## Summary of Changes for the 2024 Season

## HIGH SCHOOL

- Quarter 4: Four (4) routines will be played.


## JUNIOR HIGH

- Quarter 4: Two (2) routines will be played.


## REFEREE \& HOSTING INFORMATION

- The referee is to be provided by the host and must go through the training provided by USA Cheer. A Scoring Official will assist in the responsibility of the Referee from the official's table.


## UNIFORM

- Jerseys may not have any midriff showing.


## MEDICAL APPLIANCES/DEVICES

- Permitted proved the device is securely padded and attached to the player's body under the uniform or similarly secured.


## Summary of Changes for the 2024 Season

## SPOTTERS GUIDELINES

- Additional personnel on the sideline who will be acting as a spotter (coaches, trainers, team managers) are the responsibility of each institution and should be approved by administration to be in contact with athletes in this manner. Spotters are not allowed to use the Neutral Zone at any time.
- Spotters should enter the playing area prior to the whistle at the beginning of the round and exit the playing area at the end of the round.


## Summary of Changes for the 2024 Season

## OVERTIME

- If both teams are not able to execute a routine level during overtime, there will be a double forfeit and the game will result in a tie.
- Teams will have a one (1) minute break prior to each round during overtime. There are no timeouts in overtime.


## TECHNICAL FOULS

- Anyone who is ejected from a game will be suspended for the remainder of that game and throughout the remainder of the day. If individual(s) are not compliant, the represented team will forfeit that game.


## MERCY RULE

- The rule cannot be invoked prior to Quarter 4 and must be mathematically impossible to change the outcome of the game due to the score differential.


## Officials Information

- Referees are to be provided by the hosting location.
- Referees can wear team attire but is preferred if they are in a solid color shirt.
- A STUNT polo can be purchased in the official USA Cheer store at the following link: https://usacheershop.com
- Footwear that is potentially damaging to the field of play surface is prohibited.
- Referees may wear black and white stripe shirts but are not required.


All Officials should bring the following items while officiating, in addition to wearing the appropriate attire and being always professional.

## Bring to Games:

$\checkmark$ Whistle
$\checkmark$ Coin


## Administrative Elements - Competition Area

## HOME TEAM

## AWAY TEAM

## Being the Referee

## PREGAME

- Referee should talk to the auxiliary staff before the game and make sure they know how and when to run the clock, what the hand signals mean, when to play the music (have them test the music and volume), and when to make announcements.
- Make sure warm-up procedures are being followed, prohibited attire has been addressed, and the competition area is set up correctly.
- If a Head Official has been assigned, these responsibilities may fall to him/her.
- If using a walkie talkie, test these and make sure there are backup batteries/chargers available.
- Make sure to have a whistle, coin, Referee Card, and pen.
- Approximately twenty-five (25) minutes before game time: Have teams line up in numerical order to check jewelry, etc.
- Twenty (20) minutes before game time: Blow your whistle to begin the fifteen (15) minute warm-up.



## Being the Referee

- Five (5) minutes before game time: Cue the Announcer to call the coaches and captains to meet you in the Neutral Zone for the coin toss.
- This is your time to greet the teams and provide reminders for any/all of the following:
$\checkmark$ One (1) coach will signal to the Referee from the front corner of the mats;
$\checkmark$ Athletes may only enter/exit from the back and team side of the mats ( 20 sec .);
$\checkmark$ No counting at a distracting volume;
$\checkmark$ Whistle will START and STOP the music;
$\checkmark$ Music Malfunction and Injury Procedures;
$\checkmark$ Ask both teams if they can execute a minimum of one (1) section within four (4) routine levels. If a team cannot, you will establish that only two (2) rounds will be played in Quarter 4.
$\checkmark$ Good Sportsmanship!
- Referee will flip the coin and Home Team will call 'heads' or 'tails' in the air. The team winning the coin toss will choose which quarter to start with possession.
- Referee will have teams shake hands and return to their benches, and then indicate to the Announcer the outcome of the coin toss.
- Once the teams have returned to their benches, the Referee will signal to the coach with possession to call the first routine.


