

**Semi-Finals and Finals State Cheerleading Bulletin  
2018-2019**

**2018 Fall Cheerleading Time Line**

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| <b>August 8<sup>th</sup></b> : first practice date   | <b>November 3<sup>rd</sup></b> : State Semi-Final Double-header (Harford Community College) am 1A/2A; pm 3A/4A |
| <b>August 31<sup>st</sup></b> : first play date  |  |
| <b>October 30<sup>th</sup></b> : last invitational competitive date  | <b>November 10<sup>th</sup></b> : State Final tournament (Harford Community College)                           |
| <b>November 1<sup>st</sup></b> : Semi-Final entry deadline   |  |
| The last day of the competitive season is the State Final Cheerleading event.<br>The last day of the spirit season is the last MPSSAA event for your school. |  |

**2018-2019 Winter Cheerleading Time Line**

**\*\*Dates subject to change based on venue availability\*\***

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| <b>November 15<sup>th</sup></b> : first practice date   | <b>February 9<sup>th</sup></b> : State Semi-Final Double-header (Harford Community College) 10:00am 3A/4A; 4:00pm 1A/2A |
| <b>December 5<sup>th</sup></b> : first play date  |   |
| <b>February 4<sup>th</sup></b> : last competitive date  | <b>February 13<sup>th</sup></b> : State Final tournament (Harford Community College) 6:00pm                             |
| <b>February 7<sup>th</sup></b> : Semi-Final entry deadline  |   |
| The last day of the competitive season is March 1st.<br>The last day of the spirit season is the last MPSSAA event for your school. |   |

\* Rotation Schedule

- ~ State Semi-Finals will take place as a double-header with the following stipulations:
  - The 1A/2A will always host their State Semi-Final competition FIRST in the fall and SECOND in the winter.
  - The 3A/4A will host their State Semi-Final competition SECOND in the fall and FIRST in the winter.

This publication contains information pertaining to state tournament competition for the 2018-2019 season. It is divided into two sections. The first section contains general information. The second section contains particular rules for cheerleading.

**Section 1: General Information**

**I. State Tournament Policies**

- a. The Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading committee, representing the counties that recognize cheerleading as a sport, shall administer and supervise the tournament at the region and state level.
- b. All participating schools shall abide by the rules established by the Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading Committee.
- c. Although certain aspects of the tournament may vary from year to year, the tournament committee shall observe the following basic policies:
  - i. A tournament may not interfere with local school policy.

- ii. A school or school system has the privilege and right to decide whether or not it will participate in a tournament prior to the start of the tournament which is the County Competition.
- iii. A school shall compete in its classification when a tournament is so structured.
- iv. Certified and approved official's organizations shall be assigned competitions in a fair, equitable, and nondiscriminatory manner.
- v. All awards and recognition shall conform to MPSSAA Bylaw .08.
- vi. The tournament committee shall make every effort to establish competition sites that minimize extensive travel for participating teams.
- vii. All policy and procedure changes for a state tournament shall be subject to the approval the Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading committee serving in an advisory capacity. The State Cheerleading Director may make emergency decisions on tournament policies and procedures.
- viii. When a student athlete is found ineligible during the progress of a tournament, the competition shall be forfeited, and the team with the next highest score shall take its place.
- ix. All-star teams of best individual athlete awards **may not** be selected from an approved tournament.
- x. Sports at the state tournament level shall be governed by approved competition rules.
- xi. If a team or any student participating in state tournament play leaves the performance floor or venue before the completion of a contest, or is guilty of misconduct detrimental to the tournament (such as but not limited to a team qualifying for the Semi-Finals and/or State Finals and then not attending), then the team, coach, and the student athlete(s) may be suspended from further participation in the current tournament and from the same tournament in the succeeding year, upon the determination of the tournament committee and the director.
- xii. The rules of the association do not provide authority to order competitions replayed or open to video review. Protests arising from decisions and interpretations by officials during competition will not be considered. Their decisions and interpretations are final.
- xiii. Member schools proven to have violated MPSSAA by-laws will be excluded from participating in post-season MPSSCC championship competitions (i.e. State Semi-Finals and State Finals)
  - 1. The local County Supervisor will determine if an act is in violation of the MPSSAA by-laws. The team/act will then be referred to the Appeals Committee, which will review the infraction and make a decision about eligibility.
  - 2. A member school, student, or coach may appeal the imposed penalty within 30 days and request a hearing before the Appeals Committee of MPSSCC.
  - 3. The Appeals Committee of MPSSCC serves in a quasi-judicial capacity.

