



# 2024-2025 SPIRIT MANUAL



# MISSOURI STATE HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION

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**PLEASE NOTE:** New wording has been underlined  
and areas of emphasis are in **bold** text.

Updated  
July, 2024

## SPIRIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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The advisory committee members are appointed by the Board of Director member from their respective board district. Each individual is appointed to a four (4) year term. If an appointee is unable to fulfill their term, a replacement will be appointed to complete the remainder of the term. The purpose of the committee is to represent the schools and coaches/directors within their board district on matters concerning the administration of the sport/activity. Their role is a key component is bringing sport/activity-specific needs, concerns, and recommendations to the Board of Directors. Please make sure to use them as your voice to the MSHSAA Staff and Board of Directors.

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( ) Terms expire July 1 of the year noted

\*Eligible for reappointment due to serving partial term

CH denotes sideline cheer representative

DN denotes dance representative



## SPIRIT RULES INTERPRETERS

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The interpreters have been selected for their knowledge of the rules and willingness to provide their advice to officials, adjudicators and coaches/directors with regards to the interpretation of rules. The executive in charge of each sport/activity is the chief rules interpreter for the state but relies heavily on the advice and counsel of these individuals. Please feel free to contact them if you have a question regarding the application of sport/activity-specific rules. These individuals do not interpret any MSHSAA By-Laws or Board Policies nor do they review video of calls.

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## PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

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- A. **MISSION STATEMENT:** The MSHSAA promotes the value of participation, sportsmanship, team play and personal excellence to develop citizens who make positive contributions to their community and support the democratic principles of our state and nation.
- B. **PURPOSE OF MANUAL:** This manual has been prepared to provide a better understanding of the regulations and policies pertaining to spirit teams (sideline cheer and dance) of MSHSAA member schools and the provisions for spirit groups at the MSHSAA sponsored events. This publication will serve as a guide to the participating schools and will provide for greater consistency. Supplementary information relating to sideline cheer and dance teams may be included in the MSHSAA Journal or the MSHSAA website under Spirit Activities.
- C. **PHILOSOPHY OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES:** Interscholastic activities are intended to supplement the secondary curricular program. These activities can provide the student with educational experiences and learning outcomes that contribute toward the development of good citizenship. This can be accomplished only when the emphasis is placed upon teaching "through school activities". Interscholastic activities can be justified only when this is its primary philosophy and purpose.
- D. **PHILOSOPHY OF SPIRIT TEAMS:** Being a spirit team member is a privilege and honor. Spirit team members should be the school's most effective student leaders. Spirit teams are in a position of great influence and high standards of conduct are essential. Personal behavior communicates! Appropriate behavior will help earn the respect of the student body and this is the core of developing effective school spirit and student involvement.

Sideline cheerleaders have the responsibility to serve as a support group for the various interscholastic activity programs within the school. The team should strive to boost school spirit, promote good sportsmanship, develop positive crowd involvement and help their school achieve the most worthwhile educational objectives in its interscholastic program. The sideline cheer team is **not** intended to solely develop their physical skills and talents for the purpose of entertainment. The area of entertainment should be placed in perspective within the educational program.

Dance team members have the responsibility to serve as a performing group for the various interscholastic activity programs within the school. The areas of entertainment and competition should be placed in perspective within the education program.

Spirit teams should serve to develop leadership, confidence and skill, while maintaining their commitment to support the school activity program. Spirit teams are a very important component of the interscholastic program. A clear minded assessment of the basics will help these young leaders face the challenges of today.

- E. **SUPERVISION OF SPIRIT TEAM MEMBERS, COMPETITORS AND FANS:** MSHSAA By-Laws hold a school responsible, both at home and away, for the conduct of its competitors, students, coaches, and fans. Coaches are required to supervise their respective groups of young men and women. A coach's respect for others and school property is necessary in order to instill in his/her students a respect for others and school property. Students staying overnight in hotels or motels in conjunction with any interscholastic athletic contest should be well chaperoned. The good conduct of students will leave a good impression for the entire school.

A school also should inform its competitors, students, coaches and fans of the value contest officials play in education through athletics and activities. When informing these people of this, the difference in the purpose of high school and professional sports/activities should be emphasized. Lack of respect for officials should not be tolerated. Booing of officials leads to booing of coaches and competitors. This has no place in high school athletics/activities. Athletic administrators are urged to develop a program through any and all communication techniques available to insure that spectators understand that high school athletics/activities are an educational endeavor as opposed to the games being an end in themselves.

## KEY MANUAL AND BY-LAW CHANGES

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### A. ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS CHANGES:

1. None

### B. MSHSAA BALLOT CHANGES:

1. None Related to Spirit

## SECTION 1: ESSENTIAL RESOURCES

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The information listed/linked in this section relates to MSHSAA By-Laws, Board Policies and information from the Sports Medicine Page (SMP). The information is not sport or activity specific but is necessary for the safe and proper conduct of your sport/activity.

### Source Locations:

[MSHSAA Handbook \(HB\)](#)

[Sports Medicine Page \(SMP\)](#)

- A. Alcohol/Tobacco Usage Around Interscholastic Activities (HB-Board Policy)
- B. Charity/Awareness Events (HB-Board Policy)
- C. Concussions Education and Management Protocol ([SMP](#))
- D. Conduct – Removal of Teams & Ejections (HB-By-Law 5.5)
- E. Guidelines for Fan Support Items (HB-Board Policy)
- F. Hazardous Weather Conditions/Lightning Guidelines ([SMP](#))
- G. Heat Acclimatization (HB-By-Law 1.7 & [SMP](#))
- H. On-Site Protest Procedures (HB-Board Policy)
- I. Oxygen Use Position Statement ([SMP](#))
- J. Sanctioning (HB-By-Law 3.18)
- K. Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer Use ([SMP](#))

