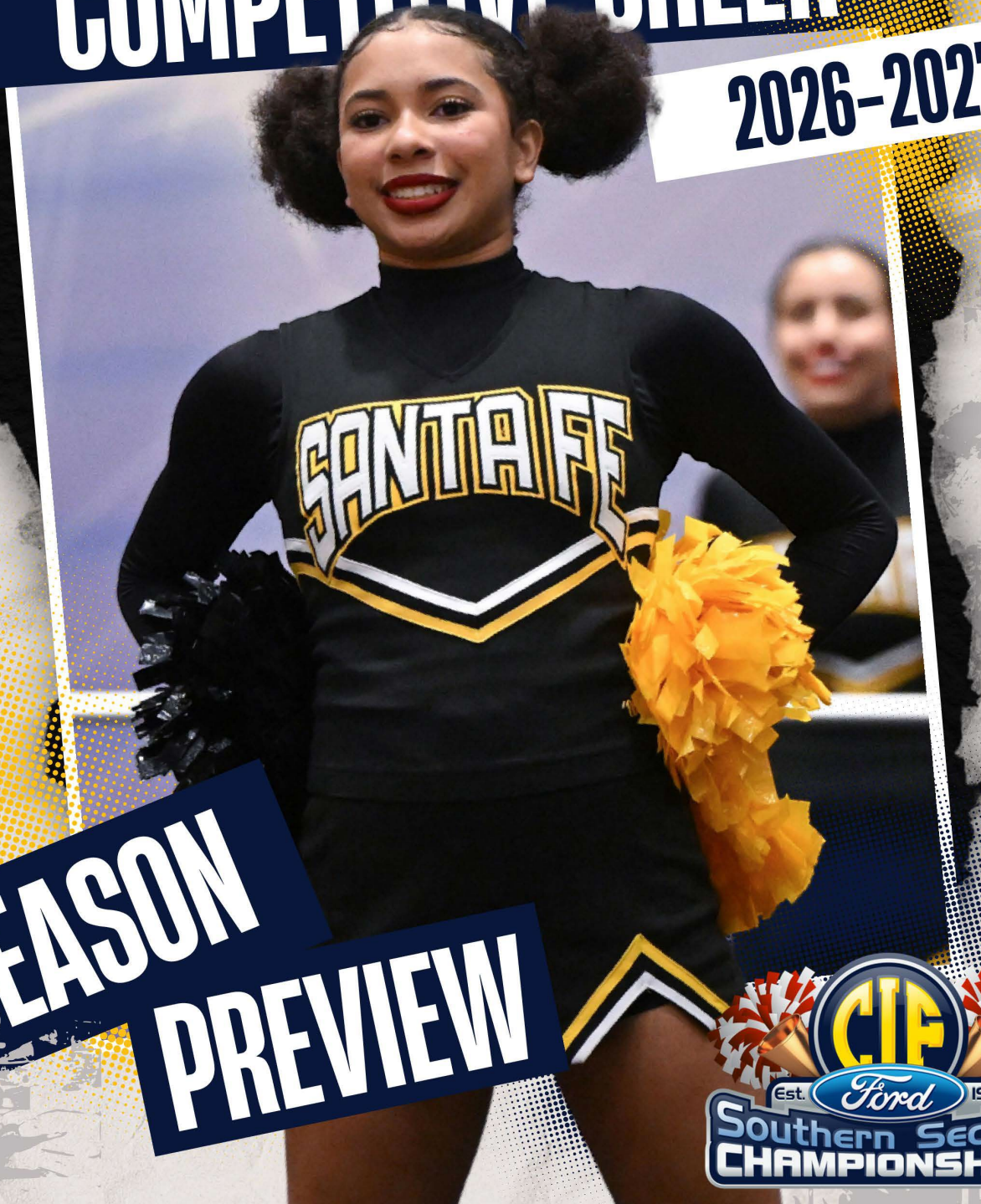


CIF SOUTHERN SECTION

# TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER

2026-2027



SEASON  
PREVIEW





**TO: CIF SOUTHERN SECTION TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER COACHES**

**FROM: KRISTINE PALLE, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER**

**DATE: JULY 2026 (updated 7/15/2026)**

**RE: CIF-SOUTHERN SECTION 2026-27 TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER SEASON**

The CIF Southern Section has put together this preview to assist schools with their Traditional Competitive Cheer program. The purpose is to improve communication regarding CIF Southern Section rules and regulations.

Be advised that this is not a complete document; it does not discuss all rules and regulations. Coaches are reminded they need to refer to the Blue Book and to discuss issues with their athletic administration.

