

# Selecting the appropriate level for your routine

Teams from all kinds of youth organizations attend the New England Cheer and Dance Competition so we try to make the division restrictions as broad as possible while still attempting to offer a somewhat level playing field. The divisions and levels at this competition may not match those of your particular organization so please use the guidelines below to help you determine how to register your team. Our goal is to have a fun, relaxed atmosphere, yet provide an exciting venue where teams get to compete against someone other than who they traditionally come up against at their league or regional tournament.

Coaches of cheer division teams from the Mitey Mites, Mites, Pee Wees, Junior High and 18U age groups need to choose between the Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Diamond levels. We aim to allow teams presenting similar skills to compete against each other, and coaches to focus on clean, safe execution rather than feeling pressure to attempt difficulty with their often first-year athletes. We have created these division guidelines based on the accepted partner stunt and tumbling progressions set out by AACCA and supported by the NFHS. As you know your squad's choreography, please examine your routine closely to determine which category it belongs in this year. No matter which level you choose, squads are limited to what their individual organizations allow. You must follow the guidelines set out by your program.

Bronze level routine restrictions:

- no single-leg skills at extended level
- no unbraced two legged skills at extended level (must be braced on at least one side by stunt/s at shoulder level or below with hand-to-hand/arm connection only)
- no unbraced single leg skills at shoulder level (bracer on one side must be on the ground, in a stunt below shoulder level or a two-leg stunt at shoulder level with hand-to hand/arm connection only)
- no inversions
- no basket tosses
- twisting transitions, entries and dismounts are limited to  $\frac{1}{4}$  turn
- no release-style transitions in any stunts/pyramids above thigh level, and these require constant contact with a base/spotter (except those involved in cradles)
- advanced/elite tumbling limited to 25% of team (any number may perform rolls,

cartwheels, round-offs and walkovers)

Silver level routine restrictions:

- no unbraced single leg skills at extended level
- no inversions in stunts (inverted dismounts from horizontal positions with hands going directly to the performing surface are allowed)
- straight ride baskets only
- twisting transitions, entries and dismounts are limited to ½ turn to/from two-legged stunts at prep level and below
- no full-ups, half-ups limited to two-legged prep level or below
- no release-style transitions in vertical stunts/pyramids above prep level, and these require constant contact with a base/spotter (except those involved in cradles or cradle positions)
- advanced/elite tumbling limited to 25% of team (any number may perform rolls, cartwheels, round-offs and walkovers)

Gold level routine restrictions:

- no unbraced single leg skills at extended level
- inversions in stunts limited to entrances, dismounts from horizontal positions with hands going directly to the performing surface, and ground-to-ground inversions with continuous flow (ex. double cartwheel, chorus-line flip)
- no two-skill or twist baskets tosses
- single twist cradles from prep level from two legs only, no doubles
- no full-ups, half-ups limited to two-legs at extended level
- express-ups/switch-ups limited to prep level
- no release transitions in unbraced stunts (except those involved in cradles or cradle positions)
- no braced flips in pyramids, non-inverted release transitions allowed
- advanced/elite tumbling limited to 50% of team (any number may perform rolls, cartwheels, round-offs and walkovers)

Platinum level routine restrictions:

- no release inversions or fold-overs in stunts
- no kick twist baskets tosses
- single twist cradles from extended level from two legs only, no doubles
- full-ups limited to prep level
- no release transitions in unbraced stunts above prep level
- braced flips (released inversions) in pyramids allowed if flyer is braced on both

of their arms

- advanced/elite tumbling limited to 75% of team (any number may perform rolls, cartwheels, round-offs and walkovers)

Diamond level routine restrictions:

Teams must follow the rules set out for them by their individual organizations.

We will have level judges in the warm-up area to help ensure that all teams are in the appropriate divisions before they hit the competition floor. Any post-performance concerns must be addressed privately between the coaching staff and head judge prior to the awards ceremony, if possible.

General expectations for routines:

Here is a sample of what elements the judges are anticipating seeing at the different levels. “**Possibly**” means if you have them in your routine, great, if not, don’t worry about it, they’re not imperative at that level. “**A few**” means less than 25% of the team. Please call Lisa at 413-531-2095 with questions if you are unsure about what level your routine fits into!

