



PCA’s Charitable Cheerleading Competition

Sin City Classic 2025 Rulebook

Group Stunt & Partner Stunt: No further developments from SCC2024 rules.
 Yellow highlight = changes to Pom rules from SCC2024

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Scoresheets, Progression Sheets, Fundraising Parameters, and **NEW 2025 Supplementary Mini Routine Planning Checklist** docs are separate. Find at pridecheerleading.org.

Competitive Divisions

1. Group Stunt
 - a. 4 to 5 competitive members allowed per Group Stunt entry.
 - b. 1 min max time.
 - c. Group must attest that performance music is licensed.
 - d. An individual Group Stunt competitor may not compete in multiple Group Stunt entries.
 - e. An individual Group Stunt competitor may cross over and also compete in Partner Stunt.
 - f. Each competitor must be age 18 or over by the date of the competition.
 - g. Group members must remain in compliance with PCA Public Health Policy for this event.
2. Partner Stunt
 - a. 3 competitive members: Top, Base, and Required Spotter. (Learn more about the Required Spotter in the "Required Spotter" section below).
 - b. 1 min max time.
 - c. Group must attest that performance music is licensed.
 - d. Required Spotter may only assist on dismounts and may not help support or help to save any stunt.
 - e. Every Partner Stunt competition entry will receive a 2 point deduction for each incident of the Required Spotter touching the stunt, other than in a dismount to cradle or dismount to the performing surface.
 - f. An individual Partner Stunt competitor, including the Required Spotter, may not compete in multiple Partner Stunt entries.
 - g. An individual Partner Stunt competitor, including the Required Spotter, may cross over and compete in Group Stunt.
 - h. Each competitor must be age 18 or over by the date of the competition.
 - i. Group members must remain in compliance with PCA Public Health Policy for this event.

3. Pom
 - a. Minimum number of competitors per group is 4. (Why 4? In the dance world, there are solos, duos, and trios, making 4 the minimum for a Pom group.) There is no maximum number of competitors per group.
 - b. 3 minute max time
 - c. Group must attest that performance music is licensed.
 - d. An individual Pom competitor may not compete in multiple Pom entries.
 - e. An individual Pom competitor may cross over and compete in Group Stunt and/or Partner Stunt.

Noncompetitive “Exhibitions”

1. These routines are not judged, so there are no potential safety deductions, however:
 - a. PCA strongly encourages noncompetitive exhibition routines to follow general safety guidelines for their own safety.
 - b. PCA encourages athletes to perform skills they can execute consistently and safely with proper technique and adequate spotting.
 - c. Noncompetitive exhibition performers are not exempt from PCA Public Health Policy for this event.
2. An individual performer in one Exhibition may perform in another Exhibition and/or one or both competitive divisions.
3. Must be family friendly and free of adult themes and offensive language
4. No time limit for Exhibition routine
5. No min or max number of performers
6. Respect the environment and property in choice of footwear, costuming, props, and accessories (e.g., excessive glitter, confetti are discouraged)
7. Group must attest that performance music is created/obtained legally and that you have the appropriate license to perform to your music.

Music

1. PCA events comply with US Copyright law PCA encourages everyone to comply by the [USA Cheer Music guidelines](#) to guarantee that you will be able to use your music at the competition and other performances at this event.
2. In order to perform to the music of your choice at this event, an authorized representative from your group must attest that you have secured the appropriate license to use your music. PCA will not collect a copy of the license.
3. If your group cannot or does not attest that you have secured the appropriate license to use your music, PCA will provide a generic 8count track for your use.
4. If your group cannot or does not attest that you have secured the appropriate license to use your music, and if your group chooses not to use PCA's generic 8count track, you may perform with no music, count (or cheer) your routine out loud, or withdraw your performance entry.
5. Music choice does not directly factor into the competition score.
 - a. Exception: One Safety Rule Violation deduction of 5 points will be made if the music uses explicit language or offensive themes.
 - b. Exception: Deductions if music goes over the 1 min time limit for Group Stunt & Partner Stunt or the 3min time limit for Pom.

Time Limits

1. For both Group Stunt and Partner Stunt, competition routine performance times may not exceed 1 minute.
2. For Pom, competition routine performance times may not exceed 3min.
3. Timing will begin with the first movement, voice, or note of music, whichever comes first. Timing will end with the last movement, last voice, or note of music, whichever comes last.
4. A Time limit violation will receive a 1 (1-5 sec), 4 (6-10 sec), or 8 (11+sec) point deduction, depending on length in excess of the time limit.

Glossary References

PCA honors the diversity of cheerleading backgrounds of our participants and Judges. Terminology across mainstream cheerleading is variable and fluid. For safety and judging consistency at this event, we have to speak the same language. The cheerleading terminology we use at this competition most closely aligns with ICU (International Cheer Union), whose most current glossary can be found [here, page 64-70](#). The Pom terminology most closely aligns with [USASF DANCE Rules Chart & Glossary](#).

General Safety Rules for all Competitors

1. Each violation of these Safety Rules will earn one Safety Rule Violation (5 point deduction) and could disqualify the group from competition, at Judges' discretion
2. All competing groups must have an emergency response plan for injury/emergency
3. Competitors and spotters may not be under the influence of alcohol, narcotics, performance enhancing substances, over-the-counter medications, or recreational substances that could hinder the ability to supervise or execute a routine safely throughout the event.
4. Appropriate performing shoes must be worn while competing. Please approach the Judges prior to the start of the competition if you have questions about footwear. (In Pom, footwear must have nonslip grip on at least where the heel contacts the performing surface.)
5. Jewelry of any kind (including but not limited to, ear, nose, tongue, belly button and facial rings, clear plastic jewelry, bracelets, necklaces and pins on uniforms) is not allowed. Jewelry must be removed and may not be taped over. Exception: medical ID tags/bracelets. Please approach the Judges prior to the start of the competition if you have specific questions about jewelry.
6. Any height increasing apparatus used to propel an athlete (e.g., trampoline, springboard) is not allowed.
7. Props can enhance the crowd appeal of a performance. An entry in the Pom division will incorporate use of poms by the majority of the

competitors, for the majority of the routine. If acquiring poms to compete in this division is a barrier to your group, contact PCA. Other props like Spirit Buckets may be incorporated in addition to, but not substituting for, poms. For all divisions, props other than poms and Spirit Buckets must receive prior approval from the Judges. (A uniform piece purposefully removed and used for visual effect is considered a prop once it is removed.) During a Group Stunt or Partner Stunt routine, competitors are not permitted to bear weight on any prop. Props with poles or similar may not be used with any kind of stunt or tumbling. All props must be safely discarded out of harm's way. Props may not be involved in tosses and dismounts from stunts.

