

BELGIAN CHEERLEADING FEDERATION

BELGIAN CHEER CHAMPIONSHIP 2027

RULEBOOK



www.belgiancheer.be

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1. GENERAL REGULATIONS

The following rules and regulations apply for Belgian Cheer Championship 2027 and are based upon the rules given by the ICU (International Cheer Union)

1.1 Clubs

Only Belgian clubs who are an effective member of VCF or FFC can register for this competition.

All clubs that participate, need to sign up 2 volunteers or pay an extra fee of €200. The club can decide what option to take.

1.2. Participants

All athletes need to be registered in the member platform.

All athletes must have citizenship or permanent residency for at least 6 months in Belgium at the time of the Belgian Cheerleading Championship. Identity, age and permanent residency of the athlete will be determined by inspection of the valid photo ID document and supporting documents that need to include the following information:

- name and surname,
- date of birth,
- photo,
- citizenship or proof for the duration of residency.

If the photo ID document does not include the information about the citizenship or duration of residency, a separate document without the athlete's photo must be used to determine the citizenship or residency.

Exception 1: Exchange students need to prove that they are studying in Belgium for at least 6 months.

Exception 2: athletes in clubs nearby the border must prove that the Belgian club is the closest club from where they live.

Clarification: This exception only applies when the Belgian club is objectively the geographically closest club to the athlete's place of residence. The availability or absence of specific levels, divisions, teams, or competitive opportunities within other clubs will not be taken into consideration when determining eligibility for this exception.

Each non-Belgian athlete needs to individually upload their document on the member platform. The federation will accept or deny the documents. The club cannot finalize their registration until all documents are accepted.

Important side note: in case you enter the competition in a division where you can qualify for the ICU European Cheerleading Championship or for other ICU competitions, you understand that the rule above 'all athletes should have permanent residency for at least 6 months in their respected country' is as mentioned in their rulebooks, without exceptions.

1.3. Ranking Mini and Primary teams

No official ranking will be published for Mini and Primary categories. These categories are participation-focused and intended to promote athlete development, experience, and

enjoyment of the sport. Teams will receive scoresheets with written feedback from the judges, but no numerical scores, placements, or rankings will be shared or announced.

You can find more information on our website.

1.4 Categories

Discipline	Performance Cheer	Cheerleading
Team Divisions	Pom Hip Hop	Cheer
Age	Mini Primary Youth Junior Senior Master	Mini Primary Youth Junior Senior Master
Difficulty level	Novice Intermediate Premier	Novice Intermediate Median Advanced Elite Premier
Gender		Allgirl Coed

1.4.1. Divisions Cheerleading

The following Team Cheer divisions with number of athletes exist for Cheerleading.

Specific Division/Age group	Master	Senior	Junior	Youth	Primary	Mini
Team Cheer Novice	/	/	/	/	8-24	8-24
Team Cheer Intermediate	/	/	/	8-24	8-24	/
Team Cheer Median	8-24	/	/	8-24	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Median	/	8-24	8-24	8-24	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Median	/	8-24	8-24	8-24	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Advanced	/	8-24	8-24	8-24	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Advanced	/	8-24	8-24	8-24	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Elite	/	8-24	8-24	/	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Elite	/	8-24	8-24	/		
Team Cheer Coed Premier	/	8-24	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Premier	/	8-24	/	/	/	/

****Important note: in case you enter the competitions in a division where you can qualify for the ICU European Cheerleading Championship or other ICU competitions, you must know that the minimum athletes required to compete is 16.***

Team Adaptive Abilities Unified Median (L2)	5-24 persons
Team Special Abilities Unified Median (L2)	5-24 persons

Note 1: Special Abilities Unified Teams must comprise of a minimum 1:1 ratio of athletes with and without intellectual disabilities per team.

Note 2: Adaptive Abilities Unified Teams must comprise of 25% or more athletes with disabilities per team in compliance with the ECU Adaptive Abilities qualification guidelines.

Substitutes

Team Divisions: up to 5 substitutes per team.

Entourage

Team divisions: up to 5 coaches or accompanying persons per team.