Bronze:

- Expected skills include one or two-legged stunts at thigh level, two-legged stunts at shoulder level
- Possibly pyramids with braced one-legged shoulder level or two-legged extended level
- Rolls, cartwheels, round-offs, possibly walkovers or more advanced tumbling skills performed by a few team members

Silver:

- Expected skills include one or two-legged stunts at thigh and shoulder level, possibly extended freestanding stunts on two legs, possibly inversions on dismounts
- Pyramids with braced one or two-legged extensions
- Rolls, cartwheels, round-offs, possibly walkovers or handsprings, or possibly more advanced tumbling skills performed by a few team members

Gold:

- Expected skills include one or two-legged stunts at thigh and shoulder level, extended free-standing stunts on two legs, possibly inversions on entrances or dismounts

- Pyramids with extended one legged stunts, possibly non-inverted releases
- Rolls, cartwheels, round-offs, some walkovers or handsprings, or possibly more advanced tumbling skills performed by a few team members

Platinum:

- Expected skills include extended freestanding one and two legged stunts, creative entrances/exits to stunts, basic inversions, twist cradles from two legs
- Possibly pyramids with inverted non-release transitions
- Rolls, cartwheels, round-offs, walkovers, handsprings and more advanced/elite tumbling skills performed by some team members

Diamond:

- Expected skills include release transitions, full-ups, twisting dismounts from extended one-legged stunts, two-skill baskets, inversions
- Pyramids with release inversions
- Rolls, cartwheels, round-offs, walkovers, handsprings and more advanced/elite tumbling skills performed by many team members

Feel free to contact Lisa Moskow at 413-531-2095 or [moskow\\_lisa@yahoo.com](mailto:moskow_lisa@yahoo.com) with any questions on your squad's routine components. We will be happy to work with you to help you make any necessary adjustments to your choreography or determine the best fit for your team.

Here are some frequently asked questions about the levels:

**Q) "Most of our stunts and pyramids are done at shoulder height or below. We have 3 of our 15 cheerleaders doing standing back-handsprings. Can we still enter the Bronze level since most of our stunts are thigh and shoulder level?"**

**A)** Yes, 3 out of 15 is below the 25 % allowed in the Bronze level. This will not elevate your tumbling score enough to be an unfair advantage over other teams in that division who may be performing only beginning level tumbling.

**Q) "Our team has 20 cheerleaders. Our tumbling includes about half the team doing back handsprings or round-off back handsprings and most of our stunts are at shoulder level with a few extensions. Should we enter Gold or Silver?"**

**A)** Gold. With the difficulty level of your tumbling that is where you'll want to enter your team, as your stunting would fit into either level.

**Q) “Our program doesn’t allow us to do basket tosses, if other teams are doing them how can we compete?”**

A) Our judges are scoring your routine based on what skills you do perform, not what you don’t, and execution is their primary driver. Specific stunts are not listed on the scoresheet, so you won’t be deemed to be ‘missing’ an element. Remember that it’s likely the team doing a basket in their routine is not allowed to, for example, perform an inverted entry into a stunt, which your program might permit. One stunt, no matter how beautifully performed, is not going to make or break the results, especially with 90 points in other categories being distributed.

**Q) “Our team of 16 has great stunting, we have 4 groups twisting from extended heel stretches and a cool release flipping transitional pyramid. Unfortunately we don’t have strong tumbling, only 7 have back handsprings and 5 have round-off back handspring back tucks. The rest of the team is doing cartwheels and forward rolls. Should we water down our stunts and enter Platinum?”**

A) No, you should keep in the skills you’ve worked so hard on. Tumbling is only worth 5 points and since it’s category judging, that’s from just one judge. If what they do is well executed and creatively choreographed, your score won’t be so far behind a team with more advanced tumbling that you can’t make it up in the other 95 points up for grabs on the scoresheet.

The primary goal of this tournament is to offer teams an opportunity to show off their routines and be recognized for the hard work they have put into preparing them. Squads from many different organizations attend, and they all have different rules and requirements. We have tried to create more categories to reduce the need for teams to make big changes to their choreography while still offering a somewhat level playing field. We make adjustments each year based on feedback from the coaches who’ve attended, and will welcome yours after the event!

If you have any questions about the levels, please don’t hesitate to call Lisa Moskow, judge’s coordinator, at 413-531-2095 for more information or clarification.