

Saskatchewan Cheerleading Association

# Judging Policy



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# Saskatchewan Cheerleading Association

## Judging Policy

### Definitions

The following terms have these meanings in this Policy:

- a) “Association” – [Saskatchewan Cheerleading Association \(SCA\)](#)
- b) “Event Producer” – The party responsible for organizing an event/competition. This party shall be the ones responsible for retaining the services of SCA judging.

### Purpose

This policy describes how the SCA provides judging services, the rules and regulations competitions must follow should they be an SCA judged event, and the requirements to become an SCA certified judge.

### Scope and Application of this Policy

Any event where the SCA judging services have been retained must adhere to the SCA judging policy.

### SCA Judging Services

The SCA will train and maintain a limited number of judges. These judges can be contracted by event producers.

### Scheduling Judges

Scheduling judges will be at the sole discretion of the SCA. The SCA will not take specific requests from event producers for certain judges to be added or removed from the panel. When possible, the SCA will make reasonable efforts to schedule judges who live geographically closer to the event. When panels have two judges per score sheet (recommended) the SCA will make reasonable efforts to pair judges with partners who are not from the same affiliated club and/or program together. However, these efforts will depend on certified judges available for each event as well as the competition schedule at each event since many Saskatchewan judges are also athletes and coaches within the same event. Event producers who contract SCA judging services understand that scheduling judges is under the sole discretion of the SCA. Specific panel/judge requests cannot be entertained to properly create the panels required. If an event producer chooses to bring in additional out-of-province judges, they must be appropriately trained, and the SCA will incorporate these judges into the panel with the Saskatchewan-based judges. It is the sole responsibility of the event producer to negotiate and determine pay rate for out-of-province judges. If the event producer would like the SCA to make payment to these judges this can be arranged between the event producer and the SCA executive director, and the event producer will reimburse the SCA for this cost.

### Training

All judges will be appropriately trained, having passed Cheer Canada exams and/or IASF Legality Official Training, and adhere to a specific Judges Code of Conduct to ensure professionalism and impartiality in decision making when they are working on behalf of the SCA. SCA judges will only judge based on the score sheets for which they have been trained on. Deviation from the SCA-approved Cheer Canada score sheets may require the event producer to source outside judges.

### Cost

The SCA will calculate and invoice the event producer for the total cost of the judging honorariums and score sheet costs. The SCA will then in turn pay the judges on behalf of the event producer.

Judges are paid an hourly rate based on the final competition schedule.



Level	Host Fee/ Hour
Score Sheet Prep.	Minimum Wage
1	\$20.00
2	\$25.00
3 & Administrator	\$30.00
Head & Safety Judge	\$35.00

## Panel Set-up

It is ideal to run the competition with two panels judging alternately. A triple panel may also be used, and is typically two cheer panels, and one performance cheer panel. This allows for each panel to accurately fill out their score sheets while keeping the competition running smoothly. A four-minute routine time frame is ideal; however, this is at the discretion of the event producer. Should only one panel be requested, there must be time scheduled in between routines to allow the judges to complete their scores sheets and the routine interval must be a minimum of 6 minutes.

Each competition is unique therefore judging requirements and panels will be determined by the event producer in conjunction with the SCA executive director and/or judging director.

### Cheer Panel

Cheer panels will have one or two judges for each scoresheet: Overall, Tumbling, and Building. It is recommended that each scoresheet have two judges working together to complete the scoring. This is particularly helpful on the building and tumbling score sheets where the judges must evaluate difficulty and execution of skills. The level and number of judges on each panel (minimum of 3, maximum of 6) is at the discretion of the event producer within the limits of judge availability. Should the event producer choose to have less than two judges per scoresheet and/or choose to only have level 1 or 2 judges they agree and understand this may impact the quality of judging including the ability to give comments. The SCA can only accommodate specific judging level requests if availability and training allows.

### Safety Panel

It is mandatory for multi-session events, **two** safety judges work together to complete the safety and deductions score sheet. In addition, it is mandatory for large events, that a Judges Consultant will be an additional SCA trained judge who will act as Head Judge and review all appeals submitted by coaches.