1.4.2 Divisions - Performance cheer

The following divisions with number of athletes exist for Performance Cheer.

Specific Division / Age group	Master	Senior	Junior	Youth	Primary	Mini
POM Novice	/	/	/	/	/	8-24
POM Intermediate	8-24	8-24	8-24	8-24	8-24	/
POM Premier	8-24	8-24	8-24	8-24	/	/
HIP HOP Novice	/	/	/	/	/	8-24
HIP HOP Intermediate	8-24	8-24	8-24	8-24	8-24	/
HIP HOP Premier	8-24	8-24	8-24	8-24	/	/

Adaptive Abilities Unified Team PC Pom	4-24 persons
Adaptive Abilities Unified Team PC Hip Hop	4-24 persons
Special Abilities Unified/Traditional Team PC Pom	4-24 persons
Special Abilities Unified/Traditional Team PC Hip Hop	4-24 persons

Males and females are allowed to participate on the same team.

Note 1: Adaptive Abilities Unified Teams must comprise of 25% or more athletes with disabilities per team in compliance with the ECU Adaptive Abilities qualification guidelines.

Note 2: Special Abilities Unified Teams must comprise of a minimum 1:1 ratio of athletes with and without intellectual disabilities per team.

Substitutes

Team divisions: up to 5 substitutes per team.

Entourage

Team divisions: up to 5 coaches or accompanying persons per team.

1.5. Age groups

The following age groups exist:

Age Group	Age	Year of birth
Master	30 years and older	1996 or before
Senior	16y and older	2011 or before

Junior	15-18y	2012, 2011, 2010, 2009, 2008
Youth	12-14y	2015, 2014, 2013, 2012
Primary	8j-12y	2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014
Mini	5-8y	2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018
Adaptive and Special Abilities	10y and older	2016 or before

Age in years refers to an athlete being that age at some point of time during the calendar year of the respective competition.

Any team proven to be in violation of the age requirements will be automatically disqualified.

1.6. Crossovers

Each athlete may only compete in **one team** in a specific division. Cross overs to other team categories (Team cheer, Team Pom & Team Hip Hop) are allowed at the coaches' discretion as scheduling conflicts are likely to occur.

Each athlete may only compete in **one age group**. Cross-over to another age groups is not allowed.

- *Example: an athlete can compete in a Senior Team Cheer Coed Median, in a Senior Team Pom and in a Senior Team Hip Hop. An athlete cannot compete in a Senior Team Cheer Coed Median and in a Senior Team Cheer Allgirl Elite.*
- *EXCEPTION: athletes from a club team can participate in the division of their university team, no matter what division.*

1.7. Time Limitations, Music, Entrances and Exits

General

A. Each team must send their music in advanced. This must be done before the deadline. Sending in your music after the deadline can result in:

- Performing your music on a music choice made by the organization
- No participation

B. Teams are required to follow the BCF Music Copyrights Educational Initiative available at: <https://www.belgiancheer.be/nl/muziek-licentie>

C. Teams must be able to provide proof of licensing during the registration of the championship.

D. All teams entering confirm that they have read and understood the BCF Music Copyrights and all sound recordings used in a team's music shall only be used with the written license from the owner(s) of the sound recordings.

E. If a team does not have proof of music licensing available when asked, they will be allowed to perform to an optional approved track of music or a track with counts (provided by BCF) or can count verbally; otherwise, they will be disqualified from the competition.

F. For purposes of family viewing and in promotion of international sport, routine music must not include content that is suggestive/sexual in nature, offensive, vulgar or inferences violence of any kind. Violations of this rule will be impacted in the Overall category on the respective score sheet(s).

G. Excessive use of sound effects and/or the addition of generic and/or custom voiceovers to the music are not appropriate and should be avoided. Exceptions can include the name of the

team, team mascot, team colors, the team's country, etc. which is recommended to be used a maximum of 2 times throughout the routine. Violations of this rule will be impacted in the Overall category on the respective score sheet(s).

