

TCYFCC Cheer Safety Rules

A. Glossary

Base: A person who is in direct contact with the performing surface and is supporting another person's weight.

Basket Toss: A stunt in which a top person is tossed by bases whose hands are interlocked.

Bracer: A top person who stabilizes and/or assists another top person.

Braced Flip: A pyramid in which the top person passes through an inverted position while in contact with bracers.

Cradle: A dismount from a partner stunt, pyramid or toss in which the catch is completed below shoulder height by a base or bases with the top person in a face-up open-pike position.

Cupie/Awesome: A stunt in which both feet of the top person are in one hand of a base.

Dive Roll: A forward roll where the feet leave the ground before the hands reach the ground.

Downward Inversion: A stunt or pyramid in which an inverted top person's center of gravity moves toward the performing surface.

Elevator/Sponge Toss: A stunt in which the top person loads in to an elevator/sponge loading position and is then tossed into the air.

Extended Stunt: A stunt in which the entire body of the top person is extended in an upright position over the base(s). Chairs, torches, flatbacks and straddle lifts are examples of stunts where the bases' arms are extended overhead, but are NOT considered to be extended stunts since the height of the body of the top person is similar to a shoulder level stunt.

Extended Position – A position in which the supporting hand(s) of the base is above the head. (Used to help determine whether certain inversions are legal.)

Hanging Pyramid: A pyramid in which the top person's weight is primarily supported by another top person. Examples of hanging pyramids are: a person being suspended between two shoulder stands; a "whirlybird" stunt where one person's weight is being supported by the legs of a top person in a shoulder sit; and a "diamond head" where two persons are suspended from one shoulder stand.

Helicopter: A stunt in which the top person is tossed into the air in a horizontal position and rotates parallel to the ground in the same motion as a helicopter blade.

Inverted: A body position where the shoulders are below the waist.

Knee Drop: Dropping to the knees without first bearing the majority of the weight on the hands or feet.

Loading Position: Bases support a non-extended top person under the foot/feet in preparation for a stunt or toss.

Log Roll: A top person in a horizontal position or cradle is popped then twists parallel to the performing surface before being caught by the original base(s) in a horizontal position or a cradle.

Pyramid: Connected partner stunts.

Post: A person on the performing surface who may assist a top person during a stunt or transition.

Prop: Any object which can be manipulated or used as a base (ex: poms, signs, flags, megaphones, etc.)

Quick Toss: A toss technique where the top person begins the toss with both feet on the ground. The bases can apply an upward force on any part of the body other than under the feet.

Released Pyramid Transition: A pyramid transition in which the top person is connected to a bracer while being released from their bases before being caught in a cradle, stunt or loading position.

Release Stunt: A transition from one stunt to another stunt (including loading positions) in which the top person becomes free from all bases, posts and spotters.

Spotter: A person who is responsible for assisting or catching the top person in a partner stunt or pyramid.

Stunt/Partner Stunt: One or more persons supporting one or more top persons off of the ground.

Switch Liberty: A stunt in which the top person begins with one foot on the performing surface, is released from the bases, then lands in a stunt on the other foot.

Suspended Roll: A skill in which a person is assisted by bases or posts while performing continuous foot-over-head rotation.

Tension Drop: A dismount from a stunt or pyramid where the top person(s) are directed toward the ground while their feet are held by the base(s) until just before the landing.

Tick-Tock: A stunt that is held in a static position on one leg, the base(s) takes a downward dip and release the top person as the top person switches the weight to the other leg and lands in a static position on the opposite leg. The dip may or may not pass through prep level before release.

Top Person: A person who is not in contact with the performing surface and is being supported or stabilized by another person or has been tossed into the air.

Toss: An airborne stunt where the base(s) executes a throwing motion from below shoulder level to increase the height of the top person and the top person becomes free from all bases, spotters, posts or bracers.

B. General

1. These rules are to be in effect for all practices, games, competitions and other performances.
2. Cheerleading squads should be placed under the direction of a qualified and knowledgeable coach. See Rule 9 – Coaches per TCYFCC Rules
3. All cheerleaders should receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading gymnastics (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps).
4. An appropriate warm-up routine should precede all cheerleading activities.
5. Prior to the performance of any skill, the immediate environment for the activity should be taken into consideration including, but not limited to proximity of non-squad personnel, performance surface, lighting and/or precipitation. Technical skills should not be performed on concrete, asphalt, wet or uneven surfaces or surfaces with obstructions.
6. All jewelry is prohibited during participation. Medical medals are not considered to be jewelry. A medical alert medal must be taped and may be visible.
7. Supports, braces and air casts which are hard and unyielding or have rough edges or surfaces must be appropriately covered. A participant wearing a plaster-type or other hard, heavy cast shall not be involved in stunts, pyramids, tosses, tumbling or spotting.
8. Squad members must wear athletic shoes (no gymnastic slippers).
9. When discarding props (signs, etc.) that are made of solid material or have sharp edges/corners, team members must gently toss or place the props so that they are under control.
10. The use of mini-trampolines, springboards, spring-assisted floors or any other height-increasing apparatus is prohibited for competition or performance.

