



# 2007 – 2008 AACCA College Cheerleading Safety Rules



*Note: See “Section G” for specific basketball/indoor restrictions.  
Revisions from 2006-07 are in **bold text**.*

## **Section A - General Program Guidelines**

1. Cheerleading squads should be placed under the direction of a qualified and knowledgeable advisor or coach.
2. All practice sessions should be supervised by the advisor/coach and held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders (e.g., use of appropriate matting, away from excessive noise and distractions, etc.)
3. 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.
4. Advisors/coaches should recognize the particular ability level of all participants and should limit the squad's activities accordingly. Participants should not be pressed to perform activities until they are safely prepared.
5. Skills that have not been mastered should be performed only in a supervised practice environment.
6. Thorough training in proper spotting techniques should be mandatory for all squads.
7. All cheerleaders should receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading gymnastics (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps).
8. All cheerleading squads should adopt a comprehensive conditioning and strength building program.
9. A structured stretching exercise and flexibility routine should precede and follow all cheerleading activities.
10. All programs should qualify cheerleaders according to accepted teaching progressions. Appropriate spotting should be used until all performers demonstrate mastery of the skill, and when spotting is required by specific rule.
11. In environments where there is close proximity to the athletic event and “out of bounds” plays pose a significant risk of injury to the participant, no technical skills should be performed while the ball is in play.
12. All partner stunts, pyramids, and basket tosses should be reviewed and approved by the coach prior to execution.

## **Section B - General Restrictions**

1. The use of any height-increasing apparatus (e.g. mini-trampoline, etc.) other than a spring floor is prohibited for performance.
2. The top person in a partner stunt, pyramid or transition cannot be released from bases with the intent to land or be caught in an inverted body position.
3. An individual may not jump, flip or dive over, under, or through partner stunts, pyramids or individuals from basket tosses, similar tosses, partner stunts or other tosses from hands.
4. Drops (knee, seat, thigh, front, back and split) from a jump, stand or inverted position are prohibited unless the majority of the weight is first borne on the hands/feet which breaks the impact of the drop.
5. Jewelry of any kind is prohibited (e.g., navel jewelry, tongue jewelry, earrings, necklaces, etc.) Medical bracelets are allowed provided they are taped to the body.
6. Soft-soled athletic shoes must be worn while cheering or competing. Gymnastics shoes, jazz shoes and/or boots are prohibited.
7. Basket and elevator/sponge tosses are prohibited on surfaces other than grass (real or artificial) or a mat.
8. Flipping skills into or from stunts, tosses or pyramids are prohibited on surfaces other than grass (real or artificial) or a mat.
9. Two and one half high pyramids are prohibited on surfaces other than grass (real or artificial) or a mat.

## Section C - Partner Stunts

1. Twisting dismounts with more than a 360 degree rotation require an additional spotter that assists on the cradle.
2. Stunts in which the base uses only one arm for support require a spotter when:
  - a. the stunt is anything other than a cupie/awesome or basic liberty. All other one-arm stunts require a spotter (e.g., heel stretch, arabesque, high torch, scorpion, bow and arrow, etc.).
  - b. the load-in or dismount involves a twist. The spotter must be in place during the twist and assist on the cradle during twisting dismounts.
  - c. the top person is popped from one arm to the other.
3. Single based split catches are prohibited.
4. Flips into or from partner stunts are prohibited, with the following exceptions (These exceptions are limited to one flip and require an additional spotter **who assists with the cradle.**):
  - a. Rewinds (no twisting allowed.)
  - b. Front flip dismounts from shoulder height **or below** to a cradle.
  - c. Back flip dismounts from shoulder height double based stunts to a cradle.
5. Leg pitch, toe pitch, walk-in, sponge, and straddle catch front and back flips are prohibited.
6. Twisting dismounts greater than two rotations are prohibited. Exception: side facing stunts - i.e. Arabesque, Scorpion, double full twisting cradles to the front are legal.
7. Front, back and side tension drops are prohibited.

## Section D - Pyramids

1. Pyramids higher than 2 ½ body lengths are prohibited. Pyramid height is measured by body lengths as follows: chairs, thigh stands and shoulder straddles are 1½ body lengths; shoulder stands are 2 body lengths; extended stunts (i.e. extension, liberty, etc.) are 2½ body lengths. Exception: an extended stunt on top of a thigh stand is allowed.
2. In all pyramids, there must be at least two spotters designated for each person who is above “two persons high” and whose primary support does not have at least one foot on the ground. One of the spotters must be in the back and the other **must** be at the side or in front of the pyramid to spot the front. **Once the pyramid shows adequate stability and just prior to the dismount**, this spotter can move to the back to catch the cradle.
3. Cradles from pyramids over two high must use at least two catchers.
4. Toe touch and twisting dismounts off of pyramids two high or above must use three catchers.
5. All flips into or from pyramids are prohibited, with the exception of a forward flip dismount to a cradle **and legal rewinds (see definitions).**
6. Front, back and side tension drops are prohibited.

