



## **High School STUNT Handbook**

## **What is STUNT?**

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STUNT is an exciting and growing athletic sport derived from the athletic skills most often seen in cheerleading. A sport in its own right, STUNT has its own unique events, competition format and scoring system. Athletes can be recruited from a variety of sources including the more than one million traditional school based cheerleaders, non-school cheerleaders known as “all-star”, and athletes with a background in acrobatics or gymnastics. A team consists of up to 30 athletes that can have various body types and abilities similar to other sports.

In STUNT, teams participate in games made up of four quarters of play; 1) Partner Stunts, 2) Pyramids & Tosses, 3) Group Jumps & Tumbling, and 4) Team Performance. During each quarter, teams perform routines of varying levels of difficulty to demonstrate their technical execution and synchronization at each level. The first three quarters consist of three rounds per quarter, with the team in control of possession determining which routine will be performed and the order of competition. The fourth quarter (Team Performance) will consist of one round, with the team in control of possession determining the order of competition. In the first three quarters, teams will perform routines head-to-head simultaneously against another team on opposite sides of the performance floor. In the fourth quarter, teams will perform consecutively on the entire performance floor.

STUNT routines are developed and published at the beginning of each year by the USA Cheer STUNT Competition Committee, which determines the type and quantity of skills as well as the number of athletes to be involved in each routine.

There are two formats by which STUNT teams compete; STUNT games involving two teams competing head-to-head and STUNT tournaments involving multiple teams, also competing head-to-head. A typical game between two teams will take approximately 45 minutes, with a three team tournament requiring approximately one hour and a four team tournament requiring approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. Using these formats, multiple games can be played during a morning, afternoon, or evening session utilizing one performance floor and facility.

Similar to other sports in which various athletes compete in certain positions, there are individual team positions associated with STUNT referred to as bases, tops, back spots, and tumblers. Through this diversity, and STUNT’s competition format of routines with varying levels of difficulty, advantages exist nationally to recruit athletes from a wide array of skill levels and experience.

In addition to the benefit of games being hosted on campuses, there is also an existing infrastructure of similar competitive events ideally suited to support STUNT’s competition requirements. Many of the needed elements such as suitable facility space, competition floor matting, bleacher seating, qualified judges, and ancillary staffing needs are already in place. Additionally, exposure of STUNT via these other similar competitive events helps promote the sport and its athletes to tens of thousands of potential participants.

## General STUNT Information

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### I. Recommended Personnel

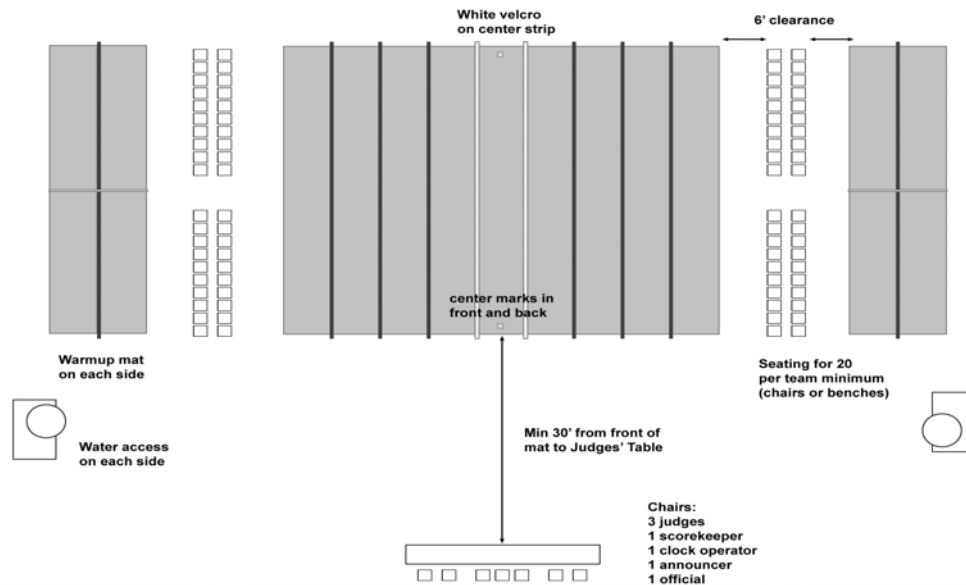
- One head coach, and up to three assistants.
- Maximum of 16 athletes for game play, with a maximum of 24 on a team roster.\*

### II. Season/Postseason

- Recommended as a Spring sport season beginning play in January.
- Postseason play: Regional tournaments can qualify teams for state level final tournament. This tournament can be a multiple-tournament playoff.

