



ARIZONA  
INTERSCHOLASTIC  
ASSOCIATION

OUR STUDENTS, OUR TEAMS . . . OUR FUTURE.

# 2024-25 Spiritline Tournament Guide

**Spiritline Tournament Coordinator**

Emily Stephens

[estephens@aiaonline.org](mailto:estephens@aiaonline.org)

**Assistant Spiritline Tournament Coordinator**

Annie Valencia

[avalencia@aiaonline.org](mailto:avalencia@aiaonline.org)

[aiaonline.org](http://aiaonline.org)

Main Office - 602-385-3810



## 2024-25 Spiritline Tournament Guide

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**Game Day Championship  
All-Girl & Partner Stunt**  
November 22, 23 2024  
*Veterans Memorial Coliseum*

Entry Fee - \$200 – per program  
(Separate fee for cheer and dance)

**REGISTRATION**

**OPENS SEPTEMBER 20, 2024, CLOSES OCTOBER 3, 2024 @ 12:00PM**

*Participant and Alternate numbers cannot be changed after this date.*

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**Traditional State Championship**  
January 16, 17, 18 2025  
*Veterans Memorial Coliseum*

Entry Fee - \$350 for Qualifiers, \$500 for Championship – per program  
(Separate fee for cheer and dance)

**REGISTRATION**

**OPENS NOVEMBER 15, CLOSES NOVEMBER 28, 2024 @ 12:00PM**

*Participant and Alternate numbers cannot be changed after this date.*

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***IMPORTANT:*** *All entry fees will be invoiced to your school athletics department.  
Please do not send purchase orders.*

***NO LATE REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED***

**All rules as stated in the National Federation Rules Book for this sport, along with the AIA Constitution & Bylaws as well as these tournament instructions apply.**

The rules and regulations contained in this tournament guide were established to promote safety, equity, and consistency on a statewide basis. Beginning in August 2021, the AIA distributes two copies of the NFHS Spirit Rules Book to each member school. It is the responsibility of Spiritline coaches to understand and consistently enforce NFHS rules at any Cheerleading, Dance, and/or Spiritline practice, game, performance, or competition during the school year. Each Spiritline, Cheerleading, and/or Dance coach should have a personal copy of the rules book with them at all practices, events, performances, and competitions.



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### Section I Introduction

AIA Spiritline is committed to the recognition, support and growth of interscholastic cheer and dance in the state of Arizona. We recognize one of the best ways to support member schools and their Spiritline (cheer, dance, or a combination of both) is by producing State Championships, where Spiritline members can showcase their school spirit & athleticism. The AIA holds two Spiritline State Championship events per year (dates listed above). AIA Spiritline is broken into four divisions (determined by school enrollment) with multiple cheer and dance competition categories offered during both events. **School conference/division/section alignments** can be found at: <http://aia365.com/teams/spiritline>. See below for the breakdown of Spiritline Divisions and Categories offered:

#### Divisions & Category Charts

ALL GIRL STUNT		
Division 1	4-5 Athletes	All Female
Division 2	4-5 Athletes	All Female
Division 3	4-5 Athletes	All Female
Division 4	4-5 Athletes	All Female
PARTNER STUNT		
Division 1-2	2 Athletes + 1 Spotter	Female/Male
Division 3-4	2 Athletes + 1 Spotter	Female/Male
<b>NEW THIS YEAR:</b> A school is permitted to enter one All Girl Stunt Group AND/OR one Partner Stunt Group. You now have the option to do both stunt categories if you choose, however you are still limited to only one All Girl Group and one Partner Stunt Group.		

ALL GIRL SHOW CHEER		
Division 1	6-30 Athletes	All female
Division 2	6-30 Athletes	All female
Division 3	6-30 Athletes	All female
Division 4	6-30 Athletes	All female
<b>NEW THIS YEAR:</b> All Girl Show Cheer will be split into small (4-15 athletes) and large (16-30 athletes) if the following conditions are met:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are at least 25 teams registered in a particular division (D1, D2, D3, D4) and only that division would split.</li> <li>There is a minimum of 10 teams in BOTH the small and large category.</li> </ol>		
For example:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Division 2 Cheer has 25 teams registered and according to participant numbers there would be 13 small teams and 12 large teams. Based off this, Division 2 Cheer would split into small and large. There are at least 25 total teams AND at least 10 in both categories.</li> <li>Division 1 Cheer has 25 teams registered and according to participation numbers there would be 8 small teams and 17 large teams. Based off this, Division 2 Cheer would NOT split. While there are 25 total teams, there is not 10 total teams in both categories.</li> </ul>		
COED CHEER		
Division 1	6-30 Athletes	Female, 1 or More Males
Division 2	6-30 Athletes	Female, 1 or More Males
Division 3	6-30 Athletes	Female, 1 or More Males
Division 4	6-30 Athletes	Female, 1 or More Males
<b>NEW THIS YEAR:</b> If you have a single male in your routine, you will be in the Coed Cheer Category.		
<i>Note: Based off the number of registrations, AIA has the right and ability to not split into individual divisions if registration numbers do not justify the need for division splits. In that instance D1 and D2 would be combined and D3 and D4 would be combined.</i>		



