



***2021-2022
DANCE TEAM
RULES &
REGULATIONS***

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MSAA Mission

Serving the needs of elementary level, middle level and high school administrators of the Massachusetts School Administrators' Association to support and promote quality educational opportunities for elementary, middle and high school students throughout Massachusetts by:

- Providing a voice for educational leaders in the state
- Offering quality professional development for Association members and their staffs
- Encouraging collaboration among members through networking
- Training future school leaders
- Organizing and facilitating statewide student activities such as Student Council, National Honor Society and Cheerleading
- Acting as an ongoing provider of pertinent and timely information to our members
- Maximizing the number of active Association members
- Collaborating with other educational leadership groups

COACHES' CODE OF ETHICS

Each high school coach is first a TEACHER. The student-athlete is participating within the school's activity program because he or she desires to do so. Consequently, that student is often more attentive to a coach's lessons than to those offered by teachers in required courses.

The function of an interscholastic coach is to educate students in "LIFE LESSONS," through their participation in educational athletics. Every student athlete should be treated as though they were the coach's own children. Their welfare must be uppermost at all times. The following abridged guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the National Federation Interscholastic Coaches Association Board of Directors.

1. The coach must be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, either for good or bad, in the education of the student athlete and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest desirable ideals of character.
2. In all personal contact with student athletes, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
3. The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse, and under no circumstances should authorize their use.
4. The coach shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his or her program in harmony with the total school program.
5. The coach shall be thoroughly acquainted with the contest rules and is responsible for their interpretation to team members. The spirit and letter of rules should be regarded as mutual agreements. The coach shall not try to seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
6. Coaches shall actively use their influence to enhance sportsmanship in the broadest possible manner.
7. Contest officials shall have the respect and support of the coach. The coach shall not indulge in conduct, which will incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.
8. A coach shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give student athletes special consideration.

School Sponsored Team:

A school team is one that is sponsored by and under the jurisdiction of the school system. By definition, a school dance team must have: a coach (or coaches) appointed by the principal; a regular practice schedule through the season defined by the sport for which they are supporting to include participation as determined by the league or school policy; a school uniform; and, the opportunity to participate in MSAA sanctioned competitions. The school must be a member of the MSAA and follow all National Federation Interscholastic Spirit Rules and Guidelines. All team participants must attend the school for which they dance.

Bona Fide Team Member:

A Bona Fide member of the school team is a student who is consistently present for, and actively participates in, all high school team practices, games and competitions. Bona fide members of a school team are precluded from missing a high school practice, game or competition in order to participate in a non-school activity/event in any activity/sport recognized by the MSAA/MIAA. A violation of this rule may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Violation of Rules and Regulations section of this Rulebook.

On occasion, a student might find himself/herself in potential conflict with this rule. This can happen when a student-athlete has an association with an out-of-school team or has an opportunity to participate in some special tournament or on a special team. A waiver of the bona fide team rule excusing the student from the school activity that day and allowing the student to participate in such a non-school event is possible under the guidelines set forth below.

Waivers will be considered on an individual basis on the merits of each case. A waiver request must be submitted in writing to the MSAA before the student may participate in the non-school event or activity. Waivers will be approved or denied within two weeks of the request, and the coach/athletic director or principal will be notified in writing.

Student Eligibility: Transfer Students

Students who transfer due to the move of parents are eligible.

A student who transfers from any school to an MSAA member high school is ineligible to participate in any interscholastic athletic contest at any level for a period of one year in all sports in which that student participated at the varsity level or its equivalent during the one year period immediately preceding the transfer. For the purpose of this rule, no transfer will be

deemed to have taken place if a student returns to former school on or before the eleventh school day from the date of last attendance there providing student did not try-out for any athletic team at the new school.

Before a transfer student can be certified as eligible within the year of the transfer, the sending MSAA school principal and athletic director must certify by signature what the student participated in (sub varsity, varsity or non-school team) during the year prior to the actual transfer.

The receiving MSAA High School Principal may declare a transfer student eligible, providing transfer is prior to the start of the season and if the sending MSAA School Principal certifies the following:

- To our knowledge recruitment was not involved in any way.
- At the time of transfer, the student was in good standing.
- The student would be academically eligible at the sending school.
- To our knowledge the transfer was in no way motivated by athletics.
- The student would have been eligible by MSAA and local rules at the sending school.

