



# **SWISS CHEER ASSOCIATION**

## **SWISS CHEER OPEN COMPETITION RULEBOOK 2027**

Version as of August 2026



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# 1 General

## 1.1 Participation Requirements

The following rules and regulations apply to competitions and championships held or supported by the Swiss Cheer Association (SCA).

1. All teams have to designate one official contact person throughout the competition.
2. The registration for the Swiss Cheerleading Championship has to be made in the official SCA registration tool.
3. The team registration and all athletes registration has to be entered by the communicated deadline before the respective competition.
4. The definitive list of participants including substitutes has to be submitted by the communicated deadline before the respective competition in the registration tool. Additional registration for individuals whose team has already registered is possible up to 7 days before the start of the respective competition. Additional fees apply for late registration.
5. The list for coaches, mascots and supervisors (list of accompanying people) has to be submitted at the latest until the communicated deadline before the respective competition. Teams can be accompanied by 2 coaches and 3 supervisors. In double and stunt categories there can be 1 coach or 1 supervisor. For all coaches, mascots, supervisors and helping staff it is mandatory that they bring a special excerpt from the criminal records that is no older than two years to ensure the safety of all athletes.
6. By registering for a competition, teams acknowledge that the respective registration fees for the competition must be paid to the SCA or the organizer responsible. If the total amount of registration due has not been paid, the SCA or the organizer responsible may ban the team from starting at the competition.
7. There is no right for a refund of registration fees.
8. Participation in SCA championships is at every athlete's own risk, including liability for accidents and third-party liabilities. If an athlete is underage, and causes injury to others (including athletes or spectators) or is injured themselves, the legal guardians will be held liable.
9. Personal Data Protection: All teams must comply with all data protection principles, including acquiring the consent of each member of a team they register at any SCA Championships for the transfer of their data to SCA and the event organizer as third parties for the purposes necessary for event registration.



## 1.2 Number of Participants

### Cheerleading

| Division                        | Number of athletes |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Team divisions (all categories) | 8-24               |
| Group Stunt divisions           | 3-5                |
| Partner Stunt divisions         | 2                  |

In Coed divisions at least one (1) male athlete must be participating on the team. No male athletes are allowed in All Girl divisions. In the Primary, Mini and Tiny divisions there are no number restrictions for male contestants.

#### Substitutes

- **Cheerleading Team divisions:** up to 5 substitutes per team.
- **Group Stunt divisions:** up to 2 substitutes per team.
- **Coed Partner Stunt division:** up to 2 substitutes per couple (if 2 substitutes are registered then there must be one male and one female athlete).

#### Entourage

- **Team divisions:** up to a total of 5 people per team: coaches, team helpers or other accompanying people (this number includes people responsible for playing the music and media representatives).
- **Group & Partner Stunt divisions:** up to 2 coaches or accompanying people per team.

### Performance Cheer

The following divisions with number of athletes exist for Performance Cheer:

| Division                                   | Number of athletes |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Team Performance Cheer (all categories)    | 6-24               |
| Doubles Performance Cheer (all categories) | 2                  |

Males and females are allowed to participate on the same team.

#### Substitutes

- **Performance Cheer Team divisions:** up to 5 substitutes per team.
- **Doubles Performance Cheer divisions:** one substitute per team.



## Entourage

- **Team divisions:** up to a total of 5 persons per team: coaches, team helpers or other accompanying persons (this number includes persons responsible for playing the music and media representatives).
- **Doubles Performance Cheer divisions:** up to 2 coaches or accompanying persons per team.

## 1.3 Age Groups

The age of athlete is considered as the age that athlete will become in the calendar year of the competition. Any team proven to be in violation of age requirements will be automatically disqualified.

This season the age groups will adapt to the international age levels from the International Cheer Union and the European Cheer Union.

