

NFHS Spirit Guidelines 2007-08

Definitions

Rule 1 Definitions

(NFHS Spirit Rules as approved by the NCSSE)

Section 1 STUNTS

- 1 **Stunt** - Any tumbling skill, toss, partner stunt/mount or pyramid.
- 2 **Partner stunt** - Any skill in which one or more persons support one or more persons.
- 3 **Pyramid** - Multiple partner stunts.
- 4 **Sponge** - A skill in which the base(s) absorb the flyer's downward momentum to push/lift the flyer into position for the next stunt/skill.
- 5 **Prep** - A skill in which the base(s) hold(s) a standing flyer at approximately chest height.
- 6 **Tumbling** - Rolls (forward, backward), inverted extended skills (cartwheel, handstand, walkover, front/back handsprings, etc.) and flips.
- 7 **Forward Roll** - A roll beginning from a position with hands on the performing surface.

Section 2 STUNTING PERSONNEL

- 1 **Base** - A person in direct weight-bearing contact with the performing surface who provides support for another person.
 - a. **NOTE:** A prop that provides primary support for a person(s) is also considered a base.
- 2 **Post** - A person in direct weight-bearing contact with the performing surface, generally standing in front of a base(s), who supports a flyer's weight during the execution of a stunt.
- 3 **Flyer** - A person who receives primary support from another person or prop at any time during a stunt. Also referred to as "top person."
- 4 **Spotter** - A person in direct weight-bearing contact with the performing surface whose primary function is to minimize risk to a flyer. A spotter shall be in a position and location to prevent injuries, with special emphasis on protecting the flyer's head, neck and back.
- 5 **Bracer** - A second-level person who is in physical contact with another flyer but does not provide primary support. The stunt should remain stable without the bracer.

Section 3 BODY POSITIONS

- 1 **Inverted** - One in which a participant's head is below her/his waist. (Examples: Chorus-line flip, back handspring, needle scale, arch back where head is below the waist)
- 2 **Handstand** - An inverted, straight-body position in which the arms are extended and beside the head, and the hips are directly over the head and shoulders.
- 3 **Layout** - Straight-body position.
- 4 **Pike** - Bent at the hips with legs straight and together.
- 5 **Tuck** - Bent at the hips and knees with knees drawn toward the torso.
- 6 **Straddle** - Bent at the hips with legs straight and apart.
- 7 **Splits** - Legs extended in opposite directions at right angles to the trunk.

Section 4 DISMOUNTS

- 1 **Dismount** - Ending a stunt by releasing the flyer to:
 - a. The performing surface.
 - b. Be cradled by the original bases.
 - c. Be cradled by catchers who are not the original bases.
- 2 **Cradle** - Occurs when catcher(s), with palms up, catches the flyer in a face-up, pike position, by placing one arm under the back and the other under the thighs of the flyer.

Section 5 DROPS

- 1 **Front Drop** - Dropping to a horizontal, face-down position on the performing surface.
- 2 **Knee/Seat/Thigh Drop** - Dropping to the knee(s), seat or thighs onto the performing surface.
- 3 **Split Drop** - Dropping to the performing surface, landing in a split position.
- 4 **Tension Drop** - A partner stunt, e.g., shoulder stand, in which the base initiates a forward lean until the flyer leaves the base without assistance.

Section 6 AERIAL STUNTS

- 1 **Aerial** - A stunt performed free of contact with a person or the performing surface.
- 2 **Flip** - An aerial stunt involving head-over-heels rotation in a tuck, pike or layout position.
- 3 **Swan Dive** - An aerial stunt in which a flyer is caught in a prone (face down) position.
- 4 **Twist** - An aerial stunt involving rotation perpendicular or parallel to the performing surface in a straight body position.
- 5 **Dive roll** - A stretched, forward roll with flight.

Section 7 EXTENDED STUNTS

- 1 **Extended stunt** - One in which the supporting arm(s) of the base(s) is/are fully extended above the head, e.g., Russian Lift, Liberty, Cupie. Most extended stunts require a spotter.
- 3 **Extension** - A specifically defined extended stunt in which the supporting arms of the base(s) are fully extended above the head, and the flyer has both feet in the hands of the base(s). All extensions require a spotter.