Team Cheerleading

- A. Each team will have a maximum of 2 minutes for music (2:00) and a recommended 30 seconds (0:30) Cheer that must be performed in the beginning or middle of the routine.
- B. The total maximum time for the routine will be three (3:00) minutes, including the Cheer.
- C. Every effort should be made to ensure that the lyrics of the music are appropriate for all audience members.
- D. Timing will begin with the first choreographed movement, voice, or note of the music whichever comes first.
- E. Timing will end with the last choreographed movement, voice, or note of the music whichever comes last.
- F. If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. One point deduction for 5-10 seconds and three (3) point deduction for 11 seconds and over per judge.
- G. Because penalties are severe, it is recommended that all teams time their performance several times prior to competition and leave a several second cushion to allow for variations in sound equipment.
- H. In order to keep the competition on time, teams must enter the performance floor as quickly as possible. Teams will have limited time to enter the floor and start their routine. Elaborate choreographed entrances will not be allowed. Additional conditions are as follows:
 - Entrances: When teams are introduced, teams must take the floor and assume their starting position within 20 seconds.
 - Exits: At the conclusion of the routine and following the completed dismount of the team (e.g. from an ending pyramid(s) or stunt(s)), teams must exit the floor immediately and must be off the performance floor within 20 seconds.

B. Performance Cheer Team

- A. Each Team will have a maximum of two (2) minutes (2:00) to perform their routine & demonstrate their expertise.
- B. Every effort should be made to ensure that the lyrics of the music are appropriate for all audience members.
- C. Timing will begin with the first choreographed movement, voice, or note of music.
- D. Timing will end with the last choreographed movement, voice or note of music.
- E. If a performance (Team or Doubles) exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. There will be a one (1) point deduction per judge for 5-10 seconds over the time limit and a three (3) point deduction per judge for 11 seconds or more over the time limit.
- F. In order to keep the competition on time, teams must enter the performance floor as quickly as possible. Choreographed entrances/exits will not be allowed. Teams will have limited time to enter the floor and start their routine. Additional conditions are as follows:
 - Entrances: When teams are introduced, teams must take the floor and assume their starting position within 20 seconds.
 - Exits: At the conclusion of the routine, teams must exit the floor immediately and must be

off the performance floor within 20 seconds.

1.8. Performance Surface

1. **Performance Cheer:** Marley dance floor, minimum surface area of 12 meters x 12 meters.
2. **Cheerleading:** No spring floor, standard foam mat surface. Min. surface area of 12mx12m.
3. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
4. No penalty for stepping outside the area.

2. GENERAL COMPETITION RULES & REGULATIONS

2.1 General Rules

- A. All teams must be supervised during all official functions by a qualified director/advisor/coach.
- B. Coaches must require proficiency before skill progression. Coaches must consider the athlete, group, and team skill levels with regard to proper performance level placement.
- C. All directors, advisors and coaches should have an emergency response plan in the event of an injury.

2.2. How to handle procedural questions

A. Rules & Procedure - Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the advisor / coach of the team and will be directed to the Competition Officials. Such questions should be made prior to the team's competition performance. For any questions concerning the legality of a move or trick, it is recommended to send a video of any skill of question to info@belgiancheer.be or rules@europeancheerunion.com.

B. Performance - Any questions concerning the team's performance should be made to the Competition Officials immediately after the team's performance and/or following the outcome of the competition.

2.3. Sportsmanship

A. All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the competition with positive presentation upon entry and exit from the performance area as well as throughout the routine.

B. The advisor and coach of each team is responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents and other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification.

C. Actions that exhibit excessive boasting, a delay in competition, poor sportsmanship, unprofessional behavior, etc. may be penalized. These actions include but are not limited to:

- An athlete calling unnecessary attention to themselves or the team using long and excessive entrances (e.g., aggressive motioning/taunting to the crowd, moving to multiple formations and patterns to begin the routine, etc.)
- Excessive pre- or post-competition team rituals (team bonding traditions must take place behind the stage area)
- Excessive celebration (e.g. athletes dropping to the floor, pounding on the floor, jumping on each other, etc.)
- For more information regarding ICU's sportsmanship policies, please see the following ICU sportsmanship guidelines video: <https://cheerunion.org/coaches-sportsmanship/>

D. In the promotion of international sport and the global athletic image of the Sport of Cheer, facial expressions and mannerisms on stage should be genuine, natural and authentic. Forced, choreographed, aggressive, vulgar and offensive facial expressions and gestures are not appropriate and should be avoided. Singing and/or pantomiming the lyrics is also not appropriate to the sport and should be avoided.

