



## INTERNATIONAL CHEER UNION (ICU) Sport of Cheer Disciplines Overview

### **ALL SPORT OF CHEER DISCIPLINES INCLUDE:**

Club, Gymnasium, Recreational (Rec), Scholastic (School & University), Masters, Special Abilities, ParaCheer/ Adaptive Abilities, National Team - *all respective age levels, team sizes and gender groupings within each category.*

### **CHEERLEADING (DISCIPLINE GROUP)**

Explanation: Created in the late 1800's by university students to motivate crowds to "Cheer" for their team(s) at a local sporting events in the USA, Cheerleading has developed over its 100 year + history as a popular Game Cheerleading activity (in the USA and in many countries) led by Cheerleading athletes at various sporting events including Cheerleading-specific skills such as partner stunts, pyramids, tosses, tumbling and other choreographed skills that are used to entertain crowds and to encourage crowd participation to "Cheer" for their respective sport team in sporting venues. In addition to the incorporation of specific Cheerleading skills at sporting events, Cheerleading can often also include the use of crowd leading techniques such as a "Cheer", "Side-line Chant", etc. and also the use of props such as poms, signs, megaphones, flags, etc. to enhance their ability to lead on a crowd. In the 1970's, these Cheerleading-specific skills were put into a Routine format for competition (Traditional) and is judged on a score sheet that evaluates each team's performance based on the technical performance of these skills and the overall routine compared to other Cheerleading teams. Since the 1970's (and televised on television since the 1980's) different disciplines of Cheerleading (Game Cheering and competition), and are listed below:

- **Traditional (Levels: Introductory (L0) - Premier (L6/L7) Divisions)**

Described above, "Traditional" Cheerleading reflects the Game Cheerleading and its 100 + years of development of sport-specific skills that were placed into a timed routine format for competition and is judged on a score sheet that evaluates each team's performance of its skill and overall routine. For reasons that the style of Traditional competition Cheerleading can differ, All Star and Urban Cheer are designated as disciplines below as well to best reflect the larger population levels of the All Star and Urban Cheer styles/disciplines as detailed below.

- **All Star (Levels: Introductory (L0) - Premier (L6/L7) Divisions)**

With the increasing popularity of Cheerleading, the style of "All Star" Cheerleading developed in private gyms in the late 1980's/early1990's with more of a focus on skills and choreography performed within an All Star style routine format that is common within the commercial / Event Producer sector for the sport.

- **Urban Cheer (Levels: Introductory (L0) - Premier (L6/L7) Divisions)**

Reflective of over 100 + years history, the "Urban Cheer" style developed at Sporting events in a style specific to urban areas of the USA and still flourish to this day. Since the 1970's, Urban Cheer competition routines, with scoring with a specific focus on the inclusion of Urban style Cheers & Chants within the routine (e.g. stomp style cheers etc.), as well as a scoring focus on Cheerleading-specific skills and choreography within the routine are unique to Urban Cheer.

- **Partner Stunt (Levels: Novice (L1) - Premier (L6/L7) Divisions)**

Normally a component of a Cheerleading competition routine or Game Cheerleading, "Partner Stunt" is a competition that involves 2 athletes (a base and a top person) that perform a series of partner stunts within a timed routine format and are judged on the skills performed in comparison to other Partner Stunt competitors.

- **Group Stunt (Levels: Novice (L1) - Premier (L6/L7) Divisions)**

Normally a component of a Cheerleading competition routine or Game Cheerleading, "Group Stunt" is a competition that involves 4-5 athletes (bases, a top person(s) and spotter(s)) that perform a series of group partner stunts within a timed routine format and are judged on the skills performed in comparison to other Group Stunt competitors.