Section 8 SUSPENDED STUNTS

- 1 **Suspended Roll** - A flyer dismounts with heels-over-head rotation while having both hands in continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with bases or posts who control the flyer's descent to the performing surface or cradle.
- 2 **Suspended Splits** - A flyer supported in a split position between two bases.
- 4 **Swinging Stunt** - A flyer is suspended and swung between multiple bases.

Section 9 NONRELEASE, SPECIALIZED STUNTS

NOTE: Stunts in this section may also be known by other names. This section does not attempt to list every stunt mentioned in this rules book.

- 1 **Cupie** - A stunt in which both feet of a flyer are in one hand of a base.
- 2 **Deadman Lift** - A stunt in which base(s) fully extend a flyer overhead, face up or face down, in a horizontal straight-body position.
- 3 **Flatback** - A stunt in which a flyer is transitioned from a vertical position to a horizontal position between two original bases.
- 4 **Handing Pyramid** - A stunt in which a flyer(s) is suspended from a shoulder stand stunt(s).
- 5 **Pendulum** - A stunt in which the flyer in a straight-body position falls forward and/or backward away from the base(s) to a horizontal position to catchers while maintaining constant hands-to-feet/legs contact with the base(s).
- 6 **Totem Pole** - A multi-base stunt that creates a tiered appearance by connecting stunts of increasing height, one behind the other.
- 7 **Vault** - A stunt in which the hands of the flyer are used to assist in clearing a base(s) or prop(s).
- 8 **Chorus-Line Flip** - A stunt in which a participant performs a backward flip while being supported by the arms of other participants.
- 9 **Liberty** - A one-leg stunt, (usually extended) that may include variations such as a hitch (front or side), a torch, a heel stretch, an arabesque, a scorpion, etc.
- 10 **Swedish Fall** - A stunt in which the flyer is in an extended prone (face-down) position, generally supporting her own upper body on a base, while being supported on her lower body by a base(s) with extended arms. One of the flyer's legs may be lifted above her body.

Section 10 RELEASE SKILLS/STUNTS

- 1 **Pop** - A controlled upward pushing motion by a base(s) to increase the height of a flyer to initiate a dismount or a transitional stunt.
- 2 **Sweep** - A controlled forward pushing motion by a base(s) to release a flyer to a cradle.
- 3 **Toss/Pitch** - A forceful upward throwing motion by base(s) to significantly increase the height of a flyer, who is then caught by the original bases.
- 4 **Basket Toss** - Toss involving three or four tossers, two of whom have their hands interlocked.
- 5 **Release Stunt** - A specifically designated stunt that is initiated by a moderate upward throwing motion by the bases to increase the height of the flyer.
- 6 **Helicopter** - A release stunt in which the flyer in a horizontal position is released upward, then rotates like helicopter blades in a horizontal plane before being caught by the original bases.
- 7 **Log Roll** - A release stunt in which a flyer in a horizontal position is released upward, then twists parallel to the performing surface before being caught by the original base(s).

Section 11 TRANSITIONAL STUNTS

- 1 **Transitional Stunt** – Involves a flyer moving from one stunt to another. The transition may involve changing bases.
- 2 **Tick-tock** – A one-leg (usually extended) release stunt in which a flyer switches from one support leg to the other.

Section 12 PROPS

- 1 **Props** – Items which may be
 - a. manipulated (e.g., poms, signs, flags, etc.)
 - b. used as a base

NOTE: A single, unfolded mat on the performing surface is not considered to be a prop.

Rule 2 General Risk Management

Note: All provisions of this rules book shall be in effect for all spirit team activities including practice, games, performances, and competition.