2.4. Interruption of performance

A. Unforeseen Circumstances

1. If, in the opinion of the competition officials, a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the competition equipment, facilities, or other factors attributable to the competition rather than the team, the team affected should stop the routine.
2. The team will perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred. The degree and effect of the interruption will be determined by the competition officials.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.

B. Fault of Team

1. In the event a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the team's own equipment, the team must either continue the routine or withdraw from the competition.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If decided by officials, the team will perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.

C. Injury

1. The only persons that may stop a routine for injury are: a) competition officials, b) the advisor / coach from the team performing or c) an injured individual.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed at a later time, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. The team may perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.
4. The injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless:
 - a. The competition officials receive clearance from, first, the medical personnel attending to that participant, the parent (if present) AND THEN the head coach/advisor of the competing team.
 - b. If the medical personnel do not clear the participant, the participant can only return to the competition if a parent or legal guardian in attendance signs a return to participation waiver.
 - c. In the event of a suspected concussion / head injury, the participant cannot return to perform without clearance from a medical professional that has training related to head injuries, and waiting 24 hours, even with a waiver from a parent or legal guardian.

2.5. Interpretations and / or Rulings

Any interpretation of any aspect of these Rules and Regulations or any decision involving any other aspect of the competition will be rendered by the BCF. The BCF will render a judgment in an effort to ensure that the competition proceeds in a manner consistent with the general spirit

and goals of the competition. If the interpretation needs to be made during an ongoing competition, it is made together by those committee members present and holding a function in the jury of the respective competition and the Head Judge.

2.6. Disqualification

Any team that does not adhere to the terms and procedures of these "Rules and Regulations" will be subject to disqualification from the competition, will automatically forfeit any right to any prizes or awards presented by the competition, and may also forfeit the opportunity to participate the following year.

2.7. Judging procedure

As the teams perform, a panel of judges will score the teams using a 100-point system. This is only valid for the following age categories: Youth, Junior, Senior and Master.

2.8. Scores and Rankings

Individual score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his or her final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores for all teams. Scores and rankings will be available only to coaches or captains at the conclusion of the competition. No scores or rankings will be given over the telephone. After each round of competition, teams will receive the judges' score sheets as well as their score and the top score in the group. In addition, teams will receive a ranking sheet with the names and scores of the team's final placement.

2.9. Finality of Decisions

By participating in this championship, each team agrees that judges' decisions are final and will not be subject for review. Each team acknowledges the necessity for the judges and competitions officials to make prompt and fair decisions in this competition, and each team therefore expressly waives any legal, equitable, administrative or procedural review of such decisions.

2.10. Penalties

A five (5) point penalty per judge whose individual score was added to the overall team's score will be assessed to any team violating any of the specific rules. This deduction does not apply to violations that are designated a lesser point value. Violation of a specific rule in more instances at the same time (ripples included) will be considered as just one violation of that specific rule and will result in just five (5) point penalty. If you have any questions concerning the legality of a move or trick, please send a video to the BCF info@belgianceer.be. This must be submitted clearly labeled with Team name, contact person name, telephone number and e-mail.

3. QUALIFICATIONS

A qualification obtained at the Belgian Cheer Championship does not automatically guarantee participation in the corresponding international event. Qualification grants the possibility to participate, subject to approval by the federation and compliance with any additional requirements, eligibility criteria, deadlines, financial obligations, performance standards, or other conditions determined by the federation.

3.1. ICU European Championships

The tables below indicate which categories are eligible to qualify for the ICU European Championships. Unless stated otherwise, the teams placing 1st and 2nd in the eligible categories will receive qualification for the ICU European Championships. Qualification remains subject to all ICU eligibility rules and category availability for the corresponding season.

