

## ARTICLE 16

Revised 10/15/09

### COMPETITIVE CHEERLEADING

#### Section 1: Rules

- A. Competition cheerleading shall be established as a winter sport, and for regulation purposes, fall under the supervision and direction of the RIIL. The RIIL shall supervise and control all interscholastic cheerleading activities, contests, and matters relating thereto. It shall supervise the schedules of state competition(s); assign officials, and award championships as determined for the sport. Competition Cheerleading may encompass cheer squads, pep squads, sideline cheerleaders or other like named groups so designated by the school.
- B. Rules and Regulations of the RIIL shall be applicable to all competition cheerleading. In order for a cheerleading team to participate in RIIL activities, that school must be a member of the RIIL and the cheerleading team must follow all National Federation High School Spirit Rules and any special rulings adopted by the Committee.
- C. A competition cheerleading team must have a coach and assistant coaches as deemed appropriate by the individual school system. The sport of cheerleading requires that a coach be qualified and trained in cheerleading procedures before a cheerleading team participates in cheerleading techniques and skills. Coaches should attend cheerleading clinics, seminars and courses to allow a coach(s) to obtain the qualifications necessary for the coaching position within a particular school system.
- D. Competition cheerleading teams should have the opportunity to participate in RIIL sanctioned competitions to include open, invitational, state, regional, and national competitions. The number of competitions should be large enough to ensure that the participants have an opportunity to experience win and loss situations and to learn the values associated with athletic participation such as commitment, sacrifice, teamwork, leadership, sportsmanship, etc.
- E. A competition cheerleading team member is a student who is consistently present for and actively participates in all high school team practices, games, and competitions, and one who must satisfy any and all of the Rules and Regulations of the RIIL or additional school requirements to be eligible to participate on a competition cheerleading team.
- F. Competition cheerleading and competition cheerleading teams shall be gender neutral but shall be classified as all girl or co-ed depending on the eligibility and division of cheerleading teams as designated by RIIL.
- G. Competition cheerleading should be conducted in a safe environment conducive with the cheerleading activities being conducted and in accordance with NFHS rules.
- H. Competition cheerleading teams and individual team members who are involved in cheerleading activities such as cheerleading skills practice, participation at cheerleading events, participation at RIIL sports and sporting events and performing while at other forums or assemblies, shall follow applicable NFHS and RIIL rules and guidelines, and shall not perform cheerleading skills outside those allowed by said rules.

#### Section 2: Certification/Coaches Training

- A. All coaches must obtain their coach's certificate through the Rhode Island Department of Education.
- B. All coaches must complete the NFHS Fundamentals Coaches Education Program, which includes the RIIL Rules and Regulations test.

- C. All coaches must complete the AACCA safety certification course or other national safety course that is recognized by the NFHS before the beginning of the season. Certification must be maintained by the coach. It is the coach's responsibility to make sure that their certification does not lapse or expire.
- D. All head coaches or designated alternate must attend a compulsory interpretation meeting for coaches prior to the start of each sports season. Copies of the NFHS Spirit Rules and Regulations shall be provided to the coaches at that meeting. It will be the responsibility of each coach to become familiar with and understand all the rules of Spirit and the rules and regulations of the RIIL.

**Section 3: Insurance**

- A. Schools must provide insurance coverage for competition cheerleading participants and coaches. The insurance coverage must cover practices and events both in school and off campus.

**Section 4: Season**

- A. Competition cheerleading will be a winter season sport. During the Fall and Spring seasons, cheerleading will be considered an activity, therefore, cheerleading teams cannot participate in any cheerleading competitions during the fall and spring seasons.
- B. The winter season, including tryouts, will begin on the designated opening date of the Monday after Thanksgiving.
- C. A competition cheerleading team participant may be drawn from different cheerleading teams so long as that cheerleader satisfies any cheering requirement(s) imposed by the school.
- D. Competition limitations:  
In the winter season, a competition cheerleading team can participate in a maximum of ten (10) competitions, not including the RIIL State Competition or the annual New England Regional High School Cheerleading Competition.

**Section 5: Outside Competitions**

- A. Cheerleading teams participating in cheerleading competitions outside of the State of Rhode Island can only participate in those tournaments that have been sanctioned by that state's athletic association, and the requesting cheerleading team has received permission to attend the tournament from the local school system and the tournament has been sanctioned by the RIIL.
- B. The RIIL with the assistance of the standing committee will sanction all tournaments under the following criteria:
  1. The host tournament and teams participating must follow in full the National Federation Spirit Rules.
  2. The tournament must provide a fundamentally fair and equitable framework in which interscholastic athletic competition in an educational setting can take place.
  3. The site of the competition shall comply with established health and safety guidelines.
  4. School competitive cheerleading teams may not compete against teams that do not represent a school.
  5. Tournaments that have been sanctioned by RIIL and hosted by Rhode Island schools including Rhode Island based cheerleading organizations must use the current score sheet, penalty sheet, and corresponding skill requirement sheets as approved by RIIL. The hosting school or organization shall have the appropriate number of judges including penalty judges and timers as required by RIIL.

- C. Requests to sanction an out-of-state tournament or to sanction participation at a regional or national cheerleading competition, the request shall be presented in writing to the RIIL.

