



**POLICY AND PROCEDURES MANUAL
FOR
FALL AND WINTER
SPIRIT
2026-27**



NHIAA SPIRIT COMMITTEE

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INTRODUCTION

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POINTS OF SPECIAL EMPHASIS

➤ A cheer component will become part of the rubric effective 2026-27.

➤ **Important Dates:**

Fall:

1st date to practice:	All Divisions	August 17, 2026
1st event:	All Divisions	September 4, 2026
After five (5) calendar days of organized practice*		
Last date to cheer:	All Divisions	November 2, 2026**

* No change in the process

**Does not include Thanksgiving Day Games and Tournament Games.

The Fall Spirit Championships will take place on Sunday, November 8, 2026, at Pinkerton Academy and will have 2 sessions.

- Session I: Divisions III & II at 10:00 a.m.
- Session II: Division I at TBD

Winter:

Divisions I & II

1 st date to practice	November 30, 2026
1 st event	December 11, 2026
Last date to schedule	February 26, 2027
Last date to play	February 28, 2027

Division III

1 st date to practice	November 16, 2026
1 st event	December 4, 2026
Last date to schedule	February 26, 2027
Last date to play	February 28, 2027

Day 1 (Qualifier Round) (WINTER CHAMPIONSHIP ONLY)

The Day 1 (qualifier round) will take place on Sunday, March 7, 2027, at Pinkerton Academy and will have 2 sessions.

- Session I: Divisions III & II at 10:00 a.m.
- Session II: Division I at TBD

The top five and ties for 5th place in each division will qualify for Day 2 (Finals) of the Winter State Tournament on March 11, 2027, at Pinkerton Academy at 6:00 p.m.

➤ **Spirit Rosters are required to be submitted by all schools competing in the NHIAA State**

Tournaments. Spirit Rosters must be submitted on the NHIAA website. Schools not competing need to indicate NOT COMPETING on survey.

- *Competition teams shall be limited to no more than 22 members who have participated in practices and cheered at games throughout the current spirit season. The remainder of the roster may include up to five (5) non-athletes. Rosters shall be completed via the NHIAA website. If a team is going to make the tournament, a team photo in uniform (no warm-ups allowed) must be submitted with a photo lineup. If no

photo is received a logo will be supplemented. *NOTE: A maximum of 20 members will be on the competition floor. The additional two are to have the same eligibility as the other members in the event they are needed to replace an injured athlete. (CM 5.2015; 11.2016)

- All competition events outside of the NHIAA State Championship must be sanctioned in accordance with By-Law Article VIII, Sanctioning Procedures for Athletic Competition and Section X: Sanctioning in this Policy and Procedures Manual. Only requests from member schools or other State Association member schools shall be considered.

➤ **ATHLETIC TRAINERS:**

Schools requesting medical services are to provide the necessary supplies for the athletic trainer for both regular season meets and tournament events.

➤ **FORMS TO BE SUBMITTED ONLINE:**

1. 2026-27 Fall Spirit Roster/Competition Application – Due Wednesday, October 14, 2026
2. 2026-27 Winter Spirit Roster/Competition Application – Due Wednesday, February 17, 2027

➤ **SPIRIT DIVISIONAL ALIGNMENTS:**

Fall Spirit

**Classification of Fall Spirit Schools
2026-27/2027-28**

DIV. I (1050+)		DIV. II (600-1049)		DIV. III (1-599)	
14 Schools		18 Schools		9 Schools	
Pinkerton	2979	Goffstown	1032	Monadnock	475
Portsmouth-Oyster River	1779	Merrimack	1013	Sanborn	433
Nashua South	1697	Winnacunnet	988	Stevens	432
Nashua North	1545	Alvirne	955	Somersworth	411
Dover	1423	Timberlane	934	Trinity	345
Bedford	1367	Windham	884	Campbell	337
Spaulding	1346	Man. West	756	Raymond	326
Man. Memorial	1345	Kingswood	727	Franklin	279
Concord	1329	Pembroke	718	Newport	263
Keene	1263	Merrimack Valley	715		
Londonderry	1219	Hollis Brookline	713		
Man. Central	1106	Souhegan	709		
Salem	1069	Plymouth	643		
*Bishop Guertin	767	Lebanon	642	*Petition	
		Bow	639		
		Milford	613		
		ConVal	603		
		*Pelham	466		

Winter Spirit**Classification of Winter Spirit Schools
2026-27/2027-28**

DIV. I (1050+)		DIV. II (600-1049)		DIV. III (1-599)	
13 Schools		18 Schools		16 Schools	
Pinkerton	2979	Goffstown	1032	Sanborn	433
Nashua South	1697	Merrimack	1013	Stevens	432
Nashua North	1545	Winnacunnet	988	Somersworth	411
Dover	1423	Portsmouth	983	Prospect Mountain	408
Bedford	1367	Alvirne	955	Winnisquam	372
Spaulding	1346	Timberlane	934	Newfound	368
Man. Memorial	1345	Windham	884	Trinity	345
Concord	1329	Man. West	756	Hillsboro-Deering	340
Keene	1263	Kingswood	727	Campbell	337
Londonderry	1219	Pembroke	718	Raymond	326
Man. Central	1106	Merrimack Valley	715	Berlin	324
Salem	1069	Hollis Brookline	713	Conant	307
*Bishop Guertin	767	Bow	639	Franklin	279
		Milford	613	Mascenic	263
		Kennett	612	Newport	263
*Petition		ConVal	603	Littleton	161
		Laconia	543		
		*Pelham	466		

Attention Spirit Schools

Changes have been made this year concerning the music used in Spirit routines.

