

2025-2026 MPA CHEERLEADING BULLETIN (WINTER)

(updated 01/05/26)

WINTER CHEERLEADING SEASON

November 17	First Practice-Competition Team / Winter Cheering Squads
December 4	*Eligibility Forms Due
January 9	Regional Program Information Due
January 16	Officials Form Due
January 26	On-line voting begins for Sportsmanship Banner (One week to vote)
January 31	Regional Cheer Competition (AS/AN, CS/CN, BS/BN) Site – Sanford High School
February 7	State Cheer Championships (All Classes) Augusta Civic Center - Order of competition to be determined at regional championships.
February 21	Close of Winter Season (unless qualified for N.E. Championships or when the school's basketball team has completed play)
March 21	New England Cheering Championships Site – Worster State University

*If you are planning to attend the MPA Regional/State competitions or cheering at the basketball tournament you must submit an eligibility form.

USA CHEER SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT (formerly known as AACCA)

All coaches of cheerleaders' grades 9 through 12 must have successfully completed the USA Cheer Safety and Risk Management Course, formerly known as AACCA, prior to the start of the season. The course is available on-line through the following website (<http://www.nfhslearn.com>).

*Each coach must complete the NFHS "*Concussion in Sport*" video that is available at the NFHS website (www.nfhslearn.com).

*Each coach must complete the NFHS "*Heat Acclimatization*" video that is available at the NFHS website (www.nfhslearn.com).

*Each coach must complete the NFHS "*Sudden Cardiac Arrest*" video that is available at the NFHS website (www.nfhslearn.com).

*Each coach must complete the NFHS "Protecting Students from Abuse" video that is available at the NFHS website (www.nfhslearn.com).

MANDATORY RULES CLINIC

Sunday, October 26, Lewiston HS, 8:30 a.m.

MAKE-UP DATE

Must view the recording of the rule's clinic.

There is a Zoom option for those who cannot attend. Please access the Zoom by clicking [THIS LINK](#). The Zoom meeting will begin by 8:45 a.m. Questions will be addressed via chat.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

MAKE-UP RULES CLINIC TRAINING VIDEO AND QUESTIONNAIRE:

The following links are for all those who missed the mandatory clinic on October 26.

[Training for Coaches](#)

[Training Questionnaire](#)

BONA FIDE TEAM RULE

A member of a school team is a student athlete who is regularly present for and actively participates in team practices and competitions. Bona fide members of a school team are prevented from missing high school practice or competition to compete or practice elsewhere.

- * Two waivers per student athlete per sport season may be granted by the principal on a case-by-case basis for extraordinary circumstances. (e.g., If a student/athlete were invited to participate in a prestigious weekend event then a waiver may be granted. If a student/athlete were invited to participate in a nationally recognized tournament over a school vacation, then **that** waiver may be granted for that activity. If a student requests to miss practice every Friday because he/she is receiving specialized coaching from an outside team/coach, then a waiver should not be granted **because it violates the spirit and intent of the rule.**)
- ** This policy is not intended to restrict dual sport participation in schools that allow dual participation.
- *** Penalty for violation of this policy:

1 st Violation	Suspension from play for one game/contest
2 nd Violation	Removal from team for remainder of season

(Effective Date: 2011)

GENERAL INFORMATION

Winter Cheering Season

The MPA Sport Season Policy remains in effect all year. Cheering squads may not sponsor or participate in clinics prior to or following the end of the winter sport season. Schools may enter one team of not more than twenty (20) participants plus **two** alternates in the Cheerleading Competition (Stunt) and MPA Tournament games (Spirit). Selection of the participants is the decision of the school. **Every school's coach must attend the virtual rules clinic, or view the video of the clinic, to cheer at tournament games or compete in competition.** If a coach does not attend one of the rules clinics, the school will be assessed a \$35 fine, and the team will not be eligible to compete.

SAFETY REGULATIONS

The MPA Cheerleading Committee follows the National Federation Spirit Rule Book. This rule book will be in effect for all cheerleader activities during the winter season and must be followed in all MPA-sponsored or sanctioned events. A primary concern of the MPA is the safety of the participants. All cheer coaches must have successfully completed the USA Cheer Safety and Risk Management Course, formerly known as AACCA, to meet coaching eligibility certification. In MPA-sponsored tournaments/events, all National Federation Rules apply. Any

school committing a flagrant violation of the National Federation Rules will lose its eligibility to compete in the MPA Cheerleading Tournament.

