



Oregon School Activities Association

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September 4, 2026

To: Athletic Directors, Activities Directors and Cheerleading Coaches

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Subject: 2026-27 Cheerleading Reminders

Included within this memo are reminders regarding OSAA policies and NFHS rules specific to cheerleading that each coaching staff should review as we begin a new season. The links provided will take you directly to more detailed information regarding that specific reminder. Each school offering cheerleading should have received one copy of the NFHS Spirit Rules Book from the OSAA, and if your Athletic Director has your email address listed on the OSAA website under your school, you will be able to have one NFHS eBook of the rules. If your school didn't receive your copy, please let me know. Feel free to contact me if you have questions and best of luck this season!

GENERAL INFORMATION

[OSAA Handbook](#)

The 2026-27 OSAA Handbook is available on the OSAA website. This handbook contains overall association rules and policies.

[OSAA Cheerleading Handbook](#)

The 2026-27 OSAA Cheerleading Handbook is available on the OSAA website. This handbook contains information regarding important season dates, NFHS rules information, OSAA cheerleading rules and policies, state championship information and qualifications, etc.

[2026-27 State Rules Interpreter](#)

Sarah Whaley will continue to be the State Rules Interpreter (SRI) for Cheerleading. SRI bulletins throughout the season will be issued and posted on the OSAA website including this year's [first bulletin](#). All rules interpretation requests should be sent to the [Safety Question Inquiry Form](#). Additional communication can be sent to cheerleading.sri@osaa.org.

[2026-27 OSAA Cheerleading Handbook Changes](#)

Game Day has been broken out into small and large divisions and schools are now allowed to participate in both Game Day and Traditional divisions at the OSAA State Championships.

1. Cheerleading State Championship Rules and Procedures

1.1. Eligibility

1.1.6 School Representation. *Only one varsity squad from each OSAA high school shall be allowed to compete in a division. No school shall be represented in more than one Game Day division and one Traditional division. The squad may be a combination of two or more varsity squads (i.e., football and basketball squads may be combined for the Cheerleading State Championships.)*

<u>Division</u>	<u>Squad Size</u>	<u>Squad Gender</u>	<u>Minimum Division Entry</u>
3A/2A/1A – Small – Traditional	15 or fewer	Females	5
3A/2A/1A – Large – Traditional	16 – 30	Females	5
4A – Small – Traditional	15 or fewer	Females	5
4A – Large – Traditional	16 – 30	Females	5
5A – Small – Traditional	15 or fewer	Females	5
5A – Large – Traditional	16 – 30	Females	5

6A – Small – Traditional	15 or fewer	Females	5
6A – Large – Traditional	16 – 30	Females	5
4A/3A/2A/1A Coed - Traditional	30 or fewer	Coeducational	5
6A/5A – Coed – Traditional	30 or fewer	Coeducational	5
3A/2A/1A – Small - Game Day	15 or fewer	Coeducational	5
3A/2A/1A – Large - Game Day	16 -30	Coeducational	5
4A – Small - Game Day	15 or fewer	Coeducational	5
4A – Large - Game Day	16 -30	Coeducational	5
5A – Small - Game Day	15 or fewer	Coeducational	5
5A – Large - Game Day	16 -30	Coeducational	5
6A – Small - Game Day	15 or fewer	Coeducational	5
6A – Large - Game Day	16-30	Coeducational	5

2026-27 NFHS Spirit Rule Changes

See the [NFHS website](#) for a complete list of changes.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Health and Safety Information

The OSAA website contains a variety of information regarding heat and hydration, lightning safety, air quality, and concussion management. This page contains links to informational items that all coaches should familiarize themselves with as practices begin.

Pre-Event Safety Timeout

Prior to the start of each contest (at all levels) the site supervisor and/or home head coach shall gather the following personnel to review these questions; Site Supervisor, Coaches, Officials, and Medical Personnel.

- ✓ **Who is the onsite contact for each school?**
- ✓ **Is there a qualified medical professional present? If not, who will lead in case of an emergency?**
- ✓ **Is there an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for the venue? Who calls 911 and who meets the ambulance (and where)?**
- ✓ **Where's the nearest AED?**
- ✓ **Environmental concerns? (heat index, air quality, lightning)**
- ✓ **Contest Interruption Policy: Cover policy and who officials are communicating with if behavior is reported to them**

Heat Index Alerts

ADs and coaches should subscribe to heat alerts through the OSAA website. Alerts are sent about 11am daily when the forecasted heat index in your area is high. If an alert is received, OSAA policy requires that schools check the actual heat index within one hour prior to the start of practice to determine if modifications must be made. If no alert is received, no further action is required by the school that day.

Synthetic Turf Field – Heat Guidance

The OSAA's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) has produced guidance for use of turf fields when it's warm outside. Synthetic turf field surface temperatures can reach up to 200 degrees Fahrenheit, which not only increases the risk of heat illness, but may cause burns to exposed skin. Radiant heat from the synthetic surface can have a "heat island" effect that may not be accounted for if Heat Index is checked by local Zip Code.

The following guidelines should be considered when practicing, working out, or playing contests on synthetic turf from May 1 through September 30 when the outdoor temperature exceeds 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperature should be measured on-site within one hour of the start of the event and monitored for the duration of the event.

1. If outdoor temperature is greater than 80 degrees Fahrenheit coaches should be aware of increased risk and observe athletes for signs of heat illness. Additional rest, water, and shade breaks should be utilized as needed.
2. If outdoor temperature is greater than 90 degrees Fahrenheit consider avoiding the use of synthetic turf fields between peak sun times of noon to 3pm.
3. If outdoor temperature is greater than 95 degrees Fahrenheit consider moving all practices, workouts, and contests to natural grass fields.

Air Quality Guidelines

It's important to review the updated [Air Quality Guidelines](#) , which were revised in June 2026. School personnel are now required to use the AirNow Fire and Smoke Map at <https://fire.airnow.gov>, which includes circles for DEQ/AirNow monitors and squares for Purple Air monitors. The policy still allows schools to participate in practices/contests up to an AQI of 150. Cancellation is required for outdoor events when AQI reaches 151 (red). The policy suggests schools consider the impact of elevated AQI lasting for multiple days and the impact of prolonged exposure for athletes and staff on multiple practice session days when making decisions.

Practice Model

The Practice Model requires athletes to have a minimum of five days of actual practice prior to participation in a jamboree or interscholastic contest. Please familiarize yourself with this policy. Notable requirements contained in the policy include:

- ✓ Prohibition on consecutive days of multiple practice sessions
- ✓ A teaching session as one of the practice sessions on the first two multiple practice days (the intensity, duration and pace of all practice components in a teaching session shall be modified from a normal practice session)
- ✓ ***In Cheerleading and Dance/Drill, choreography sessions where students are learning routine choreography while working at a reduced pace, and not conditioning, are also considered teaching sessions.***
- ✓ Maximum of one hour of weight training before or after practice on a single practice session day