Teams will not be allowed to compete at the event noted below unless this form is completed and returned.

NHIAA Fall State Championship

November 8, 2026 - Championship

NHIAA Winter State Championship

March 7, 2027- Day 1(Qualifier Round)

March 11, 2027 – Day 2 (Final)

We look forward to cheering with you!

Per USA CHEER: Authorized Music

•All routine music may only be covers of popular songs or original compositions. In order to edit and mix this music, a license from the copyright owner must be obtained.

•Go to www.usacheer.net/music for a list of authorized providers.

•Not using music from these authorized providers may result in a lawsuit against you and damages of up to \$150,000 per use. (USA CHEER, Music Copyrights Educational Initiative, December 2015).

For a full description and clarification concerning music use and changes, please visit the link below:

http://usacheer.net/aspnet_client/FreeTextBox/upload/documents/Music/USA-Cheer-Music-Initiative.pdf

All music used for competing may only be comprised of original and/or properly licensed music.

NAME OF SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION

NAME OF CHEERLEADER

NAME OF ATHLETE

SAMPLE FORM

Do not use. This form can be accessed on the NHIAA Website under the Athletic Directors' Administrative Log-in section.

This form MUST be emailed to
rmisiaszek@nhiaa.org by
Wednesday, October 14, 2026.

- If your music was obtained through the list shared by USA CHEER, proceed to **Section A**, and ignore section B.
- If your music was **NOT** obtained or provided from a source on the approved USA CHEER list, proceed to **Section B**, and ignore A.
- **Everyone needs to review and respond to Section C.**

SECTION A: Please check AND sign below.

☒ The music used at the *NHIAA Spirit State Tournament* by our team/school/organization **WAS** created by an approved/authorized provider on the USA CHEER list.

Name of provider/source/company: _____

Signature of coach: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Athletic Director: _____ **Date:** _____

SECTION B: Please check AND sign EACH section below.

☒ The music provided, used, and played during our performance at the *NHIAA Spirit State Tournament* by our team/school/organization was **NOT** created by an approved/authorized provider on the USA CHEER list.

Name of provider/source/company: _____

Signature of coach: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Athletic Director: _____

SAMPLE FORM

Do not use. This form can be accessed on the NHIAA Website under the Athletic Directors' Administrative Log-in section.

☒ The coach/athletic director/school/organization/team take full responsibility for the performance.

Signature of coach: _____

Signature of Athletic Director: _____

**This form MUST be emailed to
rmisiaszek@nhiaa.org by
Wednesday, October 14, 2026.**

☒ The coach/athletic director/school/organization/team agree to hold harmless, defend, and indemnify the NHIAA from any and all actions, claims, demands, penalties and/or suits arising out of the performance, including but not limited to any subsequent display or transmission of the performance.

Signature of coach: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Athletic Director: _____ **Date:** _____

SECTION C: Please check AND sign below.

☒ Upon request, the coach/athletic director/school/organization/team can provide the "End User License Certificate Agreement" for the music, which we obtained when we purchased our music.

Signature of coach: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Athletic Director: _____ **Date:** _____

Thank you for taking the time to provide this information.

2026-27 Spirit Rules Changes

A complete listing of all rules changes approved by the committee is available on the NFHS Web site at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Athletics & Fine Arts Activities” on the home page, and select “Spirit.”

Points of Emphasis

Tumbling Infraction – The approach initiation and performance must be within the bound of the mat and must safety and securely land feet first.

Hair – The spirit rule regarding hair (NFHS Rule 2-3-3) applies to all spirit activated, which includes both practices and performance events. Hair must be worn in a manner that is fixed or fastened so as not to give way and does not interfere with the safe execution of a stunt or tumbling. Long hair that is not secured or hair that obstructs the vision of an athlete presents significant risk during partner stunts, pyramids, tosses and aerial tumbling.

Uniforms – A cheerleader must wear the assigned team uniform for all games and events.

Concussions – Concussions are a common result of sports-related head injuries and carry the potential for serious complications if not managed correctly. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee has developed suggested guidelines for management of concussions which state that no athlete suspected of having a concussion should return to the same practice or contest even when symptoms have cleared within 15 minutes. That said, athletes should have medical clearance from an appropriate health official before returning to the activity. Spirit coaches should refer to the current NFHS Concussion Brochure available at the NFHS Web site (www.nfhs.org) under Sports Medicine Resources.