8. Medical supports, braces and soft casts which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original do not require any additional padding. Medical supports/braces and soft casts that have been altered from the manufacturer's original must be padded with a closed-cell, slow-recovery foam padding no less than one-half inch thick if the participant is involved in stunts. A participant wearing a hard cast or a walking boot must not be involved in stunts or tumbling.
9. Drops including but not limited to knee, seat, front, back and split drops from a jump, stunt, or inverted position are not allowed unless the majority of the weight is first borne on the hands or feet, which breaks the impact of the drop. Shushunovas are allowed. Clarification: Drops that include any weight bearing contact with the hands and feet are not in clear violation of this rule.
10. Athletes must have at least one foot, hand or body part (other than hair) on the performing surface when the routine begins. Exception: Athletes may have their feet in the hands of base(s) if the base(s) hands are resting on the performing surface.
11. The competitors who begin a routine must remain the same throughout the course of a routine. A performer is not permitted to be "replaced" by another performer during a routine.
12. An athlete must not have gum, candy, cough drops or other such edible or non-edible items (choking hazards) in their mouth during practice and/or performance.
13. All members of competitive/exhibition groups, and all participants and volunteers must remain in compliance with PCA Public Health Policy. Spectators strongly encouraged to comply.

Group Stunt

&

Partner Stunt

The Required Spotter

1. Definition and requirements:

- a. Definition: The Required Spotter is a person whose primary responsibility is to prevent injuries by protecting the head, neck, back and shoulders area of a top person during stunting.
- b. Must position themselves to maximize top person's safety.
- c. Must be in direct contact with the performing surface while actively spotting.
- d. Must be attentive to the stunt being performed.
- e. Must not be involved in anything that could prevent them from spotting. (E.g: required spotter holding a sign is not allowed.)
- f. Cannot stand so that their torso is under a stunt (then they become a base).

2. Partner Stunt

- a. Partner Stunt competitive groups must include a Required Spotter, a third person in your group. This person will receive a medal if your group places.
- b. The Required Spotter can transition to the role of Base or Top within one Partner Stunt routine, as long as the remaining third person can adequately perform the Required Spotter duties.
- c. Required Spotter may assist in all dismounts to cradle position or to the performing surface.
- d. Required Spotter must assist on
 - i. Flipping mounts & transitions to cradle,
 - ii. Released helicopter (max 180 degrees),
 - iii. Certain downward inversions (see "Inversions" Section for specifics),
 - iv. Dismount that exceeds 1.25 twists,
 - v. Cradles from a one-arm stunt that involve a twist.
- e. Required Spotter may not assist in any balancing, saving, lifting, tossing or repositioning of the top person, even if continuous after a dismount from those dismounts mentioned immediately above. If they need to assist for safety, that is of course encouraged, but this unplanned use of Required Spotter for safety (termed "illegal

use of spotter" on scoresheet for simplicity) will incur a deduction of 2.0 points per occurrence.

3. Group Stunt

- a. The Required Spotter in Group Stunts is a momentary role that exists for some skills and does not exist for other skills. (This implies that a group of 4 can compete in Group Stunt as long as they don't perform any skills that require 4 stunters and an additional Required Spotter.)
- b. The following Group Stunt skills need a Required Spotter.
 - i. One-arm stunts above prep level, other than cupies or liberties. Example: A one-arm heel stretch, arabesque, high torch, scorpions, bow and arrow, etc.
 - ii. When the mount/transition/dismount involves a release move with twist greater than 360 degrees, a release move with an inverted position landing at prep level or below, or a free flip.
 - iii. Releasing load-ins from a handstand position (stationary or through a handspring load-in) to a partner stunt
 - iv. During stunts in which the top person is in an inverted (handstand) position above prep level.
 - v. When the top person is released from above ground level to a one-arm stunt. (E.g., low to high or high to high pop to one-arm)
 - vi. Single based stunts with multiple top persons require a separate spotter for each top person.
- c. Required Spotter may grab the wrist(s) of the base(s), other parts of the base(s) arms, the top person(s) legs/ankles, or does not have to touch the stunt at all.
- d. Required Spotter may not be considered both a base and the Required Spotter at the same time.
- e. Required Spotter **becomes a Base** if their torso is under the stunt
- f. Required Spotter **becomes a Base** if they place both hands under top person's foot, and they can no longer be considered the Required Spotter for that skill. If there is only one person under a top person's foot, regardless of hand placement, that person is considered a base. Example: In a two leg stunt, the base of one of the legs is not allowed to also be considered the required spotter (regardless of the grip). If the spotter's hand is under the top person's foot it must be their front hand. Their (the spotter's) back

hand MUST be placed at the back of the ankle/leg of the top person or on the back side of the back wrist of the base.

Max Tricks & Legalities: Group Stunt & Partner Stunt

There are no “levels” within divisions at this competition as there are in most mainstream cheerleading competitions. Every group is competing at the same level. However, “Max Tricks” do exist. Max tricks allowed and legalities within stunts and tosses at this competition are most similar to [ICU University Premier](#) and [USASF Level 7](#), but differences between PCA and mainstream exist intentionally to respect intellectual property and to express differences of brand values. (Rules for tumbling & pyramids are also covered in this section.)

Newly implemented at SCC 2023 and carried over into SCC 2024: In the Mounts/Transitions category, Judges will score the TWO (2) highest/most difficult tricks instead of just the one (1) highest/most difficult.

1. **Max Tricks & Legalities:** Below is a list of types of stunting tricks that are (and are not) allowed and max tricks and legalities thereof:
 - a. **Release moves during mounts and transitions are allowed.**
 - i. Free releases from the performing surface and free release moves originating from a stunt are allowed. (This is a divergence from ICU where releases are only allowed from below prep level.)
 - ii. Release load-ins from a handstand position (stationary or through a handspring load-in) to partner stunt require an additional spotter.
 - iii. Release moves may land in can cradle, prone, or assisted to performing surface
 - iv. Release moves **must:**
 1. Return to original bases.
 - a. Exception 1: Partner-stunt-style tosses to a new base are allowed if (1) Stunt is thrown by a single base (2) Caught by at least one base and an additional spotter (3) The required catchers/spotters may not be involved with any other skill or choreography when the transition is initiated. (4) The original tossing base may become the spotter.