## Being the Referee

## DURING THE GAME

- Referees control the pace of the game, as well as communication throughout.
- Referees will stand at the back of the Neutral Zone during gameplay and watch for any infractions (i.e. restricted zones, spotters, prohibited items, counting volume, injuries, music malfunctions).
- As soon as Officials relay the outcome of a round, the Referee will walk up to the middle of the Neutral Zone (make sure the Announcer sees you) and signal the winner of the round.

In the event of a tie, the Referee will show this signal $\rightarrow$

Next, the Referee will indicate possession $\rightarrow$


Then the Referee will show the routine \# called to both teams, Officials, and Announcer $\rightarrow$


## Being the Referee

- The Referee will wait for teams to take the floor, then whistle for the music to start.
- Teams have 20 seconds to take the floor and be ready. If a team is in excess of this time, the Referee may issue a verbal warning to the coach. If the issue continues, the Referee will inform the coach that they lose a timeout.
- Once the teams have started the routine and there are no music or spotter issues, the Referee will fill in the Referee Card for the outcome of the previous round, possession, and the routine called for the current round.
- Referees need to watch for Timeouts, Forfeits, and Challenges called by coaches and communicate those to the Officials, as well as record them on the Referee Card.
- If a Timeout is called, the Referee should whistle and make sure the one (1) minute timer on the clock has been started.
- Referees may also need to call for an Official's Timeout (no time on the clock) or an Injury Timeout (two minutes on the clock).
- In a Forfeit situation, the Referee will indicate whether one (1) point or zero (0) points were awarded to the competing team, per the Scoring Officials.
- It is important for Referees to understand possession rules in order to keep possession alternating, regardless of points awarded.


Timeout


Forfeit

## Being the Referee



## Game Timeline - Pregame

Know the warm-up guidelines:

- Prior to warm-up, approximately twenty-five (25) minutes prior to the start of the game, Referees will have athletes line up to check for visible jewelry, uniform specifications, and appropriate spotter apparel.
- Both teams will begin their fifteen-minute pregame warm-up twenty (20) minutes prior to the start of the game.
- Five (5) minutes prior to the start of the game, both teams will clear the floor and return to their team bench.
- The National Anthem will be played at this time before the first game of the tournament.
- Two (2) minutes prior to the start of the game OR after the National Anthem has played, the Referee will call for the coaches and captains to meet at the center of the mat for the coin toss.

| On the Clock: | Teams: |
| :--- | :--- |
| 20 Minutes | Start Warm Up |
| 5 Minutes | Clear Floor \& Return to Team Bench |
| 2 Minutes | Coin Toss |

## Game Timeline - Pregame

- Coin Toss
- The Referee will show the coin to both teams, flip it in the air, and allow it to land on the ground. The home team will call 'heads' or 'tails' while the coin is in the air.
- The team that wins the coin toss has two (2) options:

| Options for Winning Team | Option 1: KEEP POSSESSION | Option 2: DEFER POSSESSION |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Winning team will.. | Call the first routine of Quarter 1. | Call the first routine of Quarter 3. |
| Opposing team will... | Call the first routine of Quarter 3. | Call the first routine of Quarter 1. |
|  |  |  |

- Once possession has been determined:
- The Referee will signal to the team that won the coin toss so the Announcer and Scoring Officials are aware.
- The Announcer will announce who won the coin toss.
- The Referee will then signal to the team in which will be starting with possession in Quarter 1.
- The Announcer will announce who will be starting with possession.
- Coaches and captains will shake hands and return to their team bench.
- The Referee will record the outcome of the coin toss on the Referee Card and then signal to the team with possession to call the first
 routine of the round.


## Introduction to STUNT

- Each of the first three (3) quarters will consist of four (4) rounds. Each round will consist of one (1) of six (6) available routines for high school and junior high, based on the category of the current quarter.
- Quarter 4 will consist of four (4) rounds for High School and two (2) rounds for Junior High. Each round will combine the routines of that level in one (1) continuous routine, in the following order: Partner Stunts, Jumps \& Tumbling, then Pyramids \& Tosses.
- The routines are designed in an overall progression from easier to harder, with Routine 1 having the lowest degree of difficulty.





## Game Timeline - Regulation

- The team with possession at the beginning of a round will determine which of the available routines will be performed.
- Coaches will show the routine number chosen on their hands to the Referee. The Referee will show the routine number chosen to both teams, the Announcer, and the Scoring Officials.
- Once a routine has been chosen, that number cannot be called again during the current quarter.
- The Referee will keep track of routines called on the Referee Card.

