

FREQUENTLY ASKED COACHES' QUESTIONS

This year's motto is "Strive to be the Best". As we enter our 20th Anniversary for the Cheerleading Championships, we are making every effort to communicate our spirit updates to our coaches. It is our way of getting the information directly to the field so that they can properly enjoy the Pop Warner Football season.

If you have any questions that you would like to see covered on this FAQ's page, please contact your League Cheer & Dance Coordinator directly.

CHEER AND DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS

- *General Questions*

What is the deduction if my Hair Piece/Bow falls out during our performance?

Hair, for cheer and dance squads, must be worn in a manner to minimize risk for the participants. Hair devices, if worn, must be secure and appropriate for the activity. If a Hair device should fall out during a competition routine, the Head Judge will decide if the safety of the participant(s) is/are at hand and may warrant a deduction. (i.e., Stepping on or over a device would warrant a safety deduction, etc.)

Unsecured Item (0.5 Deduction)

Safety Concern (5.0 Deduction)

Hair Color

Situation: I have a squad that wants to wear blue hair extensions (clip in, bow type with blue hair). Since many squads wear the wiglets (curly and/or straight pony tails) and as long as everyone had them, would this be OK or considered a prop?

Response: The Blue Hair color for the entire squad would be considered a prop. This type of accessory with hair color is reserved for Dance Squad Costuming only.

What happens if my shoe falls off during a performance?

If a participant's shoe falls/comes off on the performance floor, the participant should make every attempt to secure the shoe on the foot prior to participating further. If no attempt is made to put the shoe back on, the Head Judge will decide if the safety of the participant is at hand and may warrant a deduction. If safety is the issue it would be a 5 point deduction.

Organized Exits and Entrances

There are no organized entrances and exits from the competition floor, any jumping, tumbling and/or stunting while entering or exiting the competition floor is not permitted. A **5 Point Deduction** will be given to a participant that tumbles, jumps while entering (Entrance Area) or exiting (Exit Area) the performance area.

Boundary Violations

What is the penalty if a participant jumps or tumbles off the performance area?

Each boundary violation will result in a **0.5 deduction per occurrence**.

Can a cheerleader or dancer drop to two knees?

No, you must first put hands down in all drops, Knee, Seat, Thigh, Jazz, Split, Front and Tension Drops - Dropping to the knee(s), seat or thighs) onto the performing surface/floor from a jump or stand without first bearing most of the weight on the hands/feet which breaks the impact of the drop. [Drops are prohibited under Pop Warner Guidelines.](#)

- In every instance, if a participant goes down to the performance surface (controlled without dropping) the participant must put two hands down first. Hand/palm must go down not just fingers.
- If a participant goes down to the performing surface on one knee, it can be done without hands if and only if it is controlled. It is recommended that hands go down first in every case to insure that a participant does not over-exaggerate a move while performing and drops uncontrolled to the floor.

Stepping Over an Individual - Dance and Cheer

Partner stunts, pyramids and individuals may not pass over, under or through other partner stunts, pyramids or individuals. Note that a leap frog on the ground is not permitted (individual jumping over an individual). (Exception when the individual is actively involved in the skill being performed (i.e., Leap Frog Stunt)).

Spotting a Stunt

Question: When does spotting begin?

Answer: All stunts performed **from shoulder height and above must have a spot.** (Exceptions: Chair, Prep-Level Straddle Sit, Swedish Falls, Chest Level Torch.)

Splits in Stunts and Transitions

Splits mounts are not permitted in stunts or transitions in Pop Warner page 71, PWLS. National took out extra wording from the 2007 Rulebook because the above statement is repetitive, **a participant shall not be held in a split position off the floor by one or more persons at any time.**

- ***Novice Category***

Below Prep Level, Single Leg Stunt

Situation: If a squad holds a single leg stunt below prep level, does it have to be held at waist level?

Response: No, any stunt that is below prep level is permitted. However, if the stunt is not visibly below prep level (obvious) then it is in a gray area and left to the sole discretion of the judging panel and may warrant deductions.

Prep Level Hitch Position

A Hitch is considered a two legged stunt; both feet of the flyer are in hands of the bases. A prep level hitch is permitted in the Novice Level (both feet of the flyer in the hands of the bases). A below, prep level hitch is also permitted in the Novice Level – Below prep is not addressed in the rules therefore it is permitted. A Thigh Stand with one leg of the flyer hitched to the lower back of a base (standing on the ground) would be viewed as a

two legged stunt because both feet of the flyer (at thigh stand level) are on bases that are on the ground.

Situation: Is an Extension connected to two prep level hitches (two legged stunts) on the outside permitted?

Response: Novice YES, the hitch is considered a two legged stunt.

Extended Straddle Sit

Situation: Does an extended straddle sit require a spotter (arms of the bases are fully extended)?

Response: Yes, 2 bases must have 1 spotter, 3 bases must have one spotter.

Swedish Falls – no spotter required

Considered in a grey area of interpretation, Pop Warner places Swedish Falls in the Novice Category for clarification. The participant's body is held at a prep level position and therefore considered Novice. You do not need an additional spotter, because there should be enough support below to hold the position, however, we always recommended to err on the side of safety and add the spotter by the head of the flyer.

Prep Level, Face-Up Flatback Positions – Novice at Prep Level

A Flatback is a horizontal face-up position of a top person between two or more bases. Flatbacks are always performed in a face-up position. Therefore, a face down/surf-board position would not be permitted.

Swinging Stunts

Can a stunt swing up or down?

Swing ups or downs are not permitted in any stunt.