- b. Exception 2: Toss single based stunts with multiple top persons are allowed without returning to original base(s). The original base may become a required spotter.
- v. Release moves **must not:**
 - 1. Land inverted.
 - a. Exception 1: Ground level handstand released to hand-to-hand stunt with 0 twist and 0 flip
 - b. Exception 2: Release from prep level and below to prep level inverted position with 0 twist, 0 flip
 - 2. Exceed 18 inches above extended arm level of the bases. (If distance exceeds 18 inches from point of release, then must follow Toss or Dismount rules.)
 - 3. Come in contact with other top persons in separate release moves.
 - a. Exception: Single based stunts with multiple top persons.
 - 4. Intentionally travel (excludes partner-stunt-style tosses to a new set of bases)
 - 5. Pass over, under or through other stunts, pyramids, individuals or prop.
 - 6. Land on the performing surface without assistance from above waist level.
- b. **Helicopters are allowed.**
 - i. Max rotation of a Helicopter is up to 180-degree rotation
 - ii. Must be caught by 2 catchers, one of which is positioned at head & shoulder area of the top person.
- c. **Front & back flipping mounts/transitions are allowed.** Whether free flipping (e.g. rewind) or non free flipping (e.g., braced flip, suspended rolldown), these **cannot exceed "one flip"** ("one flip" is one hip-over-head rotation that passes through the inverted position, so it technically could be up to 1.25 rotations if, from upright, back flips to cradle) **and "one twist"** ("one twist" also technically could be up to 1.25 twists if from a side-facing stunt).
 - i. Free flipping mounts must start on the performing surface
 - 1. Examples of free flipping mounts that do not start on the performing surface: toe pitch, leg pitch and similar ways to initiate free flipping. These are **illegal** here ([though legal in USASF Level 7](#)).

2. Cartwheel rewinds, round off rewinds, and single standing handspring rewinds are allowed and can be continuous. No tumbling skills prior to the cartwheel, round-off or standing back handspring are permitted.
 3. Front/back walkover ups and front/back handspring ups where the top person is gripped by bases mid-flip are allowed and can be continuous. These are scored as inversions from handstand in Mounts & Transitions.
- ii. During flips into stunts, load-ins, or cradles, **bases are limited to 0.25 turn under the top person** (e.g., rewind with 0.5 twist to partner stunt (base makes 0.5 turn) is illegal)
 - iii. Released load-ins from a handstand (stationary or through handspring) to a partner stunt require an additional spotter.
 - iv. Free flipping transitions caught below shoulder level (e.g., cradle, prone, assist to ground) must use min 2 catchers.
 - v. In flipping transitions from stunts where top person is in a horizontal position not being supported at their feet, the top person is limited to **1.25 flips and 0 twists**. (E.g., flatback ball position may front flip to cradle (1.0 flips) or front flip all the way to upright (1.25 flips).)
- d. **Twisting (nonflipping) mounts and transitions are allowed** with **up to 2.25 twisting rotations** by the top person in relation to the performing surface.
- i. A twist performed with an additional turn by the bases in the same skill set would be illegal if the resulting cumulative rotation of the top person exceeds 2.25 rotations. Judges will use the hips of the top person to determine the amount of total rotation a top person performs in a skill set. Once a stunt is hit and the athletes show a clear stop with a stationary top, they may continue to walk the stunt in additional rotation.
 - ii. Examples of twisting transitions include partner stunt "retake" (0.5 twist down while remaining connected to foot, reverse of a walkup) and partial or full twisting "corkscrew" down multi-bases stunts that remain connected to at least one base. Once released, becomes a "Dismount"
- e. **Free-Flipping Dismounts are allowed.** May flip frontward or backward, may land in cradle/prone or assisted to performing surface, but for each there are different max tricks and legalities:

- i. **All flipping dismounts must originate from prep level or below** (e.g., power press is allowed, and can be on one foot).
 - ii. All flipping dismounts require at least 2 catchers (one of which must be an original base)
 - iii. No flipping dismounts may intentionally travel.
 - iv. Dismounts from an inverted position may not twist
 - v. If landing in cradle/prone:
 - 1. Max skills include up to **1.25 flips** (back flip to cradle or front flip to prone from a stunt) **and 0.5 twists**
 - 2. Flip can be front flip or back flip
 - vi. If landing assisted to performing surface
 - 1. Flip can only be front flip (can not back flip to performing surface even with assist)
 - 2. Max is **1 flip, and zero (0) twisting is allowed.**
 - vii. Something that is not “free”-flipping (is suspended, braced, or otherwise maintains contact with bases) is not a dismount, it is a Transition.
- f. **Twisting dismounts are allowed with up to 2.25 twisting rotations.** (Side-facing stunts i.e., Arabesque, Scorpion, torch that double full twisting to the front is a 2.25 twist.)
- i. Dismounts with more than 1.25 twists require an additional spotter that assists on the cradle.
 - ii. Cradles from a 1 arm stunt that involve any amount of twist must have a spotter assisting the cradle with at least one hand-arm supporting the head and shoulder of the top person.
 - iii. Twisting and double twisting dismounts may incorporate an additional body position (e.g. kick double twisting dismount is allowed, as in [USASF Levels 6 and 7](#)).
- g. **Non-flipping tosses are allowed with up to four “skills”** (“skill” = “twist” or “body position”) from the point of release from the hands of the bases. Examples:
- i. Legal:
 - 1. two twists plus two body positions (2+2=4)
 - a. Hitch Kick Double Full Twist (with no flip)
 - b. Kick full kick full (no flip)
 - 2. three body positions and one twist (3+1=4)
 - a. Hitch ball kick full (no flip)
 - 3. three twists
 - a. triple full (no flip)

