

Board of Directors
North Dakota High School Activities Association:

I am writing to you on behalf of the North Dakota Cheer Coaches Association (NDCCA), regarding some concerns that we have. These concerns were discussed during our annual meeting March 22nd.

The North Dakota Cheer Coach Association's foundation is to promote good, safe cheerleading, with the focus not on competitions, but promoting school spirit and supporting our teams and school. We emphasize to our North Dakota coaches adhering to the National Federation Spirit Rule Book, which, like the other sport's rule books, is the one recognized by NDHSAA (and most other states in the country). Therefore, it is very disconcerting when these rules are totally ignored at state NDHSAA-sponsored tournaments.

This past November, at the state football championships held in the Fargodome, there were artificial noisemakers used by some schools. When this was mentioned to an NDHSAA official, he replied that it was ok to do so—which was wrong. (page 11, Rule 2:1:11). This month, at the state basketball finals in both Grand Forks and Minot, megaphones were actually being handed out at the events, with the permission of the NDHSAA. This is also illegal, as megaphones can only be used by cheerleaders. (same rule, with megaphones specifically listed). Concerned cheer coaches—that do follow the rules and promote following them by their fans—did point out these infractions to officials, but were told it was ok, which of course it was not. Other infractions that have been reported are fans standing along the sidelines during district tournaments, cheerleaders with jewelry and hair not pulled back at state and regionals, etc.

We propose that there be a Spirit person hired for each state tournament that has cheerleaders—with the exception of wrestling, since there are only a couple that have cheerleaders. This person or persons would be at every game, and would know the rules and enforce them with the help of the tournament officials.

Secondly, we feel that all administrators need to be clear on the rules provided for Spirit by the NFHS. There seems to be discrepancies on what is allowed at schools and what information is being conveyed to coaches, students, and fans. There also have been times when the wrong information has been given out when someone calls the NDHSAA office asking about a rule. For example, some administrators allow artificial noisemakers during football games (which as you know, outdoors is fine). They fail to mention that if a game is brought indoors that they are not allowed, so this is a surprise to fans. Another example is what designates an artificial noisemaker (ie, banging together two sticks, using a megaphone if you are not a bona fide cheerleader, shaking bottles with rocks in them, banging 2 posters on sticks together at hockey games, etc.)

Coaches in all sports are required to attend Rules meetings, and then throughout the year, the rules that are conveyed to other sports are followed and enforced throughout the year. NDCCA would like the same to be done for Spirit—the coaches presently attend rules meetings and take a rules test—but the rules are not enforced by NDHSAA as they are for others.

Finally, Billie Ann Caya is presently doing 100% of the cheer-related jobs/items in North Dakota—certifications; answering questions, including administrators; rules meetings; interpreting rules; ----- Because of this, we feel she should be designated as cheer liason for North Dakota, and compensated as such.

As a Board we have staff in all regions of the state, Class A and B. We have certified cheer coaches that are well versed in Spirit Rules and willing to help with the aforementioned issues. We are willing to help in any capacity that you deem appropriate. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance or if you have additional questions or concerns of your own.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly Strand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Holly" and last name "Strand" clearly legible.

Holly Strand
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