2016-2017 NFHS SPIRIT RULES

Rules Changes
Situations and Rulings
Points of Emphasis
NFHS (located in Indianapolis, IN – Est. 1920):
- National leadership organization for high school sports and activities;
- National authority on interscholastic activity programs.
- Conducts national meetings;
- Sanctions interstate events;
- Produces national publication for high school administrators;
- National source for interscholastic coach training and national information center.
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF STATE HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

- Membership = 50 member state associations and D.C.
- NFHS reaches more than 19,000 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.8 million in high school sports.
The NFHS Rules Review Committee is chaired by the chief operating officer and composed of all rules editors. After each committee concludes its deliberations and has adopted its recommended changes for the subsequent year, such revisions will be evaluated by the Rules Review Committee.
The NFHS writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level.

- Publishes 4 million pieces of materials annually.
2016-17 NFHS SPIRIT RULES BOOK

- Available for purchase at www.nfhs.com
- $8.20 plus s/h
### Rules Books and Case Books Available as E-books

By 07-30-13

Below is a listing of the e-books currently available for purchase. The Amazon versions can be downloaded and used on Apple or Android devices with the Kindle app.

#### 2016-17 Books

- 2016 Football Rules Book
- 2016 Softball Rules Book
- 2016 Lacrosse Rules Book
- 2016 Basketball Rules Book
- 2016 Wrestling Rules Book

#### 2015-16 Books

- 2015 Football Rules Book
- 2015 Softball Rules Book
- 2015 Basketball Rules Book
- 2015 Wrestling Rules Book

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WWW.NFHS.ORG
ACTIVITIES & SPORTS – SPIRIT

Spirit Articles

New Rules for Dance Risk Minimization Among High School Spirit Rules...
Role of Cheerleaders in an Athletic Department’s Mission
Risk Minimization Key Focus of High School Spirit Rules Changes
Sparkle Cheer Programs Continue to Take Hold Nationwide

Rules Changes
Spirit Rules Changes - 2016-17
APPLICATION OF NFHS SPIRIT RULES BOOK

✓ Spirit rules provide the minimum safety standards followed by all spirit teams (cheerleading/dance/drill/pom, etc...)

✓ Spirit rules should be followed while participants are in a supporting role at an interscholastic contest and during all competition.

✓ RULE 1 contains definitions of terms that are used throughout the rules book.

✓ RULE 2 contains general information and safety rules that apply to all spirit groups.

✓ RULE 3 contains apparel requirements and performance safety rules that apply only to cheerleading.

✓ RULE 4 contains apparel requirements and performance safety rules that apply only to dance/drill/pom.

✓ Situations and photos are provided as examples only, and do not cover all circumstances in which the rules apply.
EDUCATION-BASED ATHLETIC/ACTIVITY PROGRAMS

✓ Interscholastic athletics/activities shall supplement the educational environment and provide students with educational experiences.

✓ Participation in education-based activity programs promotes student academic achievement.

✓ Spirit teams are very visible and in a position of great influence and therefore high standards for appearance and conduct are essential.

✓ Coaches should ensure uniforms, costumes, music and materials are age-appropriate and suitable for the educational environment.

✓ Coaches are expected to be advocates and models of good sportsmanship and follow all rules as written.
2016-2017 NFHS Spirit Rules

Changes

RULE 1 – DEFINITIONS
RULE 1 - DEFINITIONS

✓ Bracer – A top person who is connected to another top person.

✓ Cradle Position (New) – A face-up, open-pike position.

✓ Quick Toss – A release that begins with the top person in having both feet in weight-bearing contact with the performing surface and ends in a partner stunt or pyramid.
2016-2017 NFHS Spirit Rules
Changes

RULE 2 – GENERAL RISK MANAGEMENT
RULE 3 – CHEER
RULE 4 – DANCE/DRILL/POM
A spotter is required for extended stunts except:
   f. Triple-base extended stunts in which the top person is horizontal.

**Rationale:** Risk minimization.
**Rule Change**

**3-3-4 a, B**

Braced inversions in a pyramid that do not flip are permitted provided the following conditions are met:

a. Braced inversions that do not release must follow non-release stunt Rule 3-4.

b. Braced inversions that release must follow release transition Rule 3-5-5.