Subsidizing Out-Of-Season Activities

A school or a member of that school's coaching staff may not subsidize or support students who might attend any sports-related activity outside of the authorized seasonal limits for that sport. In addition, a coach may not provide transportation for candidates of his/her team to an out-of-season athletic activity/camp. Student participation in out-of-season activities may be funded by booster clubs or organizations if approved by the school administration. Schools may issue equipment during the out-of-season period, but school districts should review any liability issues that could arise from such issuance. Students may not wear school uniforms, or be identified as a school team, out-of-season and/or during non-school events.

Gender and Participation

No student shall be denied in any implied or explicit manner the opportunity to participate in any activity because of gender. A school may establish separate teams for males and females for competition provided that both teams receive equal instruction, training, coaching, access to available facilities, equipment, opportunities to practice and compete.

If a school offers a single team in a particular sport, it may not restrict eligibility based on gender unless such a restriction is necessary to ensure that the school's gendered designation of athletic opportunities complies with Title IX (either by demonstrating proportionality or the absence of unmet interest among members of the underrepresented sex).

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A student shall not be excluded from participation on a gender-specific team that is consistent with the student's bona fide gender identity

When a school district submits a roster to the MSAA, it is verifying that it has determined that the students listed on a gender-specific team are eligible to participate either based on the gender listed on their official birth certificate or based on their bona fide gender identity and that no students are included on the roster solely for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage in competitive athletics. The MSAA shall defer to the determination of the student and the student's school regarding gender classification.

Nothing in this policy shall be read to entitle a student to selection of any particular team or to permit a student to transfer from one gender-specific team to another team of a different gender during a single sports season.

It is a recommended best practice that schools communicate with their opponents as necessary about the gender-specific needs of their team in order to promote inclusion – e.g. to ensure that appropriate locker room facilities are available, that announcer use athlete's correct pronouns, etc.

Private Promoters and Sponsors

In any activity involving one or more MSAA member, schools should not endorse any private promotion and/or sponsorship, which might result in the exploitation of students or direct financial gain to the promoter or sponsor.

Schools should refer to the MSAA Office -- and when appropriate to the Board of Directors -- all outside financial offers for supporting student activities among several school district.

Adult Representation:

- A. The principal, headmaster or director of the school is responsible to the MSAA for the acts of the school dance team. All teams and individual participants must have adult representation present and responsible for the participants at all times. Such adult representative must be an employee or a designated representative of the school district. All representatives should be listed on the roster.
- B. A coach is defined as a paid or volunteer member of the school staff recognized by the school administration.

Dance Safety:

- A. Each school should employ a dance coach that is qualified and trained in dance safety. All Dance coaches must meet the same requirements set for other coaches in the school system.
- B. Dance teams should be provided the assistance of all school medical personnel and/or athletic trainers. Dance coaches should be given an equal amount of practice time in a safe environment conducive with dance activity. Dance coaches should be equipped with a team medical kit, which is readily available to them at all practices, games and MSAA sanctioned competitions. MSAA recommends that all dance coaches have some training in First Aid and CPR.

Parental Permission:

Administrators should secure from each dancer's parent/guardian written consent to participate in dance activities. Particular consideration should be given to the parent regarding the Duty to Warn about the risk involved in participating in dance.

Physical Examination:

All dance participants must pass a physical examination within thirteen months of the start of each season's tryouts. Participants who fulfill this requirement at the start of the school year will remain eligible for that school year. Physical examinations must be performed by a duly registered Physician, Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner. Exam documentation should be kept on file at the start of the season.

- A. **Missing or Diseased Paired Organ:** To participate in dance, a student with a missing or diseased organ must provide his/her principal with a parental permission form and a medical specialist's written permission to participate. The dancer must wear during all practices, games, and MSAA sanctioned competitions the protective equipment recommended by the specialist (in conjunction with National Federation rules).

Return to Participation:

- A. Subsequent to any serious injury, and prior to further participation in dance, a dancer should receive a medical release from a physician. This form should be kept on file at the school.
- B. The assigned athletic trainer at all MSAA sanctioned events will have the final approval for participation of any injured dancer.

School Attendance Policies:

Each school should establish the same school/class requirements for dancers that are set for other school activities.

Academic Requirements:

Dancers must follow the same requirements established for other school activities.

- A. Academic Awards: The MSAA will provide a certificate to the school for every varsity dance team that achieves a minimum combined GPA of 3.00 (gold) or 2.50 (silver). The school administrator in charge of cheerleading should contact the MSAA office regarding this award when applicable.

Equipment:

Each school is to provide their dance team with a suitable practice facility and ascertain that all equipment is in good, safe condition and not defective in any way.