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POM			
Division 1		4-24 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 2		4-24 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 3		4-24 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 4		4-24 Athletes	Male/Female
<p><b>NEW THIS YEAR:</b> Pom will be split into small (4-9 athletes) and large (10-24 athletes) if the following conditions are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are at least 25 teams registered in a particular division (D1, D2, D3, D4) and only that division would split.</li> <li>2. There is a minimum of 10 teams in BOTH the small and large category.</li> </ol> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division 2 Pom has 25 teams registered and according to participant numbers there would be 13 small teams and 12 large teams. Based off this, Division 2 pom would split into small and large. There are at least 25 total teams AND at least 10 in both categories.</li> <li>• Division 1 Pom has 25 teams registered and according to participation numbers there would be 8 small teams and 17 large teams. Based off this, Division 1 pom would NOT split. While there are 25 total teams, there is not 10 total teams in both categories.</li> </ul>			
OPEN JAZZ			
Division 1-4	Small	4-9 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 1-4	Large	10-24 Athletes	Male/Female
OPEN HIP HOP			
Division 1-4	Small	4-9 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 1-4	Large	10-24 Athletes	Male/Female
<p><i>Open Jazz and Open Hip Hop will be split by size if there is a minimum of 8 teams registered in the category. Based off the number of registrations, AIA has the right and ability to not split into Small and Large if registration numbers do not justify the need for category splits.</i></p>			
<p><b>A school may choose to compete in a single category to compete in (pom, jazz, or hip hop) OR they may compete in pom plus one category.</b></p>			
GUIDELINES FOR COMPETING IN TWO CATEGORIES			
<p>A minimum of 75% of your Pom athletes must carry over as your Open category athletes.</p>			



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CHEER GAME DAY			
Division 1-2	Small	4-15 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 1-2	Large	16-36 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 3-4	Small	4-15 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 3-4	Large	16-36 Athletes	Male/Female
<p><b>NEW THIS YEAR:</b> Cheer Game Day may be split by individual division (D1, D2, D3, D4) as well as size if BOTH of the following conditions are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are at least 25 teams registered in a particular division. (D1-2 Small, D1-2 Large, D3-4 Small, D3-4 Large).</li> <li>2. There is a minimum of 10 teams in <b>BOTH</b> the D1 and D2 divisions.</li> </ol> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division 1-2 Large has 28 teams registered. Of the 28, 15 are D1 teams and 13 are D2 teams. Based off this, Division 1-2 Large would split into Division 1 Large and Division 2 Large. There is a minimum of 25 registered with at least 10 being from each division.</li> <li>• Division 3-4 Small has 25 teams. Of the 25, 18 are D3 and 7 are D4. Based off this, Division 3-4 Small would NOT split. While there are 25 total teams there is not 10 teams in both categories.</li> </ul>			
DANCE GAME DAY			
Division 1-2	Small	4-13 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 1-2	Large	14-36 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 3-4	Small	4-13 Athletes	Male/Female
Division 3-4	Large	14-36 Athletes	Male/Female
<p><b>NEW THIS YEAR:</b> Dance Game Day may be split by individual division (D1, D2, D3, D4) as well as size if BOTH of the following conditions are met:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are at least 25 teams registered in a particular division. (D1-2 Small, D1-2 Large, D3-4 Small, D3-4 Large).</li> <li>2. There is a minimum of 10 teams in <b>BOTH</b> the D1 and D2 divisions.</li> </ol> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Division 1-2 Large has 28 teams registered. Of the 28, 15 are D1 teams and 13 are D2 teams. Based off this, Division 1-2 Large would split into Division 1 Large and Division 2 Large. There is a minimum of 25 registered with at least 10 being from each division.</li> <li>• Division 3-4 Small has 25 teams. Of the 25, 18 are D3 and 7 are D4. Based off this, Division 3-4 Small would NOT split. While there are 25 total teams there is not 10 teams in both categories.</li> </ul>			



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### Category Descriptions

**All-Girl Show Cheer-** Combines all the elements of cheerleading in a 2 minute and 30 second routine, broken up into two elements- up to 1 minute of a crowd leading cheer, up to 1 minute and 45 seconds of music (also can be broken up into two sections). **Entire routine CANNOT go over 2 minutes and 30 seconds.** Teams should showcase stunts, tumbling, jumps, and a dance during music section(s). Crowd leading props such as signs, poms, megaphones, and flags are encouraged to be used during the cheer section. This category is for all female participants.

**Coed Cheer-** Combines all the elements of cheerleading in a 2 minute and 30 second routine, broken up into two elements- up to 1 minute of a crowd leading cheer, up to 1 minute and 45 seconds of music (can also be broken up into two sections). **Entire routine CANNOT go over 2 minutes and 30 seconds.** Teams should perform stunts, tumbling, jumps, and a dance during music section(s) but also focus on showcasing their male athletes with a variety of coed skills, including coed partner stunting. Crowd leading props such as signs, poms, megaphones, and flags are encouraged to be used during the cheer section. This category is for teams who have at least 1 male, combined with females.

**All Girl Stunt-** A 1 minute routine set to music that utilizes 4-5 female athletes and gives programs an opportunity to showcase their best stunt skills. Groups will display a variety of stunts with little transition time and strong execution. A focus on stunt technique, creativity, and difficulty is encouraged.

**Partner Stunt-** A 1 minute routine set to music that utilizes 1 male and 1 female athlete (+ 1 additional male or female, to be used only as a spotter) and gives programs an opportunity to showcase their best coed stunt skills. Partners will display a variety of coed stunts with little transition time and strong execution. A focus on stunt technique, creativity, and difficulty is encouraged. The additional male or female is not to be used to aid or build the skills and is only there to spot the skills being performed by the male/female partners.

**Pom-** A pom routine incorporates dance-based skills such as turns, leaps and jumps but remains focused on strong and precise motions, team synchronization and visual effects. It may also include pom specific skills such as pom passes and kick lines. Poms must be used for a minimum of 80% of the 2 minute and 30 second (maximum) routine, however male dancers are not required to utilize poms.

**Jazz-** A jazz routine is a 2 minute and 30 second (maximum) performance that encompasses a traditional, contemporary or lyrical style routine and can incorporate the following approaches to movement: organic, pedestrian, traditional modern, and/or traditional ballet. Movements should complement the lyric and/or rhythmic value of the music. Emphasis should be placed on expressive movement, control, contraction and release, use of breath, body placement, and uniformity. Skills should be technical, hard hitting, with a crisp and/or aggressive approach to movement but can include moments of softness while complementing musicality. Execution should focus on body alignment, extension, control, uniformity and technique.