## SECTION 2: GENERAL INFORMATION

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- A. **INTRODUCTION:** Being selected as a member of a spirit team (sideline cheer and/or dance team) is a privilege and honor which carries with it many responsibilities.
1. It should be understood that your appearance and conduct at the games (sideline cheer) and dance team activities will reflect on your school. Spirit teams (sideline cheer and dance) are one of the school's most effective, visible and powerful student leaders and the people who Make Things Happen! The challenge facing today's young leaders' rests in a clear minded assessment of basics.
  2. **For Sideline Cheer:** The sideline cheerleader is in a position to provide a very positive influence in guiding student conduct at games and each individual should maintain the proper dignity in this leadership role.
  3. An effective sideline cheerleader will develop the necessary skills to stimulate and promote positive crowd involvement. Enthusiastic cheering from the crowd is one of the most exciting portions of an athletic contest.
  4. For sideline cheerleaders to abandon this crowd involvement for the sake of becoming feature performers to merely entertain the fans is a cheering technique that greatly detracts from the sideline cheerleader's effectiveness and purpose. Avoid the pressures of simply becoming an entertainer and, instead, put the 'Leader' back in the Cheerleader!
- B. **OBJECTIVES:** Once the spirit team has been selected, the coach should see that a list of objectives is established to serve as goals the group will attempt to attain. This list should include the following in addition to specific outcomes which might be unique to your school.
1. To promote the type of sportsmanship that will help students acquire the basic attributes of good citizenship.
  2. To develop a positive school spirit.
  3. To develop loyalty to your school. For sideline cheerleaders this includes loyalty to the team regardless of the outcome of the contest.
  4. To promote a cooperative spirit between the student body, the faculty, and the community.
- C. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPERVISION:** Per MSHSAA by-laws, teams should be supervised at all times, including both contests and practices.
- D. **STANDARDS FOR SPIRIT COACHES:** Spirit coaching requirements are outlined in Section 4 of the MSHSAA Handbook.
- E. **REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS:** The NFHS sport rules allow for state associations to authorize exceptions to NFHS playing rules to provide reasonable accommodations to individual participants with disabilities and/or special needs, as well as those individuals with unique and extenuating circumstances. The accommodations should not fundamentally alter the sport/activity, heighten risk to the athlete/others or place opponents at a disadvantage. The school may request specific accommodations or to use special equipment. The following items are required before accommodation requests can be reviewed and considered:
1. A written request from the school administrator, describing the student's special needs and the specific accommodation(s) being requested. The letter should include the rules references of applicable NFHS Spirit Rule(s) that would be violated without the accommodation.
  2. A letter from the parent(s) or guardian confirming the need for an accommodation and approving the accommodation request.
  3. A letter from the participant's doctor or applicable caregiver describing the medical circumstance or special need, and confirming the need for an accommodation.
  4. Photographs of:
    - a. The special equipment, and
    - b. The participant wearing the special equipment, if applicable.
  5. Subsequent requests (after a student is initially approved for an accommodation) will only require the school request (number 1 on the list above).
  6. Written approval from the MSHSAA office is required **prior** to any competition. The letter of approval from MSHSAA must be presented to contest officials before any accommodations may be used. Please include all sports the competitor may be participating in for the school year. MSHSAA can issue one letter covering all sports for the year and you will not have to submit a request prior to the start of each sports season.
  7. **Please allow ONE WEEK for the request to be reviewed prior to the first contest.**
- F. **STUDENT ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR SPIRIT TEAMS:** All spirit team members shall meet and follow the standards listed under Sections 1, 2, and 4 of the MSHSAA Handbook.
- G. **SPIRIT SAFETY REGULATIONS:** All NFHS Spirit Rules and MSHSAA guidelines must be followed at all practices and contests.



#### H. DANCE TEAM - CONTESTS:

1. Dance teams shall be allowed a **maximum** of **five in-state or out-of-state contests** (competitive and/or evaluative events) during the school year (from the opening day of school to the official closing day at the end of the academic year). These activities shall meet the following standards:
  - a. The safety regulations contained in MSHSAA By-Law 4.5.3 or any which are more restrictive that are established by the event sponsor shall be followed.
  - b. Any dance team event which involves students from more than one school sponsored by a non-school organization or a college or university or which will involve schools from other states shall have the approval of the Board of Directors. Application for approval shall be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the event. An interschool dance team event sponsored by a member school which involves only Missouri schools shall have the approval of the high school administrator.
  - c. Events involving students from more than two schools approved for commercial or promotional purposes and which cause a loss of class time shall not be approved for schools outside their respective local communities.
  - d. This section shall not be interpreted to prohibit a local board of education from adopting any higher standards that it considers appropriate for its school community.
  - e. A student that violates any of these standards (By-Laws, etc.) shall be ineligible from participation in any interscholastic event in the specified activity for a period not to exceed 365 days. It shall further be considered a violation for member schools to participate in an interscholastic event with a member school so suspended. **(By-Law 4.5.10)**