**Welcome to the 2026-2027 Traditional Competitive Cheer season!**

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# 2026-27 TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER CALENDAR DATES

|                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FIRST CONTEST           | <p><b>TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup></b></p> <p>The initial date on which a school may schedule and conduct an interscholastic contest.</p>                                                                                         |
| SIT OUT PERIOD          | <p><b>SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup></b></p> <p>Refer to the student's approved transfer application in CIFSS Home.</p>                                                                                                            |
| CIF-SS ENTRIES<br>OPEN  | <p><b>TUESDAY, DECEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup></b></p> <p><b>AT 12:00 PM (NOON)</b></p>                                                                                                                                                        |
| CIF-SS ENTRIES<br>CLOSE | <p><b>FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup></b></p> <p><b>BY 12:00 PM (NOON)</b></p> <p><u>Teams registered can make changes until WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup> AT 12:00 PM (NOON). <b>NO LATE ENTRIES WILL BE EXCEPTED.</b></u></p> |
| SCHEDULE<br>RELEASE     | <p><b>FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup></b></p> <p>Championship schedule can be found at <a href="http://www.cifss.org">www.cifss.org</a></p> <p><b><u>No changes will be accepted.</u></b></p>                                         |
| CIF-SS FINALS           | <p><b>FRIDAY &amp; SATURDAY, JANUARY 22<sup>ND</sup> -23<sup>RD</sup></b></p> <p><b>Felix Event Center at Azusa Pacific University</b></p>                                                                                             |

## APPROVED SANCTIONED EVENTS

Please refer to the CIF Southern Section website ([www.cifss.org](http://www.cifss.org)) for the latest Sanctioned Events, as events are updated daily.

Sanctioned Events download directions:

click on GOVERNANCE TAB,

click on SANCTIONED EVENTS,

select TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER,

click Search

*This page will display the most up-to-date information on  
Traditional Competitive Cheer Approved Sanctioned Events*



## **TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER COACHES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The CIF Southern Section is continuing to utilize the concept of coaches' advisory committees for all sports. The role of the advisory committee may or may not include the following:

- Meetings
- Recommendations for playoffs sites
- Recommendations for procedural change
- Recommendations for rule changes
- Evaluation of sport season
- Assistance to coaches and/or officials' organizations
- Communications between coaches and the CIF-SS office
- Management/Supervision at Championship Events

The Coaches Advisory Committee is made up of member coaches and an administrator from the CIF-SS office staff. Coaches selected for the committee provide a cross-section of the organization and are selected based upon geographic, as well as competitive divisions. Should you have suggestions or questions regarding Traditional Competitive Cheer competition, please make use of this excellent channel of communication; it is provided to serve your interests. The committee will meet on a regular basis during the season, and your items will become part of our agenda.

Listed on the next page are the members of the CIF-SS Traditional Competitive Cheer Coaches Advisory Committee.



## 2026-2027 TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER COACHES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

| CONTACT           | SCHOOL            | EMAIL                           |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Matt LaBelle      | Camarillo         | Matthew.labelle@oxnardunion.org |
| Elena Klock       | La Serna          | Elena.klock@wuhsd.org           |
| Jennifer Ramirez  | Los Alamitos      | jramirez@losal.org              |
| Katie Bowers      | Mater Dei         | kbowers@materdei.org            |
| Travis Neese      | Mira Costa        | travis@costacheer.com           |
| Lisa Hedspeth     | Redondo Union     | lhedspeth@rbusd.org             |
| Amber Smith       | San Clemente      | aasmith@capousd.org             |
| Andi Sanches      | St. Joseph/Lkwd   | asanchez@sj-jester.org          |
| Kylie Middlebrook | St. Margaret Epi. | Kylie.middlebrook@smes.org      |
| Sarah Peterson    | Tahquitz          | Speterson1@hemetusd.org         |
| Tom Shrake        | University        | tomshrake@iusd.org              |
| Allison Mackey    | Vista Murrieta    | amackey@murrieta.k12.ca.us      |
| Denee Easy        | NFHS              | Coachdeasy@gmail.com            |

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# CIFSSHOMES REQUIREMENTS

## VARSITY COACHES

**Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches:** It is very important that you enter your Traditional Competitive Cheer coaches (Head & Assistants) into CIFSSHome ([www.cifsshomes.org](http://www.cifsshomes.org)) no later than **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**.

Log in @ [www.cifsshomes.org](http://www.cifsshomes.org) (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

- Click on the “Users” tab, click on “User Manager”, click on the  in the upper right hand corner to add Coaches and Assistant Coaches. Enter the information requested on the “Add School User” page. Choose “Active” to provide the coach with access to CIFSSHome or “Inactive” for directory purposes only. Choose Yes or No to give the coach access to all sport, click **Submit**.
- Choose the applicable options on the Assign Coach to Team page, click Save or Add Another to add additional coach(s).

## VARSITY TEAM INFORMATION (TEAM PHOTO)

Log in @ [www.cifsshomes.org](http://www.cifsshomes.org) (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

- Click on the “Teams” tab, click “Teams Manager”, click on “Traditional Competitive Cheer”, click on the “Team Photo” tab, Click on the  under “TEAM PICTURE”, choose the file, click **Submit**.

