

MAC CHEER HANDBOOK



ADDITIONAL RULES PERTAINING TO CHEERLEADING & SPIRIT

53 CHEERLEADING & SPIRIT

Section 1 PURPOSE

Article 1: The mission of all MAC Cheerleading & Spirit squads is to foster team spirit, demonstrate good sportsmanship, and build positive relationships within the community and across all teams during events. Our goal is to collaborate effectively with team management, administration, and other athletic organizations to support a unified and spirited environment for all involved.

Section 2 CHEERLEADING & SPIRIT COUNCIL

Article 1: The MAC Cheerleading & Spirit Commission is established to provide recommendations and set guidelines for Cheerleading & Spirit programs across all MAC Member Organizations. The Commission will consist of one Director from each MAC Club. The President of the MAC Cheer Commission known as the MAC Director of Cheer & Spirit, will also serve on the board. This is an elected position up to a 6-year term with a child in the league.

Article 2: Meetings will be held at the request of the Commissioner, the Director of Cheer & Spirit, or upon request by any four-member organizations, with a required notice of fourteen (14) days. Attendance is limited to each member organization's designated representative, coaches, and organization officers.

Article 3: All organizations must be notified of any meeting at least 72 hours in advance, along with the meeting's purpose. No official conference business may take place unless this requirement is met.

Article 4: The MAC Cheerleading & Spirit Commission will hold a General Conference Meeting as early as January but no later than a week before the tackle membership meeting is held. The meeting will serve to review issues from the previous year, gather suggestions for the upcoming season, and elect the officer.

Article 5: Each club is allowed one vote. Proxy votes will not be accepted.

Article 6: Members may only vote on issues that pertain to the grade levels represented within their club.

Article 7: After voting is complete, the MAC Director of Cheerleading & Spirit will submit the results to the MAC Commission for final consideration and approval.

Section 3 ELECTION OF DIRECTOR OF CHEER & SPIRIT

Article 1: The MAC Director of Cheer & Spirit shall be appointed by the MAC Commission.

Article 2: The MAC Director of Cheer & Spirit must have been an active member of MAC the previous year with 75% attendance.

Section 4 MEMBERSHIP

Article 1: To be a member of the Cheer Club within the Midwest Athletic Conference, the Cheer or Spirit Club must enter the league through the Tackle Club member of the MAC league.

Article 2: A Cheer or Spirit Club that is a member of the MAC league may not participate in another conference or league. Each Cheer or Spirit Club admitted into the MAC league must submit to the MAC Cheer & Spirit Commission their primary representative, their email address, and contact phone number.

Article 3: A Mailing Address must be provided to the MAC Director of Cheer & Spirit and the MAC Council upon admittance into the league and then annually at the beginning of each season.

Article 4: Any Cheerleading or Spirit organization and/or its individual teams that are not in compliance with the MAC League Rules may be suspended by the Commissioner and the Commission or removed with a majority vote of the MAC member organizations.

Section 5 RULES AND REGULATIONS

Article 1: The MAC Commission Officers establish the rules and regulations for both the Tackle and Cheerleading & Spirit programs, as well as for all member organizations. They are responsible for upholding and enforcing these rules and policies consistently across the league.

Article 2: The Cheerleading & Spirit rules are an extension of the MAC football rules. All rules that are suitable or would apply shall be adhered to by all cheer or spirit clubs cheering for MAC clubs/teams. These rules and regulations will be applied throughout the regular tackle football season and the Cheerleading & Spirit competition season.

Article 3: The MAC Commissioner is empowered with the authority to limit, restrict, or make changes as deemed necessary.

Article 4: Cheer or spirit organizations must abide by all rules as set forth by MAC. Officers, coaches, and parents will be held accountable for any rule violations.

Article 5: If a Cheerleading or Spirit organization is operated separately from the tackle football program, the cheer or spirit club will be liable for all penalties assessed by the MAC Commission Officers/MAC Cheer Council.

Section 6 RULE VIOLATIONS

Article 1: Violations of league rules will be acted on promptly and penalties will be assessed by the MAC Commissioner and reviewed by the Commission, which by majority vote, can overrule or reinforce the Commissioner and his/her actions. The penalty or penalties assessed against an organization, coach, parent, cheerleader, or player can be one or more of the following:

- Fine
- Suspension of coaches or individuals within an organization
- Probation
- Any action deemed appropriate by majority vote of the MAC Commission

Article 2: Assaults, verbal abuse, profanity or display of poor sportsmanship by a coach, parent, participant, club official or guest at any MAC function will not be tolerated. Illegal drugs, alcoholic beverages and their consumption will not be permitted during any MAC function. Penalties will be enforced.

