

MICHIGAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Girls Competitive Cheer Committee Meeting

East Lansing, January 20, 2021

9:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Jordan Ackerman, MIAAA
Angela Boerkoel, Mason
Michael Brya, DeWitt
Kris Isom, Adrian
Charlie O'Dell, Grand Rapids
Danyel Prielipp, Marion
Anna Ramirez, CCCAM

Meaghan Rourke, MATS
Allison Sartorius, Waterford
Stacy Smith, Caledonia
Jon Studley, Alpena
Jessica Trefry, Michigan Center

Members Absent:

Brian Gordon, Novi

Staff:

Kathy Vruggink Westdorp

COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Girls Competitive Cheer Committee reviewed its responsibilities as a standing sport committee and the process of making recommendations to MHSAA staff and the MHSAA Representative Council. In addition, the Girls Competitive Cheer Committee reviewed the charge of the Girls Competitive Cheer Sub-Committee which met on January 19, 2021. This Sub-Committee studied the technical aspects of girls competitive cheer and made recommendations which were submitted to the Competitive Cheer Committee for additional review.

The Girls Competitive Cheer Tournament Manager's Materials and Participating School Information were also reviewed. In addition, the minutes from last year's Girls Competitive Cheer Committee and the Competitive Cheer Sub-Committee were perused. District and Regional sites were provided and reviewed.

HISTORY OF GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER

The history of girls competitive cheer was shared with the Competitive Cheer Committee including how the MHSAA's first commitment was to have girls competitive cheer meet the definition of a sport. To that end, a format was created by Michigan cheer coaches and athletic administrators with the purpose of providing consistent rules, while allowing teams to perform all aspects of cheer techniques and styles designed to promote athleticism. Additionally, meeting the criteria of a sport provided by the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Education, was imperative. Girls competitive cheer has provided a great opportunity for young women to participate in a sport in which participation and spectatorship has soared.

GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER COMPARATIVE CONCUSSION INFORMATION

Committee members reviewed comparative information from the MHSAA Head Injury Reporting System by sport and year. Comparative data indicates that in 2018, participation in girls competitive cheer was 6720 students and in 2019, participation was 6715. In 2020, participation in Girls Competitive Cheer was 6672. The 2020 concussion data indicates that girls competitive cheer had 21 concussions per 1000 participants, which was a slight increase from the year prior. Further information identified that most of the injuries occurred during practice (either at the middle or end) at the varsity level.

COVID CONSIDERATIONS

Provisions were put in place for both middle and high school girls competitive cheer which included guidance designed to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging physical distancing and allowing for appropriate protective equipment. This also included requirements for girls competitive cheer to occur, as well as the standards for participation. Provided were scheduling requirements in which schools were limited to scheduling a maximum of four teams at each site at one time; responsibilities at practices; responsibilities at contests; and other general considerations. Also included were suggestions for schools regarding specific school spectator sections, warm-up space and added provisions for officials.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE COMPETITIVE CHEER SUB-COMMITTEE

The Competitive Cheer Sub-Committee meets for the purpose of annually reviewing current competition and safety rules and to propose changes and additions to the Competitive Cheer Manual. The committee focuses on the technical aspects of competitive cheer and advises the full committee and ultimately the Representative Council of the rules that may need review, revision, or update. Review of the recommendations from the Competitive Cheer Coaches Association and discussion occurred regarding each of the technical proposals. The recommendations from the MHSAA Sub-Committee are as follows:

1. Allow a connected tumbling skill to be considered a new variety point for Round 3. (19-0) (8-0)
2. Adopt a new choreography chart that awards points based on team tumble, OLE's vertical twists/360's and release skills. (18-1) (8-0) – **Concept Only**
3. Adjust the difficulty scoring chart to reflect a maximum possibility of 20 points to equal 60 points per competitor for the high school. Middle school would remain at 50 points per competitor. (15-4) (8-0) – **Concept Only**.
4. Award 4 difficulty points for one-leg flair at the elevator level for middle school. (19-0), (7-1)

The Competitive Cheer Committee continues to discuss several topics regarding the evolution of girls competitive cheer as a sport. This includes ideas of various adjustments to the choreography chart as well as adjusting the difficulty scoring chart to reflect a variety of different maximums. There is still sentiment that all rounds of girls competitive cheer are important and that any concepts that are considered, should be for the future, as this was not the year for a multitude of changes. It also was reiterated that something may be learned from the adjustments that were put in place during this year of COVID. Additional input will continue to be requested from the Competitive Cheer Coaches Association and the Cheer Judges Associations.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

A continuance of the practice of having a summer editing group of coaches and judges review the Competitive Cheer Manual and further provide updates for the Manual will be continued. This practice would include a review of non-safety and safety related violations and lend further clarity and parameters to existing rules. This would also involve the inclusion of girls competitive cheer recommendations approved by the MHSAA Representative Council and a discussion of ways to provide a format for greater participation at all levels.

2020-21 GIRLS COMPETITIVE CHEER TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

The 2020-21 Girls Competitive Cheer Tournament will hold Districts Wednesday, March 17 to Saturday, March 20, 2021. There will be six Districts in four Divisions which will each have four teams progress to eight Regionals on Tuesday, March 23 and Wednesday, March 24, 2021. Four teams from each of the eight Regionals will move to the Finals on Friday, March 26 and Saturday, March 27, 2021. This will include four separate sessions of girls competitive cheer.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

The Girls Competitive Cheer Committee makes the following recommendations to the Representative Council:

- a. Study, with the possibility of adoption in 2021-22, a new choreography chart that awards points based on team tumble, OLEs, vertical twists/360s and release skills. This chart would award a range of points and could benefit both small and large teams which have various skill levels. (11-0)
- b. Technical Recommendations:
 - Allow a connected tumbling skill to be considered a new variety point for Round 3. (11-0)
 - Award 4 difficulty points for a one-leg flair at the elevator level for middle school. (11-0)