### SECTION 3: GUIDELINES, CONDUCT AND SPORTSMANSHIP SUGGESTIONS

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- A. **GENERAL SPIRIT COACHES GUIDELINES:** Being a member of a spirit team can assist students in developing skills in leadership, discipline, tumbling, and many other areas. A properly designed spirit program can have a positive impact on the educational development of the students involved.
1. One concept that each spirit coach has an obligation to convey is that of **INTEGRITY**. Students can learn through modeling that rules put in place by the National Federation are to be followed. Through strict enforcement by spirit coaches of the National Federation Spirit Rules, students will benefit from a safe environment in which to participate and learn that rules governing an activity are to be followed. The fundamental concept of integrity can be re-enforced by clearly communicating these rules and expecting that they be followed daily by all members of the spirit team.
  2. Spirit coaches are encouraged to observe other spirit teams and have conversations with coaches if rules violations are observed. Coaches can approach the coach of the team, the school athletic director, or principal and discuss the violation. This helps ensure safety standards are kept at the highest level. If that approach does not seem to work, the coach should advise the MSHSAA office of the violation by phone or email, and the school will be contacted by the MSHSAA staff. It is important that rules violations be communicated to the appropriate parties in one of these methods for the safety of the participants and to assist in the uniform enforcement of the National Federation and MSHSAA Spirit Rules.
- B. **GENERAL SPIRIT CONDUCT GUIDELINES:** Spirit teams should be informed of standards of conduct which they are expected to meet at both home and away events. Spirit team members should be impressed with the necessity of conduct above reproach as they are most influential in dealing with spectators. The importance of spirit teams as representatives of the school and the community should not be under-estimated.
1. The following are suggested standards for spirit teams in addition to those listed in the National Federation Spirit Rule Book:
    - a. Spirit team members should have a positive attitude throughout the contests. Other people will judge your school by their conduct.
    - b. Spirit teams should realize the importance of setting the proper influence. By setting a good example, spirit teams can positively influence the conduct of student and adult spectators.
    - c. Uniforms should be worn only for games and pep assemblies unless permission is given by the spirit team coach(s) for other school related activities.
    - d. All spirit team members should have and abide by a written constitution established and approved by the spirit coach and school administration. Acknowledgment of this constitution should be verified by the signature of the spirit team member and her/his parents.
  2. **For Sideline Cheerleaders:**
    - a. The primary factor in sportsmanship for sideline cheerleaders is to always cheer positively. It is never an asset to the contest or school to cheer against the other team or to cheer at an opposing player's mistake; it is much more effective to cheer for your own team.
    - b. Sideline cheerleaders should be impressed with the importance of accepting the decision of officials and of discouraging disagreement with them by the crowd.
    - c. During a free throw, a short "sink it" chant may be done only from the sideline and before the free throw is attempted.
- C. **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALL SPIRIT TEAMS:**
1. Follow all NFHS Spirit Rules and MSHSAA Guidelines/By-Laws
  2. Do not wait until team members are completely exhausted before quitting for the day. When the team members start getting tired, the chances of accidents/injuries are greatly increased.
  3. Tumbling and partner stunts shall not be performed on wet surfaces.
  4. Spirit teams should be aware of actions occurring within the contest and be prepared to move as play advances. They should be aware of the movement of contest officials and not interfere with their game responsibilities.
  5. **No** actions by the spirit team should be made to purposely distract the players.
  6. Performance of stunts may only be done during 60 second time-outs, between quarters and halftime on the playing area of the facility, **not** on the sidelines.
  7. It is considerate to kneel down in front of the crowd when an injury occurs and cheering should **not** resume until the contest officials signal to continue play.
  8. Spirit coaches should coordinate the placement of the spirit team with the school administrator in charge. The team should be at least 3-4 feet from any boundary line unless the facilities do not permit.
  9. Indoor Specific:
    - a. When possible, spirit teams should cheer along the sidelines close to the intersection of the sideline and end line. If space **does not permit**, the team should be located along the end line but **not** beneath the basket or within the area of the free throw lane extended. Refer to diagram in Appendix F.
    - b. Sideline cheerleaders should alternate all non-injury time outs. Refer to Section 3-F-1-c for additional information. **NOTE:** The time between quarters is considered a time-out and should be included in the rotation. Sideline cheerleaders shall **not** go onto the floor to cheer, stunt or perform during a thirty (30)

second time-out.

- c. **Placement of spirit teams at wrestling contests:** The mat area includes the wrestling mat and also a space around it of at least 10 feet where facilities permit. In this 10-foot area you would have the team benches and the officials' table. This area should be free of spectators, photographers and sideline cheerleaders. Therefore, in facilities that would permit, the sideline cheerleaders should be placed at least 10 feet from the wrestling mat.
- D. **NOTE:** It is very important that sideline cheer coaches, the school administration and cheerleaders establish clear rules and guidelines for sideline cheerleading. The above list is not all inclusive of the rules which individual schools may wish to establish. Consult the National Federation Spirit Rules Book for additional rules.

- E. **SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR SPIRIT GROUPS:** Each school is responsible for establishing and enforcing safety standards for the conduct of its spirit programs. The safety regulations contained in the NFHS Spirit Rules Book **shall** be followed. The following guidelines have been developed by the MSHSAA Spirit Advisory Committee and approved by the Board of Directors to serve as a guide for the school to use in drawing up its own standards. Rule 1 of the National Federation Spirit Rule Book contains definitions only. Rule 2 addresses "General Risk Management". Refer to Rule 3 for Cheer and Rule 4 for Dance.

**For Sideline Cheerleading:**

- 1. Safety guidelines for partner stunts and pyramids:
    - a. Beginning partner stunts and pyramids shall be mastered before progressing to more advanced partner stunts and pyramids.
    - b. All new partner stunts and pyramids shall be reviewed and approved by the sideline coach prior to execution. Assisted spotting shall be required until new stunts are secure.
    - c. Spotters should be positioned in front, back, and on the sides when practicing new partner stunts and pyramids.
    - d. Always have exact positions drawn out on paper in advance before building a pyramid so that each person will know exactly what she/he is to do. Visual knowledge of the pyramid will help eliminate accidents.
    - e. Partner stunts and pyramids shall be practiced in a properly matted area.
    - f. Components to pyramids should be practiced separately before building the complete pyramid.
    - g. Every participating member of the squad should have a thorough understanding of the components of the stunt or pyramid before attempting to execute.
    - h. Before building, verbal communication should be established to use in case of trouble. The pyramid should be dismantled from top to bottom quickly.
    - i. When building, everyone should remain quiet except the person in charge. Full concentration at all times is imperative.
    - j. Always spot the head and upper torso of the top person to ensure safety in case of a fall. Protect the head and neck areas above all else.
  - 2. Guidelines for gymnastic activities incorporated into cheers:
    - a. All new gymnastic activities shall be reviewed and approved by the sideline coach prior to execution.
    - b. Gymnastic stunts should not be executed without the use of a spotter unless they can be performed consistently and without difficulty and approved by the sideline coach.
    - c. Gymnastic stunts requiring the use of a spotter shall be preceded by verbal communication of the intended stunt.
    - d. New gymnastic skills shall be mastered on the mat. If a mat is not available assisted spotting should be employed. New tumbling skills should not be learned on hardwood or similar surfaces.
  - 3. For regulations regarding tosses and catches refer to Rules 1, 3 and 4 in the National Federation Spirit Rule Book
  - 4. All tosses are considered advanced skills and should be executed only by an advanced skill level team.
- F. **SPORTSMANSHIP:** The promotion of sportsmanship is the prime responsibility of all spirit groups. Good sportsmanship is conduct which imposes a type of self-control involving honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of results. School spirit reflects these attitudes and behavior. If a school is to succeed in one of its prime functions, that of developing good citizenship, it is necessary that student groups radiate proper sportsmanlike conduct. Spirit team members should show good sportsmanship at all contests, competitions and festivals. Treat all parties involved at all times with respect.