Article 3: A coach, cheerleader, or player that has been ejected from a game will automatically be suspended for the next game. The coach, cheerleader, or player will be allowed to practice but will not be allowed to participate except as a spectator in the stands. The MAC Commissioner, upon review, is authorized to make an exception if it is determined that an exception is warranted. A coach, cheerleader, or player may also receive a harsher penalty if warranted by the MAC Commissioner.

Article 4: A club must report to the Commission office in a timely manner any rule violations of the MAC Bylaws.

Section 7 CERTIFICATIONS AND CLINICS

Article 1: Each head coach and all members of each coaching staff will be ASEP certified in Cheerleading & Spirit and will show proof when requested by a Commission officer. The President of each member organization will turn in a list of all coaches involved in their program and a copy of each coach's ASEP card to the MAC office prior to the first regular season game.

Article 2: Exception to ASEP certification would be School Certified Coaches.

57 Article 3: All Coaches on the sideline must wear their MAC pass on a lanyard around their neck. Coaches will not be provided with their pass until they have completed the required certification.

Article 4: The head coach is responsible for their sideline. If a sideline coach is not wearing the certification, the coach in question will be removed from the sideline and prohibited from coaching. The head coach and the coach in violation will both be subject to suspension from practices and/or games.

Article 5: The number of non-player personnel on each cheer squad's sideline shall not exceed a total of three (3). These three (3) include the coach and two assistant coaches.

Section 8 GENERAL COACHES RULES

Article 1: A child's health and well-being will be the first objective for any coach.

Article 2: For safety and liability purposes, MAC requires a head coach be 18 years of age or older. (A head coach refers to the primary adult responsible for the squad.)

Article 3: A coach will adhere to all rules and regulations as set forth by their organization and the MAC Conference.

Article 4: An ASEP Certified adult must be present at all practices, games, and competitions.

Article 5: A coach will not be permitted to use profanity, abusive language, alcohol, tobacco of any kind, or conduct herself/himself in a manner that could be deemed offensive. This rule will apply to all practices, games, and functions in which the team is participating in while representing your club and MAC.

Article 6: If a problem or situation arises with another MAC Organization, the MAC Director of Cheerleading & Spirit and/or MAC Commissioner will be notified immediately.

Article 7: If a problem or situation arises within the Cheerleading & Spirit squad, the coach is expected to resolve any grievance. If a solution is not reached, the coaches are expected to direct the grievance to their Organization. If the grievance is still not resolved, the MAC Director of Cheerleading & Spirit will be notified. The MAC Commissioner shall be notified of the grievance if not resolved after following the above standards. This only applies to MAC rule violations.

Article 8: No degrading or negative cheers and chants towards another squad will be performed at any time.

Article 9: Each cheer club will be responsible for the conduct of all their coaches. Coaches are responsible for the conduct of their parents.

Section 9 PARTICIPATION RULES

Article 1: MAC Cheer Council prohibits Cheerleading & Spirit tryouts of any type. Every participant who completes registration requirements with an organization shall be allowed to participate on a cheer squad. This rule applies to both recreational as well as competitive squads.

Article 2: Each organization is required to define their Cheerleading & Spirit registration dates by advertising the beginning and ending dates. Every participant must be accepted until the ending date for registration. It is strongly recommended the advertisement be kept for verification should the need arise.

Article 3: Violation of the participation rule will be dealt with harshly by the MAC Commission and will result in the removal of any and all persons involved. All coaches, assistant coaches and squads are required to attend ALL MAC season games and playoffs that are scheduled for your club. Attendance at pre-season games and/or scrimmages and post season tournaments is at the discretion of the Club Cheer Director.

59 Article 4: Every parent will read and sign a Parents Code of Ethics prior to any participation and each cheerleader will be required to read and sign a Cheerleader Code of Conduct. It will be the responsibility of the cheer club to have the signed documents on file.

Section 10 PRACTICE AND MEMBER CONDUCT REGULATIONS

Article 1: Each Club will be responsible for setting their practice standards, including, but not limited to: the maximum number of practice days and the maximum length of practices per each age group.

