

## 2008-2009 MHSA Online Spirit Clinic Handouts

**Slide 1** Welcome to the MOA/MHSA online clinic presentations. I am Mark Beckman, Executive Director of the MHSA and Commissioner of the MOA. The MHSA/MOA is again presenting the rules clinics in this electronic format for coaches and officials throughout the state. This format saves travel time and costs for schools and officials, and by eliminating travel to clinic sites, this online format provides a safer more flexible means of delivering this necessary information.

Everyone will view the same clinic, providing consistency for coaches and officials. The clinic will be accessible during the season so you can go back and review a particular section. The software has been upgraded and all clinic production is done in house. You will find the audio clearer and the presentation slides larger and easier to read. If you have any questions or comments regarding this format please contact Brian Michelotti at the MHSA office; his email address is [bmichelotti@mhsa.org](mailto:bmichelotti@mhsa.org).

This is the fourth year of utilizing online clinics as a means of delivering the essential rules information for each activity. As requested by the MHSA Executive Board and the MOA Regional Directors, an electronic survey regarding the clinic process was sent via email to all head coaches, administrators and officials in June 2008. Responses continue to be received, and your input has been appreciated. If you have not had the opportunity to respond yet, please take a few moments to do so. The MHSA/MOA staff values your input. If you did not receive an electronic survey, please contact an MHSA staff member and provide your email address.

All head coaches must view the clinic for their activity in order to meet the clinic requirement. However, all other members of the coaching staff, as well as activities directors, are encouraged to view the clinics.

Please follow the directions at the end of the presentations to sign in and receive credit for completing the clinic requirement. We encourage you to print two copies of the verification page confirming that you have viewed the clinic. Keep one copy for your records and if you are a coach, provide a copy to your administrator as proof of your completion of this clinic.

Again, please feel free to the MHSA office with any questions or comments concerning the online presentations of the MHSA/MOA rules clinics.

**Slide 2** You are about to view the mandatory clinic for your activity. You must view the entire presentation in order to receive credit. Complete the information on the last page to ensure that your attendance has been submitted. Properly recording your attendance after the viewing is complete will fulfill the MHSA requirement.

**Slide 3** **Spirit Rules Clinic**

**Slide 4** There are several stunts in this presentation which will not be able to be seen in this format. Please go to the Spirit page at [mhsa.org](http://mhsa.org) and the video clips will be available for viewing.

**Slide 5** All rules of the NFHS Rules Book as well as rules listed in the MHSA Handbook shall be in effect for all cheer and dance activities, including practices, games, performances and competitions. Violations of these regulations are subject to penalties as outlined in the MHSA Handbook.

Also note that dance and drill teams need to follow the rules found in the rule book and the handbook. Because it is difficult for the MHSA to know exactly which schools have dance teams, it would be great if you would share the rule book and handbook with your dance team coach. MHSA may also be contacted for additional copies.

**Slide 6** This slide shows how a rule “comes to be” or is changed and the layout of the rules book.

**Rules Writing Process**

NFHS: Monitor-Consult-Review-Evaluate  
Rules Committee  
Editorial Review  
NFHS Board Approval

**Rules Book Layout**

Rule Changes / Points of Emphasis / Index / Philosophy  
Rule 1 – Definitions  
Rule 2 – General Risk Management/Situations  
Rule 3 – Dance/Drill/Pom Risk Management/Situations  
Pictures

**Slide 7** The true measure of a successfully implemented program can be determined by the degree to which the responsibility for safety is shared by all. It is the coach's responsibility to create an environment for safety and it is a responsibility of the participants to understand the risks in cheerleading and to develop a positive attitude toward safety.

As far as “Readiness”, each coach should ask these questions: does the participant have the physical talent to do the activity; are they ready for the skill, are they strong enough to perform the stunt, are they sufficiently healthy and rested, and are they mentally focused on the activity so they can perform it safely. Also, proper progressions are a must. More elite skills may be added to your program once your team has followed proper progressions.