4. three twists and one body position (3+1=4)
 - a. kick triple (no flip)
 5. 3.5 twists with no additional skill
 - a. e.g., a toss that starts facing the back, twists 3.5x, and ends facing the front.
 - ii. Illegal:
 1. Kick + 3.5 twists (No additional skills are allowed in a 3.5 twisting toss, as that would exceed 4 skills.)
 - iii. Note: Twisting is cumulative. All twisting up to 1.25 is considered 1 skill, exceeding 1.25 up to 2.25 is two skills. So, a 0.5 twist, X, 0.5 twist is considered 2 skills: 1 full twist and 1 additional skill.
 - iv. This section of the rules is most consistent with [Varsity All Star Elite Level 6 & 7 Worlds Coed](#),
- h. **Flipping tosses are allowed** (tuck, layout or pike position), with **max up to 1.25 flipping rotation** (back flip to cradle is 1.25 flipping rotation) **and 2 additional skills** ("skill" = "twist" or "body position").
- i. Legal: flip plus 2 skills
 1. Tuck flip, X-out, Full Twist
 2. Double Full-twisting Layout
 3. Kick, Full-twisting Layout
 4. Layout, Kick, Kick
 5. Pikeopen, Double Full Twist (the "open" of the pikeopen is not an additional skill)
 6. Arabian + Full Twist (or Arabian + 1.5 twist)
 - ii. Illegal: flip plus 3 skills
 1. Tuck flip, X-out, Double Full Twist (1 flip + 2 twists + an additional body position)
 2. Kick, Double Full-twisting Layout
 3. Kick, Full-twisting Layout, Kick
 4. Pike, Split, Double Full Twist
 5. Full-twisting Layout, Split, Full Twist
- i. **Inversions (top person's head below waist) are allowed** up to and including at the extended level.
- i. Stunts in which the top person is in a handstand require an additional spotter.
 - ii. Inversions going into stunts: The top person can be released from a handstand position on the ground to hand-in-hand stunt provided that the top person does not twist or rotate.

- iii. Inversions traveling downward from above prep level must maintain contact with an original base and must have 2 catchers
 - 1. Exception: A lowering of an extended inverted stunt to prep level, passing above prep level to prep level or from extended non-inverted to inverted stunt at prep level is allowed by a single base with a spotter.
- iv. **Dismounts** (release to cradle, to prone catch, or to assisted to ground) **from an inverted position** are allowed from prep/hands level, **may not flip more than 0.5 rotations** (to get from handstand to upright position assisted catch to performing surface), **and may not twist.** (Note, may twist as in roundoff down but must stay connected, can't release.)
- v. An athlete in a backbend or inverted position on the performing surface may not be in contact with a top person.
- vi. Top person can be released from cradle to inverted position.
- vii. Suspended roll transitions (e.g., arabesque rolldown, backwalkover rolldown) that maintain continuous contact with brace/post/base(s) are allowed and must be caught in a cradle or assisted to the performing surface.
- viii. Pancake inversion transitions are allowed and may not stop or land in the inverted position.
- j. **Single based split catches are not allowed.**
- k. **Front, back and side tension drops are not allowed.**

2. More Clarification on Tosses

a. Definitions:

- i. "Tosses" include any airborne stunt where base(s) execute a throwing motion initiated from waist level to increase the height of the top person (exceeds 18 inches from point of release). The top person becomes free from all contact of bases/bracers. The top person is free from the performance surface when toss is initiated.
- ii. PCA is adopting ICU terminology, which combines "basket tosses" and "sponge tosses" (essentially any toss that originates from waist level) and exceeds 18 inches from the point of release, under the broad term "Tosses."
 - 1. A "basket toss" is a Toss involving 2 or 3 bases and a spotter - 2 of the bases use their hands to grip wrists and interlock with other base. The top person has both feet **on** the bases' hands prior to the toss.

2. A "sponge toss" (sometimes referred to as "shotgun") is also a Toss, but differs from a basket toss in its load-in grip. The top person is tossed from the toe-heel load-in position (waist level). The top person has both feet **in** the bases' hands prior to the toss.

b. These are NOT Tosses

- i. A sponge or basket grip toss that does not exceed 18 inches above the bases' extended arm level or the point of release. These are "Releases" under "Mounts and Transitions."
- ii. A powerpress from chest level. Tosses are from waist level.
- iii. A sponge or basket load-in position used to **release**, (provided the height does not exceed 18in from the point of release) or to **mount a top person in a stunt**, provided that the height of the release does not significantly exceed the height of the intended stunt. These are, then, not tosses. They are Releases covered in Mounts and Transitions.

- c. Tosses may only be performed from waist level. Top person in a toss must have both feet in/on bases' hands when toss is initiated.
- d. Only a single (1) top person is allowed during a Toss
- e. Tosses can use no more than four (4) bases, and must be cradled by three (3) of the original bases, one (1) of which must catch in a scoop under the head and shoulders.
- f. Top person of tosses must land in a cradle position (on the back, flexed into a V sit, cradle caught by bases); tosses may not catch in prone and may not land on the performing surface.
- g. Tosses may not be directed so that the bases must move to catch the top person.

3. More Clarification on Dismounts

- a. Definition: The ending movement from a stunt that is **released** to a cradle or prone catch at waist level or **released** and assisted to the performing surface.

- i. Can exceed 18in from the point of release.
- ii. Can be caught in cradle, prone, or assist to performing surface

b. These are NOT Dismounts

- i. Movement from a cradle to the performing surface (e.g., "dish out"). A skill from the cradle to the performing surface (e.g., barrel roll out) is a Transition and will follow Stunt rules for twisting, transitions.

- ii. Ending Movement from stunt to cradle or performing surface that maintains contact (does not release) is not a Dismount. Bumpdowns, corkscrew downs, partner stunt retakes (reverse of walk-in), inverted rolldowns and others that remain contact with bases are Transitions, not Dismounts.
 - iii. Released movements to the load-in position are not Dismounts (as Dismounts must end in cradle, prone, or assisted to ground). These are Transitions.
 - c. Dismounts with more than one and one quarter twists require an additional spotter that assists on the cradle.
 - d. Dismounts must return to original base(s),
 - i. Exception: Single based stunts with multiple top persons do not need to (and in some instances cannot) return to original base(s) of the Group.
 - ii. Exception: Dismounts to the performing surface:
 - 1. must be assisted by either an original base and/or spotter.
 - 2. straight drops or small hop offs, with no additional skills, from waist level or below are the only dismounts allowed to the performing surface without assistance. An individual may not land on the performing surface from above waist level without assistance.
 - e. When cradling single based stunts with multiple tops, 2 catchers must catch each top. Catchers and bases must be stationary prior to the initiation of the dismount. As the Group Stunt division in this event only allows 5 competitors, if single based stunts with multiple top persons are cradling, they would need to cradle one top person at a time, to 2 catchers each time, in order to be legal.
 - f. Dismounts may not pass over, under or through other stunts, pyramids or individuals.
 - g. Dismounts may not intentionally travel.
 - h. Top persons in dismounts may not come in contact with each other while released from the bases
4. Tumbling
- a. Tumbling will not be specifically scored in Group Stunt and Partner Stunt, but may contribute to the "Impact Score" section.
 - b. Standing and running tumbling skills are allowed up to 1 flipping rotation and 2 twisting rotations.