Section 1 GENERAL

- 1 A coach must not permit a team member to participate if in the judgment of the coach, the participant does not conform to NFHS rules.
- 2 Participation in spirit team activities during interscholastic contests and spirit competitions must be limited to bona-fide students of the school who are designated as members of the school's spirit team(s). Only those students may participate in spirit team activities on the sidelines, court, field or contest area during an interscholastic event, except when exhibitions during a pregame, halftime or postgame period are authorized by the administration of the participants' school and the host school administration, if applicable. A bona fide student is one who has not graduated and is eligible to participate with and/or compete for a designated school according to the rules of that state's high school association and/or the local board of education.
- 3 Practice sessions must be held in a location suitable for spirit activities, i.e. appropriate surface/area, reasonably free of obstructions and excessive noise, etc.
- 4 Performing surfaces must be suitable and free from objects. **When discarding props (signs, etc.) that are made of solid material, or have corners or sharp edges, team members must gently toss or place the props.**
- 5 Stunts must be modified to be appropriate to the performing surface/area.
- 6 An adequate warm up, including stretching, must precede all activities.
- 7 **Use of mini-tramps, springboards, spring-assisted floors or any height-increasing apparatus is illegal for use during performances/competitions.**
- 8 Stunts must not be performed during a basketball or volleyball game when the ball is in play, including free throws in basketball and just prior to the serve in volleyball.
- 9 Spirit participants must not warm up stunts on the court or sideline area during player warm-up if an alternate area is available. If no appropriate alternate area is available, the coach must take reasonable precautions to minimize the risk to participants.

NOTE: See suggestions in the Coaches Responsibilities.
- 10 Spirit participants must remain outside the playing area during a 30-second or less time-out in a basketball game.
- 11 Artificial noisemakers must not be used at indoor athletic contests except during pregame or halftime performances.

EXCEPTION: Megaphones, appropriately used by spirit participants on the sidelines, floor or court, are permitted, if allowed by the contest official.
- 12 Participants must not chew gum or have candy in their mouths during practice or performance.
- 13 Spirit participants must not stand behind the free throw lane extended during a basketball game.
- 14 When it is detected that a participant is bleeding, has an open wound or an excessive amount of blood on the uniform, the participant must stop performing to receive proper treatment. (See Communicable Disease Procedures)
- 15 When a participant is rendered unconscious or apparently unconscious, the participant must not be permitted to resume participation without written authorization from a physician (MD/DO).

Section 2 PARTICIPANT APPAREL/ACCESSORIES

- 1 Jewelry must not be worn except for religious or medical medals, which shall be taped to the body (without a chain) under the uniform.
- 2 Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept at an appropriate length (short, near the end of the fingers) to minimize risk for the participants.
- 3 The hair must be worn in a manner to minimize risk for the participant. Hair devices, if worn, must be secure and appropriate for the activity.
- 4 Apparel and accessories must be appropriate for the activity involved to minimize risk for the participants. Cheer team members must wear athletic shoes (not gymnastics slippers).
- 5 A participant in full head and/or body costume must not spot or stunt except for a forward roll or cartwheel.
- 6 When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff.
- 7 Glitter that does not readily adhere on the hair, face, uniform, costume or the body is illegal. Glitter may be used on signs, props or backdrops if laminated or sealed.
- 8 Supports, braces, etc., which are hard and unyielding or have rough edges or surfaces must be appropriately covered. A participant wearing a cast (excluding a properly covered air cast) must not be involved in a stunt.
- 9 A single partial/whole manufacturer's logo/trademark (no more than 2 ¼ square inches with no dimension exceeding 2 ¼ inches) is permitted on the apparel.
- 10 An American flag, not to exceed 2 by 3 inches, and either a commemorative or memorial patch, not to exceed 4 square inches and with written state association approval, may be worn on the uniform/costume.
- 11 Each state association may authorize the use of artificial limbs which in its opinion are no more dangerous to participants than the corresponding human limb and do not place an opponent at a disadvantage.

Section 3 HEIGHT LIMITATIONS

- 1 All partner stunts and pyramids are limited to two levels high. The top person (flyer) receives primary support from one or more base/s who is/are in direct, weight-bearing contact with the performing surface.

Section 4 SPOTTING

- 1 A spotter may help control the building of, or dismounting from, a stunt, but must not provide primary support for the flyer.
- 2 Additional spotters are required until a stunt is mastered.
- 3 A spotter must be in the proper location with the appropriate body position to help minimize risk to the flyer.
- 4 A spotter must remain visually focused on the head-and-shoulder area of a flyer, except when it is necessary to briefly check other stunt personnel.
- 5 A spotter's arms and hands must be in one of the following positions:
 - a. Hands grasping the wrist(s)/forearm(s) of the base(s);
 - b. Hands touching or grasping the ankle(s)/lower leg(s) of the flyer;
 - c. Arms lifted toward the flyer's head and shoulders (if not touching either the flyer or a base).