Jewelry – Spirit coaches are expected to follow the rules written for the safety of all participants of cheerleading and dance. The spirit rules regarding jewelry (2-2-1 and 3-1-2) apply to all spirit activities, which includes both practices and performance events. It is the coach’s responsibility to teach and enforce this rule before it becomes an issue. Recent fashion trends have coaches and participants questioning this simple ruling with unnecessary challenges. With the exception of religious and medical medals, examples of jewelry include, but are not limited to: necklaces, bracelets, rings, all facial and body piercings (includes spacers and fishing line), wrist bands, corsages, and hair ties on wrists. This rule is consistent with rules concerning jewelry in the NFHS rule books for other athletic activities. “No jewelry” means NO JEWELRY.

Dermal Piercings - These piercings are inserted into the skin and require a medical procedure to remove them. The decorative part screws onto the pin or screw that protrudes from the skin. Even with a bandage over it would seem to pose a potential hazard.

Medical Deviation - If an athlete has a medical condition that results in deviation from the NFHS Rules, medical documentation needs to be submitted to the NHIAA

Scrimmages- Scrimmages, exhibitions, practice meets, practice matches, and jamborees involving and NHIAA members school are permitted from the first day of practice for that sport, however, they are not permitted after the first scheduled contest has been played by a school in that sport.

REGULATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

I. SPORTSMANSHIP:

Taunting, music, inappropriate language and gestures etc ... are defined in the NFHS Spirit Rulebook. Good sportsmanship is conduct, which imposes a type of self-control involving honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of results. School spirit is a reflection of these attitudes and behavior. If a school is to succeed in one of its prime functions, that of developing good citizenship, it is necessary that student groups radiate proper sportsmanlike conduct. Sportsmanship is good citizenship in action. The promotion of sportsmanship is a primary responsibility of spirit groups.

- As representatives of the school, good grooming and proper behavior shall be required.
- Spirit squads shall cheer in a positive manner. It is inappropriate to cheer against the other team or to cheer in response to an opposing player's mistake/error.
- Cheers and chants with suggestive words and/or motions shall not be used.
- Spirit leaders should discourage their fans from yelling or cheering while an opponent is shooting free throws.

II. WHEN TO CHEER:

- As your team comes onto the floor or field.
- As encouragement and tribute to an injured player as he/she leaves the floor or field.
- As encouragement to own team in its drive for a score.
- As encouragement to own team in defense of its goal.

III. WHEN NOT TO CHEER:

- When a player is attempting a free throw, the quarterback is calling signals at the line of scrimmage, a server is about to serve a volleyball, etc.
- When an opposing player is injured.
- When an opposing player makes a mistake or the opposing team is being penalized.

IV. DUTY TO WARN:

There is an obligation to provide a safe environment for student athletes and to warn these athletes of potentially dangerous conditions and situations. Integral to this aspect of warning is the establishment of procedures for safety rules and regulations.

V. ELIGIBILITY:

The eligibility rules and regulations of the NHIAA shall apply to all student athletes (sub-varsity, varsity).

VI. CLASSIFICATION:

Fall and Winter Spirit will be classified into three (3) Divisions: I, II and III

- Under no circumstances may a state championship be held with less than five (5) schools in a division participating.

VII. BLOOD SPILLAGE:

The NHIAA Sports Medicine Committee suggests that each school develop a local policy in cooperation with their local medical personnel, on how to handle blood spillage.

Housekeeping Procedures for Blood and Body Fluids

Disposable latex gloves should be worn to avoid contamination of the hands of the person cleaning spillages involving blood or other body fluids and secretions. Persons involved in cleaning contaminated surfaces should avoid exposure of open skin lesions or mucous membranes to blood or body fluids. A freshly prepared solution of dilute household bleach (one quarter cup of bleach diluted in one gallon of water) or other disinfectant labeled as *virucidal*, *Tuberculocidal*, *staphylocidal* is useful. Allow the disinfectant to stand wet for a minimum of one minute to start killing pathogens and disinfecting the area (10 minutes of disinfection time guarantees surface sterility). Whenever possible, disposable towels, tissues, and gloves should be used and properly discarded and mops should be rinsed in disinfectant.

INTERPRETATION OF EXCESSIVE BLEEDING

National Federation Rules call for a player, who is bleeding, has an open wound or excessive blood on the uniform, to leave the court/field.

The NHIAA interprets "excessive blood on the uniform" to mean that part of the uniform is saturated with blood. Saturated does not mean a wet spot. Saturated means a major portion of the garment is covered and soaked with blood. For this to occur, significant bleeding would have had to take place.

For any blood on uniform less than "saturated", the uniform does not have to be changed. School personnel have the responsibility of treating the blood area with the appropriate disinfecting solution before the athlete may participate. If the uniform is "saturated" with blood, the uniform must be changed before the athlete may participate. This interpretation is to be followed in the conduct of all NHIAA athletic events.

VIII. MASCOTS:

No below grade nine mascots will be allowed during regular season or tournament competition. **No team mascots can be included in the routine or the team photograph.**

IX. FIFTY/FIFTY (50/50) RAFFLES:

Fifty/Fifty drawings are permitted by the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA); at the site of an NHIAA member school hosting any round of an NHIAA tournament event (s). Fifty-fifty raffles will not be permitted at "sites determined by the NHIAA through the Spirit Committee" that are not NHIAA Member School sites.