In every spirit program there are three primary groups that should be involved in risk management and safety awareness – the participants themselves; the coach, and the administrator. Rules of the National Federation, the MHSA, and the local school absolutely have to be followed and always remember SAFETY FIRST.

**Slide 8** In addition to rules changes, the Spirit Rules Committee also adopted four points of emphasis for the upcoming season.

Spirit coaches need to read this section very carefully, as it discusses the most important things in the rules book and the issues that have been addressed this year by the rules' committee. Many of the rules changes this year are discussed at length in the Points of Emphasis section of the rule book.

To simplify the rules book, the committee removed the “Coaches Responsibilities and Participants Responsibilities” sections, however, these sections are available online at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org) on the Spirit Web Page.

Spirit coaches are to be reminded that these rules are the minimum safety standard for all high school programs. If in the opinion of the qualified spirit coach situations seem unsafe, the coach should make appropriate accommodations. Your responsibilities as a coach include appropriate progressions when training teams and enforcing general risk management rules. If trends continue in poor execution of stunts, the National Federation may be forced to review these stunts and minimize risk. Furthermore, coaches need to continue to make reasonable accommodations for all athletes, including special needs students. These accommodations, however, should not fundamentally alter the game, competition or performance.

**Slide 9** Here are the rules changes.

1-3-1 p. 16 Definition of Inverted  
2-1-14 p. 20 Bleeding/Open Wounds  
2-6-11 p. 22 Braced Dismounts  
2-8-2 p. 23 Inverted Flyer  
2-9-1 p. 25 Forward Suspended Rolls  
2-12-1 p. 27 Loss of Contact Transitions  
3-1-6 p. 39 Legal Dance Footwear

**Slide 10** This rules change defines an inverted position as “shoulders below waist” instead of “head below waist”, more accurately reflects the intent of the inverted flyer rule, and now allows a variety of low-risk stunts that have previously been illegal.

- Slide 11** 2-1-14 Bleeding/Open Wounds  
A participant who is bleeding, has an open wound, has any amount of blood on his/her uniform, or has blood on his/her person, shall be directed to leave the activity until the bleeding is stopped, the wound is covered, the uniform and/or body is appropriately cleaned, and/or uniform is changed before returning to participation.
- This rule is consistent with all other NFHS sports and is for the safety of all athletes.
- Slide 12** 2-6-11 Bracer-involved Dismounts  
This rule was written so that the wording would be similar to the transition exception in Rule 2-12-1.
- New:** In dismounts where a bracer is involved after the release of the flyer, all of the following conditions must be met:  
Flyer maintains hand-to-hand/arm contact with at least one bracer during loss of contact with the bases,  
Flyer does not become inverted,  
Flyer has at least two bases,  
Both flyer & bracer(s) have separate spotters,  
Loss of contact is continuous up and down movement,  
Flyer's center of gravity remains directly over bases,  
Flyer's weight is not supported by bracer(s), and...  
Bracers do not intentionally increase height of flyer.
- Slide 13** Requiring a base or spotter to maintain physical contact with a flyer while she/he is inverted stabilizes the stunt and reduces risk of injury to the flyer.
- 2-8-2 Inverted Flyer
- A flyer must not be in an inverted position **except...**  
During forward suspended roll. (*same*)
- When beginning a stunt that begins in an inverted position on the performing surface and goes directly to a non-inverted position shoulder height or below. This stunt must include a base or spotter who protects the head/neck/shoulder area of the flyer. **Add:** This base or spotter **must maintain physical contact** with the flyer from the inverted position until the flyer is no longer inverted.
- Slide 14** Go to the Spirit page at [mhsa.org](http://mhsa.org) to view this video clip. It will be listed under "Illegal Inverted Mount", Video Clip 13
- Slide 15** Go to the Spirit page at [mhsa.org](http://mhsa.org) to view this video clip. It will be listed under "Illegal Inverted Mount", Video Clip 14
- Slide 16** Go to the Spirit page at [mhsa.org](http://mhsa.org) to view this video clip. It will be listed under "Legal Inverted Mount", Video Clip 15
- Slide 17** Allowing a forward suspended roll from the performance surface does not present more risk (and possibly less) than forward suspended rolls from stunts, provided two bases are used.
- 2-9-1 Forward Suspended Rolls
- Change:** a. Flyer begins from the performing surface or from a stunt shoulder height or below.
- Add:** d. In suspended rolls from the performing surface, the flyer maintains hand-to-hand contact with two bases.
- Slide 18** Go to the Spirit page at [mhsa.org](http://mhsa.org) to view this video clip. It will be listed under "Legal Forward Suspended Roll to Floor", Video Clip 17

