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GHSA Rules and interpretation
Special Request and approvals

GHSA Rules Clinic
General Safety
CHEERLEADING
2012-2013

GHSA Materials

- Cheerleading Manuals, forms, scoring guides and rubrics may be downloaded at the following sites:
  
  GHSA Website - [www.ghsa.net](http://www.ghsa.net)
  [www.ghsacheerleading.com](http://www.ghsacheerleading.com)
  [www.georgiacheer.com](http://www.georgiacheer.com)
GHSA AND NFHS Rules Jurisdiction

The National Federation of State High School Associations has led the development of education-based interscholastic sports and activities that help students succeed in their lives.

- Rules provide direction
- Rules build awareness
- Rules support activities
- Rules improve activities
- Rules establish a consistent standard

All provisions of this rules book shall be in effect for all spirit team activities including:

- Practices
- Games - Sideline and Halftime Performances
- Competitions
- Exhibitions & Performances
- Sideline and Halftime Performances

Coaching Liability

It is the professional integrity of our coaches that we need to rely on to make sure all rules are followed.

Legal duties of a spirit coach are:

- Coaches should properly plan
- Coaches should be knowledgeable
- Coaches should provide correct and proper instruction
- Coaches should provide a safe physical environment and equipment
- Coaches should be conscious of each athlete’s ability
- Coaches should be able to evaluate injuries
- Coaches should know basic first aid and CPR
- Coaches should provide emergency assistance as needed
- Coaches should supervise all activities closely
- Coaches should warn athletes and parents of inherent risk

NFHS SPIRIT RULES BOOK

The NFHS SPIRIT RULES BOOK may be ordered from the

Georgia High School Association
P.O. Box 271
Thomaston, GA 30286

Available Resources

- NFHS Spirit Rules Committee
- State Associations
- Spirit Rules Interpreters
- Coaches Associations
1. Rule 2-3-8

- Padded Knee, ankle, and wrist braces which are unaltered from the manufacturer’s original design/production do not require any additional padding.
  
  - Adding wrist braces is consistent with the NFHS focus on risk minimization.

2. Rule 2-4-1

- Add b
  
  - A base must not:
    a. Assume a back-bend, headstand, or handstand position
    b. Hold any objects if their hands are the primary support for the top person.

Rationale: This change is consistent with the NFHS focus on minimizing risk.

3. Rule 2-4-8 (2011 Rules Book)

- This rule was deleted and will not appear in the 2012-2013 NFHS Spirit Rules Book. It addressed where the spotters hands and arms must be during stunting. See new rule 2-4-8.

  Rationale: It is not necessary for a spotter’s arms to be extended towards a top person in order to be in an alert, ready position.
4. Rule 2-4-6e

- **ADDED**

  e. Stand with hands behind his/her back.

  **Rationale:** A spotter does not demonstrate being in an alert, ready position when standing with hands behind the back.

5. Rule 2-4-8

- A spotter is required for single base shoulder level stunts in which the foot or feet of the top person are in the hands of the base.

  **Rationale:** There is significant risk that a backward fall in such stunts cannot be caught when the bases’ hands are under the top person’s feet.

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**New Section**

A new section has been created to address safety with inversions and/or inverted stunts.

**Section 2-5**

**Rationale:** This section was added to make it easier to locate inverted stunts in the rules book. The new inversion rules allow teams to have more options without increasing risk. These skills have been demonstrated to have a reasonable expectation for minimizing risk when given the specific limitations and conditions required for performance.

6. New Section: Rule 2-5

- **Rule 2-5-1** (**new**)
  
  Unless allowed under the rules in this section, a top person must not be in an inverted position.

- **Rule 2-5-2** (2011-2012 Rule 2-7-2)
  
  Forward suspended rolls are permitted provided:
  
  a. The top person begins from the performing surface or from a stunt shoulder height or below.
  
  b. The top person maintains continuous hand-to-hand contact with **two bases** or **two post** who control the top person’s dismount to the performing surface or cradle.
Rule 2-5-3 (new)
Backward suspended rolls are permitted only from the performing surface provided the top person maintains continuous hand-to-hand contact with two posts, who control the top person back to the performing surface.