### III. Field of Play

- 54 ft x 42 ft area consisting of nine non-spring, carpet bonded, foam mat panels with a minimum 1-3/8 in. thickness, referred to as a competition floor. Each mat panel, 6 ft x 42 ft in size, will be connected along its seams using a 4 in. wide Velcro strip.
- On each side of the mat will be seating for teams and two mat panels for team warm-ups.
- In a two team game, each team will have the entire surface of the 2 mat panels as a team practice area.
- In a three or four team tournament, the 2 mat panels will be divided in half using white Velcro strips, or white athletic tape. Each team will use a practice area that is 12 x 21 in size.



## STUNT Floor Plan

**IV. Equipment:**

- Competition floor and additional mat panels for team practice area
- Scoreboard (projector and screen for multiple team tournament)
- CD Audio and public address sound system
- Team benches
- Necessary table and chairs for staff
- Water stations

**V. Event staffing:**

Staffing needs include the following:

- A minimum of three judges
- One game official
- Scoreboard operator
- Music/audio operator
- Announcer
- Appropriate medical personnel (EMT, medical doctor and/or certified athletic trainer)

**VI. Quarter Routines:**

1<sup>st</sup> Quarter – Partner Stunts

- 6 possible routines of increasing difficulty
- Each routine has 5 complete “8” counts of partner stunt skills
- Routines 1 and 2 require 12 athletes, 3 and 4 require 8, and 5 and 6 requires 4

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter – Pyramids & Tosses

- 6 possible routines of increasing difficulty
- Each routine has 5 complete “8” counts of pyramid and basket toss skills
- All routines require 16 athletes for large division, 12 for small division format

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter – Group Jumps & Tumbling

- 6 possible routines of increasing difficulty (USA Cheer will develop 8 total routines from which state associations can choose which are more appropriate for their state.)
- Each routine has 5 complete “8” counts of group jumps and tumbling skills
- All routines require 7 athletes for large division, 5 for small division format

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter – Team Routine

- 1 unique routine choreographed by each individual team
- 2 minutes and 15 seconds of all music
- Maximum of 16 athletes for large division, 12 for small division format

**VI. Skill Rules:**

STUNT teams must follow the HS STUNT Safety Rules published by AACCA or the NFHS Spirit Rules.

## VII. Definitions:

**Completion of a Round:** Each round in a quarter is considered to be completed once the round is scored and announced.

**Game:** Head-to-head competition between two teams, consisting of four quarters with a halftime in between the second and third quarters.

**Forfeit:** The act of a team choosing to surrender their right to perform the called routine in a round of a quarter. A team who forfeits will receive 0 points for that round. As a result of their forfeit, the team who forfeits will gain default possession and will determine the routine for the following round of that quarter. If a team forfeits the third round of a quarter, they do not gain default possession at the start of the next quarter. **See Scoring section on how forfeits are scored.**

**Halftime:** Ten minute break between the 2nd and 3rd quarters of a game.

**Head-to-Head:** Two teams performing the same routine on opposite sides of the mat simultaneously.

**Neutral Zone:** The center mat or buffer area between teams performing head-to-head. The neutral zone is occupied by the game official and is designated by 4" wide white Velcro strips separating the zone from the adjacent mat panels.