- Teams will have twenty (20) seconds to take the floor in their designated positions.
- If a team has not taken the floor during this time, they may be assessed a timeout by the Referee. If no timeout is available, the team will automatically forfeit the round.
- At the Officials' discretion, if spotters cause a significant delay in beginning a round after receiving a verbal warning, a timeout may be assessed.
- At the Referee's whistle, the routine music will begin. At the end of the routine, teams should immediately return to their benches.


## Game Timeline - Regulation

- Scoring Officials watch both teams at the same time to determine which team wins the round based on the total number and degree of errors made by each team. The team with the fewest deductions will be declared the winner of the round. If each team has the same number of deductions, the round ends in a tie.
- The Scoring Officials will signal the outcome of the round to the Referee.
- The Referee will relay the outcome to the teams and spectators, and then signal to the coach of the team with possession to call the next routine for the subsequent round.



## Game Elements - Technical Fouls

- The first instance will result in a verbal warning from the Referee, following the same procedure as a Restricted Zone Violation.
- A subsequent instance will result in the awarding of one (1) game point to the opposing team.
- A third instance may result in the ejection of the guilty individual(s) from the game.


## Technical Fouls may be issued for the following:

- A coach, athlete, or other team personnel displaying conduct that is not representative of USA Cheer and STUNT;
- Counting loud enough that it becomes a distraction;
- Adding words to routine counts prior to the ' 1 ' of the final 8 -count;
- Failure to adhere to Team Zone guidelines;
- Athletes transitioning on/off the floor during a routine, unless it is an allowable transition in Quarter 4;
- Failure to inform the Referee during the coin toss that the team does not have a minimum of one (1) section within four (4) routine levels they can play in Quarter 4;
- If the required spotters' attire specifications are not met;
- If the uniform specifications are not met.


Technical Foul (space between hands)

## Game Elements - Spotters

- USA Cheer does not provide spotters. Spotters are the responsibility of individual teams and may be provided during any round.
- Spotters are only there to protect the athletes.
- Spotters are not assessed an execution error for talking or counting but are held to the same standard as coaches and the bench and can be warned if they are distracting.
- Spotters should be in athletic wear or professional attire (team warm up, team polo, etc.) Spotters are required to adhere to the appropriate footwear specifications. Prohibited apparel guidelines also apply to spotters.
- Anyone acting as a spotter MUST be in the same color apparel, or wear a covering, that contrasts with the predominant color of the team's uniform in order to clearly identify them as spotters.
- Spotters' attire will be assessed by the Referee prior to the team entering the main floor. If the above specifications are not met, the
 team will receive a verbal warning. If the specifications cannot be met, a Technical Foul will be assessed. One (1) game point will be awarded to the opposing team at the end of the first quarter in which spotters participate in the inappropriate attire. No further deduction will be applied.


## Game Elements - Possession

- Possession for the first round of Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 is determined by the coin toss.
- Possession for the first round of Quarter 2 and Quarter 4 is determined by alternating possession each round within the quarter.
- The team that begins with possession in Quarter 1, will also begin with possession in Quarter 2.
- The team that begins with possession in Quarter 3, will also begin with possession in Quarter 4.
- Gaining possession within a quarter:
- Possession alternates every round within the quarter.
- Possession going into Quarter 3 begins with the team who did not start with possession in Quarter 1.
- Referees will track possession on the Referee Card.
- Officials and Referees should check with each other throughout the game to ensure possession is correct.


## Game Elements - Timeouts

## TIMEOUTS

- Each team will have three (3) 60-second timeouts per regulation game.
- The signal for a timeout is the hands in front of the chest forming a ' $T$ '.

- A timeout may be called by an athlete in play, coach, or official(s).
- A timeout must be called before the Referee's whistle to start the routine music.
- During a timeout: both teams may perform skills on additional mats and may also perform skills on the main floor.
- The end of the timeout will be indicated by the scoreboard timer or the Referee's whistle.


## Game Elements - Forfeits

- Following the routine call during any round of play, either team may choose to forfeit the round. A forfeit is when a team declines to play a routine called.
- The signal for a forfeit is made with the forearms crossed in front of the chest to form an ' X '.