**Hip Hop-** A hip hop routine is a 2 minute and 30 second (maximum) performance that incorporates street style movement and/or funk choreography. There is an emphasis within choreography on style, creativity, footwork, level changes, strong movements, clear isolations, and formation changes. Execution should focus on control, rhythm, uniformity, musicality, entertainment and technique

**Game Day Cheer** – Each team will showcase their best leadership skills and sideline crowd leading material in a Game Day presentation that will include an announcer-led situational cue describing a game element. The use of crowd leading tools such as signs, poms, flags, and/or megaphones is encouraged. Skills relevant to the game day environment and effective use of material to lead the crowd should be considered in all elements. **All Game Day Rules & Regulations must be followed.**



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**Game Day Dance** – Each team will showcase their best leadership skills and sideline crowd leading material in the following categories: Fight Song, Band Dance, and Performance Routine. The use of poms is permitted and encouraged. Signs & Poms are the only props that are permitted. Game time practicality should be the highest priority in routine development. Traditional school uniforms are required. **All Game Day Rules & Regulations must be followed.**

All Scoresheets, Progression/Difficulty Charts, and Game Day Rules and Regulations can be found at: <https://aiaonline.org/activities/spirit-lines>

### Participation & Eligibility

- Participation in the Spiritline Championships is open to all eligible AIA member high schools.
- AIA Spiritline Championships are limited to “Varsity” teams only. For Spiritline, “Varsity” can be made up of students enrolled in grades nine through twelve at the same school.
- Eighth grade and below, even if the school is a K-12 school, are not eligible to make-up the “Varsity” team.
- Please refer to AIA Bylaws related to home-schooled students.
- Any school for which an ineligible participant performs will be disqualified from consideration for qualifying, placing, and/or awards.

### Registration

- Championship registration is completed through the AIA Dashboard and should be done by the Head Coach.
- Refer to page 3 for registration open and close dates. All dates will be communicated to coaches via email and through the SportsYou app, and our social media pages.
- It is the policy of the AIA to not accept late registration for any sport/activity for which registration is required. Compliance with this policy is expected.
- **After registration closes, the following will be verified for each school and each coach in order to be eligible for participation:**
  1. All coaches who are registered must have taken the NFHS Spirit Exam. The registered Head Coach must have taken the exam for which their team is registering (cheer or dance).
  2. All coaches who are registered must have taken the Online Spiritline Information Course.
  3. At least one representative from the school must have attended the In-Person Championship Meeting.
  4. All student’s registered, including alternates, must satisfy all AIA and local campus eligibility requirements.
- If a school registers, but our records indicate that the school did not have at least one representative attend the In-Person Championship Meeting, the school will not be eligible for the competition.
- Any coach who is listed on the registration but did not take the NFHS Exam and complete the Online Information Course, will be removed from registration and will not be permitted to attend the competition with the school.
- Choreographers/Skills Coaches are not required to complete the above requirements but should only be registered under one team. Each choreographer/skills coach may only register with one team. The first team who registers said choreographer and/or skills coach will show on the registration list.
- An “Eligible Schools & Coaches List” will be sent and posted prior to competition. Teams who feel their school is mistakenly not on the list must immediately email [estephens@aiaonline.org](mailto:estephens@aiaonline.org), [avelencia@aiaonline.org](mailto:avelencia@aiaonline.org), and copy their AD. AD’s will be copied on a response if they are not originally included.





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### Alternates

Each program may bring alternates to the tournament. Alternate numbers are limited to no more than half the number of participants (i.e. 12 participants, max of 6 alternates). Only alternates in full uniform or matching spirit attire are permitted in participant areas. Alternates must satisfy the same eligibility requirements as other participants as well as follow all NFHS rules. When competing in more than one category, you may not add numbers together from the two categories for alternate numbers. The number of alternates from the larger category will be the max number of alternates you can bring.

**Example:** Show Cheer – 18 participants All Girl Stunt – 5 participants *Alternate # - 9*  
Pom – 11 participants Jazz – 13 participants *Alternate # - 7*

## Section II Prior to Competition

### Routine Material/Choreography

Penalties will be given for vulgar or suggestive movements (i.e., hip thrusting, inappropriate touching, slapping, gesturing, inappropriate positioning towards one another, etc.). Routines must utilize age-appropriate movements and music must be appropriate for a family environment.

*Please see category descriptions in Section I.*

### Music Guidelines

Competition music must be properly licensed, and a team will be required to provide proof of licensing at any event where the music is used. Detailed music guidelines can be found at <https://www.varsity.com/music-guidelines/>. Please take time to familiarize yourself with these prior to attending any competition. Failure to comply may lead to disqualification and forfeiture of all fees (registration, admission, or otherwise) associated with a team’s performance.

- Teams must perform to recorded music only. No live music will be allowed during the entrance, routine, or exit.
- Lyrics must be appropriate for a public high school performance.
- Coaches must be able to provide proof of licensing (hard copy or digital will suffice) during registration at the event they are attending. This may include:
  - Proof of purchase from a preferred provider
  - If using a single song, receipt from purchase of single song.
  - If using an editor, the editor does not have to be a preferred provider; however, they must be able to provide you with proof of purchase from a preferred provider and proof of licensing for all sound effects and voice overs included in the mix.
  - If using a non-commercial music provider, documentation that assigns all applicable rights to the team. (Contact info@usacheer.org or dancemusic@varsity.com to request appropriate documentation.)
- For Game Day Music:
  - Fight Song – both cheer and dance teams must use a band recorded fight song.
  - If a high school band records their school’s *original* fight song, they will need to get the school’s permission to use the song and recording.
  - If a team legally acquires a recording of a band playing a fight song (i.e. iTunes, Amazon, etc.), the song can be used if no edits are made to the music (other than for timing purposes).
  - Spirit Raising/Band Chant – dance teams may perform the spirit raising to a recorded pep band tune or any recorded tune that would be used to create spirit on the sidelines of a game. Cheer teams must use a Marching/Pep Band recording.
- If a team cannot provide the required paperwork, they will be given the option to count the routine verbally.
- If a team cannot provide required paperwork and chooses not to count the routine verbally, the team will be disqualified from the competition and not be allowed to perform.
- Music checks on the main sound system are not permitted.