4. The membership of the MPSSCC Appeals Committee shall include one representative from each county or LEA, which participates in the MPSSCC tournament series. Five members will constitute a quorum.
5. The MPSSCC Chairperson shall notify the Appeals Committee of the hearing and establish a date, time and hearing site. The appealing school, student, or coach, or all of the above, shall be notified of the date, site and time of the hearing.
6. The MPSSCC Chairperson shall present the case to the Appeals Committee on the behalf of the MPSSCC.
7. The principal of the involved school, the student, or coach, or all of the above shall present grounds for appeal. If appropriate, the local school system's supervisor of interscholastic athletics involved in the appeal may present the case.
8. The MPSSCC Appeals Committee shall convene in closed session and vote to deny or uphold the appeal or modify the penalty. A majority vote is required to deny or uphold an appeal or modify the penalty.
9. The MPSSCC Appeals Committee shall report its findings to the concerned parties.
10. The decision of the MPSSCC Appeals Committee is final.
11. A member of the MPSSCC Appeals Committee may not hear an appeal if that member has offered advice, made a recommendation, rendered a decision, or in any other way participated in the case being appealed.

## **II. Responsibilities of Schools Participating in a Tournament**

- a. Postponed competitions shall be rescheduled on the next available (nonscheduled) playing date. A school may not request a postponement of any tournament competition because of illness, injury, or unavailability of some of its student athletes.
- b. All schools entering a tournament must agree to arrangements made by its tournament committee. This includes the time and place of each competition and the selection of officials. All competitions will be held under the rules of the Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading committee. In cases not covered by written regulations, the tournament committee in charge is empowered to make decisions.
- c. Competitions will be held on a basis of shared responsibilities. Personnel from the visiting schools must accept their joint responsibilities with the persons in charge for the supervision and maintenance of good behavior on the part of the students, spectators, and participants. Good sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, and the protection of property are of primary importance before, during, and following each competition. It is recommended that faculty representatives of the competing teams anticipate and study problems that could arise from such contests and plan cooperatively to deal with these problems.

- d. Schools hosting tournament competitions are responsible to provide a qualified site manager other than the participating coach.
- e. The possession or use of any alcoholic beverage or nonalcoholic substitute (i.e. nonalcoholic champagne) is considered to be misconduct detrimental to a tournament. An individual or team using such products in any form of consumption or celebration will be subject to disciplinary action.
- f. Coaches are responsible for providing their own medical kits including pre-wrap and tape for all their athletes.

### **III. Point of Emphasis/Social Media**

- a. The Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading committee would like to make a point of emphasis for coaches. Coaches are reminded that they set the tone for their team and are the foremost influential figures representing their school. Coaching attire and actions should reflect a professional approach that signifies a respect for the game, respect for the school, and respect for themselves.
- b. Social Media (such as Twitter, Snapchat, Vine, Facebook, Instagram, etc) should be used to promote teams and uplift athletes, not as a bullying platform. Coaches should stress to their athletes that bullying or unsportsmanlike conduct displayed over social media will not be tolerated. At this time, infractions will be investigated and dealt with at the county/school level. Coaches are encouraged to read the NFHS Code of Ethics in the NFHS Spirit Handbook.

### **IV. Scheduling conflicts**

Following are some guidelines to be used when scheduling conflicts arise:

- a. Multi-team events will be contested as scheduled.
- b. Only conflicts with school sponsored activities will be considered for modification to the schedule. Dinner reservations, hair appointments, limo pickups, photo sessions, after-prom fatigue, etc., are optional activities and are not considered official school activities.

### **V. MPSSAA Passes**

- a. MPSSAA passes will be accepted for admittance.
  - i. Passes must be signed and from the current academic year.
  - ii. Each pass should have the bearer's name printed on the pass prior to distribution.
  - iii. A valid driver's license is required to be displayed with each pass.
- b. Passes will be accepted for the bearer only. All other individuals age seven or older will be charged admission.

### **VI. Medical Personnel**

The Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading committee has budgeted for qualified medical personnel to be employed at each region and state competition. Host schools should employ those medical personnel from local sources, and they will be paid at the local rate.