Article 2: Members are expected to conduct themselves with the utmost respect toward teammates, coaches and competing teams at all organized practices, games, or any function representing their club and/or MAC. If a member is ejected from any MAC event, the club is to notify MAC immediately.

Article 3: Organized practice will begin no earlier than June 1st prior to the upcoming season start.

Section 11 STUNT AND TUMBLING REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

Article 1: No stunting is allowed without a coach present. This applies to all practices, games, and competitions or any function where the squad would be practicing or performing. Because of the increased athleticism of today's cheerleaders and the complexity of some stunts performed, there is a risk, as in any athletic sport, of serious injury. MAC strongly encourages all cheer clubs to provide instruction on stunting for all coaches from a stunting professional, prior to a squad being permitted to stunt, to reduce the risk(s) involved.

Article 2: There is to be ABSOLUTELY NO stunting or tumbling in wet conditions. Wet conditions include dew on grass and rain.

Article 3: Any stunt above shoulder level, requires a spotter at all times.

Article 4: Each Club shall determine their stunt eligibility for each grade level.

Article 5: All clubs are required to provide a copy of their stunting guidelines to the MAC office prior to any practicing or performing of any stunts. Failure to comply with this rule will result in a fine, suspension of cheer squad, and/or any action deemed appropriate by the MAC Commission Officers.

Article 6: MAC Cheer & Spirit Council strongly advises that each organization obtain parent consent before teaching or performing any stunting.

Article 7: Due to the dangers involved with stunting, violation of any stunt rule will result in immediate and severe disciplinary action by MAC.

Article 8: In order to progress to more difficult stunts, a stunt group must demonstrate that they can safely and cleanly execute lower level stunts consistently. For example, in order for a 3rd grade stunt group to progress to a single-leg prep, they must first show that they can safely and cleanly execute a standard prep repetitively and consistently. Progressing to more difficult stunts will be at the sole discretion of the coaches and coaches are required and expected to closely monitor each stunt group's execution and safety in order to determine if they are ready to progress.

Article 9: Advanced Stunts: Inversions, twisting, flipping, etc. skills should be taught by a certified stunt coach. Any coach wishing to teach advanced stunts, not on the chart above, should contact a USA Cheer Certified coach to be trained on how to teach advanced skills to MAC athletes. A Certification Form must be submitted to the MAC Spirit Director PRIOR to teaching advanced level skills.

***** GOLDEN RULE: WHEN IN DOUBT – DON'T STUNT * * ***

SEE CHARTS ON NEXT PAGE AS AN EXAMPLE GUIDELINE WHEN DEFINING STUNT ELIGIBILITY.

Grade	Allowed Stunts	Dismounts	Focus Points	Restrictions
1st	Thigh Stand • Knee Sit • Assisted Shoulder Sit • Assisted Prep	Step Down ONLY	Tight body • Confidence • Listening	No extensions • No single-leg • Spot everything
2nd	Shoulder Sit • Prep (<u>Elevator</u>) • Thigh Stand Transitions • Braced with hands, <u>1 legged</u> prep	Intro Cradle	Timing • Stability • Strong bases	No extensions • No twisting • not from ground up
3rd	Prep Stunts • Prep Liberty • Half Turns • Sponge Load → Prep to extension	Clean Cradle	Control • Transitions • Clean catches	No extensions unless club director approves it is mastered.
4th	Extension • Prep → Extension • Liberty (prep/intro ext.)	Cradle (with pop)	Strength • Stability overhead • Timing	Limited at extension
5th	Extension Liberty • Heel Stretch (<u>prep→ext.</u>) • Turns	Cradle w/ pop • Intro variations	Single-leg control • Flexibility • Clean transitions	No advanced twisting
6th	Full Extension Single-Leg • Heel Stretch • Bow & Arrow • Tic-Tocs • Pyramids	•Cradle w/ pop twist down, if club director approves	Execution • Synchronization • Advanced transitions	Must show mastery before advancing. • No unassisted flips.

Stunt PROGRESSION by Grade	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH+
 Thigh Stand / Shoulder Sit	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Prep	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Single Leg Prep	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Prep to Extension	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
 Ground Up Extension	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
 Single Leg Extensions	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
 Basket Toss	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
 Twist Cradle	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

Section 12 MAC TACKLE FOOTBALL GATE

Article 1: Everyone, including coaches and sponsors, will be required to pay gate admission or furnish a MAC game pass. If a coach or sponsor does not have their pass, he/she will be required to pay the gate admission fee.

