

**Minutes of the 2023-24 IHSA Competitive Cheerleading
Advisory Committee Meeting
Wednesday, March 13, 2024**

The [IHSA Competitive Cheerleading Advisory Committee](#) meeting was conducted with the following voting members in attendance: [IHSA Division 1](#) Coach - Jordan Miller, Chicago (Marist) High School; [IHSA Division 2](#) Coach - Christina Schweinebraten Audra Christenson, Hoffman Estates (Conant) High School; [IHSA Division 3](#) Coach - Amy Cook, Bradley-Bourbonnais High School; [IHSA Division 4](#) Coach - Joey Stanforth, Taylor Ridge (Rockridge) High School; [IHSA Division 5](#) Athletic Director – Steve Evans, Normal (University) High School; [IHSA Division 6](#) Principal – John Neubaum, Knoxville High School; [IHSA Division 7](#) Coach – Linda Drust, Carterville High School, and IHSA Official Representative Angie Wilmington for Lance Emery who was unable to attend. Other liaisons in attendance included: John Powers, [CCOI](#); Cindy Rueter, [ICCA](#); and Tim Babin, [IHSCCO](#); Carrie Nichols (Illinois State Director - [Varsity Spirit](#)); and Jackie Litwiller, [IESA](#) Cheer Administrator. IHSA Assistant Executive Director, Susie Knoblauch, conducted the meeting.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendation: III G) Online List of Participants: Registration for the state series will be completed online using the IHSA Schools Center. Each school must complete the online list of participants by midnight on ~~Monday, January 8, 2024.~~ Friday, December 13th, 2025.

Rationale: By moving this deadline up by three weeks, the IHSA can better assess if there are any team withdrawals.

2. Recommendation: VIII B – Participants

5) All schools are permitted to have one (1) student manager.

Rationale: A student team manager may assist the team with props, equipment, set up, music, videography, etc... This position allows for a student to engage in the sport, even if they are not physically able to participate in the sport.

3. Recommendation: VIII. C. 2. Competition Area

a. The competitive cheering surface shall be a matted area of 54 feet wide x 42 feet deep (9 strips). The mats should cover the entire area, provide uniform thickness and be a flat, consistent surface with no cracks, obstructions, or untaped seams. The competition mats will run vertical to the panel officials at all competition sites. A white boundary line must run the entire perimeter of the competition mat.

b. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area. A participant can step on the white boundary line, ~~but if he/she steps completely over the white boundary line during competition it is considered out of bounds.~~ If an entire body part of an athlete is off the performing surface it is considered out of bounds.

Rationale: This language provides direction that all sectional sites and the state final site will have a white boundary line on the competition mats so participants can easily see if they are near the edge of the competition floor. The additional language clarifies that a penalty is only assessed if an entire body part touches off the performing surface.

4. Recommendation: VIII. Tournament Rules 3) Music a.

Music can be ~~on a CD or~~ in a digital format with a backup. Coaches are responsible for all necessary adapters.

Rationale: CDs are obsolete and not the industry standard for playing competition music.

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

Scoresheet, Rubric, Legality and Deductions

1. Recommendation: A full down or basket that lands prone is a missed skill.

Rationale: Currently this is called a performance-based [legality](#). The performance base legality is the same deduction as a [missed skill](#) and coaches will better understand the rationale by identifying this as a missed skill.

2. Recommendation: Add straight ride tosses to the rubric under pyramid/tosses in Level 1 of the [IHSA Scoring Rubric](#).

Current

Pyramids/Tosses in Level 1

- and/or 1 skill toss

Proposed

- and/or straight ride or 1-skill toss

Rationale: In other parts of our rubric, especially in stunts, easier skills that are part of progression are included in the rubric. A straight ride toss is the first skill to execute in a toss progression, and the current rubric is not rewarding that skill. This skill would be rewarded if the straight ride toss is all a team performs. Currently, the rubric requires teams to throw a 1-skill toss that may be performed poorly based on a team's skills instead of a nice straight ride toss. A 1-skill toss is higher on the level of toss progressions, and on the higher end of difficulty and rewarded appropriately, there should be the next level of the toss progressions.

3. Recommendation: Adjust [skill utilization](#) for Level 4 to be 3 rubric categories, Level 3 to be 2 rubric categories and Level 2 to be 1 rubric category.