## VARSITY TEAM INFORMATION (ROSTERS)

**Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches:** It is very important that you enter your entire Traditional Competitive Cheer Varsity roster into CIFSSHome ([www.cifsshomes.org](http://www.cifsshomes.org)) no later than **WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2026**.

Log in @ [www.cifsshomes.org](http://www.cifsshomes.org) (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

- Click on the “Teams” tab, click on “Teams Manager”, click on “Traditional Competitive Cheer”, select 
- You can UPLOAD your roster using the instructions below (1) or you can enter each player one by one (2).

**Required roster information for Traditional Competitive Cheer is:**

**First Name, Last Name, Birth date, Year, & Eligibility**

### **(1) To ADD roster players one by one:**

- Click on  and complete fields required for Traditional Competitive Cheer.

### **(2) To Import a Roster using an Excel sample file:**

- Download the [sample file](#) and delete the “contents only”.
- Copy and paste or type your roster information into the file as the contents and save the file to your computer.
- Only an excel file  can be uploaded that is the exact same format as the sample file.
- Columns for information not required for your sport may be left blank, but the HEADER INFORMATION MUST REMAIN EXACTLY AS THE SAMPLE.
- **Required Columns for Traditional Competitive Cheer are:**

**First Name, Last Name, Birth date, Year, & Eligibility**

- Click on to find your file, then click on 
- To confirm the roster has been uploaded, your players’ names will be uploaded in the “Official Roster” section.
- Click on the next

## SCHOOL LOGO

Log in @ [www.cifsshomes.org](http://www.cifsshomes.org)

- Click on the “Configuration” tab
- Click on “School Info”
- Click on “Choose File” (.PNG file format is preferred)
- Choose the “No” option for Hide from Directory?
- Click Save

## SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Log in @ [www.cifsshomes.org](http://www.cifsshomes.org)

- Click on the “Configuration” tab
- Enter all school account names available next to the social media options (ie. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- These accounts are used during playoffs and for Games of the Week

## **BLUE BOOK RULES - SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST**

**RULE 125.1 COACH EJECTION** - Upon the ejection of a coach from any CIF Southern Section contest, it is the responsibility of the principal of said school to file a letter of explanation with the CIF Southern Section Office which includes the circumstances surrounding the matter and what action the principal has taken to prevent a recurrence. Said correspondence is to be filed within THREE school days of notification of the ejection. ADDITIONALLY, UPON EJECTION, THE EJECTED COACH SHALL BE DISQUALIFIED FROM PARTICIPATING IN THE REMAINDER OF THE GAME AND WILL BE INELIGIBLE FOR THE TEAM'S NEXT CONTEST. A SECOND EJECTION WILL CONSTITUTE A TWO CONTEST SUSPENSION AND A THIRD EJECTION WILL CAUSE SUSPENSION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SEASON.

**RULE 125.2 FAILURE TO COMPLETE A CONTEST** - When a school fails to complete a contest, due to a coach pulling his/her team from the floor, court or field, it is MANDATORY that the CIF Southern Section Office be notified by the principal within 24 hours (excluding holidays and weekends). The competing schools and officials will be required to file written reports, and after review of the aforementioned material, the principal of the school involved will be required to respond to the CIF Southern Section Office concerning his/her investigation of the incident.

*QUESTION: How serious is such action?*

*ANSWER: It has been the position of the CIF Southern Section Executive Committee to expect the building principal of the school concerned to relieve the coach from his/her assignment for the balance of that season or the Executive Committee is empowered to consider recommendations for additional penalties.*

*QUESTION: What if the head coach is red carded and there is not an assistant coach on the bench?*

*ANSWER: A district/school employee that holds **ALL coaching certifications** ("Coaches Education Training", CPR, First Aid, Sudden Cardiac Arrest, Concussion Training and anything else required by the district/school board specifically for coaches) may supervise the remainder of the game. If there is not a person holding the aforementioned credentials, the game will be terminated at that point). Teachers, administrators and other district personnel cannot fill this role unless they hold ALL necessary coaching certifications.*

### **RULE 514 - TOBACCO PRODUCTS PROHIBITED**

The use of tobacco products in conjunction with any CIF Southern Section athletic contest is prohibited. This would include all those involved in the contest including players, coaches and officials.

### **RULE 1223 - SUMMERTIME RULES**

**1223.1** With the exception of the summer dead period, until the beginning of the first official starting date for fall sports, there shall be no restriction on high school coaches working with high school students registered and/or attending their respective high school or entering them in summer competition, provided approval is received from the school principal.

*QUESTION: Who may participate in high school summer athletic programs approved by the principal?*

*ANSWER: Only students registered for the upcoming school year in grades 9 through 12. Additionally, it would be a violation to allow elementary students (8th grade and below) to participate with the high school team. For students enrolled in more than one school, all summer practice and competition must be confined to one school.*

**1223.2** High schools may sponsor sport camps and/or allow non-school sponsored sport camps to use their facilities.

\* High school students and individuals from the general community can attend.

