

Answers to Questions Submitted at the 2009 Spirit Summit

1. Are 6th and 7th graders allowed to participate?

No, 6th and 7th graders may not participate with your high school cheer or dance squad. Per NMAA Bylaws, 8th grade is the first opportunity for students to “play up.” Also, it is the decision of the school district whether to allow 8th grade participation.

2. How do you include the team manager on the roster and the NMAA website for State Competition if he/she is not a high school student?

A student who is not enrolled at a member high school may not be added to the NMAA website. However, if a note is included on the roster when submitted, and the student’s eligibility is verified using the NMAA Eligibility Verification Form, the individual may still serve as a manager.

NOTE: If your manager is NOT a student in any capacity, he or she falls under the volunteer coach policy in your district and must be recognized as such by your school.

3. How many students are allowed to compete?

Cheer: A maximum of 20 girls may be on the floor for an all-girls squad

A maximum of 24 participants may be on the floor for a co-ed squad

Dance: There is no limit to the size of a dance team

Participants: Only the students listed on your roster and within the above parameters may participate at state; this includes students who are not performing.

4. Do face piercings fall within the limitations of jewelry and do they need to be removed prior to any participation?

Yes. ALL jewelry must be removed prior to practice and competition as per the NFHS Spirit Rulebook, Rule 2.2.1 (pg 15).

5. Can we have a backdrop for State?

At this time, due to the limited viewing area at the Santa Ana Star Center, a back drop is not a possibility.

6. Who do we call to ask about the legality of a stunt?

Vanessa Whitaker is the NM Spirit Rules Interpreter. Please contact her with questions regarding the legality of any cheer or dance moves.

7. Is the Pit still under construction? When will the Competition return to that venue?

The Pit is still under construction and therefore not available for the Spirit Competition. The Spirit Competition will be held at the Santa Ana Star Center at least through the year 2012.

8. Will Spirit Fest have a spring floor this year?

The NMAA is no longer involved with the Spirit Fest. Please contact Varsity Sports with further inquires.

More importantly, please see the answer to the question below inquiring about the legality of performing on a spring floor.

9. Can we compete on a spring floor at out of state competitions?

No, per NFHS Spirit rule 2.1.7 a height increasing apparatus may be used for teaching, but NOT in a performance/competition. This rule applies to ANY performances/competitions that your squad takes part in, not just NMAA events.

10. Can we use a stage at State to elevate the performers?

Due to safety reasons, a stage is not an option at State.

11. Will the judges for State be selected from the same organization?

No, judges will be selected from multiple organizations as well as multiple regions.

12. Private school division.

The NMAA does not distinguish classifications by private and public status.

13. Can Spirit Competition deductions be posted so that all coaches have a better understanding of this process?

I do not feel that it is my right to post the deductions of individual teams. However, I will consider posting an anonymous break down of deductions.

14. Does our squad have to have a minimum number of participants to be eligible for State?

No, there is not a minimum requirement to participate in state.

15. What sanctions are imposed on squads who perform illegal stunts or break NMHSCA/NMAA rules?

Sanctions are determined by the NMAA Executive Director after an investigation of the violation is complete.

16. Is the size of a squad part of the judging criteria?

No.

17. Judges' comments last year referred to our cheers as being "too wordy." How do we fix this?

Spirit judging is quite subjective and each judge may be looking for something different. I would recommend speaking with some of your colleagues who have received positive commentary regarding their cheers.

18. Our school is small. How do we get more students interested in cheerleading?

This is a personal opinion, not that of the NMAA's, but a positive image is the best way to draw people to your squad. If your team is known for their sportsmanship, citizenship, etc., others will want to join in that atmosphere. Again, I would also recommend speaking with colleagues who have had success in building their squads.

19. Why are separate trophies not awarded for each category?

This is a State Competition, not a Festival with multiple awards. The trophies distributed are the State Championship trophies. Recognition is given to the top scores in each category in the form of certificates, but trophies will be limited to State Championship trophies.

20. Can a middle school coach have an MVP account?

If the coach is also assisting at the High School level, yes. At this time, there is no middle school MVP system.

21. Are there rules about a cheer and dance squad performing together during the year?

There are no rules specific to this, in fact it is strongly encouraged and would be a great way to increase morale and school spirit.

22. Can a middle school squad perform during half time of a high school game?

Per NMAA bylaws, yes. However, this is a decision that is ultimately made by your school administration.

23. Why are squads no longer divided by size?

Per the survey distributed to coaches prior to this decision, approximately 50% of coaches were in favor of that change. The change took place as of the 2006 State Competition.

24. Coaches' ideas seem to be solicited and then not considered. What happens to our ideas?

Ideas and opinions from coaches are heard and taken into serious consideration. However, the ultimate goal is to have a State Competition that is beneficial to all students and final decisions are made with that goal in mind.

25. The Summit should provide a separate time for State questions.

Next year the Summit will have a session dedicated to State questions.

26. How does one become a part of the spirit specific committee?

According to the NMAA Bylaws (3.2.3 B) members are appointed to the Committee. If you are interested in this appointment, please let me know.

27. Is there any way to arrange the mats in the warm up area in such a way as to add more stretching/tumbling room?

Due to the limited space in the warm-up area, the mats are laid out in such a way to ensure safety. Please remember that "rehearsal" of your routine should be done prior to the State Competition. Although we offer this warm-up area so that you can prepare for your performance, it is not designed for a complete run through of a routine.

28. My school is currently only 9th and 10th grade enrollment. Can we participate in state?

Yes, your squad may participate. The Competition is open to all Varsity squads. In a situation where there is only one squad at the high school, and no sub-varsity squads, that squad is the Varsity squad by default.

29. Would it be possible to require squads to declare a division at the beginning of the season to prevent changing divisions to increase a squad's chances of winning state?

Although I see where this causes concern, it would be unfair to require this of squads when injuries and individual improvement of students can have an impact on a squad throughout the year. Squads may not change divisions after their registration for State has been completed.

30. Can poms light up?

Yes, poms may light up. However, be sure that your poms (and any other props) adhere to the safety rules laid out in the NFHS Spirit Rulebook.

31. If a pom falls to the floor is it a deduction?

A technical deduction would be given if the pom were stepped on or considered a safety hazard, but not simply for dropping the pom. However, dropping the pom may result in a lower score from individual judges.

32. If spirit became a sport, would stipends have to be equal to other coaches?

If cheer became a sport, stipends would need to be EQUITABLE and based on the same pay schedule as other coaches.

33. Can there be a representative from spirit involved in making Title IX decisions?

The NMAA does not make any decisions regarding Title IX. This is a legislation that has been in place and, in combination with the School Equity Act, is now beginning to effect high school athletics. The NMAA's role in regards to this legislation is as an educator, not a dictator. We feel that it is important for our member schools to understand the national and now state regulations that apply to their athletic opportunities, and for that reason we have begun to educate as such.