ICU 2026
JUNIOR WORLD & WORLD
CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS

NATIONAL TEAM GENERAL INFORMATION
DIVISIONS RULES & REGULATION

22 - 24 APRIL 2026

WWW.CHEERUNION.ORG

2026 ICU WORLD CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS
2026 ICU JUNIOR WORLD CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS
General Information

The International Cheer Union (ICU) will host the 2026 ICU Junior World Cheerleading Championships & 2026 ICU World Cheerleading Championships Wednesday through Friday 22-24 April 2026 at the ***ESPN Wide World of Sports®*** Complex. Many athletes & coaches who will participate in the ICU World Cheerleading Championships will potentially also have their athletes perform at the USASF/IASF Cheerleading Worlds for All Star Teams or the ICU International Cheerleading Cup (ICC)* following the ICU Junior World & World Cheerleading Championships.

Back in 2026 - ICU International Cheerleading Cup (ICC)**: During the Cheerleading Worlds Event on Sunday & Monday 26-27 April 2026, ICU will host the ICU International Cup for Individual Cheerleading Club Teams - following the ICU rules, scoresheets & judging processes. ICU National Federations may qualify up to 2 teams per division (For individual Cheerleading Teams that are Club, Gymnasium/Gimasio, All Star, Recreational "Rec" League Teams, or Scholastic (University/School) Teams) in accordance with the ICU ICC rules.* ***Please see the ICU International Cup Division Information Packet for more details.

I. Tentative Schedule of Events

Wednesday 22 April 2026

- ICU Junior World Cheerleading Championships Opening/Welcome, Youth & Junior Division Semi-Finals
- ICU World Championships Disabled Sports Divisions (Adaptive Abilities, Special Olympics/Special Abilities) Semi-Finals
- ICU World Championships Pom Doubles and Hip Hop Doubles Semi-Finals
- ICU World Championship Opening Ceremonies
- ICU VIP Reception & Athlete Cultural Exchange

Thursday 23 April 2026

- ICU World Cheerleading Championships Senior Division Semi-Finals
- ICU World Championships Disabled Sports Divisions Finals & Awards
- ICU World Championships Pom Doubles and Hip Hop Doubles Finals & Awards
- ICU Junior World Cheerleading Championships Finals & Awards

Friday 24 April 2026

- ICU World Cheerleading Championship Senior Division Finals & Awards
- ICU World Cheerleading Championships Closing Ceremonies
- USASF/IASF Worlds Begins

Saturday 25 April 2026

- USASF/IASF Worlds
- ICU International Cheerleading Cup (ICC) Team Open Practice
- **ICU International Cup Semi-Final (Schedule/Divisions TBD)***

Sunday 26 April 2026

- USASF/IASF Worlds
- **ICU International Cup Semi-Final (Schedule/Divisions TBA)***
- **ICU International Cup Final (Day 1: Schedule TBA) ***
  (**See ICU ICC Information Packet for more details*)

Monday 27 April 2026

- USASF/IASF Worlds (Final Day)
- **NEW: ICU Cup Division Competition (Day 2: Schedule TBA) ***
  (**See ICU ICC Information Packet for more details*)
- World Championships Week Block Party

II. Junior World Championships Divisions (12 Total: 6 Youth & 6 Junior divisions)

YOUTH DIVISIONS (6 Divisions = Ages 12-14 in the year of competition)

A. Cheerleading Divisions (4 divisions)

The 2026 ICU Junior World Cheerleading Championships will offer 2 levels of Cheerleading for the Youth All Girl & Youth Coed Divisions.

Nations can select one of the following All Girl Divisions:

1. **Youth All Girl Median**
2. **Youth All Girl Advanced**

Nations can select one of the following Coed Divisions:

1. **Youth Coed Median**
2. **Youth Coed Advanced**

Notes: Each nation can enter one (1) Youth All Girl Division (Median or Advanced) and one (1) Youth Coed Division (Median or Advanced). The nation that wins either the Youth All Girl Median Division or Youth Coed Median Division at the 2026 World Championships will be required to compete in the 2027 Youth Advanced Division within the All Girl or Coed Division respectfully.

B. Performance Cheer Divisions (2 divisions)

The 2026 ICU Junior World Cheerleading Championships will offer the following Youth Performance Cheer divisions - each nation can have only one (1) entry per division:

1. **Youth Hip Hop**
2. **Youth Pom**

Note: All divisions are available to all nations. Crossover into each category & division is allowed for each country as long as eligibility requirements are met.

<u>JUNIOR DIVISIONS (6 Divisions = Ages 15-18 in the year of competition)</u>

A. Cheerleading Divisions (4 divisions)

The 2026 ICU Junior World Cheerleading Championships will offer 2 levels of Cheerleading for the Junior All Girl & Coed Divisions.

Nations can select one of the following All Girl Divisions:

1. **Junior All Girl Advanced**
2. **Junior All Girl Elite**

Nations can select one of the following Coed Divisions:

1. **Junior Coed Advanced**
2. **Junior Coed Elite**

Notes: Each nation can enter one (1) Junior All Girl Division (Advanced or Elite) and one (1) Junior Coed Division (Advanced or Elite). The nation that wins either the Junior All Girl Advanced Division or Junior Coed Advanced Division at the 2026 World Championships will be required to compete in the 2027 Junior Elite Division within the All Girl or Coed Division respectfully.

B. Performance Cheer Divisions (2 divisions)

The 2026 ICU Junior World Cheerleading Championships will offer the following Junior Performance Cheer Divisions - each nation can have only one (1) entry per division:

1. **Junior Hip Hop**
2. **Junior Pom**

Note: All divisions are available to all nations. Crossover into each category & division is allowed for each country as long as eligibility requirements are met.

III. World Championships Senior Divisions (9 total)

A. Cheerleading Divisions (4 divisions)

The 2026 ICU World Cheerleading Championships will offer 2 levels of Cheerleading for the Coed & All Girl divisions.

Nations can select one of the following All Girl Divisions:

1. **All Girl Elite**
2. **All Girl Premier**

Nations can select one of the following Coed Divisions:

1. **Coed Elite**
2. **Coed Premier**

Note: Each nation can enter one (1) All Girl Division (Elite or Premier) and one (1) Coed Division (Elite or Premier). The nation that has previously won or wins either the All Girl Elite Division or Coed Elite Division at the 2026 World Championships will be required to compete in the 2027 World Cheerleading Championships Premier Division within the All Girl or Coed Division respectfully.