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- Speed control is not available. Music must be recorded and loaded onto a device at the correct tempo.
- Guidelines to playing the music on the day of the competition will be sent to coaches a few weeks prior to the competition.

### Legality Review

Questions about legality and safety of skills, or any general NFHS rules, can be submitted to the AIA via the Skill Legality Form that is linked on the AIA website. Please complete the entire form and submit videos of your team performing the skill. **Allow up to 10 business days for a response.** Skill Legality Forms must be submitted no later than 2 weeks prior to the championship date.

### Withdrawal Procedure

If the AIA office receives a registration for a championship event (Game Day, AGS/PS or Traditional) from a school and that school no longer wishes to compete, they must officially do so by completing the “**Withdraw Form**” found on the official AIA website, under the Spiritline Tab. Official deadlines to withdraw are:

Game Day- November 8, 2024

Traditional- January 2, 2025

**If a team withdraws after the above deadlines or is a no-show the day of the event, the school will still be charged the competition entrance fee.**

### Other Staff Credential Procedures

- If a school would like to add their own certified athletic trainer and/or photographer to the school’s registration list, the Head Coach must email [estephens@aiaonline.org](mailto:estephens@aiaonline.org) & [avalencia@aiaonline.org](mailto:avalencia@aiaonline.org) a minimum of two weeks prior to the event. The school’s athletic director or other administration **MUST** be copied on the email to show approval. Emails without administration copied will be sent back.
- If an additional chaperone is required for travel by your school or district, again, the Head Coach must email Emily & Annie within 2 weeks prior to the event with their administration copied on the email.
- Bus drivers who transport teams to these events may be permitted to enter the venue as a spectator. They need to report to the pass gate, sign in and show school or district ID for admission into the spectator areas only.
- Any abuse of these rules will result in the removal of the individual from the facility and may constitute further repercussions.

## Section III

### Day of Competition

*All Day of Competition updates, including an up-to-date timeline, warm-up changes, venue reminders and other important information will be posted in the AIA Spiritline SportsYou App. Emails and texts will not be responded to.*

### Performance Schedule & Timelines

- The order of performance will be first determined by random draw, then by any conflicting performances (i.e. cheer and stunt, pom and hip-hop, etc.).
- Due to the nature of the schedule, and to keep the event moving in a timely manner, teams will only be guaranteed a 10-minute break between finishing a routine and reporting to warm-ups if they are in more than one category.



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- Starting times for events will not be determined until registration has closed. Timelines will be posted on the Spiritline page of the AIA website within the following timeframes:
  - Block Format will be published 4 weeks before the competition
  - Performance Timeline will be published 2 weeks before the competition
  - Final Timeline will be published 1 week before the competition

### Participation Changes on Day of Tournament

- Category changes on the day of the tournament will not be permitted (i.e., you registered for pom and jazz and now want to compete pom and hip hop).
- Requests to change performance times should only be made for extenuating circumstances (both once the schedule is posted and then on the day of the competition) and may only be submitted by a Head Coach AND the school's Athletic Director. All requests should be emailed to [estephens@aiaonline.org](mailto:estephens@aiaonline.org) and [avalencia@aiaonline.org](mailto:avalencia@aiaonline.org). The AIA reserves the right to deny any request.
- In case of illness or injury on the day of competition a coach may choose to enter an alternate athlete from the roster or may compete with less than the number of participants declared on the team's registration form.

### Team Check-In Upon Arrival at Site

- Team Entrance doors will not be unlocked for participants and coaches until the designated time listed on the final timeline to ensure that all staff is placed and ready. If teams do arrive early, be aware you will be asked to wait outside until the doors open.
- Teams should plan to arrive at the competition site in sufficient time. We recommend arriving on site no less than two hours prior to your scheduled warm-up time. Teams will not be allowed to cut the check-in line if they are late, so please, plan for plenty of time to travel to the site and walk to the team entrance doors. Exceptions will only be considered for emergent situations.
- Immediately upon arrival at the site, coaches must proceed to the Team Check-In Area. Remember, the check-in can take time. Give your team plenty of time to arrive, check-in, set down bags, use the restroom, etc.
- **The entire coaching staff, participants and alternates must be present to start check-in and should remain present until your team's check-in is complete.**
- During Team Check-In, the following is required & will be verified:
  - Photo I.D. to verify the eligibility of coaches present (coaches will not be permitted without proof of identity)
  - Music Licensing
  - Number of participants & alternates match your registration (you can have less; you cannot have more)
- If the school has an approved athletic trainer and/or photographer on their registration list, said personnel may arrive later than the team and should proceed to the pass gate.

### Food/Beverage for Participants & Coaches

- Apart from water in sealed containers (and/or medically required glucose or juice drinks), food and beverages may not be permitted into the competition sites by coaches or participants (depending on venue).
- Coaches may not bring an ice chest/cooler into the venue. Coolers must be left outside in the designated area. Concessions will be available throughout the events and all food should be consumed in designated area(s).

### Dressing & Restrooms

- The AIA, State Qualifier sites, Game Day and State Championship sites cannot be responsible for lost or stolen items. To keep lost items to a minimum, participants and coaches should limit the number of non-essential items they bring with them.



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- It is recommended that participants dress in their uniforms, hair is done, and makeup applied prior to arriving to the site to keep bathrooms free and the holding area clean.
- In the interest of safety, warm-up areas are not to be used for dressing.
- Participants are not permitted to change clothes in any area other than the designated restrooms and/or locker rooms. This includes the warm-up area. No dressing is permitted.
- Teams shall not find an off-limits restroom to act as a dressing or locker room. All restricted areas must be followed.