Specific Division/Age group	Master	Senior	Junior	Youth	Primary	Mini
Team Cheer Novice	/	/	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer Intermediate	/	/	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer Median	/	/	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Median	/	/	/	YES*	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Median	/	/	/	YES*	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Advanced	/	/	YES*	YES	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Advanced	/	/	YES*	YES	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Elite	/	/	YES	/	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Elite	/	/	YES	/		
Team Cheer Coed Premier	/	YES	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Premier	/	YES	/	/	/	/

*Qualification for this category is currently provisional. Based on the results of the ICU European Championships, this qualification pathway may change or no longer be available. If a Belgian club wins the ICU European Championships in this category, future participants may be required to compete in a higher division within that age category.

Specific Division / Age group	Master	Senior	Junior	Youth	Primary	Mini
POM Novice	/	/	/	/	/	/
POM Intermediate	/	/	/	/	/	/
POM Premier	/	YES	YES	YES	/	/
HIP HOP Novice	/	/	/	/	/	/
HIP HOP Intermediate	/	/	/	/	/	/
HIP HOP Premier	/	YES	YES	YES	/	/

3.2. ICU World Cup

The federation currently intends to award qualification for the ICU World Cup. However, the organization, continuation, and format of the ICU World Cup are fully dependent on the ICU

and external organizers. The federation cannot guarantee that the event will take place and cannot be held responsible in the event of cancellation, postponement, restructuring, or discontinuation of the competition.

The table below indicates which categories are eligible to qualify for the ICU World Cup. Unless stated otherwise, the teams placing 1st and 2nd in the eligible categories will receive qualification for the ICU World Cup Qualification remains subject to all ICU eligibility rules and category availability for the corresponding season.

Specific Division/Age group	Master	Senior	Junior	Youth	Primary	Mini
Team Cheer Novice	/	/	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer Intermediate	/	/	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer Median	YES	/	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Median	/	/	/	YES	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Median	/	/	/	YES	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Advanced	/	/	YES	YES	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Advanced	/	/	YES	YES	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Elite	/	YES	YES	/	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Elite	/	YES	YES	/		
Team Cheer Coed Premier	/	YES	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Premier	/	YES	/	/	/	/

Specific Division / Age group	Master	Senior	Junior	Youth	Primary	Mini
POM Novice	/	/	/	/	/	/
POM Intermediate	/	/	/	/	/	/
POM Premier	YES	YES	YES	YES	/	/
HIP HOP Novice	/	/	/	/	/	/
HIP HOP Intermediate	/	/	/	/	/	/
HIP HOP Premier	YES	YES	YES	YES	/	/

3.3. ICU International Cheer Cup

The table below indicates which categories are eligible to qualify for the ICU International Cheer Cup. Unless stated otherwise, the teams placing 1st and 2nd in the eligible categories will receive qualification for the ICU International Cheer Cup. Qualification remains subject to all ICU eligibility rules and category availability for the corresponding season.

Specific Division/Age group	Master	Senior	Junior	Youth	Primary	Mini
Team Cheer Novice	/	/	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer Intermediate	/	/	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer Median	YES	/	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Median	/	/	/	YES	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Median	/	/	/	YES	/	/
Team Cheer Coed Advanced	/	/	YES	YES	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Advanced	/	/	YES	YES	/	/

Team Cheer Coed Elite	/	YES	YES	/	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Elite	/	YES	YES	/		
Team Cheer Coed Premier	/	YES	/	/	/	/
Team Cheer All Girl Premier	/	YES	/	/	/	/

Specific Division / Age group	Master	Senior	Junior	Youth	Primary	Mini
POM Novice	/	/	/	/	/	/
POM Intermediate	/	/	/	/	/	/
POM Premier	YES	YES	YES	YES	/	/
HIP HOP Novice	/	/	/	/	/	/
HIP HOP Intermediate	/	/	/	/	/	/
HIP HOP Premier	YES	YES	YES	YES	/	/