The age groups for Cheerleading will be the following:

| Age Group   | Age Criteria          | Birth years<br>(for 2027) | Level 6<br>(Premier) | Level 5<br>(Elite) | Level 4<br>(Advanced) | Level 3<br>(Median) | Level 2<br>(Intermediate) | Level 1<br>(Novice) | Level 0<br>(Beginner) |
|-------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Masters     | 30 years+             | 1997 or before            | x                    | x                  | x                     | x                   | x                         | x                   | x                     |
| Senior      | 16 years+             | 2011 or before            | x                    | x                  | x                     | x                   | x                         | x                   | X                     |
| Junior      | 15-18 years           | 2008-2012                 |                      | x                  | x                     | x                   | x                         | x                   | X                     |
| Youth       | 12-14 years           | 2012-2015                 |                      |                    | x                     | x                   | x                         | x                   | x                     |
| Primary     | 8-12 years            | 2014-2019                 |                      |                    |                       |                     | x                         | x                   | X                     |
| Mini & Tiny | 8 years and younger * | 2018 and younger          |                      |                    |                       |                     |                           | x                   | X                     |

\* The SCA recommends not competing before the age of 5. The categories marked in green will be offered at the Swiss Cheer Open. All categories are open for Coed and Allgirl.



In the Group Stunt Categories, the following levels (Coed and Allgirl) will be offered at the Swiss Cheerleading Open:

| Age Group   | Age Criteria   | Birth years (for 2027) | Level 6 (Premier) | Level 5 (Elite) | Level 4 (Advanced) | Level 3 | Level 2 | Level 1 |
|-------------|----------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Masters     | 30 years+      | 1997 or before         | x                 | x               | x                  | x       | x       | x       |
| Senior      | 16 years+      | 2011 or before         | x                 | x               | x                  | x       | x       | x       |
| Junior      | 15-18 years    | 2008-2012              |                   | x               | x                  | x       | x       | x       |
| Youth       | 12-14 years    | 2012-2015              |                   |                 | x                  | x       | x       | x       |
| Primary     | 8-12 years     | 2014-2019              |                   |                 |                    |         | x       | x       |
| Mini & Tiny | 8 and younger* | 2018 and younger       |                   |                 |                    |         |         | x       |

and in Partner Stunt and Two Base Stunt the following levels will be offered at the Swiss Cheerleading Open:

| Age Group | Age Criteria | Birth years 2027 | Level 6 (Premier) | Level 5 (Elite) | Level 4 (Advanced) | Level 3 | Level 2 | Level 1 |
|-----------|--------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Senior    | 16 years+    | 2011 or before   | x                 | x               | x                  | x       | x       | x       |
| Junior    | 15-18 years  | 2008-2012        |                   | x               | x                  | x       | x       | x       |



The age groups for Performance Cheer will be the following:

| Age Group   | Age Criteria   | Birth years (for 2027) | Pom | Hip Hop | Jazz | Pom Doubles | Hip Hop Doubles |
|-------------|----------------|------------------------|-----|---------|------|-------------|-----------------|
| Masters     | 30 years+      | 1997 or before         | x   | x       | x    | x           | x               |
| Senior      | 16 years+      | 2011 or before         | x   | x       | x    | x           | x               |
| Junior      | 15-18 years    | 2008-2012              | X   | x       | x    | x           | x               |
| Youth       | 12-14 years    | 2012-2015              | X   | x       | x    | x           | x               |
| Primary     | 8-12 years     | 2014-2019              | X   | x       | x    | x           | x               |
| Mini & Tiny | 8 and younger* | 2018 and younger       | X   | X       | X    | x           | x               |

## 1.4 Cross-overs

Each athlete may only compete in one team in the specific division. Cross-overs to other divisions are allowed. Cross-overs to other age groups are allowed, as long as eligibility requirements are met (e.g. an athlete can start in the Youth and Junior category since there is one year overlapping). Cross-overs between clubs are not allowed. An athlete can only have a membership in one club.

## 1.5 Time of the routine

### Cheerleading

Cheerleading Divisions:

The total maximum time for the routine is three minutes (3:00), including the Cheer.

- **Cheer portion:** can be placed in the beginning or middle of routine. Cheer portion time minimum recommendation is thirty seconds (0:30).
- **Music portion:** Maximum two minutes (2:00).

