



## MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS CHEERLEADING COMMITTEE 5/2018 DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY RUBRIC CLARIFICATIONS



- I. Overall Notes/Reminders
  - a. Always follow NFHS rules when interpreting the rubrics.
  - b. This document only reflects degree of difficulty scores in these categories NOT technique/execution scores.
  - c. Read the top notes section on each rubric as well as the “Ways to Increase Score within Range” notes at the bottom.
  - d. Remember, judges can only award credit for what they can see, and they see it in an instant. Consider this when you are thinking about formations and timing (especially in baskets and tumbling). So, flaunt it if you’ve got it!
  
- II. Baskets
  - a. The ranges start at 5.0, which will be the lowest score given in this category for degree of difficulty. UNLESS there are NO tosses completed during the routine, in which case a 0 (zero) will be awarded.
  - b. Straight ride tosses will be awarded in the 5.0-6.0 range regardless of how many groups perform them.
  - c. An “arch” and any variation in arm movements are NOT considered skills.
  - d. A ball-out is not a 2-skill toss. Once an athlete is in a ball, they must come out of it to land safely in a cradle.
  - e. For the full twist requirement, the twist does not have to be completed in one rotation.
    - i. For example, if the required number of groups perform a ½ twist, X-out, ½ twist, this would score in the 8-9 range as one-trick and one full twist.
  
- III. Jumps
  - a. This rubric is NOT based on ranges, so skills will be awarded a flat score, therefore, there is no way to increase scores beyond what is listed.
  - b. The judges and rubric committee assume that a vast majority of teams will receive a 10.0 in degree of difficulty.
  - c. The lowest score awarded will be a 2.5 for degree of difficulty. Unless there are NO jumps completed during the routine, in which case a 0 (zero) will be awarded.
  - d. VARIETY = at least 2 different jumps throughout the sequence
    - i. For example, 100% of a team performs a pike, double toe – re-approach pike = 10.0
    - ii. For example, 100% of a team performs a right side-hurdler, a toe touch, a left side-hurdler, and another toe touch all using a whip approach = 10.0
    - iii. For example, 75% of a team performs a triple toe – re-approach pike=10.0
  - e. To be awarded a 10.0 - the 4<sup>th</sup> jump does not have to be connected to the previous three and could even come at a different time in the routine. OR it could be consecutive jumps, which still needs to meet the requirement of VARIETY (see above).
  - f. Any jumps connected to tumbling will be awarded in the jump category and will also be given consideration in the tumbling category as well.
    - i. For example, 75% of a team performs a triple toe – ¼ turn approach pike back handsprings.



- ii. This would be awarded a 10.0 for jump difficulty and MAY also increase the score within the appropriate tumbling range.

#### IV. Tumbling

- a. Please remember – perfection before progression and safety first.
  - i. The judges want to remind coaches that good technique can make more of an impact than higher level skills.
  - ii. Even a team forward roll could potentially earn a 10.0 in execution if performed perfectly.
  - iii. Falls and bobbles are still deducted on the Safety/Deductions Sheet
- b. Any jumps connected to tumbling will be awarded in the jump category and also given consideration in the tumbling category as well.
  - i. For example, 75% of a team performs a triple toe – ¼ turn approach pike back handsprings.
  - ii. This would be awarded a 10.0 for jump difficulty and MAY also increase the score within the appropriate tumbling range.
- c. Due to lack of video replay, position and proximity of the judges to the performance floor, and choreography choices by coaches, the committee has created a tumbling rubric that requires a compulsory, synchronized tumbling pass to meet the rubric ranges.
- d. This pass must be synchronized from the beginning of the sequence (whether one skill or multiple skills) AND cannot involve any athlete who is not performing that pass.
  - i. If 75% of the team is performing back handsprings, the other 25% cannot be involved in any other choreography, skill, or movement during this time.
  - ii. SO – no fakers, no back walkovers, no jumping, no tosses.
- e. EXAMPLES that would **get into** the 9-10 range. 75%+ of athletes perform:
  - i. single standing back tucks
  - ii. Standing back handspring back tucks
  - iii. Running round-off back handspring back tucks
  - iv. Standing or running back tucks performed in a ripple where it is CLEAR that individual team members are performing the skills.
- f. EXAMPLES that would **NOT get into** the 9-10 range.
  - i. 50% of athletes perform back backsprings and then 25% more join in so 75% perform back tucks. This is NOT synchronized from the initiation of the pass.
  - ii. 50% perform standing back tucks, then the other 50% perform running ro back tucks. Again, these are 2 separate passes that are NOT synchronized from the initiation of the pass.
- g. Even if athletes can perform the harder skill, the committee/judges need to see the synchronized pass to place your team in the correct range.
  - i. For example: On a team of 20, if 5 athletes can do back tucks and 10 athletes can do back handsprings, then the 15 athletes who have tumbling skills need to perform the back handsprings in synch. Later, the 5 athletes with advanced tumbling can perform them to increase your score within the 8-9 range.
- h. The committee hopes that this change will make it clear how many athletes are performing the skill and will be able to place teams into the correct ranges.



