



TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT
ATHLETIC ORGANIZATIONS
(TAIAO)

SUBCHAPTER X
Cheer Athletic Plan
June 1, 2024

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Except to the extent otherwise provided, the Cheer Plan is governed by and subject to the General Rules of TAI AO.

PART A – Rosters, Tryouts, & Club Participation

Section 600 – cheerleader Eligibility Roster

- A. Teams participating in TAI AO must register with TAI AO and submit a cheerleader Eligibility Roster through the TAI AO website by **August 15th**.
- B. The roster submitted to TAI AO must include:
 - cheerleader first and last name
 - age
 - grade level
 - date of birth
- C. Cheer follows TAI AO Eligibility guidelines as stated in the General Rules (*see Subchapter G, Section 236*).

Section 601 – Official Team Roster

- A. Teams participating in TAI AO postseason competition must submit an Official Team Roster to the TAI AO Cheer Committee by **September 1st**.
- B. The High School Official Team Roster must include all expected cheerleaders who will participate at the High School level during the current Year of Participation. All varsity and junior varsity cheerleaders must be included on the Official Team Roster.
- C. The Middle School Official Team Roster must include all expected cheerleaders who will participate at the Middle School level during the current Year of Participation.
- D. The Official Team Roster must include the link to the team page in MaxPreps (high school level only) and the following information for each cheerleader:
 - cheerleader first and last name
 - age
 - grade level
 - date of birth
 - number of seasons of competitive cheer experience
- E. The Official Team Roster is the final roster for the remainder of the season. This roster will be used to determine Region and Division assignments for postseason competition. cheerleaders who are temporarily ineligible for academic or other reasons must be included on the Official Team Roster.

Section 602 – Tryouts

- A. Member organizations are prohibited from holding tryouts in which cheerleaders are cut from the team or roster.
- B. Teams must accept registered cheerleaders and not close registration early in an attempt to prevent athletes from participating.
- C. Member organizations may hold “position tryouts” to determine cheerleader positions and/or to determine which cheerleaders will play at the Varsity level and which cheerleaders will play at the Junior Varsity level. Position tryouts may not be used to cut cheerleaders from the team or roster.

Section 603 – Competitive Team and School Team Participation

- A. A Competitive Team is defined as a cheer team which requires tryouts and is not sponsored

by a member organization. No more than 4 cheerleaders from any one member organization may play together on a competitive team.

- B. A School team is defined as a member organization sponsored cheer team.
- C. Cheerleaders may participate on a Competitive Team during the Off Season and Summer. At no time may cheerleaders participate on a School Team outside of the Regular Season and Spring Training.

Section 604 – Compliance

- A. TAI AO expects each Member Organization to abide by the TAI AO rules, policies, procedures, and guidelines. Each Member Organization is expected to act with integrity and to self-regulate in accordance with the TAI AO General Rules, policies, and procedures.
- B. Failure to submit rosters by the stated deadline will result in disciplinary action up to and including non-qualification for postseason cheerleader honors including Regional and State Tournament participation.
- C. Violations of TAI AO policies regarding tryouts, club participation, and school team participation will result in disciplinary action up to and including non-qualification for postseason cheerleader honors including Regional and State Tournament participation.
- D. Cheer follows TAI AO compliance guidelines as stated in the General Rules (*Subchapter I – Discipline, Protests & Appeals, sections 246-247*).

Section 605 to 609 is reserved for expansion.

PART B – Region & Division Assignment

The Rules in Subchapter J “Classifications” also apply to this Subchapter N, Part B.