C. Partner Stunts

1. Partner stunts (free-standing or as part of a pyramid) higher than shoulder stand level must have a separate, continuous spotter for each person over shoulder stand level.
2. A spotter is required for single base shoulder level stunts in which the feet of the top person are in the hand(s) of the base.
3. The bases of any extended stunt must have both feet in direct weight-bearing contact with the performing surface.
4. Bases may not:
 - a. Hold any objects in a hand that is supporting the top person.

b. Assume a backbend, handstand or headstand position.

5. A spotter:

a. Cannot provide primary support for a top person. Primary support means the majority of the top person's weight.

b. Must be in a position to protect the top person's head, neck and shoulders when coming off a stunt or pyramid or landing in a cradle. In most stunts this is behind or beside the top person.

c. Spotters must have their attention focused on the top person. Momentarily looking away in order to assess environmental safety factors (pom poms, signs, another stunt, etc.) is allowed as long as their focus returns to the top person.

d. May not have their hands behind their back.

e. May not support under the heel or sole of the top person's foot in a single based extended stunt. They may hold at the ankle of the top person and/or the wrist of the base or any combination thereof.

f. May not hold any objects in their hands.

6. The total number of twists in a dismount from a stunt cannot be greater than one and one quarter rotations.

7. Partner stunts and pyramids may not pass over, under or through other partner stunts or pyramids.

8. Cradle dismounts from partner stunts or pyramids shoulder height or above to the original base(s) require an additional spotter in position to protect the head, neck and shoulders of the top person.

9. Cradle dismounts from partner stunts to another set of bases must be caught by three bases who are standing near the original base(s). Any type of gymnastics movement (1/2 turn, twist, toe touch, etc) after the top person has left the base(s) hands is prohibited.

10. In all cradle dismounts, the top person cannot hold signs or hard props.

11. Unless listed below, a Release Stunt must either be cradled or connected to at least one bracer.

a. Helicopters are PROHIBITED

b. A log roll is legal provided it does not involve more than one complete rotations and the top person is not in contact with a person in another stunt.

1) In a single-base log roll, the top person must rotate toward the base and begin and end in a face-up position.

2) In a multi-base log roll, the top person may begin and end in a face-up position.

c. A multi-base, free standing tick-tock that begins at shoulder level is permitted.

d. A top person in a horizontal position shoulder height or below or in a cradle may be released to a loading position or stunt shoulder height or below.

12. Non-braced suspended splits in a transition are allowed provided all of the following conditions are met:

a. The top person must have both hands in continuous contact with a post or with both bases' hands or,

b. When transitioning to the split without continuous hand-to-hand contact:

1) There are a total of four bases that support the top person.

2) At least three of the bases must support under the legs of the top person. The fourth base may support under the legs or make contact with the hands of the top person.

3) The top person must have both hands in contact with bases during the split portion of the transition.

13. Extended Straddle Lifts must have an additional spotter for the head and shoulders of the top person (similar position to a Double-Based Elevator/Extension Prep).

14. Single-based stunts in which the top person is parallel to the performing surface and the bases' arms are extended must have a continuous spotter at the head and shoulder of the top person. (i.e. Bird, Side T, Single-Based Flatback, etc.)

15. A top person may be moved from a vertical position to a face up or face down horizontal position (straight body or cradle) provided all the following conditions are met:

a. The top person maintains contact with at least one original base or spotter.

b. At least two catchers and/or bases catch the upper body of the top person.

c. The catchers must be to the side or front of the person(s) moving the top person.

d. When the catchers are not the original bases, they remain close to the original bases and must be in place prior to the movement to the horizontal position.

e. When the catchers are not the original bases and the top person begins or passes through an extended overhead position, at least three catchers are required.

16. A single-base may not be the only primary support for two extended top persons. The exception to this rule is the following:

a. Double Cupies/Awesomes are allowed. If dismounted to cradles, there must be three people for each top person being cradled.

17. Dismounts to the performing surface from shoulder height or above must have assisted landings. If the dismount involves a skill (e.g. toe touch, twist, etc.) the assistance must be from two bases or a base and spotter. This assistance must be sufficient to slow the momentum of the top person.