## VII. Security

The qualified host site manager will employ adequate police protection to supervise parking lots and assist with crowd control.

### Section 2: Cheerleading Information

#### I. General Information

- a. Plans for the competition were formulated and approved by the Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading Committee, in accordance with the MPSSAA regulations.
- b. Schools choosing to enter competitions sponsored by MPSSCC have the responsibility for reading and adhering to the rules and regulations stated in Section 1 of this publication as well as those appearing within this cheerleading bulletin.
- c. Eligibility rules for all participants are defined in MPSSAA Bylaw .02, found in the current MPSSAA Handbook.
- d. General regulations for all state tournaments are contained in MPSSAA Bylaw .07, found in both the current handbook and in Section 1 of this publication.
- e. Playing rules for regular season, state semi-finals, and state finals tournament:
  - i. National Federation rules will be used.
  - ii. Fall Season Competitions: The number of competitive events permitted outside of county, state semi-finals, and state finals competitions are four educationally sponsored events per season. Up to four invitational competitions, one county, one state semi-finals, and one state finals competition is equal to up to seven total competitions per season. All competitions must be sponsored by a non-profit educational organization and must be sanctioned by the Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading committee. Teams may participate in invitationals until the start of the Semi-Finals Competitions (i.e. even after their County Championship event).
  - iii. Winter Season Competitions: The number of competitive events permitted outside of county, state semi-finals, and state finals competitions are four events per season. Up to four invitational competitions, one county, one state semi-finals, and one state finals competition is equal to up to seven total competitions per season. Invitationals may be non-sanctioned as long as the team has permission from their County to attend. Teams may participate in invitationals until March 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - iv. An invitational competition may NOT conflict with participation in a county championship.
  - v. The top ½ scoring teams from the 1A/2A East State Semi-Finals Competition and the top ½ scoring teams from the 1A/2A West State Semi-Finals Competition will advance to the 1A/2A State Finals Competition. The top ½ scoring teams from the 3A/4A East State Semi-Finals and the top ½ scoring teams from the 3A/4A West State Semi-Finals Competition will advance to the 3A/4A State Finals Competition.

- vi. If a qualifying team does not attend the Semi-Final or State Final competition, the next highest scoring team will be given the opportunity to advance.
  - vii. MPSSAA guidelines state that competitions shall not determine a national championship; shall not be preliminary to a college or professional game; shall be sponsored by an educational institution/non-profit company; all travel shall comply with MPSSAA Bylaw .09H4; all awards shall comply with MPSSAA Bylaw .08 (Awards and Recognition).
  - viii. There can be no paid consultants for choreography.
- f. Competition Rules and Regulations (not following these rules could result in an unsportsmanlike conduct deduction on the competition scoresheet).
- i. Athletes must stay in full uniform (shoes, shell zippered, skirt or full team identical warm-ups) at all times. This includes during warm-ups, the competition, and awards ceremonies.
  - ii. All electronic devices must be put away from start time of the competition until the conclusion of the awards ceremony.
  - iii. All athletes must stay with their team from the start of the competition until the conclusion of the awards ceremony. Visiting friends, parents, etc is not permitted. The team is encouraged to bring easy clean-up snacks and water with them.
  - iv. All teams are expected to adhere to the warm-up time schedule. If you are late to your warm-up time, more time will not be added. The coach is expected to know when his/her team is to be at warm-ups. All teams will be given the same amount of time for warm-up. All teams MUST leave the mat within 30 seconds once time has expired.
  - v. Performance of the routine or any part of the routine or routine warm-up is only permitted in designated areas at designated times. You may, however, stretch at any time.
  - vi. All teams should be in their designated areas no later than 10 minutes before the competition starts.
  - vii. Movement during the routines is strictly prohibited.
  - viii. Sportsmanship is expected at all times. Any team exhibiting poor sportsmanship at any time during the competition could have their final score adjusted to reflect the deduction.
  - ix. All teams are expected to leave their area clean and debris free. Please be respectful of the hosting facility.
  - x. Coaches are expected to adhere to the NFHS Coaches Code of Ethics located in the NFHS Spirit Rulebook. Coaches, good sportsmanship starts with you!