X. SANCTIONING:

Spirit Teams will only be allowed to participate in four (4) outside tournaments in addition to the State Tournament. If a team is not going to attend the State Tournament, a letter from the Principal needs to be sent to the NHIAA at least one week prior to the State Tournament.

To apply for sanction, the following information will be required:

- A. A letter of application including the sponsoring school/organization, dates and times (including snow date) the event will be held, detailed description of the tournament format, certificate of liability insurance, what the proceeds will be used for, assurance that adequate medical coverage will be provided for the site.
- B. The tournament must comply with National Federation Rules.
- C. Only sanction requests from member schools or other State Association member schools will be accepted.
- D. Only those schools listed on the application for sanction will be allowed to compete.
- E. At the completion of the tournament, a program **MUST** be forwarded to the NHIAA with the attendance of all schools, no later than one (1) week following the tournament date.
- F. Any school wishing to host a tournament for Spirit competition must have had their head coach attend a safety clinic. A current copy of the safety clinic certificate of the head coach must be submitted with the application for sanction.
- G. Sanction requests must be received by the NHIAA 30 calendar days prior to the event.
- H. In order for a spirit squad to be eligible to participate in outside competition, that squad **MUST** compete in the NHIAA State Tournament competition.

- I. In the event a member school doesn't fulfill their commitment to the State after attending an outside competition they may be called before the committee.
- J. In state spirit competition, schools must use the Elite Spirit Officials of New Hampshire as their assigner for their competition officials. Therefore, sanction request will be based on availability of officials on a given day.

XI. VIOLATIONS:

Any school unable to compete in the NHIAA State Tournament must notify the Executive Director of the NHIAA one (1) week prior to the competition in writing with an explanation for the inability to compete. If the team is unable to compete in the NHIAA State Tournament and has competed in outside competitions, the Spirit Committee will review the letter.

A spirit team that violates the rules and regulations set by the Spirit Committee shall be found in violation of the Spirit Committee's policies. Penalty will be forfeiture of participation in the following year's competition. NHIAA due process procedures will be followed.

XII. USA Cheer Safety and Risk Management Certification:

In order for a spirit team to perform any stunting/aerial tumbling, they must be supervised by a coach who has taken the USA Cheer Safety and Risk Management Course or the NFHS Cheer and Dance Safety Certification Course. This course requires a re-certification every four years. In the absence of someone who is USA Cheer Safety and Risk Management Course certified, or NFHS Cheer and Dance Safety Course certified, the spirit team must be ground bound.

- XIII.** Five (5)-calendar days of organized practice must be held prior to participating in the first event. The event in this instance means going with a team to a pre-season scrimmage or jamboree. It is not meant to mean an official spirit competition.

XIV. NOISEMAKERS:

The playing of musical instruments and/or amplified music while the game is in progress shall be prohibited. The only time that a game is not 'in progress' after it has started is during a time-out or during between periods and halftime.

Possession and/or the use of artificial noisemakers are prohibited at all time during the NHIAA regular season and tournament games.

The official interpretation of an artificial noisemaker is being any object that is used to manufacture noise by contact with another object or surface.

XV. NHIAA GUIDELINES ON OZONE POLLUTION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Fall Spirit Only

School Administrators and coaches as well as other appropriate staff are to use this document in making decisions regarding indoor and outdoor activities during periods of high ozone pollution.

CHARTING AIR QUALITY

Local officials use a simple scale to forecast and report on smog levels and other air pollution. Depending on where you live, it might be called Air Quality Index (AQI) or Pollutant Standards Index (PSI).

Current air quality is reported as a percentage of the federal health standard for a pollutant. If the current index is above 100, air pollution exceeds the level considered safe.

At Ozone smog levels above 100, children, asthmatics and other sensitive groups should limit strenuous exercise. Even otherwise healthy people should consider limiting vigorous exercise when ozone levels are at or above the health standard.

If the index is above 200, corresponding to an ozone pollution level of .20 parts per million (ppm), the pollution level is judged unhealthy for everyone. At this level, air pollution is a serious health concern. Everyone should avoid strenuous outdoor activity, as respiratory tract irritation can occur.

U.S. EPA Air Quality Index			
Index Value	Descriptor	Color	1 hr. Ozone ppb
0 – 50	Good	Green	---
51 – 100	Moderate	Yellow	---
101 – 150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	Orange	125 – 164
151 – 200	Unhealthy	Red	165 – 204
201 – 300	Very Unhealthy	Purple	205 – 404
301 – 500	Hazardous	Maroon	405 – 604

OBSERVING AIR QUALITY

- a. Watch the Calendar
Ozone smog tends to be worst during the May – to – September “smog season.” Be especially conscious of smog levels during warm weather. In warm areas, smog can be a problem at any time of the year. Carbon monoxide pollution levels also are related to the weather, as well as to altitude. In the western U.S., the highest carbon monoxide levels are found in the winter months.
- b. Watch the Clock
Since sunlight and time are necessary for ozone smog formation, the highest levels of ozone typically occur during the afternoon. Since carbon monoxide is produced primarily by motor vehicles, the highest carbon monoxide levels usually occur during rush hour or during other traffic congestion situations.
- c. Watch the News

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION

- a. Observe appropriate physical activity restrictions represented above.
- b. If an ozone exceedance is expected, but has not yet occurred at the time an interscholastic practice or contest is scheduled to begin, that event may begin as scheduled.
- c. If an interscholastic practice or contest is scheduled to begin and an E.P.A. warning is in effect (PSI 201 or higher), the event shall be cancelled, delayed or rescheduled.