Rule 2-5-4 (Revised Rule 2-5-2 from 2011-2012)
A top person may be moved from a weight-bearing inverted position on the performing surface to a non-inverted position at any height provided both the following conditions are met:
- At least one base or spotter protects the head/neck/shoulder area of the top person.
- This base or spotter must maintain contact with the top person until he/she is no longer inverted.

Rule 2-5-5 (new)
A top person may be inverted in partner stunts in which the base of support remains below shoulder level provided the following conditions are met:
- At least one base or spotter protects the head/neck/shoulder area of the top person. This base or spotter must maintain contact with the top person until he/she is no longer inverted.
- During the downward inversion, two original bases or one original base and a spotter maintain contact with the top person in a position to protect his/her head, neck and shoulder area. This contact must be maintained until the top persons hands are on the performing surface or he/she is no longer inverted.

Rule 2-5-6 (new)
A braced forward or backward flip in a pyramid is allowed provided all of the following conditions are met:
- The top person maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with a separate bracer on each side. The bracers must be in double based shoulder stands or elevator preps (no single base, shoulder sits, or thigh stand bracers).
- Each bracer has a separate spotter.
- The top person has at least two bases and a separate spotter.
- The bases remain stationary except as necessary for safety reasons.
- The top person ends in a loading position, stunt, or cradle.
- The top person does not perform more than one and one quarter (1 ¼) flipping rotations.
- The top person does not twist.
7. Rule 2-6-4

- A top person may be moved from a vertical position to a face up or face down straight body horizontal position provided all the following conditions are met:
  - a. The top person maintains contact with at least one original base of spotter.
  - b. Two or more additional catchers/bases catch the upper body of the top person.
  - c. When the catchers are not the original bases, the top person may not begin in or pass through an extended overhead position.
  - d. The catchers remain close to the original bases and must be in place prior to the movement toward horizontal.
  - e. The base(s) do not turn.
  - f. The base(s) has/have constant visual contact with the catchers.

Rationale: This change combines the NFHS 2011 rules 2-5-5, 2-5-6 and 2-5-8 and will simply a top person moving from vertical to horizontal. Eliminating 2-5-7 may reduce the risk of the extra person standing between stunts in a pyramid.

8. Rule 2-6-11

- **New Rule**
  A single base may not be the only primary support for two extended top persons with the exception of double cupies/awesomes. If dismounted to cradles, there must be three catchers for each top person being cradled.

Rationale: The NFHS has not addressed stunts in which one base is supporting two extended top persons. This rule allows for a specific stunt but limits others that might present risk.

9. Rule 2-6-12

- **New Rule**
  Partner stunts in which the base uses only one arm to support the top person are permitted only on grass (real or artificial), a mat, or a rubberized track.

Rationale: The NFHS has not addressed stunts in which a top person is supported by a single base using only one arm. This rule assures that this type stunt is only performed on appropriate surfaces.

10. Rule 2-7-2

- Basket tosses, elevator tosses and similar multi-base tosses are permitted only on grass (real or artificial), a mat, or a rubberized track.

Rationale: Adding rubberized track as an appropriate surface presents minimal risk to participants.
### 11. Rule 2-6-4c

- The NFHS Rule reference cited above appeared in the 2011 rules book. This rule has been removed from the 2012 NFHS Spirit Rules Book.

**DELETED:**

The top person does not twist during the release unless it is performed on grass (real or artificial or a mat).

**Rationale:** It has been demonstrated that a release twist during a quick toss on any appropriate surface does not present significant risk to participants.

### 12. Rule 2-6-7b

- Deleted:

  The bases remain stationary except as necessary for safety adjustments.

