit is 2:30.**
- Formal entrances which involve dance, technical skills, and all traditions/chants are not permitted. Athletes should enter the performance area in a timely fashion.
- Time will begin with the first choreographed movement or note of music, whichever is first. Timing will end with the last choreographed movement.
- **If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation.**
 - 1-Point Deduction: 3-5 seconds over.
 - 2-Point Deduction: 6-8 seconds over.
 - 3-Point Deduction: 9-10 seconds over.
 - 5-Point Deduction: 10 or more seconds over.
- Acknowledging the potential variance caused by human reaction speed and sound system time variations, judges will not issue a deduction until 3 seconds over the allowed time.

SCORING AND RANKINGS

- Coaches will receive copies of the deductions/violations sheet following their performance, and judges score sheet following the awards ceremony. Session rankings will be shared to all coaches on BAND by the end of the performance day (Sunday).
- All ties at the competition will be broken.
- If a tie occurs at the competition, the total points from "Overall Impression" on the score sheet will determine the winner. If this results in a tie, the total cheer score will determine the final tie breaker.

JUDGING CRITERIA

- Judges will score teams using the criteria listed on the OAC Cheer score sheet.
- Each team will be evaluated on a 100-point system. Each section will be combined for the final score.
- Any deductions or violations will be taken off the final score.
- There will be 5-6 judges at the competition, including the head judge.
- Judges scores will be compiled to determine the overall team score.



JUDGES ASSIGNMENT

- Judges for the events will be appointed at the sole discretion for the BITSSA based on qualifications. Judges will be trained on rubrics, definitions, and scoring scales.
- Judges must possess a strong background and knowledge of cheerleading. A judge will not judge within their former conference or have affiliation with any team within division judging. When possible, judges with affiliations to participating schools will be placed on opposite panels or assigned to rubric-only score sheets. Judge assignments will be made with the goal of maintaining consistency and professionalism throughout the event.

RULES/VIOLATIONS

RULES AND PROCEDURES

- Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be managed exclusively by the teams coach and will be directed to the Competition Director.
- Such questions should be made prior to the teams competition performance.

Please note, due to the fast pace of today's routines, it may be possible that some deductions or safety violations during our OAC event may be missed. We do our best to prevent this from occurring. This does not mean that they are legal, and that your team will not be called for them during another event.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

As a coach, it is your responsibility to be knowledgeable of and to adhere to the Safety Guidelines.

- Teams must comply with NFHS rules (www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/spirit).
- All coaches for building teams must be USA Cheer (AACCA) certified and follow USA Cheer (AACCA) guidelines. Visit their website for more information (www.usacheer.org/safety/rules).
- **Up to a 5-Point Deduction:** Tumbling over/under/over legal rotations/dive rolls/knee drop violations.
- **1-Point Deduction:** Signs or props may be safely placed or dropped outside the competition area by a team member who must remain inside the competition area. Props may not be thrown (become airborne).
- The Ohio Athletic Committee **WILL NOT** be responsible for any injury as a result of a performance.

UNIFORMS

Violation of any below will result in a 5-point deduction.

- Uniforms must cover the midriff when standing.
- Must have an element that is identifiable to your school - colors, logo, letters, mascot, etc.
- No jewelry.
- No face or body glitter.
- Props may include Poms, Signs, Flags, Rally Towels, and Megaphones

SPORTSMANSHIP

Violation of any below will result in a 5-point deduction.

- All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanships throughout the competition with positive presentation upon entry and exit from the performance area, as well as throughout the routine.
- The coach of each team is responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents, and other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly.
 - Routine choreography should be appropriate and entertaining for all audience members. Vulgar or suggestive material, choreography and/or music is not allowed and is defined as any movement or choreography implying something improper or indecent, appearing offensive or sexual in content, and/or relaying lewd or profane gestures or implications.
 - Inappropriate choreography, uniforms, makeup and/or music may affect the judges overall impression and/or score of the routine.



INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE

UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

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

FAULT OF TEAM

- In the event a team's routine is interrupted because of the failure of the team's own equipment, the team must either continue the routine or withdraw from competition.
- 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 of where the interruption occurred.