\* The high school name, nickname and identifying marks can be used in the title and/or promotion of the camp.

- \* The principal of the high school must give permission for the camp to take place; non-school sponsored camps must secure a facility permit for use of any facilities and equipment.
- \* The camp must comply with all CIF rules, including those pertaining to undue influence and dead period.

\* Non-school sponsored camps should provide required liability insurance for the use of any school facilities.

**1223.3** A summer dead period must be declared by the school district and/or principal for all sports. The dates of the dead period must be forwarded to the Southern Section Commissioner. The dead period must be the same for all sports all levels and must be two (2) consecutive weeks, fourteen (14) days between the end of school in the spring and the first day of school in the Fall. No class could be offered which could circumvent the rule. There are no exceptions to the summer dead period.

During the dead period, NO weightlifting would be permitted. No running or other type of conditioning would be allowed. No coordinated workouts by ANY staff or volunteer members associated with the school are allowed.

Special nationally recognized programs in various sports that require a national or regional championship format, such as Bobby Sox Softball, American Legion or Mickey Mantle Baseball, Junior Olympics, etc., would be allowed to continue, until completion, during the dead period

### **RULE 503 - PLAYER CONDUCT RULE**

Player:

A player who is ejected from a contest (for reasons other than fighting or leaving the bench area during a fight) shall be ineligible to participate in the remainder of that contest (event) and his or her team's future contest (s) as outlined below:

**First Ejection:** Player is ineligible to participate in the team's next contest. Player may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's next contest. If the ejection occurs in the last game of the season, the player would be ineligible for the team's first contest the following season. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for the first contest of their next season of sport.

**Second Ejection:** Player is ineligible to participate in the team's next three (3) contests. Players may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's next three (3) contests. If the season concludes prior to the player serving the three (3) contests suspension, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for the team's following season. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for their next season of sport.

**Third Ejection:** Player is ineligible to participate for the remainder of that season. The player may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's remaining contest for that season. If there are six (6) or fewer contests remaining in the season, the player would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for the team's following season, as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. If the player is a senior, he or she would

be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for the next season of sport as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

### **RULE 503 - PLAYER CONDUCT RULE continued**

A player who is ejected from a contest for fighting or leaving the bench area during a fight\* shall be ineligible to participate in the remainder of that contest and his or her team's future contests as outlined below:

**First Ejection:** Player (Fighting/Assaultive Behavior/Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct) is ineligible to participate in the team's next three (3) to six (6) contests as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. Players may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the duration of the suspension. If the season concludes prior to the player serving the full suspension, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for the team's following season. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for their next season of sport. \*NFHS Rules indicate automatic one game suspension for leaving the bench.

**Second Ejection:** Player is ineligible to participate for the remainder of that season. Player may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's remaining contests that season. If there are six (6) or fewer contests remaining in the season, the player would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for the team's following season as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for their next season of sport as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

**QUESTION:** What happens when a student engages in Fighting/Assaultive Behavior during an athletic contest that is not observed by game officials?

**ANSWER:** In cases when a student engages in Fighting/Assaultive Behavior that is not observed by game officials, it is the expectation of the CIF Southern Section Executive Committee that the building principal of the school involved will impose a minimum one-game suspension for the students who commit such offenses.

### **RULE 1224 - LEVEL OF COMPETITION**

No student shall participate in more of than ONE level of competition in the same sport in the same day.

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# **CIF-SS TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER GUIDELINES**

The Following points of emphasis should be reviewed by coaches, staff and players regarding CIF Southern Section rules and regulations as published in the CIF-SS Blue Book. This list is not all-inclusive; it highlights key areas.

## **END OF COMPETITION**

**ENTRIES ARE DUE AT 12:00 P.M. (NOON) ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>, 2026.**

**CHANGES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED ONCE THE FINAL SCHEDULE IS RELEASED.**

## **TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Traditional Competitive Cheer Championships will be held on January 22 & 23, 2027. Specific information regarding this event will be posted in the playoffs bulletin posted in October.

## **TOURNAMENTS**

For those schools hosting sanctioned events, please review the 700 series. Please be aware that all sanctioned events are to be administered by the sanctioning school and not administered by outside groups. The interpretation is that all entry fees must be handled through student-body funds under the administration of the principal of that school.

## **OUTSIDE COMPETITION BY AN INDIVIDUAL**

*During Individual's Season of Sport* - A member of a high school Traditional Competitive Cheer team may, during his or her season of sport (Fall, Winter and Spring), *compete* for an outside team in the sport of Traditional Competitive Cheer. A season of sport (see CIF-SS Blue Book Rule 504) is defined as that period which begins with a student's first interscholastic competition (non-league, tournament or league game) and ends with that student's last interscholastic contest non-league, tournament or league game). If an athlete has been selected for a National event/ tournament, permission must be obtained by the association office or CIF State Office prior to the event.