**For Sideline Cheerleaders:**

- a. Sideline cheerleaders shall always cheer in a positive fashion. It is in poor taste to cheer against the other team. It is unsportsmanlike to do anything to distract an opposing player during a free throw or serve.
- b. Cheers and chants with suggestive words and/or motions shall not be used as in many situations they bring about an inappropriate response.
- c. For indoor sporting events, unless agreed upon prior to the contest by the head sideline cheer coaches, cheers and chants should be alternated during all non-injury time outs (the time between quarters is considered a time-out and should be included in this rotation). This will eliminate confusion and prevent delays in the contest. A thirty second time-out is **not** a time that sideline cheerleaders may go onto the floor for a floor cheer or chant. As a result, a thirty second time-out should also not be included in the



- rotation.
- d. It is considered unsportsmanlike for one team to be performing a floor cheer while the other squad is cheering. Wait until the floor cheer is completed before starting the chant.
  - e. When the official signals for the contest to begin after a time-out, the sideline cheerleaders shall leave the floor at once. Officials can call a technical foul against the school which violates this procedure. Sideline cheerleaders should not stand along the end of the floor during basketball and volleyball games as it interferes with officials, players and increases possibility of injury. Sideline cheerleaders for these reasons shall stay clear of the playing area during the contest. (Refer to Appendix F for diagram).
  - f. Sideline cheerleaders should call attention to the importance of sportsmanship at all pep rallies. Placing sportsmanship posters on the wall of the gym is helpful.
  - g. Sideline cheerleaders shall discourage their followers from yelling while an opponent is shooting free throws or serving the ball and/or directing unpleasant remarks towards players or the opposing school. Intimidation or degrading of opponents has no place in high school athletics.
  - h. Sideline cheerleaders are in a position to preview spirit signs that will be posted for their school's contests. Discouraging inappropriate signs from ever being posted is a great assistance to local administration and helps create and maintain a positive crowd atmosphere.
  - i. Obnoxious behavior by fans is inappropriate and should not be encouraged or tolerated. All players, officials and fans should be treated with respect.
    - i. **NOTE:** If inappropriate crowd behavior continues, assistance should be obtained from a school administrator or the contest management.

**E. SIDELINE CHEERLEADING TECHNIQUES:**

1. Create and direct positive crowd response.
2. Choose the appropriate cheers for the game situation.
3. Be certain that words and actions used in cheers do not provoke or suggest a negative response from the crowd.
4. Do not use bells, horns, or noisemakers at indoor sporting events.
5. Use gestures that are synchronized, pleasing to watch, and easy to follow.
6. Divert the crowd's attention by starting a popular cheer/chant when booing develops.
7. Sideline cheerleaders should get the crowd to respond, not perform for the crowd. Big definite motions receive the best response.
8. It is important that the sideline cheerleader look at the crowd while leading a cheer; his/her facial expressions to the crowd are very important in generating enthusiasm and a strong response.
9. Emphasize each word and cut all words off sharply so that each word is distinct and the cheer may be understood and followed easily.
10. Remember - sideline cheerleaders are present at the contest to encourage crowd response to their cheers. An effective team of sideline cheerleaders is one of the most important assets a school can have.

## SECTION 4: SPIRIT TEAM PROVISIONS AND POLICIES FOR STATE

(TOC)

- A. **POSTSEASON BROADCASTS:** MSHSAA holds exclusive ALL-PLATFORM DISTRIBUTION rights for AUDIO, DATA and VIDEO for all postseason contests or festivals (beginning with district level through state) in all activities. Any transmission or production of any portion of these events, without the consent of MSHSAA is prohibited. Events are defined as the competition or performance. This includes, but not limited to, using programs such as Facebook Live, YouTube or Periscope.
- B. **STATE PERFORMING GROUPS:** National Anthem singers will be accepted to perform at the State Wrestling Championships held in February. Performing groups, National Anthem singers and bands will be accepted to perform at the State Basketball Championships (Show-Me Showdowns) semi-finals and finals held in March. These groups will be selected by the MSHSAA staff. A broadcast email will be sent to all Spirit coaches with an application link in the fall. Groups will be selected and notified in early January.
- C. **DANCE TEAMS:**
1. **District Tournaments:** At the discretion of the district manager, pep bands, dance teams, drill teams, etc., from participating schools may be invited to perform for district basketball tournaments. Should the manager choose to do so, the following procedure shall be followed.
    - a. **Bands** - The district manager may invite, through the school principal, bands to perform for specific evenings of the tournament. As there may be more bands that would want to perform than opportunities, bands will be selected on a first come, first serve basis. The band will perform at specified times which may include half-time, and before and after each game of the session. Bands may not come to perform only for the games in which their team plays. The participating band for the evening must remain neutral for their performance. The purpose for their performance is to provide entertainment and not to provide a competitive advantage for any team.
    - b. **Dance Teams, etc.** - The district manager may also invite, through the school principal, school performing groups to perform at half-time of each game. If so, groups will be invited to perform for the half-time of the game in which their school is participating. If both schools involved in the game have a group performing, each group will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes (including entrance to and exit from the floor) performance time. If only one school accepts the invitation to perform, that group will be allowed up to 6 minutes performance time (including entry to and exit from the floor).
    - c. Admission for bands and performing groups shall be free for actual participants and coaches/directors for the evenings that they perform. Actual participants will be admitted as a group with their coach/director.
    - d. If the district manager does not invite performing groups and bands, schools **shall not** contact the manager and request permission to bring a performing group and/or band. If the manager does not invite all schools involved in the tournament, there shall be no performing groups and/or bands at the tournament (including groups from the host site).
  2. **Sectional/Quarterfinal Games:** Bands and other performing groups will **not** be allowed to perform at these games.
- D. **SIDELINE CHEER TEAMS:**
1. **BASKETBALL, VOLLEYBALL, AND WRESTLING POLICIES:**
    - a. Refer to MSHSAA Guidelines for Fan/Spectator Support Items (Section 1) for all sports.
    - b. To ensure that all fans attending the activity have an unobstructed view, the audience should remain seated during the contest. For basketball and volleyball districts, sectionals and quarterfinals please refer to the Board Policy on Continuous Standing.
  2. **ADMITTANCE POLICY FOR STATE TOURNAMENTS:** Sideline cheerleaders will be admitted, at no charge, to each session in which their team participates, provided the team is in uniform and their coach must be present with the group as they enter through the pass gate. **SPECIFIC SPORTS DO REQUIRE PASSES FOR ADMITTANCE.**
    - a. **NOTE:** See the following table for the number of sideline cheerleaders to be admitted at no charge.)
    - b. Each sport is specific in relation to the number of sideline cheerleaders allowed, in uniform, to enter the event with no charge, (Passes as required). The maximum number per sport is indicated in the following table. If special provisions exist between levels of play i.e., sectional level to state level, these differences are listed in the table.
    - c. Bus Driver's: Sideline cheer bus drivers must have a ticket from the school's allotment.