### Performance Surface & Viewing Area

- Cheer, Stunt and Cheer Game Day performances will take place on a (approximate) 54' x 42' floor made up of nine cheer mats. Appropriately sized matting will also be provided in the warm-up room.
- Game Day Dance performances will take place on a gym floor and will have approximately half court. The front of the performance will be the short side of the court, not the long side.
- Traditional Dance performances will take place on a (approximate) 52' x 49' floor made up of eight marley panels. Each panel is approximately 6.5' wide. Appropriately sized space and areas of marley flooring will be provided in the warm-up room.
- Teams will be permitted to sit in the performance gym/arena as long as space is available. If space is needed for spectators, participants will be asked to return to the holding area. Teams will still be permitted to watch their team perform in another category.
- During a school's performance, only that school's Spiritline members will be allowed in the designated coach and participant area. Only certified coaches who have received a wristband at check-in and are wearing their wristband will be allowed in the designated coach and participant area and at the music table.
- For safety reasons and in accordance with NFHS rules, only coaches cleared at check-in, AIA staff and other designated tournament staff/volunteers are permitted in the designated participant areas or around the performing floor. **This includes children of all ages who are accompanying coaches or teams.**

### Timing Regulations & Team Entrances

- Timing will begin with the first movement, voice or note of the music, whichever comes first. If a routine has multiple time limits, each section could receive a deduction.
- 4 – 5 Seconds over – 1.0 deduction; 6 seconds or more – 2.0 deduction
- Game Day timing will not include the team spiriting, rallying, jumping, kicking, tumbling or single-based lifts prior to the start of the routine.
- Game Day Routine timing will end with the last synchronized voice or note of music. This would include call backs after the music has ended.
- Teams have 30 seconds from the team's introduction to start the routine. If a team exceeds this time limit, a penalty of a .25-point deduction for 1-5 seconds or a .5-point deduction for 6 seconds and over will be assessed.
- Timing deductions are final.
- Vulgar gestures are not permitted. Chest bumps, fist bumps, handshakes or other "traditions" a team does during that 30-seconds is permitted, within reason. A warning will be given if the Tournament Coordinators see a tradition that does not align with the values of a family-oriented event.

### Time-outs & Performance Interruptions

- A coach, official, or the Tournament Coordinators may call a time-out by walking onto the performance floor or by stopping the music if they determine there is an unsafe situation or due to an athlete injury.



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- Procedures followed when dealing with a time-out due to injury will be determined by the situation at hand.
- Non-Blood Related Injury: In the event a team's routine is interrupted by a non-blood related injury, the team will be given the option of continuing or stopping the routine. Depending on the severity of the injury, the coach may remove the team from the performance area so the next team can begin their performance. Should the routine be stopped for this reason, the team will be given the option of performing their routine at a later time. The Certified Athletic Trainer, coach, and TC's will determine if the injured member can safely perform at a later time. The school's AD may be notified if the situation is severe. If a team chooses to perform their routine at a later time, the Tournament Coordinators will determine the new performance time. Teams will be required to perform the entire routine, but judging will resume at the time of injury in routine.
- Blood Related Injury: Should an injury involving blood occur during the performance, the performance must stop immediately. NFHS procedures pertaining to blood related clean-up will be followed. The team will be given the option of performing their routine at a later time. If a team chooses to perform their routine at a later time, the Tournament Coordinators will determine the new performance time. Teams will be required to perform the entire routine, but judging will resume at the time of injury in routine.
- If, in the opinion of the Tournament Coordinators, a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the tournament equipment, facilities, or other factors attributed to the tournament rather than the team, the affected team will be instructed to stop their routine. The team will have an opportunity to perform their routine, either from the beginning or from the affected point, at a time determined by the Tournament Coordinators.
- Should any of the above take place, the Tournament Coordinators will decide on a case-by-case basis if a team is permitted additional warm-up time.
- Should a situation occur which requires interruption of a performance or a decision involving any aspect of the competition not clearly specified in these rules and regulations must be made, the Tournament Coordinators will render an appropriate judgment. This judgment will be made in an effort to ensure that the competition continues in as equitable a manner as possible for all teams and is consistent with the general spirit of the rules and goals of the competition.

### Warm-up Procedures

- Coaches will receive an official badge during Team Check-In which must be visible upon Warm-Up Check-In and throughout the competition.
- **Coaches may only travel through warm-ups, as well as stand in the designated coach section near the floor with a single team. This includes choreographers and skills coaches.**
- Registered participants will receive a stamp that must be shown to enter warm-ups throughout the day.
- Teams should stretch on their own *prior to checking in for warm-up*, not during their warm-up time. You can find space in the concourse or outside to stretch.
- If practicing outside of the warm-up room, all NFHS rules for appropriate surfaces must be followed.
- Teams should arrive at the warm-up check-in area **no more than 10-minutes prior** to their scheduled check-in time. This is found in the performance schedule.
- Teams may be turned away if they arrive at the warm-up area too soon.
- Should the event be running behind, teams should still arrive at the warm-up check-in at the scheduled time unless otherwise posted in the SportsYou App. Most times, we can quickly get the competition schedule back on track.
- Warm-up times will not be adjusted should a team arrive late.
- Eating, drinking and chewing gum are not permitted in the warm-up area.
- Appropriate matting will be provided in the practice area for all cheer and stunt teams. Details of the warm-up such as number of mats and time provided will be sent out within 2-weeks prior to



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the competition.