## **SCOUTING PROHIBITION - PRACTICE SESSION**

Scouting of any type that would include personal viewing, written notes, audio tape, motion pictures, video reproduction and/or any other type of reproduction such as still pictures, etc., shall not be taken in any sport of a member school's practice sessions by anyone without written consent of the participating school(s). An interscholastic scrimmage is not subject to this rule.

*Q & A - What is allowed with regard to scouting a contest?*

*There will be NO restrictions on the part of member schools regarding the filming/video-taping of any contest. Host schools will maintain game management rights and responsibilities.*

## **CHAMPIONSHIP DIVISIONS**

After the result of this year's competition, the advisory committee will be able to advance a team into the next highest division if they receive a plaque (runner-up or champion) two years in a row, IF they've competed in the same division both years. For example, Ridgemont High School won Division 2 medium competition this year and was runner-up last year. Next season, Ridgemont HS must register for one of the Division 1 categories (Division 1 small, Division 1 medium, Division 1 large, etc.).



# CIF Southern Section Competition Divisions

| DIVISIONS       |                     |                                                |                |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Division 1      | <b>ADVANCED</b>     | 9 <sup>th</sup> grade – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade | Female         |
| Division 1 COED | <b>ADVANCED</b>     | 9 <sup>th</sup> grade – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade | Female/1+ Male |
| Division 2      | <b>NOVICE</b>       | 9 <sup>th</sup> grade – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade | Female         |
| Division 2 COED | <b>NOVICE</b>       | 9 <sup>th</sup> grade – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade | Female/1+ Male |
| Division 3      | <b>NON-TUMBLING</b> | 9 <sup>th</sup> grade – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade | Female         |
| Division 3 COED | <b>NON-TUMBLING</b> | 9 <sup>th</sup> grade – 12 <sup>th</sup> grade | Female/1+ Male |

***\*See each division's specific skills restrictions on the next page.***

THE CIF SOUTHERN SECTION RESERVES THE RIGHT TO COMBINE/SPLIT/ADJUST DIVISIONS AS NEEDED UP TO THE DATE OF THE FINAL LINE UP BEING POSTED. BASED ON REGISTRATION NUMBERS, SUBDIVISIONS MAY BE CREATED WITHIN EACH NUMERICAL DIVISION (i.e. Division 1 Super, Division 3 Small etc.).



## TRADITIONAL COMPETITIVE CHEER RULES & RESTRICTIONS

### DIVISION 1 (ADVANCED) SKILLS RESTRICTIONS

*Teams will follow the standard NFHS Spirit Rules Book Guidelines with no other skill restrictions.*

### DIVISION 2 (NOVICE) SKILLS RESTRICTIONS (Novice)

*Teams will follow the standard NFHS Spirit Rules Book Guidelines with the additional skill restrictions below.*

**STANDING TUMBLING:** Single back handsprings are allowed. Connected rolls and walkovers to a single back handspring or between 2 single back handsprings are allowed. **Series front and back handsprings are NOT allowed. Jump handspring(s) combinations are NOT allowed**

**RUNNING TUMBLING:** Series front and back handsprings are allowed. **Flips and aerial cartwheels are NOT allowed.**

**STUNTS:** Single leg stunts at prep level or below are allowed. **Extended single leg show and go stunts are NOT allowed.** Up to ½ twisting transitions are allowed. (Exception: A single full twisting log roll is allowed if it starts/ends in a cradle, does not involve any other skill other than the twist, and is not assisted by and/or connected to another top person). **Simultaneously performing a half twist while turning, and/or while bases are turning is NOT allowed.**

**RELEASES:** **Release moves are NOT allowed.**

**INVERSIONS:** Ground level inversions to a vertical upright position are allowed. Suspended forward rolls where two people on the performing surface control the top person in a suspended forward roll with continuous hand- to-hand or hand-to wrist contact to a stunt, two-person cradle, loading position, or performing surface are allowed. During the roll, no twisting is allowed, and the top person's feet must be released. Downward Inversions are only allowed if initiated from a stationary horizontal/cradle position below prep level.

**PYRAMIDS:** All skills must follow novice stunts unless braced by at least one person at prep level or below with hand/arm connection. The required connection must be made at the initiation of the skill and remain connected throughout the entire transition. Extended single leg stunts must be braced by at least one person at prep level or below with hand/arm connection. The required hand/arm connection must be made prior to executing the extended single leg stunt. (The bracer MUST have a minimum of 2 bases or 1 base and 1 spotter). The required hand/arm connection must remain until the single leg stunt is no longer extended. **Extended stunts may not brace or be braced by any other extended stunts.**

**PYRAMID RELEASES:** Braced release moves are allowed. Any time a top person is released by the bases during a pyramid transition, the top person must be braced by two top people at prep level or below with hand-arm connection only and constant contact between the top person and the bracers must be maintained throughout the transition.