4. General safety rules Cheerleading

- All athletes must be supervised during all official functions by a qualified director/coach. Each coach must have a Trainer C certificate.
- Coaches must require proficiency before skill progression. Coaches must consider the athlete, group, and team skill levels with regard to proper performance level placement.
- All teams, gyms, coaches and directors must have an emergency response plan in the event of an injury.
- Athletes and coaches must not be under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, performance enhancing substances or over-the-counter medications that would hinder the ability to supervise or execute a routine safely, while participating in a practice or performance.
- Athletes must always practice and perform on an appropriate surface. Technical skills (stunts, pyramids, tosses or tumbling) may not be performed on concrete, asphalt, wet or uneven surfaces or, surfaces with obstructions.
- Soft-soled shoes must be worn while competing. No dance shoes/boots, and/or gymnastics slippers (or similar) allowed. Shoes must have a solid sole.
- Jewelry of any kind including but not limited to ear, nose, tongue, belly button and facial rings, clear plastic jewelry, bracelets, necklaces and pins on uniforms are not allowed. The jewelry needs to be removed from the body part, taping them is not allowed.” (Exception: medical ID tags/bracelets). *Clarification: Rhinestones are allowed when adhered to the uniform and not allowed if adhered to the skin.*
- Any height increasing apparatus used to propel an athlete is not allowed.
- Flags, banners, signs, pom poms, megaphones, and pieces of clothes are the only props allowed. *Exception: Adaptive Abilities & Special Abilities athlete mobility/support devices.*
- Props with poles or similar support apparatus may not be used in conjunction with any kind of stunt or tumbling.
Exception: Adaptive Abilities & Special Abilities athlete mobility/support devices.
Exception 2: As is common with Cheerleaders at sporting events; for divisions that allow the standing single back tuck flip skill, an athlete, already proficient in a standing single back tuck flip skill, may perform a standing single back tuck flip with poms only in the athlete's hands during the Cheer portion of the routine.
- All props must be safely discarded out of harm's way (e.g. throwing a hard sign across the mat from a stunt would be illegal). Any uniform piece purposefully removed from the body and used for visual effect will be considered a prop once it is removed from the body.
- Supports, braces and soft casts that are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design / production do not require additional padding. Supports, braces and soft casts that have been altered from the manufacturer's original design/production must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than ½ inch / 1.27 centimeters thick if the athlete is involved in stunts, pyramids, tumbling or tosses. An athlete wearing a hard cast (example: fiberglass or plaster) or a walking boot must not be involved in stunts, pyramids, tumbling or tosses. *Exception: Within the Adaptive Abilities Divisions and Special Abilities Divisions, a mobile assistance and support devices in use to assist the athlete are considered part of the athlete.*
- From a level grid standpoint, all skills allowed for a particular level encompass all skills allowed in the preceding level.
- Required spotters for all skills must be your own team's members and be trained in proper spotting technique.
- Drops including but not limited to knee, seat, thigh, front, back, and split drops from a jump, stunt, or inverted positions are not allowed unless the majority of the weight is first borne on the hands or feet, which Breaks the impact of the drop. Shushinovs are allowed.

Clarification: Drops that include any weight bearing contact with the hands and feet are not in clear violation of this rule.

- Athletes must have at least one foot, hand or body part (other than hair) on the performing surface when the routine begins. *Exception: Athletes may have their feet in the hands of base(s) if the base(s) hands are resting on the performing surface.*
- The competitors who begin a routine must remain the same throughout the course of a routine. A performer is not permitted to be “replaced” by another performer during a routine.
- An athlete must not have gum, candy, cough drops or other such edible or non---edible items, which may cause choking, in her/his mouth during practice and/or performance.
- Own additional spotters are allowed. Guidelines for Additional Spotters:
 - Should only be used during the stunt, pyramid, and/or basket toss sections. Additional spotters should stand at the back of the floor when not spotting those sections.
 - Should not touch, assist, or save skills being performed.
 - Additional spotters should only be used to prevent a fall to the competition floor.
 - Spotters are not allowed to count or coach while on the floor.
 - Should be dressed so that they are presentable, professional, and distinguishable from the performing athletes. The additional spotters should not wear clothing similar to the performing team’s uniform. Should not dress or act in a manner that distracts from the athletes and their performance.
 - Should be at least 18 years old, listed on the official event roster and familiar with spotting the skills of the performing team.
- For purposes of promotion of international sport and the global athletic image of the Sport of Cheer, athletes must compete in team attire that does not intentionally expose the midriff/mid-section of the athlete while the athlete is in a standing position.