Transportation:

Each school should transport its dance team by common carrier such as bus lines, vans, or taxicabs. The school administrator should discourage the use of any private vehicle to transport dancers to away games or competitions.

Registering Dance Team with MSAA:

The school administrator is responsible for Membership Registration for both fall and winter dance teams. Teams not registered with the MSAA will NOT be allowed entrance into any MSAA sanctioned competition. Dance team registration is a two-part process as follows, which includes submitting a roster and registration form.

- A. Dance Team Roster: A current dance team roster must be submitted to the MSAA Dance Director by the established deadline for fall (September 30) and winter (January 31) seasons. Every principal must have a roster of all eligible dancers representing his/her school before the first game or start of the season for which they are performing. Any change to the roster sheet must be reported to the MSAA. All participants must be listed on the roster (including alternates and junior varsity members

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- B. Changes to Roster: A varsity dance team may have an unlimited number of alternates, including junior varsity team members (except 7th and 8th graders as provided below). All participants must be listed on the roster submitted to the MSAA. A team may not add a dancer to its roster that did not appear as an alternate or a junior varsity member on a previously submitted roster. All team members must have attended the tryout held, and no tryouts may be held after the season begins.
- C. Dance Team/Student Activities Dues: All competitive dance teams must be members of the MSAA. Membership dues MUST be submitted to the MSAA Office by the established deadline for Fall (September 30) and Winter (January 31). Any dance team that does not submit membership dues will not be sanctioned by the MSAA and will be ineligible to compete in MSAA sanctioned events.

Student Eligibility: Baseline Eligibility Requirements

For a student to practice with, or to represent a MSAA member school in competition, the student must be duly enrolled in that school. Additionally, the student must be a candidate for that school's diploma, subject to the jurisdiction of that school's principal (i.e. the principal must have the authority to suspend the student from classes), and under the supervision of that school principal (i.e. the principal must have control and knowledge of the student's daily attendance and achievement).

Middle School Students on Senior High Teams:

A middle school student is eligible to represent a senior high school on its athletic teams only when the MSAA member high school includes those grades and they are under the direct jurisdiction and supervision of the high school principal.

Application of Rules:

As a condition of a high school's participation in dance under MSAA Rules and Regulations, prior to the first fall season contest, each principal or his/her designee must read entirely, understand, abide by and be prepared to enforce all MSAA dance rules, regulations and policies. Further, the principal and his/her designee must assure that each member of the school dance coaching staff is knowledgeable of and will enforce all requirements contained therein.

- A. MSAA rules apply to all member school teams and all individuals at all levels of competition. Teams must comply with safety standards in

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accordance with National Federation rules, guidelines and recommendations at all times.

- B. In order to be eligible to represent a school in all dance competitions, teams must conform to all MSAA rules.
- C. In the case of a postponed event, the eligibility of participants does not carry over. The students who participate in any event must meet all eligibility requirements on the date that the event is actually held.
- D. No special privileges, such as extra examinations, delayed marks, makeup opportunities or other opportunities not granted to every student in the school, are to be granted to dancers.
- E. School dance teams may not compete against teams that do not represent a school.
- F. A principal may not make a private agreement with another school or any other party to evade MSAA or National Federation Interscholastic Sprit Rules and Guidelines. Regarding the participation of an ineligible student, no ineligible high school student can participate in any dance activity (games, scrimmages, competition, etc.) regardless of any proposed agreement between school and competition host school. Schools hosting MSAA sanctioned open invitational competitions must follow the MSAA rules.
- G. Neither schools nor school committees may make rules that are in any way less restrictive than those set by MSAA or National Federation.
- H. A principal or his/her designee must report suspected rule violations to the principal of the school in question and to the MSAA Executive Officer in charge of dance.
- I. The MSAA strongly encourages and advises all coaches to allow all of the dancers that are on the roster (except alternates) to compete if the team enters a competition.

Violation of the Rules and Regulations:

- A. A violation of any of the rules contained herein may result in one of the following actions being taken, including but not limited to:
 - a. Written warning;
 - b. Suspension from competition for the remainder of the school year;
 - c. Suspension from competition for one season;
 - d. Suspension from competition for one year.

Recognized Activity and Competition Limits:

- A. Dance teams will be allowed entrance into MSAA sanctioned competitions with approval of their school administrator. The number of competitions should be large enough to ensure that the student 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.
- B. Competition Limits: Dance teams are allowed participation in a maximum of seven (7) MSAA sanctioned competitions per season.
- C. Fall Season: The fall dance season must not begin before the designated date determined by the MSAA/MIAA.
- D. Winter Season: The winter dance season must not begin before the Monday before Thanksgiving. The winter dance season must end with the last scheduled game with the exception of MSAA sanctioned dance competitions. All winter dance competitions must end by the start of the spring sport season (third Monday in March) unless the team is participating in an MSAA sanctioned event or, for teams that qualify, a national competition provided the team notifies the MSAA which national tournament they intend to enter.