- Slide 19** Go to the Spirit page at [mhsa.org](http://mhsa.org) to view this video clip. It will be listed under "Legal Forward Suspended Roll to Cradle", Video Clip 18
- Slide 20** In transitional stunts, physical contact must be maintained between the flyer and the base(s) except when all of the conditions are met. Make certain you check out these exceptions.
- The rationale for this change is that by separating the conditions from last year's book, it makes it easier to understand the legality of this stunt.
- 2-12-1 Loss of Contact Transitions
- Change:** a. Flyer maintains hand to hand/arm contact with at least one bracer during the entire loss of contact with her/his base(s).
- Add:** i. Bracers do not intentionally increase the height of the flyer.
- Slide 21** The purpose of requiring that the bottom of the foot be covered is to prevent injury and disease. The pedini-style shoe's heel raises the bottom of the foot off the floor which minimizes that risk.
- 3-1-6 Dance Footwear
- Add Exception:**  
Pedini-style dance shoes and others with heels of sufficient height to raise the bottom of the foot off the floor.
- Slide 22** These are simply the editorial changes and corrections from last year's book.
- Editorial Changes**  
Deleted: Coaches' Responsibilities & Participants' Responsibilities sections (previously located in the back of the book). They are now available at [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org).
- New Definition: 1-9-11 pg.18 Side T-lift – . . . base(s) fully extend a flyer overhead in a forward-facing, horizontal straight-body position.
- Book Corrections**  
Rules Changes pg.2 Typo: Last sentence of 2-8-2 at top of page is actually the opening statement for 2-9-1.  
Sit. 2.1.4 pg.28 Clarification: Ruling for (b) does NOT make it legal to step on poms!
- Slide 23** When you or your spirit participants begin looking at attempting a new stunt and you have questions as to the stunt's legality, use the book and follow any exceptions. If you have any questions concerning the legality of the stunt, make sure you contact me at the MHSA office and I will check it for you.
- Slide 24** *How can we, as coaches determine the legality of a stunt?  
...By learning how to interpret stunt "families".*

**Slide 25** This is an example of how you would interpret a "stunt family" for inverted mounts. Using the rule book, ascertain whether each and every exception is being followed.

**Checklist**

Is the flyer clearly in a weight-bearing inverted position on the floor **before** the base(s) support her/his weight?

Is the flyer moved **directly** into a non-inverted position shoulder height or below?

Is there a base or spotter who is in a position to protect the flyer's head/neck?

Does that base/spotter **maintain physical contact** with the flyer until flyer is no longer inverted?

**Slide 26** Here is a checklist you should use when performing a loss of contact transition.

**Checklist:**

Is the flyer always braced (hand/arm contact) during l.o.c.?

Does the flyer ever become inverted? Bracers?

How many bases?

Is there a separate spotter for the flyer and each bracer?

Are spotters paying attention to the correct flyer?

Is the flyer's weight ever supported primarily by a bracer?

Is the l.o.c. a continuous up & down movement - no pause?

Does the flyer remain directly over the base(s)?

Does the flyer return to the original base(s)?

Is the flyer released to a toss?

Do bracers intentionally increase height of flyer?

**Slide 27** And again, here is a checklist for interpreting braced dismounts.

**Checklist:**

Does at least one bracer maintain hand/arm contact with the flyer during l.o.c.?

