

Dance Competition Categories

- **Jazz:** This is the most broad category offered in a dance team competition. Teams can perform classic jazz, contemporary, "lyrical" style, or a combination of these styles within a routine. Regardless of the jazz style chosen, judges look for creativity, musicality, technical ability, and use of team strengths.
- **Pom:** This style continues to evolve adding multiple genres packed within a high-energy routine. It can include a mix of cheer motions, technical elements, hip hop tricks, and power moves. Judges look for these elements along with a visually appealing, powerful, and well executed routine. *Note: Poms must be held 85% of the routine when competing Pom.*
- **Hip Hop:** Routine can encompass street-style movement with an emphasis on style, creativity, originality, control, and body isolations. Judges should look for strength, power and authentic styles of movement, while routine maintains style and flow

Competition Category Entry and Participant Rules

Teams can compete in two of the three offered categories. (Hip-hop, Jazz, and Pom.) Number of dancers can vary as long as **50% of the competition roster** is represented in both categories.

Example: There are 16 dancers on the competition roster. 12 of them will be competing Jazz and 14 will be competing pom. **8 of the dancers** must be in both dances.

Minimum number of participants competing: 6

*Competition Alternates must be added to roster as part of the number accounted for.

Competition Routine Rules

TUMBLING AND TRICKS EXECUTED BY INDIVIDUALS

*Note: The following are lists of commonly known dance skills. This does not mean that they are required for your routine, nor does this list encompass all skills that are legal/illegal.

- **ALLOWED:** Side Aerial Cartwheels, **Front Aerials**, Front/Back Walkovers, Front Handsprings Round Off, Branny, Stalls/Freezes, Side Somi, Head spins (with hand support), Forward Rolls, Windmills, Backward Rolls, Kip Ups, Cartwheels, Shoulder Rolls, Headstands, Headsprings (with hand support), Handstands, Backbends
- **NOT ALLOWED:** Front Tucks, Back Handsprings, No handed headsprings, Dive Rolls, Toe Pitch Back Tucks, Layouts, Shushunova,

WEIGHT BEARING SKILLS

- WEIGHT BEARING SKILLS Hip over-head rotation skills with hand support are not allowed while holding poms in the supporting hand. (**Exception: forward rolls and backward rolls are allowed**). The use of hands-free poms for hip over-head skills is allowed. *Details about Hands-Free Poms section will be discussed in a later slide*

Additional Skill Rules and Details

1. Airborne skills without hand support are not allowed. (Exception: Headsprings with hand support, aerial cartwheels, and side somis not connected to any tumbling skill are allowed).
2. If a team chooses to use hands free poms for aerial cartwheels and/or side somis, and later touches down, the poms **MUST** be flipped off of the hand, or a penalty will be assessed. Simply wearing the hands-free poms for the aerial cartwheel and/or side somi does not make it legal if they are not used correctly.
3. If a team chooses to use non-hands-free poms for aerial cartwheels and/or side somis, they **MUST** be moved to one hand. If a dancer later touches down with the hand that holds both poms, a penalty will be assessed. There are no exceptions to this rule.
4. Tumbling skills with hip over-head rotation is limited to 3 connected skills. (Example: 3 consecutive headsprings are allowed; 4 are not allowed).
5. Simultaneous tumbling over or under another dancer that includes hip over-head rotation by both dancers is not allowed.
6. Choreographed drops to the knee, thigh, back, front, head, shoulder, or seat onto the performing surface are not allowed unless the dancer first bears weight on the hand(s) or foot/feet.

7. Landing in a push-up position onto the performance surface from a jump in which the legs are in front of the body and swing behind are not allowed. All variations of a shushunova are not allowed.

8. Airborne skills without hip over-head rotation may not jump from a standing or squatting position backwards onto the neck, head, back, shoulders, and/or hands. Any kip up motion must initiate from the back/shoulder area touching the ground. (NOTE: This rule refers specifically and only to the “rubber band” / “bronco” kip up skill, as well as any skill jumping backwards into a headstand/handstand stall).