For single session events of 3 hours or less, only one safety judge is required and will act as a Judges Consultant and complete head judging duties. This includes being responsible for watching all routines in order help the panel judges, assist with training of first year judges, and clarifying rules when discrepancies arise for both judges and coaches as well as review all appeals submitted by coaches.

### Performance Cheer Panel

Performance cheer panels will consist of a minimum of three judges up to a maximum of six judges. The number of judges is at the event producer's request.

## Event Producer Duties

Event producers must contact the SCA executive director a minimum of **three months** prior to the event in order to contract the SCA to provide the judges and/or score sheets for said event. The event producer must fill out the SCA Judging Services Request Form, located on the SCA website (Appendix B). **SCA resources (i.e. judges) will be assigned to competitions on a first come first serve basis.**

Event producers must provide the executive director with the competition block schedule, award divisions, specialty awards and announcement order no less than **one week** prior to an invitational event. It is ideal

to have the full competition schedule no less than one week prior as well. Should individual team order change due to an extenuating circumstance (i.e. cross over due to an injury/illness) after this one-week period the event producer must inform the executive director ASAP. When building the competition order, it is recommended that the event producer place divisions/age ranges together and on the same panel. If changes are made to the order of performance, it is important to inform the executive director as soon as possible.

On the day of the competition, event producers must provide the following:

- A private area for the judges to meet one hour before the competition begins.
- A Judges table which is prepared with enough table space and seating space/chairs and has a clear view of the competition floor.
- An administration and Score-check area with a minimum of two tables and access to power.
- A volunteer who is located next to the competition floor that will display the cheer athlete numbers.

### **SCA Judging Rules and Regulations**

1. All SCA sanctioned events policies are to be followed and will be enforced by the SCA judging staff.
2. The SCA follows Cheer Canada Scoresheets and Deduction System for all divisions and categories, including performance cheer.
  - a. The SCA judging staff makes all final decisions regarding penalties incurred due to rule violations (including image policy and unsportsmanlike conduct) and routine infractions, not the event producer.
3. All SCA sanctioned events must adhere to the Cheer Canada/IASF/ICU Image Policy and the Unsportsmanlike Conduct Policy. The SCA judging staff will enforce these policies.
4. The Safety Judge reserves the right to halt a routine if the following occur:
  - a. The mat splits or becomes unsafe.
  - b. An injury occurs.
  - c. The routine is deemed unsafe by the judges.
5. Coaches have the right to stop their team's routine at the music station if an injury occurs that places the injured athlete or other athletes at risk of further injury, as a result of the injured athlete being unable to participate to their normal skill level. An injured athlete may also leave the mat at any time during the routine, with no further penalty being incurred (a safety deduction will be given for the initial injury if it is the result of a fall or unsafe skill being performed, within the limitations of the score sheet being used, but there is no additional deduction for the athlete leaving the mat).
6. Should the routine be interrupted (see above 4 & 5), the safety judge must follow these steps:
  - a. Note the time of the interruption.
  - b. Deduct for the fall/incident when applicable (if that was what caused the routine to stop)
  - c. During the second performance, the team must perform a full out routine from the beginning. The judges will only score from the routine from the stoppage time onwards (do not rescore portion before the interruption). The score of will be determined by a combination of both performances. Any infractions incurred from the first run will be included on the second run's score.
7. If a routine interruption occurs which puts the athletes at a noticeable disadvantage, the coach or teacher advisor must speak to the head/appeals judge within 15 minutes of the conclusion of the performance in question to request a second performance. If the team chooses to perform again,

**the Head Judge, in conjunction with the even producer, will determine when the team will perform.**

8. All IASF/ICU approved props may be placed or safely tossed off the mat during performance without penalty.
9. In the event of a tie, the following tie breaking steps (in order of priority) shall be followed:
  - a. Team with the highest unweighted Performance score
  - b. Team with the least overall deductions
  - c. Team with the least legality deductions
  - d. Team with highest overall difficulty score
  - e. Judges will be polled. Majority rules. All judging decisions are final.