INJURY

- The only person that may stop a routine for the injury are any of the following:
 - Competition officials OR
 - The coach from the team performing OR
 - The injured individual
- 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 re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. The team must perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point of where the interruption occurred.
- The injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless:
 - Competition officials receive clearance from, first, the medical personnel, the parent (if present), THEN the head coach of the competing team.
 - If the medical personnel does not clear the participant, the participant can only return to the competition if a parent or legal guardian in attendance signs and returns a participation waiver.
 - Any athlete who exhibits signs or symptoms consistent with concussion should be removed from the activity at that time and should not be allowed to return to activity that day. The athlete should not return to activity on a subsequent day until evaluated by and receives written clearance for such participation from a qualified physician (MD or DO specifically trained in concussion management).

DISQUALIFICATION

- OAC does not disqualify; however, failure to follow the rules will result in penalties.



GAME DAY DIVISION

GAME DAY ROUTINES: **THIS IS SPECIFICALLY TO SHOWCASE YOUR GAME DAY SPIRIT AND CROWD LEADING SKILLS. THERE ARE NO RUBRICS FOR GAME DAY ROUTINES.**

Game Day (Building and Non-Building) will not be combined.

GAME DAY RULES

1. Teams must enter the competition floor with all props; they will not be permitted to set up prior to competition. Run on will not be timed. Routine may not exceed three (3) minutes.
2. The situation chant will no longer be given in the warmup room. Teams will pre-select their situation chant using offense or defense prior to the competition.
3. Teams may add up to one (1) mascot in their Game Day Routine. The mascot must enter the floor with the team and should be used to raise crowd energy and participation. The mascot is not allowed to be involved in any stunts/technical skills and/or tumbling and should position themselves away from skills being performed. The mascot will not count towards the total number of participants allowed.
4. The performance will follow this order: Band Chant, Crowd Leading (cheer & chant), followed by the Fight Song. Performances may not exceed three (3) minutes.
5. The incorporation of stunts, jumps, and tumbling are only allowed during the Fight Song, Chant, and Cheer. To receive points in this category, be sure to incorporate a skill in each element.
6. Building teams may use transitions to initiate building skills.
7. Fight Song incorporation is limited to three (3) consecutive 8-counts of stunts and/or tumbling. If the Fight Song repeats, the incorporation will only be allowed both times if it is repeated the same both times. Counting will begin with the first initiation of a skill and continue until either the incorporation is complete or the end of the third 8-count.
8. The Band Chant should have an emphasis on crowd appeal and practicality - No stunting or tumbling is permitted, however jumps and kicks are allowed.
9. The use of crowd leading tools such as signs, poms, flags, rally towels, and/or megaphones is not mandatory, but encouraged.

GAME DAY SKILL(S) RESTRICTION

- No tosses (basket, sponge, or elevator) are allowed.
- No inversions are allowed.
- No twisting released dismounts are allowed.
- No running tumbling is allowed. This includes any CONNECTED STANDING TUMBLING SKILLS.
- Standing tumbling is allowed but cannot be connected. A single tumbling skill can only be connected to a single jump. The only standing tumbling skills that are allowed include the following: back handspring, back tuck, forward roll, front walkover, cartwheel, jump to back handspring, and jump tuck.
- Standing fulls and any skills above a back tuck are not allowed. Rippled single back handsprings are permitted. Jump-to-tumble combinations are allowed, provided the tumbling pass includes only one skill.
- Single leg stunts are limited to liberties and liberty hitches.

Please email **BITSSAOHIO@gmail.com** for any clarifications or interpretations of the above safety guidelines, and state that you are attending the 2027 OAC Cheerleading State Championships.



**ALL MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS ARE REQUIRED
TO SIGN AND RETURN THE FINAL PAGE OF THIS FORM.**

We have reviewed the 2027 OAC Cheerleading State Championships Rules & Regulations Handbook with the entire team and we hereby accept this information as a fair and integral part of the competition and agree to adhere to the rules, policies, and procedures contained herein.

SCHOOL

DATE

DIVISION

CITY/STATE

COACH SIGNATURE

ADVISOR/PRINCIPLE SIGNATURE