**\*NOTE:** In volleyball, basketball and wrestling there is no limit as to how many sideline cheerleaders may actually cheer. Please note that the state basketball tournament limits the number of sideline cheerleaders on the floor due to lack of space. All sub-state tournament managers in volleyball, basketball and wrestling may limit the number of sideline cheerleaders which may be on the floor if space is at a premium. (8 is suggested if a manager must limit the teams.)

## FALL SPORTS

Activity	Level of State Series	Provisions for Sideline Cheerleader Admittance
Cross Country	District, Sectional & State	No provision for cheerleader admittance.
Football	Sectional, Quarterfinals, Semifinals and Finals	Varsity cheerleaders in official cheerleading uniforms and their coach will be admitted free to the contest their team plays provided the school athletic administrator has submitted their names through the MSHSAA online district entry process. Cheerleaders must enter the gate as a group and they must be accompanied by their coach. Specific instructions on how to obtain the pass for the cheer coach will be included in the informational packet sent to each state qualifier by the MSHSAA Administrator responsible for that sport.
Girls Golf	District and State	No provision for cheerleader admittance.
Girls Tennis	District and State	No provision for cheerleader admittance.
Boys Soccer	All Levels of State Series	Varsity cheerleaders in official cheerleading uniforms and their coach will be admitted free to the session their team plays provided the school athletic administrator has submitted their names through the MSHSAA online district entry process. Cheerleaders must enter the gate as a group and they must be accompanied by their coach. Specific instructions on how to obtain the pass for the cheer coach will be included in the information packet sent to each state qualifier by the MSHSAA Administrator responsible for that sport.
Softball	All Levels of State Series	Varsity cheerleaders in official cheerleading uniforms and their coach will be admitted free to the session their team plays provided the school athletic administrator has submitted their names through the MSHSAA online district entry process. Cheerleaders must enter the gate as a group and they must be accompanied by their coach. Specific instructions on how to obtain the pass for the cheer coach will be included in the information packet sent to each state qualifier by the MSHSAA Administrator responsible for that sport.
Boys Swimming	State	Varsity cheerleaders in official cheerleading uniforms and their coach will be admitted free to the session their team plays provided the school athletic administrator has submitted their names through the MSHSAA online district entry process. Cheerleaders must enter the gate as a group and they must be accompanied by their coach. Specific instructions on how to obtain the pass for the cheer coach will be included in the information packet sent to each state qualifier by the MSHSAA Administrator responsible for that sport.
Volleyball*	All levels of State Series	Varsity cheerleaders in official cheerleading uniforms and their coach will be admitted free to the session their team plays provided the school athletic administrator has submitted their names through the MSHSAA online district entry process. Cheerleaders must enter the gate as a group and they must be accompanied by their coach. Specific instructions on how to obtain the pass for the cheer coach will be included in the information packet sent to each state qualifier by the MSHSAA Administrator responsible for that sport.

## WINTER SPORTS

Activity	Level of State Series	Provisions for Sideline Cheerleader Admittance
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Basketball* (Boys & Girls)	All levels of State Series	Varsity cheerleaders in official cheerleading uniforms and their coach will be admitted free to the session their team plays provided the school athletic administrator has submitted their names through the MSHSAA online district entry process. Cheerleaders must enter the gate as a group and they must be accompanied by their coach. Specific instructions on how to obtain the pass for the cheer coach will be included in the information packet sent to each state qualifier by the MSHSAA Administrator responsible for that sport. <b>NOTE:</b> Due to limited floor space at the <b>semifinal and final sites</b> no more than 12 cheerleaders from one school are allowed on the floor at one time to cheer.
Girls Swimming	State	Varsity cheerleaders in official cheerleading uniforms and their coach will be admitted free to the session their team plays provided the school athletic administrator has submitted their names through the MSHSAA online district entry process. Cheerleaders must enter the gate as a group and they must be accompanied by their coach. Specific instructions on how to obtain the pass for the cheer coach will be included in the information packet sent to each state qualifier by the MSHSAA Administrator responsible for that sport.
Wrestling*	Districts	A maximum of eight passes will be issued to cheerleaders in official school cheerleading uniform. A maximum of one pass will be used to the cheer coach, who must accompany the cheerleaders when entering. Tickets must be purchased for any person beyond these maximums.
Wrestling*	State	A maximum of eight cheerleaders in official school cheerleading uniform and one cheer coach will be admitted from each school that qualifies one or more wrestlers to the state meet. Cheerleaders and their coach must enter Mizzou Arena via the northeast corner entrance. Cheerleaders without a cheer coach will be referred to the ticket office to purchase an admission ticket.

#### SPRING SPORTS

Activity	Level of State Series	Provisions for Sideline Cheerleader Admittance
Baseball	All levels of State Series	Varsity cheerleaders in official cheerleading uniforms and their coach will be admitted free to the session their team plays provided the school athletic administrator has submitted their names through the MSHSAA online district entry process. Cheerleaders must enter the gate as a group and they must be accompanied by their coach. Specific instructions on how to obtain the pass for the cheer coach will be included in the information packet sent to each state qualifier by the MSHSAA Administrator responsible for that sport.
Boys Golf	District and State	No provisions for cheerleader admittance.
Boys Tennis	District and State	No provisions for cheerleader admittance.
Girls Soccer	All levels of State Series	Varsity cheerleaders in official cheerleading uniforms and their coach will be admitted free to the session their team plays provided the school athletic administrator has submitted their names through the MSHSAA online district entry process. Cheerleaders must enter the gate as a group and they must be accompanied by their coach. Specific instructions on how to obtain the pass for the cheer coach will be included in the information packet sent to each state qualifier by the MSHSAA Administrator responsible for that sport.
Track (Boys & Girls)	District, Sectional & State	No provision for cheerleader admittance.

## SECTION 5: UNIFORMS

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- A. Uniforms should be functional and should be those which the school would approve within the school dress code. The uniforms should be comfortable and provide freedom of movement.
  - 1. Excessive bagginess in uniforms should be avoided because of safety.
  - 2. Consideration should be given for climate conditions in which the uniform(s) will be worn.
  - 3. When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff.
  - 4. Jewelry, etc. shall **not** be worn during practice, games, performances or competitions.
- B. **For Sideline Cheer:** Skirts, sweaters, vests, jumpers and warm-up suits would all be appropriate attire for cheerleaders. Tennis shoes with soft soles and good support should be selected.
- C. **For Dance Teams:** Uniforms and warm-up suits would all be appropriate attire for dance team members (see below regarding Modesty Rule for Dance Costumes). All dance teams must wear footwear that is consistent with all NFHS Spirit Rules.
- D. **Modesty Rule for Dance Costumes:** Missouri dance teams are expected to wear costumes that are *appropriate* for education-based activities and approved by the local school administration for performances and competitions. It is the school coach(es) responsibility to be knowledgeable of all NFHS and MSHSAA rules regarding dance and to convey these rules to any company or individual providing a service to the school team (i.e. choreographers, seamstress, prop designer, etc.).
  - 1. Costumes and/or leotards must be at a minimum a brief cut.
  - 2. Teams may have a cutout or open back costume. However, if the cut is below the natural waist line in the back the costume is **illegal**.
  - 3. Bare skin or any material that gives the illusion of flesh shall **not** be part of the costume in the midriff area.
  - 4. Footwear must comply with NFHS Rules.
- E. Participants shall **not** be permitted to perform/compete in **illegal** attire.