## **Judging Appeal Process**

Safety scoresheets will be made available to coaches as soon as possible after a team's performance. Coaches can collect their sheets at the designated station and will be required to initial for the time they were collected. Coaches have 15 minutes after collecting their sheets to fill out an appeal form if there is a discrepancy. Appeal forms must be filled out completely and correctly, with as much detail as possible. The Judging Consultant will review the appealed section of the routine with video feedback and complete the results section of the appeal form. If other legalities or deductions are discovered while under review, the Judging Consultant reserves the right to add the infractions to the scoresheet. The coach will be contacted when the appeal is ready to be picked up. The Judging Consultant will be available upon request to discuss the results of the appeal in person. Please refer to Appendix A for the SCA Appeal Form.

**Coaches can only appeal the results of their own team. Requests for review of other team's routines will not be tolerated and could result in an unsportsmanlike conduct deduction for the team making the request.**

## **Approaching the Judges' Table**

~~Coaches, athletes, and spectators (including SCA board members and event producers) may not approach the panel or safety judges during or after the competition.~~ If there are questions or concerns during the session that are not addressed by the appeal form, coaches may approach the designated scoresheet pick up station and request to speak to the ~~Judges Consultant~~ **Head Judge**.

## **Judging Complaints**

The SCA believes the introduction of the appeal process will prevent any errors from reaching the awards ceremony. All coaches will have the ability to review their Safety sheets prior to awards being given out for each session. Judging decisions are FINAL. The Head Judge will be available for 30 minutes after the last session to answer any questions or address any tabulation errors.

For concerns or questions that arise after the completion of an event, the following steps should be taken:

1. Within 5 days of the competition, submit, via e-mail, a letter expressing your concerns to the SCA Executive Director with a copy to the SCA President, and the school teacher/advisor/principal or club owner of the team expressing the concern.
2. The Executive/Judging/Dance Directors will address your concerns in a letter via email within 7 days after receiving the complaint, and after consulting with the judges and other persons concerned. This response will also be sent to those individuals copied in the original complaint letter.

## Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Cheerleading is a subjective sport which uses a comparative score sheet. Judges are trained according to common industry methodology and work to consistently apply these methods in order to properly score teams. Judges are human, and do their best given their training and time constraints at competitions. The SCA prides ourselves on proper education and consistency, however with a subjective sport and a comparative score sheet there will always be variance. All members are required to respect the judges, and their decisions. Remember, without judges, there would be no competition.

The following list outlines prohibited member behaviour with respect to SCA judges:

1. Athletes, parents, or spectators approaching the judge's table. Only the team coach and/or program owner can speak to the Head Judge.
2. Requests to review another team's scores or routine, this includes discussing other team's scores with the Head Judge, panel judges, other officials, or competition hosts via phone calls, text messages, in-person conversation and social media.
3. Yelling, rude language, or an outburst at any judge, including the Head Judge and judging administrators
4. Discussing results, deductions, appeals, scoring, or placings with any panel judges, other officials, or event producers. This includes phone calls, text messages, in-person conversation and social media.
5. Coaches, athletes, parents, spectators, administrators, owners entering the judges room to confront an issue.
6. Publicizing scoresheets including division results and score comparison sheets released to coaches. Coaches may verbally share results with their team but must not provide a copy which in any form.

Individuals who engage in behaviour described above will receive an unsportsmanlike conduct deduction for the team they are associated with. These individuals will also be considered to have violated the Code of Conduct Policy and will be subject to the Discipline and Complaints Policy and the sanctions within.

~~Direct confrontation of the panel judges, event coordinator, or judging consultant is considered inappropriate. Coaches are not allowed to enter the judges' room to confront an issue. Coaches and athletes may not approach any judges regarding scoring rules or competition results. This includes phone call, text messages, in-person conversation and social media. Such actions could result in unsportsmanlike conduct deductions, disqualification or suspension from future SCA competitions.~~

## Video Feedback

Should a coach request for a routine review using video feedback, new Deduction or Limitation infractions viewed during the review will be deducted from the original run's score.