NOTE: It is not necessary for the arms to be straight, but they must be in a "ready" position.

- 6 A spotter must not:
 - a. Grasp the sole of the flyer's foot.
 - b. Grasp the base(s) hand(s) under the flyer's foot.
 - c. Place her/his torso underneath the stunt.
- 7 A spotter is required for stunts in which the supporting arm(s) of the base(s) is(are) fully extended above the head, except for the following:
 - a. Chair
 - b. Russian lift
 - c. Torch
 - d. Double-base split catch
 - e. Triple-base dead-man lift
 - f. Triple-base extended suspended splits
 - g. Double base vertical T-lift

Section 5 BASE/BRACER

- 1 A base must not assume a back-bend, headstand, or handstand position.
- 2 Bases of extended stunts must have both feet in direct weight-bearing contact with the performing surface.
- 3 A bracer must not provide primary support for a flyer.

Section 6 DISMOUNTS

- 1 Dismounts to the performing surface from shoulder height or above must have assisted landings.
NOTE: Extension prep height is considered shoulder height.
- 2 For all cradle dismounts, the catcher(s) must have continuous visual contact with the flyer.
- 3 Neither bases nor catchers shall move during dismounts except for safety purposes.
- 4 No skill, e.g., toe touch, twist, etc., without constant hand-to-hand contact shall be performed prior to landing on the performing surface.
- 5 A skill may be performed to a cradle except during dismounts to separate catchers.
- 6 A twist to cradle (including a log roll) must not involve more than two complete rotations.
EXCEPTION: When dismounting to a cradle from a side-facing stunt, 2 ¼ rotations are permitted.
- 7 Dismounts from multi-base stunts to a cradle must be cradled by at least two catchers and an additional head and shoulders catcher/spotter.
- 8 Dismounts from single base stunts to a single base cradle must have an additional catcher/spotter who is responsible for the head-and-shoulder area of the flyer.
EXCEPTION: No additional catcher/spotter is required when cradling a chair or a torch.
- 9 Dismounts to catchers who are not the original bases must have at least three catchers, one being a head and shoulders catcher/spotter. Following the pop to release the flyer, no skill, e.g., toe touch, twists, etc., shall be performed into the cradle.
- 10 Dismounts from, or passing through, an inverted position are illegal.
EXCEPTION: Forward suspended roll.

Section 7 DROPS

- 1 Knee, seat, thigh and split drops from a jump, stand or inverted position are illegal unless most of the weight is first borne on the hands/feet, or is controlled to absorb the impact of the drop.
- 2 Front drops from an airborne position are illegal.
- 3 Tension drops are illegal.
- 4 A handspring/flip over to any drop is illegal

Section 8 PARTNER STUNTS/PYRAMIDS

- 1 A participant must not move under or over a partner stunt or pyramid.
- 2 A flyer must not be in an inverted position except for the following:
 - a. During a forward suspended roll;
 - b. During a mount that begins from an inverted position on the performing surface to a non-inverted stunt shoulder height or below. It must include a base or spotter who protects the head/neck/shoulder area of the flyer.
- 3 **In braced partner stunts/pyramids, at least one bracer of each pair must be at shoulder height or below.**
EXCEPTIONS:
 - a. **The following extended stunts may brace any other extended stunt:**
 1. Chair
 2. Multi-base deadman lift
 3. Multi-base straddle lift
 - b. **Extensions may brace the stunts listed above and other extensions (except a totem pole).**
- 4 A hanging pyramid is legal provided all the following conditions are met:
 - a. The bases remain stationary.
 - b. Spotters are present for each shoulder stand.
 - c. Base(s) maintain constant contact with the suspended flyer.
 - d. Suspended flyer is lower than the shoulder stand(s).
 - e. Suspended flyer's feet are hanging free.
 - f. Suspended flyer is not inverted.
 - g. Suspended flyer does not rotate on the dismount.
- 5 A pendulum, or pendulum-type stunt is legal provided all the following conditions are met:
 - a. The flyer begins at shoulder height or below.
 - b. The flyer does not pass through an extended overhead position.
 - c. The flyer is caught in a face up or face down position.
 - d. There are at least three stationary catchers who remain in their original positions.
 - e. No participant is standing between the base(s) and catchers.
 - f. Only the flyer may turn.
 - g. The base(s) has/have constant visual contact with the catchers; therefore, all full pendulums require two bases.
 - h. The bases remain stationary.
- 6 A pendulum may end in an extension.