**Rationale:** As a point of clarification, these stunts are legal when not braced; therefore, two bracers are not necessary for non-flipping inversions.
Braced flips in a pyramid are allowed provided all the following conditions are met:

a. The top person maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with two bracers who are in multi-base preps with a spotter. The top person is not behind the bracers.

**Rationale:** Braced flips may start in a single-base stunt but still require two bracers in preps. The bracers may be on any side, including behind the top person.
Rule 3-3-5
BRACED FLIPS

LEGAL

NOTE: Bracers can be to the back or to the side of the top person.
3-3-6 b

In all other inversions:

b. Static inversions at prep level require two bases or a base and spotter. The spotter is not required to be in contact with the top person.

c. A release transition from a static inverted position to a non-inverted position is permitted provided:
   1. The top person lands at or below prep level.
   2. The top person does not twist more than 1/4 rotation.
   3. There is a spotter.
In all other inversions:

c. A release transition from a static inverted position to a non-inverted position is allowed provided:
   1. The top person lands at or below prep level.
   2. The top person does not twist more than $\frac{1}{4}$ rotation.
   3. There is a spotter.
Rule Change

3-3-6 F, G

In all other inversions:

f. When the stunt begins in an inversion and goes to a non-inverted position, the upper body contact may be released before the top person is no longer inverted.

g. Dismounts from inverted stunts to a cradle or an upright position on the performing surface are allowed provided the top person begins in a static or “pump and go” position and does no more than a one-quarter turn.

Rationale: Inversion section is simplified and reorganized. Rules for inverted stunts are less restrictive and permit additional low level/low risk stunts without creating undue risk to participants.
Rules 3-3-6g and 4-3-6g

DISMOUNTS FROM INVERTED STUNTS

BOTH ARE LEGAL
3-4-3

In pyramids where one static extended stunt braces another static extended stunt the connection must be hand/arm to hand/arm.

**Rationale:** Removing the requirement for bracers of non-release, static stunts to be at shoulder height or below does not create undue risk.
A participant must not jump unassisted onto the back of a base who is in a horizontal position.

**Rationale:** Risk minimization.
**Rule Change**

3-5-2 B, E

In all release stunts and tosses:

b. The top person must not land in an inverted position.

e. The top person must not make more than 1 1/4 twists during the release.

**Rationale:** Risk minimization.
Rule Change

3-5-4

(P) ART. 4 . . . A switch liberty is permitted as an exception to Articles 3-5-2 and 3-5-3.

Rationale: The exception for a switch liberty does not create undue risk.
Rule Change

3-5-5 b

Release transitions are permitted provided all of the following conditions are met throughout the transition:

b. The top person maintains hand-to-hand/arm contact with at least one bracer except for the following:

1. A non-braced top person in a vertical position at prep level may be released to a stunt at any level provided the top person remains vertical.

2. A non-braced top person in a cradle position or horizontal position at prep level or below may be released to a loading position or stunt prep level or below.

Rationale: With the advancement of cheerleading skill, allowing lower level non-braced transitions do not create undue risk.
3-5-5 C

c. The top person and each bracer (who is at shoulder level or below) have a separate spotter with the exception of bracers in shoulder sits and thigh stands.
Non-braced suspended splits that originate from or pass through prep level are permitted provided
a. At least three bases slow the momentum of the top person.
c. At least two of the bases support under the top person’s legs and the third base may support under the legs or be in contact with the top person’s hands.

Rationale: Reducing the number of required bases for suspended splits does not significantly increase risk.
Dismounts to the performing surface from prep level or above that involve a skill require two bases or a base and a spotter. **Assistance is required from at least one base or spotter.**

**Rationale:** Requiring just one base/spotter to assist the top person to the floor does not cause undue risk.
CHEERING ON PROPS AS BASES

ART. 1 . . . The height of the prop must not exceed 3 feet.
ART. 2 . . . Jumps and/or stunts are not permitted on props.

Rationale: Specifically clarifies that cheerleaders have limitations when cheering on props.
**Rule Change**

4-1-5 B

b. Footwear that covers the entire foot/feet and has non-slip soles must be worn for:

1. Stunts/lifts at prep level in which the top person’s foot/feet are in the hands of a base(s).
2. Airborne tumbling with the exception of front and side aerials.