Section 610 – Region & Division Assignment

- A. Region and Division assignment will be determined by the Cheer Committee following the **September 1st** deadline for Official Team Roster submission.
- B. Region assignment will be determined by the member organization’s geographic location.
- C. Division assignment will be determined by the Official Team Roster.
 - **Division 1:** A roster count of $X+1$ cheerleaders or more, or 7+ seasons combined cheerleader experience in competitive cheer.
 - **Division 2:** A roster count of X cheerleaders or fewer.
 - **JV Division:** All Junior Varsity teams will play in the JV Division.
- D. Division assignment for a member organization’s inaugural season of a cheer team will be Division 2 regardless of the roster count (assuming fewer than 7 seasons of combined cheerleader experience in competitive cheer). This exception is made only for the first year of the organization’s cheer program.

The roster count for division assignments will change from year to year. Each year the committee will determine the value of X based on roster submissions. For example, if $X = 12$, then D1 is 13 or more cheerleaders and D2 is 12 or fewer cheerleaders.

Section 611 – New Member Organizations

- A. Upon admission to TAI AO, each new member organization will be assigned to a region and division by the Cheer Committee.
- B. Roster Data for any organization applying for membership in TAI AO must be submitted with its league application.

Section 612 is reserved for expansion.

PART C – Off Season, Spring Training, & Summer

The Rules in Subchapter K – “General Plan” also apply to this Subchapter N, Part C.

Section 613 – Calendar

The TAI AO calendar for Cheer outside of the Regular Season is as follows:

- **Off Season:** From the conclusion of the Regular Season through **May 31st**.
- **Spring Training:** Beginning **March 1st** and ending **May 31st**.
- **Summer:** Beginning **June 1st** and ending **July 31st**.

Section 614 – Off Season (*See Section 264 of the General Rules*)

- A. Off Season workouts can be held anytime other than Spring Training or the Regular Season.
- B. Off Season workouts may include individual cheer skills, strength training, and conditioning.
- C. Workouts may be conducted starting no earlier than 6:00 AM and concluding no later than 9:00 PM. Off Season workouts shall not exceed a total of 300 minutes per week.
- D. Coaches should explain to cheerleaders that participation in Off Season activities is strictly voluntary and never required. Participation must not be a prerequisite for participation on a cheer team or getting more playing time.

Section 615 – Member Organization Facilities Use (Off Season) (*See Section 262 of the General Rules*)

Section 616 – Spring Training

- A. Spring Cheer Workouts (“Spring Training”) must be an optional activity.
- B. Organized practices may include team and individual instruction in sport specific skills.
- C. A team is permitted:
 - No more than 18 total practice days
 - Only one practice session per day
 - No practice which exceeds 3 hours
 - A maximum of 12 hours per week
- D. No contests (matches or scrimmages) with other schools are allowed.
- E. No Sunday activities unless authorized by TAI AO.
- F. Coaches should explain to cheerleaders that participation in Spring Training is strictly voluntary and never required. Participation must not be a prerequisite for participation on a cheer team or getting more playing time.

Section 617 – Summer Activities (*See Section 265 of the General Rules*)

- A. Summer activities must be optional.
- B. Summer activities may include individual cheer skills, strength training, and conditioning.
- C. Summer activities may be conducted starting no earlier than 6:00 AM and concluding no later than 9:00 PM. Summer activities must not exceed 2 hours per day and a total of 8 hours per week.
- D. Cheer Camp (day camp and overnight camp) is permitted, as long as strenuous physical activity is limited to 6 hours per day.

E. Coaches should explain to cheerleaders that participation in Summer activities is strictly voluntary and never required. Participation must not be a prerequisite for participation on a cheer team or getting more playing time.

Section 618 – Member Organization Facility Use (Summer) (*See Section 262 of the General Rules*)

Sections 619 to 620 are reserved for expansion.

PART D – Regular Season

Section 621 – Calendar

- A. Organized Practices may begin **August 1st**.
- B. Regular Season cheer events may begin as early as the first Monday of August.
- C. No cheer events will be scheduled on Sunday.