- c. Tumbling performed over, under, or through group/partner stunts, pyramids, or individuals is prohibited.
 - d. Tumbling over props or weightbearing tumbling while holding props is allowed (exception: props w/ poles are prohibited during tumbling). (Props are prohibited during dismounts from stunts.)
 - e. Dive rolls are allowed. Dive rolls with twisting are prohibited.
 - f. Airborne drops (to knee, seat, front, back, split, etc.) from a tumbling skill are not allowed unless the majority of the weight is first borne on the hands or feet, which breaks the impact of the drop. Shushunovas are allowed. Clarification: Drops that include any weight bearing contact with the hands and feet are not in clear violation of this rule.
 - g. Each violation will incur one 5 point Safety Rule deduction
5. Pyramids
- a. 2.5 high pyramids are not allowed in the Group Stunt Division of this competition because of inadequate spotting dedicated to the top person in such stunts as performed with 5 competitors.
 - b. One arm extended Paper Dolls are not allowed in Group Stunt because of inadequate spotting dedicated to the top people in these stunts as performed with 5 competitors.
 - c. Examples of Pyramids with 5 people:
 - i. Extended partner stunt lib hitch to two-person prep
 - ii. Extended two-person lib hitch to partner stunt in hands.
 - d. Pyramids must follow stunt and Spotter rules.

Judging & Scoring: Group Stunt & Partner Stunt

1. **Judging:** Competition routines will be adjudicated by a panel of Judges. PCA makes a concerted effort to ensure diversity on this panel, including diversity in where their cheerleading judging experience comes from. Consistent with that mission, “Judges discretion” is welcomed and praised. For this reason, the scoring system includes **ranges of points and progressions**, instead of just precise point values, to serve as more of a guide than a rubric. Judges also may **score down to fractions of**

points (+/- 0.5, +/- 0.25) in both additive categories (points earned) and deductions (points subtracted).

2. **Completing the Scoresheets:** The Scoresheet includes 3 categories of additive points (points that can be earned and are summed): IMPACT SCORES, DIFFICULTY SCORES, TECHNIQUE SCORES. Scoring rubrics accompany the Scoresheet to guide the Judges in these additive point areas. (Details in next section.) The Scoresheet also includes one section of subtractive points (DEDUCTIONS). Prior to the start of the event, the panel of Judges will select a Head Judge, whose responsibility includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that each Scoresheet is filled out completely and correctly. The Scoresheet is designed so that a single judge can score all areas. However, as a group, the Judges may determine judge-specific specialty scoring areas and will define fair, equitable, and feasible processes for Scoresheet completion and score calculation. It is possible, but unlikely, that the quantity and diverse expertise of Judges allows for the Scoresheet to be divided up such that one Scoresheet is completed per competition group and all Judges contribute to that Scoresheet equitably (in that case, skip the Averaging process). It is also possible, and more likely, that all judges on a panel will all judge all areas, complete their own scoresheets, and additive scores will be averaged (described in the last section of this document).
3. **Progression Sheets:** Progression Sheets accompany the Scoresheet to guide judges in scoring the DIFFICULTY SCORES. These Progression Sheets were developed and updated by PCA for PCA hosted competitions. Much is derived from [ICU University Premier](#) level rules and scoring. High level non flipping toss progressions most closely follow [Varsity All Star Elite Level 6 & 7 Worlds Coed including IASF Divisions](#) and Dismount progressions are also similar to [NAIA](#), however differences between PCA and mainstream exist intentionally to respect intellectual property and to express differences in brand values.
 - a. If a judge is following the progression sheet guidelines closely, there may be a skill that could theoretically earn >10 points. (The human capacity is seemingly infinite, even within the Max Skills & Legalities we define.) Rather than create a new system, judges must conform to the 10 point max and consider awarding points in IMPACT SCORES for these impressive skills

4. **Ranking:** In each division (Partner Stunt and Group Stunt are the only divisions at this competition), the highest total scoring routine will receive a gold medal, second highest will receive a silver medal, and third highest will receive a bronze medal. In the event of only one group in a division, the silver and bronze medals will not be awarded. In the event of only two groups, the bronze medal will not be awarded. In the event of a tie among any amount of groups in any division, all members of the tie will receive the higher medal. (If physical medals are unavailable at the event, contact PCA..)
5. **Appeals:** Any member of any competitive group may approach the Judges to appeal their score, its calculation, and/or ranking for a set appeal time period (likely 15min) announced by PCA after the close of competition. Appeal will consist of competitor stating the specific score(s), calculation(s), or ranking they are contesting and why, with reference to video and Scoresheets/Rulebook as relevant. Each appeal will receive equitable reconsideration. Score reconsideration will consist of re-watching official recording of the routine and re-calculation and re-ranking as appropriate. Any adjustments to original scores and/or rankings must be approved by the Head Judge before finalized.

Scoresheets & Calculation: Group & Partner Stunt

1. **IMPACT SCORES: "What impact did performance & performers have on the community, spectators, & Judges?"** (Additive points. Max = 30)
 - a. **Fundraising Score:** Scored within each division. For rankings, e.g., "3rd highest" means "3rd highest against other Partner Stunts" not "3rd highest of the whole competition" (Max = 10)
 - i. Each competitive group is expected to participate in fundraising associated with the competition, following the specific parameters set by PCA (see separate Fundraising Parameters document, available upon request)
 - ii. Scoresheet accommodates a broad range of donations and rewards any amount over \$0 with at least 1 point.
 - iii. Up to 10 points are possible in this section (this exists in Partner Stunt, Group Stunt, *and Pom* divisions. Stunt discussed here.)