B. Team Performance Cheer (3 divisions)

The 2026 ICU World Cheerleading Championships will offer the following divisions – each nation can have only one (1) entry per division:

1. **Hip Hop**
2. **Pom**
3. **Jazz**

Notes All divisions are available to all nations. Crossover of teams into each category & division is allowed for each country, including the Adaptive Abilities & Special Abilities Divisions (below), as long as eligibility requirements are met.

C. Performance Cheer Doubles (2 divisions)

The ICU World Cheerleading Championships will offer the following Performance Cheer Doubles Divisions - each nation can have only one (1) entry per division:

1. **Hip Hop Doubles** (2 athletes)
2. **Pom Doubles** (2 athletes)

Note: Each nation can only have one (1) entry per nation per division. Crossover of teams into each category & division is allowed as needed for each country as long as eligibility requirements are met.

IV. World Championships Disabled Sports Divisions (11 options total)

ADAPTIVE ABILITIES DIVISIONS (5 Divisions = Ages 12 years or older in the year of competition)

Note: All teams must comply with the Adaptive Abilities Division Criteria & Eligibility Criteria (See Page 4 & 5):
https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Adaptive-Abilities.pdf

A. Cheerleading Divisions (3 divisions)

The 2026 ICU World Cheerleading Championships will offer the following Adaptive Abilities Divisions- each nation can have only one (1) entry per division:

1. **Adaptive Abilities Unified Median**
2. **Adaptive Abilities Unified All Girl Advanced**
3. **Adaptive Abilities Unified Coed Advanced**

Note: Adaptive Abilities Unified National Teams must comprise of 25% or more athletes with disabilities per team in compliance with the ICU Adaptive Abilities qualification guidelines.

B. Performance Cheer Divisions (2 divisions)

The 2026 ICU World Cheerleading Championships will offer the following Adaptive Abilities Divisions- each nation can have only one (1) entry per division:

1. **Adaptive Abilities Unified Hip Hop**
2. **Adaptive Abilities Unified Pom**

Note: Adaptive Abilities Unified National Teams must comprise of 25% or more athletes with disabilities per team in compliance with the ICU Adaptive Abilities qualification guidelines.

SPECIAL ABILITIES/SPECIAL OLYMPICS DIVISIONS (6 Division Options = Ages 12 years or older in the year of competition)

Note: All teams must comply with the Special Abilities or Special Olympics Division Criteria & Eligibility Criteria (See Page 4):
https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Special-Abilities.pdf

A. Cheerleading Divisions (Choice of 4 divisions available)

The 2026 ICU World Cheerleading Championships will offer the following Special Abilities & Special Olympics Divisions. Each nation will have a choice of entering either Special Abilities and/or Special Olympics in the following divisions:

1. **Special Abilities Unified Intermediate** and/or **Special Olympics Unified Intermediate**
2. **Special Abilities Traditional Novice** and/or **Special Olympics Traditional Novice**

Note (a): All Special Olympics Team eligibility is based on approval by the country's respective Special Olympic programme & ICU National Federation. Although ICU encourages teams to register in Special Olympics Divisions, ICU offers the enclosed Special Abilities Divisions for teams not yet eligible under Special Olympics guidelines. ICU reserves the right to consolidate or expand divisions based on team eligibility and number of teams registered in each division.

Note (b): For Special Abilities & Special Olympics Divisions; all rules, guidelines & scoring criteria are the same with the exception of the Special Olympics programme approval for Special Olympics Divisions; and for all Unified Divisions - Special Olympics requires a 1:1 ratio & Special Abilities requires a 50% + ratio of athletes with an intellectual disability (ID) to athletes without an ID on a team.

B. Performance Cheer Divisions (Choice of 8 divisions available)

The 2026 ICU World Cheerleading Championships will offer the following Special Abilities & Special Olympics Divisions. Each nation will have a choice of entering either Special Abilities and/or Special Olympics in the following divisions:

1. **Special Abilities Unified Hip Hop Intermediate** and/or **Special Olympics Unified Hip Hop Intermediate**
2. **Special Abilities Unified Pom Intermediate** and/or **Special Olympics Unified Pom Intermediate**
3. **Special Abilities Traditional Hip Hop Novice** and/or **Special Olympics Traditional Hip Hop Novice**
4. **Special Abilities Traditional Pom Novice** and/or **Special Olympics Traditional Novice**

Note (a): All Special Olympics Team eligibility is based on approval by the country's respective Special Olympic programme & ICU National Federation. Although ICU encourages teams to register in Special Olympics Divisions, ICU offers the enclosed Special Abilities Divisions for teams not yet eligible under Special Olympics guidelines. ICU reserves the right to consolidate or expand divisions based on team eligibility and number of teams registered in each division.

Note (b): For Special Abilities & Special Olympics Divisions; all rules, guidelines & scoring criteria are the same with the exception of the Special Olympics programme approval for Special Olympics Divisions; and for all Unified Divisions - Special Olympics requires a 1:1 ratio & Special Abilities requires a 50% + ratio of athletes with an intellectual disability (ID) to athletes without an ID on a team.

V. Time of Routine - JWC (Youth & Junior) and WC Divisions

For more details re: entrances/exits, please see "TIME LIMITATIONS, MUSIC AND ENTRANCES/EXITS" on Page 10 (Cheerleading Divisions) and on Page 15 (Performance Cheer Divisions)

A. Cheerleading Divisions

1. The total maximum time for the routine is three (3) minutes, including the Cheer
   - Cheer Portion: Can be placed in the beginning or middle of routine. Cheer portion minimum time requirement is thirty (30) seconds.
2. Music portion: Two minutes (2:00)

B. Performance Cheer Team Divisions

1. Music portion: Two minutes (2:00)

C. Performance Cheer Doubles Divisions:

1. Music portion: One minute, thirty seconds (1:30)

VI. Cheer Portion of Routine - JWC (Youth & Junior) and WC Divisions

(All Cheerleading Divisions)

For the Cheerleading Divisions at the 2026 ICU Junior World & World Cheerleading Championships, a Cheer must be included in the beginning or middle of routine. Use of native language (including sign language, especially for Adaptive Abilities & Special Abilities/Special Olympics Divisions) in the Cheer and using a more national pride style cheer is encouraged. The Cheer portion of the routine is worth 10 points (of 100 points) and is based on the ability to lead the crowd for the team's nation, use of signs, poms, flags, megaphones, and practical use of stunt/pyramids to lead the crowd. Video examples can be provided; again, native language (including sign language) is encouraged.