- Each team should plan to utilize their entire allocated time. Coaches whose teams do not adequately warm up assume all responsibility for athlete injuries occurring due to inadequately warming up. Staff members will note teams that do not adequately warm-up during their allotted time.
- **Upon warm-up check-in, teams will go through the following process:**
  1. Athletes will be checked for nails, jewelry, and other safety aspects. Any NFHS rule violation will need to be immediately remedied. The lead warm-up staff member will radio the Tournament Coordinators for any issues. The need to radio the Tournament Coordinators may result in a penalty. It is the coach's responsibility to understand the NFHS rules pertaining to jewelry, nails, appropriate footwear, appropriate hair and accessories, and other apparel or general safety rules.
  2. Teams will then proceed to the designated warm-up station and check in with staff prior to taking any cheer mat or dance floor. (keep below or wait until 2 weeks to put this out as a warm-up details and map even?)
    - CHEER will be given a total of 13 minutes on a set of mats to warm up any and all necessary elements of the routine.
    - STUNT (both All Girl and Partner) will be given a total of 10 minutes on a set of mats to warm up any and all necessary elements of the routine.
    - DANCE will be given a total of 13 minutes on a non-matted surface to warm up any and all necessary elements of the routine.
    - GAME DAY will be given a total of 13 minutes on a set of mats (cheer) or non-matted surface (dance) to warm up any and all necessary elements of the routine.
- Teams will then proceed to the on-deck area while coaches will proceed to the music area and get ready for their team to take the floor.
- For safety reasons and in accordance with NFHS rules, only coaches cleared at check-in, approved school athletic trainers/photographers, AIA staff and other designated tournament staff/volunteers are permitted in warm-up area. **This includes children of all ages who are accompanying coaches or teams.**

### Post Performance

- At the conclusion of the performance, coaches may enter the performance floor to assist in picking up any props or debris (such as pom pieces) that may have fallen to the floor. This should be done as quickly as possible so as not to delay the next performance.
- At the conclusion of each team's performance, the coach(es) are to exit the performance floor with their team as quickly as possible.
- All venue directional signage regarding exiting the performance floor and performance level of the venue shall be followed. Teams or coaches who do not follow signage or verbal directions are subject to a sportsmanship penalty.

### AIA Spotters

The AIA will provide **additional spotters** for all cheer and stunt divisions. **Definition of additional spotter:** Individuals on the floor provided as a safety precaution to spot specific elements of a routine. To provide the safest competitive environment, teams should not attempt skills beyond their ability level.

#### Guidelines for Additional Spotters

- Will be used during the stunt and/or pyramid sections only.
  - Will stand at the back of the floor when not spotting those sections.
- Will not touch, assist, or save skills being performed.
  - Will only be used to prevent a fall to the floor.
- Will be presentable, professional, and distinguishable from the performing athletes.
- Will be selected based on experience and will be versed with spotting cheerleading skills.

**ALL DECISIONS MADE BY THE TOURNAMENT COORDINATORS ON THE DAY OF THE COMPETITION ARE FINAL.**



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### Section IV Safety

#### **National Federation Rules**

Official rules followed at the State Qualifiers and the State Championships will be those delineated in the current NFHS Spirit Rules Book, AIA Constitution and Bylaws, and tournament instructions specified in this tournament guide. All routines must be planned in accordance with NFHS safety rules.

#### **Additional Tournament Safety Rules**

- Should a coach or participant have a medical condition that could result in the need for glucose drinks, juice, candy, etc., coaches must make certain that these items are brought to the tournament and kept close at hand; however, NFHS rules prohibit eating candy or chewing gum during practices or performances.
- Inappropriate Substance Use: Any coach or competitor using tobacco, alcoholic beverages, or illegal drugs while participating in AIA Spiritline State Qualifiers or the State Championships will be disqualified from the competition.
- Expect possible security checks of personal belongings upon entering the sites.
- For safety reasons and to ensure adequate supervision, the team's registered head coach or a member of the school administration willing to assume responsibility for the team, must arrive at the sites with the team. Coaches and/or an administrator must accompany participants through the warm-up process and to the performing floor. It is asked that a coach and/or administrator be with and supervise participants throughout the entire day. Any problematic behavior from athletes, where the coach is not quickly available to handle the situation, may result in sportsmanship penalty.
- No one other than the school coach(es) or school administrator (i.e., a friend, a parent, a team member, a teacher, etc.) may be put in charge of members of the team, as these individuals would not be in compliance with AIA Bylaw 39.10.7.
- If coaches have an emergent question regarding illness or injury, or venue concerns, they should send a private message in the SportsYou App. If they are not getting a response, they should report to the check-in area and a staff member will locate the Tournament Coordinators. If the question is not emergent and more of a general concern, please email the Tournament Coordinator. Please allow ample time for post-competition emails to be responded to.

### Section V Judges & Scoring

**Coaches MAY NOT approach any judges or official at any time before, during, or after the competition.**

#### **Judges' Seating Area**

To ensure that the concentration of judges is not interrupted during performances, the seating area directly behind and/or in front of the judges' table will be cordoned off. Seating in this area will not be permitted.

#### **Panel Judges**

- Panel Judges are those who use the scoresheets to judge the various elements of the routine.
- Judges for this event will be appointed at the discretion of the AIA. They will be qualified, experienced individuals with a thorough knowledge and background in the variety of categories of cheer and dance. They will go through a specific training for the scoresheet they will judge and what AIA expects of them.



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- While there are judging expectations and progression charts to be followed, **panel judges' scores and comments are subjective and cannot be challenged.** By participating, coaches and administrators understand cheer and dance competitions are an adjudicated process where we must trust the “judgement” of our judges. Even within difficulty, a panel judge must still give a subjective score, and comments, based on the scale.
- Judges must be at least 21 years of age and must be unaffiliated with any team participating in the category they are judging. Affiliation is defined as working directly with a team as a choreographer or skills coach. Tournament Coordinators do ask and consider any conflicts of interest. The AIA maintains the utmost integrity when hiring judges.
- Qualified judges from both in-state and out-of-state may be used for all competitions.
- In coordination with the Tournament Coordinators, there is a HEAD PANEL JUDGE that oversees the entirety of the panel judging process. This person does not make any changes to individual judges' scores.