When ozone levels reach a national PSI level of 201 (.201 parts per million), exercising indoors or outdoors may cause significant respiratory tract irritation and a decline in lung function. Therefore, strenuous exercise indoors and outdoors is to cease.

RECOMMENDED RESTRICTION OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The following limits on activity for each type of episode are as follows:

- A. Level Orange, PSI 101-150 (Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups)
 1. Active children and adults and people with heart or respiratory disease, such as asthma or allergies, should limit prolonged outdoor exertion.
 2. Healthy individuals with noticeable health effects associated with existing conditions should minimize outdoor activity.
- B. Level Red, PSI 151-200 (Unhealthy)
 1. All athletes should discontinue prolonged, vigorous exercise indoors and outdoors.
 2. Sensitive individuals, primarily children who are active outdoors and people with heart or respiratory disease such as asthma or allergies, should avoid indoor and outdoor activity.
 3. Indoor and outdoor activities that should be avoided include, but are not limited to, calisthenics, basketball, baseball, running, field hockey, soccer, football, tennis, swimming and diving.

C. Level Purple, PSI 201-300 (Very Unhealthy)

1. All athletes shall discontinue vigorous indoor and outdoor activities, regardless of duration.
2. All indoor and outdoor physical education classes, sports practices and athletic competitions shall be rescheduled.

Note: Indoor practices may be held if an air-conditioned facility is available.

XVI. HEAT STRESS AND ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

Early fall football, cross country, soccer and field hockey practices are conducted in very hot and humid weather in many parts of the United States. Due to the equipment and uniform needed in football, most of the heat problems have been associated with football. During the 1998 season, there were four heat stroke deaths in football. There are no excuses for deaths if the proper precautions are taken. During hot weather, the athlete is subject to the following:

HEAT CRAMPS - Painful cramps involving abdominal muscles and extremities caused by intense, prolonged exercise in the heat and depletion of salt and water due to profuse sweating.

HEAT SYNOCOPE - Weakness, fatigue, and fainting due to loss of salt and water in sweat and exercise in the heat. Predisposes to heat stroke.

HEAT EXHAUSTION (WATER DEPLETION) - Excessive weight loss, reduced sweating, elevated skin and core body temperature, excessive thirst, weakness, headaches and sometimes unconsciousness.

HEAT STROKE - An acute medical emergency related to thermoregulatory failure. Associated with nausea, seizures, disorientation, and possible unconsciousness or coma. It may occur suddenly without being preceded by any other clinical signs. The individual is usually unconscious with a high body temperature and a hot dry skin (heat stroke victims, contrary to popular belief, may sweat profusely).

HEAT ACCLIMITIZATION

- A minimum of three (3) days before interscholastic scrimmaging
- A minimum length of time between practices (3 hours)

It is believed that the above-mentioned heat stress problems can be controlled provided certain precautions are taken. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Sports Medicine, heat related illnesses are all preventable. (Sports Medicine: Health Care for Young Athletes, American Academy of Pediatrics, 1991). The following practices and precautions are recommended:

1. Each athlete should have a physical exam with a medical history when first entering a program and an annual health history update. History of previous heat illness and type of training activities before organized practice begins should be included. State high school association's recommendations should be followed.
2. It is clear that top physical performance can only be achieved by an athlete who is in top physical condition. Lack of physical fitness impairs the performance of an athlete who participates in high temperatures. Coaches should know the PHYSICAL CONDITION of their athletes and set practice schedules accordingly.
3. Along with physical conditioning, the factor of acclimatizing to heat is important. Acclimatization is the process of becoming adjusted to the heat and it is essential to provide for GRADUAL ACCLIMITIZATION TO HOT WEATHER. It is necessary for an athlete to exercise in the heat if he/she is to become acclimatized to it. It is suggested that a graduated physical conditioning program be used and that 80 percent acclimatization can be expected to occur after the first seven to 10 days. Final stages of acclimatization can be expected to occur after the first seven to 10 days. Final stages of acclimatization to heat are marked by increased sweating and reduced salt concentration in the sweat.
4. The old idea that water should be withheld from athletes during workouts has NO SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION. The most important safeguard to the health of an athlete is the replacement of water. Water must be on the field and readily available to athletes at all times. It is recommended that a minimum of 10 minutes be scheduled for a water break every half hour of heavy exercise in the heat. WATER SHOULD BE AVAILABLE IN UNLIMITED QUANTITIES. Check and be sure athletes are drinking the water. Cold water is preferable. Drinking ample water before practices and games has also been found to aid performance in the heat.
5. Salt should be replaced daily. Modest salting of foods after practice or games will accomplish this purpose. Salt tablets are not recommended. ATTENTION MUST BE DIRECTED TO REPLACING WATER—FLUID REPLACEMENT IS ESSENTIAL.
6. Know both the TEMPERATURE and the HUMIDITY. The greater the humidity, the more difficult it is for the body to cool itself. Test the air prior to practice or game using a wet bulb, globe, relative humidity index

(WBGT Index) which is based on the combined effects of air temperature, relative humidity, radiant heat and air movement. The following precautions are recommended when using the WBGT Index (ACSM's Guidelines for the Team Physician, 1991):

Below 64...unlimited activity
 65-72.... moderate risk
 74-82.... high risk
 82+...very high risk

There is also a weather guide for activities that last for 30 minutes or more (Fox Matthews, 1981) which involves knowing the relative humidity and air temperature.