Dance Lifts and Partnering

- 1. The Executing Dancer must receive support from a Supporting Dancer who is in direct contact with the performance surface through the entire skill. (Exception: Kick Line Leaps).**
- 2. Elevators, thigh stands, shoulder sits, and chair sits are allowed.**
 - a. non-inverted/swinging lifts are allowed with standard poms**
- 3. The following cheer-based stunts are not allowed:**
 - a. Extended cheer stunts (the lifted dancer is extended in an upright position over the base(s) who maintain fully extended arms and have the lifted dancers' feet in hands)
 - b. Pyramids and basket tosses
4. Swinging in and out of lifts and tricks is allowed in the prone and/or supine positions; swinging forwards, backwards, or making a complete circular rotation will not be allowed if the Executing Dancer is in a prone position (body facing the ground).
5. Hip over-head rotation of the Executing Dancer(s) may occur if a Supporting Dancer maintains contact until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or is returning to the upright position.
6. Vertical Inversions are allowed if: (with hands-free poms)
 - a. The Supporting Dancer(s) maintain contact until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or returns to the upright position.
 - b. When the height of the Executing Dancers shoulders exceeds shoulder level of the Supporting dancer, there is at least one additional dancer to spot who does not bear weight.

Release Moves

1. An Executing Dancer may jump, leap, step, or push off a Supporting Dancer if:

- a. The highest point of the released skill does not elevate the Executing Dancer's feet above head level of the Supporting Dancer.
 - i. Exception: toe touches off a dancers back/leap frog jumps will be allowed
- b. The Executing Dancer may not pass through the prone or inverted position after the release.
- c. Toe pitch back tucks are not allowed.

2. A Supporting Dancer may release/toss an Executing Dancer if:

- a. The highest point of the release/toss does not elevate the Executing Dancer's hips above head level of the Supporting Dancer.
- b. The Executing Dancer is not supine or inverted when released.
- c. The Executing Dancer does not pass through a prone or inverted position after release.
- d. Toe Pitch back tucks are not allowed.

Hands Free Poms

- The use of hands-free poms will be allowed. Hands-free poms are defined as poms with a **strap across the palm of the hand**, making them easily transferable to place a clean hand on the ground for skills, tricks, etc. A hair tie, rubber band, plastic holes for fingers, or tying pom strings/pieces together will not be counted as a handsfree pom. Proper hands free poms shown below:



Music Guidelines

ATTENTION All Cheer and Dance Coaches and Administrators:

Recent enforcement efforts by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) have highlighted the need for compliance with US Copyright Law. The Massachusetts School Administrators Association (MSAA) is providing the following information regarding the use of copyrighted music at school cheer and dance events (pep rallies, Homecoming events, cheer or dance routines in general, etc.) including competition routines.

The licenses purchased by the MSAA for the regional and state championships do not cover the music usage by individual schools. Each school is obligated to comply with copyright laws regarding the use of music. We understand that this change has come up at a time in the year where coaches may have already started the process of ordering, or have already ordered music. Coaches should contact his/her music provider to see what steps they take to ensure that they are in compliance. A list of preferred vendors has been compiled by USA Cheer and is included in the links below.

The information provided here and in the links below should not be construed as legal advice. If you have specific questions or concerns related to copyright laws, please contact an attorney.

Useful links:

National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) <https://www.nfhs.org/sports-resource-content/usa-cheer-music-use/>

USA Cheer Music Copyrights Educational Initiative Announcement
http://usacheer.net/aspnet_client/FreeTextBox/upload/documents/USACheerAnnouncement.pdf

USA Cheer Music Information <http://usacheer.net/presssafety/music>

FAQs for the USA Cheer Music Copyrights Education Initiative http://usacheer.net/aspnet_client/FreeTextBox/upload/documents/USACheerFAQ.pdf

USA Cheer Preferred Music Providers <http://usacheer.net/presssafety/preferred-providers>

Routine Length

Dance routine length can not exceed 2:15

Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, note of music, or audio cue, whichever comes first. The timer will allow for a 5-second grace period prior to assessing a penalty.

Videotaping Policy

Dancers, spectators, and coaches are not allowed to film other teams at any competition. If caught, it will result in disqualification of team in which the videographer is affiliated with. Reporting of videotaping should be brought to competition director.

Additional Rules and Regulations

For more information regarding general MSSAA rules, please refer to NFHS handbook and MSAA online resources.