



# 2022-2023 SPIRIT RULES INTERPRETATION

REVISED BY GREG COLLINS FOR MARYLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS STATE CHEERLEADING



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National Federation of State High School Associations

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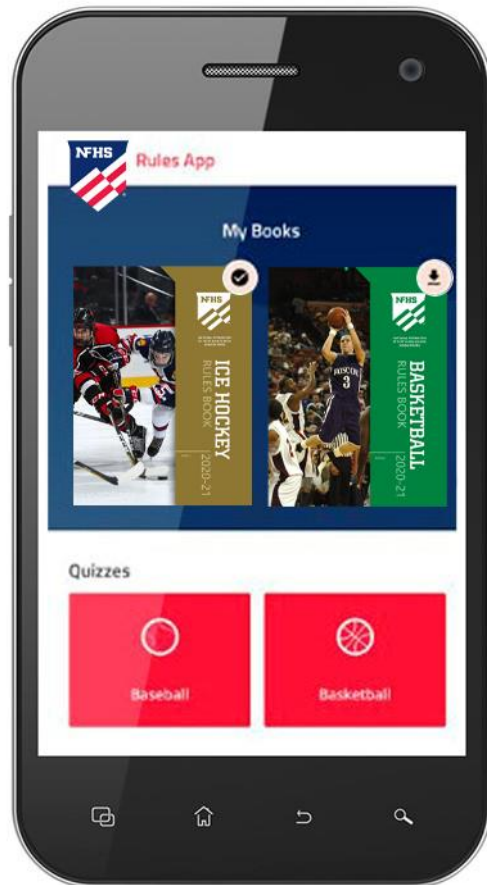
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## POINTS OF INTEREST:

- MPSSC follows the current year's NFHS rulebook (this year is 2022-2023). Rulebooks should be handed out by each county, or you may purchase an on-line version from NFHS for 6.99.
- Spirit Rule books encompass both Cheer and Dance. MPSSC **ONLY** follows Cheer rules **NOT** Dance rules. You will never need to refer to the dance rules when choreographing a routine.
- All judges' decisions are FINAL. **There is no review process.** Letters from coaches, AD's, Parents, etc., will be referred back to your county rep and athletic supervisor. Rankings and Standing WILL NOT CHANGE!





# 2022-2023 RULES CHANGES





## RULE 1: DEFINITIONS

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- **Airborne** - ~~A type of skill performed~~ state in which a person is free of contact ~~with~~ from a person or the performing surface.
  - **Rationale:** Better describes the term airborne is not a skill in itself but is instead a body position.
- **Headspring** – A tumbling skill in which a person places both hands and his or her head on the performing surface, pushes off with the hands while flipping the legs overhead and landing on his or her feet. It is non-airborne in approach but airborne in descent following the inversion.
  - **Rationale:** Clarification added to explain at what point the person executing the skill should be airborne.

## 2-1-5: GENERAL

- **ART. 5...** Hair control devices, accessories, and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened, appropriate for the activity, and do not present an increased risk to the participants are allowed.
- ~~Hair must be worn in a manner that is appropriate for the activity involved. Hair devices and accessories must be secure.~~
- **Rationale:** The language “securely affixed to the hair” was in 2.1.5 Situation A as a “Comment”. This helps to clarify the importance of devices and accessories being securely affixed to the hair in the actual rule instead of the comment.
- The NFHS aims to be inclusive of all students from varying cultural backgrounds to access athletic or activity programs provided at member schools, while providing a fair and safe environment. The NFHS also endeavors to provide fair competition and eliminate competitive advantages and disadvantages in each sport and activity.





## 2-1-11: GENERAL:

- **ART. 11...** Soft, nonabrasive, and/or non-hardening Ssupports, braces, soft casts, etc., that are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional padding. ~~Supports/braces that have been altered from the manufacturer's original design/production.~~ Hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, etc.) on the hand, wrist, forearm, elbow, or upper arm must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than one-half-inch thick if the participant is involved in partner stunts, pyramids or tosses. A participant wearing a lower body plaster cast or a walking boot must not be involved in partner stunts, pyramids, tosses, jumps or tumbling.
- **Rationale:** In the interest of risk minimization, this proposal disallows supports and or braces that are altered from the manufacturer's original design, production, and/or intended use. The change also clarifies the padding requirements of hard and soft support equipment.





## 3-2-1: STUNTING PERSONNEL

- **ART. 1...** A base must not:
  - a. Assume a back-bend, headstand or handstand position.
  - b. Hold objects in a hand that is supporting a top person.
- **Exception:** A base and top person may share a pom during a mount or dismount from a thigh stand, shoulder sit/straddle, shoulder stand, or prep.
- **Rationale:** The original rule was intended to address bases holding poms while basing preps. Sharing poms during mounts and dismounts has not been a safety issue. Teams are changing their grips to grab wrists while climbing into shoulder stands, which is poor technique. Even when doing so, it is difficult for rules interpreters to see that change and teams are getting called for deductions unnecessarily. When teams have climbed into shoulder stands with shared poms, we have not seen any increased risk.



## 3-3-5A: INVERSIONS

- **ART. 5...** Braced flips in a pyramid are permitted provided all the following conditions are met:
- a. ~~Both of the top person's hands/arms are in continuous contact with a bracer. If a single bracer is used, there must be a hand/arm connection between both hands/arms of the top person and bracer.~~ The top person and at least one bracer(s) must have a hand to hand/arm connection. This connection can be with one or both hands/arms.
- **Rationale:** Would allow a new set of pyramid visuals that are all lower in the progression skill list than some current braced flip skills that are allowed. EX: Rewind off the ground to extended with one bracer.



