

2026 OPEN ENTRY BOOK

CHEERLEADING COMPETITION



INDIANA
STATE FAIR

CHEERLEADING COMPETITION

2026 ENTRY BOOK

Entry Department

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Terms and Conditions for Cheerleading Competition



Tim Phelps
Indiana State Fair Board

Coordinator: Tammy Bauchert, cheerleading@indianastatefair.com

1. **Date and Time of Contest:** The 2026 Indiana State Fair Cheerleading Competition will be held on **Saturday, August 8, 2026** beginning at 9:30am EST in the Hoosier Lottery Grandstand on the track at the Indiana State Fairgrounds & Event Center.
2. Only one competition session will be held per division. Scores received during each contest division will determine team placement for that division. The competition will be held on the track level with mats.
3. The Indiana State Fair Cheerleading Competition is open to Indiana junior high/middle school or high school game-cheering squads. (A game-cheering squad is one that cheers in actual game situations.)
4. Each participant, male or female, must be currently enrolled in an Indiana junior high/middle school or high school and must be a member in good standing of the competing game-cheering squad.
5. Squad members graduating from high school in 2027 or after are eligible to compete; 2026 graduates are not eligible.
6. An Indiana school may enter its varsity, junior varsity or junior high/middle school squads in the competition. Teams may enter only ONE traditional category for competition with the same team members. Teams may enter the second basketball time out division with the same cheerleaders on the traditional team or new team members.
7. The eligibility of all participants must be certified by the cheerleader coach and high school principal or athletic director, both of whom must sign the official entry form.
8. Junior varsity and varsity squads **MAY NOT COMPETE TOGETHER** in the traditional category. High school teams may compete together for the basketball time out division.
9. Freshman squads that are selected by their high school as freshman and/or junior varsity squads may compete in the junior varsity competition. Junior varsity squads may include teams selected by their school as freshman squads and/or junior varsity squads. A junior varsity squad may not include varsity team members.
10. 6th, 7th & 8th grade squads may compete separately or may be combined in the junior high/middle school division.
11. All spotters must be members of the competing game-cheering squad.
12. Any violation of eligibility Terms and Conditions will result in disqualification. If any violation of the Terms and Conditions of the 2026 Cheerleading Competition is observed, a school's coach or adult designee must file a written protest with the Cheerleading Competition Coordinator the day of the competition prior to the presentation of awards. The final decision on any written protest will be made by the Indiana State Fair Executive Director or their designee.
13. **Organization of Competition:** The order of performance for all squads will be determined by a draw. All squads will be advised of their appearance order and approximate performance time one week prior to the competition.
14. Cheerleaders and coaches only will be admitted to the Indiana State Fairgrounds free of charge for the Cheerleading Competition. In order to receive parking vouchers, cheer coaches must provide on the competition entry the accurate number of vehicles that will transport the squad(s) to the competition.
15. **Performance:**

Contest Division I: Choose One	Additional Contest Division II: Add to Division I or Compete ONLY in this Division II
A) Non-Music Routine -2 min junior high/JV/Varsity	Basketball Time Out-
B) Music Routine -2 min 30 sec (music not to exceed 1 min 45 sec) Varsity	A) Junior High
C) No Music/No Tumbling/Open Division -No tumbling-2 min junior high/JV/Varsity	B) High School
	Routines-1 minutes for a basketball time out. Add additional 15 seconds to leave the contest mat at the buzzer.
	Follow the score sheets
Follow the score sheets	