- 7 A half or full pendulum must have a designated spotter facing the flyer when he/she returns to vertical in a straight body position at the end of the stunt.
- 8 A flatback is legal provided both of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The flyer begins in a vertical position and is transitioned to a horizontal, straight body position between two original bases.
 - b. At least two additional catchers catch the upper body of the flyer.
- 9 A release of a vertical flyer from above shoulder height to a catch in a layout position is illegal.
- 10 A totem pole is legal provided all the following conditions are met:
 - a. Each flyer leaning forward is stabilized/supported by the stunt directly in front.
 - b. No extended stunt stabilizes/supports another flyer.
 - c. A spotter is present for each extended stunt.
- 11 A swinging stunt is legal provided both the following conditions are met:
 - a. The flyer is swung in an upward direction.
 - b. The flyer is in a face-up position.
- 12 Suspended splits originating at shoulder level or below and ending at any level are legal provided all the following conditions are met:
 - a. There are at least two bases.
 - b. The flyer has both hands in constant contact with a base(s).
 - c. A spotter is in place if the flyer passes through or ends in an extended position.
- 13 Suspended splits originating above shoulder height and dropping to any level are legal provided that at least four bases slow the momentum of the flyer.
 - a. In side-facing splits, the four bases support under the flyer's thighs and legs prior to reaching the full split position. The flyer has both hands in contact with a base(s) once she reaches the full split position.
 - b. In forward-facing splits, three of the four bases support the flyer under her thighs and legs, and both hands of the fourth base support both hands of the flyer prior to reaching the full split position.
- 14 Single-base stunts in which the flyer is supported under the legs in a split or straddle position are illegal.
- 15 T-lifts to roll-downs must have an additional head-and-shoulders catcher/spotter.

Section 9 ROLLS / TUMBLING

- 1 A forward suspended roll is legal provided all the following conditions are met:
 - a. It begins from a stunt at shoulder height or below.
 - b. In multi-base stunts, the flyer maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with two bases or two posts.
 - c. In single-base stunts, the flyer maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with two posts.
 - d. The bases or posts control the flyer's dismount to the performing surface or cradle.
- 2 Backward suspended rolls are illegal.
- 3 Suspended rolls from a basket toss position, pitch or toss are illegal.
- 4 Tumbling over or under a stunt, person or prop is illegal.

EXCEPTION: Forward rolls over a prop.
- 5 A forward roll from an airborne position is illegal.
- 6 A flip into a mount or cradle is illegal.
- 7 A flip in a tumbling pass must not involve more than one complete rotation or more than one complete twist.

Section 10 TOSSES

- 1 In all tosses:
 - a. The flyer must be directed vertically and be caught by the original bases.
 - b. Participants must not pass over or under other participants.
 - c. The tossers/catchers and spotter must remain in their original positions unless making adjustments for safety purposes.
 - d. The flyer must not become inverted (head below waist).
 - e. The flyer must not hold objects in her/his hands (e.g., poms, signs, etc.)

EXCEPTION: Load-in tosses (also called "tosses into partner stunts" or "toss to hands," etc.)
- 2 Basket tosses and other similar multi-base tosses are permitted only on appropriate mats, grass, rubberized and soft-yielding surfaces.
- 3 Basket tosses and other similar multi-base tosses must not involve more than four tossers, including the person who may set or "load" the flyer.
 - a. One of the tossers must be behind the flyer during the toss
 - b. The flyer must be cradled by at least two of the original tossers and have a separate head and shoulders spotter who was one of the original tossers
- 4 Tosses through a prop are illegal.