VII. Team Size/Number of athletes per team- JWC (Youth and Junior) & WC Divisions

A. Cheerleading Divisions: All Coed, All Girl, Adaptive Abilities Unified, Special Abilities & Special Olympics Divisions:
- *Minimum 16 athletes, maximum 24 athletes*

B. Performance Cheer Team Divisions: All Hip Hop & Pom Team Divisions (does not include Jazz):
- *Minimum 16 athletes, maximum 24 athletes*

C. Performance Cheer Jazz Division:
- *Minimum 18 athletes, maximum 24 athletes*

D. Performance Cheer Doubles Divisions: Hip Hop Doubles & Pom Divisions:
- *Two (2) athletes*

VIII. Age of Athlete - Junior World Cheerleading Championships

A. All Youth Divisions: Ages 12-14 years old within the year of the Junior World Championships

Note: Athletes born in the years of 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 will be eligible for the Youth Division(s) in 2026. Any team proven to be in violation of the age requirements will be automatically disqualified. Crossovers between ICU Divisions are permitted as long as the crossover athlete meets the division eligibility criteria.

B. All Junior Divisions: Ages 15-18 years old within the year of the Junior World Championships

Note: Athletes born in the years of 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 will be eligible for the Junior Division(s) in 2026. Any team proven to be in violation of the age requirements will be automatically disqualified. Crossovers between ICU Divisions are permitted as long as the crossover athlete meets the division eligibility criteria.

IX. Age of Athlete - World Cheerleading Championships

A. All Special Abilities/Special Olympics Divisions: 12 years or older within the year of the World Championships

B. All Adaptive Abilities Division: 12 years or older within the year of the World Championships

C. All Girl & Coed Elite Divisions: 16 years or older within the year of the World Championships

D. All Girl & Coed Premier Divisions: 16 years or older within the year of the World Championships

E. Team Hip Hop, Pom & Jazz Divisions: 16 years or older within the year of the World Championships

F. Doubles Hip Hop, Doubles Pom Divisions: 16 years or older within the year of the World Championships

Note: This age range best represents cheerleading on the global status for national team competition; however, all federations can adjust their own team age ranges to be more restrictive than the World Championship parameters as needed. With the exception of the Junior World Championships divisions, there is no set maximum age. Any team proven to be in violation of the age requirements will be automatically disqualified. Crossovers between all ICU Divisions and between JWC and WC are permitted.

X. Performance Surface

A. Performance Cheer: Hip Hop, Pom, Jazz; Adaptive Abilities Unified Hip Hop & Pom; Special Abilities & Special Olympics Hip Hop & Pom; and Doubles Divisions: Marley performance floor. (Minimum surface area of 42 feet x 42 feet or 12.8 meters x 12.8 meters)

B. **Cheerleading: Coed, All Girl, Adaptive Abilities, Special Abilities & Special Olympics Divisions:** No spring floor, ICU foam mat surface. (9 strips/42 feet x 54 feet or 12.8 meters x 16.5 meters). Note: For the reason of accessibility, cost, and ICU objective of grassroots growth of cheerleading within every nation, a standard foam mat was selected for all Cheerleading Divisions.

XI. Crossovers (athletes participating in multiple divisions)

A. Athlete crossovers between divisions & categories will be allowed within a National Team Delegation of the 2026 ICU Junior World & World Cheerleading Championships, as long as all respective crossover athlete(s) meet ICU division eligibility criteria.

B. ICU National Team athletes may also compete in the USASF/IASF Club World Championships or in the ICU International Cheerleading Cup (ICC); however,
   - Within the USASF/IASF Worlds/ICU ICC Events specifically, individual Cheerleading teams may not crossover to other Club/All Star divisions. (e.g., Individual Club/All Star Cheerleading Teams may only compete in (1) one Cheerleading division throughout the USASF, IASF or the ICU ICC, and may not cross-over between the USASF, IASF & ICU ICC as well)
   - *Exception: IASF Performance Cheer Teams may cross-over into other genres/divisions for the IASF Event per the IASF rules and within the ICU ICC per the ICU ICC rules.*

XII. Residence of Athletes

All athletes are required to be a legal citizen or must have a minimum of six (6) month consecutive permanent resident of their respective nation on the 2026 ICU Junior World & World Cheerleading Championships date of competition.

XIII. Music Guidelines

A. For the 2026 ICU Junior World Championships and World Championships, all National Teams will have the choice of following the USA Cheer Music Copyrights Educational Initiative (https://www.usacheer.org/music) or the ICU (http://cheerunion.org/education/musicinfo/) Music Copyrights Educational Initiative.

B. I have read and understand the USA Cheer or ICU Music Copyrights Educational Initiative and all sound recordings used in our team's music shall only be used with the written license from the owner(s) of the sound recordings.

C. Teams must check Music Provider list for updates and changes periodically. For any questions on music and the music guidelines, teams should email portal@cheerunion.org.

D. Teams must be able to provide proof of licensing, in the form of a printed copy, during the registration at the Championships.

E. If a team does not have proof of music licensing available, they will be allowed to perform to an optional approved track of music or a track with counts (provided by the ICU) or can count verbally.

F. If a team cannot provide proof of licensing, and do not perform to an optional approved track of music or to counts, the team will be disqualified from the competition and not allowed to perform or compete.

G. If there are concerns regarding a certain team's use of music, a Challenge Form must be completed immediately following the team's performance.

H. A challenge can only be made by the official coach or an official National Federation representative of a team competing at the event at where the challenge is being made.

I. Challenge Process:
   - All music challenges must be submitted in writing to the International Cheer Union head official.
   - There will be a $100 USD fee to request a music challenge and must be in the form of USA currency.
   - Fees collected will be returned if the challenge is correct.
   - If the team challenged can provide documentation during the event or can be verified, the fees will be donated to a local children's charity, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.
   - If the team challenged can provide documentation that requires further review, a decision will be finalized within 48 hours of the event.

J. Each team is required to have a responsible adult remain at the music station that knows the routine and music. This representative is responsible for start the music and stopping the music in case of technical malfunction or injury. Should this responsible adult choose not to stay at the music table for the duration of the routine, and a malfunction occurs, teams may or may not be permitted to perform the routine again.

K. If available and if applicable, it is recommended that teams who prepare their routine music on a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) should assure the volume of the music is at "0". Should a DAW be available, a few additional reminders:
   - Most DAWs have a default that sets a track at -6 when a track is added
   - Check to see if there is a normalization process after the work is rendered/saved

L. All teams must provide their own device for use on the event provided sound system. Music should be on a digital music player/iPod/iPhone. CD's will no longer be allowed, and CD players will not be provided at competition.