Section 622 – Organized Practice Definition & Schedule

- A. Beginning **August 1st** and continuing until **August 15th**, a member organization may schedule up to two organized practices per day. From **August 15th** until the end of Postseason play, only one organized practice per day may be scheduled.
- B. The maximum length of an organized practice cannot exceed 3 hours.
- C. Except for cheerleader participation on Club/Select teams, organized practices are only allowed during Spring Training and the Regular Season (to include postseason playoffs).
- D. Cheer organized practice is defined as team and individual instruction in sport specific skills. The following are typical “practice activities” included in organized practices:
 - Actual cheer practice
 - Sport specific skill instruction
 - Mandatory conditioningThe following are not considered “practice activities”:
 - Meetings
 - Injury treatment
 - Weight training
 - Water breaks / Rest breaks
 - Film study
 - Voluntary conditioning (may not be coach directed)

Section 624 – Game Participation Limits

- A. **Weekly Limit:** No member organization or cheerleader may schedule or participate in the lesser of two days of games or four games in one calendar week (Monday through Saturday). For example, a cheerleader may not participate in a middle school game on Thursday, varsity game on Friday and JV game on Saturday. They would need to select two of these days to participate.
- B. **Pep Rally:** Cheerleaders may cheer at a double header (two contests at the same site on one school night) or participate in a pep rally prior to a contest. This does not violate the weekly limit.

PART E – Uniforms & Equipment

Section 625 – cheerleader Uniform Requirements

A. General Uniform Requirements

B. Uniform Top

C. Uniform Bottom

D. Undergarments

Section 626 - Equipment

A. Additional Gear

B. Cheers

Sections 627 - 644 are reserved for expansion.

PART F – Postseason Competition

Section 645 – Postseason Playoff Schedule & Seeding

- A. The TAIIO Postseason schedule will be determined by the Cheer Committee on an annual basis.
- B. The Cheer Committee is responsible for determining the member organization teams participating in the competition for each Division.
- C. The Cheer Committee is responsible for seeding each Divisional tournament event.

Section 646 – Middle School, JV, and Varsity Participation

- A. Middle School teams will compete in the State Tournament in a separate division..
- B. Junior Varsity teams will compete in the JV Division at the State Tournament.
- C. Varsity teams will compete at the Division 1 and Division 2 levels at the State Tournament.

Section 647 – Minimum Match Requirement

- A. Member organizations are required to cheer at a minimum of 3 Regular Season games during the fall season (Aug 1 to November 30th) to qualify for Postseason competition.
- B. Cheerleaders are required to cheer at a minimum of 3 Regular Season games during the fall season (Aug 1 to November 30th) to qualify for Postseason competition.

Section 648 is reserved for expansion.

Section 649 - State Tournament

- A. The format of the TAIIO State Tournament will be determined annually by the Cheer Committee.
- B. The State Tournament will be played at a central location designated by TAIIO.
- C. TAIIO will manage all game day activities.
- D. The TAIIO Steering Committee will make every effort to choose playoff locations that can accommodate the expected crowd.
- E. The TAIIO Steering Committee will determine a reasonable ticket price for the State Tournament. The Committee will consider the venue, the expense of the event, the impact on expected spectator population, and the overall TAIIO organizational welfare in determining admission. This policy is consistent with those procedures used by like organizations and is the guidance that will be applicable to all TAIIO activities.
- F. Coaches, cheerleaders, team trainer, team manager (one per team) and officials are exempt from paying admission. The Cheer Committee may not exceed the number of free admissions granted in the General Rules.
- G. All match and season passes issued by any member organization are suspended for the State Tournament.

Sections 650 to 659 are reserved for expansion.

PART G – Postseason Honors and All-Star Game

Sections 660 to 664 are reserved for expansion.

PART H – Removal from Contest

The Rules in Subchapter I – “Discipline, Protests & Appeals” also apply to this Subchapter N, Part I.