During the competition, judges are to use the video feedback for clarification purposes only. If a judge uses video feedback for clarification and a Deduction or Limitation infraction is viewed during the review, no deduction will occur. Video from each SCA judged competition will be retained for 14 days.

## Non-disclosure Agreement

All SCA certified judges are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. This agreement prevents judges from discussing any routines, scores or judging decisions from all SCA judged competitions. Judges who violate the agreement will no longer be certified to judge for the SCA. This agreement is in place for the following reasons:

- Judges may feel uncomfortable or intimidated when approached with questions.
- Questions directed at multiple judges may result in miscommunication. Directing concerns through the appropriate channels provides consistent and thorough answers.



- Judges volunteer their time. Approaching judges on personal time prevents them from being able to step away from this responsibility when they are not being compensated for it
- The SCA supports all judging decisions, therefore it is not up to individual judges to “justify” or provide reasoning for competition results.

## **Judges Certification**

All judges must attend a minimum of one SCA Judging Training clinic (all training material provided by Cheer Canada) prior to becoming a SCA/Cheer Canada certified judge. Certification for all cheer judges and performance cheer judges will be through Cheer Canada (online certifications).

All judges must pass the Cheer Canada Judging Competency Tests prior to judging each season upon release of the testing from CC.

All returning judges must pass the Judging Competency Exams prior to judging for a new season. Returning judges may be required to attend the SCA judging training clinic in the event they do not pass the certification exam. In seasons where major rule changes and/or scoresheet changes have occurred, ALL returning judges will be required to attend the Certification Clinic prior to challenging the Competency Exam.

Judges cannot judge any team that they coach. This means they cannot both coach and judge a team; however, they can judge teams from the same school or club they coach for. Judges cannot judge any team that they have children or siblings on.

If an individual would like to judge at a competition in which they are competing in, they must seek consent from both the event producer and the SCA Judging or Dance Director.

## **Cheer Judges**

Safety Judge training will not be provided by the SCA. Training is available online through the IASF. School and All-Star cheer divisions will follow the Cheer Canada or SCA approved image policy.

Cheer judges will be trained to judge school and all-star cheer divisions using Cheer Canada methodology. Cheer judges will be trained to judge group and partner stunt, as well as individual tumbling, using Cheer Canada methodology.

Cheer judges will also receive optional training on the administrative role to ensure all judges have a general understanding of how the Excel sheets are set up, how rank sheets are organized, etc.

## **Performance Cheer (Dance) Judges**

Performance Cheer judges will be trained following the school and all-star dance Age Grid, Dance Rules & Age Divisions, which dictates routine requirements and limitations as set out by Cheer Canada and/or the IASF and ICU. Currently, the SCA can only provide dance judges for the Pom, Jazz and Hip-Hop categories. All dance divisions will follow the Cheer Canada or an SCA approved image policy.

Performance Cheer judges will be trained to judge Scholastic and All-Star Performance Cheer divisions using the Cheer Canada Performance Cheer Scoring Methodology or an SCA approved scoring methodology. Dance judges will also receive optional training on the administrative role to ensure all judges have a general understanding of how the Excel sheets are set up, how rank sheets are organized, etc.

## **Administrators**

Administrators will be trained to use the SCA electronic scoring system, along with the process of preparing ranks and scoresheets for distribution. Administrators are selected by the executive director and are specialized judges willing to work the fast paced, intense and high-pressure situation that is ensuring the awards presentation occurs in a correct and timely manner.



## **Judging Duties**

All members of the judging panel must arrive at the competition one hour prior to the start of the competition unless otherwise specified. A judges meeting will be held during this time and judges should use this time to review any issues or rules that pertain to the competition.

The event producer must provide someone at the competition who will confirm the number of athletes competing at the time the team takes the competition floor, typically done with a number board visible to the judges from afar.