M. Use of a Smart Phone for playing routine music is not recommended due to the probably of music interference during the routine.

N. MP3 devices must be free of any cover (protective, decorative, or otherwise) to assure an unobstructed connection with the event sound system.
O. It is important that all devices have a headphone connection component/jack to connect to the sound system and that all devices are fully charged, volume turned up and placed in airplane mode.
P. All device connection components/jacks must be clean and free of any debris to prevent a music malfunction. Should a team's device not have a headphone connection component/jack, then the team must have an adapter to accommodate this device requirement on site for the competition.
Q. For purposes of family viewing and in promotion of international sport, routine music must not include content that is suggestive/sexual in nature, offensive, vulgar or inferences violence of any kind. Violations of this rule will be impacted in the Overall category on the respective score sheet(s).
R. Excessive use of sound effects and/or the addition of generic and/or custom voiceovers to the music are not appropriate and should be avoided. Exceptions can include the name of the team, team mascot, team colors, the team's country, etc. which is recommended to be used a maximum of 2 times throughout the routine. Violations of this rule will be impacted in the Overall category on the respective score sheet(s).
S. Teams may not use Disney themes, nor may they have costumes that resemble a Disney character. However, Disney music is acceptable if following the music guidelines.

XIV. Logo Usage

Teams will not be allowed to use the ICU logo including banners, rings, bows, t-shirts, etc. without prior approval from the ICU office. The use of the ICU letters will be allowed.

XV. Media Policy

No commercial recording (audio or visual) or commercial live streaming is allowed in the event venue or other event-related venues (including but not limited to, hotels and restaurants) or on the grounds of any such venues (collectively, "Event Locations"). In the event a team authorizes the commercial recording or streaming in any Event Location, the team will be automatically disqualified. In addition, the personal, non-commercial use of live streaming apps (such as Periscope, Facebook Live, etc.) to capture all or any part of a performance during the event is not permitted. By attending/purchasing admission to the event, each attendee grants permission to ICU and its affiliates, designees, agents, licensees and invitees to use the image, likeness, action and statements of the attendee in any live or recorded audio, video, film, or photographic display or other transmission, exhibition, publication, or reproduction made of, or at, the event in any medium, whether now known or hereafter created, or context for any purpose, including commercial or promotional purposes, without further authorization or compensation.

XVI. Health Precautions (e.g., COVID-19, etc.) & Guidelines

ICU will fully comply with all health policies & guidelines required by local authorities at the 2026 ICU Junior World & World Cheerleading Championships and full compliance with be required of all attendees as well. Should any measures be required, the ICU reserves the right to take any required measures, at any time, to assure the safety of our athletes and all attendees in relation to these championships.

XVII. ICU Anti-Doping Rules and Regulations-Guidelines and Operations Procedures

ICU is committed to doping free sport, and strictly follows the enclosed guidelines and procedures of the ICU WADA approved Anti-Doping guidelines and procedures for the safety of our athletes and fairness of play for our sport. https://cheerunion.org.ismmedia.com/ISM3/std-content/repos/Top/WADA/docs/ICU_Anti-Doping-Rules_21.pdf

XVIII. ICU Rules and Regulations against Illegal Betting and Competition Fixing

ICU is committed to fair play for our athletes and the integrity of the sport and follows rules and regulations in the fight against illegal betting and competition fixing.
https://cheerunion.org.ismmedia.com/ISM3/std-content/repos/Top/2013_Website/About%20Us/Documents/ICU_Rules_Competition-Fixing.pdf

XIX. ICU Privacy Polices

ICU is committed to your privacy. ICU's Privacy Policies: http://cheerunion.org/contact/privacypolicy/

XX. ICU Safeguarding Policies

ICU is committed to safeguarding our Athletes. ICU Safeguarding Policies and additional information:
https://olympics.com/athlete365/what-we-do/integrity/safe-sport/, https://cheerunion.org/education/coach/ , http://cheerunion.org/about/bureau/
***Note**: Additional ICU World Championship venue safeguarding requirements provided upon team registration.*

2026 ICU WORLD CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS
2026 ICU JUNIOR WORLD CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS
CHEERLEADING DIVISIONS RULES & REGULATIONS
All Girl & Coed Divisions
Senior, Junior, Youth, Adaptive Abilities, Special Abilities & Special Olympics

I. GENERAL RULES
A. All teams must be supervised during all official functions by a qualified director/advisor/coach.
B. All directors, advisors and coaches should have an emergency response plan in the event of an injury.

II. TOURNAMENT
A. The event will take place on Wednesday to Friday 22-24 April 2026 in Orlando, Florida, USA.
<u>Wednesday 22 April 2026</u>
ICU Junior World Cheerleading Championships Opening/Welcome & Semi-Finals
ICU World Cheerleading Championships Disabled Sports Semi-Finals
ICU World Championships Opening Ceremonies
<u>Thursday 23 April 2026</u>
ICU World Cheerleading Championships Senior Division Semi-Finals
ICU World Cheerleading Championships Disabled Sports Finals & Awards
ICU Junior World Championships Finals & Awards
<u>Friday 24 April 2026</u>
ICU World Championships Senior Divisions Finals & Awards
ICU World Championships Closing Ceremony
B. The competition is scheduled to be held at the ESPN Wide World of Sports ® Complex.
C. The tournament officials shall have the right to alter the time and location of the competition in the event changes become necessary due to inclement weather, facility problems, television production requirements, or any other situation deemed by the tournament officials to be essential to the successful execution of the championship.

III. HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS
A. **RULES & PROCEDURES**: Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the director/coach of the team and will be directed to the Competition Director. Such questions should be made prior to the team's competition performance. For any questions concerning the legality of a move or trick, it is recommended to send a video copy of any skill of question to cheer.rules@cheerunion.org.

B. **PERFORMANCE:** Any questions concerning the team's performance should be made to the Competition Director immediately after the team's performance and/or following the outcome of the competition.

IV. SPORTSMANSHIP
A. All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the competition with positive presentation upon entry and exit from the performance area as well as throughout the routine.
B. The advisor and coach of each team is responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents, and other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification.
C. In the promotion of international sport and the global athletic image of the Sport of Cheer, facial expressions and mannerisms on stage should be genuine, natural and authentic. Forced, choreographed, aggressive, vulgar and offensive facial expressions and gestures are not appropriate and should be avoided. Singing and/or pantomiming the lyrics is also not appropriate to the sport and should be avoided.