Group Stunt / Partner Stunt categories:

- Maximum one minute (1:00)

### Performance Cheer

- **Performance Cheer Team:** Maximum two minutes (2:00).
- **Performance Cheer Doubles:** Maximum one minute and thirty seconds (1:30)



## 1.6 Music / Entrances

1. Every effort should be made to ensure that the lyrics of the music are appropriate for all audience members. Excessive use of sound effects or the addition of too many voice overs should be avoided.
2. Timing will begin with the first choreographed movement or note of the music and end with the last choreographed movement or note of music whichever comes last.
3. If a team exceeds the maximum time limit of the music portion, a penalty will be assessed. One (1) point deduction for 5-10 seconds and three (3) point deduction for 11 seconds and over per judge.
4. Because penalties are severe, all teams are advised to time their performance several times prior to competition and allow for a margin of several seconds to account for variations in sound equipment.
5. Each team must have a coach/representative to play their music. This person is responsible for bringing the music to the music table and pushing «play» and «stop» for the team.
6. In order to keep the competition on time, teams must enter the performance floor as quickly as possible. Teams will have limited time to enter the floor and start their routine. Elaborate choreographed entrances will not be allowed.
7. The requirements for music including the type of carrier will be determined by the event organizer. In any case, SCA recommends that you also bring an mp3 type music file.

## 1.7 Performance Surface

1. **Performance Cheer:** Dance floor, wooden parquet floor or gym surface. Minimum surface area of 12 meters x 12 meters.
2. **Cheerleading:** No spring floor, standard foam mat surface. Minimum surface area of 12 meters x 12 meters.
3. Teams may line up anywhere inside the competition area.
4. There is no penalty for stepping outside the area.

## 1.8 How to handle procedural questions

1. **Rules & Procedure:** Any questions concerning the rules or procedures of the competition will be handled exclusively by the advisor/coach of the team and will be directed to the competition officials.  
If a team has questions concerning the legality of a move or skill, it is recommended to send a video to the SCA Judges & Rules Committee, via <https://www.swisscheer.ch/rules>.  
If the SCA approves the skill, the team must bring the approved question and the official answer to the competition. Before the competition, the Safety Judges will be informed about



all approved questions so that they can take them into account when judging. If the Safety Judges give a deduction for a skill that was approved by the SCA, the team may show the approved question and answer when the coaches are called to the judges' table. If the approval applies to the situation, the deduction will be removed.

2. Performance: Questions about the team's performance must be directed to the competition officials immediately after the team's performance and/or after the competition results have been announced. Questions may only be asked by the team's advisor/coach.

## 1.9 Sportsmanship

1. All participants agree to conduct themselves in a manner displaying good sportsmanship throughout the competition with positive presentation upon entry and exit from the performance area as well as throughout the routine.
2. The advisor and coach of each team is responsible for seeing that team members, coaches, parents and other people affiliated with the team conduct themselves accordingly. Severe cases of unsportsmanlike conduct are grounds for disqualification.
3. Actions that exhibit excessive boasting, a delay in competition, poor sportsmanship, unprofessional behavior, etc. may be penalized. These actions include but are not limited to:
  - An athlete calling unnecessary attention to themselves or the team using long and excessive entrances (e.g., aggressive motioning/taunting to the crowd, moving to multiple formations and patterns to begin the routine, etc.)
  - Excessive pre- or post-competition team rituals (team bonding traditions must take place behind the stage area)
  - Excessive celebration (e.g. athletes dropping to the floor, pounding on the floor, jumping on each other, etc.)
  - For more information regarding ICU's sportsmanship policies, please see the following ICU sportsmanship guidelines video: <https://cheerunion.org/coaches-sportsmanship/>

## 1.10 Interruption of performance

### A. Unforeseen circumstances

1. If, in the opinion of the competition officials, a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the competition equipment, facilities, or other factors attributable to the competition rather than the team, the team affected should stop the routine.
2. The team will perform the routine again in its entirety, but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred. The degree and effect of the interruption will be determined by the competition officials.



3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.