## **Safety Judge**

- Ensure at least 1 medical personnel is in attendance.
- Confirm the performance order and communicate to the judging panel.
- Double check the performance order
- Must be familiar with both the cheer and dance ISASF rules.
- Time each team's performance.
- Ensure routine limitations are followed (Rule 2).
- Record any time, general safety, and legality violations for each routine.
- Record any point deductions for each cheer routine (Bobble, Fall, Major Fall & Maximum)
- The Safety Judge cannot be a Panel Judge as well.
- Add all safety deductions.
- Stay after the competition in the competition area to address any safety or other questions that arise.

This position should be appointed to a judge with more than two years' experience, who has experience judging both performance cheer and cheer, and has passed the IASF Safety exams.

## **Panel Judges**

- Double check that your score sheets are correct and in the order of performance.
- Ensure that you know what you will be evaluating:
- Take notes as needed during the performances – this will help in an accurate evaluation.
- Consult with the head/safety judge and/or video feedback if unsure about aspects of your score sheet
- At the discretion of the Judging Director, experienced judges may be paired with a first year or shadow judge to provide additional guidance and real-time training during a competition. If a judge is not comfortable in this role, he/she should discuss this with the Judging Director in advance of the event.

## **Judging Consultant/Head Judge**

- For multi-session events there will be a Judges Consultant to review any appeals of safety infractions or difficulty range errors during each cheer session, before awards are given out.
- The Judges Consultant will also act as the Head Judge.
- If the Judging Director is not present, the consultant will hold the judges meeting prior to the start of the first session to clarify any questions or issues that have come up.
- Ensure the judges have a private area.
- Deal with anyone that approaches the judging table (this is not allowed).
- Review any safety or difficulty range appeals before the end of the session using video feedback.
- Communicate with the panel judges involved as necessary between routines.
- Communicate with coaches when their appeal is ready, and be available to discuss the results of the appeal in person if requested by the coach.
- For single session events (3 hours or less) this position can be combined with the safety judge
- Time permitting; the consultant will act as a reference for the panel and safety judges should any concerns arise.
- Assist Administrator as time allows.





**Administrator(s): Competitions requesting SCA judges are required to use an SCA certified administrator. The event producer may provide additional, manual tabulators as a dual tabulation system.**

- Ensure that all judges arrive and are provided with pens and scrap paper.
- Ensure the judging table is prepared with enough table space and seating space/chairs.
- Assist with set up of the laptops, printer, and scanner.
- Review division ranking excel spreadsheets: double checking all sheets for accuracy, tabulation errors, or omissions.
- Double check the final ranking on the division score sheets. Print the division score sheets once the division is completed. Print a copy for the MC as well as for each team in that division.
- Hand out all original score sheets and rank sheets to coaches after the awards presentation.
- Handle any questions in a professional manner.
- Review the score sheets prior to the start of competition and ask head/safety judge for clarifications
- If a score is missing, correspond with the judges to get it filled in.
- Organize the score sheets by team (if time permits)

\*For multi-session competitions two administrators are required. This keeps the process running smoothly when the Consultant is busy reviewing appeals or assisting the judging panel.

### **Comment Judge (Optional)**

- Double check that your score sheets are correct and in the order of performance.
- Record any non-technical comments. Ensure they are framed in a positive manner.
- Do not comment on what could have been done – comment on what was brought to the performance.
- May select winner of “Judges Choice” competition categories.

### **Judging Levels**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Completed Years of Experience</b>
1	0-1
2	2-3
3	4+

A Judge’s level is based on his/her years of experience but is ultimately chosen at the discretion of the SCA Executive Director.