Article 2: Any coach or person(s) caught in an attempt to gain entry with a false or reproduced MAC pass, gain entry without their pass and/or refuse to pay gate admission, or caught attempting to “hand-off” a MAC pass to another individual is subject to having their pass revoked, subject to suspension, and/or a fine up to \$100.00.

Section 13 HALF-TIME PERFORMANCES

Article 1: All cheer squads will be allowed to perform a half time routine. The cheer squad has many responsibilities during the football game; the half-time performance is one of them. Half-time is the time to motivate the crowd and get them ready for the second half.

Article 2: Half time is 10 minutes (15 minutes maximum, if necessary with prior approval from your club). Guest cheerleaders or spirit squads will perform first, followed by the home cheerleaders and/or spirit squads. Home fields are only required to allow one guest performance per half-time. No field official/field representative has the authority to cancel a halftime performance without prior consent of the MAC Commissioner. ALL performances are limited to 3 minutes max.

Article 3: If half-time consists of a homecoming/recognition activity, the guest organization must be allowed to perform first and all activities cannot exceed 15 minutes combined.

Section 14 MUSIC

Article 1: Each squad MUST provide an appointed individual to be in the press box during half time performance. His/her responsibility will be to announce each squad member's name as well as to start and stop music for the performance. (Providing a tape recording of each squad member's name might be an option).

Article 2: Each squad must have their own equipment to play any music for performance.

Article 3: Please keep in mind that MAC promotes a family environment, therefore, music that contains sexual references, words and/or sounds considered inappropriate are not allowed. Dance routines that contain sexually suggestive movements are considered inappropriate and therefore not allowed.

Section 15 COMPETITIONS

Article 1: All Cheerleading & Spirit coaches will adhere to the MAC Rules and Regulations when attending all competitions. Insurance provided by MAC does not cover guidelines outside of our organization.

Article 2: All MAC football games (season and postseason playoffs) are priority and must be fulfilled.

Article 3: MAC will host a MAC cheer competition at the end of the season. All Clubs must participate and compete even if only at the Sideline level.

Article 4: If your athlete is cheering up on the sidelines they are NOT allowed to cheer up but 1 level during competition. (You must get your club directors approval to cheer up on the sidelines during games.)

Section 16 SAFETY & APPEARANCE GUIDELINES

Article 1: Jewelry (including belly button rings), gum, or candy, are not allowed during practice or games. This rule applies to all cheerleaders, coaches and/or advisors who are actively participating at practices and games.

Article 2: Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept at an appropriate length at practice and games to minimize the risk of injury. This rule applies to all cheerleaders, coaches and/or advisors who are actively participating at practices and games.

Article 3: Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.

A copy of medical releases should be kept by the coach at all practices, games, competitions, or performances.

Be mindful, when attending out of town games, of the location of medics, ambulances, etc.

Prepare a quick and handy reference chart on squad members that may be diabetic, allergic to bee stings, asthmatic, etc. Ask your parents to inform you of prescribed medications cheerleaders may be taking.

Make certain the squad is properly warmed-up before each practice or game. Failure to do so is one of the largest contributors of injuries.

Always inspect cheer areas for debris and uneven terrain. Remove all debris from the area. Keep water bottles, bags, etc. orderly and away from the cheering area.

Section 17 CHEER ETIQUETTE

Article 1: It is appropriate to cheer when your team comes on the field, when your team or a player makes an exceptional play either on offense or defense, during a big defensive play, between quarters and at halftime, during timeouts, when the other team is kicking a field goal or extra point, and when your team is kicking off or punting.

Article 2: When an injured player leaves the game, it is appropriate to cheer encouragement and tribute to that player. This includes a player on the other team.

Article 3: It is not appropriate to cheer when a player is injured. This includes a player on the other team. It is advisable to take a knee until the injured player leaves the game.

Article 4: Negative, demeaning, or chanting/cheering for the purpose of taunting the opponent will not be tolerated. Applies also when more than one cheerleading or spirit squad is on the same sideline.

Article 5: All cheer & spirit members are representing the MAC and your prospective cheer & spirit clubs, so please conduct yourself in a manner that reflects good sportsmanship, a spirit of cooperation with coaches, parents, and other cheerleaders as well as a care and concern for yourself and others around you.

Section 18 RULE CHANGES

Article 1: Rule changes may be amended, adopted, or repealed each season by the MAC Membership and/or Commissioner.