## 3-3-5D: INVERSIONS

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- **ART. 5...** Braced flips in a pyramid are permitted provided all the following conditions are met:
- d. Bracer(s) must be in a multi-based prep with a spotter and remain stationary.
- **Rationale:** Aligns the braced release skills. Currently, there's nothing preventing a braced flip from "walking".





## 3-5-4: RELEASE STUNTS/TOSSES

- **ART. 4...** A ~~switch-up~~ toss caught in a vertical stunt by the original bases is permitted as an exception to Rules 3-5-2 and 3-5-3. Toss must not go significantly higher than the intended skill. A ball up position would not be considered against the significantly higher measurement.
- **Rationale:** Currently switch ups are allowed and inverted releases to upright stunts are allowed. Both could be considered harder than suggested rule change with inverted releases off ground harder than all skills that would be allowed. Also spinning switch ups are harder than all skills that could be allowed with change.



## 3-5-5C: RELEASE STUNTS/TOSSES:

- **ART. 5...** Release transitions are permitted provided all of the following conditions are met throughout the transition:
- c. The top person and at least one bracer maintain contact except for the following skills:
- 1: A non-braced top person in a vertical position at prep level or above may be released to the original bases to a stunt at any level provided the top person remains in a position where the upper body remains vertical, and the legs are not in a seated/pike position. Vertical releases from an extended position to an extended position may not perform more than a  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn.
- 2: A non-braced top person in a cradle position or horizontal position at prep level or below may be released to the original bases in a loading position or stunt at any level ~~with no more than a  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn.~~
- **Rationale:** From a horizontal position releasing to a horizontal position and twisting is allowed in the log roll rules, so this creates a contradiction. And, twisting from a horizontal to vertical will be limited by their skills.



## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- A release is when the top person is NOT in contact with anyone on the performing surface.
- A braced/suspended roll occurs when the top person is still connected to the someone on the performing surface.
- **A release to prone is still NOT ALLOWED**
- A top person starting at prep level or above cannot go directly to the ground inverted. There must be a stop at the prone position. (be careful with the cartwheel out dismount).
- No one ANYONE associated with your school (coach, athlete, parent, etc.) should ever be contacting a judge for any information regarding Maryland High School Cheer.







# CONCUSSION AWARENESS IN PRACTICE

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- The NFHS's most recent injury data revealed that the majority of concussions associated with spirit programs occur at practice. To assist in the prevention of concussions, special attention should be given to length of practice, performer readiness, coach supervision, teaching of proper techniques and skill progression, and enforcement of concussion protocol.



# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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- Professional development is one of the responsibilities of a coach. Many resources are available beyond the NFHS Spirit Rules Book and NFHS Rules App which are useful in coaches' professional development. Scholastic organizations such as NFHS, USA Cheer, Varsity Spirit, state spirit coaches' associations, etc., may all provide resources and training opportunities which enhance the growth and knowledge of coaches.



## INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Web Page: [marylandcheercoaches.org](http://marylandcheercoaches.org)

Facebook: Maryland Public School Cheerleading Coaches (make sure you are answering the question required to join).

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/132424104185655>

Heather O'Brien – [Heather.OBrien@fcps.org](mailto:Heather.OBrien@fcps.org)

Kari Ganske- [kari\\_ganske@mcpsmd.org](mailto:kari_ganske@mcpsmd.org)

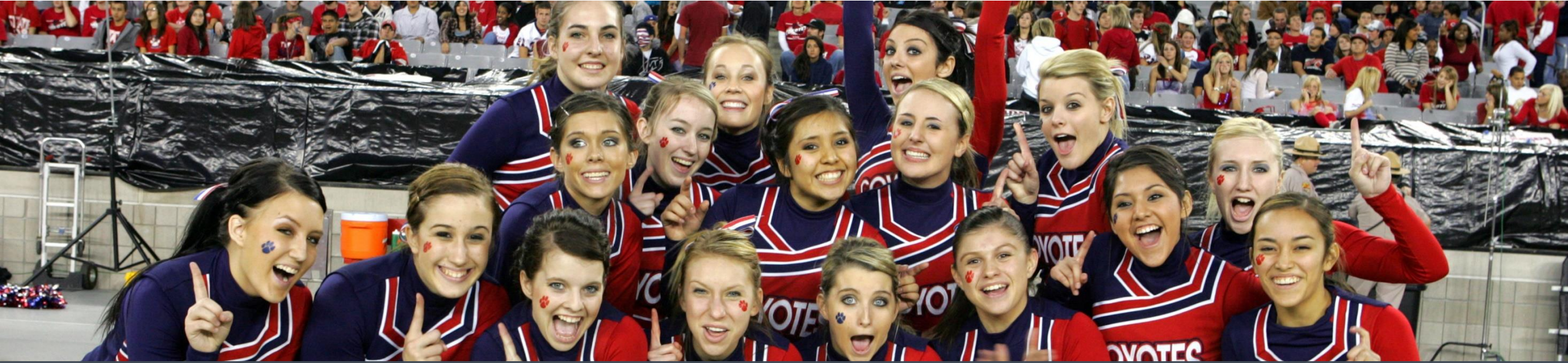
Greg Collins- [gcollins2@bcps.org](mailto:gcollins2@bcps.org)

When emailing a question:

1. Explain in full detail ( a video is best to avoid misunderstandings).
2. Cite rule and page number you are concerned with.
3. I will get back to you within 5 school days.







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