Try Outs:

- A. Participants may try out for the **fall** team in the spring. Tryouts may not be held before May 1st and must conclude no later than September 30. Spring tryouts may last for two consecutive school weeks (10 consecutive school days) and must end by the last day of school.
- B. Participants may try out for the **winter** team in November. Tryouts may not be held prior to the Monday before Thanksgiving (spring try out is allowed if the school does not have a fall dance team).

Competition Routine Parameters:

Entire dance routine is not to exceed two minutes and fifteen seconds (2:15). Teams are expected to bring an original compact disc and a backup compact disc to each tournament.

Award Ceremonies:

- A. Student athletes should be apprised of the potential risk of injury associated with victory celebrations including activities such as “piling on”. This is of particular concern at presentation of awards during

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competitions. Coaches are responsible for discouraging their teams from responding in a manner that could cause injury to others.

- B. During the award ceremony of any MSAA sanctioned event, teams and coaches should behave in an appropriate and sportsmanlike manner.
- C. Teams must be in full uniform for award ceremonies.

Sanctioned Events:

MSAA will sanction all competitions. Only MSAA member/sanctioned schools will be allowed entrance into sanctioned competitions.

- A. **In-State Teams Competing Out of State:** Teams wishing to compete out of state must seek written permission of the MSAA Executive in charge of dance. An out of state host must allow only those Massachusetts teams sanctioned by MSAA to participate. Out of state hosts allowing non-sanctioned Massachusetts teams to compete will not receive MSAA sanctioning.
- B. **Out-of-State Teams Competing in MSAA events:** Out of state teams may receive a waiver to compete in MSAA open invitational if the host site director obtains a registration form with written signed approval from the registering school administrator; total female enrollment figures (9-12); a team roster sheet not to exceed twenty-four (24) competing members and four (4) alternates; the coach's contact information; signed verification of physicals; and a release of liability to the MSAA and the school hosting the event while competing and/or transporting participants to and from the event.

Hosting Competitions (Open/Invitational AND League):

- A. Member schools wishing to sponsor an open or invitational or league competition must submit an "Application for Approval of Multiple School Dance Event" for approval by the MSAA. Competitions must be sanctioned by the MSAA prior to sending out invitations to member schools. Only sanctioned teams will be allowed to compete.
- B. The host school is responsible for verifying the eligibility of the teams that enter the competition. This can be done on the MSAA website. If the host site allows a team that is not sanctioned to compete at its tournament, it will receive a warning letter. If there is a subsequent violation by the host site, the host site will no longer be allowed to host tournaments.

- C. All interstate cheer competitions must be sanctioned by MSAA and abide by all National Federation rules and recommendations.

Qualifying for National Competition:

- A. Champions from each division will receive a National Bid.
- B. Any team obtaining a score of 80% of the total possible score or higher will receive a national bid.
- C. National Bids may only be used in the school year that it is earned.
- D. Teams using their National Bid must notify the MSAA regarding where and when the bid will be used.

Ties:

If a tie occurs, ties will be broken by adding the Overall Impression and Execution of Style & Technical Skill categories. If the tie remains, the team with the higher score in Execution of Style & Technical Skill, will win. If both teams have the same score in that category, they will both receive recognition and the tie will stand.

Penalty for Playing if Ineligible:

The principal of a school that allows a student to dance who is later found to be ineligible shall notify in writing the MSAA representative and the tournament director of all dance competitions in which they have received award recognition as a team or individuals (trophy for placements, most valuable dance awards, spirit awards, etc.). The team will return all recognition awards to the MSAA office, forfeiting every dance competition in which the ineligible student competed during that season.

Out of Season Coaching Parameters:

Between seasons a coach may conduct meeting(s) with team candidates only to elect captains, collect equipment, issue equipment, provide for physical exams, conduct legitimate fund raising events, or offer chemical health workshops or activities (such as information of pre- and post-season conditioning skills). Teams may participate in school or community events. Neither a coach nor any other representative of the school may require a dancer to participate in a sport or training program outside of the MSAA defined season. Volunteer conditioning sessions open equally to all students in a school and which are entirely devoid of a sports specific activity may be

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conducted between sessions provided no candidate is either required to participate or penalized for not doing so.