In a TRADITIONAL FORFEIT situation, the team with possession calls a routine and the opposing team forfeits the round. The team with possession will then take the floor and perform the routine with the opportunity to win the round and receive one point.


## Game Elements - Forfeits

In a SELF FORFEIT situation, the team with possession calls a routine and immediately forfeits the routine.

- In this situation, the opposing team may choose to take the floor and perform the routine to win the round.

In a DOUBLE FORFEIT situation, the opposing team may also choose to forfeit the round and not take the floor, ending the round.

- A team can either forfeit an entire round of Quarter 4 or they can forfeit part of the round.
- To forfeit the entire round, the coach signals the Referee like any other quarter.
- To forfeit part of the round, a team will do the following:
- The team will leave the floor during the substitution counts prior to the section they are to forfeit and then return to the floor for the section they do not want to forfeit.
- If they are forfeiting the first section, they do not have to take the floor until the substitution counts of the section they do not want to forfeit.


## Game Elements - Forfeits

- In order to win the round and receive one (1) point in any forfeit situation, the performing team must execute the routine with fewer than eight (8) deduction points in total for the Partner Stunts and Pyramids \& Tosses sections and fewer than twelve (12) deduction points in total for the Jumps \& Tumbling section.

| Forfeit Scoring: |  |
| :--- | :--- |
| Team that performs in Quarters 1-3 | Zero (0) or one (1) point |
| Team that forfeits in Quarters 1-3 | Zero (0) points |
| Team that performs in Quarter 4 | Up to three (3) points |
| Teams that forfeit in Quarter 4 | Zero (0) points for forfeited section(s) |

- When a forfeit occurs, possession will continue to alternate, regardless of points awarded.


## Game Elements - Overtime

## OVERTIME

- In the event of a tie at the end of regulation, the Referee will call the coaches to the center of the mat to review overtime procedures.
- Routine 1 from Quarter 4 will be performed by both teams, unless it was the last round played in Quarter 4. In that case, the first round played in overtime would be Routine 2.
- The team that wins the round is declared the winner of the game.
- If the round results in a tie, the routine level will advance to the next routine level from Quarter 4. This process will repeat until a winner is determined.
- If overtime extends past the highest routine level without a winner, the process will start over with Routine 1 until there is a winner.
- If both teams are not able to execute a routine level during overtime, there will be a double forfeit and the game will result in a tie.


## Game Elements - Overtime

## OVERTIME CONT.

- Overtime rounds are performed and scored exactly as in Quarter 4 regulation play.
- Teams will have a one (1) minute break prior to each round during overtime.
- There are no timeouts in overtime.
- Unused timeouts from regulation do NOT carry over into overtime.



## Game Elements - Injury Protocol

- If play is stopped due to an injury in Quarters 1-3:
- The round is over and will NOT be repeated. The round is scored up until the point of when the referee blows the whistle or music is stopped.
- After the injury is assessed, there is a two-minute injury timeout.
- If play is stopped due to an injury in Quarter 4:
- Performance will stop temporarily.
- After the injury is assessed, there is a two-minute injury timeout for substitutions and to prepare for the remaining sections of the round.
- Injured athlete(s) CANNOT participate in the completion of this round.
- If the team with the injury forfeits, the other team will follow the process to finish the round and be officiated like any other type of forfeit.
- If the team with the injury chooses to continue, the teams will set up on the sideline, music will be played from the beginning of the round, and teams will come onto the floor for the section(s) that are left to perform.
- The section that the injury occurred will be scored up until the point of when the referee blows the whistle or music is stopped.
- Play may be stopped by a coach, athlete, Referee, or Scoring Official. When the injury is seen, the Referee should whistle for the music and play to stop and signal for the coach and athletic trainer to assess the injury.


## Game Elements - Music Malfunction

- Music Malfunction during Quarters 1-3:
- Both teams will be required to perform again from the beginning of the routine.
- All skills must be performed from the beginning of the routine.
- Music Malfunction during Quarter 4:
- If a music malfunction occurs after the ' 1 ' of the ending 8 -count in the Partner Stunts or Jumps and Tumbling section of a Quarter 4 routine, teams are NOT required to replay the completed section(s).