**Rationale:** Deleting 2-6-7-b is necessary to allow bases to move as allowed in the provisions of 2-6-7f.

### 13. Rule 2-7-4c

- New Rule (Addition to 2-7-4)
  - The bases can apply upward force on any part of the body other than the feet.
  - Exception: Switch Liberties

**Rationale:** Prohibiting single foot pitches during a quick toss ensures that the top person will not be tossed significantly higher than the intended stunt.

### 14. Rule 2-7-7e

- The released top person and base(s) may make a ¼ turn around the bracer in a continuous movement in which the top person remains vertical over the bases.

**Rationale:** (The phrases "release is a" and "vertical up and down" were deleted from the wording of the 2011 rule)

- Allowing the top person to move to the side during the release transitions does not present significant risk provided the bases move and remain below him/her.
15. Rule 2-8-5

A swinging stunt is legal provided all the following conditions are met:

a. A downward movement is only allowed from below shoulder height.

b. The top person is face up.

C. The top person begins from the performing surface or a stunt that is below shoulder height.

NOTE - Deleted: A slight downward swing to prepare for an upward swing is permitted.

Rationale: Allowing swing stunts to begin from below shoulder height rather than specifically from a cradle will increase creative options but will continue to minimize risk.

Rule 16: 2-9-8

NEW:

A twist performed to a cradle must not involve more than one complete rotation except when dismounting to a cradle from a side-facing stunt or toss, 1 ¼ rotations are permitted. The bases may make a ¼ turn to the cradle.

NOTE - DELETED: A twist performed to cradle: a. Must not involve more than two complete rotations; (Exception 2-10-2); b. Is permitted only on grass (real or artificial) or a mat.

Rationale: Based on data, prohibiting double twists to a cradle is consistent with NFHS focus on risk minimization.

Rule 17: 2-10-6

Airborne twisting tumbling skills are permitted only on grass (real or artificial), a mat, or a rubberized track, with the exception of round-offs and aerial cartwheels.

Rationale: Adding rubberized track to these tumbling skills presents minimal risk to participants.

Rule 18: 2-10-1

Rule reference is to the Rule for 2011.

Deleted: Twist performed to a cradle, during a tumbling pass or in a quick load in toss are legal only on grass (real of artificial) or a mat.

Rationale: This rule is already covered in other areas.
Rule 19: 2-11-1

- A twist performed to a cradle must not involve more than one complete rotation except when dismounting to a cradle from a side-facing stunt or toss, 1 ¼ rotations are permitted. The bases may make a ¼ turn to catch the cradle.

**NOTE - Deleted:** The number was changed to one. In the past two rotations were allowed.

**Rationale:** Data has shown that a single twist to a cradle has minimal risk to participants. Prohibiting double twists to a cradle is consistent with the NFHS focus on risk minimization.

1. Concussions: Rule 2-1-14

- An athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health-care professional.

**Comment:**
The National Federation of High Schools currently offers an on-line course:

“Concussions in Sports – What We Need to Know”

Do you know what a concussion is? Do you know the signs of a concussion?
1. Concussions: Rule 2-1-14

Remember:

When in doubt
Sit them out!

Reference: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control and Prevention – “Heads Up to Schools: Know Your Concussion ABC’s”
A – Assess the situation
B – Be alert for signs and symptoms
C – Contact a health care professional

GHSA Rules to Know

1. No glitter is allowed.
2. In competition no props may be used other than poms.
3. No noise makers at indoor events.
4. All team members must be bona fide students of the school they are cheering for. (Exception: At all male schools a spirit cheerleading team may be comprised of spirit cheerleaders from another school.)
5. Teams may only participate in GHSA sanctioned events.
6. No Jewelry is allowed.
7. Fingernails must be kept short, near the end of the fingers.

Sportsmanship

A participant, coach, substitute, trainer, or other team attendant must not commit an unsporting act. This includes but is not limited to acts or conduct such as:

a. Disrespectfully addressing or contacting an official or gesturing in such a manner as to indicate resentment.

b. Using profane language, music, or gestures.

c. Baiting or taunting an opponent.

