2026 North Shore Elite State Championship Weekend

Congratulations to ALL our athletes and coaches on qualifying for the 2026 ICA State Championship! This marks our 17th trip to State in as many seasons. Words cannot express how proud we are to be included among some of the best youth cheer athletes in the state. No matter the outcome, this is sure to be an amazing weekend!

Please keep in mind this is the biggest competition of the year, and it is imperative we have complete commitment from you. We do want everyone to have fun, but keep in mind this weekend is a **business trip** for our teams, so our main goal is to stay focused on them.

NSE State Championship Weekend Rules:

- ***ABSOLUTELY NO SWIMMING FOR NSE CHEERLEADERS BEFORE COMPETING***
- ***ATHLETES SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN GOOD HABITS AND REST***
- ***EVERYONE MUST ADHERE TO NSE CODE OF CONDUCT AT ALL TIMES***

During this weekend, schedules are tight and there will be lots of things going on. We ask that you keep in mind the importance of being on time and present whenever required. This document includes a detailed itinerary for the entire weekend. This will indicate when and where your athlete is needed.

Competition Details

ICA 2026 State Championships
Thursday November 14 - 15, 20-22
NIU Convocation Center
Admission is **FREE**
Parking – in and out access
$20 per car, per day when purchasing online ahead of time, the cost may go up on the day of
Parking tickets can be purchased at the ICA website: NIU PARKING FOR ICA STATE

REMINDER – Admission is FREE which means parking can be tight and full capacity could be reached. DO NOT WAIT to until performance or awards time to arrive. Carpooling is strongly suggested. **BE SURE TO REVIEW THE NIU RULES ON BRINGING ITEMS INTO THE ARENA**

What is required of my athlete prior to State?

- They MUST BE PRESENT at all practices leading up to State. If they are absent, they can and will be removed from the routine.
- They should continue to be prepared, fully focused and participating in all practices and events leading up to State. If they are unable to do so, they can and will be removed from the routine.

What do I need to know to ensure my athlete, and our family survive State?

- Ensure your athlete is not experiencing any additional stress or unnecessary excitement. This will be a very emotional and exciting time, and we rely on you to help support them holistically. You MUST KEEP YOUR EMOTIONS IN CHECK!
- Rest when you get the opportunity! Stay hydrated! Eat when you are hungry!
- Remember – our biggest goal is for a great performance and a safe, clean routine. While a championship is the bonus goal, we are only in control of what we put out there on the mat. As a staff, we only ask that our athletes give it their absolute best and hold nothing back.

What are the logistics of Competition Day at State?

- We will follow the same procedures as our regular season. The NIU Convocation center is a large place but can get very congested, please be sure to follow all directions carefully and have your athlete in the proper place at the correct time.
- On the first weekend, awards sessions will only announce the top 3 teams after that day's competition. Please review the itinerary for your athlete's specific schedule. Momagers will also communicate on the day of.
- On the second weekend, all athletes MUST REMAIN in the arena or area depending on timing of their performance and awards.

What do we do in our down time?

- Take advantage of any downtime you may have. Just follow the provided itinerary and you'll know exactly what's going on at any given moment.

Are the adults allowed to enjoy themselves?

- Absolutely! This is a fun and exciting time that everyone should enjoy. While you and your guests are always required to adhere to the NSE Code of Conduct at the hotel and the Arena, we encourage you to continue making memories with one another. Be mindful of the rules and requirements of the NIU Campus and Convocation Center. At the end of the day, please be responsible, and again, keep in mind, <u>our main reason for being here is our athletes, this is business trip, not a vacation.</u>

Logistics

Hotels

Hotel stays are NOT REQUIRED. But if you will be staying in the area over the weekend, to help keep everyone informed, we are asking that you provide the name and location of your hotel and the dates you will be staying to your momager. In the event of an emergency, this will help inform steps to take to get your athlete where they need to be.

Regardless of where you are staying, please keep in mind you are representing not only your family, but the NSE Cheer family as well. We expect all conduct agreements/requirements are always upheld during this weekend. Reminder – athletes SHOULD NOT be swimming the day before or day of their performance.

Weekend Schedule

Make sure your athlete is on time and present when they need to be. The current itinerary is in this document. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with it and remain in communication with your momager. This is very strict and none of it is a suggestion. If your athlete is not present at drop off time, and we have not been in communication with you, we will begin steps to adjust the routine without your athlete.

Times related to arrival, athletes drop off to coaches and meet up for awards may be adjusted depending on the ICA schedule. Please be mindful of these times.

Gifts/Keepsakes

NSE Cheerleaders will be receiving their final keepsakes of the season this week. If you have items for your athlete's Cheer Buddy or teammates, please do those exchanges outside of the Arena. As we have asked all season, please refrain from distributing any gifts at the arena.

Uniform/Attire

Athletes should be in their full uniform with their warmup jacket on upon arrival to the arena. Hair should be done; bows should be in place. Bathroom lines may be long, do not count on having time to change after arrival. Athletes should be wearing their team warm up jacket or a team shirt when they are not performing to keep their uniform clean. When they are dropped off to coaches for performances, they should not have any additional belongings. When they are dropped off for awards, they should be in their full performance attire unless instructed otherwise. NO PHONES or bags for awards please.