- A. **Dance Training/Camp:** Coaches may attend one (1) session (no longer than 5 consecutive days – not to be split into separate weeks) of training/camp during out of season with their team. This training session must be in the interest of learning technique and safety. This session should not be used for the purpose of competition or choreographing competition routines.
- B. **Captain's Practice:** The term "Captain's Practice" refers to a situation in which the team's captain(s) organizes and conducts out-of-season practice for dance without adult supervision. The MSAA does not in any way sanction, encourage, or condone "Captain's Practice." Teams conducting out of season practice sessions are in violation of MSAA rules. Use of school facility or grounds for out-of-season participation should not be allowed. If it can be demonstrated that a school is allowing "Captain's Practice", the liability responsibility for an injured athlete may be quite serious.

Sportsmanship: Taunting

- A. Taunting includes any actions or comments by coaches, participants, or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates, or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs, or personal characteristics.

Examples of taunting include but are not limited to: "trash talk", defined as verbal communication of a personal nature directed by a competitor to an opponent by ridiculing his/her skills, efforts, sexual orientation, or lack of success, which is likely to provoke an altercation or physical response; and physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game, including, but not limited to "in the face" confrontation by one participant to another.

- B. A violation of this rule may result in disciplinary action as outlined in the Violation of Rules and Regulations section of this Rulebook

Student (and Coach) Eligibility: Chemical Health /Alcohol / Drugs/Tobacco

- A. During the season of practice or competition, a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give

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away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer”. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by his/her doctor. This rule represents only a minimum standard upon which schools may develop more stringent requirements.

This MSAA/MIAA statewide minimum standard is not intended to render “guilt by association”, e.g. many student athletes might be present at a party where only a few violate this standard.

If a student in violation of this rule is unable to participate in interscholastic sports/activities due to injury or academics, the penalty will not take effect until that student is able to participate again.

Minimum PENALTIES:

First violation: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 25% of the season.

Second and subsequent violations: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 60% of the season.

If after the second or subsequent violations the student of his/her own volition becomes a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in MSAA activities after a minimum of 40% of events. The director or a counselor of a chemical dependency treatment center must issue such certification. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 40% of the season.

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Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year. If the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student's next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year.

- B. During practice, game or competition, a coach shall not use any tobacco product.
- C. Steroid Use - Anabolic androgenic steroid use at the high school level is of grave concern. Steroids are used by some athletes, and the seriousness of the problem has been well documented. The use of steroids in sports is cheating. The MSAA strongly opposes the use of steroids.

Good Citizen Rule:

Student-athletes may not represent their school if they are on in-house or out-of-house disciplinary suspension. A suspended student is ineligible for practice or competition for at least the number of days (or partial days) equal to the number of days of the suspension. Individual school policies will determine the actual days of ineligibility. The MSAA suggests that policies be included in local Student Handbooks.

Regional Representatives

Each Regional Representative will be chosen by the Dance Committee, and will serve on the Committee for a three (3) year term. There will be four (4) Regional Representatives, one for each region of the state.

Signs and/or Banners

The display of signs, banners, place cards or similar items at MSAA regional and state competitions is permitted, provided:

- A. They are in good taste and reflect good sportsmanship in their message and use;
- B. They reflect identification and encouragement to participants and their school or community, and make no reference to the opposing team(s), its school, players or community;
- C. They do not obstruct the view of participants or spectators;

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- D. They do not endorse any private promotion and/or sponsorship, which might result in the exploitation of students or direct financial gain to the promoter or sponsor.
- E. They are not safety hazards; and
- F. They are not prohibited by facility management.

Noisemakers

Horns and noisemakers are not to be permitted at any site. If the site manager feels that something not mentioned above is also creating a nuisance at a contest site, the site manager should have such items removed.

MSAA Web Site:

www.MSAA.net – check for updates on dance events throughout the season.

National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS):

www.nfhs.org– check for updates on “Spirit Rules” or to order publications.

Dance Calendar of Events:

A Dance Calendar of Events will be published at the beginning of each season. This information will be available on the MSAA website (www.MSAA.net).

General Competition Guidelines

- A. Team members are required to be in costume/uniform and participate in the awards ceremony.
- B. No team may compete with less than six (6) on the competition floor at any time.
- C. CATEGORIES – Teams may perform any style or dance or a combination of styles. Some are listed below.
 - i. **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.

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- ii. **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.*
- iii. **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

Performance Area

Performance surfaces and dimensions may vary by competition based on venue, size and restrictions, divisions offered, and other factors.