**Playoff:** The period that occurs if two teams are tied for 1<sup>st</sup> place at the end of regulation of a game/tournament. **See Section IX of the Game/Tournament Timeline for playoff rules.**

**Possession:** The team having control of determining the routine to be performed by all teams in the following round. In tournaments, the team with possession will determine the routine and also the order of competition. **See Section XI of the Game/Tournament Timeline for possession rules.**

**Practice Mats:** Two (2) mat panels, each 6' x 42' in size, available to teams for warm-up areas in proximity to their team bench.

**Quarter Break:** Two minute breaks between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2nd quarters, as well as the 3rd and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of play.

**Quarter:** Each of the four (4) skill and components of a game. Each quarter consists of the following diverse components: 1st Quarter - Partner Stunts, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter - Pyramids & Tosses, 3rd Quarter - Quarter-Group Jumps & Tumbling, and 4th Quarter - Team Performance.

**Roster:** List of athletes and coaches on the official STUNT team representing a college or university. A roster may have a maximum of 30 athletes and 4 coaches.

**Round:** A period of time in which the team with possession determines which of the 6 pre-set routines to be performed, all teams perform the called routine, judges rank the teams, and rankings

are announced. There are three rounds in each of Quarters 1, 2 and 3. The 4th quarter, Team Performance, will consist of one round.

**Routine:** Predetermined skill sequences of progressive levels of difficulty set to music. Routines are choreographed and published by USA Cheer STUNT Competition Committee. There are six available routines in each of the first three quarters.

**Routine Call:** Decision of the team with possession as to which routine will be performed in a particular round.

**Skill Sequences:** Predetermined routines for each quarter based on progressive levels. These routines, including the type and number of skills, as well as the number of athletes required in each level, are developed and published annually by the STUNT Competition Committee.

**Team:** The entire team of athletes representing an institution. Each institution may have a maximum of 30 athletes on the STUNT team. All members of the team must be

**Team Performance:** The performance routine each team has choreographed to showcase their skills in each specific skill category. The routine can be a maximum of 2 minutes and 15 seconds and is performed one time in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

**Ties:** A tie occurs when two teams receive the same overall ranking from the judges. When a tie occurs, all teams that receive the same ranking will receive the higher point value. A tie at the end of regulation would result in a playoff between the tying teams.

**Timeouts:** A one minute break during the game in which play stops, signaled by a player or coach and called by the game official. Each team has one timeout per half. During a timeout, all teams may use their practice mats. After one minute passes, play resumes. **See Section X of the Game/Tournament Timeline for Timeout Rules.**

**Tournament:** Head-to-head competition between three (3) or more teams, consisting of four quarters with a halftime in between the second and third quarters.

## **The Game/Tournament Timeline**

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### **I. Pregame**

- **Team Warm-up:** Prior to the game, each team will have ten minutes on the performance area competition floor to warm up skills. Teams may continue to warm-up on their practice mats as needed.
- **Team Introductions:** The announcer will introduce the visiting team(s) followed by the home team.

- **Coin Toss or Draw for Possession:** The initial possession for any game or tournament is determined prior to the start of play through a random drawing by the team head coaches, administered by the game official.
- **National Anthem**

## II. 1st Quarter: Partner Stunts

- The team that wins the pre-game drawing for possession will determine the routine to be performed for the first round of the quarter. For the remaining rounds, the team who wins the preceding rounds gains possession and determines the routine to be performed. In tournaments, the team with possession will determine the routine and also the order of competition.
- In each round of the quarter, teams will perform the chosen routine head-to-head with another team. In tournaments, the first two teams will perform simultaneously, followed by the remaining teams. In three team tournaments, one team will perform alone.
- Teams will have 20 seconds to take the floor in their designated positions. At the official's whistle, the routine's music will begin. Following the routine's end, teams have 10 seconds to clear the floor and return to their benches.
- Following each round, judges will rank teams according to how well the chosen routine was executed. Points will be awarded based on the team rankings. The winning team receives the same number of points as there are teams in the game/tournament. Each successive team receives one less point than the team who ranked above them. For example, in a three team tournament, the team that wins the round receives three points, the second place team receives two points, and the third place team will receive one point. If a team is unable to perform and forfeits a round, they would receive no points for that round.

## III. Quarter Break

- There will be a two minute quarter break between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters.