#### **B. Fault of Team**

1. In the event a team's routine is interrupted because of failure of the team's own equipment, the team must either continue the routine or withdraw from the competition.
2. The competition officials will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If decided by officials, the team will perform the routine again in its entirety, but will be evaluated only from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.

#### **C. Injury**

1. The only people that may stop a routine for injury are:
  - a. competition officials/judges,
  - b. the advisor/coach from the team performing or
  - c. an injured individual.
2. The competition officials/judges will determine if the team will be allowed to perform at a later time. If the competition officials allow a routine to be performed at a later time, the spot in the schedule where the re-performance is to take place is at the sole discretion of competition officials. The team may perform the routine again in its entirety, but will be evaluated ONLY from the point where the interruption occurred.
3. If a team needs to re-perform a routine but fails to do the routine in its entirety, then this team will receive a score based on the lower-level performance.
- a. The injured participant that wishes to perform may not return to the competition floor unless:
  - The competition officials receive clearance from, first, the medical personnel attending to that participant, the parent (if present) AND THEN the head coach/advisor of the competing team.
  - If the medical personnel do not clear the participant, the participant can only return to the competition if a parent or legal guardian in attendance signs a return to participation waiver.
  - In the event of a suspected concussion, the participant cannot return to perform without clearance from a medical professional that has training related to head injuries, and waiting 24 hours, even with a waiver from a parent or legal guardian.



### **1.11 Interpretations and/or rulings**

Any interpretation of any aspect of these Rules and Regulations or any decision involving any other aspect of the competition will be rendered by the Competition Rules Committee. The committee will render a judgment in an effort to ensure that the competition proceeds in a manner consistent with the general spirit and goals of the competition. If the interpretation needs to be made during an ongoing competition, it is made together by those committee members present and holding a function in the jury of the respective competition and the Head Judge.

### **1.12 Disqualification**

Any team that does not adhere to the terms and procedures of these «Rules and Regulations» will be subject to disqualification from the competition, will automatically forfeit any right to any prizes or awards presented by the competition. The following behavior may, in any case, lead to disqualification:

- Assaults or insults to the judges, officials, participants, visitors
- Competing of a non-registered person
- Violation of age requirements
- Violation of the anti-doping-decree
- Unsportsmanlike conduct

### **1.13 Judging procedure**

As the teams perform, a panel of judges will score the teams using a 100 point system. The team who receives the highest overall score from the jury in a category wins. If the panel consists of five or more judges, the highest score and the lowest score given for each team will be dropped and the remaining judges' scores will be totaled and then divided by the number of remaining judges to determine the overall team score. In the event of a tie of two or more teams, all teams take the same place. The respective number of following places will remain unfilled. In the event of a tie for first, second or third place, the high and low score will be added back into the total score. If a tie remains, the ranking points from each judge will be used to break the tie.

### **1.14 Scores and Rankings**

Individual score sheets are for the exclusive use of each particular judge. Each judge has the responsibility and authority to review and submit his or her final scores and rankings prior to the final tally of the scores for all teams. Scores and rankings will be available only to coaches at the conclusion of the competition. After the competition, teams will receive the judges' score sheets. In addition, teams will receive a ranking sheet with the name and score of the teams final placement.



### **1.15 Finality of Decisions**

By participating in a SCA championship, each team agrees that judges' and competition officials' decisions are final and will not be subject for review. Each team acknowledges the necessity for the judges and competition officials' to make prompt and fair decisions in this competition and each team therefore expressly waives any legal, equitable, administrative or procedural review of such decisions. The only circumstance under which an objection may be raised is if, during the season, a skill was submitted for safety purposes and approved by the SCA, but was subsequently penalized by the safety judges at the competition (see Chapter 1.8).

### **1.16 Judges**

1. The judging panel of a competition consists of a minimum of three (3) judging members who judge the team routines. Up to two (2) additional judges can be added (and another max. two (2) safety judges can be added. Their functions are to judge the shown routines and to apply eventual penalties.
2. The deductions will be deducted from the overall sum.
3. The choice of judges for the Swiss Cheerleading Cheer Open is made by the Rules Committee of the SCA. Jury protocols are being made showing the decisions, special cases, and so on.
4. A list of all places and rankings will be made for the jury protocol, the presenter and the SCA.
5. The jury stays in a separate area, not open to the participants and coaches. For the award ceremony, the head judge has to be available for possible questions.