### Deduction & Penalty Officials

- Deductions assess athlete falls, minor and major building falls, and pyramid falls. Other general deductions include out of bounds, unsportsmanlike behavior, time limits, and Game Day format violations.
- Penalties assess general & specific NFHS safety violations.
- The AIA hires the appropriate number of highly qualified and trained OFFICIALS (this is different than panel judges) to assess all deductions and penalties.
- The appropriate number of officials are hired to ensure the most correct calls are made.
- Officials must be at least 21 years of age and must be unaffiliated with any team participating in the category they are judging. Affiliation is defined as working directly with a team as a choreographer or skills coach. Tournament Coordinators do ask and consider any conflicts of interest. The AIA maintains the utmost integrity when hiring officials.
- Qualified officials from both in-state and out-of-state may be used for all competitions.
- All officials follow the Deduction and Penalty sheet during the championship. It is the responsibility of the coaches to review the Deduction & Penalty sheet which can be found at: <https://aiaonline.org/activities/spirit-lines>
- In coordination with the Tournament Coordinators, there is a HEAD OFFICIAL that oversees the entirety of the officials and officiating process. Both lead the Deduction & Penalties Review Process.

### Challenge & Review Information

- Any discussion with an official/judge/tournament worker must maintain proper professional conduct. Failure to do so will result in an UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT PENALTY of 1.0, as well as forfeit the right, as a program, to have any other scores reviewed through the review process.
- You may only challenge up to THREE penalties and/or deductions per routine.
- Results of all Challenges and Results are FINAL.
- During the challenge, no other teams should be mentioned. We will not compare their deductions and/or penalties with yours.
- When submitted a challenge, the ENTIRE routine will be reviewed and any penalties and/or deductions that were not assessed live could be added.
- Tournament Coordinators and other staff members are not permitted to discuss any routine with coaches outside the official challenge process.





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### Steps for Submitting a Deduction/Penalty Challenge

1. A QR code will be displayed that will take you straight to the Challenge Deduction/Penalty Form.
2. The form must only be submitted by the registered head coach.
3. The head coach will have **15 minutes** from when they receive their deduction/penalty scoresheets to submit a challenge via the form.
4. The Head Official, in coordination with the Tournament Coordinators, will review the information submitted by the coach and will consult to make a final call.
5. A response will be provided to the head coach in writing before the next round of competition or prior to awards via email.
6. Just like any other sport, this call is final. Coaches may not challenge the official again.

### Scoring & Overall Results

Final scores and qualifying will be determined for each category as follows:

**Show Cheer-** Scores from the *four score sheets- Cheer, Stunts & Pyramids, Tumbling, Jumps & Dance-* will be added together for a score out of **100**. From that total, deductions and penalties will be taken to determine qualifying and placing.

**Coed Cheer-** Scores from the *four score sheets- Cheer, Stunts & Pyramids, Tumbling, Jumps & Dance-* will be added together for a score out of **100**. From that total, deductions and penalties will be taken to determine qualifying and placing.

**Dance-** Scores from the *Choreography* judges will be averaged. Scores from the *Execution* judges will be averaged. Those two averages will be added together for a score out of **100**. From that average, deductions and penalties will be taken to determine qualifying and placing.

**All-Girl & Partner Stunt-** The scoresheet (although it is one sheet) will be split into two areas of attention – difficulty and then execution/transitions/continuity/overall impression. These two areas will be scored by a single judge or judging pairs depending on judge availability. Regardless, the score will be out of **100**. From that total, deductions and penalties will be taken to determine placing.

**Cheer Game Day Championship-** Scores from the *three score sheets- Band Chant, Fight Song, and Sideling/Crowd Leading-* will be added together for a score out of **135**. From that total, penalties and deductions will be taken to determine qualifying and placing.

**Dance Game Day Championship-** Scores from the *Fight Song & Spirit Raising* judges will be averaged. Scores from the *Performance Routine* judges will be averaged. Those two averages will be added together for a score out of **100**. From that average, penalties and deductions will be taken to determine placing.

All scores will be computer tabulated. Overall standings will be posted within 7 days of competition. Copies of individual team score sheets from each judge will be available at the conclusion of competition.

### Disqualification

It is understood that any team that does not adhere to the AIA Game Day Championship or the AIA Traditional State Championship rules and regulations may be disqualified from the competition.

### Finality of Tournament Decisions

By participating in this tournament, each coach, participant and school administrator agrees that decisions by the panel judges will be final and will not be subject for review. Up to three deductions/penalties may be challenged the one time, and then all decisions are final. Each coach, participant, and administrator acknowledge the necessity for the judges and officials to make prompt and fair decisions in this competition to the best of their abilities. Each coach, participant and parent, therefore, waives any legal, equitable, administrative, or procedural review of final decisions. Schools should also be advised that publicly disparaging the finality of decisions will be subject to a meeting with the AIA and administrators.



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### Section VI Qualifying Round & Final Round Criteria

AIA member schools that have met the above eligibility requirements can register for the competition. The first round of each competition is called the Qualifying Round. Upon qualifying, teams then compete in the Final State Round. There is no qualifying round for All-Girl and Partner Stunt. Each group that registers will compete in one round in one day.

Criteria for teams to qualify for the finals round at the **Traditional Championship**:

- Teams will qualify **AFTER *penalties and deductions*** are assessed.
- The top 50% of teams in each category will qualify.
- No more than 10 teams in each category will qualify.
- A team may compete only in the categories they qualified for during the preliminary round.
- All teams start with a clean slate for finals. There is no carryover score from the qualifying round.
- All teams who qualify during the preliminary round are expected to compete at the AIA State Championship. (Withdrawal Violation will be in effect with no refunds given.)