**PYRAMIND INVERSIONS:** **Pyramid inversions are not allowed.**

**DISMOUNTS:** **(Please see definition of dismount in NFHS Rules Book)** Straight pop downs are allowed from prep level or below. Basic straight cradles are allowed. ¼ twisting dismounts are allowed.

**TOSSES:** A toss to a cradle is allowed. The only body position allowed is a straight ride. All other tosses are NOT allowed.

### **DIVISION 3 (NON-TUMBLING) SKILLS RESTRICTIONS**

*Teams will follow the standard NFHS Spirit Rules Book Guidelines with the additional skill restrictions below.*

Any and all tumbling with feet over head rotation i.e. rolls and walkovers not allowed. Legal inversions into or from stunts will not be considered tumbling and are allowed in this division. Exception: a back handspring entry into stunts / pyramids will not be allowed.



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## **CIF-SS HISTORY RECORD BOOK**

The CIF-SS Record Book is updated on a yearly basis and can be found here.

<https://cifss.org/record-book/>

The CIF-SS Communications Office will automatically update information on championship teams, scores, and Players of the Year. Should your team, an athlete on your team, or a coach, meet a milestone record, then please complete this form.

<https://cifss.org/record-book-request/>

Please note we only record the top 10 in each category.

## **ALL CIF-SS**

The All CIF-SS teams are decided by the coaches' advisory committees for each sport.

To be considered, your coach must attend the divisional meeting to submit their nominations to the committee. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

The CIF-SS will receive the first team list from the committee and release those on [www.cifss.org](http://www.cifss.org).

We will also mail the first team certificates to the athlete's school.

The CIF-SS office does not collect 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> team information. If the sport has a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> team, that information will be available through the coaches committee.



## **CIF STATE INFORMATION**

*Can be found at [www.cifstate.org](http://www.cifstate.org)*

# EXTREME HEAT AND AIR QUALITY POLICY FOR THE CALIFORNIA INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION

As per **CA State Law AB 1653** and CIF Bylaw 503 K. Heat Illness and Air Quality Index Protocols, **all CIF member schools must adhere to the CIF Heat Illness Prevention and Heat Acclimatization Policies as outlined below.**

## Extreme Heat Procedures:

The WetBulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is a measure of heat stress in direct sunlight, which considers: temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle, and cloud cover (solar radiation). This differs from the Heat Index, which takes into consideration temperature and humidity and is calculated for shady areas. The WBGT is especially valuable in environments where people are physically active, such as sports, as it provides a better assessment of the risk of heat-related conditions during physical exertion. The CIF requires that schools use the WBGT for the most accurate measurement.

Depending on your Category Region (see map below), it is mandated for the benefit of the health and safety of our student-athletes that practice/games be canceled, or delayed until cooler when WBGT exceeds these levels:

- Region Category 1 >86.2°F
- Region Category 2 >89.9°F
- Region Category 3 >92.0°F

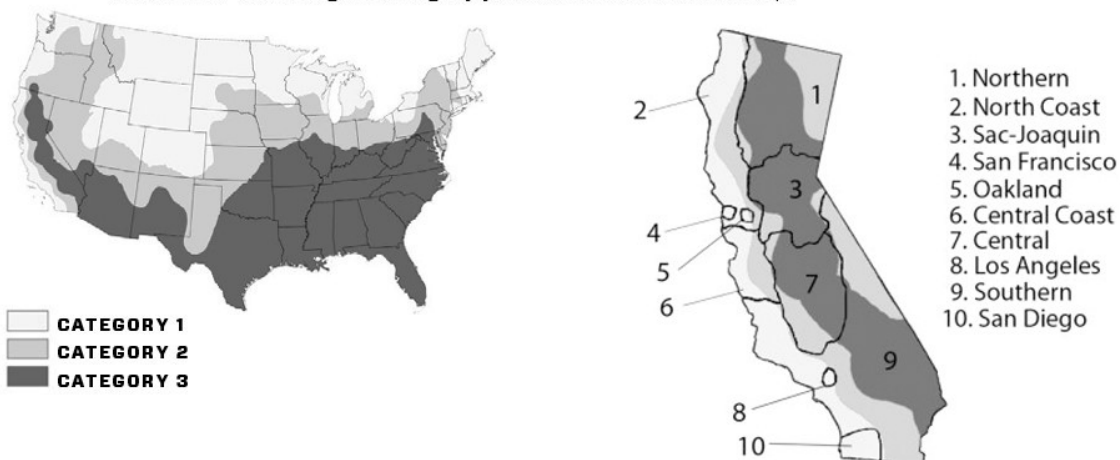
## STEP 1

### Find your Region Category

Based on the following map, schools should select the category that best fits their region to follow the required guidelines shown below.

The majority of states fall under just one category or two at the most. However, due to its diverse climate across the state, California encompasses all three categories: light gray - Category 1 / medium gray - Category 2 / dark gray - Category 3. (See image below).

Determine which region category you are in based on the map.