**Rationale:** Additional restrictions will minimize risk to dance/drill/pom participants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule 4-1-5b</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Image 1" /> <img src="image2.jpg" alt="Image 2" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Both are Legal**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.jpg" alt="Image 3" /> <img src="image4.jpg" alt="Image 4" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Both are Illegal**
A spotter is required for stunts in which the supporting hands of the base(s) is(are) above the head, except for the following:

f. Triple-base stunts in which the top person is horizontal.

**Rationale:** Removing spotting requirements for such stunts does not increase risk to participants.
Rule Change

Triple-base Swedish Fall
Braced flips are not permitted in Dance/Drill/Pom.

**Rationale:** Minimizes risk for high school dancers who are generally not properly trained to execute higher level stunts that require lead-up skills and progressions.
Rule Change

BRACED FLIP
In all other inversions:

b. Static inversions at prep level require two bases or a base and spotter. The spotter is not required to be in contact with the top person.

c. Release transitions from an inverted position are not permitted in Dance/Drill/Pom.

f. When the stunt begins in an inversion and transitions to a non-inverted position, the upper body contact may be released before the top person is no longer inverted.
Stunts/lifts in which base(s) support an extended top person under the foot/feet are not permitted in Dance/Drill/Pom.

**Rationale:** Minimizes risk for high school dancers who are generally not properly trained to execute higher level stunts that require lead-up skills and progressions.
4-4-4 A

A top person may be moved from a vertical position to a horizontal or cradle position provided:

a. The top person begins at or below prep level and does not pass through an extended position.

**Rationale:** Minimizes risk for high school dancers who are generally not properly trained to execute higher level stunts that require lead-up skills and progressions.
4-3-6 B

Rules 3-3-6b and 4-3-6b

ALL ARE LEGAL
Stunts/lifts in which base(s) support an extended top person under the foot/feet are not permitted in Dance/Drill/Pom.

**Rationale:** Minimizes risk for high school dancers who are generally not properly trained to execute higher level stunts that require lead-up skills and progressions.
A top person may be moved from a vertical position to a horizontal or cradle position provided:

a. The top person begins at or below prep level and does not pass through an extended position.

**Rationale:** Minimizes risk for high school dancers who are generally not properly trained to execute higher level stunts that require lead-up skills and progressions.
A participant must not jump unassisted onto the back of a base who is in a horizontal position.

**Rationale:** Minimizes risk of injury to participants.
Rule Change

4-4-11

In pyramids where one static extended stunt braces another static extended stunt the connection must be hand/arm to hand/arm.

Rationale: Removing the requirement for bracers of static stunts to be at shoulder height or below does not create undue risk.
Rule 4-4-11

In pyramids where one static extended stunt braces another static extended stunt, the connection must be hand/arm to hand/arm.
ART 13. Single-base stunts in which the base is the primary support for two extended top persons are not permitted in Dance/Drill/Pom.

ART 14. Single base stunts in which the base uses only one arm to support an extended top person are not permitted in Dance/Drill/Pom.

Rationale: Minimizes risk for high school dancers who are usually inadequately prepared to execute stunts/lifts that require lead up skills and progressions.
The following release stunts are not permitted in Dance/Drill/Pom:

a. **Tosses**

b. **Braced release stunts and braced release transitions.**

c. **Swan Dives**

d. **Switch Liberties**

**Rationale:** Minimizes risk for high school dancers who are usually inadequately prepared to execute tosses and higher level braced and non-braced releases.
4-5-3 A,B

Non-braced release stunts are permitted:
   a. **The top person must begin and end at prep level or below.**
   b. **The top person must not begin or end in an inverted position.**

**Rationale:** Allows lower level release stunts for dance/drill/pom participants.
Non-braced suspended splits that originate from or pass through prep level are permitted provided

a. At least three bases slow the momentum of the top person.

b. At least two of the bases support under the top person’s legs and the third base may support under the legs or be in contact with the top person’s hands.

Rationale: Reducing the number of required bases for suspended splits does not significantly increase risk.
4-6-4

The top person in braced suspended splits must not be released by the bases in Dance/Drill/Pom.

Rationale: Reinforces Rule 4-5-2 which prohibits braced releases in Dance/Drill/Pom.
Dismounts to the performing surface from prep level or above that involve a skill (e.g. toe touch, twist, etc.) require two bases or a base and a spotter. Assistance is required from at least one base or spotter.