## IV. Second Quarter: Pyramids & Tosses

- The team with the lowest game score will have possession and determine the routine to be performed for the first round of the second quarter. For the remaining rounds, the team who wins the preceding rounds gains possession and determines the routine to be performed. In tournaments, the team with possession will determine the routine and also the order of competition.
- In each round of the quarter, teams will perform the chosen routine head-to-head with another team. In tournaments, the first two teams will perform simultaneously, followed by the remaining teams. In three team tournaments, one team will perform alone.
- Following each round, judges will rank teams according to how well the chosen routine was executed. Points will be awarded based on the team rankings.

## **V. Halftime**

- There will be a ten minute halftime break between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters.

## **VI. Third Quarter: Group Jumps & Tumbling**

- The team with the lowest game score will have possession and determine the routine to be performed for the first round of the third quarter. For the remaining rounds, the team who wins the preceding rounds gains possession and determines the routine to be performed. In tournaments, the team with possession will determine the routine and also the order of competition.
- In each round of the quarter, teams will perform the chosen routine head-to-head with another team. In tournaments, the first two teams will perform simultaneously, followed by the remaining teams. In three team tournaments, one team will perform alone.
- Following each round, judges will rank teams according to how well the chosen routine was executed. Points will be awarded based on the team rankings.

## **VII. Fourth Quarter: Team Performance**

- The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter will consist of one round of competition.
- The team with the lowest game score entering the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter will have possession and determine the order of competition.
- Once the order of competition has been determined, the play clock begins a thirty second countdown for the first team's required number of athletes to take the floor in their designated positions. At the official's whistle, the routine's music will begin.
- Upon completion of the routine, the performing team will have ten seconds to return to their designated bench area followed by thirty seconds for the next team's required number of athletes to take the floor in their designated positions.
- In the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, the highest ranking team will receive points equal to the number of teams competing multiplied by three. With only 1 round in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, this process allows all quarters to be worth the same amount of points.

## **VIII. Final Score**

- Points are awarded and announced at the conclusion of each quarter with the game total being posted on the event scoreboard. The game/tournament winner will be determined by the team that has accumulated the most total points for the game.

## **IX. Playoff for Final Score Tiebreaker**

- In the event of a tie for 1<sup>st</sup> place at the conclusion of regulation, a playoff will determine the winner of the game/tournament. A coin toss will determine the first possession of overtime. The team who won the pre-game coin toss, or drew the lowest number in the pre-game draw will call the playoff coin toss. The winner of the coin toss will determine the quarter for the 1<sup>st</sup> round in the playoff. Only quarters 1, 2 and 3 are eligible for the playoff period. Routine 1 of the quarter called by the coin toss winner will be performed by both teams. Judges will rank the tying teams. If still a

tie, the coach who did not win the playoff coin toss will determine the quarter for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round in the playoff. Routine 2 in the chosen quarter will be performed by both teams and judges will give rankings. The process continues until there is a clear winner.

#### X. Timeouts

- Each team will have one sixty second timeout per half. Timeouts do not carry over from one half to the next. Timeouts must be signaled by the coach or team member prior to the start of play.
- Timeouts are signaled by displaying the hands in a “T” figuration.
- During timeouts all teams may utilize their warm-up area.

#### XI. Possession

- ***Start of Game***

The initial possession for any game or tournament is determined prior to the start of play through a random drawing by the team head coaches, administered by the game official.

- ***Quarter Change***

The initial possession in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters is given to the team with the lowest overall game score at the end of the preceding quarter.

- ***Second and Third Rounds of Each Quarter***

The team that wins the previous round gains possession for the following round.

- ***Forfeits***

If a team forfeits the round, that team gains default possession for the following round.

- ***Ties***

If there is tie between two teams, making both eligible for possession, possession will go to the team that did not have possession in the round in which they tied.

**Quarter Change** - If neither tying team had possession in that round, possession is determined by the highest point total at that time. If still a tie, possession defaults to the pre-game drawing results.

