



USA Cheer Youth Rec Sideline Rules

The following rules are encouraged to be adopted by organizations to be used while cheering on the sidelines during youth rec league games. These guidelines do not apply when performing competition-style routines, which should follow the direct association or hosting competition's rules. The intent of these rules is to provide an easy to understand set of rules for the game environment.

General Rules for all levels:

- Follow all direct governing association rules regarding age levels, concussion management, heat illness, etc.
- All skills legal for sideline cheering can be performed on artificial/live grass, rubberized track, indoor basketball court or a matted surface. No skills are allowed on asphalt, concrete or any other similar surface.
- Uniforms must be appropriate for youth rec cheerleading. When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff.
- Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept short, near the end of the fingers.
- Hair must be worn in a manner that is appropriate for the activity involved. Hair devices and accessories must be secure. In general, hair should be pulled back away from the face and secured.
- Supports, braces, soft casts, etc., that are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding. Supports/braces that have been altered from the manufacturer's original design/production must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than one-half-inch thick if the participant is involved in partner stunts, pyramids or tosses. A participant wearing a plaster cast or a walking boot must not be involved in partner stunts, pyramids, tosses, jumps or tumbling.
- Jewelry of any kind is prohibited except for the following: A religious medal without a chain is allowed but must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.
- Use of mini-tramps, springboards, spring-assisted floors or any height-increasing apparatus is not permitted for use at any time other than practices under the direct supervision of someone trained in their use.
- Participants must not chew gum or have candy in their mouths during practice or performance.
- Cheerleaders must remain outside of the playing area during a 30-second or less time-out during a basketball game.
- The only props allowed to be used are megaphones, poms, signs and flags. The only props allowed to be used while in stunts or pyramids are poms or signs in use by the top person only. A top can hand a sign to a base or spotter with the intent of immediately releasing it to the ground as long as the top is not extended.
- Participants must not stunt or tumble when the ball is in play, including during free throws in basketball.
- Participants are not allowed to be in the area directly beneath and behind the basketball goal called the "free throw lane extended."

Definitions (photos will be available online at usacheer.org):

Base: A person in direct weight-bearing contact with the performing surface who provides primary support for another person.

Cradle: A dismount from a partner stunt, pyramid or toss in which the catch is completed below shoulder level height by a base or bases with the top person in a face-up open-pike position.

Dismount: Ending a stunt by releasing a top person to the performing surface or a cradle position.

Extension: An extended stunt in which the top has both feet in the hands of a base(s).

Hitch Body Position: A single-leg stunt where the leg not providing support is in a liberty type position and that hip is open.

Inverted Position: Shoulders are below the waist.

Liberty: A multi-based, single-leg stunt where the leg not providing support is pulled to approximately a 90-degree angle with the hips of the athlete performing the skill, including the hitch variation.

Loading position: A skill/stunt with one or two feet in the hands below prep level.

Spotter: A person in direct, weight-bearing contact with the performing surface whose primary function is to protect a top person's head, neck and shoulders. Spotters should be qualified to help minimize an injury by assisting a top person. A spotter may be a qualified team member or a coach if necessary.

Toss: A release stunt in which the base(s) begin underneath the top person's foot/feet and execute a throwing motion from below shoulder level to increase the height of the top person. The top person becomes free from all bases, spotters, posts or bracers.

Rules Grid

Skills not specifically allowed in the rules grid are prohibited. Skills from any lower level are allowed at the higher level.

Category	Level 1 (10 and under*)	Level 2 (14 and under*)	Level 3 (18 and under*)
Jumps	All jumps and jump combinations allowed.	All jumps and connections to tumbling allowed.	All jumps and connections to tumbling allowed.
Tumbling	Forward and backward rolls Forward and backward walkovers Roundoffs Cartwheels (series cartwheels allowed)	Non-twisting standing handsprings and standing back tucks allowed. No series or connected airborne tumbling and no twisting airborne skills.	Series tumbling allowed. No twisting airborne skills.
Stunts	No inversions (the head can never be below the hips).	No inversions (the head can never be below the hips).	No inversions (the head can never be below the hips).
	No release stunt transitions other than a reload from a cradle position.	No release stunt transitions other than a reload from a cradle position.	No release stunt transitions other than a reload from a cradle position.
	A spotter is required for all stunts.	A spotter is required for all stunts.	A spotter is required for all prep-level and above stunts.
	No spinning/twisting.	Half twist loading allowed. Full twist to a loading position allowed.	Full twist from a loading position to double base prep and double base extension allowed.
	Allow all skills prep level and below. A standing stunt at prep level must be double based and standing on both feet.	Double base extensions allowed. Liberties and liberty hitches at prep level allowed.	Extended Liberty/Hitch allowed. Single base extensions allowed.
Dismounts	No spinning/twisting No released dismounts (bump down, regrab hands, use a post and pop down, etc.)	Non-twisting cradles and pop downs allowed.	Full-twisting cradles and non-twisting pop downs allowed.
Pyramids	Follow stunt rules.	Follow stunt rules.	Follow stunt rules. If two connected stunts are extended, the connection must be hand to hand/arm. Twisting while connected is not allowed.
Baskets	Not allowed.	Not allowed.	Pencil/Timer and Toe Touch only. No twists.

* USA Cheer recognizes that there are different age brackets for each organization based on what works best for their teams. The age recommendations provided for Levels 1, 2, and 3 are recommendations and can be modified to best fit an organization. All athletes on a team are subject to the rules for that level, regardless of age. For example, a 10-year-old on a "14 and under" team may perform back handsprings. Regardless of the upper age in the group, coaches should always be mindful of the ability, maturity, and preparedness level of each individual and what skills they are performing.