### **Travel, Per Diems, and Accommodations**

The event producer will provide judges travelling from out of town to competitions mileage will follow the Reasonable Allowance Rate for the current year as set by CRA and with the requirements of carpooling. Mileage will be paid based on carpools of 4 judges. If 2 or more judges travel separately from the main carpool, the mileage amount will be split between drivers. If one judge chooses to travel alone, mileage will not be provided for that judge. If there are less than 4 judges required to travel mileage will still be paid for one vehicle. **Judges who are required to be at the competition as a coach or athlete will not be paid mileage by the SCA or event producer.**

The event producer will pay judges \$12/hour for all travel that is greater than THREE (3) hours in one direction. For example: if a judge needs to travel from Regina to Lloydminster, they will be compensated for 2 hours and 15 minutes each direction (4.5 hours total) at \$12/hour (\$54 total per judge from Regina) since the drive is 5 hours and 15 minutes each way (10.5 hours total).

A per diem will be given during the period of travel time for meals that are not provided by the event producer. Per diem rates can be found in the SCA Finance Administration Policy. The event producer will



be responsible for either providing meals or paying the per diem for meals for which the travel time and competition time overlaps.

If travel is warranted the day prior to and following an event due to early competition start times, late competition end times, over 2-hour drive to the event, and/or inclement weather and road conditions, the event producer will be responsible for providing overnight accommodations for the judges. If judges require accommodations, the event producer must ask how many rooms are required prior to booking, as judges may not be comfortable rooming together. The SCA will ask judges and make reasonable efforts to pair judges together when the judges are comfortable with such arrangements.

Extra compensation during the competition is up to the individual event producers. Judges will be notified of any additional compensation prior to accepting any judging duties.

All mileage, travel time, hotel costs, and per diem charges will be included in the invoice from the SCA.

### **Judges' Code of Conduct**

In addition to following the SCA Code of Conduct policy, SCA certified judges must adhere to the following:

- Ensure that you have signed and comply with the SCA judges' non-disclosure agreement.
- Act and dress in a professional manner. Unacceptable behaviour, language, or clothing will NOT be tolerated and will result in the relinquishment of your duties.
- Perform your duties in a respectful and unprejudiced manner.
- Ensure that you are properly educated to do your job.
- Ensure praise is consistent amongst teams.
- Do not have excessive contact with teams before, during, or after the competition.
- Ensure the performing team has your full, undivided attention.
- Minimize chatter during and between performances.
- All comments should be made in a positive manner.
- No talking, text messaging, or checking your cell phone at the judging table.
- Scores must reflect what has been presented on the competition floor at the time of evaluation; past performance or skill potential cannot be factored into the score. You score what you see.
- Do not comment on the performances to anyone outside the judging panel.
- Do not show favouritism.



### Appendix A – SCA Appeal Form

- 1) You have 15 minutes from the time you pick up your deduction scoresheet to submit an appeal. The time will be recorded upon scoresheet pick-up. Appeal timing may be extended if coaches are dealing with injured athletes at the First Aid station.
- 2) This form must be completed in full and submitted to the score check consultant located at a table next to the judges' table.
- 3) The score check consultant will review the appeal and address the matter. You will be called to the table to pick up your appeal ruling once it is complete.  
**Only appeals based on an error in applying the Cheer Canada/SCA approved rules will be considered.** **NOTE:** should a coach request for a routine review using video feedback, new deduction or limitation infractions viewed during the review will be deducted from the original run's score
- 4) No protest shall be heard on judgement calls/comparative scoring of a panel judge.
- 5) The safety judge is the final decider regarding legality rulings and deductions.
- 6) The following will automatically void an appeal:(Sportsmanship deduction could be in place)
  - a. Failure to observe the time limit.
  - b. Approaching or attempting to influence a judge's decision.
  - c. Seeking explanation or appealing someone else's score
  - d. Deliberate disruptive behavior by the coach, team or an individual.
  - e. Verbally abusing, using profanity or disrespectfully addressing a judge, event host or volunteer

Team Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Division (please include if IASF/ICU division): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ (text/call when appeal is ready)

Section:      Legalities \_\_\_\_\_ Deductions \_\_\_\_\_

Appeal Details (Include as much detail as possible): \_\_\_\_\_

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Coaches' Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of Submission: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Use Only
Reviewed By: _____
Outcome: _____
_____
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## **Appendix B – Judging Request Form**

[Link to the Google Judging Request Form](#)