In accordance with National Federation Rules ... Tumbling and partner stunts shall not be performed on concrete, wet surfaces, or where there is not enough space. Tumbling or partner stunts and pyramids/mounts shall not be performed during games when the ball is in play. Basket tosses, elevator/sponge tosses, twisting out of stunts and similar multi-base tosses are permitted only on appropriate mats.

BASKETBALL/HOCKEY CHEERLEADERS (Spirit)

- Per MPA rules, **tumbling and/or stunting is prohibited at tournament games**. Cheerleaders performing at tournament games may perform **ONLY** sideline cheers.
- At **regular season** games, tumbling and/or stunting is permitted **ONLY at halftime** during the performance of a cheering routine, and must be done on mats.
- Cheerleaders are **NOT** to perform competition routines at tournament games.
- Mats will **NOT** be available at tournament games and teams cannot bring their own mats to tournament games.

PRACTICE SESSIONS

All practice sessions should include spotters. Appropriate mats must be used while all stunts are being learned. Step-by-step procedures should be used to master all stunts and learning sessions should be supervised by a qualified coach, advisor, or teacher in accordance with NFHS Spirit Rules. The MPA Cheerleading Committee strongly encourages principals and athletic administrators to determine the appropriateness, degree of danger, and difficulty of the routine considering the amount of training (in tumbling/gymnastics) of the coach and the abilities of participants.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS/RULES OF COMPETITION

1. The National Federation Spirit Rules will be used in all competitions. In addition, the terms and conditions in this Maine Principals' Association Bulletin shall govern all regular season and tournament competition.
2. Each school may enter one team of up to twenty (20) members (plus two alternates); this includes spotters. Only 22 team members will be allowed free entrance, no more than twenty-two team members may be dressed in a cheering uniform or as a mascot.
3. Judging will be based on overall execution, projection, transitions, cheerleading fundamentals (motion technique, jumps, tumbling, dance, partner stunts/pyramids), and overall effect (choreography, degree of difficulty, creativity of routine).
4. Routines will be limited to three minutes. Time starts on the first sound or movement after the team is announced. Cheerleaders may start their routine anywhere on the mat and are not required to stand with their hands to their sides. Routine timing ends with the last sound or motion. Safety and sportsmanship rules are in effect until the teams have left the performing area.
 - a. Apparel and accessories must be appropriate for the activity involved to minimize risk for the participants. Cheer team members must wear athletic shoes (not gymnastics slippers). No props may be used except pompons; only cheerleader uniforms shall be worn, no jewelry will be worn during the competition or warm-up. Rhinestones that

are sewn, punched, or glued on uniforms are legal. Rhinestones that are woven into the hair or glued to the face are illegal. Hair must be pulled back and out of the face. Eyeglasses must be securely fastened.

5. In Regional Tournaments, each team in each class will perform its routine once. In all classes the top eight scoring teams will qualify for the state competition.
6. In the State Championship competition, the qualifying schools in each class will perform their routines once. The champion and runner-up will then be selected. (No callbacks will occur at Regional and State Competitions)
7. Participants who are bleeding, have an open wound, or become sick during the routine may not continue the routine. Routines will be stopped by a judge, and the team will be placed at the end of the class to complete their routine from the point of interruption. A team should have T-shirts and shorts in case blood spills on uniforms. If an athlete suffers an injury during the routine, they should take a knee, and the routine will be immediately stopped. If an injury occurs during the routine, the team will be placed at the end of the competition and allowed to start the routine from the beginning, but the officials will only score from the point of interruption. If an injury occurs during the warm-up, the team will be placed at the end of the program.
8. Tie Breaker – In the case of a mathematical tie the first tie breaker will be the least number of deductions, and the second tie breaker will be the highest execution scores.
9. There will be an area designated at each competition for coaches and alternates.
10. An MPA committee member will provide score sheets and a tally sheet to each head coach after the conclusion of the awards ceremony. Decisions of the officials will be final and not subject to appeal.
11. All music must be brought with the team on the day of the competition. Prior to the start of the regional championships each school will be required to submit a Compliance Form, confirming that all music used in a routine has been properly licensed. The form will be provided to all schools sponsoring a competitive team.

