

## IOWA ALL-STATE CHEERLEADING 2026-27

High school cheerleaders are invited to try out for the 2026-2027 All-State Cheerleading Squad. This is the 37th year of this squad. The cheerleaders chosen for this squad will perform at the Iowa Boys' State High School Basketball Tournament in March.

### TRYOUT REQUIREMENTS:

- A) The head coach is a member of the ICCA and has completed the current online rules meeting and concussion video.
- B) One ICCA head coach registers ALL participants for ALL ICCA events.
- C) A non-refundable \$30 registration fee payable to ICCA is required from each candidate. School and coach information, plus the names of the candidates are due online by September 20 at 5:00 pm and must match the money submitted with ONLINE registration. **NO LATE REGISTRATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED!** Payment for registration must be postmarked by September 27, 2026. This fee must be paid before a candidate will be allowed to try out. Do not send multiple checks.
- D) All participating coaches (head, assistant, volunteer) are registered members of the ICCA.
- E) All participating coaches (head, assistant, volunteer) have completed the current online spirit rules meeting (completed in August of the current school year) and the National Federation concussion video training. All coaches have rules meeting and concussion training certificates on file with ICCA.
- F) The school and coaches must be in good standing with the ICCA in regards to the National Federation and ICCA/IHSAA Spirit Rules to participate in ICCA events involving cheerleaders.
- G) Candidates must be bona fide high school cheerleaders. There are no limits to how many cheerleaders may try out from a school.
- H) A cheerleading coach (employed by the district) must drive candidates to and from All-State tryouts, practices, and performances. See "Coaches' Duties" for further details.
- I) The supervising coach must have a completed Medical Treatment and Release Form for each member of the squad. It is the responsibility of the coach to carry medical forms. The coach will be asked to sign off indicating the forms are in their possession.

### TRYOUT MATERIAL AND INFORMATION:

**LOCATION:** TBD, Central Iowa

**TRYOUT DATES:** Saturday, October 10th and Sunday, October 11th, 2026. All cheerleaders from one school must try out on the same day.

### TIMETABLE: (approximate)

Registration and Warm-up	9:30 – 10:00 am
Learn cheer and practice	10:00 – 11:15 am
Practice time w/ group	11:15 – 11:30 am
Tryouts	11:30 – finish

For the convenience of those who are traveling a great distance, cheerleaders will try out in order of their distance from the tryout site. On the registration form, coaches will indicate distance of their school to the try out location. This will be used to determine try out order.

**SELECTION PROCESS:** A panel of judges will assess the candidates' skills. All judges will have prior cheerleading experience and/or coaching experience of high school/collegiate cheer squads. A minimum of twenty cheerleaders will be selected for the All-State Squad. There will not be a specific number selected from each day of tryouts. All candidates' **coaches** will receive an email by Monday 10/12 by 3pm (at the latest) containing the roster for the 2027 All-State Squad. The roster will also list those selected as alternates. Coaches will need to inform their cheerleaders of who did/did not make the team.

**APPEARANCE:** Candidates must wear plain BLACK or NAVY BLUE shorts with a plain white, short-sleeved T-shirt during the practice and tryout. No tank tops, crop tops (midriff-baring), or

long sleeved T-shirts can be worn. No school affiliation, advertising, logos, or words can be on the clothing. If necessary, candidates may turn their shirts inside out for the tryouts. Cheerleading shoes must be worn. Candidates with long hair must have their hair in a ponytail or braid and away from their face. Refer to the "Clarifying the Hair Rule." No bows are allowed for tryouts.

**All National Federation Spirit Rules must be followed at all times by all candidates. Those trying out will be checked for violations, including jewelry, unsafe hair devices, and unsafe fingernails. Anyone in violation will not be allowed to review material. Candidates will be checked again for violations prior to the actual tryout. No refunds will be given in the event of disqualification.**

### **TRYOUT PROCEDURE**

**MOTION TECHNIQUE/CHEER:** Candidates will learn the motion technique/cheer. Judges will be looking for strong, correctly placed motions that demonstrate rhythm, coordination, and technique.

**DANCE:** Candidates will be taught a dance (about 4 – 6 eight counts) by video. This instruction will be made available on the ICCA website in mid September. The dance will be reviewed at tryout practice, but candidates need to know the dance prior to the tryout. Candidates will dance in groups when trying out. Judges will be looking for coordination, rhythm, and technique.

**JUMPS:** After the motion technique and dance portion of the tryout, each candidate will perform a single toe touch and also a two-jump combination. This combination can include any jumps such as a toe touch, front hurdler, etc. The candidate may take a prep between jumps, but the combination must demonstrate continuous motion. We ask that coaches help determine what their candidates' best jumps are. For example: A toe touch jump performed well is better than a pike jump that is not. Just because the pike is more difficult, doesn't mean a candidate should perform that jump specifically.