D. Actions that exhibit excessive boasting, a delay in competition, poor sportsmanship, unprofessional behavior, etc. may be penalized. These actions include but are not limited to
   - An athlete calling unnecessary attention to themselves (e.g. high fives, chest bumps, etc.)
   - Excessive pre- or post-competition team rituals (team bonding traditions must take place behind the stage area)
   - Excessive celebration (e.g. athletes wrapping their legs around coaches and/or each other, victory dances, etc.)

DI. For more information regarding ICU's sportsmanship policies, please see the following ICU sportsmanship guidelines video: https://cheerunion.org/coaches-sportsmanship/

V. INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE

A. UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

1. If, in the opinion of the competition officials, a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the competition equipment, facilities, or other factors attributable to the competition rather than the team, the team affected should **STOP** the routine.
2. The team will perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred. The degree and effect of the interruption will be determined by the competition officials.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.

B. FAULT OF TEAM

1. In the event a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the team's own equipment, the team must either continue the routine or withdraw from the competition.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If decided by officials, the team will perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.

C. INJURY

1. The only persons that may stop a routine for injury are:
   a. competition officials
   b. the advisor / coach from the team performing
   c. an injured individual.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed at a later time, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. The team may perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.
4. The injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless:
   a. The competition officials receive clearance from, first, the medical personnel attending to that participant, the parent (if present) AND THEN the head coach/advisor of the competing team.
   b. If the medical personnel do not clear the participant, the participant can only return to the competition if a parent or legal guardian in attendance signs a return to participation waiver.
   c. In the event of a suspected concussion, the participant cannot return to perform without clearance from a physician (MD/DO) that has training related to head injuries, and waiting 24 hours, even with a waiver from a parent or legal guardian.
   d. In addition to the head injury policy, we encourage you to be familiar with the specific law where the competition is being held.

VI. INTERPRETATIONS AND/OR RULINGS

Any interpretation of any aspect of these Rules and Regulations or any decision involving any other aspect of the competition will be rendered by the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will render a judgment in an effort to ensure that the competition proceeds in a manner consistent with the general spirit and goals of the competition. The Rules Committee will consist of the Competition Director, Head Judge, and a designated competition official.

VII. DISQUALIFICATION

Any team that does not adhere to the terms and procedures of these "Rules and Regulations" will be subject to disqualification from the competition, will automatically forfeit any right to any prizes or awards presented by the competition, and may also forfeit the opportunity to participate the following year.

VIII. SPOTTER POLICY

In an effort to promote a higher level of safety for competing athletes, the ICU World Cheerleading Championships will provide spotters for all rehearsal and competition floors. To provide the safest competitive environment, teams should not attempt skills beyond their ability level.

XII. GENERAL SAFETY RULES

All Cheerleading Teams must follow the ICU General Safety Rules (see Page 3):
https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ICU_2026_Rules_CH-PC.pdf

XIII. MOBILITY & SUPPORT DEVICE RULES

Note: The use of the term "wheelchair" below also applies to the use of scooters and similar mobility devices, as is applicable.

A. **Special Abilities and Special Olympics Teams** (see Page 4):
https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Special-Abilities.pdf

B. **Adaptive Abilities Teams and all other Divisions requiring Mobility & Support Devices** (See Page 4):
https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Adaptive-Abilities.pdf

XIV. CHEERLEADING DIVISIONS (BY LEVEL) - SAFETY RULES

For Safety Rules by Level/Division, please reference the ICU Safety Rules Document link enclosed here https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ICU_2026_Rules_CH-PC.pdf and reference the respective Level/Division Page Number(s) as noted below:

A. ICU Novice Division Rules (Special Abilities / Special Olympics Traditional Divisions*): See Pages 6-9
**Note: Special Abilities / Special Olympics Teams must follow the ICU Novice Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Special Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 3-4): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Special-Abilities.pdf*

B. ICU Intermediate Division Rules (Special Abilities / Special Olympics Unified Divisions*): See Pages 9-12
**Note: Special Abilities / Special Olympics Teams must follow the ICU Intermediate Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Special Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 3-4): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Special-Abilities.pdf*

C. ICU Median Division Rules (Youth Median & Adaptive Abilities* Median Divisions): See Pages 12-17
**Note: Adaptive Abilities Teams must follow the ICU Median Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Adaptive Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 2-5): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Adaptive-Abilities.pdf*

D. ICU Advanced Division Rules (Youth, Junior & Adaptive Abilities* Advanced Divisions): See Pages 17-21
**Note: Adaptive Abilities Teams must follow the ICU Advanced Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Adaptive Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 2-5): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Adaptive-Abilities.pdf*

E. ICU Elite Division Rules (Junior & Senior Elite Divisions): See Pages 22-25

F. ICU Premier Division Rules (Junior & Senior Premier Divisions): See Pages 25-29

XV. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For a full listing of the ICU Cheerleading Glossary of Terms (with video and visual examples as well), please see https://cheerunion.org/cheerleadingglossary/. For any questions or requests for further clarification. Please email cheer.rules@cheerunion.org

XVI. TIME LIMITATIONS, MUSIC, AND ENTRANCES/EXITS

A. Each team will have a maximum of 2 minutes for music (2:00) and a recommended 30 seconds (:30) Cheer that must be performed in the beginning or middle of the routine.

B. The Total maximum time for the routine will be three (3:00) minutes, including the Cheer.

C. Every effort should be made to ensure that the lyrics of the music are appropriate for all audience members.
D. Timing will begin with the first choreographed movement, voice or note of the music whichever comes first.
E. Timing will end with the last choreographed movement, voice or note of the music whichever comes last.
F. If a team exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. One point deduction for 5-10 seconds and three (3) point deduction for 11 seconds and over per judge.
G. BECAUSE PENALTIES ARE SEVERE, IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT ALL TEAMS TIME THEIR PERFORMANCE SEVERAL TIMES PRIOR TO COMPETITION AND LEAVE A SEVERAL SECOND CUSHION TO ALLOW FOR VARIATIONS IN SOUND EQUIPMENT.
H. Each team must have a coach/representative to play their music. This person is responsible for bringing the music to the music table and pushing "play" and "stop" for the team.
I. In order to keep the competition on time, teams must enter and exit the performance floor as quickly as possible. Teams will have limited time to enter the floor and start their routine. Elaborate choreographed entrances will not be allowed. Additional conditions are as follows:
   - Entrances: When teams are introduced, teams must take the floor and assume their starting positions within 20 seconds.
   - Exits: At the conclusion of the routine **and following the completed dismount of the team (e.g. from an ending pyramid(s) or stunt(s))**, teams must exist the floor immediately and must be off the performance floor within 20 seconds.
J. **For purposes of family viewing and in promotion of international sport, routine music must not include content that is suggestive/sexual in nature, offensive, vulgar or inferences violence of any kind. Violations of this rule will be impacted in the Overall category on the respective score sheet(s).**
K. **Excessive use of sound effects and/or the addition of generic and/or custom voiceovers to the music are not appropriate and should be avoided. Exceptions can include the name of the team, team mascot, team colors, the team's country, etc. which is recommended to be used a maximum of 2 times throughout the routine. Violations of this rule will be impacted in the Overall category on the respective score sheet(s).**
L. Teams may not use Disney Themes, nor may they have costumes that resemble a Disney character. However, Disney music is acceptable.