16. Participating teams performing with music are required to complete the **Music Copyright Compliance Form** stating that all copyright requirements were met prior to you obtaining your music from your producer. Forms can be downloaded from the Indiana State Fair website at <https://www.indianastatefair.com/state-fair/competitionscontests/competitive-events/> **Music Copyright Compliance Forms are due by July 27, 2026 and should be submitted to Cheerleading@indianastatefair.com.**
17. The announcer will tell the squad for the traditional routines they may take the mat. Once they are on the mat, the announcer will say, "You may begin." The timing begins with the first word or motion after the "you may begin" directive. Timing ends when one member of the squad signals by a wave to the judges that the routine done. The squad may then exit the matted area. For the basketball time out the announcer will say "You may begin" to enter the matted area, a buzzer will sound at one minute to exit the mat within 15 seconds.
18. The performance area for all categories will be matted with nine (9) cheer/tumbling mats for safety. Any squad going out of bounds off the designated performance area (mats) will receive ten (5) penalty points with exception of basketball time out-may place props off matted area and immediately return to contest mats.
19. Each participant must compete in the appropriate uniform of his/her school.
20. Jewelry should not be worn during the performances. Follow NFHS Spirit rules for 2026.
21. Pom-poms, megaphones, and signs (no flags) are the only props permitted for the traditional competition categories. Basketball time-out division may use megaphones, poms, signs, and flags within the matted competition area.
22. Applicable safety rules will be enforced in this competition. We will be following the **2026 National Federation of State High School Associations Spirit Rules Book**. It is the coach's responsibility to abide by these rules.
23. **Judging:** Indiana State Fair contest score sheets will be used for the cheerleading completion. There will be three certified judges for each division. Each judge will score all areas of the competition. The combined total of all three judges respectively will determine the top squads.
24. In addition, two penalty/**technical** judges will be seated with the other judges and will score all penalties for NFHS rules. The penalty/**technical** judges will record penalty points on one penalty sheet for each squad. Any penalty points will be deducted from a squad's combined total score. A point deduction form will also be used in judging each team.
25. Ties in all divisions will be reviewed and broken by all three judges.
26. **Presentation of Awards:** All trophies will be awarded at the conclusion of the Large Varsity with Music division at approximately 3:00 pm, pending the total number of contest entries. Award prize money for top 4 teams in each division will be mailed to the schools by mid October 2026. At the end of the Fair, a complete list of finishers and their points for all squads in the competition will be available to all cheer coaches whose squads participated in the competition.
27. **Videotaping:** Videotaping of the competition will be allowed. Attendees may videotape from their seats in the Grandstand, but please use courtesy while taping.
28. **Inclement Weather:** Indiana School for the Deaf_(Indianapolis, IN) has been secured as the alternate, indoor competition location in the event of an inclement weather forecast. Monitoring the forecast, a decision will be made by 12pm EST on Friday, August 7, 2026 whether to move the event indoors. Squad coaches will be notified by email shortly after Noon on August 7, 2026. In the event of inclement weather on the date of the event (Saturday, August 8, 2026) with the Competition remaining on the Fairgrounds, all attempts will be made to hold the contest.

Cheerleading Competition Entry Information



1. All entries must be made in accordance with the terms and conditions.
2. **Online Entry** - To enter the Indiana State Fair, please go to <https://exhibitorscorner.indianastatefair.com/> and enter online. Each exhibitor/squad is required to pay an entry fee at the time of entry. An exhibitor /squad will not be considered entered the Indiana State Fair until payment is made in full. Payment can be made online with a valid credit card. Entry fee will cover Fair admission for all participants (see number 12). Entries will not be accepted over the phone.
 - a. If the Cheerleading Coach has access to and approval to use the school credit card: Complete the online entry, proceed through “checkout,” enter the card information and complete the online entry process.
 - b. If the Cheerleading Coach does NOT have access to or approval to use the school credit card: Complete the online entry to the point of “checkout”. Leave the registration in the “cart” but do not pay. The registration will remain in the Indiana State Fair Entry system, incomplete. Coaches must MAIL the entry fee, paid by school check, made payable to: Indiana State Fair Cheerleading Competition. Upon receipt by the ISF Entry Department, the Cheerleading Coach will receive an email when the registration has been updated and deemed “complete”. **Entry fee checks postmarked after July 26, 2026 will not be accepted.**
3. **Entry Deadlines and Fees** - see below.

Enter between	Enter Between
May 1, 2026 - July 1, 2026	July 2, 2026 - July 26, 2026
Department Fee: \$50	Department Fee: \$100
Second Category Fee: \$25	Second Category Fee: \$50
4. As part of the online entry, the Cheerleading Coach will be asked to submit their School Principal's name and email address. By completing the online registration, the School Principal will be sent an email notification letting him/her know the squad(s) entered the 2026 Indiana State Fair Cheerleading Competition.
5. **Music Compliance Forms** after July 31, 2026 will not be accepted.
6. Entry questions? Call 317-927-7515

Projected Schedule

- Times approximate depending upon number of entries-please arrive AT LEAST 45 minutes to warm-up time.
- Score sheets for divisions located on Indiana State Fair Entry page

Date	Time	Description	Location
Saturday, August 8	9:30am	Junior High/Middle School/Junior Varsity Traditional Routine & Junior High Basketball Time Out (These will alternate.)	Hoosier Lottery Grandstand
	11:00am	Small Varsity/Large Varsity Traditional Routine NO Music (These will alternate)	
	12:00pm	Open High School Division (Grades 9-12) Traditional Routine NO Music/No Tumbling [cheer/chant/jumps/stunts/pyramids-Max 20 team members]	
	1:00pm	Small Varsity/Large Varsity Traditional Routine WITH Music. (These will alternate)	
	2:00pm	High School Basketball Time Out Division	
	3:00pm	Announcement of all Division Winners. <i>The top 4 in each division will receive awards</i>	