AIR TEMP	DANGER ZONE	CRITICAL ZONE
70 F	80% RH	100% RH
75 F	70% RH	100% RH
80 F	50% RH	80% RH
85 F	40% RH	68% RH
90 F	30% RH	55% RH
95 F	20% RH	40% RH
100 F	10% RH	30% RH

RH = Relative Humidity

One other method of measuring the relative humidity is the use of a sling psychrometer which measures the bulb temperature. The wet bulb temperature should be measured prior to practice and the intensity and duration of practice adjusted accordingly. Recommendations are as follows:

Under 60 F...safe but always observe athletes

61-65 F.....observe players carefully

66-70 F.....caution

71-71 F.....shorter practice sessions and more frequent water and rest breaks

75 + F.....danger level and extreme caution

7. Cooling by evaporation is proportional to the area of the skin exposed. In extremely hot and humid weather, reduce the amount of clothing covering the body as much as possible. NEVER USE RUBBERIZED CLOTHING.
8. Athletes should weight in each day before and after practice and WEIGHT CHARTS CHECKED. Generally, a 3% weight loss through sweating is safe and over a 3% weight loss is in the danger zone. Over a 3% weight loss that athlete should not be allowed to practice in hot and humid conditions. Observe the athletes closely under all conditions. Do not allow athletes to practice until they have adequately replaced their weight.
9. Observe athletes carefully for signs of trouble; particularly athletes who lose significant weight and the eager athlete who constantly competes are his/her capacity. Some trouble signs are nausea, incoherence, fatigue, vomiting, cramps, weak rapid pulse, visual disturbance and unsteadiness.
10. Teams that encounter hot weather during the season through travel or following and unseasonably cool period should be physically fit but will not be environmentally fit. Coaches in this situation should follow the above recommendations and substitute more frequently during games.
11. Know what to do in case of an emergency and have your emergency plans written with copies to all of your staff. Be familiar with immediate first aid practice and prearranged procedures for obtaining medical care, including ambulance service.

HEAT STROKE – *This is a medical emergency- DELAY COULD BE FATAL.*

Immediately cool the body while waiting for transfer to the hospital. Remove clothing and place ice bags on the next in the axilla (armpit) and on the groin area. An increasing number of medical personnel are now using a treatment for heat illness that involves applying either alcohol or cool water to the victim's skin and vigorously fanning the body. The fanning causes evaporation and cooling. (Source, The First Aider – September 1987).

HEAT EXHAUSTION – *OBTAIN MEDICAL CARE AT ONCE.* Cool the body as you would for heat stroke while waiting for transfer to the hospital. Give fluids if athlete is able to swallow and is conscious.

SUMMARY – The main problem associated with exercising in the hot weather is water loss through sweating. Water loss is best replaced by allowing the athlete unrestricted access to water. Water breaks two or three times per hour is better than one break an hour. Probably the best method is to have water available at all times and allow athletes to drink water whenever he/she needs it. Never restrict the amount of water an athlete drinks, and be sure the athletes are drinking the water. The small amount of salt lost in sweat is adequately replaced by salting foods at meals. Talk to your medical personnel concerning emergency treatment plans. (Reprinted with permission from NFHS)

XVII. NFHS Guidelines for Management of Concussions:

The NHIAA mandates the following of the NFHS guidelines for management of Concussions.

Concussions: Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. For additional information and potential symptoms, please be sure to visit By-Law Article III; Sports Medicine: Sect. 13: Concussions and the New Hampshire SB402 and its language as written.

TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

I. MANAGEMENT:

The NHIAA Spirit Committee shall manage and control the New Hampshire State High School Spirit Tournament under its By-Laws and Policies and Procedures. They shall employ all necessary event personnel to ensure a quality tournament.

- II.** The Fall Spirit Championships will take place on Sunday, November 8, 2026, at Pinkerton Academy and will have 2 sessions.
- Session I: Divisions III & II at 10:00 a.m.
 - Session II: Division I at TBD

DAY 1 (Qualifier Round) (WINTER CHAMPIONSHIP ONLY)

The Day 1 (qualifier round) will take place on Sunday, March 7, 2027, at Pinkerton Academy and will have 2 sessions.

- Session I: Divisions III & II at 10:00 a.m.
- Session II: Division I at TBD

The top five and ties for 5th place in each division will qualify for Day 2 (final) of the Winter State Tournament on March 11, 2027, at Pinkerton Academy at 6:00 p.m.