A participant, coach, substitute, trainer, or other team attendant must not use tobacco, smokeless tobacco, alcohol, or other controlled substance while representing the school.
### Jewelry

Spirit coaches are expected to follow the rules written for the safety of all participants of cheerleading and dance. The spirit rules regarding jewelry (2-3-1) apply to all spirit activities, which includes both practices and performance events.

* Nose piercings are not allowed – It is not acceptable to cover the piercing with tape or fill a piercing with a spacer or clear stud.

### Jewelry

With the exception of religious and medical medals, examples of jewelry include, but are not limited to: necklaces, bracelets, rings, all facial and body piercings (includes spacers and fishing line), wrist bands, corsages, and hair ties on wrists. This rule is consistent with rules concerning jewelry in the NFHS rule books for other athletic activities. “No jewelry” means NO JEWELRY.

### Basketball Rules

Basketball cheerleaders must follow all guidelines of the GHSA and the NFHS when cheering.

Remember when coaching basketball cheerleading:

2-1-5: Performance surfaces and areas must be suitable for spirit activities.
   - Surfaces and areas must be reasonably free from objects and/or impediments.
   - Stunts and tumbling must be modified to the surface and in relation to other participants.
   - When discarding props that are made of hard material or have corners or sharp edges, team members must gently toss or place the props.

2-1-7: Participants must not chew gum or have hard candy in their mouths during practice or performances.
Basketball

Remember:

2-1-8: Participants must not stunt or tumble during a basketball or volleyball game when the ball is in play, including free throws in basketball and just prior to the serve in volleyball.

2-1-9: Participants must not warm-up stunts or tumbling on the court or sideline area during player warm-up if an alternate area is available. If no appropriate alternate area is available, the coach must take responsible precautions to minimize the risk to participants.

2-1-10: Participants must remain outside the playing area during a 30 second or less time-out in a basketball game.

Rules to Remember:

2-1-11: Artificial noisemakers must not be used at indoor athletic contest except during pregame or halftime performances. Exception: Megaphones, appropriately used by spirit participants on the sidelines, floor or court, are permitted, if allowed by contest officials.

2-1-12: Participants must not stand behind the free throw lane extended during a basketball game.

Unsporting acts would include: Disrespect of an official, using profane or inappropriate language, music or gestures, baiting or taunting.

Basketball

Rules to Remember: Apparel/Accessories

(NOTE: The following rules apply to all cheerleaders.)

2-3-1: Jewelry of any kind is prohibited except for the following: A religious medal without a chain is allowed and must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.

2-3-2: Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept short, near the end of the fingers.

2-3-3: The hair must be worn in a manner that is appropriate for the activity involved. Hair devices must be secure.

2-3-4: Apparel and accessories must be appropriate for the activity involved.

2-3-6: When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff.

Important Reminder for All Coaches!

Rule 2-6-2:
Basket Tosses, elevator tosses and similar multi-base tosses are permitted only on grass (real or artificial) or a mat.

No tosses of any kind can be executed on the basketball court.
Basketball: What to do – What not to do?????

**What to do?**
1. Extension prep dismount to cradle
2. Liberty dismount straight to cradle
3. Pendulum
4. Braced Tick-Tock
5. Leap frog
6. Helicopter
7. Split Drop
8. Dismount from a single based stunt to a single based cradle with proper spotting
9. Series of back-handsprings
10. Series of cartwheels

The stunts listed above are just a few examples of items that could be legal if executed appropriately on a basketball court or track.

**What not to do?**
1. Basket tosses of any kind
2. Quick Load to a toss that twist prior to landing in a stunt
3. Elevator toss
4. Double twist dismounts or tumbling
5. Perform a single twisting back flip

The stunts listed above are examples of stunts that would be illegal if executed on a basketball court or track.

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Georgia High School Association wishes you a safe and successful year.

The Key to Great Coaching is to:
Follow the Rules
And
Display good Sportsmanship!