Awards

Description	Awards	Premiums
Large Varsity No Music/Large Varsity with Music (squads of 13 and over)	1 st -4 th place trophies	\$300-250-200-150
Small Varsity No Music/Small Varsity with Music (squads of 12 and under)	1 st -4 th place trophies	\$300-250-200-150
Junior Varsity	1 st -4 th place trophies	\$300-250-200-150
Junior High / Middle School	1 st -4 th place trophies	\$300-250-200-150
Open High School Division No Music/No Tumbling (Grades 9-12), cheer/chant/jumps/stunts/pyramids-Maximum 20 team members	1 st -4 th place trophies	\$300-250-200-150
Junior High Basketball Spirit Time Out	1 st -4 th place spirit plaques	\$300-250-200-150
High School Basketball Spirit Time Out	1 st -4 th place spirit plaques	\$300-250-200-150

All emergencies, safety concerns and suspicious activity should be reported immediately to the Indiana State Fair Operations Center at (317) 927-7520.

Prohibited Items

1. No alcoholic beverages may be brought on to the Fairgrounds during the annual Indiana State Fair.
2. No person in possession of a deadly weapon shall be permitted onto or be permitted to remain on the Fairgrounds, unless that person can demonstrate that the deadly weapon is intended for sale or trade at an event that is taking place on the Fairgrounds (Indiana Administrative Code, Title 80, Section 11-2-2(b)).
 - a. The definition of a deadly weapon includes firearms, knives or sharp bladed items (regardless of blade length), or any object carried or possessed with the intent to be used as a deadly weapon.
 - b. Exhibitors will be permitted to carry and use knives and other tools necessary for the proper care of their animals, tack, and equipment. However, these items may only be carried within the confines of the barn in which the animal(s) is housed. Knives and other tools carried outside of the barn are subject to confiscation under the deadly weapon rules found in the Indiana Administrative Code, Title 80, Section 11-2-2.
3. Any deadly weapon found in the possession of a person while on the Fairgrounds is subject to immediate confiscation by persons authorized to provide security protection services as well as city, county, and state police agencies. Federal, state, or local law enforcement officers or those employed or authorized by the Indiana State Fair Commission are excepted from this rule (Indiana Administrative Code, Title 80, Section 11-2-2 (a), (c), and Section 11-2-3 CI) and (2)).
4. Any person properly licensed to carry a firearm must secure the firearm in a locked compartment of his/her vehicle and it shall not be visible to passersby (Indiana Administrative Code, Title 80, Section 11-2-2(d)).
5. No generators (not attached to a working/in transit RV/trailer/living quarters) or animal scales are permitted on the Fairgrounds except those furnished by the State Fair.

Animal Policies & Procedures

6. The only animals permitted on the Fairgrounds during the Indiana State Fair are animals registered, boarded or entered for exhibition, show or other competition; animals that will be used in a scheduled performance or to perform work at the Fair; law enforcement animals and service animals. Household and family pets, whether domestic or wild, and service animals not recognized by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Section 36.104 are not permitted on the Fairgrounds during the Indiana State Fair. No person in possession of or having control over an unauthorized animal shall be permitted onto or be permitted to remain on the Fairgrounds (Indiana Administrative Code, Title 80, Section 11-2-4).
7. Animals entered for exhibition, show or competition and animals scheduled to perform must remain in approved areas at all times. Violation may be disqualifiable offenses. See individual department terms and conditions for more specific information.

General Safety Policies & Procedures

8. Smoking is not permitted inside barns and buildings. Smoking is only permitted in designated areas on the Fairgrounds.
9. Cameras are located throughout the Fairgrounds for security and promotional purposes.
10. Motorized vehicles, including golf carts, are not permitted in any barns or buildings (IFC 313.1). This does not apply to personal mobility devices. A valid State issued driver's license is required to operate a motorized vehicle including a golf cart on the Fairgrounds.
11. Fans are permitted, so long as they have safety-approved shrouds. See individual department requirements pertaining to size, allowable number, and placement of fans.

Tents, Canopies, & Stall Coverings

- Any tent, canopy, or stall covering in a building must be made of a material to allow for or not block water distribution as well as meet or exceed NFPA Standard 701.
- A portable fire extinguisher must be located under each tent, canopy, or covering. Fire extinguishers mounted in the building by the ISFC do not apply. Exhibitors must have their own fire extinguisher under each tent, canopy, or covering.

Fire Safety

- The Indiana State Fire Marshal's Office conducts regular inspections of all barns and buildings during the Indiana State Fair to identify any potential fire hazards or threats to life safety. The decisions of the fire marshal are final and will be enforced.
- Fire extinguishers are located throughout every barn and building. They may be used for approved purposes only. Do not use a fire extinguisher if you are not trained on its proper use.
- Most buildings and barns are equipped with fire alarm and/or fire suppression systems. In the event of a fire, these systems should be activated.
- Emergency exits are clearly marked in all barns and buildings. In the event of an emergency, calmly evacuate through the nearest accessible emergency exit.
- Do not store tack/supplies in primary aisles, in front of exit doors, or in/under stairwells.