## **SECTION 6: PREVENTION AND CARE OF INJURIES**

[\(TOC\)](#)

- A. It is very important that the members of spirit teams understand the importance of incorporating a good warm-up and stretching program prior to all practices, games, competitions and performances. The team will be much more effective and dynamic if the spirit members are physically fit. The maintenance of a good level of physical fitness and proper warm-ups will not only produce a spirit team that is energetic and pleasing to watch, but will also greatly reduce the risks for injuries and accidents.
1. The spirit team coach shall assist in the development of a conditioning and warm-up program for the spirit team.
  2. Proper techniques in stunts should be used at all times.
  3. When stunts and pyramids are constructed; the team should have spotters as needed for the particular stunt.
  4. The spirit team coach should acquire a very basic knowledge of first aid and be prepared to treat minor injuries, strains, sprains, contusions, cuts, etc. A basic first aid kit should be located at the site for practice, games, performance and competitions in case an injury occurs.



## SECTION 7: CHEER/DANCE CLINICS

(TOC)

- A. **Conducting Elementary Spirit Clinics:** The sideline cheerleaders and/or dance team can work with the elementary grades and get them involved in a few of the simple cheers, chants or school fight song dance routines. Have a special night where these students, as a group, will do a couple of cheers or dance routine either before the contest or during halftime.
1. Reminder these students are **not** allowed to be on the sidelines with the cheer or dance teams during the actual contest for safety and liability reasons. This also includes mascots. Perhaps set aside a special section in the bleachers for the students on that night. One possibility is to have an elementary clinic and give T-shirts to all of the children who attend and have them wear these shirts to the high school or junior high contest.
- B. **MSHSAA One-Day Cheer Clinics:** Each June, MSHSAA sponsors one-day cheer clinics. Sideline cheerleaders and their coaches are encouraged to attend the clinic nearest their school. The sites and dates of these clinics are placed on the MSHSAA website under the 'Spirit Activities' link. Registration forms and clinic brochures will be available via the MSHSAA website for all MSHSAA member senior and junior high schools in early spring.
1. These clinics are designed to be helpful to sideline cheerleaders and their coaches with varying degrees of experience. Each MSHSAA One-Day Cheer Clinic will offer a session on sports medicine designed specifically for spirit groups. **The dates for the 2024 One-Day Clinics will be announced in the fall.**
  2. New coaches will also find helpful information regarding "coaches and participants responsibilities" located on the NFHS website ([www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)). Select the Activities and Sports tab to locate the spirit link.

## **APPENDIX A: PROGRAM INFORMATION AND STATISTICS**

(TOC)

The MSHSAA staff strives to publish the most accurate materials for all Championship events. Since a majority of the information contained in Championship publications is submitted by qualifying schools, it is imperative that the MSHSAA office receive correctly-spelled names, accurate classifications (year in school), season results, statistics of participants and coaching information. The MSHSAA Board of Directors has approved a fine process for all late, incomplete or illegible submissions for MSHSAA Championship publications. Schools that do not submit their information to MSHSAA in a timely, legible, complete and accurate manner will be fined \$25 per offense (Board Policy). Electronic reports must be submitted by the appropriate deadline in the format and style included with the report instructions. It is the responsibility of the school to verify that MSHSAA has received its program information, team photo and any other required information by the appropriate deadline.

## **APPENDIX B: COPYRIGHT COMPLIANCE**

(TOC)

### **MSHSAA Position Statement Regarding U.S. Copyright Compliance**

Educators, coaches, and administrators who wish to use copyrighted material need to understand the privileges and rights of the copyright owner and must abide by defined limitations as expressed in U.S. Copyright Law. It is the responsibility of the school administration to ensure their school community is following U.S. Copyright Laws at all times when playing music at your events, reproducing consumable materials, and all other events taking place at school facilities where copyright laws are to be followed. When hosting a MSHSAA postseason event, the host site is responsible for confirming any music being played over a public sound system, used in video clips, etc., has the gained written permission and/or secured the necessary license(s) to play the music, video clips, etc. from the appropriate Performing Rights Organization (i.e. ASCAP, BMI, SESAC, other).

The NFHS (National Federation of State High Schools) has established an agreement with ASCAP to allow schools and non-school sites hosting a MSHSAA postseason event, to perform/play music in which they own the rights (at least 50%) of the work at no charge. It is your responsibility to ensure the music performed onsite is owned by ASCAP. To determine if the music is owned by ASCAP to go [www.ASCAP.com](http://www.ASCAP.com) and select the link 'Repertory' to search their catalog. If the work is not owned by ASCAP (at least 50%), you will need to work directly with the organization that does own the rights (BMI, SESAC, etc.) to secure the necessary license or not use that work. This agreement only extends to the playing of music recordings downloaded to personal electronic devices, CD's, etc. but does not extend to mash-up recordings or music altered from its original recording without the site obtaining a license to do so.

## **APPENDIX C: TECHNIQUES OF DEVELOPING POSITIVE CROWD INVOLVEMENT AT INTERSCHOLASTIC EVENTS**

### (TOC)

Sideline cheerleaders have a very important responsibility at our interscholastic contests. Through their leadership the student body and other fans can cheer exuberantly for their team in a manner becoming of good sportsmanship. Sideline cheerleaders contribute to "crowd control" through positive crowd involvement. The thoughts provided below are just a few techniques which have proven to be successful in developing school spirit and positive crowd involvement.