Bracing Prep Level Stunts

Situation: Can a one legged stunt at prep level brace hand to hand on both sides by an individual standing on the ground reaching up to the stunt?

Response: Our rules specify "to brace prep level stunts", no thigh stands, no individuals.

PWLS Pendulum

Pop Warner still requires **4 four catchers** in place and remain in original position for a Pendulum as opposed to NFHS which now requires only 3 three.

A pendulum must progress back to the upright position. Please reference page 81 of the PWLS Rulebook for more details.

- ***Intermediate Category***

Intermediate Stunt: Stepping Stone

The stepping stone is viewed as a transitional stunt and not a Novice stunt. It is placed in the Intermediate Category under transitional stunts where at least one base stays in contact with the flyer at all times.

Intermediate Category Pyramids

In the skill level sheet, it says that in the intermediate level you can do one legged extended stunts, but in the pyramid section it says one legged extended stunts need to be braced on both sides. **Answer:** The one-legged stunt can be performed on its own in the Intermediate and Advanced Categories. It does not need to be braced on both sides. The listing in the pyramids section of the Intermediate skills sheet was an example of a pyramid that can be performed in that skills' level. Although confusing, it was meant to further clarify that it cannot be performed in the Novice Pyramid Category.

Intermediate Category Pyramids

Three two legged extended stunts may brace each other (i.e., three extensions). We limit the number of braced two extended stunts to **three max**.

Intermediate Category Pyramids

Situation: 2 should sits on the end then, 2 Heel stretches (extended),
In the middle a full extension, The flyers are all holding arms (braced)

X X X X X
Sit Heel Ext Heel Sit

Response: This is not permitted, pg 79E, single legged extended stunts may not brace any other extended stunt.

Intermediate Transitions

Situation: Are we allowed to do any special dismounts such as a toe-touch dismount or an X-out dismount? This would be **after the girl cradles** and is getting "set out" from a cradle position. Instead of the bases and back spot setting her out of the cradle, they would lift her enough for her to do a toe touch or an X-out and land on her own. Also, If this is not legal...would it become legal if the back spot maintained contact with the flyers waist as she is doing the toe touch and lands?

Response: In the Intermediate Division Dismounts, only straight pop downs, basic straight cradles and quarter turns are permitted (you cannot toe touch or x-out). You have to complete the stunt to a basic cradle from a straight ride. You can certainly transition from the cradle to another stunt but would need to complete each stunt. Further note, that a flyer in a cradle cannot be released to the floor from a jump or x-out in any level.....A toe touch dismount can be performed to a cradle in the Advanced Division. It can not be performed to the ground. Page 80.

- ***Advanced Category***

Sponge Toss to Flatback Position (Pyramid Transition)...Not permitted per PWLS guideline, page 81. A stunt/pyramid that transitions from a vertical position (from shoulder height and above) to a flatback / horizontal straight body position between two original bases is not permitted.

Additional Advanced Stunts

Given the advanced rules, ie. **360's, tick tocks, etc. are all** permitted in the Advanced Division

Advanced Transitional Stunts

Situation: Superman/Muscleman to Single Based Lib. From an extended lib, the flyer descends to the floor to front roll and back roll back to bases for a re-take without losing contact with the bases.

Response: The Superman/Muscleman to Single Based Lib is permitted. The front roll to the floor from the stunt is not permitted. It is considered an inverted stunt and very dangerous for our age levels.

Advanced Transitional Stunts

In pyramid transitions, the top person must be in contact with the bracers (hand/arm connection) during the up and down transition. The top person may not be supporting on any other body part of the person(s) assisting other than their arms (i.e., shoulders of the bracers.) **Further note that the definition of a brace is a physical connection that helps to provide stability to a Top Person/Flyer without having weight bearing contact.** Therefore, the bracers should not have to squat down and pick up a flyer (becoming weight bearing) to assist the flyer's bases in the lift for the up and down motion.

- ***Tumbling***

Handstand Connected to a Stunt

A handstand is viewed as a tumbling skill and therefore cannot be connected to a stunt under Pop Warner guidelines. When connected to a stunt it is considered an inverted position which is not permitted in PWLS. Therefore, a handstand is not permitted in stunting or pyramids. It can only stand alone and be judged as a tumbling skill.

Back Bend

You are permitted to perform: A bridge or backbend is a standing tumbling skill that would fall in the Novice Category. (This skill involves constant physical contact with the performing surface). It is only permitted as a standing tumbling skill and cannot be performed as any part of a stunting/transition or pyramid skill.

Cartwheels in Novice

You are permitted to perform: Right and Left Cartwheels, One arm cartwheel (near and far hand), Timing cartwheel (Legs close at top of cartwheel and then open again), Switch leg cartwheels.

- ***Dance***

Uniform

Prop Approval Forms

All prop approval forms must be submitted by the Head Coach to the League and Region Coordinator prior to first competition.

Uniforms - Dance Squads with Glitter

Dance Squads with Glitter sealed in uniform are permitted. Glitter that adheres to uniform and will not come off; it is a part of the material.

Routine

Dance Routine

Dance routines should incorporate a combination of styles including Pom, Jazz, Kick, Hip Hop, etc. Dance routines must incorporate at least two of these styles.

Dance Squad – Bare Feet

Soft soled dance shoes are required. All dance squads must wear athletic shoes or appropriate dance shoes that cover the toes and the entire sole of the foot.

Dance Squad – Suggestive Moves, Suggestive Words

Music Selection should appeal to the audience to get them involved in the performance. Routines must be appropriate for family viewing and listening. Any vulgar or suggestive movements, words or music will result in a 5.0 point deduction. Please note that removing improper language and replacing it with sound effects still constitutes inappropriate.