**Second and Third Rounds of Each Quarter** - If neither tying team had possession in that round, possession defaults to the pre-game drawing results.

#### Scoring

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Quarters 1 – 3:

At the beginning of the season, routines of increasing skill level are distributed to the teams for each of the first three quarters. The routine to be performed is determined by the team with possession. Each team must then perform the routine as it has been set by the competition committee. This removes the subjective “degree of difficulty” from the scoring process.

The three scoring officials each rank the teams based on the number of execution errors that have occurred and the severity of those errors. For example, a minor deduction (marked as a slash “/”) would be assessed for a slight balance error or a timing error between athletes or groups that doesn’t result in a fall. A major deduction (marked as an “X”) would be assessed for an incomplete skill or incorrect body position such as the performance of a single full twist instead of the required double full twist. A double major deduction (XX) would be assessed for a fall to the ground. Each type of error and the appropriate deduction are provided to the scoring officials. Two minor errors are the equivalent of one major error. Skills that are not attempted or have been altered from the scripted routine, such as changing a twisting cradle to a non-twisting cradle, will result in one major deduction per element.

Once all teams have completed the routine, the officials each total the number of deductions and rank the teams in order from first to last. Teams may tie if the number of deductions is equal. The individual scoring official's rankings are combined to determine the final ranking for the round. Points are determined by the number of teams competing. The highest ranked team receives the same number of points as there are teams competing. Each of the remaining teams receives a lower score one point lower according to their rank. Example:

	Official 1 Rank	Official 2 Rank	Official 3 Rank	Total	Final Ranking	Points
Team A	1	1	2	4	1	4
Team B	2	2	1	5	2	3
Team C	3	2	3	8	3	2
Team D	4	4	4	12	4	1

In the event of a tie in the final ranking, each of the tied teams will receive the higher point value. The next team receives the point their ranking position would normally receive. Example:

	Official 1 Rank	Official 2 Rank	Official 3 Rank	Total	Final Ranking	Points
Team A	1	1	1	3	1	4
Team B	2	2	3	7	2	3
Team C	3	2	2	7	2	3
Team D	4	4	4	12	4	1

In the event that a team cannot perform the required routine (due to injury, ability level, etc.) that team forfeits the round and will receive 0 points. If the team with possession is left unchallenged after the opposing team(s) forfeit, then the team with possession must perform the called routine in order to earn the designated point(s). The point(s) awarded will be determined by the judges based on the performing team's execution of the routine. Failure to successfully execute the routine with a minimum level of accuracy could result in zero points awarded. In a multi-team tournament, the judges have the right to award points at any available ranking based on execution of the called routine.

This process repeats in each round for a total of three rounds per quarter in the first three quarters. Quarter 4:

The fourth quarter consists of the team performance where teams create their own routines based on their unique ability level, strengths and talents. This routine will combine the elements of the first three quarters and requires that each of the prior categories must be represented in order to obtain full points.

Each of the scoring officials score the elements according to the to the team's execution by category, taking into account the difficulty of skills performed. The points from each category are added up to give a combined score for the routine. The teams are then ranked by each official according to their scores. Rankings are combined as they are in each of the rounds of the first three quarters to determine the final ranking for this round. Since there is only one round in the fourth quarter, the round score is multiplied by three in order to have equal balance between quarters.

Final Scores:

The final scores are determined by the combined scores from each of the four quarters. The winner is the team with the most points at the end of the game.

## Modifications by State

USA Cheer recognizes that the ability level and the number of available athletes at different institutions will vary by state and region.

The STUNT structure outlined in this handbook is for teams with a maximum of 16 participants (large division) and for teams with a maximum of 12 participants (small division).

Different locales may modify the routine requirements and number of athletes required to participate in order to provide fair competition and increased participation. USA Cheer is available to assist locales with these modifications.

State associations may choose to associate these team sizes with their own classifications, such as small division format for Class A/AA and large division format for Class AAA/AAAA. If a smaller size is needed, modifications can be made such as only using one stunt group for each partner stunt routine and eliminating the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of pyramids which will result in a game consisting of 3 periods instead of 4 quarters.