- **Team STUNT (Levels: Novice (L1) - Premier (L6/L7) Divisions)**

A different competition format than Traditional, All Star or Urban Cheer Cheerleading Routine competitions, "Team STUNT" (also called "STUNT") is a head-to-head competition format that involves only 2 Cheerleading teams in a dual team match (or "game") of whom compete in 4 rounds of skills-based routines in various categories - partner stunts, jumps & tumbling, pyramids & tosses, and team routines. Team STUNT competitions can be administered in a dual (2 team) match format only or in a bracket / tournament style of competition (for 6-8 or more teams, as an example).

- **Game Day (Levels: Introductory (L0) - Premier (L6/L7) Divisions)**

Reflective of Cheerleading's origin of Game Cheering - entertaining and leading crowds in Cheers/Chants with Cheer skills/techniques at sporting events, the "Game Day" competition format mimics the real Game Cheerleading experience. The Game Day competition format consists of 4 segments or less (exact segments are set to the discretion of the competition host) that comprises of segments common at sporting events, such as a Game Cheer, Sideline Chant, Timeout Performance, Fight Song, etc. With a focus more on crowd leading skills and effective skill incorporations in the Game Day routine (and less on skill difficulty), each segment is scored individually, and collectively and is compared to other teams competing in Game Day.

### **PERFORMANCE CHEER (DISCIPLINE GROUP)**

Explanation: Created in the late 1920's in Texas USA to complement university Cheerleading athletes and Marching Musical Bands efforts to entertain crowds at the universities respective sporting events, Performance Cheer Teams initially began as a group of athletes performing short routines in a military "Drill Team" style to the music of the university's Musical Marching Band. These performances included High Kick (also called "Kick") and various drill styles common during pre-game, timeout, and post-game performances. Very similar to it's Cheerleading Team counterpart, Performance Cheer / Drill Teams would entertain the crowd with their performance routines as well as the lead the crowd in support of their respective sport team. Shortly after the launch of Performance Cheer, Pom-poms ("poms") were introduced and Performance Cheer Teams added the genre/discipline of "Pom" to the existing genre/discipline of "High Kick" and we're commonly known as "Pom Teams" and/or Drill Teams. With the crowd demands of more variety and with the technology advances in music, Performance Cheer added the genres/disciplines of "Jazz" and "Hip Hop" commonly seen at Basketball Games. In the 1980's, Performance Cheer routines (Hick Kick, Pom, Jazz, and Hip Hop) were introduced and on television, and each team was scored based on the skill and timed routine requirements of the genre/discipline in comparison to other teams of the same Performance Cheer division. The Performance Cheer disciplines, developed for both Game Cheering/entertainment and competition, and are listed below:

- **Pom**

Performance Cheer routine style that 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.

- **Hip Hop**  
Performance Cheer routine style that incorporates authentic street style influenced movements with groove and style. 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 athleticism. Distinctive clothing and accessories reflecting the Hip Hop Culture must be worn.
- **Jazz**  
Performance Cheer routine style that 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.
- **Kick/High Kick**  
A kick routine incorporates the creative use of kick styles with an inclusion of a variety of skills, creativity, and staging. The choreography shall display a variety of kicks throughout the entire routine that may include, but are not limited to: high kicks, low kicks, diagonal kicks, fan kicks, jump kicks, etc. Precision, timing, control, technique, and uniformity of height are to be emphasized.
- **Doubles Pom**  
Same as “Pom” in a routine format for 2 athletes.
- **Doubles Hip Hop**  
Same as “Hip Hop” in a routine format for 2 athletes.
- **Game Day**  
Reflective of Performance Cheer’s origin of Game Cheering - entertaining and leading crowds at sporting events, the “Game Day” competition format mimics the real Game Cheerleading experience. The Game Day competition format consists of 4 segments or less (exact segments are set to the discretion of the competition host) specific for Performance Cheer Teams that can include all genres of Performance Cheer within the segments such as a Game Situation, Timeout Performance, Fight Song, Routine Performance etc. With a focus more on crowd leading skills and effective skill incorporations in the Game Day routine (and less on skill difficulty), each segment is scored individually, and collectively and is compared to other teams competing in Game Day.

**For more information, please contact [info@cheerunion.org](mailto:info@cheerunion.org)**