



MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS CHEERLEADING COMMITTEE RUBRIC/SCORING CLARIFICATIONS and EXAMPLES



- I. General 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. Tosses
 - 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 required number of groups has changed to the expected number of groups. The committee has eliminated the “majority of expected number” option. Groups are still based on traditional groups of 5 (back spot, two bases, top person, front spot).
 - c. Any additional tosses may be considered as part of the overall impression score and will be taken into consideration for the toss technique/execution score.
 - d. An “arch” and any variation in arm movements are NOT considered skills.
 - e. 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.
 - f. 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 4th 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.
 - iii. Teams that do not follow this requirement will be awarded the .5 of the range below.
 1. For example: a team of 20 performs running round-off back tucks in a square formation for their synch pass. The back group of 5 performs round-off back handsprings NOT tucks. Although the team could potentially be in the 9-10 range, they will be awarded an 8.5 since the requirements of the rubric (“cannot involve any other choreography”) were not met.
- 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 handsprings 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. Only this ONE pass needs to be synchronized and the same. Any additional passes can be choreographed however the coach sees fit.
 - i. 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.
 - j. 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
 - k. Tumbling may be performed in a ripple, but it must be ABSOLUTELY obvious that individual athletes are performing the skills. And each athlete must still perform the same skill from beginning to end of pass regardless of which ripple they are in.
 - i. For example: on a team of 20. Athletes set up across the back of the mat in rows of 5. The first 5 tumble to the front while performing a round-off back handspring, back tuck. They take a knee and the next 5 tumble to the front while performing round-off back handspring back tucks. They take a knee and then the next 5 tumble to the front while performing round-off back handspring back tucks, etc...
 - l. 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.
 - m. 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

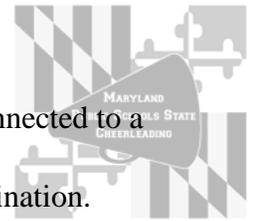
- a. The top range was adjusted to 8.5-10 to give judges more room to separate teams accordingly. All other ranges are still a 1 point spread, but were adjusted to accommodate opening the top range.
- b. The required number of groups has changed to the expected number of groups. The committee has eliminated the “majority of expected number” option. Groups are still based on traditional groups of 5 (back spot, two bases, top person, front spot).
- c. All bullets in any given range must be met to get into that range.
 - i. For example, in the 8.5-10 range, a switch-up to extended single-leg cannot count for BOTH the specialty mount requirement and the release to extended position requirement.
- d. If only the skills listed are performed, remember, this gets you INTO the range.
- e. 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.
- f. The required specialty mounts/dismounts/transitions must be attached to the same stunt sequence. These could be included in any combination.



- i. For example when the rubric requires 3 specialty mounts/dismounts/transitions any of the following would count: 1 mount, 1 transitions, 1 dismount; OR 2 mounts, 1 dismounts; OR 3 transitions; etc
- g. Specialty mounts/dismounts/transitions do not have to land at or come from the extended position. This will allow for more creativity in choreography.
 - i. Specialty mounts must actually mount to a stunt or use the momentum from the mount to go to a stunt – not a load-in, normal tap-up, or squish position.
 - ii. **EXAMPLES OF SPECIALTY MOUNTS:**
 1. Switch-ups, twist-ups, or inversion directly to a stunt
 2. A handstand on the ground that is assisted to a squish and IMMEDIATELY (in the same bounce) is taken to an extension.
 3. To get into the elite level categories, we are looking for the momentum of the specialty skill to carry you directly into the mount to a STUNT.
 - iii. **EXAMPLES that are NOT SPECIALTY MOUNTS:**
 1. A handstand on the ground that is assisted to a squish and then bases bounce twice before completing the extension.
 2. A back handspring to a cradle position, pop out to the ground, normal tap up to lib
 3. A walk-in approach to a lib load but flyer taps more than once before going up
- h. The vertical release to extended position requirement in 8.5-10 range **MUST START AT PREP LEVEL OR ABOVE** (per NFHS rules) and end on either two or one leg(s).
 - i. **EXCEPTION** for 2021 Season – a switch-up **WILL** count as the vertical release requirement. This exception is only for the 2021-2022 season as we transition back to competition after COVID. Technically, a switch-up is **NOT** a vertical release per the definition.
 - ii. As stated above, any one skill can only count as **ONE** bullet point. So, performing a switch-up can count as only **ONE** of the required mount/transition/dismounts required.
- i. 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 top range was adjusted to 8.5-10 to give judges more room to separate teams accordingly. All other ranges are still a 1 point spread, but were adjusted to accommodate opening the top range.
- b. 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.
- c. Remember that there are other options for inverted releases other than a braced flip. See NFHS inversions and release rules for ideas/options.
- d. Only one stunt group needs to perform the required skills to be counted as long as the # of groups connected is reached.
- e. Stunts connected to squishes/load-in positions will not count as a structure.