III. STATE COMPETITION:

- A. All member schools will be able, but not required; to enter one varsity team into the state competition provided they have cheered for a school team, such as basketball, as a squad. There will be no strictly competition teams allowed.
- B. A pre-set order of competition shall be prepared by the NHIAA and presented to the coaches 10 days prior to the State competition.
- C. The only props allowed are megaphones, pompoms, signs, **and flags**. A sign is defined as letters, words, logos, insignia, or school colors. All other props are prohibited. In addition to the National Federation rules on props, signs must be hand held and NOT on sticks, etc...
- D. Each squad will have a maximum of three minutes to demonstrate its cheerleading style and expertise. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice or note of music, whichever comes first.
- E. If a team exceeds the time limit, a five point penalty will be assessed. Because penalties are severe, it is recommended that all squads time their performance several times prior to their attendance at a competition.
- F. A one-minute non-routine entrance will be allowed prior to being judged. All introductions (tumbling entrances, chant spellouts, etc.) are considered part of the routine and are timed as part of the performance.

IV. TIE-BREAKING PROCEDURES:

The scoring procedure will have four (4) category judges. The ranking will be based on the scores of all four (4) judges. In the event of a tie for champion and runner-up, the tie will be broken by the following criteria:

1. Safety deductions – Rank the tied teams by the least to most points deducted for safety violations. The team with the least amount of points in safety deductions shall win the tie. If a tie still exists proceed to step two (2).
2. Calculating Execution/Degree of Difficulty Scores –All six (6) scores from the Execution/Degree of Difficulty Categories. The team with the most points shall win the tie. The six (6) categories are: pyramids, tumbling, jumps, partner stunts/tosses, motions and dance. If a tie still exists proceed to step three (3).

3. Calculating Overall Effect and Performance Appeal Scores –All four (4) scores and the team with the most points shall win the tie. If a tie still exists proceed to step four (4).
 4. All teams involved in the tie for first place shall perform their routine again. If a tie still exists and cannot be broken using the first three (3) criteria on the second performance it will be considered a tie.
- G. Jewelry is prohibited, with the exception of religious or medical medals. If such medals are worn, they shall be taped to the body under the uniform. No jewelry, hair curlers, barrettes, etc. will be allowed during warm-ups or competition.
- Dermal Piercings - These piercings are inserted into the skin and require a medical procedure to remove them. The decorative part screws onto the pin or screw that protrudes from the skin. Even with a bandage over it would seem to pose a potential hazard.
- H. All routines will be done on a matted surface.
- I. Coaches are responsible for emailing their music to the competition DJ and it is suggested they have a backup Mp3/CD available in the event something goes wrong with the e-mail submission. Instructions for emailing music to the DJ are as follows:

V. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SENDING YOUR MUSIC TO THE DJ

- Music can be emailed to djcarryroy@gmail.com. Music must be submitted in .mp3 format. If you run into any issues submitting via email, we can discuss using a file-sharing service such as Dropbox/Box/WeTransfer. *Please include your contact information with your e-mail so you can confirm that there are no issues with your music.*
- J. During warm-ups all teams are ground bound unless they are practicing on a matted surface. COACHES are responsible to keep all athletes on the ground.
- K. COACHING during a routine IS PROHIBITED. All coaches will sit in an area designated by the Spirit Committee.
- L. TOURNAMENT RESULTS: Are available at the completion of the tournament event.
- M. PROTEST PROCEDURE AT STATE TOURNAMENTS:
During State Tournament play, there shall be no appeals of protests to the Executive Director. All protests shall be resolved at the game site at the time of the protest. Only protests involving violation of a specific rule will be considered. A team may not protest decisions of judgment. All questions regarding scoring are to be directed to the Spirit Committee through the Executive Director of the NHIAA.
- N. Competition teams shall be limited to no more than twenty (20) members who have participated in practices and cheered at games throughout the current spirit season.

VI. INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE:

- A. In the event the presentation of any squad must be interrupted because of the failure of the tournament equipment, facilities, etc., the squad affected will be allowed to present their routine in its entirety.
- B. In the event the presentation of any squad must be interrupted because of the failure of the team's own equipment or supplies, the squad must either continue the presentation or withdraw from competition.
- C. In the event that any injury (including body fluids on uniform/performance surface) causes the presentation of the team to be interrupted, the squad will be allowed to resume their presentation from the point of interruption. The tournament officials reserve the right to stop the presentation due to injury (including body fluids on uniform/performance surface) and the team will be allowed to present the routine from the point of interruption. The Tournament Committee will have discretion as to when the continuation of the performance will be performed.

VII. STUNTS:

Refer to National Federation Rules Book for all safety guidelines and rules.

***All coaches should read this Rule Book in its entirety.**

VIII. TOURNAMENT WARM-UP PROCEDURES:

The doors will open two (2) hours before the event for the competing teams. Tickets will go on sale sixty minutes before. Coaches meeting will be 45 minutes prior to the first competition time. All teams must arrive at the competition site 60 minutes prior to the start of the event. Your warm-up and competition time will be according to the published schedule.

IX. ATHLETIC TRAINERS:

Schools requesting medical services are to provide the necessary supplies for the Athletic Trainer.

X. ADMISSION:

Admission to the Spirit Tournament will be in accordance with By-Law Article I Policy, Sect. 18.