1. Educate the student body of the expectations of a good crowd. Good communication with the student body and the public of what the expectations of the school are for good sportsmanship is vital.
2. If a student group evolves which is somewhat rowdy the group should be educated to work with the sideline cheerleaders. This group must feel a part of the system. This may be accomplished by having them help with a pep assembly, having them meet with the sideline cheerleaders, or have the sideline cheer coach or activities director visit with this group regarding their role in promoting school spirit.
3. The administration must give positive support for good sportsmanship and crowd involvement. An administrator emphasizing good sportsmanship and proper conduct at every opportunity is vital in this area.
4. Poll students as to what cheers and chants they like and will follow. The sideline cheerleaders can use this information to select the popular cheers to use during contests which will gain support from the student body.
5. Have a session where the athletes may educate the sideline cheerleaders on the athletic contest. This will help the cheerleaders to begin chants and cheers which are appropriate for the game and the situation which is occurring in the contest.
6. Good communication is necessary to have between the administrators, the sideline coaches, the sideline cheerleaders, and the student body. This will help provide clearer expectations to the students, and the student body. This will help provide clearer expectations to the students, fans, and coaches for actions during athletic contests.
7. Use your vocal students to your advantage. For example, if a student body group starts a good chant, have your sideline cheerleaders join in. This shows a mutual respect between the two groups who, in essence, want to work together as one.
8. The pep or jazz band can be very helpful in promoting school spirit by working with the sideline cheerleaders as they try to promote positive crowd involvement.
9. The band director can have a pep band play over a booing situation if it is at an appropriate time for the band to play.
10. Before a game starts sideline cheerleaders can have a chant followed by playing the school fight song or other song in which the student body will participate. This helps get the crowd involved and set the tone at the beginning of the contest.
11. Parent groups may be formed such as "Proud Parents" to encourage the adult fans to work together in a positive manner supporting the school athletic program. For example, a sign could be placed on the wall designating a reserved seating area for the "Proud Parents" and include a statement such as "Proud Parents don't boo." This could also be done with the school booster club. The idea is to reinforce positive behavior by parents and other adults attending the athletic contest.
12. A column in the school newspaper or weekly bulletin may be used to print some of the chants that will be used at the upcoming contests for that week. The sideline cheerleaders may also list in the school paper or bulletin a thank you to particular clubs and other school groups for coming to the game and supporting their school team.
13. Conduct a pep rally before the game starts. Sideline cheerleaders have an opportunity to go over the words of the cheers and chants to be used that night and also indicate what is considered appropriate behavior. This would cause the cheerleading squad to plan out the basic cheers and chants they will be utilizing that evening.
14. Sideline cheerleaders must be assertive in their leadership role. They must be able to go into the crowd and help get the crowd excited and involved. It will take some guidance to help teach and develop this type of leadership. The cheerleading coach must teach the cheerleaders that they should not turn around and ignore the inappropriate actions. The coach must be able to foster and teach how to be the desired type of a leader.
15. Incorporate cheers which will use a card to elicit a crowd response i.e. "Go Big Red" and each of the words is on a card which the sideline cheerleaders will hold up indicating to the crowd this is the response they should give at that particular time.

## **APPENDIX D: SPORTSMANSHIP... A TEAM EFFORT**

### (TOC)

A mainstay of our interscholastic athletic program is good sportsmanship. If our interscholastic activities are to be worthwhile and afford continuing supplemental educational experiences for our boys and girls in relationship to our educational goals and objectives we must have good sportsmanship at our schools.

Good sportsmanship is built and maintained through a collective effort by administrators, coaches, players, spirit teams, and spectators. A team effort is necessary in your school if good sportsmanship is to exist.

To help prepare "your team" for the season the following suggestions just may give you the edge over the opponent...poor sportsmanship.

1. Administrators must work to create the best environment possible for interscholastic activities. This shall include facilities, officials, game equipment, supervision and behavior of all involved.
2. Administrators shall communicate clearly the expectations of behavior on the part of all those involved with athletics and the consequences for inappropriate behavior.
3. The administrative staff should develop a plan of action to address inappropriate behavior at interscholastic events. This procedure should be discussed with spirit coach(s) and clearly explained to other personnel involved with supervision.
4. Administrator and the spirit coach(s) should discuss and develop a procedure to deal with difficult situations regarding sportsmanship.
5. Identify how the spirit team members can assist in developing and promoting good sportsmanship.
6. The spirit coach(s), with the administrator's guidance, should work with the group to effectively deal with spectators and learn to recognize situations which need adult intervention.  
The spirit coach(s) should know who to contact in the event the unsportsmanlike acts are not easily resolved. Neither spirit members nor their coach should permit themselves to be placed in a "no win" situation with the crowd. However, their techniques should be developed to lessen the likelihood of unsportsmanlike conduct.
8. Spirit coach(s) must continue to emphasize to the members what an important role they play in the school's overall program.
9. At the beginning of school have the administrator, spirit coach(s) and team members meet together to discuss and clearly understand each other's role and how they will work together for good sportsmanship.
10. Spirit members, with help from the coach and administrators, can actively work to promote good sportsmanship. This can be accomplished by developing expectations for behavior for 1) their school, 2) all schools within a conference and 3) expectations for visiting schools.
11. The expectations can appear in programs, posters, etc. These expectations can be provided to all visiting schools.

These are just a few "pre-season" suggestions to help your team be good sports and expect the same from others.



## APPENDIX E: GUIDELINES FOR BANDS

(TOC)

### REGULAR SEASON:

The performing and playing of music and use of sound effects are important to the football experience making for an exciting environment for all participants. It is important those in charge of overseeing these activities maintain proper sportsmanship and follow rules when these activities are permitted.

In order to maintain a proper perspective and to insure equity in competition for the participating teams, certain guidelines indicating when to play must be followed. The guidelines listed below include an appropriate playing schedule for music. It is suggested the band director work closely with the school administration to create a schedule so everyone can support the team.

These activities are permitted:

- before the game begins;
- During the contest up until the Center touches the ball or the Kicker strikes the ball on a free kick;
- During time-outs, except injury time-outs;
- Between quarters;
- At halftime of the contest;
- At the end of the contest.

If any of these activities continues outside of the designated times listed above, it can be considered an 'unfair act' under NFHS Football Rule 9-9-1 and could result in a 15-yard penalty being assessed to the head football coach of the offending school for unsportsmanlike conduct.

When bands want to warm-up prior to halftime, directors should arrange this so that it is done in an area that is not a distraction to the contest. **NOTE: No whistles may be used while the game is in progress.**

Halftime is 20 minutes in length unless the participating schools mutually agree to a 15-minutes half. The band may take the field as soon as the teams have cleared the field. The band should be off the field when there is 3-minutes remaining on the clock. The football teams should not enter the field until the band is finished and off the field.