18. A swinging stunt is legal provided all the following conditions are met:

- a. A downward movement is only allowed from below shoulder height.
- b. The top person is face up.
- c. The top person begins from the performing surface or a stunt that is below shoulder height.

19. Single-based split catches are prohibited.

20. Tension drops are prohibited.

D. Pyramids

Note: In addition to these specific pyramid rules, all persons and stunts involved in a pyramid must follow all rules from the Partner Stunt and Inversion sections.

1. The top person in a pyramid must receive primary support from a base or be connected to a bracer who is on a base.

2. A bracer may not support a majority of a top person's weight.

3. In braced pyramids, at least one bracer of each pair must be at shoulder height or below. The exception to this rule is the following:

a. Extensions (double- or single-based) may brace other extensions.

4. Partner stunts and pyramids may not pass over, under or through other partner stunts or pyramids.

5. If a person in a pyramid is used as a brace for an extended stunt, that brace must not be supporting a majority of the top person's weight. (To demonstrate this, the foot of the top person's braced leg must be at or above the knee of their supporting leg.)

6. Hanging pyramids must have a continuous spotter for each shoulder stand involved in suspending another person. Hanging pyramids are not allowed to rotate.

7. In a Released Pyramid Transition the following rules apply:

a. The top person must have at least two bases. Exception: a single-base tick-tock is permitted provided the top person remains upright.

b. The released top person and bases make no more than a $\frac{1}{4}$ turn around the bracer in a continuous movement in which the top person remains above the original base(s).

c. The top person and all bracers at shoulder level must have a spotter in place during the transition movement. (Shoulder sits and double-based thigh stands do not require an additional spotter.)

- d. The top person must be in hand/arm to hand/arm contact with at least one bracer during the entire transition.
- e. The top person may not be supporting his or her weight on any other body part of the person(s) assisting (i.e. Shoulders of the bracer).
- f. The top person must be continuous in motion and cannot be supported so that they pause during the transition.

For braced inversion pyramids, see E4.

E. Inversions

Note: Inversions are partner stunts or pyramids in which the top person has her or his shoulders below the waist. In addition to the following rules, all persons involved in an inversion must follow all rules from the Partner Stunt and Pyramid sections.

1. Unless allowed under the rules in this section, a top person must not be in an inverted position.
2. A top person may be inverted in partner stunts in which the base of support remains below an extended position provided that:
 - a. In a downward inversion:
 - 1) Two bases (original or new) are in a position to protect the head/neck/shoulder area of the top person.
 - 2) These bases must maintain contact with the top person's upper body (waist or above, including arms) until the top person is no longer inverted.
 - 3) The top person cannot go to an inverted position on the ground from a prep position.
 - b. When a top person is inverted at or passing through shoulder level:
 - 1) At least one base must be in a position to protect the head/neck/shoulder area of the top person.
 - 2) This base must maintain contact with the top person's upper body (waist or above, including arms) until the top person is no longer inverted.
 - 3) An additional spotter must be in a position to protect the head/neck/shoulder area of the top person. This person may assist but is not required to maintain constant contact.
 - c. In all other inversions, including those coming from the performing surface:
 - 1) At least one base or spotter is in a position to protect the head/neck/shoulder area of the top person.

2) This base or spotter must maintain contact with the top person's upper body (waist or above, including arms) until the top person is no longer inverted.

3. Suspended forward and backward rolls/flips are permitted provided all of the following conditions are met:

a. The top person begins on the performing surface or in a stunt shoulder height or below.

b. Two bases or two posts control the top person in suspended forward or backward rolls with continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact to a stunt, two-person cradle, loading position or the performing surface.

Exception: One base or post may control the top person in a suspended forward roll/flip with continuous hand-to-hand contact to a two-person cradle. Each hand of the top person must be in a grip with a hand of the base and vice versa.

c. During the roll/flip, the feet of the top person must be released.

4. Braced forward or backward flips in a pyramid are allowed provided all the following conditions are met:

a. The top person begins in a multi-base loading position, stunt, cradle or on the performing surface.

b. The top person maintains continuous hand-to-hand/arm contact with a bracer on each side. The bracers are in preps with a spotter (no shoulder-stand, shoulder-sit or thigh-stand bracers). The top person is between or in front of the bracers.

c. At least three catchers (one base and two spotters or two bases and one spotter) who were the original bases/spotters catch the top person in a loading position, stunt or cradle, or assist the top person to the performing surface. If the flip ends in a cradle, the bracers may release the top person once she/he begins to descend and is no longer inverted.

d. The top person ends in a non-inverted position.

e. The top person does not perform more than one and one quarter ($1\frac{1}{4}$) flipping rotations and does not twist.

f. The bases/catchers remain stationary except as necessary for safety adjustments.