### **1.17 Penalties**

A five (5) point penalty per judge whose individual score was added to the overall team's score will be assessed to any team violating any of the specific rules. This deduction does not apply to violations that are designated a lesser point value. Violation of a specific rule in more instances at the same time (ripples included) will be considered as just one violation of that specific rule and will result in just five (5) point penalty. If you have any questions concerning the legality of a move or skill, it is recommended to send a video to Swiss Cheerleading Rules committee (form under <https://www.swisscheer.ch/rules>). This must be submitted clearly labeled with Division, Team name, contact person name, telephone number and e-mail (see Chapter 1.8).

### **1.18 Participation in official international competitions and qualifying for Swiss Nationals**

- Only teams that have reached at least 75% of the points possible for the respective category in the Swiss Cheerleading Championship qualify for official international competitions. If a team wins a category but doesn't reach the 75%, the respective team can send a request to the SCA board, to be eligible to participate at international competitions.



- For the European Cheerleading Championship (ECU), the winners of team categories in the Swiss Cheer Open qualify for the respective category at the ECU Championship (given that the category is provided at the ECU). If the first team does not participate, the teams following in the ranking may participate, given all of the requirements are fulfilled.
- **Qualifications for SCA members:**
  - Qualifier for the ECU Europeans 2026

Only teams that have reached at least 75% of the points possible for the respective category in the qualifying Championship qualify for official international competitions. If a team wins a category but doesn't reach the 75%, the respective team can send a request to the SCA board, to be eligible to participate at international competitions.

    - Cheerleading: Youth Median or Advanced, Junior Advanced or Elite, Senior Elite or Premier
    - Performance Cheer: Youth, Junior, Senior Freestyle Pom, HipHop and Jazz
  - Qualifier for small divisions (GS/PS) for the following Swiss Championship
    - The top 5 teams will advance to the Nationals
    - Primary Median (lvl3), Youth Advanced (lvl4), Junior Elite (lvl5) and Senior Premier (lvl6).
- The final clearance for official international competitions is made by the SCA in consultation with the responsible representatives of the clubs. Clubs who are not members of the SCA may not participate in official international competitions.



## 2 CHEERLEADING DIVISIONS

For the 2026-2027 competition season, the Safety Rules & Scoresheets of the ICU (2026 version) will be applied. It can be found at:

[https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ICU\\_2026\\_Rules\\_CH-PC.pdf](https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ICU_2026_Rules_CH-PC.pdf)

A version with marked changes from 2025 to 2026 can be found on the SCA website. Although the document serves only as an aid to visualize the changes. Regarding legal matters, the original unmarked version of the ICU is the valid one.

## 3 PERFORMANCE CHEER DIVISIONS

For the 2026-2027 competition season, the Safety Rules of the ICU (2026 version) will be applied. It can be found at:

[https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ICU\\_2026\\_Rules\\_CH-PC.pdf](https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/ICU_2026_Rules_CH-PC.pdf)

A version with marked changes from 2025 to 2026 can be found on the SCA website. Although the document serves only as an aid to visualize the changes. Regarding legal matters, the original unmarked version of the ICU is the valid one.

ATTENTION: A lot of changes were made in the Performance Cheer Rulebook by ICU from 2025 to 2026. Please pay close attention to them. All categories and their changes can also be consulted on the ICU Website: <https://cheerunion.org/education-schedule/rules-agegrid/>

## 4 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For the 2026-2027 competition season, the Glossary of Terms of the ECU (2026 version) for both Cheerleading and Performance Cheer will be applied. It can be found at:

[https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/2026\\_ICU-Europe\\_competition\\_rules.pdf](https://cheerunion.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/2026_ICU-Europe_competition_rules.pdf)

## 5 SCORESHEETS

Standard ICU Scoresheets will be used. See: <https://cheerunion.org/education-schedule/scoresheets/>