Below are a few links that will assist schools as they choose music for the upcoming cheering season:

[USA Cheer Music Announcement](#)

[USA Cheer Music Copyright Educational Initiative](#)

[FAQs for the USA Cheer Music Copyrights Education Initiative](#)

[Preferred Music Providers](#)

[USA Cheer Music Guidelines](#)

12. Spotters will be provided on the competition floor at both the regional and state championships.
13. Schools must notify the MPA office if they are unable to attend a regional or state competition. Failure to notify the MPA shall result in a \$75.00 fine being assessed to the school.

STUDENT AND ADULT SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS

- Bare-chested individuals, including individuals wearing sports bras, are not allowed in the venue.
- Signs or banners may be attached to the facility walls with masking tape, provided they are not obscene, inappropriate, and do not contain profane language.
- Placards, signs, pennants, and shakers on sticks that restrict the view of other spectators or may be used as a missile or weapon are prohibited.
- The parading of banners or signs on or around the mat or in the stands is prohibited.
- Horn or noisemakers of any kind are not allowed.
- Only members of a recognized high school band representing one of the teams currently in competition may use musical instruments.
- Only members of a recognized high school cheering squad representing one of the teams currently in competition may use megaphones or other voice amplification devices.
- Any person throwing objects on the mat will be removed immediately from the venue.
- Security will be instructed to detain any student perceived to be under the influence of an illegal substance. They will then contact their parents.
- Mascots or other individuals are not allowed on the mat.

OFFICIALS

There will be six officials, one of whom is the penalty official, and another designated as the lead official. **Decisions of the officials will be FINAL and not subject to appeal.**

PROGRAMS

Schools participating in the regional cheerleading competition must submit tournament information for the electronic program by January 9, 2026.

CHEERLEADING CLASSIFICATION

CLASS A 650+	CLASS B 400-649	CLASS C 0-399
NORTH	NORTH	NORTH
1. Lewiston, 1,655 2. Portland, 1,146 3. Edward Little, 1,136 4. Bangor, 1,069 5. Oxford Hills, 1,021 6. Deering, 1,033 7. Windham, 935 8. Hampden, 749 9. Skowhegan, 696 10. Mt. Blue, 694 11. Brewer, 693	1. Nokomis, 614 2. Hermon, 556 3. Old Town, 536 4. Lawrence, 528 5. Ellsworth, 522 6. John Bapst, 508 7. Waterville/Messalonskee, 484/713 8. Belfast, 471 9. Presque Isle, 456 10. Foxcroft, 431 11. Caribou, 422	1. Houlton/Greater Houlton Chr, 382/23 2. Washington, 317 3. Central, 311 4. Mattanawcook/ Penobscot, 306/129 5. Dexter, 273 6. Calais, 228 7. Narraguagus, 209 8. Machias, 168 9. Fort Fairfield, 149 10. Woodland, 140 11. Lee, 117 12. Central. Aroostook, 108 13. Deer Isle-Stonington, 96
SOUTH	SOUTH	SOUTH
1. Thornton, 1,287 2. Sanford, 1,075 3. Bonny Eagle, 1,034 4. South Portland, 990 5. Noble, 940 6. Scarborough/Falmouth, 911/695 7. Massabesic, 870 8. Kennebunk, 701 9. Biddeford, 689 10. Gorham/Cheverus	1. Cony, 647 2. Morse/Wiscasset, 629 3. Gardiner/Hall-Dale, 583/251 4. Lincoln, 555 5. Leavitt, 552 6. Medomak Valley, 552 7. Erskine, 533 8. Lake Region, 500 9. Oceanside, 498 10. Poland, 493 11. Mt. Valley, 415 12. Spruce Mtn. 407 13. Wells	1. Oak Hill, 389 2. Winslow, 367 3. Orono, 365 4. Lisbon/Hebron, 362/139 5. Bucksport, 358 6. Mt. View, 288 7. Sacopee Valley, 281 8. Sumner, 238 9. Dirigo, 228 10. Monmouth, 188 11. Madison, 167 12. Boothbay, 163 13. Bangor Christian/Penobscot Christian, 105 14. Maine Central Institute, 268