1. 10 points total to the Partner Stunt group that collects the highest value in total monetary donations of all Partner Stunt groups. 8 to the second highest. 6 to the 3rd highest, and so on down to 2 points for the 5th highest.
 2. 10 points total to the Group Stunt group that collects the highest value in total monetary donations of all Group Stunt groups. 8 to the second highest. 6 to the 3rd highest, and so on down to 2 points for the 5th highest.
 3. 1 point total to any Partner Stunt or Group Stunt group that brings in any donation amount above \$0, if it does not rank in the top 5 as above.
- b. **Choreography/Theme:** Appeal and creativity of apparel, props, theme, choreography (of stunts AND of motions, dance, tumbling, jumps, transitions). Appropriateness for this event. What *this routine* was designed to showcase. (Max = 10)
 - c. **Athlete Showmanship:** Performers' expression, engagement, and energy throughout the routine. Appropriateness for this event. What *these people* did with this routine. (Max = 10)
2. **DIFFICULTY SCORES: Difficulty level of the ONE most difficult Toss, the TWO most difficult Mounts & Transitions, and the ONE most difficult Dismount in the routine.** (Additive points. Max = 40 for Group Stunt, Max = 30 for Partner Stunt (no Tosses in Partner Stunt).)
 - a. Scores are based on progressions within the **three categories (Tosses, Mounts & Transitions, Dismounts)** below. Progression Sheets are separate from the Scoresheet and will serve as a guide for the Judges' scoring. "Judge's discretion" is encouraged.
 - b. To score DIFFICULTY SCORES, Judges will not score every trick performed in a routine. Judges will identify and score the ONE trick (or TWO tricks, in the case of **Mounts & Transitions**), in each of the **three categories** below, executed with the highest difficulty. All lesser tricks in that category will not be scored, but could add to build IMPACT SCORES and do contribute to TECHNIQUE SCORES. Tricks must hit or be saved (not drop) to receive a score. Even a poorly-executed trick will receive a score (likely with deductions), as long as it hits and/or is saved. Tricks that drop will not receive a score; judges will then score the next highest trick that hits/is

saved to complete the score for that category. Failure to execute any trick in a given category will earn 0 points for that category.

- c. Additional transitional stunting or acrobatic skill elements that are not captured in the **three categories** can be rewarded in the IMPACT SCORE for Choreography. Technique during these elements will also be assessed to complete the TECHNIQUE SCORE.

d. Three categories:

- i. **Tosses (scored for Group Stunt only) (Max = 10)**
 - 1. Score only the ONE highest-difficulty trick (Max = 10)
- ii. **Mounts & Transitions (Max = 20)**
 - 1. Score the TWO highest-difficulty tricks
 - a. Max = 10 for the highest-difficulty trick
 - b. Max = another 10 for the second-highest-difficulty trick
- iii. **Dismounts (Max = 10)**
 - 1. Score only the ONE highest-difficulty trick (Max = 10)

- 3. **TECHNIQUE SCORES: Execution of all elements in the routine (not just the highest-difficulty trick) by members of the group or partner stunt.** (Additive points. Max = 30.)

- a. Execution of Technique by **Bases** (sides, front/back, partner stunt base) during stunting (Max = 10)
- b. Execution of Technique by **Top Person(s)** during stunts (Max = 10)
- c. Execution of Technique by **all group members** during Motions, Dance, Tumbling, Jumps, etc. (Max = 10)

- 4. **DEDUCTIONS: Deductions for bobbles, falls, early cradles, safety violations, and time limit violations.** These are subtractive points deducted from the Average Total score.

- a. **Building Bobble (deduct 1 point each incident):** Stunts/tosses that almost drop/fall but are saved, including incomplete twisting cradles.
- b. **Fall, early cradle, or illegal use of Required Spotter in Partner Stunt (deduct 2 points each incident):** Uncontrolled cradle/dismount, bringing down early. Base falling to the floor. Partner Stunt Required Spotter assist in balancing, saving, lifting, tossing, repositioning top person – encouraged for safety when needed, but termed “illegal” because it results in a deduction.

- c. **Top person fall to floor (deduct 3 points each incident):** Falls from stunt or toss where top person touches the performing surface
 - d. **Safety Rule Violation (deduct 5 points each incident):** Trick outside of "Max Tricks" in PCA Rules, violation of any safety rule of this event, explicit language/offensive theme.
 - e. **Time Limit Violation (deduction based on length):** Deductions when music or performing of the routine runs over 1:00 minute.
 - i. up to 5 seconds over time: deduct 1 point
 - ii. >5 to 10 seconds over time: deduct 4 points
 - iii. > 10 seconds over time: deduct 8 points
5. **Calculation:** Here is the step by step process for score calculation:
- a. On Scoresheet pg 1, each judge's additive scores in the Subtotals column (3 Impact Scores, 3 Difficulty Scores, 3 Technique Scores) are summed to obtain a Sum Total for that Judge.
 - b. Once each Judge's Sum Total is calculated, an Average Total Score for the routine will be calculated by averaging the Sum Totals across Judges. (E.g., Judge 1 Sum + Judge 2 Sum + Judge 3 Sum, divided by 3.) (Skip the averaging step if the panel of judges is equipped to contribute equitably and fairly to scoring only one Scoresheet per competitive group.)
 - c. On Scoresheet pg 2, to calculate deductions, multiply the number of incidents of each type of deduction by the correct multiplier in each category to obtain Subtotal Deductions. Sum these subtotal deductions to obtain the Total Deductions for that routine. (These are to be calculated **once for each routine** - could be assigned to one judge, or could be the conclusion of a consensus of Judges.)
 - d. From the Average Total Score, subtract Total Deductions (summed only once, not averaged across Judges) to obtain the Grand Total score for use in ranking.

Pom

Max Tricks & Legalities: Pom

There are no levels and no other dance categories within PCA's Charitable Cheerleading competition. However, "Max Tricks" do exist for Dance Lifts / Tumbling skills (see section 1 below). Every group is competing at the same level against the same scoresheet designed for Pom, a derivative of cheerleading. **An entry in the Pom division will incorporate use of poms by majority of the competitors, for the majority of the routine.** Other props like Spirit Buckets may be incorporated in addition to, but not substituting for, poms. If acquiring poms to compete in this division is a barrier, contact events@pridecheerleading.org. Rules are designed with the expectation that Pom routines will be performed on the same floor as cheer routines.