**Rationale:** Requiring just one base/spotter to assist the top person to the floor does not cause undue risk.
2016-2017 NFHS Spirit Rules

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

www.nfhs.org
To facilitate the navigation of the NFHS Spirit Rules Book, the following guidance is offered:

- Cheer related sections include Rules 1, 2, and 3.
- Dance related sections include Rules 1, 2, and 4.

When seeking information regarding a specific skill, it is helpful to identify the section in which it is located.

- For further assistance in understanding rules and/or skills, go to spiritrules.com. This website is a valuable resource that offers video footage illustrating skills and supporting the explanation of spirit rules.
## POINTS OF EMPHASIS – NAVIGATING THE SPIRIT RULES BOOK – RULE 3

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<th>Topic</th>
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<td>Drops</td>
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<td>Sec 10</td>
<td>Props as Bases</td>
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</table>
## POINTS OF EMPHASIS - NAVIGATING THE SPIRIT RULES BOOK - RULE 4

### DANCE/DRILL/POM

- **Sec 1** Apparel/Accessories
- **Sec 2** Stunting Personnel
- **Sec 3** Inversions
- **Sec 4** Non Release Stunt/Lifts
- **Sec 5** Release Stunts
- **Sec 6** Suspended Stunts
- **Sec 7** Dismounts
- **Sec 8** Tumbling
- **Sec 9** Drops
- **Sec 10** Props as Bases
- **Sec 11** Spotting Props
- **Sec 12** Dismounting Props
Consideration of practice/performance surfaces are a vital component of risk minimization. The following skills are only allowed on a mat, grass, or rubberized track surface:

a. Basket tosses, elevator/sponge tosses and other similar multi-base tosses.

b. Partner stunts in which the base uses only one arm to support the top person.

c. Twisting tumbling skills (Arabians, full twisting layouts, etc.). EXCEPTION: Cartwheels, round-offs and aerial cartwheels are allowed on surfaces other than a mat, grass or rubberized track.
Application of NFHS Spirit Rules Book – The spirit rules book provides rules and safety limitations that should be followed by all cheerleading/dance/drill/pom and other spirit teams that stunt, tumble or use props as a base. The spirit rules should be followed while participants are in a supporting role at an interscholastic contest and during competition. Dance/drill/pom and other spirit teams that stunt, tumble or use props as a base must follow the appropriate safety limitations in Rule 2 and Rule 3. Cheerleading or other spirit teams that use props as a base must follow the appropriate safety limitations in Rule 3. It is important to note that cheerleaders must follow Rule 2-3 and dancers must follow Rule 3-1 regarding apparel/accessories. Situations and photos are provided as examples only, and do not cover all circumstances in which the rules apply.

Education-based Athletic/Activity Programs – Interscholastic athletics/activities shall supplement the educational environment and provide students with educational experiences. Participation in education-based activity programs promotes student academic achievement. Spirit teams are very visible and in a position of great influence and therefore high standards for appearance and conduct are essential. Coaches should ensure uniforms, costumes, music and materials are age-appropriate and suitable for the educational environment. In addition, coaches are expected to be advocates and models of good sportsmanship and follow all rules as written.
Concussions – The understanding of sports-related concussions has evolved dramatically in recent years. We have learned that young athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion. The majority of concussions for spirit participants are acquired during partner stunts. An athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from participation and shall not resume participation until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional. Look to your state high school association and the NFHS for education regarding prevention and treatment of concussions.
NFHS SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION IN SPORTS

In the Appendix of the 2016-17 NFHS Rules Book

Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. An athlete does not have to have suffered a direct blow to the head or lose consciousness (be “knocked out”) to have suffered a concussion.

Common Signs and Symptoms of Concussion Include:
- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall
- Headaches or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right” or is “feeling down”

Suggested Concussion Management:
1. No athlete should return to play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
2. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion should be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional that day.
3. Any athlete with a concussion should be medically cleared by an appropriate health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition.
4. After medical clearance, RTP should follow a step-wise protocol with provisions for delayed RTP based upon return of any signs or symptoms at rest, while doing school work or with physical activity.

For further details please see the “NFHS Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports” at www.nfhs.org.

Revised and Approved October 2013
**Points of Emphasis**

**POINTS OF EMPHASIS – COACHES RESPONSIBILITY**

**Coaches’ Responsibility: Education** – Coaches have a professional responsibility to read and fully comprehend the entire NFHS Spirit Rules Book. It is important for coaches to read the entire rules book to fully understand all rules to correctly teach the appropriate skills to their athletes. It is also the coaches’ responsibility to educate their student-athletes so they are aware of the rules changes.