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.

- g. The required specialty mounts/dismounts/transitions can be included in any combination.
 - i. For example when the rubric requires 4 specialty mounts/dismounts/transitions any of the following would count: 1 mount, 2 transitions, 1 dismount; OR 2 mounts, 2 dismounts; OR 4 transitions; etc
- h. 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 8.5-10 range because there are 3 different extended single leg structures.
 - ii. For the 8.5-10 range, at least three extended single leg structures/pictures must be DIFFERENT. This means that if we were to draw a picture of your pyramid, the look of the connections is different.
 - 1. A prep connected to a lib connected to a prep – the middle group performs a tick-tock and is now holding a lib with the other foot – this is still the same overall picture (prep – lib – prep) and will NOT be counted as a different structure.
 - 2. A prep connected to a lib connected to a prep – the middle group transitions and switches with one of the outside groups. The new middle group performs a lib – this is still the same overall picture (prep – lib – prep) regardless of the fact that it is a different flyer performing the lib and will NOT be counted as a different structure.
 - 3. A prep connected to a lib connected to a prep – the middle group then hitches to the right. This IS a different picture (prep – hitch – prep).

VII. Subjective Categories

- a. All subjective, non-rubric categories, including technique and execution scores, will be assessed on a 5-10 scale. Therefore, the lowest score given for these categories will be a 5.
- b. Cheer, Dance, and Overall Impression scores include both difficulty and execution.
 - i. These are 10 point categories and should be treated as such – not just an afterthought or a transitional element.
- c. There is no minimum or maximum requirement for length of cheer or dance; however, the judges need to be able to identify the section as such and see the skills executed.
- d. Judges are trained to take the following items into consideration for the following categories. This is NOT a list of required elements, but a guideline.
 - i. CHEER:
 - 1. Motion technique – sharpness, placement, punch, synch
 - a. Are actual motions being used – not just clapping, angry stomping, or transitioning?
 - 2. Voice - clarity, enunciation, volume, participation
 - 3. Synchronization and Timing
 - 4. Footwork
 - 5. Floor work/Level Changes



6. Visual Appeal – creating pictures, moving eye front to back/side to side
 7. Age/audience appropriate – speed, words, difficulty of motions
 8. Transitions and formations
 9. Energy, facials
- ii. DANCE:
1. Motion technique – sharpness, placement, punch, synch
 - a. Are actual motions being used – not just clapping, angry stomping, or running transitions?
 2. Dance technique – musicality, partner work, are they actually dancing?
 3. Synchronization and Timing
 4. Footwork
 5. Floor work/Level Changes
 6. Visual Appeal – creating pictures, moving eye front to back/side to side
 7. Age/audience appropriate – speed, difficulty of motions, family friendly
 8. Transitions and formations
 9. Energy, facials, performance quality
- iii. OVERALL IMPRESSION:
1. Overall technique and execution
 2. Is the routine appropriate for their ability/age level
 3. Formations, transitions – clean, thought out, fluid
 4. Energy, facials, performance quality
 5. Ability to recover from any mistakes
 6. Visual appeal
 7. Creativity, uniqueness
 8. Age/audience appropriate

Resources:

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