XI. AWARDS:

Official NHIAA Championship and Runner-up plaques will be awarded to the respective champion and runner-up teams in each class. Twenty-four (24) team medals shall be awarded to the team members, managers, and coaches of the respective champion and runner-up teams in each class, including coed.

XII. REGULATION OF CHEERLEADERS AT OTHER SPORT TOURNAMENTS:

Those individual sports committees shall govern the number of cheerleaders allowed at other sports tournaments. The following sports have set maximum numbers:

Fall Sport

Soccer* – 22

Football* – 22

Winter Sports

Basketball* – 22 and 1 coach

Ice Hockey*- 22 and 1 coach

***See appropriate sport for regulations:**

XIII. DURING TOURNAMENTS the following regulations will be in place:**A. Basketball**

1. **Maximum of twenty-two (22) cheerleaders and one (1) coach will be allowed.** The coach is requested to sit with the cheerleaders. Requests for more than 22 cheerleaders ***will not*** be granted in accordance with NHIAA Basketball Committee regulations.
2. Cheerleaders will be admitted free only to the session in which their team is playing.
3. Cheers will be alternated with the opponent's cheerleaders. **THIS MEANS ONLY ONE CHEER PER TIME OUT.**
4. Cheerleaders will perform during time-out periods and between quarters.
5. Any time the players are ready to play, the horn will blow, the cheer will stop and cheerleaders will leave the floor immediately.
6. Cheerleaders will cheer in an area designated by the Game Director.
7. No below grade nine students who have not received a waiver may be on the floor or standing on the sidelines.
8. **All cheerleaders shall be "ground-bound" at all NHIAA basketball tournament games, preliminary through championship rounds. There shall be NO TOSSES, LIFTS, TUMBLING, ETC., and the cheerleaders' feet will remain on the floor. Jumps **WILL** be allowed as long as the athlete does not use another athlete to complete this activity.**
9. Half-time Entertainment: At all tournament sites, half time will be 15 minutes.
10. Any school intending to participate in a half-time program must receive approval from the NHIAA Basketball Committee prior to the date of the tournament game. A total of eight (8) minutes is devoted to half-time routines. Each school will have a maximum of four (4) minutes for a routine if they both choose to perform. If only one school performs, the total six (6) minutes may be used.
11. No Elementary or Pre-School cheerleaders will be allowed.
12. NFHS Rule 2-7-2 Specifies that basket tosses, elevator tosses and other similar multi-base tosses are allowed only on specified surfaces

B. Ice Hockey Tournaments the following regulations will be in place:

1. You will be admitted free only to the session in which your team is playing. You should arrive 30 minutes prior to the game.
2. Requests for additional cheerleaders will be granted on a case-by-case basis.
3. No flammable material will be allowed in any of the arenas. Signs, posters, etc. are acceptable, but no ticker tape, streamers, or confetti. All signs and posters are to be in good taste. Noisemakers will not be permitted at any time.
4. All cheers are to be in good taste or you will be asked to leave the arena. No booing officials or players and no inappropriate signs. **PROMOTE GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP!**
5. Throwing objects on the ice is prohibited and cheerleaders are asked to assist the tournament officials in enforcing this policy with their spectators.

C. Soccer Tournaments the following regulations will be in place:

1. The advisor must be with the cheerleaders at all times during the tournament game.
2. Cheerleaders must be in uniform to be admitted free.

D. Football Tournaments the following regulations will be in place:

CHEERLEADERS AND MASCOTS: Spectators, cheerleaders, mascots, etc., are not permitted in team boxes or in the coaches' areas. Cheerleaders and mascots are to be in the area restricted for them behind and to the side of the team boxes, behind the restraining line, during the game.

XIV. JEWELRY AND BODY PIERCING RULE:

No jewelry, which includes body-piercing objects, shall be worn at any time. Religious or medical alert medals must be properly secured (taped) under the uniform. **Adhesive stickers are illegal.**

Dermal Piercings - These piercings are inserted into the skin and require a medical procedure to remove them. The decorative part screws onto the pin or screw that protrudes from the skin. Even with a bandage over it would seem to pose a potential hazard.

XV. NEW ENGLANDS:

- The top three (3) all girls team in each division (I, II, III) and the top three (3) teams in coed regardless of division with a New Hampshire score of 70 points or more in the two-day Winter State Tournament will be allowed to compete in the New Englands Competition.
- Determining Coed – if you compete and qualify at the Winter State Tournament with a male on your team (defined as rostered one (1) or more males), you will be considered to compete in coed only at the New Englands. If there are more than 3 schools that have male athlete that qualify, they will be seeded and selected by the following criteria (in order):
 1. If they are a champion of their Division – they qualify over point total of any division
 2. Point total
- If a team is moved to the coed division and the maximum team number has not been met, the next school in line will be moved up to represent the division, providing they have the score to qualify.
- The NHIAA has the discretion to determine the eligible teams for the New Englands competition based on either the Day 1 (Qualifier Round) or Day 2 (Final) score, should it be necessary to make a team eligible for New Englands, should there be an issue of failure to qualify based on Day 2 (Final) scores.
- The NHIAA will contact the schools to inquire on their intent to participate and submit the NH entries with roster to the coordinator for the New England event.