5. General rules and specific routines guidelines

Performance Cheer

I. General rules

- A. All teams must be supervised during all official functions by a qualified director/advisor/coach.
- B. Coaches must require proficiency before skill progression. Coaches must consider the athlete, group, and team skill levels with regard to proper performance level placement.
- C. All directors, advisors and coaches should have an emergency response plan in the event of an injury.

II. Specific Routine Guidelines

A. Choreography and costuming

1. Suggestive, offensive, or vulgar choreography, costuming, makeup and/or music are inappropriate for family audiences and therefore lack audience appeal.
2. Routine choreography should be appropriate and entertaining for all audience members. Vulgar or suggestive material is defined as any movement or choreography implying something improper or indecent, appearing offensive or sexual in content, and/or relaying lewd or profane gestures or implications.
3. Teams may not compromise the integrity of the performance surface. (Examples: Residue from sprays, powders, oils, etc.)
4. Use of fire, noxious gases, live animals, and other potentially hazardous elements are strictly prohibited.
5. Inappropriate choreography, costuming and/or music may also affect the judges' overall impression and/or score of the routine.
6. All costuming, makeup and choreography should be age appropriate and acceptable for family audiences.
7. All costuming should be secure and offer full coverage of body parts appropriate for family viewing. Costume malfunctions resulting in team members being exposed may be grounds for disqualification.
8. Tights should be worn under briefs, hot pants or excessively short shorts.
9. Footwear is required. Partial sole shoes are acceptable. Performing barefoot, in socks and/or footed tights, high heels, roller skates, roller blades or any other footwear that is inappropriate for the sport is prohibited. If in doubt, please consult the ICU Rules Committee for approval.
10. Jewelry as a part of the costume is allowed.
11. All male performers' costumes must include a shirt that is fastened; however, it can be sleeveless.
12. No cheers or chants are allowed.

B. Props

1. A prop is defined as anything that is used in the routine choreography that is not/was not originally part of the costume.
 - a. Clarification 1: For Pom Categories, Poms are considered part of the uniform.
 - b. Clarification 2: For Adaptive Abilities, Special Olympics & Special Abilities Divisions, all mobility equipment, prosthesis, and braces are considered part of the athlete unless they are removed, in which case they are considered legal props, until replaced or returned to the athlete.
2. Handheld props and free "standing props" in all categories are not allowed. Use of parts of the uniform/ clothing (e.g., used for choreography purposes. Examples such as a

necklace, jacket, hat, etc.) are NOT allowed. In addition, pieces of clothing/costume may not be used to facilitate choreography/movement or to create visual pictures or shapes in staging. All clothing, and pieces of clothing must be worn at all times and may not be removed, used to facilitate choreography or discarded during the performance.

3. Within the Pom Category, it is compulsory to use poms throughout the entire routine. If there are male performers in this category, they are not required to use poms.
4. No large free “standing props” will be allowed in any category, such as chairs, stools, benches, boxes, stairs, steps, ladders, bars, sheets, etc. Any item that bears the weight of the participant is considered a “standing prop”.

C. Category Definitions

POM: Incorporates the use of proper Pom motion technique that is sharp, clean, and precise while allowing for the use of concepts from Jazz, Hip Hop and High Kick. An emphasis is placed on group execution including synchronization, uniformity and spacing. The choreography of a dynamic and effective routine focuses on musicality, staging of visual effects through fluid and creative transitions, levels, and groups, along with complexity of movement and skills. Poms are required to be used throughout the routine. The uniform/costuming should reflect the category style. See score sheet for more information.

HIP HOP: Incorporates authentic street style influenced movements with groove and style. An emphasis is placed on group execution including synchronization, uniformity and spacing. The choreography of a dynamic and effective routine utilizes musicality, staging, complexity of movement and athleticism. Distinctive clothing and accessories reflecting the Hip Hop Culture must be worn. See score sheet for more information.