**Coaches’ Responsibility: Minimizing Risk** – Risk minimization for participants must be the primary objective for all spirit coaches. Protecting the head, neck and shoulders of participants during stunting must be a top priority. Participants should be placed under the direction of a qualified and knowledgeable coach who can recognize a squad’s particular ability level and limit their activities accordingly. Partner stunts and other gymnastics-related activities should be taught in natural progressions from easy to hard and low to high. Practice should focus on risk minimization for all stunting personnel. During practices, coaches should ensure that athletes are thoroughly trained in proper spotting techniques and receive appropriate training before attempting any form of stunting and tumbling. Only those skills mastered in practice and consistently executed safely should be performed. Coaches should also provide a comprehensive conditioning and strength-building program to ensure optimum fitness for their athletes. Overuse injuries are a common problem characterized by irritation to a body part. Cutting back on the intensity, duration and frequency of specific activities/skills will help to minimize the potential for overuse injuries to athletes. A coach should be mindful of other athletic activities in which their participants are involved and should educate parents and participants regarding overuse injuries and over-training.
INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS AND STATE ASSOCIATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION OF ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Request from Student to School for Accommodation(s)
2. School Conducts Individual Student Assessment
3. Request from School for Accommodation(s) to State Association
4. Notice and Opportunity to be Heard
5. State Association Review of Request
6. State Association Provides Written Determination for Accommodation(s) to School
7. If appropriate, School Provides Letter of Authorization to Head Official for Local Contest Allowing Competition with Accommodation(s)
NFHS INFORMATION

- Rule Change Proposal Form – February 1, 2017
- Spirit Rules Committee Meeting March 4-6, 2017
- Rules Online Interpreters Meeting July 17, 2017
NFHS SPORT QUESTIONNAIRE

NFHS Sport Questionnaires
By on April 18

Click on a link below to take one of the 2014 NFHS sport questionnaires.

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<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Opens</th>
<th>Closes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>April 20</td>
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<td>Boys Lacrosse</td>
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<td>Girls Gymnastics</td>
<td>April 20</td>
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<td>Track and Field</td>
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Sports Questionnaire Results

2015 NFHS Boys Lacrosse Rules Questionnaire

PART I: Checklist: Are the NFHS 2015 Rules - Were the following rule changes satisfactory?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule Description</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No %</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adding an additional check procedure to ensure that the ball will not fall out of the hand and hit the ground</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catching an illegal stick will result in a penalty for non-meeting specifications, even if it is not in play</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checking the status of the shot before the official makes a call</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catching the ball in the air before the official makes a call</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catching the ball in the air before the official makes a call</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stopping the game because the player was underwater or any part of the body was below the water surface</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>Stopping the game because the player was underwater or any part of the body was below the water surface</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>Stopping the game because the player was underwater or any part of the body was below the water surface</td>
<td>90%</td>
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<td>Stopping the game because the player was underwater or any part of the body was below the water surface</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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Coaches' Official's Team's

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<td>Stopping the game because the player was underwater or any part of the body was below the water surface</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>Stopping the game because the player was underwater or any part of the body was below the water surface</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<td>Stopping the game because the player was underwater or any part of the body was below the water surface</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stopping the game because the player was underwater or any part of the body was below the water surface</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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</table>
Mission: Provide ongoing professional development for Coaches, Administrators, Students, Parents and Officials on the role they play within interscholastic athletics and activities.
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National Coach Certification Program

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Coaching Cheer and Dance

Course Objectives
- Learn how to match your coaching philosophy to the role of the spirit team in the school setting
- Create a fair tryout system where you make the final decisions
- Understand the difference between game day/sideline responsibilities and competitions
- Recognize a team member’s physical performance readiness
- Work with safe spotting techniques and motion techniques
- Teach appropriate and safe jumping techniques
- Understand the legal liability and responsibilities of a cheer or dance coach
- Use the rule situations in the NFHS Spirit Rules Book to effectively interpret the spirit rules

Units
- Coaches Performance Responsibilities
- Coaches Administrative Responsibilities
- Fundamental Technique
- Risk Management

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NFHS INFORMATION

- Contact Information:

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THANK YOU!

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