F. Tosses (including tosses from the performing surface)

1. In all single-based tosses that land in a stunt all of the following rules apply:

a. The top person must land on the original base.

b. The toss may not be directed so that the base must travel to catch the top person.

c. The top person cannot travel over or under another person.

d. The top person cannot be caught in a prone position.

2. In all single-based tosses that land in a loading position or return to the performing surface all of the following rules apply:

a. Must be caught by the original base and a spotter who must be in position to protect the head, neck and shoulders.

b. The toss may not be directed so that the base must travel to catch the top person.

c. The top person cannot travel over or under another person.

d. The top person cannot be caught in a prone position.

3. In all single-based tosses to a cradle all of the following rules apply:

a. Must be caught by at least three catchers that include the original base, one of whom must be at the head and shoulders.

b. The toss may not be directed so that the base must travel to catch the top person.

c. The top person may not hold any objects (pom poms, signs, etc.) during the toss.

d. The top person cannot travel over or under another person.

e. The top person cannot perform any skill (twist, toe touch, ball-up, etc.) during the toss.

4. In all multi-based tosses to a cradle the following rules apply:

a. No more than four tossers are allowed.

b. Must be caught by at least three of the original tossers, one of whom must be at the head and shoulders.

c. The toss may not be directed so that the bases must travel to catch the top person.

d. The top person may not hold any objects (pom poms, signs, etc.) during the toss.

e. The top person cannot travel over or under another person.

f. The total number of twists cannot be greater than one and one quarter rotations.

5. In multi-based tosses that land in a stunt or loading position the following rules apply:

a. The top person must begin with both feet on the ground. The bases can apply an upward force on any part of the body other than under the foot. The exception to this rule is the following:

1) Switch Liberties are allowed.

b. The top person must be caught by at least two of the original tossers and a spotter who must be in position to protect the head, neck and shoulders.

c. The toss may not be directed so that the bases must travel to catch the top person.

d. The maximum distance allowed between the highest point of the base and the lowest point of a top person's body cannot exceed approximately twelve inches.

e. The top person cannot travel over or under another person.

f. The top person cannot be caught in a prone position.

g. The top person may not land in a basket toss loading position.

G. Tumbling and Jumps

1. Dive rolls are prohibited.

2. Flips greater than one rotation are prohibited.

3. Twists greater than one rotation are prohibited.

4. A forward three-quarter flip to the seat or knees is prohibited.

5. Participants may not perform aerial tumbling or rebound over an individual or prop. (Cartwheels, rolls and walkovers with pom poms or over a person are allowed. Back handsprings and tucks with pom poms are prohibited.)

6. Participants may not land in a partner stunt or in a catching position from an aerial tumbling skill. (Example : A back flip from a tumbling pass into a cradle is prohibited, however, rebounding from a back handspring into a cradle is allowed.)

7. Landings for all jumps must bear weight on at least one foot. (Example : A toe touch jump to the seat, knees, or landing with both feet back, or to a push-up position are prohibited.)

8. Knee drops are prohibited.

9. Drops to a prone position on the performing surface from an airborne or handstand position are illegal. (Examples: Landing in a pushup position from a back flip, toe touch, or back handspring are all illegal.)

H. Specific Surface Restrictions

The following skills are only allowed on a mat, grass or rubberized track surface.

1. Basket tosses, sponge tosses and other similar multi-based tosses.
2. Partner stunts in which the base uses only one arm to support the top person.
3. Twisting tumbling skills (Arabians, full twisting layouts, etc.). The exception to this rule is the following:
 - a. Cartwheels, roundoffs and aerial cartwheels are allowed on surfaces other than a mat, grass or rubberized track.

I. Additional Restrictions for Mighty Mites

The following restriction for Mighty Mite teams is in addition to the above rules for high school teams:

1. Basket tosses, and similar multi-based tosses are prohibited.

Copies of these guidelines should be distributed to all squad members and any administrators involved with the cheerleading program. All guidelines should be understood and accepted by all parties involved in the cheerleading program including coaches, assistants, squad members, parents, and administrators.

The above safety guidelines are general in nature and are not intended to cover all circumstances. All cheerleading gymnastics including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified adult coach.

Cheerleading jumps, gymnastics and stunts may involve height and inversion of the body and there is an inherent risk of injury involved with any athletic activity. While the use of these guidelines in coordination with the AACCA Safety Course will help minimize the risk of injury, the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Administrators makes no warranties or representations, either expressed or implied, that the above guidelines will prevent injuries to individual participants.

For more information, visit AACCA.org.