## STEP 2

**WBGT Readings** (Note: Temperatures listed in the chart below are calculated using a WBGT and are not basic air temperatures) Please see Step 3 below for samples of WBGT readings.

| Cat 3                          | Cat 2                          | Cat 1                          | Outdoor Activity Guidelines                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <82.0°F<br><27.8°C             | <79.7°F<br><26.5°C             | <76.1°F<br><24.5°C             | Normal Activities – Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 3 min each during the workout.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 82.2 - 86.9°F<br>27.9 - 30.5°C | 79.9 - 84.6°F<br>26.6 - 29.2°C | 76.3 - 81.0°F<br>24.6 - 27.2°C | Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise; Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 min each.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 87.1 - 90.0°F<br>30.6 - 32.2°C | 84.7 - 87.6°F<br>29.3 - 30.9°C | 81.1 - 84.0°F<br>27.3 - 28.9°C | Maximum outdoor practice time is 2 h. Provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 min each. <u>For Football/Field Hockey:</u> players are restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice. If the WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing full pads without changing to shorts. |
| 90.1 - 91.9°F<br>32.2 - 33.3°C | 87.8 - 89.6°F<br>31.0 - 32.0°C | 84.2 - 86.0°F<br>29.0 - 30.0°C | Contests are permitted with additional hydration breaks. Maximum outdoor practice time is 1 h. No protective equipment may be worn during practice, and there may be no conditioning activities. There must be 20 min of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice.                                                                                                |
| ≥92.1°F<br>≥33.4°C             | ≥89.8°F<br>≥32.1°C             | ≥86.2°F<br>≥30.1°C             | No outdoor workouts/contests. Delay practice/competitions until a cooler WBGT is reached.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

### STEP 3

**Schools without a WBGT should use the link below from the NOAA for a WBGT reading**

<https://digital.mdl.nws.noaa.gov/?zoom=7&lat=35.28787&lon=-79.36779&layers=F000BTTF&region=0&element=8&mzm=true&barbs=false&subl=TTFFF&units=english&wunits=nautical&coords=latlon&tunits=localt>

#### **EXAMPLE @2:30 PM**

AUGUST 31, 2023

##### **CATEGORY 1 SCHOOL**

Outside Air Temp 87<sup>0</sup> F

WBGT Reading =80

AUGUST 31, 2023

##### **CATEGORY 2 SCHOOL**

Outside Air Temp 97<sup>0</sup> F

WBGT Reading =82

AUGUST 31, 2023

##### **CATEGORY 3 SCHOOL**

Outside Air Temp 92<sup>0</sup> F

WBGT Reading =81

#### **CIF Fall Outdoor Sports Acclimatization Policy**

Given the extreme heat issues typically experienced at the start of the Fall sports season, heat acclimatization is crucial for high school athletes to help them adapt to hot weather conditions and reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses. The following is a four-step plan for heat acclimatization in outdoor high school sports:

1. **Gradual Increase in Activity:**

- Start with light workouts in cooler conditions to prepare athletes for increased heat exposure.
- Gradually increase the intensity and duration of practice sessions over 10-14 days.

2. **Hydration Education:**

- Teach athletes the importance of staying hydrated and recognizing signs of dehydration.
- Encourage regular water breaks during practice and games and always provide access to water.

3. **Modify Practice Schedules:**

- Schedule outdoor practices during cooler times, like early morning or late evening.
- Allow frequent breaks and shade to help athletes cool down and recover.

4. **Monitor Athlete Health:**

- Educate coaches, trainers, and athletes on the signs of heat-related illnesses (heat exhaustion and heat stroke).
  - The school will have available a method to institute whole-body cooling to treat a student-athlete with exertional heat illness, especially heat stroke (e.g., ice tub, “taco tarp”, ice towels) which is easily accessible at all practice and contest venues.

Safety should always be the top priority when acclimating high school athletes to hot weather conditions. This plan helps athletes adapt while minimizing the risk of heat-related issues.

#### **For All Outdoor Fall Sports**

**Five-Day Acclimatization Period.** Preseason practice shall begin with a five-day acclimatization period for all Fall student-athletes. All student-athletes, including those who arrive at preseason practice after the first day of practice, are required to undergo a five-day acclimatization period. The five-day acclimatization period shall be conducted as follows:

- (a) Participants shall not engage in more than one on-field practice per day during the five-day acclimatization period. On-field practices shall last no longer than two hours.

#### **For Football Only**

- (b) During the first three days of practice or testing activity, helmets shall be the only protective equipment student-athletes may wear. During the next two days of practice or testing activity, helmets, and shoulder pads shall be the only protective equipment student-athletes may wear. Student-athletes may practice in full pads on the sixth day of practice or testing activity.