Because the band acts as a spirit group, members should always act in a positive manner and must not do anything to distract or negatively affect the opposing team. It is the director's responsibility to prevent his/her band from playing at inappropriate times, playing inappropriate music, or taunting the opposing team and/or contest officials. The band must display courtesy and respect towards the players, cheerleaders, and fans. To do anything else is not only a distraction from the contest but also reflect negatively on the band, the director, and the school. Support your school and team in a positive manner.

The participation of bands at a school football contest is an exciting aspect of the event. The band contributes to the event by increasing the level of excitement to the contest. In order to maintain a proper perspective and to insure equity in competition for the participating teams, certain guidelines indicating when to play must be followed. Band directors are reminded that as a courtesy to the teams and sideline cheerleaders, the performances by the band should be limited to a certain schedule. The guidelines listed below include an appropriate playing schedule for the band.

### **MSHSAA FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS:**

Halftime intermission shall be limited to a maximum of 20-minutes, plus the 3-minute warm-up prior to the start of the second half.

**Option 1 - One Band Performing:** The band performance shall be limited to a **maximum of 12 minutes** at halftime **including marching onto the field, performing, and marching off the field.** The band director shall consult the game manager concerning arrangement for halftime and pregame activities. **A school's dance team may perform during the 12-minutes allotted the school.**

**Option 2 - Two Bands Performing:** Each band performance shall be limited to a **maximum of 7 minutes** at halftime **including marching onto the field, performing, and marching off the field.** The band director shall consult the game manager concerning arrangements for halftime and pregame activities. **A school's dance team may perform during the 7-minutes allotted each school.** Schools will be expected to follow the information in *Guidelines for Band during Regular Season Contests* regarding when to play during the contest.

**NOTE:** Contact should be made with the host school if a pep band is coming to perform at any MSHSAA playoff game. This will avoid confusion and performance issues at the site.

**GUIDELINES FOR BANDS PERFORMING AT BASKETBALL CONTESTS:** Part of the excitement at many of our interscholastic basketball contests involves the spirited music supplied by a pep or jazz band. The performances of the musical group are enjoyed by all attending the game. To ensure full appreciation of the group's performances certain guidelines indicating when to play should be followed. Band directors are reminded that as a courtesy to the teams and sideline cheerleaders of both schools the performance numbers by the band should be limited to a certain schedule. The guidelines listed below indicate an appropriate playing schedule for the band.

1. The band may play before the game begins. The director should coordinate the schedule so that team members may be announced if desired by the host school.
2. The band may play at halftime of the contest.
3. The band may play in between contests, again, coordinating this schedule so that team members may be announced.
4. The band may play at the end of the contest if desired.
5. The band should not play during time outs or the break between quarters in order to allow cheerleaders the opportunity to lead cheers. Players and coaches need to be able to communicate clearly with each other during time outs.
6. Musical instruments shall not be used as noise makers during the contests.

The band director and his/her performing group will display courtesy and respect to the players and sideline cheerleaders by playing at specific times. With good planning and cooperation, the school pep band will be an integral part of the excitement and spirit of the contests.

## APPENDIX F: PLACEMENT OF SIDELINE CHEER TEAMS AT INDOOR CONTESTS

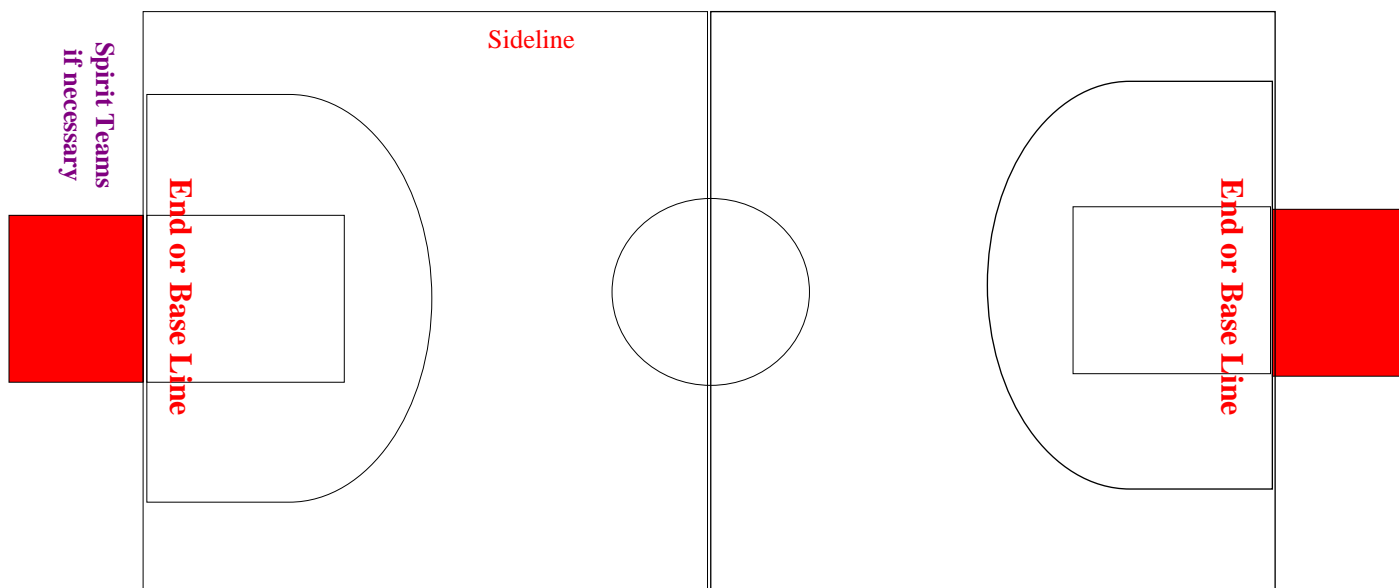
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Spirit coaches should coordinate the placement of the cheerleaders and other spirit groups with the school administrator in charge. When possible, the spirit teams should be along the sidelines close to the intersection of the sideline and end line. If space does **not** permit, the team should be located along the end line but **not** beneath the basket or in the red zone.

Spirit Teams should always be aware of the actions occurring within the contest and the contest officials, and be prepared to move as play advances so as not to interfere with the contest.

### SPECTATOR SEATING

Spirit Teams—Preferable



Spirit Teams—Preferable

### SPECTATOR SEATING





# **MISSOURI STATE HIGH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION**

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