## Section E - Tosses

1. Basket and elevator/sponge tosses may only be performed from ground level, can use no more than four bases, and must be cradled by three of the original bases, one of which must catch in a “scoop” under the head and shoulders.
2. Basket and elevator/sponge tosses may not be directed so that the bases must move to catch the top person.
3. Basket and elevator/sponge tosses cannot exceed one flipping and two twisting rotations.
4. In flipping basket or elevator/sponge tosses (tuck, layout, or pike position) only two additional skills are allowed. One twisting rotation is considered to be one skill. Examples:

<u>Legal (two skills)</u>	<u>Illegal (three skills)</u>
Tuck flip, X-out, Full Twist	Tuck flip, X-out, Double Full Twist
Double Full-twisting Layout	Kick, Double Full-twisting Layout
Kick, Full-twisting Layout	Kick, Full-twisting Layout, Kick
Pike, Open, Double Full Twist	Pike, Split, Double Full Twist
Arabian Front, Full twist	Full-twisting Layout, Split, Full Twist

Note: An Arabian Front followed by a 1 ½ twist is considered to be a legal skill.
5. Basket and elevator/sponge load-ins can land in a stunt or pyramid provided that the toss does not significantly exceed the height of the intended skill. Flips into stunts or pyramids from a basket or elevator/sponge load-in are prohibited.

## Section F - Tumbling

1. Tumbling skills performed over, under or through partner stunts, pyramids or individuals are prohibited.
2. Tumbling skills that exceed one flipping rotation are prohibited.
3. Tumbling skills with two or more twisting rotations are prohibited.
4. Dive rolls are prohibited.

## Section G – Specific Basketball/Indoor Court Rules

1. The following skills are prohibited at basketball and other athletic contests conducted on courts:
  - a. Basket tosses, elevator/sponge tosses and other similar multibased tosses.
  - b. Partner stunts in which the base uses only one arm to support the top person.
  - c. Flips or **released** twists into or from partner stunts.
  - d. Two and one half person high pyramids.
  - e. **Inversions in partner stunts and pyramids.**
  - f. Twisting tumbling skills.

The only exception to the above rule is during halftime or postgame performances where the area is free of obstructions and non-cheer personnel, and all skills are performed on a matted surface. Pregame and timeouts are not exceptions to this rule and are subject to the listed restrictions.

## Section H - Glossary

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

**Top** – A person who is either being supported by another while off of the performing surface or who has been tossed into the air by another person.

**Middle** – A person who is being supported by a base while also supporting a top person.

**Toss** – A movement by one or a group of participant that propels a person into the air so that the person is airborne (i.e., free of contact with the performing surface).

**Stunt** - A skill in which a top person is supported by a base or bases.

**Pyramid** – A skill in which a top person is being supported by a middle layer person.

**Flip** – When a person is airborne while the feet pass over the head.

**Dive Roll** - A forward roll wherein the performer is airborne prior to the beginning of the forward roll.

**Cradle** – Dismount from a stunt/pyramid/toss in which the top person lands in a face-up, semi-piked position.

**Helicopter Toss** – A stunt in which the top person is tossed into the air with the body parallel to the ground and completes a 360 degree horizontal rotation (like the blades of a helicopter.)

**Rewind** - Skill in which the top person starts with BOTH FEET on the ground, is tossed into the air and performs a backward or side rotation into a stunt, **pyramid** or loading position (**this would include a cradle**). Flips are limited to one rotation **into a pyramid, stunt or loading position and one and one quarter rotations into a flatback or cradle** and cannot twist.

**Loading Position** – Any intermediate position below shoulder level that uses continuous motion to put a top person in a stunt or pyramid. Examples: Elevator/sponge load, basket load, smooch, scoop from the back, etc.

**Flatback** – A stunt in which the top person is in a face-up, straight-body position parallel to the performing surface.

**Height-increasing Apparatus** – Any type of equipment that increases the height of a skill

*The above safety rules are general in nature and are not intended to cover all circumstances. All cheerleading gymnastics, including tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, jumps and tosses should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified and knowledgeable advisor or coach. 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 the most recent safety rules and information, visit <http://www.aacca.org>.*