Current

L4 - The team demonstrates more than the required skills defined in 2 skill-based categories

L3 - The team demonstrates more than the required skills defined in 1 skill-based category

L2 - The team only demonstrates skills that get them into a skill based rubric range

Proposed

L4 - The team demonstrates more than the required skills defined in 3 skill-based categories

- L3 - The team demonstrates more than the required skills defined in 2 skill-based categories
- L2 - The team demonstrates more than the required skills defined in 1 skill-based category
- L1 - The team only demonstrates skills that get them into a skill based rubric range

Rationale: Currently, Teams are consistently exceeding the 2-skill based category requirements with additional stunts, tosses (with a pyramid) and standing and running tumbling. This adjustment will allow for rewarding teams in skill utilization based on the make-up of their routine. This is more of the norm already but changing this allows more separation of scores in the rubric.

4. Recommendation: Jumps

JUMPS Additional jumps beyond ~~four~~ three will be rewarded in the Skill Utilization category.

LEVEL 4: 9-10

~~Four~~ Three advanced* jumps Including

- One full team synchronized advanced* combination jump
- ~~Three different advanced* jumps~~

*Advanced Jumps include: herkie, side hurdler, front hurdler, toe touch, pike, double nine, around the world

Rationale: This change in the number of required jumps shifts the focus on quality rather than quantity of jumps a team needs to execute.

Discussion Items

1. The committee heard updates from ICCA, IHSCCO, and CCOI.
2. The committee reviewed and discussed topics from the post-season coaches' meetings.
3. The committee reviewed the 2023-24 competitive cheer state series. Knoblauch acknowledged and thanked the sectional host sites. Any school interested in hosting an IHSA cheer sectional can contact Knoblauch at the IHSA and/or complete the Host Availability Survey/Facility survey via their school admin. in the IHSA Schools Center. Knoblauch shared that the IHSA would like to develop a five host calendar so selected schools can place the sectional hosting date on their school calendar.
4. The committee discussed sectional sites and assignments, withdrawals/drops, balance, travel, and splits for sites that run two of the same divisions.
5. The committee reviewed warm-up areas, warm-up schedule times, and procedural formats.
6. The committee discussed the need for consistency in sectional sites such as placements of DJ and coaches' area.
7. The committee supported the idea that the State Final Qualifying Coaches Meeting will be prerecorded so coaches can view at their convenience.
8. The committee discussed execution, degree of difficulty, skill utilization, synchronization, projection & showmanship, and routine composition.

9. The committee discussed the process for warnings vs. deductions being taken at competitions.
10. The committee supported the following Points of Emphasis (POE) for the 2024-25 season:
 - a) Competitor apparel and base garments interpretation
 - b) Athlete leaving the mat due to illness
11. The committee did not support a proposal that would have teams perform on Saturday at the State Final in reverse order from how they placed in Fridays prelims. Performance order will remain random.
12. The committee did not support the elimination of comparative scoring.
13. The committee discussed deductions pertaining to stunt/pyramid collapse but did not support a proposal to separate major/minor infractions.
14. The committee discussed video review. Coaches still support video review for 5 pt. deductions.
15. The committee reviewed a document by the IHSA that recorded the number of participants on the floor by each competing school at the state final and discussed a required minimum team numbers on the competition floor for participation in order to stop coaches from trying to get a competitive advantage by placing less student-athletes on the competition floor. The concern is how to address this without being punitive to programs that can honestly only field a certain number of participants.
16. The committee discussed the posting of rule interpretations in case situations so both officials and coaches can receive the same information.
17. The committee discussed officials' assignments, role, and scope.
18. The committee heard an update regarding the [IHSA Officials Conference](#) July 12 & 13, 2024.
19. The committee discussed IHSA Geographical Philosophy [Policy 18](#).
20. The committee discussed conference competitions
21. The committee discussed [IHSA By-law](#) 5.340 and the process for increasing the number of competitions
22. The committee discussed [IHSA By-law](#) 5.340 and realigning the beginning/ending dates of the competitive cheer season.
23. The committee reviewed [IHSA Policy](#) 39.
24. The committee reviewed sideline cheer rule issues.
25. The IHSA acknowledged and thanked the following outgoing committee members Coach Jordan Miller from Marist High School, and Coach Joey Stanforth from Rockridge High School for their service on the Competitive Cheer Advisory Committee and for their support of the IHSA.