Does the flyer or bracer(s) ever become inverted?

Are there two bases?

Is there a separate spotter for the flyer and each bracer?

Is the l.o.c. a continuous up & down movement?

Does the flyer remain directly over the bases?

Does the flyer return to the original base(s)?

Does a bracer intentionally increase the height of the flyer?

**Slide 28** Go to the Spirit Page at [mhsa.org](http://mhsa.org) to view this video clip. There are several examples of this stunt and they will be listed under "Load-in Tick Tock", Video Clip 27

**Slide 29** Notice in this slide, the picture to the left shows the performer bearing her own weight. In contrast, the picture on the right shows the performer entirely supported by the base which would make the stunt illegal.

**Slide 30** Go to the Spirit Page at [mhsa.org](http://mhsa.org) to view this video clip. It will be listed under "Assisted Floor Stunts", Video Clip 29

**Slide 31** Go to the Spirit page at [mhsa.org](http://mhsa.org) to view this video clip. It will be listed under "Assisted Floor Stunts", Video Clip 30

**Slide 32** AACCA Safety Certification is mandatory for coaches who have stunting squads. Once taken, the certification is good for four years.

Because very few facilities offer the use of matting, you should get in the practice of bringing your own matting to any tournament site if your squad performs tosses.

**Slide 33** The MHSA Handbook had only one editorial change this year.

Also note that your individual school district can be more restrictive than what is allowed by the NFHS and the MHSA.

Again, note that all rules found in the NFHS Spirit Rule Book as well as the MHSA Handbook are in effect for all practices, games, performances, and competitions.

Violations of these regulations are subject to penalties as outlined in Article VIII, Section (2) of the MHSA By-Laws.

**Slide 34**

No individual shall participate in a game until she/he has a minimum of ten (10) days of practice with at least one practice session per day on ten (10) different days (no practice permitted on Sundays) prior to the date of the first allowable game

What this means is that your cheerleaders must have AT LEAST ten days of practice prior to their first appearance, however, this rule does not preclude them from beginning practices MORE than ten days prior if the school allows.

There are no practice starting dates for cheerleaders.

**Slide 35** First and foremost... AACCA Safety Certification – must be certified in order to stunt. Certification is good for four years. National Federation Spirit Coaches Education Program – Lisa Parker at 442-6492 is Montana's State Director MCA Clinic held each August (first Wednesday, Thursday & Friday) – Mark your calendars!

Contact me for dates of AACCA Safety Certification or you can go to AACCA.com and click on "Safety Courses By State".

There are three levels of credentials in the NFHS Spirit Coaches Education Program, the Bronze, Silver and Gold. The NFHS Spirit Advisory Board has made recommendations to the NFHS on the development and choice of the courses offered. Currently the Bronze level credential is available in all states and offers three requirements, plus an additional course of your choosing. Call Lisa Parker at the number shown above to ask about this invaluable training.

Please note that Montana's Spirit Coaches no longer need to complete the on-line Coaches Education Program offered by the MHSA.

And remember that each year there is an abundance of spirit-related topics covered at the Annual MCA Clinic held in Great Falls in August. One of the benefits of belonging to the MCA is receiving a pass to all high school games in the state.

**Slide 36** This ends the 2008-09 edition of the Spirit Rules Clinic. As always, please remember the MHSA is YOUR service organization and we are here to assist you in your coaching endeavors. Please use this contact information to call me or e-mail me with any questions or concerns.

**Slide 37** It is vital that your clinic attendance be recorded. You must verify that you have viewed this entire presentation in order to meet your clinic requirement for this activity.

Please use the link to access the registration page.

If you are not directed to the registration page after you click the link, try again by simultaneously holding the control key and clicking the link.

Do not close this presentation until you have verified that your attendance has been recorded using the appropriate link.

Thank you for viewing the 2008-09 MHSA Spirit rules clinic. If I can be of any assistance during the year, please give me a call. Have a great season!