1. Tumbling Max Tricks (same as Group Stunt/Partner Stunt)
 - a. Standing and running tumbling skills are allowed up to 1 flipping rotation and 2 twisting rotations. (Note: "High" scoring tumbling skills start at Aerials, Front or back tucks, Multiple handsprings / combo, Roundoff handspring, tuck, combo.)
 - b. Tumbling performed over, under, or through lifts or individuals is prohibited.
 - c. Tumbling over props or weightbearing tumbling while holding props is allowed (exception: props w/ poles are prohibited during tumbling). (Props are prohibited during dismounts from lifts.)
 - d. Dive rolls are allowed. Dive rolls with twisting are prohibited.
 - e. Airborne drops (to knee, seat, front, back, split, etc.) from a tumbling skill are not allowed unless the majority of the weight is first borne on the hands or feet, which breaks the impact of the drop. Shushunovas are allowed. Clarification: Drops that include any weight bearing contact with the hands and feet are not in clear violation of this rule.
 - f. Each violation will incur one 5 point Safety Rule deduction
2. Dance Lifts Max Tricks
 - a. Definition: Dance Lifts = Dancer is elevated from the performance surface by one or more dancers and set back down. Dancer can be elevated upright or inverted.

- b. How high can they go? Dance lift height is measured by the height of the **lowest part of the top person**. Dance lifts are either:
- i. Low Lifts (Lowest part of the top person doesn't go above base's waist level. A low lift can finish, hold, stop at waist level and still be legal.)
 - ii. Mid Lifts (Lowest part of the top person is above waist but at or below base's shoulder level. A mid lift can finish, hold, stop at shoulder level and still be legal.)
 - iii. High Lifts (Lowest part of the top person passes through base's extension level, e.g. overpop or show-n-go. Legalities for this competition prohibit lifts from finishing, holding, or stopping at extended level. They must come back down to a lower level if they are going to be held there.)
- c. Dismounts: If a lift holds, stops, finishes above the ground, how may it come down? Dance lifts that end at base's waist or shoulder level may dismount using any dismount that is legal in the Group Stunt (if supported by required amount of bases) or Partner Stunt (if supported by required amount of bases) category. However, dismounts are not specifically scored in Pom. Points for appealing dismounts may, but do not necessarily, add to the Choreography IMPACT SCORE, but poor technical execution of the dismount could also decrease the TECHNIQUE SCORES in the areas of Technique of Skills, Synchronization, and Sharpness and placement (of motions and of body control during skills). The judges are looking for lifts that have high difficulty during the lift, and come down clean.
- d. Releases: releases *during* Dance Lifts are *illegal*. These are all braced airborne skills. There must be **at least one gripped point of contact** between the top and one or more supporting bases (e.g., minimum: one base grips one of top's wrists with one hand, one base grips one of top's feet with one hand). While braced, the top may execute **up to one flip** and **up to one twist**.

Judging & Scoring: Pom

1. **Judging:** Competition routines will be adjudicated by a panel of Judges. PCA makes a concerted effort to ensure diversity on this panel, including diversity in where their cheerleading judging experience comes from. Consistent with that mission, “Judges discretion” is welcomed and praised. For this reason, the scoring system includes **ranges of points and progressions**, instead of just precise point values, to serve as more of a guide than a rubric. Judges also may **score down to fractions of points (+/- 0.5, +/- 0.25)** in both additive categories (points earned) and deductions (points subtracted).
2. **Completing the Scoresheets:**
 - a. At the top right of the scoresheet, it is important to write the number of athletes in the competition group and the number which would represent majority (majority is defined as **greater than 50%**; for an even number of athletes, follow the “50% + 1” rule.) This is important for calculating the difficulty score.
 - b. The Scoresheet includes 3 categories of additive points (points that can be earned and are summed): IMPACT SCORES, DIFFICULTY SCORES, TECHNIQUE SCORES.
 - i. Progression Sheets accompany the Scoresheet to guide the Judges in the DIFFICULTY scores. (Details in next section.)
 - c. The Scoresheet also includes one section of subtractive points (DEDUCTIONS). This can be the responsibility of one judge.
 - d. Prior to the start of the event, the panel of Judges will select a Head Judge, whose responsibility includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that each Scoresheet is filled out completely and correctly. The Scoresheet is designed so that a single judge can score all areas. However, as a group, the Judges may determine judge-specific specialty scoring areas and will define fair, equitable, and feasible processes for Scoresheet completion and score calculation. It is possible, but unlikely, that the quantity and diverse expertise of Judges allows for the Scoresheet to be divided up such that one Scoresheet is completed per competition group and all Judges contribute to that Scoresheet equitably (in that case, skip the Averaging process). It is also possible, and more

likely, that all judges on a panel will all judge all areas, complete their own scoresheets, and additive scores will be averaged (described in the last section of this document).

- e. Scoresheets & Calculation section below describes how to score each section
3. **Progression Sheets:** Progression Sheets are the scoring rubrics that accompany the Scoresheet to guide judges in scoring the DIFFICULTY SCORES. These were developed and updated by PCA for PCA hosted competitions. Differences between PCA and mainstream cheer/dance are expected and exist intentionally to respect intellectual property and to express differences in brand values.
4. **Ranking:** The highest total scoring routine will receive a gold medal, second highest will receive a silver medal, and third highest will receive a bronze medal. In the event of only one group in a division, the silver and bronze medals will not be awarded. In the event of only two groups, the bronze medal will not be awarded. In the event of a tie among any amount of groups in any division, all members of the tie will receive the higher medal. (If physical medals are unavailable, contact PCA.)
5. **Appeals:** Any member of any competitive group may approach the Judges to appeal their score, its calculation, and/or ranking for a set amount of time after the competition is closed. PCA will announce the appeal time period (likely 15mins) at the competition. Appeal will consist of competitor stating the specific score(s), calculation(s), or ranking they are contesting and why, with reference to video and Scoresheets/Rulebook as relevant. Each appeal will receive equitable reconsideration. Score reconsideration will consist of re-watching official recording of the routine and re-calculation and re-ranking as appropriate. Any adjustments to original scores and/or rankings must be approved by the Head Judge before finalized.