State Competition Format

The ICA Championship is a 2-weekend competitive format. We will continue to compete in groups based upon Division/Category/Size. Teams will compete twice with their cumulative score resulting in their final placement. **Special note for Munchkins - we will now be competing for placement as the other teams have done all season, not just a score.**

The three (3) teams with highest point values awarded by the panel of judges will be considered the "podium" teams winning either a gold, silver or bronze State medal and a trophy for the organization. All other teams will receive a State Qualifier medal.

DO NOT cut your commute short. The ICA WILL NOT hold up competition because someone is late. If your child is late, they will not compete. This can result in the team being seriously impacted in score, please be on time.

Round 1 Saturday November 14/Sunday November 15, 2026

- *Teams will compete against their entire division. This will account for 25% of the team's total score. There will be 2 mats going throughout this weekend.*
- *During the Awards session, the top 3 scoring teams in each group will be announced. No one will receive a medal on this day.*
- *Munchkins will compete on Saturday November 14 – Staff will stay for Awards – your athletes are invited to do the same*
- *Juniors and Seniors will compete on Sunday November 15 – Juniors have the option to stay for Awards; Seniors will stay for awards*
- *We will try to go live on our private Facebook page for the Awards sessions*

Round 2 Saturday November 22/Sunday November 23, 2025

- There will be one mat for performances this entire weekend
- Teams will walk the red carpet and perform under the lights on this day!
- Teams will be earning the final 75% of their cumulative score for the weekend. The top 3 scores will be announced, crowning the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place teams in the State. Teams will receive their medals at this time. This awards session includes a huge balloon and confetti drop!

VERY IMPORTANT LOGISTICAL NOTE – WE WILL ALWAYS BRING THE TEAM BACK TO YOU IN THE SEATS – DO NOT LEAVE THE SEATING AREA AFTER PERFORMANCES OR AWARDS

STATE ROUND 1 – NOVEMBER 14-15, 2026

MUNCHKINS	***JUNIORS***	***SENIORS***
SATURDAY 11/14	***SUNDAY 11/15***	***SUNDAY 11/15***
Arrive 12:30pm **THIS IS NOT A SUGGESTION**	Arrive 8:00am **THIS IS NOT A SUGGESTION**	Arrive 4:00pm **THIS IS NOT A SUGGESTION**
Drop off to coaches 1:40pm	Drop off to coaches 9:05am	Drop off to coaches 5:10 – 5:20pm*
On the Mat to Compete Panel B 2:34pm	On the Mat to Compete Panel B 9:57am	On the Mat to Compete Panel B 6:03pm*
Awards 4:50pm	Awards 12:50pm	Awards 7:20pm
ATTENDANCE AT AWARDS OPTIONAL – PLEASE LET US NOW IF YOU WILL BE STAYING FOR AWARDS	YOU DO NOT HAVE TO BE PRESENT FOR THIS AWARDS SESSION – WE WILL PLAN TO STREAM LIVE IF WE CAN	SENIORS **WILL** ATTEND AWARDS AS A TEAM **this time is subject to change – more to come*
WE WILL BRING ATHLETES TO YOU IN THE SEATS - DO NOT LEAVE THAT AREA	WE WILL BRING ATHLETES TO YOU IN THE SEATS - DO NOT LEAVE THAT AREA	WE WILL BRING ATHLETES TO YOU IN THE SEATS - DO NOT LEAVE THAT AREA

THIS ITINERARY IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE – PLEASE REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH YOUR MOMAGERS AND STAY TUNED IN TO YOUR TEXTS!

STATE FINALS – NOVEMBER 20-22, 2026

SENIORS

FRIDAY 11/20

Arrive 5:00pm
THIS IS NOT A SUGGESTION

Drop off to coaches

6:15-6:30pm*

On the mat to compete
7:14pm*

Awards 8:40pm

ALL ATHLETES ARE REQUIRED TO STAY FOR THIS AWARDS CEREMONY

*this time is subject to change – more to come

WE WILL BRING ATHLETES TO YOU IN THE SEATS - DO NOT LEAVE THAT AREA

MUNCHKINS

SATURDAY 11/21

Arrive 2:00pm
THIS IS NOT A SUGGESTION

Drop off to coaches 3:15pm

On the mat to compete
4:12pm

Awards 7:10pm

ALL ATHLETES ARE REQUIRED TO STAY FOR THIS AWARDS CEREMONY

WE WILL BRING ATHLETES TO YOU IN THE SEATS - DO NOT LEAVE THAT AREA

JUNIORS

SUNDAY 11/22

Arrive 9:00am
THIS IS NOT A SUGGESTION

Drop off to coaches
10:15am

On the mat to compete
11:02am

Awards 1:00pm

ALL ATHLETES ARE REQUIRED TO STAY FOR THIS AWARDS CEREMONY

WE WILL BRING ATHLETES TO YOU IN THE SEATS - DO NOT LEAVE THAT AREA

THE FOLLOWING ITINERARY IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE – PLEASE REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH YOUR MOMAGERS AND STAY TUNED IN TO YOUR TEXTS!