- 5 Toe/thigh pitches to a jump, tumbling skill or suspended roll are illegal.
- 6 Tosses to a position in which the flyer's weight is supported under the legs in a split or straddle position are illegal.
- 7 A twist that occurs during a toss must not involve more than two complete rotations.
- 8 Load-in tosses to stunts are legal provided all the following conditions are met:
 - a. The toss does not significantly exceed the height of the intended stunt.
 - b. The flyer does not land in a loading position for another toss.
 - c. The flyer is not tossed again nor loses contact with her/his bases without first dismounting to a cradle or the performing surface.

EXCEPTION: Loss-of-contact stunts meeting the criteria of Rule 2-12-1.

Section 11 RELEASE STUNTS

- 1 In all release stunts:
 - a. The flyer must be directed vertically and be caught by the original bases.
 - b. Participants must not pass over or under other participants.
 - c. The tossers/catchers and spotter must remain in their original positions unless making adjustments for safety purposes.
 - d. The flyer must not become inverted.
- 2 A helicopter is legal, provided all the following conditions are met:
 - a. The rotation in the horizontal plane is not greater than 180 degrees.
 - b. The flyer does not twist.
 - c. The flyer is in a face-up position.
 - d. There are at least four bases who serve as both tossers and catchers.
 - e. At least one tosser/catcher must be in position to support the flyer's head, neck and shoulder area.

NOTE: A helicopter is an exception to the transition rule.
- 3 A log roll is legal provided the following conditions are met:
 - a. It does not involve more than two complete rotations.
 - b. The flyer is not in contact with a person in another stunt.

NOTE: A log roll is an exception to the transition rule.
- 4 In a single-base log roll, the flyer must:
 - a. Rotate toward the base.
 - b. Begin and end in a face-up position.
- 5 In multi-base log rolls:
 - a. With fewer than four catchers, the flyer must begin and end in a face-up position.
 - b. With four catchers, the flyer may be caught face-up in a cradle or in a lay-out position; or face-down in a layout position.

NOTE: The face-down catch is an exception to the swan dive rule (2-11-6).
- 6 A swan dive is illegal.

Section 12 TRANSITIONAL STUNTS

- 1 In transitional stunts, physical contact must be maintained between the flyer and the base(s) except when all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The flyer is braced.
 - b. The flyer does not become inverted.
 - c. The flyer has at least two bases.

EXCEPTION: A single-base tick tock is permitted provided the flyer remains vertical.

 - d. The flyer and each bracer have a separate spotter.
 - e. The loss of contact is a continuous up-and-down movement in which the flyer's center of gravity remains directly over the bases, the flyer's weight is not supported by the bracer(s), and does not pause at the top.
 - f. The flyer is not released to a toss.
- 2 When a transitional stunt involves changing bases, the new base(s) must be to the side or in front of the person moving the stunt except when the flyer remains upright (vertical) throughout the transition to the new base(s). The person moving the stunt can make no more than a half turn to face the new base(s).

Section 13 TWISTS

- 1 A twist performed on the performing surface (jump-twist-land) must not involve more than two complete rotations.
- 2 A twist performed to a cradle must not involve more than two complete rotations except, when dismounting to a cradle from a side-facing stunt, 2 ¼ rotations are permitted.
- 3 A twist performed during a tumbling pass must not involve more than one complete rotation.

Section 14 VAULTS

- 1 Vaults that do not involve heels over head rotation are legal.

Section 15 SPORTSMANSHIP/CONDUCT

- 1 A participant, coach, substitute, trainer, or other team attendant must not commit an unsporting act. This includes, but is not limited to, acts or conducts such as:
 - a. Disrespectfully addressing or contacting an official or gesturing in such a manner as to indicate resentment.
 - b. Using profane or inappropriate language or gestures.
 - c. Baiting or taunting an opponent.
NOTE: The NFHS disapproves of any form of taunting which is intended or designed to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances including on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin.
- 2 A participant, coach, substitute, trainer or other team attendant must not use tobacco, smokeless tobacco, alcohol, or other controlled substances while representing the school.