## Air Quality and Sport Participation:

### CIF Position Statement Sports Medicine Advisory Committee

|                                                                                    | US AQI Level                           | PM2.5<br>( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) | Health Recommendation<br>(for 24 hour exposure)                                                                             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | Good 0-50                              | 0-12.0                                | Air quality is satisfactory and poses little or no risk.                                                                    |
|   | Moderate 51-100                        | 12.1-35.4                             | Sensitive individuals should avoid outdoor activity as they may experience respiratory symptoms.                            |
|   | Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups 101-150 | 35.5-55.4                             | General public and sensitive individuals in particular are at risk to experience irritation and respiratory problems.       |
|   | Unhealthy 151-200                      | 55.5-150.4                            | Increased likelihood of adverse effects and aggravation to the heart and lungs among general public.                        |
|   | Very Unhealthy 201-300                 | 150.5-250.4                           | General public will be noticeably affected. Sensitive groups should restrict outdoor activities.                            |
|  | Hazardous 301+                         | 250.5+                                | General public at high risk of experiencing strong irritations and adverse health effects. Should avoid outdoor activities. |

*Pictured: Air quality index chart with corresponding PM2.5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .*

Recent catastrophic and historical fires in California continue to raise numerous questions regarding safe participation in sport and practice for young athletes. This position statement serves as a resource to coaches, administrators, parents and students who have questions about participation in outdoor activity during periods of diminished air quality for California high school sport.

Healthy athletes are at increased risk for inhaling pollutants in the air. Physical activity increases ventilation and the number of pollutants that are inhaled are increased compared to periods of rest. During physical activity, air is often inhaled directly into the mouth, bypassing the built-in nasal filtration system. Deep inhalation diffuses pollutants into the bloodstream more quickly during exercise. These risks are increased if an athlete has a pre-existing medical condition such as asthma or a cardiac condition.

A valid and reliable standardized national air quality resource is the National Weather Service (NWS) Air Quality Forecast System. This system provides constant monitoring of ozone, particulate matter and pollutants with accurate and advanced notice to prevent the adverse effects of decreased air quality.

The key component of the standardized air quality resource is the NWS Air Quality Index (AQI). The AQI provides real time monitoring and alerts in response to changing air quality levels. Five different pollutants are tracked in this system including the following: 1) ground level ozone 2) particle pollution 3) carbon monoxide 4) sulfur dioxide 5) nitrogen dioxide. Ground level ozone and particulate matter are the most concerning pollutants for outdoor physical activity. The AQI is reported as a single number based on a

scale of 0 to 500 with 0 being completely safe and 500 indicating the most hazardous levels of air pollution.

Consistent with this national reporting system and consistent with the National Collegiate Athletic Association Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspect of Sport, the CIF Sports Medicine Advisory Committee offers the following general guidance to institutions seeking to make decisions about the appropriateness of practice or competition in questionable air quality situations. With recent severe fires within the state of California, both regional and statewide authorities have often established alerts to cancelling sport events or practices because of local risk. CIF recommends following these guidelines. If specific guidelines have not yet been provided, the following are useful guidelines consistent with NCAA and NFHS position statements on air quality.

- 1) Monitoring of local AQI and associated air quality alerts, especially during times of extreme environmental conditions is recommended. Advice and monitoring is best done by the primary athletics health care providers (athletic trainers, school nursing staff, team physicians) who have training in such monitoring. Schools may choose to delegate this responsibility to a staff member with knowledge of AQI.
- 2) Member schools should consider shortening or cancelling outdoor athletic events (practices or competition) in accordance with AQI recommendations. Exposure to air should be managed more carefully for students with pre-existing lung or heart conditions. When the AQI rises above 100 schools should consider removing such athletes at risk from practice or competition.
- 3) At AQI values above 150 serious consideration should be given to rescheduling the activity or moving it indoors if possible. Prolonged exposure and heavy exertion should be avoided.
- 4) School Emergency Action Plans may guide the emergency care response in these circumstances and the staff should be made aware of this plan.
- 5) The Preparticipation Physical Examination for Sport will be used as a tool to identify students at risk for smoke inhalation exposure such as asthma, cardiac disease and respiratory disease.
- 6) Emphasize to student athletes that the wearing of masks, such as for protection against COVID-19 does not protect against exposure to hazardous air quality. Consequently, wearing masks will not allow competition or practices when AQI is at hazardous levels.

There are now validated online applications to smart phones which can track not only AQI in a town or city, but also AQI regionally near each neighborhood within each town or city. Consistent with NFHS, California Air Quality Board and California Environmental Protection Agency, the CIF recommends using the [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov) application for this purpose. The AQI may even be checked periodically during a day of competition or practice in case of changing conditions. The application was created with the collaboration of the Environmental Protection Agency and contains not only air quality data but also current fire conditions, webcams and email notifications consistent with local and regional up to date conditions.

#### References

- 1) Air Quality Position Statement. NCAA Sports Science Institute, Sept 2018
- 2) NFHS Position Statement on Physical Activity, Air Quality and Wildfires, April 2019
- 3) CIF North Coast Section. Air Quality Index Rules, Bylaw 1003H.
- 4) US Environmental Protection Agency. Air Now website [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)

**UPDATED 10/19/23**