XVII. COMPETITION AREA

A. The performance floor will be approximately 42 feet x 54 feet/12.8 meters x 16.5 meters**.** The surface will be a standard ICU foam Cheerleading mat.
B. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
C. No penalty for stepping outside the area.

XVIII. JUDGING CRITERIA & SCORESHEETS

The judges will score the teams according to the judging criteria on a 100-point system. ICU World Championships scoresheets can be accessed https://cheerunion.org/championships/cheerleading/. For any questions and/or for further clarification as needed, please email portal@cheerunion.org

XIX. JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judges for the event will be appointed at the sole discretion of the International Cheer Union. As the teams make their presentations, the judges will score the teams using a 100-point system. The highest score and the lowest score given for each team will be dropped and the remaining judges' scores will be totaled to determine the overall team score. In the event of a first-place tie, the high and low score will be added back into the total score. If a tie remains, the ranking points from each judge will be used to break the tie.

XX. SCORES AND RANKINGS

Individual score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his or her final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores for all teams. Scores and rankings will be available only to coaches or captains at the conclusion of the competition. No scores or rankings will be given over the telephone. After each round of competition, teams will receive the judges' score sheets as well as their score and the top score in the group. In addition, teams will receive a ranking sheet with the names and scores of their respective team's final placement.

XXI. FINALITY OF DECISIONS

By participating in this championship, each team agrees that decision by the judges will be final and will not be subject for review. Each team acknowledges the necessity for the judges to make prompt and fair decisions in this competition and each team therefore expressly waives any legal, equitable, administrative, or procedural review of such decisions.

XXII. SEMI-FINALS AND FINALS

ICU reserves the right to determine if a semi-final or final round will be necessary. All divisions with one round of competition prior to the finals will be classified as a semi-final. Ten (10) of the teams in each semi-final round will advance to the finals. In the event of a tie for the final team advancing, both teams that are tied will advance. Tournament officials will have the full authority to make the final determination of the number of teams selected to advance to the next round.

XXIII. APPEARANCES, ENDORSEMENTS, AND PUBLICITY

All teams winning titles or awards agree to have all appearances, endorsements and publicity approved through the ICU office.

XXIV. PENALTIES

A five (5) point per judge penalty will be assessed to any team violating any of the specific rules as stated above. This deduction does not apply to violations mentioned above that are designated a lesser point value. For any questions concerning the legality of a move or trick, it is recommended to send a video copy of any skill of question to cheer.rules@cheerunion.org.

We have reviewed the ICU Rules and Regulations with our entire team and we hereby accept the Rules and Regulations as a fair and integral part of the competition and agree to adhere to the rules, policies and procedures contained herein. Rule clarifications and changes may occur throughout the season.

_____	_____
Team Name	*Date*
_____	_____
City/State/Country	*Coach/Director's Signature*
_____	_____
Division	*Captain's Signature*

Retain a copy of these rules for your files

2026 ICU WORLD CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS
2026 ICU JUNIOR WORLD CHEERLEADING CHAMPIONSHIPS
PERFORMANCE CHEER DIVISIONS RULES & REGULATIONS
HIP HOP, POM & JAZZ*
(*Jazz for Senior Teams only)
Senior, Junior, Youth, Adaptive Abilities, Special Abilities & Special Olympics

I. GENERAL RULES
A. All teams must be supervised during all official functions by a qualified director/advisor/coach.
B. Coaches must require proficiency before skill progression. Coaches must consider the athlete, group, and team skill levels with regard to proper performance level placement.
C. All directors, advisors and coaches should have an emergency response plan in the event of an injury.

II. TOURNAMENT
A. The event will take place on Wednesday to Friday 22-24 April 2026 in Orlando, Florida, USA.
<u>Wednesday 22 April 2026</u>
ICU Junior World Cheerleading Championships Opening/Welcome & Semi-Finals
ICU World Cheerleading Championships Disabled Sports Semi-Finals
ICU World Championships Opening Ceremonies
<u>Thursday 23 April 2026</u>
ICU World Cheerleading Championships Senior Division Semi-Finals
ICU World Cheerleading Championships Disabled Sports Finals & Awards
ICU Junior World Championships Finals & Awards
<u>Friday 24 April 2026</u>
ICU World Championships Senior Divisions Finals & Awards
ICU World Championships Closing Ceremony
B. The competition is scheduled to be held at the ESPN Wide World of Sports ® Complex.
C. The tournament officials shall have the right to alter the time and location of the competition in the event changes become necessary due to inclement weather, facility problems, television production requirements, or any other situation deemed by the tournament officials to be essential to the successful execution of the championship.

III. HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS
A. **RULES & PROCEDURES:** Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the director / coach of the team and will be directed to the Competition Director. Such questions should be made prior to the team's competition performance. For any questions concerning the legality of a move or trick, it is recommended to send a video copy of any skill of question to pc.rules@cheerunion.org.

B. **PERFORMANCE:** Any questions concerning the team's performance should be made to the Competition Director immediately after the team's performance and/or following the outcome of the competition and should be made exclusively by the advisor/coach.

IV. SPORTSMANSHIP
A. All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the competition with positive presentation upon entry and exit from the performance area as well as throughout the routine.
B. The advisor and coach of each team are responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents, and other persons affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification.

C. In the promotion of international sport and the global athletic image of the Sport of Cheer, facial expressions and mannerisms on stage should be genuine, natural and authentic. Forced, choreographed, aggressive, vulgar and offensive facial expressions and gestures are not appropriate and should be avoided. Singing and/or pantomiming the lyrics is also not appropriate to the sport and should be avoided.