Scoresheets & Calculation: Pom

1. **IMPACT SCORES: “What impact did performance & performers have on the community, spectators, and Judges?”** (Additive points. Max = 30)

- a. **Fundraising Score:** Scored within each division. For rankings, e.g., "3rd highest" means "3rd highest against other Pom groups" not "3rd highest of the whole competition" (Max = 10)
 - i. Each competitive group is expected to participate in fundraising associated with the competition, following the specific parameters set by PCA (see separate Fundraising Parameters document, available upon request)
 - ii. Scoresheet accommodates a broad range of donations and rewards any amount over \$0 with at least 1 point.
 - iii. Up to 10 points are possible in this section
 1. 10 points total to the Pom group that collects the highest value in total monetary donations of all Pom groups. 8 to the second highest. 6 to the 3rd highest, and so on down to 2 points for the 5th highest.
 2. 1 point total to any Pom group that brings in any donation amount above \$0, if it does not rank in the top 5 as above.
 - b. **Choreography/Theme:** (*What this routine was designed to showcase.*) Appeal and creativity of your use of poms, optional props, apparel, theme, choreography/transitions, and variety of skills; appropriateness of this routine for this event. (Max = 10)
 - c. **Athlete Showmanship:** (*What these people did with this routine.*) Performers' expression, engagement, and energy throughout the routine, and its appropriateness for this event. (Max = 10)
2. **DIFFICULTY SCORES: Score is based on the relative difficulty level** (low, medium, high - see grid below), **and percent of performers doing the skills** (is it **half or less** than half; or is it **more** than half). *This is why judges put the total and what amount constitutes majority (>50%) on the top right of the sheet first.* (Additive points. **Max = 50**). A Group gets a zero (0) in a category if no skills in that category are performed.

Below is a **new (for 2025)** reference for determining the low, medium or high **difficulty** of skills performed in a Pom routine.

NEW FOR SCC 2025: Pom Skills PROGRESSION SHEET (Difficulty)

Difficulty of Skills (5 Categories are: Turns, Kicks, Leaps, Jumps, and Dance Lifts/Tumbling Skills)

Score is based on the relative difficulty level (low, med, or high), quantity performed, % of performers doing the skills.

This Progression Sheet helps determine **relative difficulty level (low, medium, or high)** of common skills. It is not exhaustive. Judge will also count quantity performed and calculate if skills are performed by half or less than half or by more than half of the team

SKILLS	LOW 1 pt: low difficulty skills done by half or less than half the team 2-3 pts: low difficulty skills done by more than half the team	MEDIUM 4-5 pts: medium difficulty skills done by half or less than half the team 6-7 pts: medium difficulty skills done by more than half the team	HIGH 8-9 pts: high difficulty skills done by half or less than half the team. 10 pts: high difficulty skills done by more than half the team.
URNS	Single Pirouette turn Tour en L'air Pirouette sur le cou-de-pied Turns with Chase 1-2 Chenne Turns 1 Foutette Posé Turn	Double Pirouette turn 2-3 Fouette Turns 3+ Chenne Turns Axel Turn	Triple Pirouette turn Illusion 4+ fouettes Turns changing spots Leg Holding turns Double tour en l'air
KICKS	1+ low level kicks (below waist) (front or side)	1+ Medium level kicks (above waist, below shoulder) (front or side or fan)	1+ High Kicks (above shoulder) (front, side, fan or tilt) Combination Kicks that include 1+ high kick
LEAPS	Grande Jete Grande Jete Developpe Tilt Leap	Leap in Second Calypso Firebird Jete	Switch split leap Switch firebird leap Turning Discs
JUMPS	Spread Eagle or Star jump Tuck Jump	Toe touch Side Hurdler Front Hurdler Pike	Combination jumps (2+ connected jumps without a prep in between)
DANCE LIFTS AND TUMBLING	Low Lifts (Lowest part of the top person doesn't go above base's waist level.) Cartwheel Forward / backward roll Shoulder roll	Mid Lifts (Lowest part of the top person is above waist but at or below base's shoulder level.) Back extension roll Roundoff Front/back walkover 1 front/back handspring	High Lifts (Lowest part of top person passes through base's extension level, e.g. overpop or show-n-go. Legalities prohibit lifts from finishing, holding, or stopping at extended level.) Aerial Front or back tucks Multiple handsprings / combo Roundoff handspring,tuck,combo

3. **TECHNIQUE SCORES: Technical execution of the elements in the routine. Score is based on judges' discretion.** A general rule for each of the four technique scores is: Below average = 0-4, Average = 5-8, Above average = 9-10. (Max = 40).
 - a. Technique of the skills (turns, kicks, leaps, jumps, dance lifts, tumbling) performed. (Max = 10)
 - b. Spacing (formations, transitions, staging). (Max = 10)
 - c. Synchronization (timing in unison in moves, floorwork, and skills performed). (Max = 10)
 - d. Sharpness and placement (of motions and of body control during skills performed). (Max = 10)
4. **DEDUCTIONS: Deductions for collisions, falls, safety violations, and time limit violations.** These are subtractive points deducted from the Average Total score once it is calculated.
 - a. **Collisions & Prop Drops (Deduct 1 point each incident, (each collision not each person)).**
 - b. **Athlete Falls/Drops to floor (deduct 3 points each incident).**
 - c. **Safety Rule Violation (deduct 5 points each incident):** Trick outside of "Max Tricks" in PCA Rules, violation of any safety rule of this event, explicit language/offensive theme.
 - d. **Time Limit Violation (deduction based on length):** Deductions when music or performing of the routine runs over 3:00 minutes.
 - i. up to 5 seconds over time: deduct 1 point
 - ii. >5 to 10 seconds over time: deduct 4 points
 - iii. > 10 seconds over time: deduct 8 points
5. **Calculation:** Here is the step by step process for score calculation:
 - a. On Scoresheet pg 1, each judge's additive scores in the Subtotals column (3 Impact Scores, 3 Difficulty Scores, 4 Technique Scores) are summed to obtain a Sum Total for that Judge.
 - b. Once each Judge's Sum Total is calculated, an Average Total Score for the routine will be calculated by averaging the Sum Totals across Judges. (E.g., Judge 1 Sum + Judge 2 Sum + Judge 3 Sum, divided by 3.) (Skip the averaging step if the panel of judges is equipped to contribute equitably and fairly to scoring only one Scoresheet per competitive group.)

- c. On Scoresheet pg 2, to calculate deductions, multiply the number of incidents of each type of deduction by the correct multiplier in each category to obtain Subtotal Deductions. Sum these subtotal deductions to obtain the Total Deductions for that routine. (These are to be calculated **once for each routine** - could be assigned to one judge, or could be the conclusion of a consensus of Judges.)
- d. From the Average Total Score, subtract Total Deductions (summed only once, not averaged across Judges) to obtain the Grand Total score for use in ranking.