**TUMBLING:** If a candidate wishes to show any tumbling skills, they will demonstrate these last. Tumbling skills should be at least at the back handspring level. **Tumbling will be performed on a gym floor; mats will not be used during tryouts.** A cheerleader does NOT have to tumble to make the squad.

### **ALL-STATE SQUAD REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION:**

**The following is information pertaining to those who make the All-State Squad and their coaches. Please read it carefully so both the candidate and coach knows what is expected of All-State Squad members.**

**COACH'S DUTIES** – All-State cheerleaders need to be accompanied to practices and performances by a school district-employed cheerleading coach. An assistant coach who has completed the online rules meeting and concussion video may accompany the cheerleader(s). The All-State Director must be notified in advance if an assistant coach is coming so that their eligibility and credentials can be verified against ICCA records. All-State cheerleaders need the guidance of a cheer coach during practice as well as coaching while the All-State cheerleader practices on their own between official practices with the choreographer. For optimum success of an All-State cheerleader, the coach must accept an active role and also make a commitment to the All-Stater(s).

A coach must drive candidates to and from all All-State tryouts, practices, and performances. Coaches are responsible for chaperoning at all times which means they cannot leave the site during the tryout, practices, and performances. No parents will be permitted to accompany the participants in a supervisory position unless they are employed by the school AND special circumstances have been arranged with the All-State Director in advance. The ICCA abides by the National Federation Spirit Rules governing cheerleading. Insurance regulations require a school vehicle (unless other arrangements are made with your administrator) and a school employee to bring the cheerleaders to the event.

In special circumstances, if a coach is unable to attend, ICCA will allow an employee of the All-State cheerleader's school district to escort the cheerleader to tryout practices and performances. A request for any exception must be approved IN ADVANCE in a timely manner (at least one week prior) with the All-State Director. If necessary, the All-State Director will seek the advice of the Executive Board. Upon approval of the All-State Director, the school employee must bring a letter from the school district superintendent or their designee stating the employee's relationship to the school and why a cheer coach cannot attend. **This should only occur in case of an emergency, as it is important that a coach attend the tryout, practices, and performances.** Failure to comply with this ruling will result in a consequence. Possible consequences could be, but are not limited to, suspending the school from All-State for a designated time, suspending the coach from ICCA for a designated time, or dismissing that school's current All-State cheerleaders from the All-State squad.

**The coach must have a completed Medical Treatment and Release Form for each candidate at the tryout, practices, and performances.**

**SQUAD PRACTICES AND PERFORMANCES** – The All-State Squad will practice on Sundays. To be a member of the squad, the candidate must attend all practices. **Failure to attend a practice will result in dismissal. Dismissal from the team for attendance or disciplinary reasons will make the cheerleader ineligible for the team in the following school year. Similarly, quitting the team after signing the commitment form will make the cheerleader ineligible to tryout the following year. If an injury prevents full participation, attendance is still required if you wish to remain on the team. Coaches and cheerleaders should understand the commitment before trying out.** There are hundreds of cheerleaders who try out for this squad. Being a member is an honor!

Squad members and their coaches must be responsible for knowing when practices will be held. Practices are from **10:00 am to 3:30 pm** unless stated otherwise. The first practice will start earlier (9:30am) in order to take a group picture for the plaque. The practices will be held at a central Iowa location on the following dates:

**Sunday, January 3rd, 2027**  
**Sunday, February 7th, 2027**  
**Sunday, February 28th, 2027**  
**MAKE UP (If needed) Sunday, March 7th, 2027**

Final practices will be held the afternoon and evening of **Thursday, March 11, 2027**, at a school in central Iowa, and the morning of **Friday, March 12, 2027**, at Hilton Coliseum. Afternoon performances will be on **Friday, March 12, 2027**, at the Iowa Boys' State High School Basketball Tournament.

#### **OTHER INFORMATION:**

- 1. Once a cheerleader has made a commitment to the All-State Squad, they are expected to fulfill this commitment as an affirmation of their integrity.**
2. Alternates are expected to attend all practices and learn all material, including counts for stunting, and formations. The expectations for alternates are equal to those of the members named to the team. Cheerleaders selected for All-State may be replaced by alternates due to absence, injury, or *inability to complete the skills expected of them*.
3. Squad members are required to follow all guidelines established by the ICCA. These guidelines will include: appearance, behavior, conditioning, etc. The squad member will also be required to follow Good Conduct policies set by individual schools.
- 4. Squad members and coaches are responsible for all food, hotel, and travel expenses.**
5. The All-State Director/ICCA representative shall not permit a team member to participate if in their judgment there is a safety concern.
6. Squad members might be asked to perform in more than one stunting position.
- 7. The last day to change names/substitute for tryouts is October 5, 2026 by 1pm.**
8. Any apparel representing the ICCA All-State team will be available through the designated ICCA vendor. An online store will be available for coaches and team members.