D. Actions that exhibit excessive boasting, a delay in competition, poor sportsmanship, unprofessional behavior, etc. may be penalized. These actions include but are not limited to:

- An athlete calling unnecessary attention to themselves or a team using long and excessive entrances (e.g. aggressive motioning/taunting to the crowd, moving to multiple formations and patterns to begin the routine, etc.)
- Excessive pre- or post-competition team rituals (team bonding traditions must take place behind the stage area)
- Excessive celebration (e.g. athletes wrapping their legs around coaches and/or each other, victory dances, etc.)

E. For more information regarding ICU's sportsmanship policies, please see the following ICU sportsmanship guidelines video: https://cheerunion.org/coaches-sportsmanship/

V. INTERRUPTION OF PERFORMANCE

A. UNFORSEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

1. If, in the opinion of the competition officials, a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the competition equipment, facilities, or other factors attributable to the competition rather than the team, the team affected should **STOP** the routine.
2. The team will perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred. The degree & effect of the interruption will be determined by the competition officials.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.

B. FAULT OF TEAM

1. In the event a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the team's own equipment, the team must either continue the routine or withdraw from the competition.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If decided by officials, the team will perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.

C. INJURY

1. The only persons that may stop a routine for injury are:
   a. competition officials
   b. the advisor / coach from the team performing
   c. an injured individual
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed at a later time, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. The team may perform the routine again in its entirety but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.
4. The injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless:
   a. The competition officials receive clearance from, first, the medical personnel attending to that participant, the parent (if present) AND THEN the head coach/advisor of the competing team.
   b. If the medical personnel do not clear the participant, the participant can only return to the competition if a parent or legal guardian in attendance signs a return to participation waiver.
   c. In the event of a suspected concussion, the participant cannot return to perform without clearance from a physician (MD/DO) that has training related to head injuries, and waiting 24 hours, even with a waiver from a parent or legal guardian.
   d. In addition to the head injury policy, we encourage you to be familiar with the specific law where the competition is being held.

VI. INTERPRETATIONS AND/OR RULINGS

Any interpretation of any aspect of these Rules and Regulations or any decision involving any other aspect of the competition will be rendered by the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee will render a judgment in an effort to ensure that the competition proceeds in a manner consistent with the general spirit and goals of the competition. The Rules Committee will consist of the Competition Director, Head Judge, and a designated competition official.

VII. DISQUALIFICATION

Any team that does not adhere to the terms and procedures of these "Rules and Regulations" will be subject to disqualification from the competition, will automatically forfeit any right to any prizes or awards presented by the competition, and may also forfeit the opportunity to participate the following year.

VIII. SPECIFIC ROUTINE GUIDELINES

A. CHOREOGRAPHY AND COSTUMING

See Page 31: "A. CHOREOGRAPHY AND COSTUMING"
https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ICU_2026_Rules_CH-PC.pdf

B. TIME LIMITATTIONS, MUSIC, AND ENTRANCES/EXITS

1. Each **Team** will have a maximum of two (2) minutes to perform their routine & demonstrate their expertise.
2. Each **Doubles** will have a maximum of 1 minute and 30 seconds (1:30) to perform their routine & demonstrate their expertise.
3. Every effort should be made to ensure that the lyrics of the music are appropriate for all audience members.
4. Timing will begin with the first choreographed movement, voice or note of the music.
5. Timing will end with the last choreographed movement, voice or note of the music.
6. If a performance (Team or Doubles) exceeds the time limit, a penalty will be assessed for each violation. There will be a one (1) point deduction per judge for 5-10 seconds over the time limit and a three (3) point deduction per judge for 11 seconds or more over the time limit.
7. All teams must have a coach/representative to play their music. This person is responsible for bringing the music to the music table and pushing "play" and "stop" for the Team or Doubles performance.
8. In order to keep the competition on time, teams must enter and exit the performance floor as quickly as possible. Choreographed entrances/exits will not be allowed. Teams will have limited time to enter the floor and start their routine. Additional conditions are as follows:
   - Entrances: When teams are introduced, teams must take the floor and assume their starting positions within 20 seconds.
   - Exits: At the conclusion of the routine, teams must exist the floor immediately and must be off the performance floor within 20 seconds.
9. **For purposes of family viewing and in promotion of international sport, routine music must not include content that is suggestive/sexual in nature, offensive, vulgar or inferences violence of any kind. Violations of this rule will be impacted in the Overall category on the respective score sheet(s).**
10. **Excessive use of sound effects and/or the addition of generic and/or custom voiceovers to the music are not appropriate and should be avoided. Exceptions can include the name of the team, team mascot, team colors, the team's country, etc. which is recommended to be used a maximum of 2 times throughout the routine. Violations of this rule will be impacted in the Overall category on the respective score sheet(s).**
11. Teams may not use Disney themes, nor may they have costumes that resemble a Disney character. However, Disney music is acceptable.

C. PROPS

See Page 31: "C. PROPS"
https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ICU_2026_Rules_CH-PC.pdf

D. MOBILITY & SUPPORT DEVICE RULES

Note: *The use of the term "wheelchair" below also applies to the use of scooters and similar mobility devices as is applicable*

1. **Special Abilities and Special Olympics Teams** (see Pages 7-8):
   https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Special-Abilities.pdf
2. **Adaptive Abilities Teams and all other Divisions requiring Mobility & Support Devices** (See Pages 7-8):
   https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Adaptive-Abilities.pdf

E. TEAM PARTICIPATION

1. Each division will have a separate title winner.
2. Each country will provide a National Team comprised of individual team members. The National Team may compete in a single division or multiple divisions.
3. If the National Team chooses to compete in more than 1 division, it is permissible, but not compulsory for each individual team member to compete as part of the National Team in each division.
4. Each National Team may be comprised of as many different individual team members as desired; however, the National Team may only participate in a division with a minimum of 16 performers (Team Pom & Team Hip Hop) or 18 performers (Team Jazz) and a maximum of 24 on the floor at one time. It is permissible, but not compulsory, that the same individual team members compete in each division.
5. Each Doubles will be comprised of 2 team members.
6. Participants will be allowed to crossover into the National Team Cheer Divisions at the coaches' discretion as scheduling conflicts may occur.
7. Each country's National Federation will need to provide proof of permanent residency (minimum of six (6) months consecutive permanent residence) for each member of its team.
8. Each athlete must be compliant with the age requirements of their respective division.
   Any team proven to be in violation of the age requirements will be automatically disqualified.
9. All genders are allowed to participate on the team.

F. COMPETITION AREA

1. The performance floor will be approximately 42 x 42 feet/12.8 x 12.8 meters.
2. The surface will be professional grade material (e.g., Marley floor)
3. There is no penalty for stepping outside the performance floor area.

G. CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

POM: Incorporates the use of proper Pom motion technique that is sharp, clean, and precise while allowing for the use of concepts from Jazz, Hip Hop and High Kick. An emphasis is placed on group execution including synchronization, uniformity and spacing. The choreography of a dynamic and effective routine focuses on musicality, staging of visual effects through fluid and creative transitions, levels, and groups, along with complexity of movement and skills. Poms are required to be used throughout the routine. The uniform/costuming should reflect the category style. See score sheet for more information.

HIP HOP: Incorporates authentic street style influenced movement that has evolved from Hip Hop culture. Routines should exhibit originality, creativity and movement techniques with engagement, high energy and genuine connection to the music. An emphasis is placed on group execution, including synchronization, uniformity, and spacing. Choreography should highlight genuine groove, authentic rhythm, vibe and style, intricate musicality, visual staging, complexity of movement and athleticism. Costuming should reflect Hip Hop culture in a way that supports both authenticity and performance. See score sheet for more information.

JAZZ: Incorporates traditional or stylized dynamic movements with strength, continuity, presence, and proper technical execution. An emphasis is placed on group execution including synchronization, uniformity, and spacing. The choreography of a dynamic and effective routine utilizes musicality, staging, complexity of movement and skills. The overall impression of the routine should be lively, energetic, and motivating, with the understanding that the dynamics of movement may change to utilize musicality. The uniform/costuming should reflect the category style. See score sheet for more information.

IX. SPECIFIC RULES

A five (5) point per judge penalty will be assessed to any team violating any of the specific rules as stated herein. This deduction does not apply to violations mentioned elsewhere that are designated a lesser point value.

X. PERFORMANCE CHEER DIVISIONS - RULES BY LEVEL/GENRE

For Safety Rules by Level/Division, please reference the ICU Safety Rules Document link enclosed here https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ICU_2026_Rules_CH-PC.pdf and reference the respective Level/Division Page Number(s) as noted below:

A. ICU Pom Rules - Novice (Special Abilities/Special Olympics Traditional Divisions*): See Pages 32-33

**Note: Special Abilities / Special Olympics Teams must follow the ICU Pom Novice Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Special Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 6-8): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Special-Abilities.pdf*

B. ICU Hip Hop Rules - Novice (Special Abilities/Special Olympics Traditional Divisions*): See Pages 36-37

**Note: Special Abilities / Special Olympics Teams must follow the ICU Novice Hip Hop Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Special Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 6-8): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Special-Abilities.pdf*

C. ICU Pom Rules - Intermediate (Special Abilities/Special Olympics Unified Divisions*): See Pages 33-34

**Note: Special Abilities / Special Olympics Teams must follow the ICU Pom Novice Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Special Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 6-8): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Special-Abilities.pdf*

D. ICU Hip Hop Rules-Intermediate (Special Abilities/Special Olympics Unified Divisions*): See Pages 37-38

**Note: Special Abilities / Special Olympics Teams must follow the ICU Novice Hip Hop Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Special Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 6-8): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Special-Abilities.pdf*

E. ICU Pom Rules – Premier (Youth, Junior, Senior, Adaptive Abilities* Divisions): See Pages 35-36

**Note: Adaptive Abilities Teams must follow the ICU Pom Premier Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Adaptive Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 6-8): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Adaptive-Abilities.pdf*

F. ICU Hip Hop Rules – Premier (Youth, Junior & Adaptive Abilities* Divisions): See Pages 39-40

**Note: Adaptive Abilities Teams must follow the ICU Advanced Division Rules with additional modifications as noted in the Adaptive Abilities Safety Rules Guidelines (Pages 6-8): https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/ICU_Rules_Adaptive-Abilities.pdf*

G. ICU Jazz Rules – Premier (Senior Division Only): See Pages 42-43

XI. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For a full listing of the ICU Cheerleading Glossary of Terms (with video and visual examples as well), please see https://cheerunion.org/performancecheerglossary/. For any questions or requests for further clarification. Please email pc.rules@cheerunion.org

XII. JUDGING CRITERIA & SCORESHEETS

The judges will score the teams according to the judging criteria on a 100-point system. ICU World Championships scoresheets can be accessed https://cheerunion.org/championships/cheerleading/. For any questions and/or further clarification, please email portal@cheerunion.org

XIII. JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judges for the event will be appointed at the sole discretion of the International Cheer Union. As teams make their presentations, the judges will score the teams according to the judging criteria on a 100-point system. The highest score and lowest score given for each team will be dropped and the remaining judges' scores will be totaled to determine the overall team score. In the event of a first-place tie, the high and low score will be added back into the total score. If a tie remains, the ranking points from each judge will be used to break the tie.

XIV. SCORES AND RANKINGS

Individual score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his or her final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores for all teams. Scores and rankings will be available **only** to coaches or captains at the conclusion of the competition. No scores or rankings will be given over the telephone. After each round of competition, teams will receive the judges' score sheets as well as their score and the top score in the group. In addition, teams will receive a ranking sheet with the names and scores of the teams' final placement.

XV. FINALITY OF DECISIONS

By participating in this championship, each team agrees that decisions by the judges will be final and will not be subject for review. Each team acknowledges the necessity for the judges to make prompt and fair decisions in this competition and each team therefore expressly waives any legal, equitable, administrative, or procedural review of such decisions.

XVI. SEMI-FINALS AND FINALS

ICU reserves the right to determine if a semi-final or final round will be necessary. All divisions with one round of competition prior to the finals will be classified as a semi-final. Ten (10) of the teams in each semi-final round will advance to the finals. In the event of a tie for the final team advancing, both teams that are tied will advance. Tournament officials will have the full authority to make the final determination of the number of teams selected to advance to the next round.

XVII. APPEARANCES, ENDORSEMENTS, AND PUBLICITY

All teams winning titles or awards agree to have all appearances, endorsements and publicity approved through the ICU office.

XVIII. PENALTIES

A five (5) point per judge penalty will be assessed to any team violating any of the specific rules as stated above. This deduction does not apply to violations mentioned above that are designated a lesser point value. For any questions concerning the legality of a move or trick, it is recommended to send a video copy of any skill of question to pc.rules@cheerunion.org.

ON BEHALF OF MY TEAM, I HEREBY ACCEPT THE ICU PERFORMANCE CHEER COMPETITION AND ROUTINES RULES AND GUIDELINES AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THESE RULES

_____	_____
Team Name	*Date*
_____	_____
City/State/Country	*Coach/Director's Signature*
_____	_____
Division	*Captain's Signature*

Retain a copy of these rules for your files