## II. State Semi-Final and State Final Tournaments

### a. Tournament Organization

- i. The state play-off tournaments will be divided regionally between East and West as follows:

- 1. West – Carroll, Charles, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, Washington

**2. East – Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Cecil, Harford, Queen Anne’s**

- ii.** Each region will also be separated by classification as follows: 1A/2A and 3A/4A. This will result in 4 regional divisions: 1A/2A West, 1A/2A East, 3A/4A West, 3A/4A East.
- iii.** A State Semi-Final Champion will be awarded in each of the four aforementioned divisions. A State Champion will be awarded for 1A/2A and 3A/4A classification.
- iv.** All County Championship teams will automatically advance to their respective State Semi-Final tournament. If you are the only competing team in your county, you must have a qualifying score to advance. If County Champions fall outside of the top ½ of qualifying teams, they will not take a spot from those in the top ½, but will be allowed to advance.
- v.** All MPSSCC participating counties will submit their county competition score breakdowns to the 1A/2A Director, 3A/4A Director, and State Director no more than 24 hours after their county competition has been decided.
- vi.** The top ½ (highest scoring) of each of the four aforementioned divisions advance to the State Semi-Finals in their respective divisions. This will result in 4 separate Semi-Finals competitions: 1A/2A West, 1A/2A East, 3A/4A West, and 3A/4A East
  - 1.** Advancing numbers are based on the number of teams providing a score from their County Championships. For example, if there are 30 total schools in the 1A/2A West division, but only 24 schools field a team at their County Championships, then only 12 teams advance to the Semi-Finals Competition.
  - 2.** If there is an odd number of teams competing, the advancing number will be rounded up to the next whole number. For example, if there are 19 teams competing, 10 will advance to the next round.
  - 3.** If a qualifying team does not attend the Semi-Final or State Final competition, the next highest scoring team will be given the opportunity to advance.
- vii.** The top ½ (highest scoring) teams from each of the 1A/2A State Semi-Finals Competitions and the top ½ (highest scoring) teams from each of the 3A/4A State Semi-Finals Competition will advance to their respective classifications’ State Finals Competition.
  - 1.** If a qualifying team does not attend the Semi-Final or State Final competition, the next highest scoring team will be given the opportunity to advance.
- viii.** The State Finals Competition will be treated as a one-day event. The Semi-Finals scores will only be used to determine seeding for the State Finals Competition (see II.m.ii below).

- b. The rules interpreter is responsible for the assignment of officials. The State Cheerleading Director and/or 1A/2A and 3A/4A Directors is/are responsible for the notification of schools as to the tournament bracket, date, and start times.
- c. The competition must be held on regulation mats. They are to be 42' X 42' and must be set up according to the guidelines set forth by the committee.
- d. There should be a clearly defined spectator area. Spectators may not stand in or around the judging area.
- e. Provisions should be made for adequate supervision and crowd control.
- f. A judge's table and chairs should be provided and must be secure from fans, spectators, cheerleaders, and coaches.
- g. The MPSSCC will provide a professional sound system/announcer for State Semi-Finals and State Finals events.
- h. In case of inclement weather, teams shall be prepared to participate on the next available date.
- i. The Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading Committee will pay officials and required workers from the gate receipts at State Semi-Finals and State Finals Competitions.
- j. State Committee Members are required to work the Semi-Finals and Finals events unless they are a current contracted coach whose team is participating in the tournament. If the committee member cannot attend or is coaching, they will provide a worker in their place.
  - i. These workers will be paid \$75 for each competition they work.
- k. Proceeds from the gate at State Semi-Finals and State Finals Competitions shall stay with the Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading committee.
- l. A fundraising group will be procured to help set-up and break down mats before and after the tournament competitions. They will be paid a \$500 stipend for the season (\$250 for Semi-Finals; \$250 for Finals).
- m. Tournament apparel will be on sale and provided by the committee at both State Semi-Finals and State Finals events. Proceeds from apparel sales shall stay with the Maryland Public Schools State Cheerleading Committee.
- n. Order of performance will be assigned ahead of time via a random number generator by the 1A/2A and 3A/4A Directors.
  - i. Teams' county competition scores will determine teams' seed for the random generator.
  - ii. Teams with the top ½ of scores will be randomly chosen to participate in the final ½ of the tournament; teams with the bottom ½ of scores will be randomly chosen to participate in the first ½ of the tournament.
  - iii. All tournament scores will be sorted to determine the final tournament standings.
  - iv. For example: If there are 10 advancing teams in the 1A/2A West Region. Those teams' county scores will be sorted/seeded by the 1A/2A Director in descending order. The lowest scoring 5 teams will be randomly selected to compete in the 1-5 spots in the 1A/2A West State Semi-Finals competition. The top 5 teams will be



randomly selected to compete in the 6-10 spots in the 1A/2A State West Semi-Finals competition.