Criteria for teams to qualify for the finals round at the **Game Day Championship**:

- Teams will qualify **AFTER *penalties and deductions*** are assessed.
- The top 40% of teams in each category will qualify for finals.
- All teams will start with a clean slate for finals. There is no carryover score from the qualifying round.

### Section VII Awards

#### **Award Structure**

The AIA Game Day Championship and the AIA Traditional Cheer and Dance State Championship award structure has been designed to encourage maximum participation in as many events as possible. As is true in other AIA events, such as swimming, track, etc., the AIA Game Day Championship and the AIA Traditional Cheer and Dance State Championship will name category winners and runners-up.

#### **Tie Breaking Policy**

- Ties will only be broken for **FIRST PLACE** in the final round of all championships.
  - The team with lessor **DEDUCTIONS** will be awarded first place.
  - If the deductions remain equal, the tie will not be broken and both teams will be awarded first place.
- The Spiritline Coordinators will speak to both teams' coaches to determine which team will take the banner and which team will take the trophy (photos will be taken for both teams). Whichever item the team didn't get will be ordered and sent to the school ASAP.

### Section VIII Sportsmanship

Please be assured that the AIA will take all reasonable action to promote the safety and well-being of participants, coaches, spectators and staff. Law enforcement officers, in addition to security guards, will be on site during the entire competition.

All participants are expected to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the tournament. The coaches of each team are responsible for seeing that athletes, coaches, parents, and any other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly.



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### Code of Conduct

- Unsportsmanlike behavior by coaches, participants, or spectators may result in penalty of 1 point per occurrence and/or removal from the event. This can be assessed both on and off the competition floor. Severe demonstrations of unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of a participating team will result in the team's disqualification.
- Appropriate attire is expected by coaches, participants, and spectators who attend the State Qualifiers and the State Championship (for example: school shirts, business casual attire, no vulgar shirts, etc.). Coaches, participants, or spectators who are found wearing inappropriate attire may be removed from the event.

### Taunting

- Taunting will not be tolerated and includes any actions or comments by coaches, participants, or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar, sexist, or racist.
- Included is conduct that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs, or personal matters.
- Examples of taunting that could lead to disqualification include but are not limited to "trash talk," physical intimidation outside the spirit of the game, reference to sexual orientation, and/or "in-the-face" confrontation by a participant.
- Security staff may eject spectators who taunt others.

## Section IX Medical

### Certified Athletic Trainers & Medical Care

The AIA will provide a Certified Athletic Trainer throughout the competition to respond in case of injuries or emergencies. At registration, coaches will be told where the official Certified Athletic Trainer is located. Please keep in mind that while the Certified Athletic Trainer is available to respond to emergencies, teams should provide their own Certified Athletic Trainers if they anticipate the need for precautionary taping, wrapping, etc.

### Medical Records

The AIA recommends that each school have in their possession their team's medical emergency plan, physical and other medical-related information specific to each athlete, including names and telephone numbers of parents, doctors, etc.

## Section X Admission & Facility Information

**Information for spectators** including admission pricing, the digital ticketing process, programs, souvenirs, venue information & schedules can be found at:  
<https://azpreps365.com/championships/spiritline>

**Media** information, including policies, credential requests, broadcasting & media rights agreements can be found at: <https://aiaonline.org/host-media-info>

**ADA Compliance** information can be found at: <https://aiaonline.org/files/14160/committees-ada-compliance.pdf>

**Emergency personnel** protocols & information related to AIA postseason competitions can be found at: <https://aiaonline.org/files/17188/qmp.pdf>

### Non-Competing Groups

All non-competing groups will be charged admission as spectators.



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### **Spectator Entrances**

Spectators may enter at the designated entrance at the competition sites. Hand stamps will be given upon admission and will be required to re-entry (if venue permits re-entry).

### **Spectator Behavior**

The National Federation of High School Associations disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances. AIA Bylaw; Article 16.3.4 stipulates that student spectators, parents, or other non-school personnel that initiate or use profanity in cheers or chants having the intent of sounding profane, single out opposing players personally and/or heckle them by directing derogatory or profane statements or chants at them, use racist remarks or direct offensive cheers /chants at opposing individuals, teams or fans are in violation of in the AIA sportsmanship rules. At all contests, including region and state tournament contests, participating school's administrators have the responsibility to control their fan behaviors, either student or adult. Any spectator conduct that becomes unruly or interferes with the orderly progress of the tournament will result in the suspension of the tournament until offending spectator(s) are removed from the game site.

### **Seating (Non-team)**

Certified Athletic Trainers may sit in the spectator seating or with their schools in the team holding area. Bus Drivers may sit in the spectator seating only. All other spectators including students, parents, family and friends may sit in any spectator section that is not closed or designated for another group. Students, parents, family and friends may not sit in the team holding area with participating members. However, participating members may sit in the spectator seating areas so long as there is room and the athlete's coach has given approval.

### **Signs & Banners**

Spectator signs and banners are NOT PERMITTED at the State Qualifier and the State Championship per the AIA Bylaws, Article 12.1.4. This includes homemade signs and banners, crowd leading signs and banners, and enlarged pictures. Site security will monitor this, and any usage of signs will be instructed to discontinue use. Issues with compliance will result in a Sportsmanship Penalty.

### **Noisemakers & Other Devices**

- Noisemakers, including sirens, horns, bells, buzzers, or any other type of artificial or mechanical noisemakers are not permitted.
- Megaphones are not permitted- this does not apply to megaphones used by a performing team during a performance.
- Balloons and confetti are not permitted.
- Due to the severe safety hazard caused by laser light devices if aimed at an eye, laser light devices are STRICTLY prohibited. Individuals who use one of these devices will be removed from the building and subject to possible prosecution.

### **Lost & Found**

Neither the AIA, nor the sites, are responsible for lost or stolen articles. Team members and coaches are urged to leave valuables at home and to take special care of their possessions while at the tournaments. Should an item be lost, please check at the check-in table to see if it has been turned in.