Severe Weather

- In the event of severe weather impacting the Fairgrounds, be it a severe thunderstorm or tornado, you may receive instructions over the barn or building public address system. If the barn or building is not equipped with a public-address system, State Fair staff will notify people in person.
- During a severe weather situation, you will be asked to remain inside, away from windows and doors whenever possible. Staff may be instructed to close all doors and windows, including overhead doors.
- Larger barns and buildings will be used for shelter-in-place (points of refuge) to allow Fairgoers to seek shelter. This may cause an influx of people into livestock areas and result in the postponement of a show or exhibition. Exhibitors should be mindful of this, keep aisles and walkways clear, and tend to their animals accordingly.

Food Preparation/Cooking Policies & Procedures

- Cooking inside and adjacent to barns and buildings is not advised. The Indiana State Fair Biosecurity plan recommends that food be excluded from animal areas. If cooking and/or food preparation is necessary, the following policies and procedures must be followed:
 - All grills and flat-top cook surfaces that are powered by gas, charcoal, or other fuel are prohibited on the Fairgrounds. Only electric-powered cooking devices are allowed. **Any cooking device with an open flame is prohibited.**
 - Approved cooking devices are limited to crockpots, or similar slow cookers, and microwave ovens. Cooking devices must have a cover approved for use with the device and comply with all applicable electrical and fire codes. Cooking devices are also required to be powered by approved cords that are not frayed or malfunctioning in any way.
 - Exhibitors cooking in the barns and buildings do so at their own risk and assume all liability for their actions concerning food contamination from pathogens that may be present in or near a livestock area.

Extension Cords

- Extension Cords shall not be a substitute for permanent wiring. IFC 2012 (605.4.1) Extension Cords shall not be affixed to structures. IFC 2012 (605.5)
- Extension Cords shall not extend through walls, ceilings, doorways, or floors. IFC 2012 (605.5) Extension Cords shall not be buried under carpet or animal bedding.

Multi-plug Adapter/Power Strip

- Multi-plug adapter(s) are prohibited. IFC 2012 (605.4)
- Power strip(s) shall be grounded and be equipped with overcurrent protection. IFC 2012 (605.4.1) Power strip shall be directly connected to an electrical outlet (no piggy-backing). IFC 2012 (605.4.2) Power strip cords shall not extend through walls, ceilings, doorways, or floors. IFC 2012 (605.4.3)

Animal Wellness & Care

The Animal Wellness & Care Plan (AWAC) was established to reinforce the Indiana State Fair's commitment and belief in the proper treatment of all animals in exhibition. The Indiana State Fair holds exhibitors of the various species of animals being exhibited to the highest standards in wellness, care and ethics of exhibition. The AWAC is responsible for ensuring the most up to date standards as well as to be a source for the public to seek answers to their questions relating to the health and safety of the animals involved in the Indiana State Fair. Failure or refusal by an exhibitor or fairgoer to comply with the Animal Wellness & Care Plan can result in penalties up to and including but not limited to removal and a ban from the Fairgrounds for the duration of the event.

Biosecurity

The Indiana State Fair Biosecurity Plan was developed to prevent the outbreak of diseases carried by both animals and humans that spread pathogens that can be transmitted to and from farm animals, as well as through the food supply. Many diseases and pathogens can be prevented through maintaining the cleanliness of facilities and encouraging good hygiene. The Biosecurity Plan will be enforced during the Indiana State Fair and all exhibitors are expected to carryout and preform basic biosecurity and hygienic task including:

- Hand Washing/sanitizing following exposure to animals and always before consuming food or drinks
- Excluding human food and food preparation from animal areas
- Maintaining general cleanliness of animals and animal areas
- Properly disposing of animal waste/soiled bedding in properly identified/designated areas
- Cleaning-up after your animal if it soils/has a biological event in a building/Fair common space
- Reporting the appearance or evidence of animal/human sickness or distress to Fair officials

Failure or refusal to comply with the above can result in penalties up to and including but not limited to removal and a ban from the Fairgrounds for the duration of the event.

The Indiana State Fair is committed to providing opportunities for all 4-H participants to show their animals as part of the State Fair. The State Fair also wants to ensure the integrity of its 4-H competitions as is evidenced by the various terms and conditions set forth in this Entry Book, including its policy with respect to testing for unauthorized substances in certain animals that are entered into these competitions and the penalties associated with positive results. By entering into these competitions, you agree to these terms and conditions and as such, we strongly recommend that you read this information carefully prior to submitting your entry.