The required pass can be met through EITHER standing OR running, but must include the specific skill(s) listed.

- i. BACK handsprings, BACK tucks, or cartwheels/round-offs
- j. Any additional tumbling will increase your score within range. As well as adding in combination synchronized passes.
  - i. For example: back walkover back handsprings are harder than just back handsprings so that skill will help drive the range.
- k. The lowest score given for tumbling will be a 4.0 unless no tumbling is performed by any athlete in which case a zero (0) will be awarded.

## V. Stunts

- a. All bullets in any given range must be met to get into that range.
  - i. For example, in the 9-10 range, a switch-up to extended single-leg cannot count for BOTH the specialty mount requirement and the release to extended position requirement.
- b. If only the skills listed are performed, remember, this gets you INTO the range.
- c. The advanced body positions do not have to be consecutive.
  - i. For example, a team could perform a scale, arabesque, then reload and hit a heel stretch. This would hit the requirement for 3 advanced body positions in the same sequence.
- d. Specialty mounts and dismounts do not necessarily have to be at the very beginning or very end of a sequence, but they must be attached to the same stunt sequence.
- e. Specialty mounts and dismounts do not have to land at or come from the extended position. This will allow for more creativity in choreography. However, the committee would like to note that this may be looked at during future rubric revisions.
- f. The release to extended position can start at any level and end on either two or one leg(s) (while following NFHS rules. PLEASE note the difference between a vertical release and a switch-up).
- g. Please remember – perfection before progression and safety first.
  - i. The judges want to remind coaches that good technique can make more of an impact than higher level skills.
  - ii. Even a team set of extended libs could potentially earn a 10.0 in execution if performed perfectly.
  - iii. Falls and bobbles are still deducted on the Safety/Deductions Sheet

## VI. Pyramids

- a. The required number of participants has been adjusted to number of groups instead of number of individuals which aligns with the other building skills rubrics. Please note the change and choreograph accordingly.
- b. Remember that there are other options for inverted releases other than a braced flip. See NFHS inversions and release rules for ideas/options.
- c. Each point in the rubric must be met in order to get into the range.
  - i. For example, in the 9-10 range, one braced flip cannot meet the requirements for the inverted release and a release move.
  - ii. However, if a team performs a front braced flip and then a back braced flip, the first could count as the inverted release and the second could be counted as the second release move because they travel in different directions.
- d. A picture/structure must be completed before the transitions will begin to be counted.



- i. Anything performed before the first picture/structure will be counted as a specialty mount.
  - ii. Stunts connected to squishes/load-in positions will not count as a picture.
  - iii. The first picture/structure does not have to be an extended single-leg structure.
- e. All transitions must be completed BEFORE the final structure.
- i. Any skills performed AFTER the final structure will be considered a specialty dismount.
  - ii. Stunts connected to a squishes/load-in positions will not count as a structure/picture.
- f. A switch-up (or similar skill) will be considered a release move as long as it is connected to a bracer at the time of the release making it a pyramid transition and not just a specialty mount for a singular group.
- g. Extended single leg structures are not limited to paper dolls, but anytime the flyer of an extended single leg stunt is connected to another flyer at any NFHS allowed level.
- i. For example – 75% of the team is involved in a pyramid that completes extended single leg paper dolls, transitions to hit two outside preps connected to an extended single leg liberty, the extended liberty then transitions to hit an arabesque where the prep level flyer is holding the ankle. This would meet the structure requirement for the 9-10 range because there are 3 different extended single leg structures.
- h. Variety of formations OR flyers (see ii. below) for the 9-10 range: Formations indicates how your pyramid is constructed, not level changes/transitions/etc. Therefore, the rubric requires that the pyramid not stay in a straight line the entire time (on a team of 20 – 5 groups in a row with no movement).
- i. Examples (not inclusive) of formations – straight line parallel to judges, straight line perpendicular to judges, two separate pyramids going at the same time, wolf wall type formations, ¼ turns of groups in front or in back of another group, a star/box formation... the possibilities are as endless as your imagination.
  - ii. You could also meet this requirement by using a variety of “main flyers”. Instead of the same one or two groups performing all the transitions or more advanced body positions, consider if others flyers have the skills to be involved in this way.
  - iii. For example: Flyer A hits an outside prep and connects to Flyer B who is in an extended single leg in the middle and also connected to Flyer C who is in an outside prep on her other side. The pyramid transitions so Flyer B is now in a prep in the middle and Flyers A and B hit outside extended arabesques. Perhaps there is a Flyer D waiting in the back and Flyer B (in the middle) dismounts so Flyer D can mount and complete a legal braced flip in the center. This would meet the requirements for the Variety of Flyers.

#### Resources:

- [www.cheerrules.org](http://www.cheerrules.org) – Cheer Rules – NFHS Spirit rules with video examples
- [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org) – NFHS official website
- [www.marylandcheercoaches.org](http://www.marylandcheercoaches.org) – MPSSCC official website
- [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxo1P8MLndAgaIUNjRBxfM\\_vkqR9FpvMp](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxo1P8MLndAgaIUNjRBxfM_vkqR9FpvMp) – MPSSCC Training/Explanation videos with video examples