**Section 6: Cheerleading Championship**

- A. RIIL shall schedule and administer one unified State Cheerleading Championship to be held on or about the second weekend of March of each year.
1. Divisions will include Junior Varsity, Varsity and Varsity Co-Ed.
  2. A Co-Ed varsity team is any team with one or more males on the team. If there is only one Co-Ed varsity team, the team will compete in its respective division (based on female enrollment at the school.) **No student shall be denied in any implied or explicit manner the opportunity to participate on the competition cheerleading team because of his/her gender.**
  3. In order to have a division, there must be a minimum of two teams.
  4. The RIIL has the right to expand, combine or eliminate division(s).
- B. The RIIL Cheerleading Championship shall be open to all RIIL Cheerleading member high schools.
- C. For a team to participate at the RIIL State Championship, all coaches must have completed a cheerleading coach's safety certification program that is recognized by the RIIL.
- D. All registration forms entered for the RIIL State Cheerleading Championship must be received by the date designated by the RIIL Cheerleading Committee. Registrations received after this date will not be accepted.
- E. Competition Rules shall be as follows:
1. Maximum participants performing the routine shall be 20 members, including spotters. Teams may have alternates unless the school has a junior varsity team from which a varsity team can draw, should a participant have to be removed. Minimum team size will be four (4) participants.
  2. Varsity/Junior Varsity squads shall be limited to ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) grade through twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) grade.
  3. The RIIL State Championship will have the following divisions. The winners of each Division will be named RI State Champions in their respective Divisions:
    - a. Small Varsity
    - b. Medium Varsity
    - c. Large Varsity
    - d. Co-Ed Varsity
  4. The small, medium and large division is based on female enrollment (as of October of the previous year) of those schools (grades 9 – 12). The enrollment numbers will be placed in order from smallest to largest and then the list shall be divided into three with each division having as close to equal numbers as the list shall allow.
  5. Each team will have a minimum of two (2) minutes to a maximum of two and one-half (2 ½) minutes to perform the complete routine. If a team uses music in their routine, the maximum time limit for music is one and one-half (1 ½) minutes. If a team exceeds the music time limit of one and one-half (1 ½) minutes, one point per second over the time limit will be deducted. If a team exceeds the overall routine time limit of two and one-half (2 ½) minutes, one point per second over the time limit will be deducted. Music time limit and overall routine time limit are considered separate infractions. If a team does not perform an overall routine of a minimum of two minutes, one point per second under the two minutes minimum time limit will be deducted.

6. Timing will begin with the first note of music or first motion.
7. All teams must perform the cheerleading routine on a mat. The minimum mat size will be 42' by 42'. Any team performing off the mat will be assessed a ten- point safety infraction. Teams must begin their routine on the mat.
8. Any team not following the safety guidelines shall be penalized. Teams are also required to adhere to their own school rules in regards to skills performed. All cheerleading teams not following National Federation High School Spirit Rules shall be assessed the appropriate penalties. Those teams in the Varsity Novice Division who do not follow the limitations placed on that division shall be disqualified.
9. The RIIL Competition Cheerleading Committee will assign and determine the number of certified judges. Scoring Judges shall include all judges scoring the competition including those individuals designated as penalty judges.

F. Scoring

1. Each team shall be scored according to the system set forth in the score sheet recommended by the Competition Cheerleading Committee and adopted by the RIIL.
2. Judges will follow the Judging Criteria form adopted by the RIIL.
3. In the event of a tie, co-winners shall be declared.
4. At the conclusion of the Championship, each squad will receive a copy of the master score sheet as well as a copy of their individual squad's score sheet.

G. RIIL shall present awards and medals as determined by the RIIL.

1. The RIIL shall declare Division State Champions in the Small, Medium, Large and Co-Ed Divisions and runners-ups as recommended by the Competition Cheerleading Committee.
2. The team with the highest overall score at the State Competition shall be declared the RIIL Competition Cheerleading State Champion and the next highest overall scoring team shall be declared the runner up.

H. RIIL shall present awards and medals as determined by the RIIL.

- I. Registration and admission fees shall be determined by the RIIL. Any team not meeting the deadline for payment of fees will be assessed a late penalty fee.
- J. There shall be an inclement weather plan that will be used in the event that the weather may disrupt the normal competition schedule. Alternate scheduling (i.e. delays, cancellations, and postponement) will be determined in accordance with RIIL guidelines.

K. Officials

- qualification and training
- officials list
- fee schedule

**Section 7: Individual Competition**

- A. RIIL shall schedule and administer one Individual State Cheerleading Championship which will be held each year at a time and place to be determined by the RIIL.

- B. The RIIL Individual Cheerleading Championship shall be open only to individual cheerleaders whose schools are members of the RIIL Competition Cheerleading League and whose names appear on the schools eligibility list and whose application has been approved by the member school cheerleading coach. The RIIL reserves the right to limit the number of individuals that may compete from each member school.
- C. Candidate will be given a **maximum of one and one-half (1½) minutes** to perform their routine. The routine **must** have the following **elements**:
- a. One (1) Cheer based on their school
  - b. One (1) Dance (which will consist of no more than 4 eight counts)
  - c. Only one (1) Double Jump (not to be combined with any other skill)
  - d. Only one (1) Running Tumbling skill
  - e. Only one (1) Standing Tumble skill
- D. The Candidate **must** provide RIIL the **sequence** in which the elements of the routine will be performed on the registration form under *Sequence of elements*. The specific skill is not to be listed –only the elements; example ~ b,d,c,a,e.
- E. **Order of competition will be a random draw performed by RIIL officials at the RIIL Office.**
- F. **The candidates are required to bring their own music and are responsible to make up their own dance and their own cheer.**
- G. **Candidates** must wear their respective school cheerleading uniform.
- H. Each cheerleader shall be scored according to the system set forth in the score sheet recommended by the committee and adopted by the RIIL. The RIIL Competition Cheerleading Committee will assign and determine the number of certified judges.
1. To break a tie score, the following formula will be used: **A comparison of the candidates' routine scores will be made starting with "a" down to "e"** in order to locate a difference in their individual skills score.
  2. The top twenty (20) **individuals**, according to the final scores, will be designated "RIIL All-State Individual Champions."
  3. RIIL shall present awards and medals as determined by the RIIL.