- v. The same sorting technique will be applied to the State Finals Tournament.
- o.** The host school will have a designated warm up area separate from the competition area.
  - i.** Individual athletes will be given a 30-45 minute open tumbling warm-up on the main floor before the competition begins. Individuals can warm-up standing and running tumbling at this time until the floor closes.
  - ii.** Teams will then be given a 6 minute warm-up on a full floor before they compete. MPSSCC will provide a boom box and a timer.
- p.** The number of cheerleaders permitted to participate in State Semi-Final and State Final competitions is up to twenty-five (25).
- q.** A total of thirty (30) members of the official cheer party (in uniform and listed on the registration form) will be admitted free. Only contracted cheerleading coaches on a list sent by the County Athletic Supervisor will be allowed to enter with the team. Coaches should keep their teams together and make spectators aware of the awards ceremony, which will follow the competition. Spectators, including coaches' children, non-working committee members, and JV teams, should remain off of the performance surface at the conclusion of the ceremony.
- r.** Admission to tournaments
  - i.** Individuals seven years of age and older will be charged an admission of \$8.00 for the State Semi-Final tournament.
  - ii.** Individuals seven years of age and older will be charged an admission of \$10.00 for the State Final tournament.
- s.** Awards
  - i.** The State Semi-Finals champions in each division will receive a team plaque and 25 individual awards. There will be four (4) State Semi-Finals Champions awarded: 1A/2A East, 1A/2A West, 3A/4A East, 3A/4A West.
  - ii.** The State Finals Champion, 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place teams in each classification will each receive a team trophy and 25 individual awards. There will be two (2) State Champions awarded: 1A/2A and 3A/4A.
- t.** Officials
  - i.** Maryland Judges Association certified officials will be assigned for each competition. One head judge, three category judges, and two safety judges will be used for all tournament competitions.
  - ii.** The judge's assigner will be paid a \$500 stipend per season.
  - iii.** All judges listed above will be paid as follows

| Number of Teams  | Payment                                  |
|--|--|
| 0-9  | \$80                                     |
| 10-16  | \$100                                    |
| 17-22  | \$120                                    |
| 23+  | Double panel required - \$100 each judge |
| Pay per division if you are clearing the gym (each division treated like a |  |

new competition)

MPSSCC sponsored events (Semis/States/Showcase) - \$200

- iv.** Reviewing videos by judges is NOT an option and may NOT be used to determine scoring. All judges' scores are final.
- u.** Method of Tie Breaking for Title – use these methods for 1<sup>st</sup> place only. If there is a tie for 2<sup>nd</sup>, the next place awarded will be 4<sup>th</sup>; if there is a tie for 3<sup>rd</sup> the next place awarded will be 5<sup>th</sup>. If there is a tie for the last advancing place, both teams will advance. For example, if there are 20 teams advancing from 1A/2A classification and there is a tie for 20<sup>th</sup>, both teams will advance making the total number of teams 21.
  - i.** Add all of the deductions, team with the fewest total deductions earning the higher place.
  - ii.** Add all of the degree of difficulty points. Higher points win.
  - iii.** Send the decision back to the judges.
  - iv.** Coin toss.
- v.** Stopping the Routine
  - i.** If an injury is suspected, the safety judge, head judge, or competition director can stop the routine.
  - ii.** If the routine is stopped for any other reason, a deduction may be given.
  - iii.** If there are music issues, the team should continue with counts.
    - 1.** After the routine, if it is deemed to be an issue on the coach's end, the scores will stand and the routine will not be redone for a score.
    - 2.** After the routine, if it is deemed to be a technical issue, the competition director will discuss with the head judges whether the lack of music affected their scores. If the team can re-perform, the deductions will stick before the music issue, and the team could accrue deductions after during their re-performance.
  - iv.** If the routine needs to be stopped, and the team is allowed to re-perform, the team must perform the entire routine full-out – no marking of routine elements – from the very beginning, but it will only be judged from the moment it was stopped.