Section 665 - Removal from Contest

- A. **Incident Report:** If a coach or cheerleader is ejected from a contest, the Member Organization must file an Incident Report with TAI AO on the TAI AO authorized form.
 - 1. The Incident Report is due by noon the second school day following the match.
 - 2. The Member Organization must provide the opposing team’s head coach with a copy of the filed Incident Report.
 - 3. Member organizations who fail to properly report an ejection are subject to further sanctions.
- B. **Discipline of cheerleaders**
 - 1. Any cheerleader ejected from a contest will be suspended from the next contest as shown on the schedule submitted to TAI AO prior to the season.
 - 2. Any cheerleader ejected from a contest for a 2nd time within the same season will be suspended from the next 2 contests.
 - 3. Any cheerleader ejected from a contest for a 3rd time within the same season will be suspended for the remainder of the season (including postseason).
- C. **Discipline of Coaches**
 - 1. Any coach ejected from a contest will receive a private reprimand and will be suspended from the next contest as shown on the schedule submitted to TAI AO prior to the season.
 - 2. Any coach ejected from a contest for a 2nd time within the same season will receive a public reprimand and will be suspended from the next 2 contests.
 - 3. Any coach ejected from a contest for a 3rd time within the same season will be suspended for the remainder of the season (including postseason).
- A. The TAI AO Chairman will determine appropriate discipline in addition to the minimum sanctions listed above.
- B. If a total of three ejections, coaches and cheerleaders combined, are received by a member organization during the season, the athletic director and coaching staff of the member organization must meet with the TAI AO Cheer Committee Chairman and TAI AO Commissioner.

Section 666 - Dispute with an Official

- A. A coach who deliberately comes into physical contact with or threatens to harm an official will receive a minimum five (5) game suspension.
- B. A cheerleader who deliberately comes into physical contact with or threatens to harm an official will receive a minimum five (5) game suspension.

Sections 667 to 680 are reserved for expansion.

PART I – Coach Training & Concussions

Section 681 - Coach Training & Certification (*See Section 272 of the General Rules*)

Section 682 - Concussions

- A. In addition to required training, every TAI AO head cheer coach will follow the UIL mandated protocol related to any student who shows signs, symptoms, or behaviors associated with a concussion.
- B. UIL Concussion Protocol mandates:
 - 1. cheerleader is immediately removed from the contest or practice.
 - 2. cheerleader may not return to play on the same day.
 - 3. cheerleader may not return until cleared to play by an appropriate health-care professional.
- C. Return to Play protocol must, at a minimum, include the following:
 - Day 1** – 24 hours symptom free
 - Day 2** – Light aerobic exercise (5-10 minutes of light workout)
 - Day 3** – Moderate aerobic exercise (15-20 minutes of running at moderate intensity)
 - Day 4** – Non-contact training drills, weight training, resistance training
 - Day 5** – Full contact practice and training
 - Day 6** – Eligible for game play

PART J – Videotaping & Filming

Section 683 – Media, Videotaping, and Filming (*See Section 275 of the General Rules*)

PART K – Middle School Cheer

Rules in Sections 600-604, 613-618, 621-624, 641-642, 645-648, 665-666, 681-683 also apply to Middle School Cheer.

Section 684 - Season Calendar

- A. Organized Practices may begin **August 1st**.
- B. Regular Season matches may begin as early as the first Monday of August.
- C. No matches will be scheduled on Sunday.

Section 685 - Eligibility

- A. Participation in TAI AO Middle School cheer is open to students who:
 - 1. Will reach their 10th birthday no later than September 1st of the calendar year of participation.
 - 2. Will not reach their 14th birthday prior to May 31st of the calendar year of participation.
- B. cheerleaders may have up to four consecutive years of eligibility at the Middle School level (5th through 8th grade).
- C. cheerleaders who turn 14 between June 1st and September 1st have the option to play Middle School or High School cheer. If the member organization and family agree to advance the student to High School play, this is acceptable, but will begin the student's four years of High School participation.
- D. A member organization may adopt eligibility rules related to Middle School participation that are more stringent than TAI AO rules for eligibility (including academic eligibility).